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The Politics of Chinese Education in Malaya,
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Tan Liok Ee

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Penang
February 1996

TAN LIOK EE

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Abbreviations

ACCC	Associated Chinese Chamber of Commerce
ANM	Arkib Negara Malaysia
CAC	Central Advisory Committee
CAH	Chinese Assembly Hall
CCC	Chinese Chamber of Commerce
CKP	<i>Chung Kuo Pao</i>
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPM	Communist Party of Malaya
CSCA	Chinese School Committees' Association
CSTA	Chinese School Teachers' Association
DAP	Democratic Action Party
FM	Federation of Malaya
FMS	Federated Malay States
IBRD	International Bank for Reconstruction and Development
ICSS	Independent Chinese Secondary Schools
IMP	Independence of Malaya Party
ISA	Internal Security Act
KMT	Kuomintang
KWYP	<i>Kwong Wah Yit Poh</i>
LCE	Lower Certificate of Education
MC	Management Committee
MCA	Malayan/Malaysian Chinese Association
MCACECC	Malayan Chinese Association Chinese Edu- cation Central Committee
MCE	Malayan Certificate of Education
MIC	Malayan/Malaysian Indian Congress
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
MSSEE	Malayan Secondary Schools Entrance Exam- ination
MU	Malayan Union
NEP	New Economic Policy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NTSS	National-Type Secondary Schools

<i>NYSP</i>	<i>Nanyang Siang Pao</i>
PAS	Parti Islam SeMalaysia
PMIP	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
PPP	Peoples' Progressive Party
PRO	Public Record Office
PUTERA-AMCJA	Pusat Tenaga Rakyat-All-Malayan Council of Joint Action
RHO	Rhodes House Library, Oxford
<i>SCJP</i>	<i>Sin Chew Jit Poh</i>
<i>SPJP</i>	<i>Sing Pin Jih Poh</i>
SS	Straits Settlements
TCL/ANM	Tan Cheng Lock Papers, Arkib Negara Malaysia
TCL/ISEAS	Tan Cheng Lock Papers, Institute of South- east Asian Studies
UCSCA	United Chinese School Committees' Asso- ciation
UCSTA	United Chinese School Teachers' Associ- ation
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
UN	United Nations

Notes on Terminology, Names, and Sources

'MALAYA' is used in this book as an abbreviation for the Federation of Malaya when discussing events or developments from 1948 to September 1963. It is also used in an inclusive geographical sense to refer to the peninsula as a whole, including Singapore, in discussing developments before 1948.

'Malaysia' is used when discussing developments after September 1963 when the Federation of Malaysia incorporating the former Federation of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore was formed. Singapore separated from Malaysia to become a separate political unit in August 1965.

Chinese names, whether of persons or of schools, are retained in the form normally used by the persons or schools concerned where this is known. When this cannot be established, names will be rendered in *pinyin*.

Chinese words are rendered in *Hanyu pinyin*, with brief translations where possible. Chinese characters for Chinese terms and names are provided in the Glossary.

All translations from Chinese sources are the author's, unless otherwise specified.

All currency references are to the Malayan dollar (\$) as it was then known or to the Malaysian Ringgit (MR).

Chapter 6 is a revised version of 'Whither Chinese Education in Malaya: The Controversy over Chung Ling High School, 1955-1957', which appeared in Vol. 44 (1989) of the *Journal of the South Seas Society*. The editors' consent to use the same material in this book is gratefully acknowledged.

Introduction

WHEREVER Chinese migrants have settled in significant numbers, outside of China, they have established their own schools to educate their children in their mother tongue.¹ Only in Malaysia, however, have such schools survived to this day and retained their identity as Chinese schools while flourishing as a vibrant part of the education system of a multi-ethnic society. The 1992 Minority Rights Group Report on the Chinese in South-East Asia noted that 'Malaysia has Southeast Asia's most comprehensive Chinese-language system of education'.² Even in Singapore, where the Chinese constitute more than 75 per cent of the population and where Mandarin as a language is taught more extensively than before, schools teaching entirely in Chinese no longer exist. In that sense, the Chinese schools in Malaysia are unique.

Today, Malaysia has more than 600,000 children studying in 1,287 National-Type Chinese Primary Schools. Most of these schools have existed for decades but the oldest among them were founded more than a hundred years ago. These 1,287 Chinese primary schools use Mandarin as the medium of instruction, form an integral part of the national system, and provide free education, at state expense, to 21.1 per cent of the total primary school students in the country.³ Eighty-nine per cent of Chinese children at primary school age are currently enrolled in these schools.⁴

At the secondary school level, more than 60,000 pupils study in 60 Independent Chinese Schools. These Independent Chinese Schools teach mainly, but not completely, in Mandarin. They are not part of the national system and are entirely supported by the financial resources of local Chinese communities. In addition, there are 54 National-Type Secondary Schools which stopped teaching in Mandarin when they were absorbed into the national system after the passage of the 1961 Education Act. As part of the national system, these schools are funded by the state and their students do not pay fees but their main medium of instruction is Malay, the national language. Nevertheless, a significant number of such schools are still regarded as 'Chinese schools' mainly because

Chinese is still taught as a language within the curriculum, the internal culture of the school remains identifiably Chinese, and the schools have retained strong links with the local Chinese community.

Thus the Chinese schools in Malaysia exist both *within* the national system (in the case of the primary schools and, arguably, the National-Type Secondary Schools) as well as *outside* the national system (in the case of the Independent Chinese Schools). Current enrolments indicate that both types of Chinese schools remain popular choices with Chinese parents. A new, and intriguing, development of the 1990s is the discernible increase in the number of Malay children, currently estimated at over 30,000, studying in the Chinese primary schools.

Optimists would say that the future of the Chinese schools looks even brighter. The continuing prosperity of the Asian region, and especially the growing economic strength of China, may well enhance the social and economic value of the Chinese language, and, therefore, an education in Chinese. Within Malaysia, both the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister have recently tried their hand at writing Chinese calligraphy at public functions—an important if symbolic indication of a warmer attitude among Malay leaders towards the Chinese language and things Chinese and a greater Malay–Chinese cordiality.

Yet it was only eight years ago, in October 1987, that Malaysia appeared to be hurtling towards a Malay–Chinese conflagration, sparked off by the promotion of about 100 Chinese—but non-Mandarin speaking—teachers to senior positions in Chinese schools within the national system. The controversial promotions may have been ‘an administrative hiccup’ but they were perceived by supporters of Chinese education to be a government attempt to ‘change the character of the Chinese schools’.⁵

In October 1987, Chinese politicians within the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition who had pledged to ‘sink or swim with the Chinese schools’ were joined by Chinese opposition party leaders in a massive rally to show that they were united in defending ‘the essential character of the Chinese schools’. In response, UMNO and Malay politicians planned an even bigger rally to demonstrate that the Malays were united behind their leaders in withstanding pressure from the Chinese.⁶ The escalating racial tension was defused after the Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, launched ‘Operation Lalang’ on 27 October which resulted in the arrest of 119 persons under the Internal Security Act (ISA). Among the most prominent detainees were Lim Fong Seng, president of the United Chinese School Committees’ Association (UCSCA);

Sim Mow Yu, president of the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA); Twang Pik King, headmaster of an Independent Chinese School; and Kua Kia Soong and Ong Tin Kim, who were closely associated with the UCSCA.⁷

October 1987 was a particularly dramatic illustration of how the Chinese education issue is one of the most sensitive nerve centres of communal politics in Malaysia. 'Operation Lalang', one of the biggest and most wide-ranging rounds of political detention in Malaysia's post-colonial history, did not just target the leaders of Chinese education organizations. But it was also not the first time that the State had resorted to repressive action to curb dissent from the Chinese education organizations. There had been other occasions when controversy over Chinese education led to political brinkmanship, each time showing that the survival of Chinese education, in its various forms, was a highly emotive issue.

To take another example, the Merdeka University campaign spawned highly charged intercommunal and intracommunal politicking in Malaysia until the Federal Court ruled in July 1982 against the possibility of a Chinese language university.⁸ The Merdeka University proposal, first mooted in 1967, attracted widespread Chinese support when it was revived in 1974. For some Chinese in Malaysia, the Merdeka University issue was a test to determine if the state would uphold the linguistic rights which are constitutionally guaranteed to the Chinese as an ethnic minority. For other Chinese, the establishment of a university teaching mainly in Chinese would have fulfilled the dream of a complete system of education in Chinese. For yet other Chinese, the Merdeka University campaign provided a channel to protest the ethnic quotas for admission to institutions of higher learning which were introduced as part of the New Economic Policy (NEP) and which reduced access to tertiary education for non-Malays.

More episodes in the troubled history of Chinese education in Malaysia could easily be cited. Suffice it here to note that October 1987 and the Merdeka University campaign demonstrate how Chinese education issues could draw the support of Chinese who were themselves not educated in Chinese and might not have had a direct interest in the survival of the Chinese schools or the establishment of a Chinese university.

Why has the cause of Chinese education become so suffused with anxiety, emotion, and controversy, lending itself so easily to 'politicization'? Yet, how is it that the Chinese schools have remained, on the whole, such a resilient system of education despite the political sensitivities in Malaysia's multi-ethnic society?

To answer both these questions, this study returns to a critical fifteen-year period in Malaysia's history—from 1945, when British rule was re-established over the peninsula, to 1961 when the passage of the Education Act marked a decisive point in government policy towards the Chinese schools. During these fifteen years, the constitutional framework and political structure of a new nation—the Federation of Malaya—were being constructed. It was also the period when an education policy—with the objective of integrating Malaysians from diverse ethnic groups, and linguistic and cultural backgrounds into a single nationality—was being formulated. The organizations and personalities involved in that political evolution never questioned the need for a national system of education. Instead, the controversy, from the start, revolved around the question of whether a single language was an essential basis for national integration.

The British colonial government wanted a Malayan system of education based on multiracial schools which would teach mainly in English. But the Malay leaders wanted the Malay language to have pride of place in the future national education system. Indeed, they wanted the Malay language to be the basis not only of national integration but also for the creation of a national identity. But a national education system based solely on English or Malay left no room for the Chinese language or the Chinese schools. In fact, the Chinese schools were seen by British officials and Malay leaders as obstacles to the assimilation of Chinese children into Malayan society.

In protest, teachers and Management Committees of the Chinese schools launched a 'Chinese Education Movement' to ensure the survival of Chinese education and to fight for a legitimate place for the Chinese schools within the national education system. In the process, the cause of Chinese education became fused with a political struggle, the objective of which was to resist cultural domination while undergoing political integration. Chinese education became an important motif within an evolving political vision. This envisaged the Chinese integrating into Malayan society while retaining their cultural identity.

Chapter 1 discusses the origins of the Chinese schools, which began in colonial Malaya, as *minban xuexiao*, that is schools established and supported by their own local communities. Historically, the British encouraged mass Chinese immigration to Malaya but the colonial government never thought it necessary to provide for the education of immigrant children. The Chinese set up their

own schools and began a tradition of self-reliance in education. Chinese schools sprang up in almost every town and village where the Chinese settled.

In the first decade after 1945, the Chinese schools recovered from the ravages of the Japanese Occupation and expanded furiously to meet the tremendous demand for education from a settled and growing population. Thus numerous Chinese schools were already providing the most important source of education for the majority of young Chinese when the controversy over their future arose. On this basis, the supporters of Chinese education sought to defend these schools against the encroachments of colonial policy when the British formulated a new education policy for post-war Malaya. Herein lay the roots of the resilience of the Chinese schools in post-colonial Malaya.

Chinese organizations opposed British policies as seeking to impose a colonial language, English, upon a country that was on the verge of independence. They saw the expansion of English education as an attempt by a decolonizing power to continue its cultural hegemony into the post-colonial era and contended that a foreign language was not a proper foundation for nurturing social and political integration amongst Malaysians. But the Chinese schools of the immediate post-war years still represented an anomalous link with China. Could they be transformed into schools that could inculcate a new Malayan loyalty while preserving a Chinese cultural identity? Chapter 2 shows that it was, ironically, the British who initiated the transformation of the Chinese schools from being remnants of a *huaqiao* (or overseas Chinese) past to becoming schools that could serve to produce future Malayan citizens.

In opposing British proposals for a single system of schools teaching in English, supporters of Chinese education had to seek an alternative to fulfil their linguistic, cultural, and political aspirations. Chapter 3 introduces the central personalities and organizations behind the launching of the Chinese education movement and the articulation of a pluralistic vision in which the Malay, Chinese, and Indian schools would coexist to form the multiple bases for a uniquely Malayan system of education. Their argument was that national integration should not require uniformity of language. Instead, Malaya's multi-ethnic and multicultural society called for equality of status and respect for all the languages and cultures of the major ethnic components of the Malayan nation. Accordingly, there should be a legitimate place for the Chinese

language and the Chinese schools *within* the future national education system of independent Malaya.

With imminent independence, any confrontation with the British was, ultimately, less important than reaching an accord with the Malay leaders who were poised to inherit the power to rule Malaya. Would the Malay elite accommodate other languages and cultures generally and, in particular, the Chinese schools within the national education system? Education policy became one of the key issues which tested the range and the limits of inter-communal accommodation between Malay and Chinese leaders on the eve of Merdeka. Chapters 4 and 5 show that the Chinese schools gained a foothold within the national education system as a result of the crucial compromises arrived at between Malay and Chinese leaders who were then united in their desire to be free of British rule. But the inconclusiveness of those compromises only postponed several disagreements which led to later conflict.

The main features of the Merdeka Constitution, in the opinion of some Chinese leaders, indicated that the UMNO leaders basically leaned towards a *danyuan*, or unitary, vision of the Malayan nation. This vision placed the Malay people at the centre of the Malayan polity and regarded the Malay language and culture as the basis for a Malayan national identity. Such a vision was unacceptable to the major Chinese organizations who urged the MCA to stand with them to fight for a *duoyuan*, or pluralistic, approach to nation-building. Among other things, this demanded parity for the languages of the three major ethnic groups and equal rights for all citizens as the proper basis of national integration.

Chapter 7 traces the post-Merdeka breakdown in the pre-Merdeka compromises that had been struck between the Alliance and the leaders of the Chinese education movement. It pays particular attention to the events that led to a climatic confrontation in 1961 between the Alliance and the UCSTA over the future of the Chinese secondary schools. This confrontation was expressed in various forms—student demonstrations, public campaigns, and private negotiations—before ending in a historic parting of ways between the Alliance and the Chinese education leaders. It ended with the dissolution of the Chinese Education Movement which had been launched in 1951.

1. See Chen Guohua, *Xianquzhe de jiaoyin: haiwai Huaren jiaoyu sanbainian, 1690-1990nian*, Toronto: Royal Kingsway Inc., 1992, for an attempt at a world-wide survey.

2. Minority Rights Group, *The Chinese of South-East Asia*, London, 1992, p. 13.

3. The total primary school enrolment in 1995 was 2,802,677 of which 592,184 were enrolled in Chinese primary schools. See Malaysia, Bahagian Perancangan dan Penyelidikan Pendidikan, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, *Perangkaan Pendidikan '95: Maklumat Umum Sekolah Seperti pada 1 Januari 1995*, Kuala Lumpur, 1995.

4. Out of a total of 619,964 Chinese children enrolled in primary schools in 1994, 551,622 were enrolled in Chinese primary schools; see Table 6 in Ng Kwei Kuen, 'Mother-tongue Education in a Multilingual Multicultural Society: The Malaysian Chinese Experience', in David Nunan, Roger Berry, and Vivien Berty (eds.), *Bringing about Change in Language Education*, Hong Kong: Department of Curriculum Studies, University of Hong Kong, 1994.

5. For a succinct and balanced report, see Suhaini Aznam, 'The Language of Politics: MCA Comes Close to Crisis with UMNO over Chinese Teachers', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 29 October 1987.

6. *Ibid.*

7. See *Star*, 28 October 1987, for launching of 'Operation Lalang' and Committee Against Repression in the Pacific and Asia, *Tangled Web: Dissent, Deterrence and the 27 October 1987 Crackdown in Malaysia*, Haymarket, NSW: CARPA, 1988 for more details.

8. See Visu Sinnadurai, 'Rights in Respect of Education under the Malaysian Constitution', in F. A. Trindade and H. P. Lee (eds.), *The Constitution of Malaysia: Further Perspectives and Developments*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 46-58. For different perspectives on the Merdeka University, see Aliran, *The Real Issues: Aliran on the Merdeka University*, Penang, 1979; Duli Daxue Youxian Gongsi, *Duda lunzheng ji*, Kuala Lumpur: Merdeka University Berhad, 1979; Merdeka University Berhad, *Universiti Merdeka: Kenyataan-kenyataan dan Kritikan-kritikan, Statements and Commentaries*, Kuala Lumpur, 1978; Yahaya Ismail, *Politik Universiti Merdeka*, Petaling Jaya: Dinamika Kreatif, 1978.

The First Hundred Years: The Chinese Schools, 1849–1950

A Tradition of Community Schools

THE earliest mention of some form of schooling being arranged by Chinese living in Malaya is Francis Light's report in 1794 that the Chinese in Penang 'have everywhere people to teach their children, and sometimes they send males to China to complete their education'.¹ The next available report comes from William Milne, a missionary, who found three Chinese schools in Malacca in 1815.² A local researcher has claimed that the earliest Chinese school in Penang was the *Wufu Shuyuan* (Academy of Five Blessings) established in 1819.³ In Singapore, three small dialect schools were reported to be functioning in 1829.⁴ By 1884 there were 52 Chinese schools in Penang, 51 in Singapore, and 12 in Malacca.⁵

These early schools have left no historical records that can be studied to determine when and by whom they were founded. For this reason, Tan Yeok Seong, a well-known researcher of the early history of the Chinese schools, has suggested that 1849 marks the beginning of the recorded history of the Chinese schools.⁶ The plaque marking the foundation of the *Chongwen Ge* (Chamber of Exalted Learning) in Singapore not only tells us that the school was founded in 1849 and located in Teluk Ayer Street but also provides us with the names of the school's founders, their ideals, and how they intended to run the school.⁷ Two other Chinese schools which can be reliably dated from the statements of their founders are the *Cuiying Shuyuan* (Congregation of Talent Academy) established in 1854 in Singapore and the *Nanhua Yixue* (Southern Chinese Charitable School) founded in 1888 in Penang.⁸

The values that motivated some of the pioneers of Chinese education in Malaya can be gleaned from the statements left by the founders of the *Chongwen Ge*, *Cuiying Shuyuan*, and *Nanhua Yixue*. The *Cuiying Shuyuan* was founded with the rather lofty ideal of 'fostering learning and encouraging the talented'.⁹ The founders of the *Nanhua Yixue* were, by contrast, more pragmatic. They hoped

that the average pupil would, after studying at the school for three years, have learnt enough 'to be literate and able to earn a living'.¹⁰ The founders of both the *Cuiying Shuyuan* and *Nanhua Yixue* intended their schools, as *yixue* or charitable schools, to accept pupils 'regardless of whether they came from rich or poor families'. One common concern expressed in the founding statements of all three schools was that students would, through getting an education, also 'learn to follow the moral path' and 'uphold the righteous path of the ancient sages'.¹¹

The early Chinese schools in Malaya were replicas of the pattern of schooling common in China during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1911).¹² There was in Qing China a broad-based demand for a basic or elementary education. Many families in towns as well as villages tried to see at least one son through a year or two of schooling so as to have one functionally literate person within the family. A functional literacy, meaning the ability to recognize and use 1,000 to 2,000 Chinese characters, was desired by a wide range of people such as traders, artisans, craftsmen, and even peasants, because it was extremely useful for everyday purposes.¹³ The state, however, played no role in meeting this demand. Its role was confined to organizing the examinations through which the court recruited its officials and sponsoring a few élite academies that prepared scholars for various stages in the official examinations. Elementary education in China had, for centuries, been provided through the family or through neighbourhood schools organized at the local community level.

Young children in China started their early schooling either in *sishu* (private schools) or in *yixue* (charitable or free schools). A *sishu* was typically a small teaching unit consisting of a group of 20–30 students taught by a single teacher. It was a small, informal, and flexible arrangement which could be set up by the teacher himself or by a wealthy family that employed a teacher. *Sishu* could also be set up by a clan, lineage, or village committee, indeed by any group of people who wanted to share in an arrangement for the education of their children and could agree on the terms for engaging a teacher for this purpose. Each year, thousands of men failed in the official examinations, even after repeated attempts, and ended up providing a ready supply of teachers for the *sishu*.

The *sishu* normally charged fees but these were usually not prohibitive. Pupils in village schools in China sometimes paid the teacher by bringing rice, dried meat, or vegetables. Children from poor families were sometimes charged lower rates or exempted from

paying. Some clans even ran schools especially for fatherless boys or sons of poor households in the lineage. The *sishu* seldom had its own buildings. Classes were conducted in a spare room in the family home or in the teacher's house or in any available space in public buildings such as village temples or ancestral halls with pupils sometimes bringing their own chairs. Operating at the most rudimentary level, all that was required was a space that could accommodate a small group of children for part of the day and a teacher who was prepared to teach for the sum of money offered for his services.

Yixue as charitable schools, unlike *sishu*, did not charge fees at all. But like the *sishu*, *yixue* were usually small neighbourhood schools housed in simple, sometimes makeshift, buildings. They were sometimes launched by an endowment of a piece of land or a building but more often they were funded by collections of donations from richer families in the neighbourhood. Sometimes it was the local official who played the leading role as the Qing Court frequently called on its officials to set up *yixue* in the areas under their jurisdiction. Established for the benefit of children from the poorest families in the area, *yixue* were usually administered by a committee and often had a founding Constitution. Hence the earliest *yixue* in Malaya can be more easily traced than the earliest *sishu* which left little documentation.

The curriculum and teaching methods of both types of schools were similar. Pupils ranging in age from 5 or 6 to almost 20 years were taught to read and write through the age-old method of memorizing and copying three Classical Chinese texts which had been used as teaching primers for centuries. These were the *Qianzi Wen* (Thousand Character Classic) dating from the sixth century, the *Sanzi Jing* (Trimetrical Classic) used as a teaching primer since the Sung Dynasty (960-1279), and the *Baijia Xing* (Book of Hundred Surnames), a collation of the most common Chinese surnames. Through these three texts, a student could learn up to 2,000 Chinese characters as well as acquire a smattering of history and traditional ethics. Some more ambitious teachers may have started their brighter or older students on the *Si Shu* (Four Books) or the *Wu Jing* (Five Classics), Confucian texts considered to be the core of a proper scholar's education. But these texts were far too difficult for most students and simplified primers about the lives of virtuous men of the past were used instead by way of moral education.¹⁴

By the end of the nineteenth century, the curriculum and teaching methods of these traditional 'old-style' schools were being

criticized as completely outdated. However, to many simple families in the cities as well as villages of China, the system of neighbourhood schools in the form of a *sishu* or a *yixue* provided the most accessible means for their children to acquire some rudimentary literacy and numeracy skills. Reports of nineteenth-century observers from different parts of China indicate that *sishu* or *yixue* could be found throughout China and even the smallest village often had its own little neighbourhood school. These schools continued to persist well into the 1940s even after modernizers in China had started to introduce 'new-style' schools modelled on the education system of Japan and the United States.¹⁵

The earliest Chinese schools in Malaya were patterned on the 'old-style' *sishu* or *yixue*. Many immigrants to Malaya would themselves have gone to such schools for a year or two. As they settled here, and found the colonial authorities indifferent to the education of the children of immigrants, they fell back on this tradition of small neighbourhood schools established and supported by families, clans, villages, or local communities. Taking Penang as an example, in addition to the *Nanhua Yixue* mentioned above, the Tong Sian School was established in 1897 as a *pingmin yixue* (charitable school for the poor) providing free education to a small group of pupils. The Sin Kang and Eng Chuan Schools were founded by the Khoo clan and the Tan clan in 1906 and 1917 respectively. Both schools were initially conducted in the respective clan ancestral temples. Pupils came only from within the clan and no fees were charged. Fees were charged only after the schools began to take in pupils from other clans. Examples of schools founded by dialect associations or provincial *huiguan* were the Kong Min School which began as a *sishu* with less than 10 pupils founded by the *Guangzhou Tingzhou Huiguan* in 1909; the Aik Hwa School started in 1913 by the Hainanese; the Han Chiang School established by the Teochews in 1919 and housed in the *huiguan's* premises; and the Sum Sun School founded by the Hock Chew group in 1928. The Shang Wu School's name, literally Commercial Affairs School, reflects its origins. This school began in 1909 as a night school to teach shop assistants and apprentices the practical skills of letter writing and basic bookkeeping.¹⁶

From available school histories, similar patterns can be found in the other states.¹⁷ These histories tell with pride how the schools began modestly with a handful of students and a single teacher whose job was to take his charges through the first stages of learning to read and write. The conditions of these early schools were as

rough and basic as those of their counterparts in China. This is how Xu Suwu describes the conditions in some of the early *sishu*: 'The facilities were dilapidated and appalling in the extreme . . . with discoloured blackboards and chairs which were falling to pieces. All students, no matter what their numbers, were crowded into a single classroom where the ventilation was bad and the lighting inadequate.'¹⁸ As for the teachers in the 'old-style' Chinese schools, Victor Purcell had this to say: 'The teacher, as likely as not, combined his profession with that of fortune teller, or geomantic diviner, letter writer, and general learned odd man of the village, and any man who could read and write fluently was considered as fully qualified to teach.'¹⁹ The early Chinese schools may have been far from satisfactory from the point of view of their teachers, the physical facilities, or the outdated classical texts they used as teaching material. However, as the school histories justifiably claim, they provided their students with the *only* opportunity to receive an education, however basic. And it was from these humble beginnings that many schools slowly grew.

In 1904 the first 'new-style' Chinese school in Malaya, the Chung Hwa School, was established in Penang. This was patterned on the new concepts of schooling and education being introduced by modernizing officials in the last two decades of the Qing Dynasty's rule. China's defeat by the British in the Opium Wars of 1839-42 and at the hands of the Japanese in 1895 had spurred attempts by reformers like Zhang Zhidong and Kang Youwei to advocate modernization of its education system. The 'old-style' *sishu* were criticized as outdated both in content and in teaching methods. Modernizers advocated instead a system of 'new-style' schools with proper buildings, trained teachers, regular timetables and all the other features that Chinese reformers thought were part of a modern system. The old teaching texts and Confucian classics were replaced by specially written textbooks and the curriculum was expanded to embrace a spectrum of subjects such as history, geography, science, and even music and physical education. Foreign languages too were included for the first time as part of the school curriculum.²⁰

The founding Constitution of the Chung Hwa School in Penang reflected the characteristics associated with a 'new-style' Chinese school. The school was to teach history, geography, arithmetic, physics, art, and physical education in addition to the Chinese language as well as the more traditional areas of the classics and ethics. The hours to be devoted to each subject were specified. In

addition, the Constitution required that English should be taught as the foreign language most suitable for a school located in a British colony. As a 'new-style' school, the Chung Hwa School was to have its own building which was planned to eventually accommodate 800 students, a distinct breakaway from the small units typical of the *sishu*. Though restricted by limited space in its first year, the school took in 160 students.²¹

Following swiftly in the footsteps of the Chung Hwa School in Penang, 'new-style' schools were set up in other towns having large concentrations of Chinese. For example, the Confucian School was established in Kuala Lumpur in 1906, the Yuk Choy School in Ipoh in 1907, the Pay Fong School in Malacca, and the Foon Yew School in Johore Bahru in 1913. It was in the towns, too, that the establishment of girls' schools began to appear; for example, the Kuen Cheng Girls' School in 1908 in Kuala Lumpur, the Perak Girls' School in 1914 in Ipoh, and the Fukien Girls' School in Penang in 1920. This followed a new emphasis on the importance of education for women which was one of the features in the modernization of China's education system.

The most important factor spurring the growth of Chinese schools in the first two decades of the twentieth century was the increase in the number of children being born in Malaya. The Chinese population on the peninsula, excluding Singapore, doubled from 419,355 in 1901 to 855,863 in 1921.²² The 1911 Census showed that 23.5 per cent of the Chinese living in the Straits Settlements were local born. For the peninsula as a whole, according to T. E. Smith, the 1921 Census indicated that 'the Chinese had already gone some way towards becoming a permanently settled community'. This, Smith argued, was clear from the birth registration records as well as the spread of Chinese settlement outward from the towns into the rural areas as more Chinese engaged in mining and agricultural activities.²³ In 1901, out of a total of 13,339 Chinese children below 15 years of age in the four Federated Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, and Pahang, an estimated 2,000 were enrolled in Chinese schools compared to 600 in English schools.²⁴

The spread of the Chinese population out into the rural areas noted by T. E. Smith was reflected in the establishment of Chinese schools in smaller urban centres, villages, and outlying rural areas. Most of these schools, unlike the 'new-style' institutions being established in the bigger towns had humble beginnings reminiscent of the 'old-style' *sishu*. For example, the Chio Min School in

Kulim, Kedah, began in 1918 with only seven pupils in a shop-house. Similarly, the founders of the Khoon Aik School in Kangar, Perlis, rented a small shophouse to accommodate its first group of students in 1921. The first Chinese school in Sungai Petani, the Sin Min School, started in 1911 with 10 pupils and one teacher in an *atap* house. In Perlis, the Chung Hwa School's first classes were conducted in a three-walled room, measuring 14 feet by 14 feet, with the fourth wall removed to provide the entrance, the exit, and ventilation!²⁵ In Victor Purcell's memoirs, there is an amusing account of how, as Inspector of Chinese Schools in the early 1920s, he tracked down an unregistered school. To get to the school, he had first to row up a river with thickly wooded shores, then 'scrambling out in semi-darkness, [we] bushwacked for an hour or so until we espied a clearing and I heard the unmistakable sound of youthful voices chanting a lesson in unison'.²⁶ In this particular case, the unregistered Chinese school was located in Labuan, then part of the Straits Settlements. Purcell's anecdote illustrates how neighbourhood Chinese schools sprouted up even in the most far-flung and remote settlements.

Slowly, the schools grew as the number of children born in the area and the financial resources of the small communities supporting the school increased. As more pupils enrolled in a school, additional teachers would be employed. When enough money was collected, the school might get its first proper building and as the need arose additional classrooms would be added. Thus, by 1930, the Chio Min School in Kulim had moved into new buildings after a piece of land was bought for the school. Enrolment had by then increased to 70 pupils. In 1926, the Khoon Aik School in Kangar moved into a residential house which was converted to accommodate four classrooms, a school hall, and a teachers' room. The Sin Min School in Sungai Petani benefited from the help of Lim Lian Teng, a wealthy businessman in Penang, who helped the school acquire a two-storey building in 1917. In 1941, five neighbouring shophouses were bought over and converted into classrooms to accommodate the school's enrolment which had grown to 400.²⁷ The same pattern of gradual expansion is described in the histories of most schools, whether big or small, rural or urban. The schools in the bigger towns expanded faster with more impressive buildings and facilities as rich merchants in the towns could afford to contribute much more than local leaders in the small villages.

The colonial government played no role at all in setting up Chinese schools except that the state government of Selangor took

over the running of two Chinese schools in Kuala Lumpur. One had been initiated by Yap Ah Loy, the first Kapitan China in 1884; the second was founded by Kapitan Yap Kwan Seng in 1928.²⁸ These were the only two Chinese schools that provided free education in Chinese at the colonial government's expense. It should be noted, however, that Christian missionaries did help to start some Chinese schools.²⁹

The Intrusion of Politics from China

One feature of the Chinese schools which disturbed the British and resulted in the colonial government taking steps to control the schools was the active participation of teachers and students in China-orientated political activities. This arose from four inter-related factors. First of all, the period from the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century was one of social and political upheaval in China. China's defeat at the hands of invading Western powers as well as Japan spurred the development of modern nationalistic movements. The major events in China's political history, from the overthrow of the Qing Dynasty with the 1911 Revolution through the warlord years to the civil war between the Kuomintang and the Communist Party of China, lie beyond the parameters of this discussion. What is important, in the context of this chapter, is the fact that many of the Chinese living in Malaya, like *huaqiao* or overseas Chinese in the rest of South-East Asia, were swept by patriotic feelings into supporting China's cause. Visiting leaders from China reminded the Chinese in Malaya of their duty to China in her hour of need and detailed reports of happenings in local Chinese newspapers kept the Chinese-educated constantly in touch with the world of China's politics. Teachers and students in the Chinese schools, as an educated group, were especially susceptible to the appeal of *huaqiao* nationalism.³⁰

Secondly, a new intelligentsia had emerged in China as a result of the abolition of the official examinations in 1906, the setting up of modern secondary schools, teacher training colleges, and universities, and the return of large numbers of students who had been sent to study in Western countries as part of China's modernization drive. The younger teachers recruited from China to teach in the Chinese schools in Malaya in the 1920s and 1930s belonged to this new generation. They were critical of traditional values, fired by new social and political ideas, and saw themselves as the vanguard of change and hope. Imbued with idealism and

nationalistic fervour, they sought, in turn, to inspire the same spirit in their students. Teachers and students became enthusiastic participants in political activities.

The May Fourth Incident of 1919, in which students and workers in China staged demonstrations to protest the terms of the Treaty of Versailles which allowed Japan to retain control over the Shandong Peninsula, symbolized the birth of this new intelligentsia. What began as demonstrations against China's humiliation by the Versailles Treaty eventually expanded into an intellectual revolution, the May Fourth Movement, calling for fundamental changes in the entire fabric of China's traditional society. One of the May Fourth Movement's most important legacies was its espousal that colloquial Mandarin (or *baihua*) should become the standard form of the Chinese language to be taught in schools and used in modern literature to make both language and literature more widely and popularly accessible.³¹ In Malaya, Chinese school teachers and pupils were participants in violent anti-Japanese demonstrations in Singapore, Penang, and Kuala Lumpur in June 1919 in support of the May Fourth demonstrations in China. The British were so alarmed that martial law was declared in Singapore and Penang. After June 1919, teachers and students from Chinese schools continued to play a leading role in the demonstrations, protests and fund-raising campaigns that were organized as part of *huaqiao* support for China right up to the eve of the Japanese conquest of the peninsula in 1941.³²

Thirdly, textbooks imported from China were another channel through which a China-orientated political consciousness was filtered to students. This became a problem after the classical texts used in the old-style schools were replaced by the new textbooks of the 1920s and 1930s. The old texts taught literacy through the linguistic idioms of classical Chinese and were bearers of a traditional moral orthodoxy. The new textbooks, written in colloquial Chinese, often came with overtly political content and the intention to inculcate a patriotic and nationalistic fervour. History, geography, and Chinese-language textbooks, for example, included stories about revolutionary heroes or lessons about China's humiliation at the hands of the Western powers. Used in the Malayan context, these textbooks taught political loyalty towards China and anti-imperialism towards Western powers which British officials considered subversive.³³

Fourthly, the Chinese schools became a site for contests between opposing political factions in China because, as Yen Ching-hwang

has explained, the schools 'offered the key to influencing the members of the educated circles, and hence to other sections of society. The schools were able to offer jobs to professional reformists and revolutionaries, and they provided the best cover for their political activities.'³⁴ When Kang Youwei and Sun Yat Sen visited Malaya during the first decade of the twentieth century, they called on their supporters to contribute to China's modernization effort by establishing schools to educate the young. Some of the earliest 'new-style' schools, such as the Chung Hwa School in Penang and the Confucian School in Kuala Lumpur, were affiliated with Kang's reform group. The revolutionary group's influence was seen mainly in night schools for adults as well as in schools established by the *yueshubao she*, reading clubs which were set up as centres for disseminating new political ideas. The reading clubs provided Chinese newspapers and other forms of political literature to keep its members up to date on political events in China. They also served as centres for talks and other political activities.³⁵ Examples of schools founded by reading clubs in Perak were the Yit Chee School in Pusing (1902), the Tat Chai School in Tanjung Rambutan (1910), and the Sin Hwa School in Parit Buntar (1913). Examples in Penang were the Chong Teik School in Balik Pulau (1911), the Chung Shan School in Bayan Lepas (1914), and the Chung Ling School (1917).³⁶

Successive governments in China tried to exert or claim some control over the schools as important links to a younger generation of overseas Chinese. The Qing Court sent several delegations to offer the schools encouragement and support before it was overthrown in 1911. The republic, established after the overthrow of the Qing, went further. Having recognized Chinese living abroad as nationals under the principle of *jus sanguinis*, the republican government also considered the Chinese schools outside China to be an integral part of its education system. Between 1913 and 1917, the central government in Beijing and provincial governments in Fujian and Guangdong sent a number of emissaries to inspect, advise, and regulate the Chinese schools in Malaya. After the Kuomintang (KMT) established a government based in Nanjing in 1927, it issued regulations for the registration of overseas Chinese schools, included them in its 20-year plan for educational development, and sent a succession of delegates to advise and supervise Chinese schools abroad. It also decreed that Sun Yat Sen's political principles, the *San Min Chu I*, which had been adopted as the party ideology, should be taught as part of the

curriculum in all Chinese schools. Several conferences were organized to bring headmasters and teachers from overseas Chinese schools together and persuade them to adhere to KMT policies.³⁷

However, the Nanjing government, like the Republican government and the Qing Court, lacked the financial resources to offer the schools significant assistance. Beset by their own political problems, the governments in China in actual fact exerted little effective control over most of the schools. Above all, they did not have the legal basis to enforce their regulations on schools which were not located within China's borders. The Chinese schools in Malaya came, in fact, under the jurisdiction of the colonial state which ruled the Straits Settlements directly as a British colony and the rest of the peninsula indirectly as Protected Malay States. But until the June 1919 demonstrations, the colonial authorities had not moved to exercise any control over the Chinese schools.

British Colonial Policy: Negative Containment

British policies in Malaya were, in general, guided by the belief that social order was best maintained by keeping the Malay peasantry on the land while confining immigrant labour to work in the mines, plantations, or petty trade in the towns. In the area of education, the colonial government decided that it was necessary to develop a system of schools for Malay children and began to set up Malay primary schools in the Straits Settlements and Malay States soon after British rule began. The education provided in these schools, though free, was extremely rudimentary. In the famous words of a British official, the aim was no more than 'to make the son of a fisherman or peasant a more intelligent fisherman or peasant'.³⁸ No secondary education in Malay was provided and only a small proportion of those who finished their primary schooling in Malay were recruited to be trained as teachers for the primary schools. The Sultan Idris Training College was set up for this purpose in 1921, replacing two earlier and smaller teacher training centres.³⁹

As for the children of Chinese and Indian immigrants, the prevalent British view was that 'it is not the proper policy for the Government to undertake the education of the alien, temporary population in their own languages'.⁴⁰ The responsibility of providing an education to the children of Indian immigrants was shifted to their parents' employers. Employers were required by law to

provide schooling and day-care centres for children of their employees and thus became 'the reluctant custodians of the education of the vast majority of Indian children'.⁴¹ The Chinese immigrants were left largely to their own devices as they showed sufficient interest and initiative in seeing to the education of their children.

A small minority of children living in the Straits Settlements or major towns in the Malay States were able to find places in, or could afford the fees charged by, the few English schools available. Most of the English schools were established by Christian missionary organizations or enthusiastic individuals, including some prominent Chinese leaders.⁴² An élite boarding school, teaching in English and having staff recruited from England, was set up in 1905 to train the scions of the Malay aristocracy for recruitment into the administrative service. The status of the English schools as élite institutions accessible to, and providing mobility for, only a select few was further safeguarded by the colonial government's persistent refusal to meet demands from both Malays and Chinese for more English schools to be established. Colonial officials were generally reluctant to expand English education partially because of the costs involved. But they were also concerned that an excessive supply of English-educated locals who might not be able to find employment could be socially disruptive and politically dangerous.⁴³

The result of these policies was the development of a dualistic system of education in which a small élite was brought together in the English schools while the masses were separated in schools teaching in vernacular languages. The encapsulation of the majority of Malay, Chinese, and Indian children in separate schools sowed the 'seeds of separatism' by socializing the younger generation into different linguistic and cultural traditions. This system of multiple language schools mirrored and exacerbated the characteristics of a plural society in which different ethnic groups lived economically differentiated, politically compartmentalized, and culturally distinct lives.

Until 1920, the development of the Chinese schools had met with little interference, but also no active encouragement or support, from the colonial government. The scale and character of the June 1919 demonstrations and the identification of Chinese school teachers and students amongst their leading participants led the colonial government to take immediate action to try and bring the

Chinese schools under its control. In May 1920, a Bill requiring all schools and teachers to register with the Education Department was introduced in the Straits Settlements Legislative Council. In presenting the Bill which stipulated various regulations governing the running of educational institutions, the Attorney-General explained that the objectives were to ensure that all schools were 'properly conducted', that teachers had been given 'effective training', and that the teaching provided was not 'against the interest of the government of the Colony'.⁴⁴ The main intention, stated explicitly in a confidential dispatch to the Colonial Office, was 'to prevent the teaching of undesirable political doctrines'.⁴⁵ The Bill empowered the government to order the closure of schools which did not comply with its requirements. These included specifications on physical facilities such as sanitation and ventilation. Such regulations were intended to apply to all schools but political control was directed especially at the Chinese schools. The Secretary for Chinese Affairs considered such control to be 'most necessary in the case of the Chinese vernacular schools'.⁴⁶

There was vehement opposition to the Bill from many Chinese school teachers, principals, and community leaders, including Chinese Legislative Councillors. The Chinese feared that the British would use the Bill to arbitrarily close down existing Chinese schools and impede the establishment of new ones. The colonial authorities' attempt to exercise control over the schools was resented because the Chinese felt that the government had no right to control schools which it had neither set up nor supported. Delegations were sent to both London and Beijing to petition against the Bill. This was the first confrontation between the colonial state and leaders of Chinese society over the Chinese schools. Opposition eventually crumbled when the colonial government remained firm in its determination to implement the Bill. Similar legislation was promulgated for the Federated Malay States in 1921 and the Registration of Schools Ordinance subsequently underwent several rounds of amendments to increase the colonial authorities' powers over the schools. As a palliative, but also to draw the Chinese schools within the web of official inspections and control, a system of grants-in-aid for the Chinese schools was introduced in 1923.⁴⁷

The registration and supervision of the Chinese schools came under an Assistant Director of Education who functioned, not as part of the Department of Education, but as part of the Chinese

Protectorate which dealt with Chinese Affairs. Purcell's description of his job as an Inspector of Chinese Schools indicates that the British were interested mainly in political control over the schools:

My job, it cannot be denied, was in essence police work. It entailed interference with the liberty of the subject to teach what he liked, to read what he liked, and to learn what he liked. Certainly, when necessary, we did not hesitate to use our powers of cancelling a teacher's certificate, withholding a grant-in-aid, or closing down a school, and even, in many cases, returning a teacher to the country of his birth (regarded as the severest of all penalties).⁴⁸

Political vigilance did lead to the closure of a few schools each year and the expulsion of some teachers during periods of more intense political activity. But the implementation of the Bill did not lead, as some Chinese had feared, to the elimination of the Chinese schools. Neither, however, did the colonial government keep its pledge that the Bill would be used to improve the Chinese schools. Measures to assist in the training of teachers, or in the compilation of textbooks suitable for local needs and to make improvements in their curriculum were, according to one study, 'half-heartedly undertaken and usually after long procrastination'.⁴⁹ The grants-in-aid for the Chinese schools were given at levels far below those provided to the English schools. For example, in 1929, Chinese schools in the Federated Malay States received aid at the rate of \$9.78 per pupil compared with the rates of \$54.00 and \$87.50 per pupil paid to aided and government English schools respectively.⁵⁰

The implementation of the 1920 Bill did not induce the Chinese schools to become more local or Malayan in their orientation.⁵¹ It did, however, force those in charge of the schools to recognize the authority of the colonial state. The threat of closure of a school and deregistration or banishment of teachers did force those inclined to political activities to be more circumspect or restrained. On the part of the colonial government, officials began to realize 'that political control brought with it some very definite educational responsibilities'.⁵² But there was little agreement amongst colonial officials on what the government's policy should be with regard to the education of the children of Chinese migrants. Some officials favoured a policy of encouraging the Chinese to move to English schools. Others thought that the government should force both Chinese and Indian immigrants to accept Malay education. The latter policy was advocated by Sir Cecil Clementi during his tenure

as Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner of the Malay States between 1929 and 1934. In line with this policy, harsher and more discriminatory actions were taken against the Chinese schools. The government stopped further increases in aid to the Chinese and Tamil schools in 1932. Though this restriction did not apply to the English schools, fees were increased to make an English education more prohibitive. In addition, Clementi also took more stringent measures to curb political activities amongst the Chinese. The KMT was banned and so were textbooks containing KMT propaganda. Surveillance over the schools was increased by employing more Inspectors of Chinese Schools.⁵³

Clementi's policies were unpopular with Straits Chinese who wanted more English education for their children and alienated those Chinese who wanted their children to be educated in their own language. After Clementi retired in 1934, a reappraisal of policy took place under his successor, Sir Shenton Thomas. The response to Clementi's policy had shown that it was unrealistic to force the Chinese to go to Malay schools which provided an education which had little utilitarian value in colonial Malaya. The Secretary for Chinese Affairs of the Straits Settlements advocated that the government should 'try to wean the Chinese from vernacular education to English education'.⁵⁴ But this policy was not carried out as the colonial government was not prepared to meet the costs. In a confidential memorandum, dated 1938, A. Keir, the Director of Education of the Straits Settlements, estimated that the costs of implementing a policy of providing free elementary English education for Chinese children alone would amount to \$9 million. The policy would, of course, have to be extended to children of other ethnic groups. This would cost \$16 million! Keir, therefore, suggested cheaper alternatives such as increasing facilities for afternoon classes in English schools and persuading Chinese schools to change over to the English medium.⁵⁵ It is significant that colonial officials had begun to think of 'converting' Chinese schools into English schools at this stage.

Thomas decided that the government should start by adopting 'a policy which would assist significantly the financing of Chinese education to enable constructive innovations to be undertaken under the supervision of the Education Department'.⁵⁶ In line with this policy, government aid to the Chinese schools increased after 1935. The government also began to play a role in co-ordinating the Chinese schools and helping them to improve their educational standards. Teacher training classes in Chinese schools were sub-

sized to help build up a supply of locally trained teachers. In 1935 the government took over the running of common examinations for students in the final year of primary and the third year of secondary schools. These examinations had been initiated in 1931 by the Hokkien Hoay Kuan of Singapore to institute some uniformity in standard amongst the Chinese schools. A committee, with representatives from major Chinese schools, was set up in 1939 to start drawing up a curriculum for Chinese primary schools which would be more suitable to the Malayan context.⁵⁷

Though these were all steps in a more positive direction, they were insufficient and came too late to effect significant changes. Total grants to Chinese schools in the Federated Malay States did increase from \$128,209 in 1935 to \$342,369 in 1938. But spread out over an additional 161 schools and 31,247 more pupils, the per capita rate of aid in fact declined from more than \$7 per pupil to \$6.74 each (Table 1.1). In the Straits Settlements, in 1938, the government paid an average of \$65.42 towards the cost of each pupil studying in government or aided English schools whereas it was paying only \$7.47 per pupil in aided Chinese schools.⁵⁸ Thus the increased aid was insufficient to help the Chinese schools to upgrade their facilities or raise the standard of teaching. The attempt to start

TABLE 1.1
Government Aid to Chinese Schools in the Federated Malay States,
1924-1938

Year	Total Grants to Chinese Schools (\$)	Total Federal Expenditure (\$ million)	% of Total Expenditure
1924	33,000	2.02	1.6
1925	39,000	2.29	1.7
1927	48,000	2.70	1.8
1928	56,000	2.97	1.9
1929	74,000	2.29	3.2
1930	78,000	2.42	3.2
1932	81,000	2.93	2.8
1933	78,000	2.65	2.9
1935	80,000	2.67	3.0
1937	158,000	3.77	4.2
1938	195,000	3.80	5.1

Source: Philip Loh Fook Seng, *Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874-1940*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975, p. 93.

on a local curriculum came too late to have significant effect before British rule was abruptly ended in 1941 by the Japanese invasion.

Throughout the 1930s, colonial officials continued to be more concerned with the problem of teachers and students participating in China-centred political issues. These fluctuated between years of relative quiet, for example between 1932 and 1935, and intense activities during the dramatic climaxing of *huaqiao* nationalism after 1937 when the Japanese invasion of China began. The colonial government's attitude towards such activities was *ad hoc* and ambivalent. It vacillated between alarm when these had an anti-colonial or anti-British tone and tolerance when British interests were not threatened.⁵⁹

In general, though the Chinese schools were frequently accused of instilling a China-orientated political consciousness in their pupils, colonial policies did not assist them to become schools which could produce young Chinese who were Malayan in their thinking and outlook. This was related to a basic problem that remained unresolved throughout the pre-war years. What was the legal and political status of the growing population of non-Malays which had already outnumbered the Malay population in several states by the 1930s? This and the unification of the peninsula into a single political and administrative unit were issues which the British tried to resolve with new constitutional proposals when they returned to rule Malaya after the Japanese surrender in August 1945.

Chinese Schools in the 1930s: Growing Pains

By the 1930s, according to T. E. Smith, the majority of the Chinese population in Malaya were no longer 'mere sojourners'. Restrictions on male immigration and fewer constraints on entry for Chinese women immigrants led to a more balanced sex ratio which in turn saw an increasing number of children being born locally (Tables 1.2 and 1.3). With this demographic change, the Chinese population had become clearly settled in nature. As T. E. Smith observed, though repatriation to their country of origin at government expense was offered to Chinese workers during the depression years, 'the great majority of the Chinese population endured the depression years in Malaya'.⁶⁰

The growing number of children led to more Chinese schools being established throughout the 1930s. Table 1.4 shows the

TABLE 1.2

Sex Ratio of Chinese Population in Peninsular Malaysia, 1911-1957

Year	Females per 1,000 Males
1911	215
1921	371
1931	486
1947	815
1957	926

Source: Charles Hirschman, *Ethnic and Social Stratification in Peninsular Malaysia*, Washington: American Sociological Association, 1974, p. 12.

steady increase in the number of Chinese schools registered with the government from the early 1920s, when registration was enforced, up to 1938, the last year for which official figures are available before the Japanese invasion. In 1931, the *Annual Report on Education* reported that 'there are facilities for the primary vernacular education of Chinese boys in all villages of any size and schools of 20 or even fewer students are maintained by the Chinese community so that no one may be denied instruction' (p. 26). By 1938, the Chinese schools were the largest component of the education system of Malaya. At a total of 996 schools, there were more Chinese schools, catering for more students and employing more teachers than the Malay, English, or Tamil schools (Table 1.5).

The colonial government's political surveillance over the Chinese schools did not prevent more schools from being established because the basic motive for them was cultural and educational, not political. Yung Yuet Ling's study has documented how an enthusiasm for education led many Chinese to contribute to the

TABLE 1.3

Percentage of Chinese Population Born in Peninsular Malaysia, Including Singapore, 1921-1957

Year	% of Total Chinese Population
1921	20.9
1931	29.9
1947	63.5
1957	75.5

Source: As for Table 1.2, p. 10.

TABLE 1.4
Chinese Schools, Pupils, and Teachers in the Straits Settlements
and the Federated Malay States, 1921-1938

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
1921	252	n.a.	589
1922	391	n.a.	980
1923	537	n.a.	1,362
1924	564	27,476	1,257
1925	643	33,662	1,390
1926	657	36,380	1,493
1927	665	40,760	1,637
1928	696	43,961	1,806
1929	711	46,911	1,900
1930	716	46,367	1,980
1931	657	39,662	1,867
1932	669	41,858	1,929
1933	731	47,123	2,021
1934	766	54,618	2,371
1935	824	62,014	2,730
1936	860	70,483	3,058
1937	933	79,993	3,415
1938	1,015	91,534	3,985

Source: Yung Yuet Ling, 'The Contributions of the Chinese to Education in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, 1900-1941', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1967, pp. 72-3.

TABLE 1.5
Primary Schools, Pupils, and Teachers in Malaya, 1938

<i>Medium</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
Malay	788	56,904	2,810
English	271	41,917	2,350
Chinese	996	86,147	3,556
Tamil	607	26,271	864

Source: Malaysia, Ministry of Education, EPRD, *Educational Statistics of Malaysia, 1938-1967*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1968, Tables 4-11, 20, 21, 24, and 25.

Note: The total number of Chinese schools provided in this source differs from that of Table 1.4.

development of English schools both in the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States.⁶¹ However, as she rightly pointed out, it was the Chinese schools which attracted far more enthusiasm and support, not only from wealthy Chinese but also from 'countless people of ordinary means'. Most of the people who invested their time, money, and energy in founding and running Chinese schools were, as Yung suggested, motivated by a simple pride in their culture and the desire to have their children educated in their own language and culture. As migrants 'living in a foreign country where they were treated as aliens', Yung observed further, 'the Chinese were eager to establish at least a cultural link with the land of their origin'.⁶² Such sentiments can be found in the histories of most of the schools.

Yung is also right in pointing out that the Chinese schools were not looked upon as commercial or profit-making ventures but were in effect public community projects.⁶³ They are usually referred to in Chinese as *minban xuexiao*, literally schools run by the people. As *minban xuexiao*, the biggest problem the Chinese schools faced was a constant struggle to make ends meet. Fees charged by the schools before the war varied from 50 cents to \$2.00 for students in primary classes with secondary students paying between \$2.00 and \$10.00. However, children from poor families were often charged lower fees or exempted from payment.⁶⁴ The schools had to devise various ways to meet a constant deficit between income and expenditure. Apart from running costs, the money for physical facilities such as buildings or equipment always had to be raised because aid from the government, even where available, never covered capital expenditure. Teachers and headmasters too were often required to help in raising money for their schools, a duty which some resented. Sometimes teachers went without pay while the school's sponsors desperately went around raising money to replenish the school's depleted coffers.⁶⁵ It was not unusual to find in the school histories that the school had to close temporarily for a year or two due to financial difficulties. During the depression years of the 1930s, the number of schools registered with the government dropped from 716 in 1930 to 657 in 1931, recovering slightly in 1932 with a total of 669 (see Table 1.4).

Money to keep the schools going was raised through annual donations, collection of monthly dues, or special fund-raising campaigns. In the Unfederated Malay States where Chinese schools did not receive any government aid until after the Second World

War, money was sometimes collected through 'taxes' on local products or trading activities. Some schools in Johore, for example, were supported by rubber or rice dealers' associations which collected a cess from their members for the schools. In Kelantan and Trengganu, two Malay states with smaller Chinese populations, many schools were launched with small initial collections of around \$700 to \$900 which were then bolstered by collections of monthly dues. Two particularly interesting cases are the Yuk Tsee School in Tumpat and the Kwong Hua School in Dungun. The Yuk Tsee School began with an enrolment of 30 pupils under the charge of a single teacher in two houses donated by a Fee Heng Chang in 1916. No fees were charged because a tax levied on import and export of goods in the town was sufficient to cover the running of the school. The Kwong Hua School, faced with an increasing enrolment and no proper school buildings, sent a group of representatives to Singapore to collect money for the school's building fund in 1936. The \$20,000 raised was used to buy a piece of land and construct a two-storey building.⁶⁶

How a school fared depended very much on the character of the individuals who were involved in setting up and running the school. The biggest financial contributors automatically became benefactors of the school and usually also became *dongshi* or members of the school board as well. In the bigger schools, *dongshi* were elected at biennial meetings of all benefactors of the school. The *dongshi* would then constitute the Management Committee (MC) or if the number of *dongshi* was too big, they would elect from amongst themselves a smaller group, that varied from 8 to 15 persons, to occupy the positions of chairman, vice-chairman, secretary, treasurer, and committee members.

In Chinese society, successful businessmen who aspired to be leaders would usually contribute handsomely to the welfare of their community. Making contributions to Chinese schools was an important part of such philanthropic activities. To be a *dongshi* definitely enhanced a man's social status and, for wealthy Chinese, sitting on the boards of several schools was one way of extending one's web of influence, patronage, and power. Whatever the rewards of being a member of the MC of a school, it meant bearing the ultimate responsibility, socially and morally, of always finding the resources to keep the school going. This meant being prepared to dip into one's pockets as well as going round to pressure one's friends or peers into parting with their money. Of course, there were limits beyond which local leaders could not or were not prepared to go. These limits became more apparent in the 1950s when the

costs of upkeeping the schools became more formidable as the schools grew in number and in size and teachers expected more pay.

Being a member of the MC also involved time and energy as the MC not only made most of the major decisions for the school but was responsible also for the hiring and firing of its principal and teachers. The livelihood of the principals and staff of Chinese schools rested in the hands of the MC. Teachers who incurred the displeasure of influential members of the MC could sometimes lose their jobs. Some MCs were happy just to take care of the financial aspects, leaving pedagogic matters and the actual running of the school to the principal. At the other extreme, there were a few individuals who treated the school almost as their fiefdom, imposing their control over all aspects of the school.

Schools could sometimes suffer because of petty disputes within the MC. For example, construction plans for the Yu Chai School in Kuala Krai, Kelantan, were held up for three years, from 1932 to 1935, because the MC could not agree whether brick or wood should be used for the new buildings! As a result, the school continued to operate in two rented plank houses and lost out on government aid offered on condition that the school was housed in proper buildings. Another school in Kelantan, the Yok Eng School in Pasir Mas, closed for a year in 1934 because of trouble amongst its committee members. The school was reopened the following year when it was presented with a piece of land but disagreement within the committee surfaced again in 1938. This time the headmaster decided to run the school without a committee until 1941 when a group of prominent Chinese in the town managed to get a new committee together. There were, on the other hand, examples of members of MCs who sometimes volunteered to carry out the duties of the headmaster temporarily or even to teach for a while when the school found itself without the necessary staff.⁶⁷

By the 1930s the Chinese schools had undergone some changes. The old-style *sishu* with its unstructured classes had by and large been replaced by a system of six years of primary education followed by another six years of secondary education, divided into three years of Junior Middle and another three years of Senior Middle classes. Most of the Chinese schools in Malaya, following China, had also switched from teaching in the provincial dialects to using Mandarin or Kuo Yu, as it was then known, as the medium of instruction. However, the MCs of the Chinese schools, made up mostly of businessmen who had received only a few years of education and sometimes none at all, were not able to address a fundamental problem faced by the schools. The schools remained in

many ways transplants of a system that had its origins in China but they were educating a generation of locally born children who were likely to continue living in Malaya.

Through their textbooks and teachers, the Chinese schools in Malaya continued to inculcate a China orientation amongst their students. From 1928 the colonial government began to ban books that contained political messages offensive from the British point of view. These measures purged the textbooks of blatant KMT propaganda and anti-imperialistic messages, but students still continued to learn more about China and little or nothing about Malaya from them.⁶⁸ In 1932 two major publishers in China began to produce special editions of textbooks for use in Chinese schools outside China.⁶⁹ But there was no move as yet to produce textbooks in Malaya with a Malayan perspective.

Even after 1945 the colonial government's main concern was to expunge Chinese school textbooks of political propaganda. In 1948 a Chinese Education Technical Advisory Committee, comprising officials from the Education Department and some teachers and headmasters of Chinese schools, was appointed to vet textbooks used in Chinese schools. A report on the work of this committee showed that it spent most of its time trying to reduce China-orientated content through *ad hoc* measures such as 'deleting unsuitable sections and substituting in their place others considered more suitable for children in Malaya'. The results were often bizarre as publishers tried to salvage their products simply by blocking out offending sentences or sections and pasting in substitutes. The committee acknowledged that such piece-meal scissors and paste work was no more than a 'temporary expedient'.⁷⁰ The need for textbooks specially written for the Chinese schools in Malaya was one of the reasons for appointing the Fenn-Wu Committee in 1950.

Annual Reports on Education in the 1930s continued to note that the vast majority of staff in Chinese schools were recruited from China. Social and political upheaval led many educated men and women to flee China and seek jobs in Malaya, amongst other places. Local supply of teachers was very limited for several reasons. Up to 1938 there were only 36 schools which had secondary classes and the total enrolment in these classes totalled just 3,200. This was a relatively small pool from which to draw recruits to teach in the 996 Chinese primary schools operating then.⁷¹ Teacher training facilities were extremely limited. Only a handful of secondary schools conducted what were known as 'normal

classes'.⁷² For three years, trainees in such classes would spend a few hours in the morning observing or conducting classes themselves while attending lectures in the afternoons. They would then spend another two years teaching under observation after which those who were found to be satisfactory would be awarded a teaching certificate. Trainees for Junior Normal Classes were recruited after they finished six years of primary education while those for Senior Normal Classes came from those who had finished three years of Junior Middle secondary schooling. The government had done little to assist in training teachers for the Chinese schools. Between 1926 and 1932, the Education Department ran some normal classes which produced a handful of graduates. After 1935 it confined itself to subsidizing some of the normal classes conducted by the Chinese schools.⁷³ As a result, up to 1948, according to H. R. Cheeseman, the first post-war Director of Education, 50 per cent of Chinese school teachers still came from China.⁷⁴

A memorandum written in 1948 by G. Webb and supported by W. L. Blythe, two senior officers who had served in the Chinese Protectorate before the war, revealed that officers dealing with Chinese Affairs had advocated for many years that the government should start a training college to produce locally trained teachers for the Chinese schools. Webb argued that the Chinese schools were 'the strongest link in the chain of connection with China' because their teachers who came from China continued to have strong loyalties to China. This, said Webb, was 'the root of the matter' and 'we have done practically nothing to stop it'. But the colonial government took no action. The British began to consider a college to train teachers for the Chinese schools only in 1948. This, Webb commented, was 'starting at least twenty years too late'.⁷⁵

Post-war Recovery: Old Problems, New Challenges

The years of the Japanese Occupation from February 1942 to August 1945 were years of destruction and despair for the Chinese schools. Many school buildings, furniture, and equipment were damaged or destroyed while school records, books, and documents were burnt.⁷⁶ Throughout the Occupation, the use of Chinese as a medium of instruction was prohibited and from March 1944 teaching Chinese as a language too was forbidden. Under these restrictions, most Chinese schools remained closed. The few which opened functioned, in effect, as Japanese schools. This was part of a Japanese policy to 'Nipponize' the local population.⁷⁷

As soon as the Occupation ended, there was a rush to open the schools to accommodate the thousands of young Chinese anxious to make up for lost time during the war years. The 1946 *Annual Report on Education* reported that enrolment in the Chinese schools increased monthly and by March 1946, barely six months after the Japanese left, had already passed the 1941 enrolment. Another six months later, enrolment had reached 172,000. This represented an increase of 55 per cent over 1941 figures.⁷⁸ The money and energy for the post-war recovery came entirely from the Chinese themselves. Of the 1,105 Chinese schools existing in 1946, 90 per cent were public schools managed by 'properly constituted committees'. There were just 27 mission schools and the government remained responsible only for the two schools in Kuala Lumpur.⁷⁹ These two schools remained the only Chinese schools totally supported by the colonial government. In a confidential report on the Chinese schools dispatched to the Colonial Office in 1955, the High Commissioner of the Federation explained that

government was not in a position to meet all the educational needs of post-war Malaya and the new insistent demand for education on the part of the Malays absorbed a great part of the resources available. The Chinese, still left largely to their own resources, recognized the serious position which was facing their children, and money was forthcoming to finance a further rapid expansion of vernacular schools.⁸⁰

The demand for schooling continued unabated for the next decade. The first post-war census in 1947 showed that the proportion of local-born Chinese had increased to 62.5 per cent in comparison to the 29.1 per cent indicated in the 1931 census. By the 1957 census, 74.4 per cent of the Chinese population was local-born. The number of Chinese children below the age of fifteen rose from 747,452 in 1947 to 1,129,926 (Table 1.6). Enrolment in Chinese schools increased from 193,340 in 1947 to 391,667 in 1957. There was no dramatic increase in the total number of schools which remained around the maximum of slightly over 1,300 schools (Table 1.7). This was probably because there were many instances of schools amalgamating to pool their resources after the war. Movement of population during and after the Occupation required new schools to be set up. Thus the total number of schools remained relatively stable though their enrolments increased. The relocation of large numbers of rural Chinese in New Villages during the Emergency resulted in old schools being relocated and some new schools being established.⁸¹ Perak had 129 New Villages, the highest number in any single

TABLE 1.6
Chinese Children below Fifteen Years of Age in Malaya, 1921-1957

Year	No. of Chinese Children below 15
1921	230,211
1931	434,021
1947	747,452
1957	1,129,926

Sources: 1921: J. E. Nathan, *The Census of British Malaya, 1921*, London: Waterflow and Sons, 1922.

1931: C. A. Vlieland, *British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census*, Westminster: Crown Agents for the Colonies, 1932.

1947: M. V. Del Tufo, *Report on the 1947 Census of Population: Malaya Comprising the Federation of Malaya and the Colony of Singapore*, Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, Federation of Malaya, 1949.

1957: H. Fell, *1957 Population Census of the Federation of Malaya*, Report No. 14, Kuala Lumpur: Department of Statistics, Federation of Malaya, 1960.

state, and contained 36 per cent of the total New Village population in Malaya.⁸² As a result, 41 new schools were founded in Perak in the 1950s.⁸³

The most notable feature of the 1950s is the growth of Chinese

TABLE 1.7
Chinese Schools, Pupils, and Teachers in Malaya, 1946-1957

Year	No. of Schools	Pupils	Teachers
1946	1,105	172,101	4,513
1947	1,338	193,340	5,293
1948	1,364	189,230	5,337
1949	1,338	202,769	5,493
1950	1,319	216,465	6,240
1951	1,171	206,343	6,369
1952	1,203	239,356	6,057
1953	1,214	250,881	6,748
1954	1,236	252,312	7,035
1955	1,276	277,454	7,606
1956	1,325	320,168	8,345
1957	1,347	391,667	9,663

Sources: MU, *Annual Report on Education*, 1946 and 1947; FM, *Annual Report on Education*, 1948-57.

secondary education. In 1946 there were only 15 Chinese schools with secondary classes. The total secondary enrolment was just 4,508 pupils. By 1957 this had increased more than tenfold to 49,536. The number of Chinese secondary schools had jumped to 60 and teachers employed in them had also increased tenfold from 194 in 1946 to 1,060 in 1957 (Table 1.8). Several factors may be identified as contributing to this growth. Some of the demand came from the young Chinese whose education was interrupted by the Japanese Occupation. The increase in primary school enrolments from 1945 to 1950 would have further contributed to the numbers seeking secondary education in the 1950s. While before the war it was possible to send older children to China to continue their schooling, this was no longer possible after the Communist victory in China in 1949. There was thus a greater demand for secondary education to be available locally.

Finally, it is important to note that the increased demand for secondary education was part of a sea change in attitude towards education. The Chief Education Officer of Malacca captured this very well when he observed in his 1955 Annual Report that

from being something that was frequently regarded with indifference by many parents before the war, when all who wanted it could obtain it, education, since 1945, has come to be looked upon as a *sine qua non* in the lives of young and old alike. Interest in education has increased one

TABLE 1.8
Chinese Primary Schools, Pupils, and Teachers in Malaya,
1946-1957

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
1946	1,004	158,037	4,064
1947	1,379	190,349	5,179
1948	1,362	185,670	5,328
1949	1,336	198,126	5,348
1950	1,317	210,336	5,865
1951	1,168	198,840	5,942
1952	1,199	227,803	5,565
1953	1,211	236,041	6,282
1954	1,231	232,818	6,458
1955	1,265	255,158	6,642
1956	1,311	279,549	7,380
1957	1,333	342,194	8,521

Sources: As for Table 1.7.

hundred-fold because more and more people have come to realise its value as the key to advancement in life. Parents have suddenly realised that education will help their children to obtain good jobs with high salaries and they have therefore become anxious that their children should be educated in order that they may eventually enjoy the material benefits which education will bring them.⁸⁴

Education, in other words, was very much desired for its economic value. The Chinese schools which had played an important role in providing an education in the mother tongue would also have to meet this newer challenge; an education in Chinese must also lead to better jobs and higher education facilities. The issue of examinations and qualifications became a critical issue for the Chinese secondary schools in the 1950s.

The proposal to establish a Chinese university, mooted by Tan Lark Sye in Singapore in January 1953, was a response to the general demand for higher education from Chinese society. The establishment of the Nanyang University was intended specifically to provide Chinese school graduates with an accessible outlet for higher education. Universities in China had become inaccessible after 1949. The University of Malaya, established in 1949, required proficiency in English and qualifications such as the

TABLE 1.9
Chinese Secondary Schools, Pupils, and Teachers in Malaya,
1946-1957

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Schools</i>	<i>Pupils</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
1946	15	4,508	194
1947	22	3,194	201
1948	21	3,474	220
1949	27	4,450	265
1950	32	6,159	380
1951	38	7,503	426
1952	40	11,378	462
1953	46	14,840	455
1954	53	18,306	503
1955	55	23,397	964
1956	70	40,330	1,037
1957	60	49,536	1,060

Sources: As for Table 1.7.

Note: Number of schools includes both institutions in which secondary classes were conducted and institutions which were separate secondary schools.

Cambridge School Certificate for admission. These were not within the reach of most Chinese secondary school students. There was a clear need for an alternative institution for the thousands of young Chinese coming out from the Chinese schools in the Federation and in Singapore.

The response to the Nanyang University proposal was so enthusiastic that within six months, in July 1953, the land for the proposed university had been bought and the foundation stone was laid. In March 1956 the Nanyang University took in its first batch of students. Though the biggest contributor was Tan Lark Sye himself, support for the university came from a wide spectrum of Chinese from trishaw riders and taxi drivers to businessmen.⁸⁵ As H. E. Wilson commented in his study of education in Singapore, the establishment of the Nanyang University was a good example of how 'the Chinese community characteristically decided to meet its needs on its own initiative and out of its own resources'.⁸⁶ With the opening of the Nanyang University in March 1956, it was possible to have an education in the Chinese language from the primary level to the university level.

Until 1950, the Chinese schools had been patterned on models of education drawn from China with teachers and textbooks imported from China. In the context of post-war constitutional and political changes, the Chinese living in Malaya had to define a new political identity for themselves as Malayan citizens. In such a context, China-orientated schools for Chinese children were, more than ever before, an anomaly. Schools which perpetuated the links of young Chinese to China were not acceptable. It was no longer enough that the schools filled a need neglected by the government. The Chinese schools' future existence would have to be premised on their ability to educate young Chinese to be future citizens of Malaya. This was the challenge that those responsible for the schools had to take up in 1951.

1. Francis Light, 'Notices of Pinang', *Journal of the Indian Archipelago*, 5 (1850): 9, as cited in Lee Ting Hui @ Lee Ah Chai, 'Policies and Politics in Chinese Schools in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, 1786-1941', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1957, p. 1.

2. William Milne, *Protestant Mission to China*, Malacca, 1820, p. 151, as cited in Lee Ting Hui, 'Policies and Politics in Chinese Schools', p. 1.

3. Kuang Guoxiang, 'Liushi nian lai Bincheng Huaxiao shihua', *Shizhong*

Xuexiao sishi zhounian jinian tekan, Hong Kong, 1954, p. 71. Kuang, however, provides no evidence in support of this date. In another article, Kuang stated that the date on one of the pillars in the *Wufu Shuyuan* indicates that the building was put up in 1863. See his 'Bincheng Wufu Shuyuan yu Zheng Jinggui', *SPJP*, 3 October 1951. I would like to thank Tan Kim Hong of International College Penang for these two sources.

4. In historical surveys of the pre-war period, Malaya conventionally includes Singapore, which together with Penang and Malacca formed the Straits Settlements, an administrative unit created by the British in 1826. Reverend Thomson's report that there were two Cantonese schools, one at Kampong Glam of twelve boys, the other at Pekin Street of eight boys, and a Hokkien school at Pekin Street with twenty-two boys is cited in Charles Burton Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore, 1819-1867*, first published 1902; Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965, p. 206. It is also mentioned in Song Ong Siang, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, first published 1923; Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967, p. 26.

5. From the 1884 Annual Report of the Straits Settlements, as cited in Lee Ting Hui, 'Policies and Politics in Chinese Schools', p. 1.

6. Tan worked for some years as an Inspector of Chinese Schools of the Straits Settlements before resigning in 1939 to work in a firm publishing books for Chinese schools. His writings on Chinese education, published in various places in the 1950s and 1960s, were collected together with the rest of his other writings in *Yeyinguan Wencun*, published in three volumes in 1984 by the South Seas Society. A supplementary fourth volume was added in 1987. As the original versions are now difficult to locate, citations from Tan's work will refer to the *Yeyinguan Wencun*.

7. See text of the plaque in Tan Yeok Seong, *Yeyinguan Wencun*, Vol. 2, pp. 307-9.

8. See texts of plaque marking the foundation of the *Cuiying Shuyuan* and the founding Constitution of the *Nanhua Yixue*, in *Yeyinguan Wencun*, Vol. 2, pp. 223-6.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 223.

10. Rule 6 of the *Nanhua Yixue* Constitution in *ibid.*, p. 225.

11. *Yeyinguan Wencun*, Vol. 2, pp. 223, 224-6, and 307-8.

12. The following discussion is drawn from Chen Dongyuan, *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi*, first published in 1936; Taipei: Taiwan Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1966; Sally Borthwick, *Education and Social Change in China: The Beginnings of the Modern Era*, Stanford: Hoover Institute Press, 1983; and Evelyn Sakakida Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy in Ch'ing China*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1979.

13. See Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, Ch. 1, for definition of functional literacy and discussion on the many ways in which ordinary people needed to be minimally literate in Qing China.

14. Borthwick, *Education and Social Change*; Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*; and Chen Dongyuan, *Zhongguo jiaoyu shi* all have descriptions of the curriculum and teaching methods of old-style Chinese schools. Chen includes an account by well-known twentieth-century writer, Hu Shih, of his early education in a *sishu*. See also Victor Purcell, *Problems of Chinese Education*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench and Truber, 1936.

15. Borthwick, *Education and Social Change*, p. 25, estimates that up to

40 per cent of males in Qing China would have attended a neighbourhood school. Rawski, *Education and Popular Literacy*, Chs. 1 and 4 have more extended discussions. She estimates that generally 30–45 per cent male Chinese were functionally literate during the late Qing years but the southern province of Guangdong probably had higher rates of literacy at 40–50 per cent with rates possibly reaching 80 per cent in urban centres such as Canton.

16. These examples were selected from the histories of 66 Chinese schools in Penang in Lin Youyu (comp.), *Malaxiya Huaxiao Guominxing Zhongxiaoxue rexin jiaoyu renshi daquan*, Penang: Lin Youyu, 1982.

17. Apart from Lin Youyu, above, other compilations of school histories used for this study are Wang Zhiyuan (ed.), *Malaiya Huaxiao quanmao*, Penang: Wang Aiyang, 1961 and Tay Lian-soo and Gwee Yee Hean (eds.), *Malaxiya Xinjiapo Huawen Zhongxue tekan tyyao fu xiaoshi*, Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Pengajian Tionghua Universiti Malaya, 1975. School publications were also used. These are listed in the Bibliography.

18. Xu Suwo, *Xinjiapo huaqiao jiaoyu quanmao*, Singapore: Cultural Books Co., 1950, p. 18.

19. Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, first published 1948; Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 228.

20. See Borthwick, *Education and Social Change*, for an interesting discussion of the different stages in the modernization of China's education system.

21. See the transcript of the school Constitution and Tan Yeok Seong's account of the early history of the school in *Yeyinguan Wencun*, Vol. 2, pp. 260–70.

22. Cheng Lim Keak, 'Growth, Structure and Spatial Pattern of the Chinese Population in Peninsular Malaysia, 1750–1980', Paper presented at the Chinese in Malaysia Workshop, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1993.

23. T. E. Smith, 'Immigration and Permanent Settlement of Chinese and Indians in Malaya: And the Future Growth of the Malay and Chinese Communities', in C. D. Cowan (ed.), *The Economic Development of South-East Asia*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1965, pp. 174–85.

24. See Philip Loh Fook Seng, *Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874–1940*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975, pp. 37–9.

25. Director of Education File 69/51, 'History of Chinese Vernacular Schools in Malaya', ANM. This file contained short histories of some Chinese schools in Kedah, Negri Sembilan, Johore, Kelantan, and Trengganu.

26. Victor Purcell, *Memoirs of a Malayan Official*, London: Cassell, 1965, p. 159.

27. Director of Education File 69/51, ANM.

28. The first school is mentioned in Yung Yuet Ling, 'The Contributions of the Chinese to Education in the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, 1900–1941', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1967, p. 22. For the history of the second school, see Lin Youyu, *Malaxiya Huaxiao*, p. V71.

29. This is mentioned in Lee Ting Hui, 'Policies and Politics in Chinese Schools' and Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese'. Examples were also found in the sources cited in nn. 16 and 17 above.

30. For a succinct discussion of *huaqiao* nationalism, see Wang Gungwu, 'The Limits of Nanyang Chinese Nationalism, 1912–1937', first published 1976; reprinted in his *Community and Nation: China, South-East Asia and Australia*, St Leonards, NSW: ASAA in association with Allen and Unwin, 1992, pp. 40–58. For more detailed discussions, see Stephen Leong Mun Loong, 'Sources, Agencies and Manifestations of Overseas Chinese Nationalism in Malaya, 1937–1941', Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1976 and Akashi Yoji, *The*

Nanyang Chinese National Salvation Movement 1937-1941, Kansas: University of Kansas Centre for East Asian Studies, 1970.

31. The seminal work in English on the May Fourth Movement is Chow Tse-tsung's *The May Fourth Movement: Intellectual Revolution in Modern China*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1960.

32. See Khoo Kay Kim, 'The Beginnings of Political Extremism in Malaya', Ph.D. thesis, University of Malaya, 1973, pp. 135-42; Stephen Leong, 'Sources, Agencies and Manifestations', pp. 63-72 and Lee Ting Hui, 'Policies and Politics in Chinese Schools', pp. 76-83 for descriptions of the June 1919 demonstrations. Both Leong and Lee also discuss the involvement of Chinese school teachers and students in subsequent phases of *huaqiao* nationalism.

33. See Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', pp. 174-90 and Ong Yen Her, 'Politics of Chinese Education in Singapore during the Colonial Period', M.Soc.Sc. thesis, University of Singapore, 1974, Ch. 2, for discussions of the political content in Chinese school textbooks.

34. Yen Ching-hwang, *The Overseas Chinese and the 1911 Revolution: With Special Reference to Singapore and Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976, p. 156.

35. See *ibid.*, Ch. 4, for detailed discussions.

36. Examples selected from Lin Youyu, *Malaixiya Huaxiao*.

37. Lee Ting Hui, 'Policies and Politics in Chinese Schools', provides the most detailed survey. Less detailed but still useful are Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese' and Tay Lian-soo, 'Xinma zhanqian de Huawen jiaoyu', in his *Malaixiya Xinjiapo Huaren wenhuashi luncong*, Singapore: South Seas Society, 1986, Vol. 2, pp. 90-179.

38. From George Maxwell's 1920 Annual Report as Chief Secretary, as cited in Philip Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, p. 29.

39. On the Sultan Idris Training College, see Awang Had Salleh, *Malay Secular Education and Teacher Training in British Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1979. The importance of this college and the Malay College in Kuala Kangsar in the development of Malay nationalism is discussed in William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1974.

40. W. H. Treacher in his 1901 Report as Resident of Selangor, as cited in Philip Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, p. 45.

41. Sinnappah Arasaratnam, *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore*, published for the Institute of Race Relations, London; Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 179.

42. On the contributions of the Chinese to the development of English education, see Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', Ch. 4.

43. See the discussion in Philip Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, Ch. 3.

44. From his speech to the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, as cited in Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', p. 53.

45. Sir Lawrence Guillemard, Governor of the Straits Settlements, Dispatch to the Colonial Office, 25 April 1921, as cited in H. E. Wilson, *Social Engineering in Singapore: Educational Policies and Social Change, 1819-1972*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1978, p. 59.

46. From A. M. Goodman's 1921 'Memorandum on Chinese Education', as cited in Philip Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, p. 94.

47. Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', pp. 52-91, provides the clearest and most comprehensive discussion of the Bill, Chinese opposition to it, and its subsequent effects. See also Lee Ting Hui, 'Policies and Politics in Chinese

Schools', Chs. 4 and 5 and H. E. Wilson, *Social Engineering in Singapore*, Ch. 2.

48. Purcell, *Memoirs of a Malayan Official*, p. 157.

49. Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', p. 83.

50. 1929 Annual Report of the Education Department of the Federated Malay States, as cited in Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', p. 82.

51. This view is suggested in Tay Lian-soo, 'Xinma zhanqian de Huawen jiaoyu', p. 114.

52. Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, p. 230.

53. See Philip Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, pp. 96-100 and Lee Ting Hui, 'Policies and Politics of Chinese Schools', Ch. 6.

54. Philip Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, p. 100.

55. A. Keir, Untitled Memorandum, with 1938 penned in ink, Enclosure No. 11, MSS Pac. s. 46, RHO.

56. Philip Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, p. 100.

57. Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', pp. 104-6.

58. A. Keir, Untitled Memorandum, 1938, containing estimates of the costs of providing English education to Chinese children, MSS Pac. s. 46, RHO.

59. See Lee Ting Hui, 'Policies and Politics in Chinese Schools', Chs. 7-8 and Stephen Leong, 'Sources, Agencies and Manifestations', Chs. 2-3.

60. Smith, 'Immigration and Permanent Settlement', p. 179.

61. See Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', Ch. 4 for discussions of Chinese contributions to English and Higher Education.

62. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-1.

63. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

64. From SS, *Annual Report on Education*, 1931, and Director of Education File 69/51, ANM.

65. Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', pp. 141-4 and Tay Lian-soo, 'Xinma zhanqian de Huawen jiaoyu', *passim*.

66. These examples come from Director of Education File 69/51 and Ed. Ch. Kn. 15/50, ANM.

67. *Ibid.*

68. See Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', pp. 174-81 and Ong Yen Her, 'Politics of Chinese Education', Ch. 2.

69. SS, *Annual Report on Education*, 1935, p. 21.

70. 'Report on the Chinese Education Technical Advisory Committee', in Director of Education File 12/50, ANM.

71. Figures from SS/FMS, *Annual Report on Education*, 1938.

72. According to SS, *Annual Report on Education*, 1935, p. 61, 'four of the larger girls' schools in Singapore and two in Penang had "normal" sections'. Many women teachers were graduates of these classes but 'most of the men teachers are from China'.

73. See Yung Yuet Ling, 'Contributions of the Chinese', pp. 134-41 and Suen Y Chern, 'Chinese Education and Government Policy in Malaya', M.Ed. thesis, University of Melbourne, 1960, *passim*.

74. Letter from H. R. Cheeseman to Senior Inspector of Schools in Perak, 12 November 1948, Director of Education File 727/48, ANM.

75. Memorandum on 'The Chinese in Malaya' by G. W. Webb, Acting Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Singapore, 9 August 1948, with An Accompanying Note by W. L. Blythe, then President of the Municipal Commissioners in Singapore, 30 August 1948, both addressed to the Colonial Secretary in Singapore, in MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 255, RHO.

76. For a general account, selected from various school magazines, see Tay Lian-soo and Gwee Yee Hean (eds.), *Malaxiya Xinjiapo Huawen zhongxue tekan*, pp. 20-2.

77. Akashi Yoji, 'Education and Indoctrination Policy in Malaya and Singapore under the Japanese Rule, 1942-1945', *Malaysian Journal of Education*, 13 (1976): 1-46; Akashi Yoji, 'Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 1, 2 (1970): 61-89. For a comprehensive study of the Japanese Occupation, see Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983.

78. MU, *Annual Report of Education*, 1946, p. 26.

79. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

80. Dispatch from the High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 'Federation of Malaya: The Chinese Schools', 2 March 1955, in CO 1030/266, PRO Kew.

81. This is evident from going through the school histories in Lin Youyu, *Malaxiya Huaxiao*.

82. Francis Loh Kok Wah, *Beyond the Tin Mines: Coolies, Squatters, and New Villagers in the Kinta Valley, Malaysia, c.1880-1980*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988, Table 3.3, p. 124.

83. Tay Lian-soo and Gwee Yee Hean, 'Pilizhou de Huawen jiaoyu', in Tay Lian-soo, *Malaxiya Xinjiapo Huaren wenhuashi luncong*, Singapore: South Seas Society, 1982, Vol. 1, pp. 120-1.

84. Draft Report on Education for 1955 in Thomas Hunter Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 133, RHO.

85. See Xinjiapo Nanyang Wenhua Chuban she (comp.), *Nanyang Daxue chuangxiao shi*, Singapore: Nanyang Wenhua Chuban she, 1956 and Tan Eng Leong, 'The Establishment of Nanyang University, 1953-1956', BA academic exercise, University of Singapore, 1973.

86. Wilson, *Social Engineering in Singapore*, p. 147.

A Decade of Critical Changes, 1945-1955

THE Chinese schools entered a phase of vigorous growth after the Japanese Occupation ended in 1945. The impetus for this came from two social forces; a rapidly growing population with increasing numbers of children reaching schooling age, and a surge in the demand for education which had come to be perceived as essential to social advancement. During this period of growth, the Chinese schools found themselves paradoxically confronted by the threat of exclusion from the national system of education being proposed by the British. To those deeply concerned about the future of the Chinese schools, this threat was seen as bringing with it the possible danger of extinction in the long run. British officials wanted to have a system of multiracial 'national schools' teaching mainly in English to *replace* the separate vernacular schools. Malay leaders demanded that the Malay language should have a prominent role within the future national system of education. This left little room, in the minds of both the British and Malay leaders, for the Chinese schools or the Chinese language.

From 1945 to 1955, it was the British who held the power to make and to implement education policy. But the British returned to rule over Malaya, in effect, as a decolonizing power. Though no timetable had, as yet, been set for concrete steps towards self-government, this was an eventuality that had to be taken into consideration. Almost immediately upon their return, the British found that there were much stronger local political forces than they had anticipated; first in the form of Malay opposition to British proposals for a Malayan Union, then in the form of an armed struggle for liberation from colonial rule led by the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM). This forced the British to accommodate some local aspirations, to make adjustments to their original plans, and finally to yield to a pace of decolonization much faster than they had thought possible. This chapter discusses British attempts to leave a legacy of an education system centred on the ideal of

multiracial schools teaching in English. It shows how despite their long-term policy objective of edging the Chinese schools out of the educational mainstream, the British were forced by political and pragmatic considerations to implement policies towards the Chinese schools which, ironically, gave them a longer lease of life.

Constitutional Changes and Education Policy

It is well known that the original plan of the Colonial Office was to unify all the Malay States and the two colonies of Penang and Malacca into a Malayan Union. In pre-war days, British control over Malaya was spread over what technically comprised 'nine legally sovereign States with ten sovereign Monarchs (nine Malay and one British) ... ten legislatures, seven judicial systems, seven police forces and seven civil services'.¹ The Malayan Union appeared, on paper at least, to be the neatest alternative; a single legislative, judiciary, and administrative system for the entire peninsula. In consonance with the long-term objective of creating a single nation out of the Union, liberal citizenship rights were to be accorded to non-Malays resident in the peninsula. All citizens regardless of race or descent would have equal rights. Singapore was excluded because the British still required it as a naval and military base. Its predominantly Chinese population would also have upset the racial balance in the Union. This plan was conceptualized by a Malayan Planning Unit set up by the Colonial Office in 1943. British officers of the Malayan Planning Unit in London worked out the Malayan Union proposals with little knowledge of changes in political mood among the population living in Malaya.² Consequently, the plans fell apart as soon as they were taken out of the artificial glasshouse of the planning room.

The Malayan Union débâcle is generally regarded as a major turning-point in Malaya's political history. For the history of Malay nationalism, it is certainly *the* watershed. The intensity of Malay opposition to the Malayan Union and the speed with which Malay organizations were galvanized into a mass movement astounded British officials in 1946, forcing them to beat a hasty retreat. The three features of the Malayan Union that were the focus of Malay protests may be summarized as follows: 'Firstly, the sovereignty of the (Malay) rulers was to be transferred to the (British) Crown; secondly, the autonomy of the separate Malay states was to be lost within the Union; and thirdly, the privileges of the Malay community were to be extended to the other races.'³ Taken

together these features of the Malayan Union, in the words of a Malay researcher, amounted to 'an overpowering threat to the security of the Malay race and to their survival as a respectable community in their native land.'⁴ The Malayan Union would have enabled roughly 83 per cent of the 1,884,000 Chinese and 75 per cent of the 531,000 Indians resident in the Malayan peninsula to become citizens.⁵ The granting of such liberal citizenship rights for non-Malays was threatening to the Malays because non-Malays outnumbered Malays in several states and overall comprised a sizeable proportion of the total population. In 1931 Malays comprised just 49.2 per cent of the total population and in 1947, the Malay proportion of the population was 49.5 per cent (Table 2.1). In providing citizenship rights for the majority of non-Malays and, at the same time, rejecting the special position accorded all along by pre-war British policy to Malays as the 'natives of the land', the Malayan Union cut at the very foundations of Malay political supremacy. The plan represented a reversal of the frequently stated British stand that Malaya was historically a Malay country. This drastic change from pre-war British policies hit Malay political sensitivities particularly hard in the immediate post-war context.

Cheah Boon Kheng's study of the Japanese Occupation in Malaya has shown how the racial divisions incipient in the plural society of colonial Malaya were transformed into 'open and lasting conflicts' when the Occupation ended.⁶ Japanese policies that were generally conciliatory towards the Malays but repressive of the Chinese accentuated the persistent racial divide between the two races with Malays being stereotyped as collaborators. In the chaotic interregnum between Japanese surrender and the re-establishment of British control, Chinese resistance groups emerging from the jungle meted out brutal punishments on Malay villagers whom they suspected of being Japanese collaborators. There were violent reprisals as Malays, organized into religious cult movements, took revenge on neighbouring Chinese villages.⁷ These experiences fuelled long-standing Malay fears, which had already surfaced in the 1930s, that they were outnumbered and could easily be subjugated in their own land.⁸

This was the background to Malay anxieties which were not comprehended by the British officers of the Malayan Planning Unit in London. Several studies of Malay reactions to the Malayan Union have also identified the manner in which the plans were implemented, in particular the infamous MacMichael treaties which the Malay rajas were pressured into signing, as contributory

TABLE 2.1
Ethnic Composition of the Population in Peninsular Malaysia, 1911-1957 ('000)

Race	Population by Year									
	1911		1921		1931		1947		1957	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Malay	1,370	58.6	1,569	54.0	1,864	49.2	2,428	49.5	3,126	49.8
Chinese	693	29.6	856	29.4	1,285	33.9	1,884	38.4	2,334	37.2
Indians and Pakistanis	239	10.2	439	15.1	571	15.1	531	10.8	707	11.3
Others	37	1.6	43	1.5	68	1.8	65	1.3	112	1.8
Total	2,339	100.0	2,907	100.0	3,788	100.0	4,908	100.0	6,279	100.0

Source: Charles Hirschman, *Ethnic and Social Stratification in Peninsular Malaysia*, Washington: American Sociological Association, 1974, p. 9.

factors to the unexpected vehemence of Malay reactions. More recent studies have gone beyond these immediate events to locate a more complex range of factors that contributed to the famous climaxing of Malay nationalism in a few dramatic months in 1946.⁹ In those same months, a new Malay political organization, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), was born. Under its first leader, Dato Onn Jaafar, UMNO assumed the mantle of being the vanguard of Malay interests and soon eclipsed other existing Malay political organizations.¹⁰

Edward Gent (the man appointed Governor of the Malayan Union to implement a plan he had led in conceptualizing as head of the Malayan Planning Unit in the Colonial Office) and Malcolm Macdonald (the Commissioner-General whose job was to co-ordinate post-war British policy in South-East Asia) quickly recognized that the wisest move for the British lay in opening lines of negotiation with UMNO leaders as well as the Malay rajas. They immediately tried to re-establish the traditional working relationship between the British and the Malay élite. What the British feared most in 1946 was that anti-Malayan Union protests could, under the sway of more radical Malay nationalists, be transformed into a militant anti-British movement demanding immediate emancipation from colonial rule. Events in nearby Indonesia where the return of Dutch rule had been met with violent resistance were being watched with apprehension by the British. Negotiations with UMNO leaders and representatives of the Malay rajas were started immediately to identify possible points of agreement. By December 1946 the terms of a new Constitution had been agreed upon and were published. In March 1948 the Federation of Malaya officially replaced the Malayan Union.¹¹ Gent was briefly the first British High Commissioner of the Federation until he was recalled for consultations a week after the Emergency was declared in June 1948. He died in a plane crash on the way back to London.¹²

The British side lost little in exchanging the Malayan Union for the Federation of Malaya. Once relinquished, the original plan was soon recognized as a *faux pas* which had been criticized from its own side not only by 'Old Malayan hands', retired officials of the pre-war colonial era, but also by some of its older officers returning to serve in post-war Malaya. A few of these officers even threatened to resign rather than administer such a scheme.¹³ The Federation of Malaya still brought the entire Malay peninsula under a central government with administrative and executive

powers centred in the hands of a High Commissioner who had the right to appoint the members of both the Executive Council as well as the Legislative Council. Citizenship rights for non-Malay residents were retained in principle but with more restrictive terms.¹⁴ Singapore remained excluded as it was one of the features of the Malayan Union that did not meet with opposition from UMNO. There were, as in the Malayan Union, no provisions for any steps towards self-government.

For the Sultans and UMNO leaders, it was a significant victory. At their insistence, non-Malay representatives had been excluded from the negotiation process because, it was argued, treaties involving the Malay States had been and should remain a matter between the British and representatives of the Malays. A Consultative Committee was appointed to allow non-Malays to submit their views on the terms of the Federation agreement but only after these were finalized and published in December 1946.¹⁵ With the Federation agreement, the sovereignty of the Sultans was restored; state governments regained jurisdiction over some important areas such as land; and, Malay Mentris Besar were appointed to head state governments in the Malay States. Special rights for Malays were reinstated and Malay was recognized as an official language alongside English. The principle that Malaya was historically the land of the Malays who, as the definitive people of the country, should have distinctive special rights, was re-established. UMNO's role in the negotiations consolidated its claim to represent Malay political interests laying the foundations for its dominant role in Malay politics throughout the 1950s, a position it has retained to this day.

UMNO leaders were alert in responding to the first British initiatives in education policy. Opposition from UMNO forced the British to withdraw two policy proposals; the first in 1946 and the second in 1950. H. R. Cheeseman, the Director of Education between 1946 and 1948, had drawn up a council paper on education policy which would provide free primary education through four streams of schools teaching in English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil. English was to be taught as a language in Malay, Chinese, and Tamil primary schools and English would be the main medium of instruction beyond the primary school level. This differed from pre-war policies in one significant aspect; it committed the state to supporting *fully* all four streams of primary schools.¹⁶ After the Malayan Union Advisory Council accepted the Cheeseman proposals in December 1946,¹⁷ the UMNO Secretary-General wrote

to Gent protesting against the discussion of education policy at a time when a new Constitution had just been negotiated. Gent was informed that 'it is UMNO's opinion that the future education policy of this country should conform with the terms, aims and ideals of the new Constitution'.¹⁸ The letter from UMNO indicated to the British that an education system providing equal status to English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil schools was not acceptable to UMNO.

In September 1948, six months after the Federation of Malaya agreement officially came into force, a Central Advisory Committee (CAC) was appointed to re-examine education policy.¹⁹ M. R. Holgate, who had replaced Cheeseman as Director of Education, was Chairman of the CAC. After UMNO's opposition to Cheeseman's proposals, the Education Department under Holgate had moved in the direction of seeing 'the wide extension of English education as the real solution to the problem of interracial education'.²⁰ This was the central theme of the First Report of the CAC which was published in May 1950.²¹

The First Report of the CAC introduced a new approach to education policy. The multiple types of schools which had been allowed to develop in the past was to be replaced by a single system of schools which could integrate and unify young Malaysians. A single system of schools meant that all children would have to be taught 'through the medium of one common language' (para. 1). In introducing this new approach, the First Report of the CAC defined the framework of official education policy for the next five years. The question which the CAC posed from the beginning (para. 1) was: 'What system of education would contribute most to the nullifying of communal divisions and the integration of all into one Malayan entity?' Its answer to this question was 'the English schools'. The reasons given for this answer were (a) none of the existing vernacular schools were acceptable to all racial groups and (b) the one language everyone was prepared to accept as a common language was English (para. 6). The Report described the English schools in glowing terms. Each class in the English schools was 'a miniature Malaya, racial or religious difficulties seldom appearing'. The English schools were credited with making 'the greatest ... contribution to common experience, understanding and harmony' (para. 4).

The First Report of the CAC recommended, therefore, that the 'ultimate desirable objective' of education policy should be 'free (and finally compulsory) primary education in the medium of

English' (para. 5; emphasis and parentheses in original). Progress towards this objective was to be 'by encouragement rather than by imposition'. The government would expand English education 'as rapidly as funds permit' so that more and more parents could send their children to English schools. As a possible intermediary stage, the CAC suggested two main types of primary schools, one teaching in English with Malay as a compulsory subject and the other teaching in Malay with English as a compulsory subject. Both types of schools would provide facilities for learning Chinese and Tamil, if parents desired this for their children (paras. 6 and 7).

When Holgate presented the First Report of the CAC to the Legislative Council in July 1950, he emphasized that the ultimate objective suggested in the report was not immediately possible. In the interim, the government would concentrate on improving English and Malay schools with funds for new buildings and extensions. Holgate also asked for approval to increase aid to the Chinese and Indian schools because there was no immediate alternative available to replace these schools. Holgate's proposals were denounced by Dato Onn as 'a gratuitous insult to the Malays and the Malay language'. In the Malay view, said Dato Onn, 'there is only one vernacular language in this country and that vernacular is Malay. Even English is a foreign language ... but it is accepted because we consider it necessary'. Government money should therefore only be used for education in these two languages. To go beyond them and finance education in 'Chinese, Indian, Hottentot, Eskimo and I don't know what', said Dato Onn, would end up creating 'a Babel in this country'.²²

In the aftermath of the fight against the Malayan Union, Malay leaders were more assertive in seeking a central role for the Malay language. They also wanted more attention to be paid to the educational problems of the Malays. The CAC's proposal that the English schools should be privileged as the crucible of social and political unity went against the grain of Malay views.²³ Holgate's plea for more assistance to the Chinese and Indian schools made matters worse. The Legislative Council, at Dato Onn's suggestion, decided to postpone further discussion on education policy until the Barnes Committee, appointed to study the problems of Malay education, had submitted its report.²⁴ Education policy was not raised again in the Legislative Council until September 1951. This meant, in effect, that there was no change to the pre-war policy of allowing four streams of primary schools teaching in English, Malay, Chinese, and Tamil.

The negative response of Dato Onn and other Malay members of the Legislative Council to the First Report of the CAC should, perhaps, have been anticipated by Holgate. A year earlier, he had reported to a meeting of Directors of Education that the Malay state governments had made it clear to the Federal government that priority should be given to extending education facilities for Malays before any additional expenditure was allocated for the education of non-Malays. The Malay position, Holgate had explained, was that 'safeguarding the special position of the Malays was the special responsibility of the Federal Government'.²⁵ It should be noted here that under the Federation of Malaya agreement, legislative power over education policy lay with the Federal government but it was the state governments which held the power to administer and execute policies.

The Barnes Committee was appointed on 25 July 1951. Its terms of reference were to examine the existing system of Malay education, the adequacy of education facilities for Malays, and the question of how to uplift the general level of Malay scholastic attainment.²⁶ Four days later, on 29 July, Sir Henry Gurney, who had replaced Edward Gent as the High Commissioner, wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies suggesting the appointment of another committee to study problems relating to Chinese education.²⁷ The appointment of what later came to be known as the Fenn-Wu Committee on Chinese Education was thus not made after the release of the Barnes Report as suggested in two earlier studies on educational policy.²⁸ The Fenn-Wu Report was, in fact, released in July 1951 barely a month after the release of the Barnes Report in June 1951. The need for a committee to study Chinese education arose from the Emergency which forced the colonial government to seek urgent solutions to some of the problems in the Chinese schools.

The Emergency and the Chinese Schools

British officials had been keen to start negotiations with the comparatively moderate leadership of UMNO because another and more radical challenge to the British was building up under the leadership of the CPM. The CPM had been a wartime ally of the British, had played a major role in organizing resistance against the Japanese during the Occupation years, and was the most effectively organized political force when the British returned in 1945. With the advantage of being able to function as a legal political

party, the CPM immediately embarked on mobilizing urban working class support towards an open confrontation with the British.²⁹

By March 1947, according to one study, the CPM was 'at the peak of its power', having organized 'more militant and successful strikes than ever before ... and having brought Singapore trade to a near standstill in late February 1947'.³⁰ John Dalley, the head of Malayan Security, estimated in June 1947 that the CPM was in control of 75 per cent of organized labour.³¹ The CPM was at the same time giving its support to the Pusat Tenaga Rakyat-All Malayan Council of Joint Action (PUTERA-AMCJA), a multi-ethnic coalition of political organizations under the leadership of Tan Cheng Lock. PUTERA-AMCJA was organizing a mass-based opposition to the Federation agreement on the grounds that it provided no provisions for the beginnings of self-government. A Federation-wide hartal organized by PUTERA-AMCJA in October 1947 effected business shutdowns in most of the major towns in the peninsula as well as Singapore.³²

From February 1946 the colonial government had begun to arrest and deport persons identified as instigators of violent demonstrations but this did not stop the CPM from continuing in its build-up towards a confrontation. Outright war against the CPM was declared after three British planters were killed on 16 June 1948. Within three days, a state of Emergency was declared throughout the peninsula. The PUTERA-AMCJA coalition collapsed as most radical activists went underground to escape arrest and detention. The CPM was outlawed and continued its struggle from its jungle bases, relying mainly on Chinese living in the rural outskirts for support.³³

As many studies of the Emergency have shown, the war between the British and the CPM caused much hardship for many ordinary Chinese who were caught 'between two millstones'.³⁴ British officials themselves later acknowledged that immediately after the Emergency began, government officials as well as European planters and miners advocated policies of 'bashing the Chinese' as Chinese in general 'became targets of hate and suspicion'.³⁵ However, the Emergency also forced the British to reassess their neglect of Chinese problems which had been overshadowed by concern with Malay opposition to the Malayan Union. Non-Malay views had essentially been set aside in coming to terms with the Malay élite on the main features of the Federation of Malaya. To win the war against the CPM, the British had to fight the CPM not only on the military front but also on the political and ideological

fronts. The British had to work on getting more Chinese to actively support them against the CPM. There was an ironic racial twist to this struggle for the 'hearts and minds' of ordinary people. The CPM, predominantly Chinese both in its leadership and support, fought an uphill battle to garner Malay support while the colonial government found that its main problem lay in winning over the Chinese.³⁶

At the beginning of the Emergency, the colonial government found itself without the machinery and enough Chinese-speaking British officers to deal directly with the Chinese population. Part of the problem was due to the dismantling of the pre-war Chinese Protectorate, a separate section of the colonial administration that had dealt with all matters relating to the Chinese population, including the Chinese schools. The administrative readjustments required when the Malayan Union was replaced by the Federation had exacerbated the problem. Gurney acknowledged that the abolition of the Protectorate, 'though a necessary and good decision' had resulted in 'government losing touch with ordinary Chinese'. He also realized that the Federal government was largely staffed by officers who had been trained for service in the Malay States and had little experience dealing with the Chinese population. A worse situation pertained at the level of state governments which, according to Gurney, 'have a strong Malay bias at the higher levels'.³⁷

Recognizing the weakness in its administrative machinery, the colonial government made immediate changes. Secretaries for Chinese Affairs were appointed to all states to oversee the enforcement of Emergency regulations and to provide points of contact in each state between the Federal government and the Chinese population in the state. Equally important, the Emergency resulted in the recruitment of more Chinese into the state administrations. The Emergency thus brought more Chinese and more Chinese-speaking colonial officials back into the forefront of the colonial administration.³⁸ Their input began to have an impact on all policy matters relating to the Chinese population, including the Chinese schools.

The Chinese schools in Malaya had come directly under the Education Department for the first time as a result of the dismantling of the Chinese Protectorate. The Education Department found itself without enough British officials who could deal with this new responsibility. In July 1948, there was only one British officer who knew the Chinese language. He had under him 10 Chinese Inspectors to keep track of 1,364 schools in the

Federation.³⁹ After the declaration of the Emergency, the Chinese section of the Education Department was strengthened with more staff because the British wanted to keep up effective political surveillance over the Chinese schools. In 1952, 10 additional posts for British officers were created for the section. By 1953 there were 35 local Inspectors of Chinese Schools working under three British officials.⁴⁰

The Chinese schools came under a general pall of suspicion in the context of the Emergency. Their role as educational institutions tended to be overlooked by Special Branch officers who saw them only as 'congenial breeding grounds' for political influences from China which were 'harmful to the good order and well-being of Malaya'.⁴¹ The colonial administration's Chinese Affairs officers, such as G. Webb and W. L. Blythe, were no less negative. They thought that the Chinese schools fermented 'Chinese racialism' and produced 'good little Chinese nationalists from our local-born Chinese children'.⁴² The English schools, on the other hand, were seen as producing Chinese who were 'loyal to us'. Such views led the Chinese Affairs officers to agree with officers in the Education Department that the objective of the government should be to expand English education to attract Chinese away from the Chinese schools. Both Webb and Blythe believed that most Chinese parents would send their children to English schools because of the better prospects available for those who had received an English education.⁴³ The recommendation to displace the Chinese schools by channelling more children to English schools was made by the Joint Chinese Affairs Committee of the Federation in January 1949. It was stated again in a 'Paper on Education Policy for the Chinese in the Federation' in June 1949.⁴⁴

However, the government could not close down existing Chinese schools and their enrolments were, in fact, growing from year to year. In 1949, there were more than 200,000 pupils in these schools and this had increased to 216,405 by 1950 (see Table 1.7). The Chinese schools had recovered from their wartime devastation and expanded their enrolments with little help from the British. Government aid to the Chinese schools had remained at pre-war levels. Until and unless the government was able to provide alternative schools to accommodate these pupils, it had no choice but 'to increase government control and obviate the grave dangers of neglect' of the Chinese schools.⁴⁵ As Gurney pointed out in a January 1950 dispatch to the Secretary of State for the

Colonies, 'the battle against the communists has also to be fought in the schools'.⁴⁶

From February to June 1950 there were appeals from many Chinese schools and organizations for the government to increase aid to Chinese schools.⁴⁷ When Holgate presented the First Report of the CAC in July 1950, he had explained that the government was considering these requests sympathetically because 'we cannot convert these schools overnight into Malay and English schools even were it desirable to do so. We cannot close the schools and cast the pupils into utter darkness. Clearly they are meeting a need for which there is no present or early substitute and it is our duty to see them continued and improved'.⁴⁸

Despite Dato Onn's negative reaction to Holgate's recommendation to increase aid to the Chinese schools, the Federal government proceeded to take action. The Emergency was at its height and the Communist victory in China in 1949 had boosted the morale of the CPM and its supporters. The colonial government could not afford to neglect the Chinese schools. This would provide the CPM with an issue to stir up anti-British feelings. In August 1950, the Chief Secretary wrote to all State and Settlement Secretaries asking them to consider doubling previous levels of aid to Chinese schools as a matter of political necessity. He emphasized that in the context of fighting the communists, 'it is vital that Chinese children should not grow up uneducated in any language and therefore an easy prey to communist doctrine'. Pointing out that 93 per cent of Chinese children of school-going age were born in Malaya and their parents were contributing in taxes to public revenue, the Chief Secretary argued that neglect of the Chinese schools would cause the Chinese to be cynical of their position as Malayan citizens.⁴⁹ It took almost a year for this proposal to be approved by all the states and an increase of 100 per cent in aid to Chinese schools was finally announced in June 1951.⁵⁰

In the meantime, the first experiments in relocating rural Chinese, in particular squatters on the jungle fringe, to separate the CPM from its main support and recruitment bases had begun.⁵¹ Under the Briggs Plan, launched in April 1950, this expanded into a massive scheme in which a total of 572,917 Chinese were uprooted and resettled in 480 New Villages over the next four years.⁵² Chinese schools in these New Villages had to be rebuilt and started up in their new locations. The government provided assistance for education and other social amenities as measures to keep the New Villages 'contented communities' to insulate them from 'further intrusions by communists'.⁵³

A special scheme of aid for Chinese schools in the New Villages, available only for the first two years after resettlement, was provided directly by the Federal government under Directive 13 of the Emergency Regulations. These came into effect in February 1951.⁵⁴ Expenditure on New Village schools in 1951 and 1952 amounted to slightly over \$2 million, spread over a total of 216 such schools. In 1953 this increased to a peak \$6 million, accounting for 6 per cent of total expenditure on all types of schools, but after that began to decrease (Table 2.2). These measures to increase government aid to Chinese schools were essentially short-term measures arising from the political exigencies of the Emergency. They did not reflect, as yet, any significant change from the pre-war policy of 'negative containment'.

A noticeable change in the colonial government's policy towards the Chinese schools began after the release of the Fenn-Wu Report in July 1951. Perhaps more important than the report itself was a confidential memorandum which Fenn had written to Gurney, conveying frank observations that could not go into a public report. Fenn told Gurney that he was appalled at the antagonistic attitude towards Chinese schools he found prevalent in

TABLE 2.2
Government Expenditure by Type of School, 1948-1957 (\$ million)

Year	Type of School				
	English	Malay	Chinese	Indian	New Village
1948	11.7 (44)	12.2 (45)	1.1 (4)	1.9 (7)	-
1949	12.6 (40)	15.3 (49)	1.4 (4)	2.1 (7)	-
1950	13.8 (41)	16.0 (48)	1.7 (5)	2.1 (6)	-
1951	21.9 (41)	23.0 (43)	3.6 (7)	2.9 (5)	2.2 (4)
1952	22.6 (38)	25.3 (42)	6.7 (11)	3.2 (5)	2.3 (4)
1953	33.4 (38)	34.1 (37)	13.7 (15)	3.7 (4)	6.1 (6)
1954	36.2 (40)	34.6 (38)	11.8 (13)	3.9 (4)	5.0 (5)
1955	35.0 (39)	32.1 (35)	17.4 (19)	3.9 (4)	2.6 (3)
1956	42.4 (40)	37.6 (34)	23.6 (22)	4.2 (4)	1.8 (2)
1957	44.4 (40)	41.8 (38)	17.6 (16)	4.6 (4)	1.7 (2)

Sources: IBRD, *Report on the Economic Development of Malaya*, Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1955, p. 471, and FM, *Annual Report on Education, 1949-57*.

- Notes: 1. Excludes expenditure not attributable by type of schools.
2. Excludes expenditure on English streams in vernacular schools and 'ra'ayat' schools which were featured only in the 1955-7 Annual Reports.
3. The figures within parentheses indicate percentages of total expenditure.

official circles. This was apparent in 'both public utterances and official actions'. He cited, as an example, that the Director of Education had said 'I want only the end of all Chinese schools as they now are'. The government could hardly expect much co-operation from the Chinese, said Fenn, if Education Department officials confirmed Chinese impressions that the British were out to 'eliminate the Chinese schools'. He called on Gurney to 'reverse present policy towards Chinese schools' and emphasized that 'now is the time to win Chinese constructive partnership in the building of Malaya'. Fenn agreed that Education Department officials could be right in thinking that as 'more English schools are available, Chinese schools will decrease with the weak and poor schools being weeded out eventually'. However, it was foolish to announce this as an objective and alienate the Chinese. It would be far more effective, he argued, to let this happen as a 'slowly engineered process'. Sometimes, suggested Fenn, 'the longest way around could be the shortest way over'.⁵⁵ After 1951, officials dealing at the ground level with the Chinese schools began to take Fenn's advice. At the level of defining an official policy, however, it was a rather different story.

'National Schools': The British Model

From the composition of the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Committees, we can see which of the two committees was intended to play a more important role in determining education policy. The Barnes Committee had 14 members. These consisted of nine Malays, L. D. Whitfield, Deputy Director of Education in 1950 and Director of Education from 1951, as well as three other officials from the Education Department.⁵⁶ The Fenn-Wu Committee was made up of two foreigners and included neither representatives from the Education Department nor from local Chinese organizations.⁵⁷ Unlike the Barnes Committee, the Fenn-Wu Committee was thus not intended to incorporate official views nor be a forum for consulting local opinions.

In fact, just before the Fenn-Wu Committee arrived in Malaya, the government had announced that the Committee was to study the Chinese schools with a view to 'bridging the gap between the present communal system of schools and the time when education will be on a non-communal basis with English or Malay as medium of instruction and other languages as optional subjects'.⁵⁸ The Fenn-Wu Committee protested that this announcement

made it appear as if the Committee was appointed as 'a mere tool designed to further an established policy'. Gurney then agreed to accept the Fenn-Wu Committee's rephrasing of its own terms of reference as follows: 'to survey sympathetically but objectively the entire field of the education of the Chinese in Malaya and to recommend such constructive changes and improvement as would lead to the Chinese schools making the greatest contribution to the future welfare and happiness of the people of Malaya and in particular of the Chinese who have chosen that prosperous land as their home'.⁵⁹ With the Fenn-Wu Committee starting from such premises and the Barnes Committee approaching education policy from the viewpoint of improving education for the Malays, it is not surprising that the two Reports presented diametrically opposed recommendations.

From its survey of the existing system of education for the Malays, the Barnes Committee came to the conclusion that the segregation of Malay pupils in bad schools with poor teachers had militated against Malay progress in education. Malay vernacular schools had failed to help the Malays improve their status 'relatively to the other communities in the population' (p. 20). Students from Malay schools were also hampered in their access to secondary and tertiary education, available only in English. This was an unacceptable situation when the Malay community's aspiration was 'to make itself the main vehicle of the national idea' (p. 20). Though the Barnes Report did not recommend that Malay should be the main medium of instruction, it did advocate that there should be a prominent role for the Malay language within the education system to 'safeguard the position and status of the Malay language' and to enable it to develop into 'a comprehensive means of expression and communication in the major fields of human endeavour' (p. 22).

In its general approach to policy, the Barnes Report echoed the First Report of the CAC. Primary education in Malaya, said the Barnes Report, 'should be treated avowedly and with full deliberation as an instrument for building up a common Malayan nationality' (p. 20). Proceeding from this premise, the Barnes Report (para. 4) stated its main recommendation for primary education even more strikingly than the First Report of the CAC had done: 'In principle, we recommend the end of separate vernacular schools for the several racial communities and their replacement by a single type of primary schools.' This new type of primary school should teach in both Malay and English to produce students who

would be effectively bilingual. They would then be able to progress smoothly to secondary and tertiary education which would be available only in English.

The Barnes Report adopted for the first time the term of 'National school' for its proposed new primary schools, which were described as 'schools for citizenship' and 'nation-building schools'. The Report called into question the allocation of public funds for the maintenance of separate vernacular schools and recommended that all public funds be devoted in future to the proposed 'National schools'. These schools would then successfully attract students away from existing vernacular schools (p. 20). The Barnes Report differed from the First Report of the CAC in providing no place for Chinese or Indian languages to be taught. Non-Malays who regarded Malaya as their permanent home and as the object of their loyalty were asked to 'set aside their vernacular attachments in the interests of a new social unity' (p. 23).

The Fenn-Wu Report, in total contrast, advised against the 'restrictive imposition of one or two languages' and called for a 'natural mingling of diverse cultural elements' as the best possible way of developing a truly Malayan identity. It supported the teaching of both Malay and English in all schools but recommended that the various communities of the country should be permitted to retain their own languages and cultures (pp. 4-6). This, for the Chinese in Malaya, would mean trilingualism, which the Fenn-Wu Committee thought was what most Chinese would want for their children (p. 6).

The Fenn-Wu Report pointed out that the Chinese schools were not exceptional in lacking a Malayan orientation since 'the English schools . . . were still heavily orientated in outlook toward England and Europe, Indian schools toward India and Malay schools toward a Malay nation' (p. 7). After assessing both the strengths and weaknesses of the Chinese schools, the Report recommended that the government should help the Chinese schools to evolve into 'truly Malayan schools'. They could then become 'equal partners with other schools' in the future educational system of the country (p. 11). An immediate increase of 200 per cent in aid to the Chinese schools was recommended by the Fenn-Wu Committee as a first step in this direction (p. 12).

The release of the Barnes Report in June 1951 and the Fenn-Wu Report the very next month sparked off a heated public controversy on education policy and the related problems of language and culture that 'highlighted the emerging bimodal values of

the two major communities'.⁶⁰ While one side argued for a single system of schools centred on Malay and English, the other advocated a pluralistic and open approach which would allow schools teaching in different languages to be part of the Malayan system of education. Malay organizations and dailies came out in support of the Barnes Report and condemned the Fenn-Wu Committee's recommendations, the opposite was the case for the Chinese press and organizations.⁶¹ The big debate was also conducted in the English newspapers.⁶² H. R. Cheeseman, the former Director of Education, contributed to the debate with a long article in two parts that was critical of the Barnes Report.⁶³

Meanwhile, behind the scenes, a different kind of exchange had been taking place between Fenn, Gurney, and the Colonial Office in London. Gurney tried to exert some pressure on Fenn through Sir Christopher Cox, Adviser on Education for the Colonies, with whom Fenn was scheduled to have discussions before writing his report. Gurney was anxious that Fenn should not write a report 'which might have the effect of encouraging the Chinese in their reluctance to accept Barnes'. He wanted Cox to pressure Fenn to emphasize 'the overriding importance of establishing a common stream of education'. In the Malayan context, said Gurney, Fenn 'will do more harm than good' if he were to express too much sympathies for the Chinese.⁶⁴

Fenn's view, however, was that the British should reverse their policy of trying to eliminate the Chinese schools. Instead of alienating the Chinese with this negative approach, Fenn recommended a more subtle approach to the problem of Chinese education to win the Chinese over politically. Cox agreed with Fenn that it was politically more important to win Chinese co-operation and suggested to Gurney that 'the best way out is for a policy with more language flexibility than Barnes and one which allows the Chinese schools to slowly become National schools'.⁶⁵ The problem with the two Reports, as Cox saw it, was that 'each sees only one side of the picture' with the result that it is 'unpalatable to the other side'.⁶⁶

Gurney avoided bringing two such conflicting reports to the Legislative Council. He sent both reports first to the CAC. The CAC wrote a Second Report which basically endorsed the proposals of the Barnes Report. An attempt by two Chinese members of the CAC to present the unfavourable reactions of most Chinese organizations to the Barnes Report was brushed aside by L. D. Whitfield who, as Director of Education, was chairman of the CAC.⁶⁷ In its

Second Report, the CAC relinquished its earlier proposal for free and compulsory primary education only in English. It recommended instead a system of primary schools in which either English or Malay was the medium of instruction. This differed from the Barnes Report which recommended a bilingual system in which both languages would be used. Another difference was that while the Barnes Report had not recognized the need for other languages to be taught, the CAC retained the proposal already contained in its First Report that there should be provisions for Mandarin and Tamil to be taught in the proposed 'National schools' (p. 4).⁶⁸

The Second Report of the CAC endorsed the Barnes Report's recommendation that priority in the allocation of public funds should be given to the 'National schools' and government aid to vernacular schools should be continued only 'as long as there are not enough acceptable National schools to take their place'. The government meanwhile should through 'persuasion and inducement' try to 'modulate existing Vernacular schools so that their eventual transmutation into acceptable National schools will be natural and voluntary' (p. 6). The vocabulary used in this sentence, particularly the term 'transmutation', hinted that what the colonial government had in mind was the 'conversion' of all existing vernacular schools into 'National schools' teaching in English. This was in fact how the Federal Executive Council understood the Report's recommendations when it met in August 1951 to discuss it.⁶⁹ But the colonial government's intention to try and 'convert' vernacular schools into multiracial schools teaching in English was not revealed until much later when the White Paper of 1954 was released in October 1954.⁷⁰

Gurney decided that the best way to get education policy through the Legislative Council was 'to codify it into a Bill and allow no substantive discussion till the Bill is presented'.⁷¹ Thus the Legislative Council was asked, on 20 September 1951, to accept a purely procedural motion to appoint a Special Committee on Education, to be headed by the Attorney-General, to draft legislation to cover all aspects of education policy.⁷² Gurney was, of course, right that the Legislative Council could not reject a purely procedural proposal. It was a clever move also because the procedural motion nevertheless gave its members an opportunity to air their views which could, if necessary, be taken into account in drawing up the Bill. In addition, to ensure Legislative Council acceptance of the Ordinance when it was duly drafted, Gurney co-opted leaders from the major political parties into the Special Committee.

By September 1951 Dato Onn had left UMNO and formed the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) while Tunku Abdul Rahman had taken over as leader of UMNO. The IMP was then more closely aligned with the British. Three of the five locals who had been nominated by the High Commissioner to take on portfolios as Members of the Executive Council came from the IMP. These included Onn Jaafar himself as Member for Home Affairs and E. E. C. Thuraisingham as Member for Education.⁷³ The Member system was introduced to give some local leaders a chance to be involved in the government as one of the steps towards gradual introduction of self-government. The Special Committee on Education included Thuraisingham, Onn Jaafar, and two other IMP leaders; Tunku Abdul Rahman and Dato Abdul Razak Hussein from UMNO; and H. S. Lee and Leung Cheung Ling from the MCA.⁷⁴ The composition of the Special Committee marked a distinct change from the earlier committees in which expatriates had been in the majority. The inclusion of representatives from the three leading political parties reflected British recognition that the local élite had to be included in the determination of education policy.

Thuraisingham, the Member for Education, led the debate in the Legislative Council on the motion to appoint a Special Committee to draft an Education Ordinance. His views revealed that he was in agreement with the British position. Thuraisingham supported the British view that it was 'chiefly in the English schools that there is any fusion of races and any cultivation of a common Malayan outlook'. He dismissed the principle of education in the mother tongue as 'overstated' and 'impossible of realization' because the home languages spoken by the Chinese and Indians were too diverse to be represented by either Mandarin or Tamil. The most important problem, to Thuraisingham, was to provide places in school for the large numbers of children still deprived of an education. This, he said, was 'the sole responsibility of the state'.⁷⁵

UMNO and MCA councillors expressed views that were more reflective of the controversy taking place outside the Legislative Council. Malay speakers generally supported the Barnes Report while Chinese speakers were very critical of it. To Tunku Abdul Rahman, the most urgent problem was the disparity in standard of education between Malays and non-Malays. The Malays, said the Tunku, 'must be lifted from the rut in which they live today' so that they are 'properly equipped to take independence in the country'. Dato Abdul Razak Hussein, who was later to be the first

Minister of Education in 1955, emphasized that 'any cultural development of this country must be centred and built upon the Malay language which should ultimately become the official language of this country'. There was, he said, an important difference between the status of the English and Malay languages; English was necessary for pragmatic purposes but Malay was 'the national language of the Malays'. The Barnes Report was most severely criticized by Tan Siew Sin, who thought some of its views smacked of 'racial bigotry, racial intolerance and deep-seated ignorance of fundamental political principles'. Tan contended that it was possible to have 'unity in diversity' and 'the only regimes which have insisted on unity through uniformity are [the] totalitarian regimes'.⁷⁶

A year elapsed before the 1952 Education Ordinance was presented to the Legislative Council in November 1952. The Report of the Special Committee and the 1952 Education Ordinance committed the Federal government to the ambitious goal of providing universal, compulsory, and free primary education. A bold vision of 'National schools' which charged no fees and provided books, transport, school uniforms, meals, and even medical and dental treatment to children from poor families who needed such services was presented. The 'National schools' were to be both models of interracial integration as well as quality schooling.⁷⁷

The Special Committee endorsed the basic formula of multiracial primary schools but rejected the Barnes Report's recommendation of using both English and Malay as medium of instruction. Instead, the proposed 'National schools' would teach in either Malay or English depending on the requirements and wishes of the inhabitants of the area in which the school was located. Facilities for teaching Mandarin and Tamil as languages would be provided 'to those children whose parents so desire where there are at least 15 pupils in any standard who wish to take advantage of such facilities'.⁷⁸ Though the Education Ordinance did not specify exactly how this provision was to be implemented, the statutory provision for other languages to be taught became the government's chief defence against accusations that its educational policy was intended to eliminate the Chinese and Tamil languages.

Significantly, the Report of the Special Committee discussed the possibility of 'converting' existing schools to 'National schools'. The Report envisaged that some existing government English and Malay schools could be easily converted into 'National schools', since they were already teaching in the appropriate languages.

Aided English schools as well as Chinese and Indian vernacular schools could also be encouraged to gradually convert themselves into multiracial 'National schools'.⁷⁹ This echoed the Second Report of the CAC and was later to emerge again in the 1954 White Paper. The government would establish new primary or secondary schools only as a second alternative after existing schools in the area had been asked to transform themselves into 'National schools'. Meanwhile, government aid would continue to 'Conforming schools' (schools which taught in either English or Malay), 'Special Agreement schools' (Chinese schools essentially), and 'Employer Aided schools' (Tamil schools essentially).⁸⁰

The Education Ordinance was unanimously approved by the Legislative Council with reservations expressed only by one Chinese member. Wong Pak Choy was concerned that the effect of the Ordinance would be 'to make it more and more difficult for non-English and non-Malay schools to exist, and eventually bring about their reduction or extinction'.⁸¹ However, he did not cast a dissenting vote against the Ordinance. Gurney, who was assassinated in October 1951, had not lived to see the success of his strategy in finally getting Legislative Council to approve the colonial government's proposals on education policy. The Legislative Council's unanimous approval of the 1952 Education Ordinance was a point which colonial officials were to constantly use in defending the Ordinance against criticisms from Chinese organizations, especially from Chinese school teachers.

Pragmatic Innovations in the Chinese Schools

While general policy was being formulated and debated, the colonial government acted on the ground level to bring the Chinese schools more within the administrative control of the state and to steer them towards a more Malayan orientation. In 1950 aided Chinese schools were required to teach Malay as well as English as part of their curriculum. This followed from a Legislative Council decision in November 1949 requiring all aided schools to teach both the official languages.⁸² Most of the Chinese schools had been teaching English since the 1930s⁸³ but the inclusion of Malay was a new and a significant step in the schools becoming more Malayan in their orientation. By 1951 Malay was being taught in 268 Chinese schools and the total had risen to 408 schools in 1952.⁸⁴ The Chinese schools were also asked in 1950 to follow the same academic calendar as the English schools. This came from a

suggestion in the First Report of the CAC that the academic calendars of the different streams should be streamlined to facilitate transfer of students from vernacular to English schools.⁸⁵

There was a noticeable change of policy towards the Chinese schools after the release of the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports in June and July 1951 respectively. The vehement objections of Chinese organizations to the Barnes Report's proposal to eliminate vernacular schools and Fenn's confidential memorandum to Gurney warning against such a policy as short-sighted and detrimental to British efforts to win the Chinese over politically pointed to the need for a more subtle approach. As D. Gray, the Acting Secretary for Chinese Affairs, observed, the colonial administration should approach the problems of the Chinese schools 'quietly and in a friendly way'.⁸⁶ In 1952 the colonial government began to take several measures in line with Fenn's suggestion that the 'longest way over may be the shortest way across'. The British had come round to the idea that helping the Chinese schools to do a better job, though in conflict with stated policy, was more in line with British political interests.

A good example of this was in the area of teacher training. All the official policy statements advocated that public funds should only be used to train teachers for the proposed 'National schools'. But, locally trained teachers were desperately needed by the Chinese schools. Training teachers for the Chinese schools had been advocated even before 1941 by the colonial administration's Chinese Affairs officers who had pointed to textbooks and teachers as two urgent areas for action to reduce the 'alien' character of the Chinese schools.⁸⁷ The Fenn-Wu Committee had also identified this as an urgent and immediate area for action. British officials finally accepted that government expenditure on, and control over, teacher training was the best way to influence teaching in the schools. In May 1952 a full-time training school for Chinese teachers, 'the first of its kind' according to the 1952 *Annual Report on Education*, took in its first group of 148 trainees. The aim of this school was 'to provide Chinese school teachers with a Malayan background competent to teach in English and Malay as well as Chinese'. The emphasis, in this first training college for teachers of Chinese schools, would be on 'training for citizenship with special attention being given to all kinds of extra-mural activities such as scouts and guides'.⁸⁸

The other urgent need was for textbooks written specially for Malayan schools with a distinctive Malayan orientation. Immediate

action was taken on the Fenn-Wu Committee's recommendation that a Special Committee responsible to the Department of Education be set up to oversee the writing of new textbooks for the Chinese schools.⁸⁹ In February 1952 the Executive Council approved a proposal to take immediate action on textbooks for Chinese schools. This was drawn up by C. E. S. Adkins from the Chinese Secretariat.⁹⁰ The following month, Chinese school teachers were invited to send representatives to the Syllabus and Textbook Committees set up by the Education Department.⁹¹

The teachers were, at first, suspicious of the government's motives in calling for changes in the content of teaching in the Chinese schools since other schools were not being asked to do the same. They were also hesitant because they feared that teacher representatives would be in the minority in the two committees and would be used purely to rubber-stamp decisions made by Education Department officials. Nevertheless, leaders of the Chinese school teachers were fully aware that the content of teaching in the Chinese schools was outdated and in need of change. They therefore decided to co-operate with the Education Department on this important project especially after Education Department officials seemed ready to meet their requests to increase teacher representation in the textbook committees.⁹² Without the teachers' co-operation, the work of writing textbooks with a Malayan perspective would not have been possible. This was acknowledged in the 1952 *Annual Report on Education* (p. 2) which praised 'the hard work put in and the time so freely given by the Chinese teachers' in working on this project.

By April 1952 two committees, with representatives from the Chinese school teachers, had begun work on drawing up new syllabuses with a Malayan outlook for the various subjects taught in the primary schools. Throughout 1952 and 1953, smaller subcommittees were set up to draw up detailed guidelines for textbooks for each subject.⁹³ These were then handed to the publishing firms. By the beginning of 1954, the first of the new Malayan textbooks for Chinese primary schools were in use.⁹⁴ Finally, the Chinese primary schools were no longer totally dependent on China for textbooks and teachers.

A third important change in government policy towards the Chinese primary schools came in June 1952 when a new system of aid was announced.⁹⁵ Since 1923 aid to the Chinese schools had been given at fixed per capita rates based on average annual enrolments. Rates of aid to Chinese schools were much lower than

those provided to aided English schools. Malay vernacular schools, by comparison, were fully supported from public funds. This had been a source of frequent complaints from Chinese school teachers and managers, who accused the colonial government of discriminating against the Chinese schools. From the government's point of view, per capita aid was unsatisfactory because it gave the government no leverage over the management of the schools. The government had no control over the salaries paid to teachers or the fees students were charged.

The New Salary Aid Scheme was intended 'to afford greater government control and promote the development of an efficient and contented body of Chinese school teachers'.⁹⁶ The scheme, in one brilliant stroke, gave teachers better terms of service while the government acquired more control over the schools by reducing some of the powers of the Management Committees (MCs). The government hoped that with better pay and greater security for teachers, the new aid scheme would reduce the 'social dangers inherent in a discontented intelligentsia'.⁹⁷ This was an important consideration because the Chinese school teachers had emerged as the most vocal critics of official policy after the release of the Barnes Report in June 1951.⁹⁸

Under the new aid scheme, the government would be responsible for half of the emoluments paid out to teachers with the other half covered by the fees paid by students. The Education Department would determine both the fees students were charged and the salaries paid to teachers. These would be brought in line with salary scales of vernacular teachers in government schools. All appointments or dismissals, as well as transfers, of staff would have to be approved by the Education Department. Lower fees for students, standardized salary scales for teachers with annual increments, security of tenure, and better conditions of service, including medical benefits, were the immediate benefits of the new scheme.⁹⁹ The MCs lost their power to hire and fire teaching staff but were freed of the perennial need to cover the gap between fees and teachers' salaries. However, they remained responsible for the capital and development expenditure of the schools as the aid scheme only covered running costs.

The benefits offered by the New Salary Aid Scheme made it attractive to the teachers but they approached it with great caution, realizing that it implied a loss of autonomy for the schools. The teachers had to balance between their own material gains and the implications of the government acquiring greater control over the schools. When the scheme was first announced, the Executive

Committee of the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA), an umbrella organization representing Chinese School Teachers' Associations at the district and state levels, decided that it was unacceptable for two reasons. First, the pay scales proposed were not fair since Chinese school teachers would still be paid less than teachers in the English schools. Second, the scheme would result in a complete loss of autonomy in the management of the schools. In the opinion of the UCSTA leadership, the Chinese schools would lose 'their special characteristics' if they were not autonomously run by their own MCs.¹⁰⁰

Realizing the serious implications of accepting the new aid scheme, MCs and teachers met to discuss the implications of the New Salary Aid Scheme. These meetings began at the state level and culminated in a gathering of representatives of Chinese school teachers and MCs from all the states in the Federation of Malaya on 9 November 1952. This meeting, stimulated by the need to make a co-ordinated decision on the New Salary Aid Scheme, was to have a significance beyond this particular issue. The 9 November meeting symbolized the inception of the Chinese education movement.¹⁰¹

Negotiations between the government and Chinese education organizations on the New Salary Aid Scheme began after the 9 November meeting and continued until early 1953. The government agreed to meet the teachers' requests for adjustments to be made to the proposed salary scales to ensure that no one lost out under the new scheme. The Chinese school teachers tried to push for their salaries to be raised to those paid to teachers in English schools. But this was rejected by the government. Ultimately the material benefits of the scheme, especially after the government had made several concessions, induced almost all the Chinese primary schools to accept the new scheme.¹⁰² By 1953, 75 per cent of the Chinese primary schools had been persuaded to accept the new scheme.¹⁰³ The implementation of the new aid scheme resulted in a doubling of government expenditure on Chinese schools, from \$6.7 million in 1952 to \$13.7 million in 1953 (see Table 2.2).

The change in British policy towards the Chinese schools in 1952, in particular the introduction of the New Salary Aid Scheme, was due to a group of Chinese-speaking officers who were seconded to the Education Department in 1952. According to a British officer who was recruited as the Superintendent of Chinese Schools in Selangor in 1954, this group of officers brought greater sophistication to the government's handling of the Chinese schools.¹⁰⁴ His view is corroborated by a 20-page Report on the

Chinese Schools written by three unnamed British officers who joined the Education Department in January 1952. There was no date on this report but, as it was sent to the Colonial Office in May 1954, it was probably written in late 1953 or early 1954.¹⁰⁵

The Report on the Chinese Schools surveyed changes in policy which had been introduced in 1952 and made follow-up recommendations for the future. Its views echoed in many ways those expressed by Fenn in his confidential memorandum to Gurney in 1951. The colonial government was asked to recognize that the large number of Chinese schools in existence was serving an important and, basically, effective educational role. The government's main objective should be to prevent these Chinese schools from becoming an obstacle to official policy. To do this, the best method was for the government to spend more money to establish greater control over the schools. This would then enable the government to transform the schools so that they were better suited to the needs of Malayan society. Changes should, however, be introduced slowly and almost imperceptibly rather than through drastic measures.¹⁰⁶

The most significant feature of this Report on the Chinese Schools is the clear difference in approach which it recommended towards the primary and secondary schools. The Chinese primary schools were accepted as too well established for the government to attempt any change in their medium of instruction. This would be too drastic. Therefore, the government's main objective should be to maintain the control that had been established through the New Salary Aid Scheme and to transform the schools through locally trained teachers and textbooks. The secondary schools, however, were seen as more malleable as they were just beginning to expand in the early 1950s.

The Report recommended that the government's objective should be to resist the development of a full-fledged stream of Chinese secondary education. This should be done by discouraging any more Chinese secondary schools from being established while those schools which had already started should be pressured to convert themselves into schools teaching in English. The government should be prepared to spend more money on schools which were prepared to 'conform' to this policy and should deny aid to those schools which refused to do so. Little resistance was expected to this policy because the writers of the Report thought that 'most Chinese were aware of the importance of English at the level of higher education'. The government was already giving

extra aid to Chung Ling High School in Penang to pay for teachers trained to teach in English. Chung Ling was teaching most subjects in English and prepared students to sit for the Cambridge School Certificate examinations. The government should be prepared to extend more aid to those schools which followed Chung Ling's example.¹⁰⁷

The writers of the Report had astutely recognized that the growth of Chinese secondary schools presented the government with a problem that should, if possible, be nipped in the bud before it could flower. There were no Malay nor Tamil secondary schools in the 1950s and all official policy statements had recommended that education at the secondary and tertiary levels should be in English only. If Chinese secondary schools expanded further, this would mean that the government would have to address the problems of separate teacher training and textbook production in Chinese at the secondary level. Thus, the Report recommended that administrative barriers should be used to deter the Chinese from setting up more secondary schools and aid be used to pressure existing schools to follow the Chung Ling model.¹⁰⁸

This policy towards the Chinese secondary schools was implemented from early 1953. In March 1953 the Education Department organized a seminar attended by 92 principals and senior staff of Chinese secondary schools to explain the official view on the syllabuses and orientation of secondary education.¹⁰⁹ In April 1953, a circular from the Education Department informed all Chinese schools that plans to start secondary classes must be submitted for approval six months prior to implementation. The Education Department required that secondary classes must be accommodated in a separate building with its own separate staff.¹¹⁰ This set up a major obstacle for the establishment of secondary classes as the Chinese schools usually grew class by class, occupying existing rooms and deploying available staff until the financial resources could be found for building additional rooms or employing additional staff. As each application to start a secondary section was received, the school was pressured to adopt a curriculum similar to the English schools and to use English as the medium of instruction, especially at the upper secondary level.¹¹¹ As the Assistant Director of Education explained to one of the schools:

The aim of any new Chinese Senior Middle school should be to lead to the government Senior Middle examination and the Cambridge School

Certificate. The object of this policy is to equip the Senior Middle graduate with qualifications which are of value in this country, and to provide schools which will in part prepare students for entry to the University of Malaya. There is little point in a Chinese Senior Middle school which is an end in itself or which serves to prepare students for entry only to a university in China.¹¹²

Government officials repeatedly emphasized that the Chinese schools should produce students with the qualifications that would lead to higher education or suitable employment.

Government efforts to discourage the growth of Chinese secondary schools were not too effective. This can be seen from Table 1.8 showing the growth in number of secondary schools and their enrolments in the first post-war decade. The demand for places in secondary schools was so great that education officers in the states sometimes appealed to the Education Department to allow more classes to be set up.¹¹³ As the government was not building sufficient new schools to accommodate this increased demand, it had little alternative but to allow the Chinese schools to set up more secondary classes. Nevertheless, colonial officials persisted with their efforts to try and get the Chinese secondary schools to follow the Chung Ling pattern. To make the Chung Ling pattern attractive to other schools, the colonial government not only gave this school additional aid in 1953. In July 1955, it offered to give Chung Ling full aid comparable to that usually given to English schools.¹¹⁴ This policy towards Chung Ling in particular and the Chinese secondary schools in general laid the groundwork for the Alliance government's policy towards Chinese secondary schools after it came into power.

The British in Retreat

While the government was pushing ahead with more innovative policies in the Chinese schools, not much seemed to be done towards realizing the bold vision of free primary education in 'National schools' proposed in the 1952 Education Ordinance.¹¹⁵ Several times in 1953, questions were raised by local Legislative Councillors, including Dato Razak who had been a member of the Special Committee that drafted the Ordinance. The British were pressed for information on progress in the implementation of the Ordinance. The government provided vague replies, as for example, when the Financial Secretary talked about an already expanding

budget on education; or disingenuous answers, such as when Thuraisingham as Member for Education said free primary education was already available in Malay and estate schools.¹¹⁶ Thuraisingham's answer was particularly weak as he had eulogized the 1952 Ordinance as a commitment on the part of the government to the objective of making free primary education available as widely as possible.

Yeap Chong Kong, who had supported the 1952 Education Ordinance as a 'masterpiece of compromise', tabled two motions in January 1954. One of them called on the government to 'provide as soon as possible as many schools and/or facilities for schooling as are required in every State and Settlement' and the second asked the government to 'give consideration to the immediate implementation of the new Education Policy for free primary education'. The government responded by amending the motions to the effect that implementation would have to be in accordance with 'available financial resources'.¹¹⁷

Local Legislative Councillors had become more assertive and vocal because there was a major change in political mood in the country. After the introduction of local level elections in 1952, the initiative began to pass more and more into the hands of the local élite. By 1953 the British found that they were no longer able to determine the pace of political change nor dictate who their political successors were going to be. In 1953 the Legislative Council became a battleground between Dato Onn's IMP and a growing partnership between UMNO and the MCA. This began soon after Dato Onn's IMP was trounced by an electoral pact between UMNO and the MCA in the Kuala Lumpur municipal elections in February 1952. The UMNO-MCA combination then went on to outshine the IMP in other local level elections held later in 1952 and in 1953. Having begun the electoral process, the British found themselves in the awkward position of having backed the wrong horse. The IMP had lost out to the UMNO-MCA Alliance in the contest for popular support.¹¹⁸

Within the completely nominated Federal Legislative Council as well as the Executive Council, nominees from the IMP outnumbered those from the UMNO and MCA. This became a point of strength for the UMNO-MCA Alliance. Operating astutely as an opposition, UMNO and MCA leaders began to cast the Alliance in the role of a nationalist movement that was fighting for early independence from the British. The IMP, then taking a more conservative approach of advocating a slower transition to self-government

because of its defeats at the polls, was portrayed as a party that was collaborating with British colonialists and trying to delay independence. In May 1954 Alliance leaders went to London to push for the first Federal elections to be held by the end of 1954. When this delegation returned home unsuccessful in June 1954, the Alliance announced that all its members were withdrawing from participation in Federal and State governments. The British were forced to yield to Alliance pressure. The Alliance won a symbolic victory when a compromise solution was offered by Donald MacGillivray who had taken over from Templer as High Commissioner. Elections were to be held in July 1955 and the party which won the majority of the seats open to electoral contest would be assured of a workable majority through the right to nominate five additional members of the Legislative Council.¹¹⁹

With developments towards self-government in full swing, it was not surprising that the White Paper on the implementation of education policy which the British presented to the Legislative Council in October 1954 received an extremely bad reception. The White Paper's proposals provided UMNO-MCA leaders with more ammunition for their position that a colonial government simply could not meet the aspirations of the local population. There were two main points in the White Paper. The first was a major modification in the policy of 'National schools' as proposed in the 1952 Ordinance. The second was a whole range of cut-backs on expenditure on education. The basic reason for these recommendations was financial; there was going to be a deficit of \$200 million in the government's budget for 1954. Over the past two years, the government's revenue was dropping whilst its expenditure had been increasing.

The White Paper explained that the cost of implementing the policy of 'National schools' as defined in the 1952 Education Ordinance would cost an estimated \$200 million. And this would only cover primary education. Since the total revenue for the 1954 fiscal year was estimated at \$600 million, it was 'clearly impossible' for the government to concentrate its limited resources on building new 'National schools'. The White Paper proposed instead that the 'National schools' concept should be implemented by introducing 'National streams', consisting of multiracial classes teaching in English, in *all* vernacular schools. Primary 1 classes would be introduced in the first year and more classes would be added progressively each year until within six years there was a complete 'National stream' within what was originally a vernacular school.

This proposal implied that all vernacular schools would eventually be dominated, and perhaps ultimately displaced, by 'National streams' since these streams would receive more financial support from the government as a central feature of policy as contained in the 1952 Ordinance. This implication was further supported by the fact that the cut-backs on education expenditure proposed in the White Paper would restrict expansion in the vernacular primary schools. There was to be a brake on any further increases in aid to *all* vernacular schools. Fewer Malay primary schools were to be established and no secondary Malay schools at all.¹²⁰

These proposals made the White Paper the target of severe criticisms within the Legislative Council and the subject of intense attacks outside it. Coming so soon after the 1952 Education Ordinance's promise of greater government commitment to education, the problems of finance raised by the White Paper sounded like lame excuses as well as an admission of bad planning on the part of the colonial government. The government was rapped for proposing to reduce expenditure on education when demand for schooling was increasing phenomenally. The White Paper evoked a sense of outrage because the reductions of expenditure on education would definitely result in more children being deprived of an education. Its proposals to cut back on aid to vernacular schools meant that even where physical facilities in these schools were available the government would not provide money to help pay for teachers so that more classes could be opened.¹²¹

The White Paper's proposal that English streams should be started in vernacular primary schools was perceived by both Chinese and Malay school teachers as an attempt by the colonial government to use the 'National schools' policy to convert vernacular schools into English schools. The White Paper was described by the Chinese school teachers as a final desperate attempt by the British to eliminate the Chinese schools by forcing them to convert into English schools. It was criticized by Malay school teachers as an attempt by the British 'to oust the Malay language'.¹²²

That the British intended to use the White Paper of 1954 to strengthen the position of the English language within Malaya's education system can be supported by two developments, unknown to the public at that time. First, the colonial government's record on educational development had already been criticized, confidentially, in a working paper prepared in July 1954 by Professor Falk who was part of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development mission to Malaya. Falk had

criticized the policy proposed in the 1952 Education Ordinance as impractical and declared the objective of replacing vernacular schools by 'National schools' to be financially not feasible. In actual practice, he pointed out, the Education Department had in effect accepted the need for vernacular schools to continue. He therefore recommended that the proposal to create 'National schools' as defined by the 1952 Education Ordinance should be abandoned and the government should adopt openly as policy what, in effect, it had been practising. Falk advocated that the multiple vernacular system of schools be retained, expanded, and improved as an immediate necessity. More bridges for pupils to transfer to the English stream could be set up to make the English schools the confluence of the different streams of vernacular primary schools and the mainstream of secondary education. He emphasized that with only 56 per cent of children of school-going age admitted into schools, the gap between the demand for and supply of education in Malaya was reaching 'crisis' proportions. The government's first priority should be to expand educational opportunities through maximizing the existing vernacular schools rather than try to replace them by restricting their growth.¹²³ Falk's recommendations were definitely quite different from those proposed by the British in the White Paper.

MacGillivray's response to Falk's report indicated why Falk's recommendations were not acceptable to his government. He described Falk's proposals as tantamount to 'throwing the Education Ordinance overboard'. This, said MacGillivray, would have the effect of encouraging further controversy and criticisms of the government especially from those who had all along opposed the Ordinance. MacGillivray named the Chinese school teachers as a group which would like to see the Ordinance thrown overboard. He was, however, adamant that the 1952 Ordinance should stay in place.¹²⁴ Hence the White Paper, in contrast to Falk's recommendations, proposed to retain the British policy of 'National schools' by trying to introduce multiracial classes teaching in English into vernacular schools. The choice of MacGillivray's government was to spend the limited money available on strengthening the concept of multiracial classes teaching in English. This had been an ideal embedded in statements of British policy since the First Report of the CAC in 1950.

This interpretation is further supported by the second development. This was MacGillivray's attempt to get the government of the United Kingdom to sponsor the setting up of 300 special schools as models of the 'National schools' proposed in the 1952

Education Ordinance. MacGillivray wanted the 300 special schools to set the standard in quality education, so that 'the vernacular schools will wane in popularity'. 'Sir Donald MacGillivray's Proposals for National Schools in Malaya' generated much discussion and paperwork in the Colonial Office in June and July 1955 when MacGillivray was on home leave in England.¹²⁵ The basic idea was for the government of the United Kingdom to provide the necessary funds for setting up 300 'National schools' as a 'parting gift' to Malaya. MacGillivray's plan was to announce this gift at the opening session of the first elected Legislative Council in August 1955.

The basic reason for his proposal was, as MacGillivray himself acknowledged, a political one. The 300 special schools would seed the right kind of education system while the British still had the influence and power. A system of multiracial schools teaching in English, said MacGillivray, was crucial to combatting the dangers of communalism and fighting the attractions of communism. It was also an important way of safeguarding Britain's political objective of 'a united Malayan nation attached to the British connection and firmly aligned with the anti-communist world'. The amount involved, estimated at \$2 million per year for the next 14 years, was in MacGillivray's opinion 'not an excessive premium' to safeguard British investment in Malaya. The British had, after all, been spending an estimated 65 million pounds sterling per year on maintaining fighting forces during the Emergency.¹²⁶

MacGillivray's proposal was supported by the Foreign Secretary and the Colonial Office but Treasury officials were worried that special aid for Malaya would set a precedent for similar requests from other British colonies. The British government had made a decision to reduce its commitments abroad and could not come up with the money for MacGillivray's proposal.¹²⁷ In the end, MacGillivray's 300 special schools never materialized.¹²⁸ Nevertheless, the proposal and the interest it generated in the Colonial Office support the interpretation that the British were still trying to leave a legacy of schools in which the English language had a dominant role just before they handed political power to the local élite.

In June 1955 the British were not only running out of money. They were also running out of time. The White Paper was put to the Legislative Council in October 1954. This left too little time for its proposals to have much effect before a locally elected government took over after the July 1955 elections. The proposal to establish English streams in vernacular classes was opposed so

vehemently that it was never really implemented. Opposition to the White Paper's proposals, in fact, reflected the strong desire of both Chinese and Malays to have their children educated in their own languages at least at the primary school level. Soon after the Alliance won the elections, a Committee was appointed to review education policy.

1. Mohammed Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation: Political Unification in the Malaysian Region, 1945-1965*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1976, p. 13.

2. On British planning for the Malayan Union, see James de V. Allen, *The Malayan Union*, South-East Asian Studies Monograph Series No. 10, New Haven: Yale University, 1967; C. M. Turnbull, 'British Planning for Post-war Malaya', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 5, 2(1974): 239-54; Mohammed Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation*; A. J. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics during the Malayan Union Experiment, 1942-1948*, JMBRAS Monograph No. 8, Kuala Lumpur, 1979 and Albert Lau, *The Malayan Union Controversy, 1942-1948*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991. Officers recruited to serve in post-war Malaya were told during their briefing that Singapore was excluded because her population was predominantly Chinese, her free port status was incompatible with the revenue system of the Malay States, and her naval and military base would be required by the British long after the Malayan Union had gained independence. See J. M. Gullick, 'My Time in Malaya', p. 11, Box 13 File 4, Heussler Papers, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 480, RHO.

3. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics*, p. 31.

4. Mohammed Noordin Sopiee, *From Malayan Union to Singapore Separation*, p. 24.

5. See K. J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965, pp. 73-5 for a discussion of citizenship provisions of the Malayan Union.

6. Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983, p. 17.

7. *Ibid.*, Chs. 6, 7, and 8. See also K. Burrige, 'Race Relations in Johore', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, 2, 2 (1957): 151-68 and Nellie Goh Kim Guat, 'Sino-Malay Relations in Malaya, 1945-1955', BA academic exercise, University of Malaya, 1960.

8. See Khoo Kay Kim, 'Sino-Malay Relations in Peninsular Malaysia before 1942', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 12, 1 (1981): 93-107 for a quick survey. Examples of Malay views in the 1930s can be found in Zabedah Awang Ngah (ed.), *Antologi Esei Melayu dalam Tahun-tahun 1924-1941*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1964 and Khoo Kay Kim and Jazamuddin Baharuddin (comps.), *Lembaran Akhbar Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Melayu, 1980.

9. For a brief but perceptive discussion, see Cheah Boon Kheng, 'The Erosion of Ideological Hegemony and Royal Power and the Rise of Malay Nationalism, 1945-1946', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 19, 1 (1988): 1-26. See also Ishak

bin Tadin, 'Datuk Onn and Malay Nationalism, 1946-1951', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 1, 1 (1960): 62-102; Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail, 'Takkan Melayu Hilang di Dunia: Suatu Sorotan Tentang Nasionalisme Melayu' in Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail and R. Suntharalingam (eds.), *Nasionalisme: Satu Tinjauan Sejarah*, Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1985, pp. 36-63; and Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu: Malay Concepts of Democracy and Community, 1945-1950*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993. Two useful compilations of speeches and events are Mohammed Yunus Hamidi, *Sejarah Pergerakan Politik Melayu Semenanjung*, Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1961 and Ibrahim Mahmood, *Sejarah Perjuangan Bangsa Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1981.

10. See Ramlah Adam, *UMNO: Organisasi dan Kegiatan Politik*, Kota Bharu: Mohd. Nawawi Book Store, 1978 and also her *Dato' Onn Jaafar: Peranannya di dalam Politik dan Pentadbiran Persekutuan Tanah Melayu, 1895-1962*, Kuala Lumpur: Gateway Publishing House, 1987.

11. Barely a month after Gent was installed as the Governor of the Malayan Union, he had held his first meeting with the Malay rulers. In June 1946 meetings were held with the rulers and UMNO leaders to discuss possible alternatives. Detailed discussions are available in Allen, *The Malayan Union*; Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics*, and Albert Lau, *The Malayan Union Controversy*. See also Malcolm Macdonald's account in Transcript of an interview by Ivan Lloyd Philips, 15 December 1972, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 533/5, RHO.

12. See MacDonald's account of this in *ibid.* Correspondence relating to the search for a new High Commissioner for the Federation of Malaya, Creech-Jones Papers, Box 57 File 2, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 332, RHO, show that the search for Gent's replacement had already begun on 1 June 1948 before Gent's death.

13. See Robert Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya, 1942-1957*, Singapore: Heinemann Asia, 1985, pp. 94-5.

14. See Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process*, Ch. 3, for detailed comparison of citizenship provisions for non-Malays in the Malayan Union and Federation of Malaya. See also Cheah Boon Kheng, 'Malayan Chinese and the Citizenship Issue, 1945-1948', *RIMA*, 12, 2 (1978): 95-122 and R. K. Vasil, *Ethnic Politics in Malaysia*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1980, pp. 17-30.

15. The Working Committee which drafted the Federation of Malaya proposals consisted of six British officials, four Malay rulers, and two UMNO representatives. The Consultative Committee had two Chinese members. See Gordon Means, *Malaysian Politics*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970, pp. 50-6, Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process*, pp. 50-4, and Albert Lau, *The Malayan Union Controversy*, Chs. 8 and 9.

16. Council Paper No. 53 of 1946, reprinted as Appendix XV in MU, *Annual Report on Education*, 1946. Cheeseman had, together with S. M. Middlebrook, put together some ideas for post-war policy while they were still prisoners of war in Singapore. See CO 273/676/1 and CO 273/676/6, PRO Kew, for Cheeseman's involvement in planning for post-war education policy.

17. *Proceedings of the Malayan Union Advisory Council*, 10-11 December 1946. There were no UMNO representatives in the Council as part of UMNO's opposition to the Malayan Union.

18. Letter from Panglima Bukit Gantang, Secretary-General of UMNO to Governor of the Malayan Union, 1 February 1947, in CO 717/162/52746. The Governor replied on 26 February 1947, agreeing that implementation of policy would be withheld till after the Constitution issue was settled.

19. FM, *Annual Report on Education*, 1949, p. 28.

20. 'Report of Conference of Directors and Deputy Directors of Education, Singapore, 23-24 June 1949', CO 717/162/52746 (Annexe).

21. FM, *First Report of the Central Advisory Committee on Education* (Council Paper No. 29 of 1950). The Committee, chaired by Holgate, comprised four Malays, four Chinese, two Indians, one Eurasian, and eight expatriates.

22. FM, *Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council*, Third Session, 27 July 1950.

23. Opposition to the First Report of the CAC was also expressed by the Malay rulers and the *Utusan Melayu*, a leading Malay daily. See Pelajaran Kota Bharu File 185/49, ANM.

24. FM, *Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council*, Third Session, 27 July 1950.

25. 'Report of Conference of Directors and Deputy Directors of Education, Singapore, 23-24 June 1949', CO 717/162/52746 (Annexe).

26. See 'Extracts from Minutes of Executive Council Meeting, 25 July 1950', CO 717/190/52336. The need for a general review on Malay education seems to have originated from student troubles at the Sultan Idris Training College in 1949. A full report of this is available in the same file.

27. Letter from Sir Henry Gurney to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 29 July 1950, CO 717/193/52621. By December 1950, the decision to appoint Professor Fenn from the United States was confirmed and his proposal to have Wu Teh Yao as his assistant accepted.

28. Paul Chang Min Phang, *Educational Development in a Plural Society: A Malaysian Case Study*, Singapore: Academia Publications, 1973, p. 43 and Chai Hon Chan, *Education and Nation-building in Plural Societies: The Malaysian Experience*, Development Studies Centre Monograph No. 6, Canberra: Australian National University, 1977, p. 21.

29. See Gene Hanrahan, *The Communist Struggle in Malaya*, first published 1954; Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1971; M. R. Stenson, *Repression and Revolt: The Origins of the 1948 Communist Insurrection in Malaya and Singapore*, Athens: Ohio University Press, 1969; and Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960*, London: Frederick Muller, 1979. See also M. R. Stenson's *Industrial Conflict in Malaya: Prelude to the Communist Revolt of 1948*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970. For assessments of the situation in 1946-8 by Victor Purcell, W. L. Blythe, and G. W. Webb, three Chinese Affairs officers in the Malayan Union and Singapore, see W. L. Blythe Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 116, RHO; G. W. Webb Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 255 and 'Note by W. L. Blythe', in response to a letter from Sir Thomas Lloyd of the Colonial Office, 12 September 1948, in Box 9 File 3, Robert Heussler Papers, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 480, RHO.

30. Stenson, *Repression and Revolt*, p. 3.

31. Dalley was reporting on the political situation at a conference held on 26 June 1947 in Malcolm MacDonald's Office in Singapore. The conference was called by MacDonald, then Governor-General, to discuss the threat posed by the CPM. The minutes provide an interesting insight into views of British officials in June 1947. See minutes of the conference in John Dalley Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 254, RHO.

32. The relationship between the CPM and the PUTERA-AMCJA is discussed in detail in Cheah Boon Kheng, *The Masked Comrades: A Study of the Communist United Front in Malaya, 1945-1948*, Singapore: Times Books International, 1979. For discussions of the PUTERA-AMCJA, see also Yeo Kim

Wah, 'The Anti-Federation Movement in Malaya, 1946-1948', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 4, 1 (1973): 31-51; Cheah Boon Kheng, 'Asal-usul dan Asas Nasionalisme Malaya', in Abdul Rahman Haji Ismail and R. Suntharalingam (eds.), *Nasionalisme: Satu Tinjauan Sejarah*, Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1985, pp. 81-103. See Pusat Tenaga Rakyat, *The People's Constitutional Proposals for Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, November 1947, for PUTERA-AMCJA's own statement of its political ideals.

33. See Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989 and citations in n. 29 above.

34. See Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare*, Ch. 3. This phrase, which came from Tan Cheng Lock's submission to the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs, 24 July 1948, was used by Stubbs as the title for his chapter.

35. See Memorandum written by D. Gray, Acting Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Federation of Malaya, 4 December 1951 in W. J. Watts Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 320, RHO.

36. See 'Text of Talk on Experiences during the Emergency given by A. H. P. Humphrey, at the Far East Centre, St Anthony's College, Oxford, 22 May 1979, MSS Pac. s. 115, RHO. Humphrey was the Secretary for Defence and Internal Security in the Federation from 1953 to 1957. Before that he was Deputy Secretary (1951 and 1952) and Assistant Secretary (1949-50).

37. Letter from Gurney to Thomas Lloyd, 20 December 1948 in CO 537/3758, PRO Kew.

38. See Draft Memorandum written by D. Gray, Acting Secretary for Chinese Affairs, 4 December 1951; 'The Chinese Problem in Malaya' by D. Gray, July 1952; and 'The Chinese Problem in the Federation of Malaya' by F. Brewer, 1955, all in W. J. Watts Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 320, RHO. See also Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare*, Ch. 3 and Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya, 1942-1957*, Ch. 6.

39. The number of staff was determined from the minutes of a Conference of the Chinese Inspectorate, 5 July 1948 in Selangor Ed. Ch. File 11/48, ANM.

40. Number of staff was determined from 'Minutes of Conference of Superintendents, Chief Inspectors, Inspectors and Assistant Inspectors of Chinese Schools Held at the Federal Education Department, Kuala Lumpur on 12th and 13th August 1953' in Selangor Ed. Ch. File 11/48, ANM. The monthly Administrative Report for April 1952, in CO 1022/449, PRO Kew, stated that two Chinese-speaking European Inspectors had been recruited and 10 additional posts had been created but were not yet filled.

41. 'Communism and the Chinese Schools', in W. D. Horne Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 128, RHO. Horne was an ex-MCS officer who was recalled to work in the Special Branch during the first two years of the Emergency.

42. See 'Chinese in Malaya: Cultural Background' by W. L. Blythe, April 1947 and Blythe's replies to a questionnaire from Lennox Mills, 21 September 1948, both in W. L. Blythe Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 116, RHO. See also Note by Blythe on the Memorandum on the Chinese in Malaya written by Webb (9 August 1948), 30 August 1948, G. W. Webb Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 255, RHO.

43. 'Chinese in Malaya: Cultural Background' by W. L. Blythe, April 1947. This was written by Blythe as a background paper for submission to the Carr-Saunders Committee appointed to study university education in the Federation.

44. Extract from 'Minutes of Joint Chinese Affairs Committee of the Federation of Malaya and Singapore', CO 717/162/52746 and 'Paper on Education Policy for Chinese in the Federation, 17 June 1949', CO 717/52336/1/50.

45. *Ibid.*

46. Dispatch from Gurney to Creech-Jones, 12 January 1950, Creech-Jones Papers, Box 57 File 2, MSS Brit. Emp. s. 332, RHO.

47. *SPJP* for the months of February-June 1950.

48. FM, *Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council*, Third Session, 27 July 1950.

49. Letter from Chief Secretary of the Federal Government to all State and Settlement Secretaries, 15 August 1950, Pelajaran Kelantan File 122/50, ANM.

50. Several Malay States were resistant to the pressure from the Federal Government to increase aid to Chinese schools and agreed finally on the understanding that it was an interim measure till the release of the Barnes Report. See CO 717/52336/1/50.

51. These began in Jelebu Seremban through the initiative of Charles Howe; see Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya, 1942-1957*, pp. 161-9.

52. These figures were taken from Table 3.3 in Francis Loh Kok Wah, *Beyond the Tin Mines: Coolies, Squatters and New Villagers in the Kinta Valley, Malaysia, c. 1880-1980*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988, p. 124. For detailed discussions of squatter resettlement, see Kernal Singh Sandhu, 'The Saga of the Squatter in Malaya', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 5, 1 (1965): 143-77; Short, *Communist Insurrection in Malaya* and Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare*.

53. See 'Administration of Chinese Settlements', Directive by H. R. Briggs, 26 February 1951, CO 1022/32, PRO Kew.

54. See copy of Directive 13 and other documents relating to New Village schools in CO 1022/32, PRO Kew and the section on Education in the New Villages in the Federation of Malaya, *Resettlement and the Development of New Villages in the Federation of Malaya Ordinance, 1952*.

55. Memorandum from Fenn to Gurney, 15 June 1951, CO 717/191/52336/3.

56. See the list of members of the Committee in FM, *Report on the Committee on Malay Education* (Council Paper No. 23 of 1951), p. iii; cited henceforth as the Barnes Report.

57. Dr William Fenn and Dr Wu Teh Yao were both recruited from the United States. Fenn had experience with educational institutions in China and Wu had spent some years in Penang during which he had been a student of the Chung Ling High School.

58. FM, *Report of a Mission Invited by the Federation Government to Study the Problem of the Education of the Chinese in Malaya: Chinese Schools and the Education of Chinese Malaysians* (Council Paper No. 35 of 1951), pp. 2-3; cited henceforth as the Fenn-Wu Report.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 3.

60. Chai Hon Chan, *Education and Nation-building*, p. 23.

61. Chinese response will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3. For an account of Malay responses, see T. R. Fennel, 'Commitment to Change: A History of Malayan Educational Policy, 1945-1957', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1968, pp. 182-4.

62. See the *Straits Times*, from the middle of June to late July 1951.

63. A copy of this article, published in the *Straits Budget*, 13 September 1951, is available in CO 1022/285, PRO Kew.

64. Dispatch from Gurney to Cox, 9 April 1951, CO 717/191/52336/3.
65. Dispatch from Cox to Gurney, 14 August 1951, CO 717/191/52336/3.
66. Dispatch from Cox to Gurney, 16 May 1951, CO 717/191/52336/3.
67. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Central Advisory Committee on Education on July 23rd and 24th 1951', in Member for Education File 31/51, ANM. The CAC took only three meetings to agree on its recommendations.
68. FM, *Second Report of the Central Advisory Committee on Education* (Council Paper No. 44 of 1951).
69. 'Extract from Minutes of an Executive Council Meeting held on 28 August 1951', in CO 717/190/52336/2.
70. This is discussed in the final section of this chapter.
71. Dispatch from Gurney to Cox, 6 August 1951, CO 717/191/52336/3.
72. FM, *Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council, Fourth Session*, 20 September 1951.
73. For more details on these political developments, see Means, *Malaysian Politics*, Ch. 5; Khong Kim Hoong, *Merdeka: British Rule and the Struggle for Independence in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Institute for Social Analysis, 1984, Ch. 5; James Ongkili, *Nation-building in Malaysia, 1946-1974*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985, Ch. 3.
74. See the list of members in FM, *Report of the Special Committee Appointed on the 20th day of September 1951 to Recommend Legislation to Cover All Aspects of Educational Policy for the Federation of Malaya* (Council Paper No. 70 of 1952); cited henceforth as *Report of the Special Committee of September 1951*.
75. FM, *Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council, Fourth Session*, 20 September 1951.
76. Ibid.
77. *Report of the Special Committee of September 1951*, paras. 15-21 and *Education Ordinance, 1952*, sect. 21. The minutes of all but two of the meetings of the Special Committee are available in Selangor Secretariat File 2143/51 and provide some interesting insights into the discussions behind the main provisions of the Ordinance.
78. *Report of the Special Committee of September 1951*, para. 17 and *Education Ordinance, 1952*, sects. 18 and 20. The Committee spent several meetings debating the language issue; see minutes of committee meetings in Selangor Secretariat File 2143/51.
79. *Report of the Special Committee of September 1951*, para. 19 and *Education Ordinance, 1952*, sect. 72.
80. *Report of the Special Committee of September 1951*, paras. 25-9.
81. *Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council, Fifth Session*, 20-21 November 1952.
82. Ibid., Second Session, 28 November 1949.
83. According to the SS, *Annual Report on Education, 1936*, p. 32, English was taught in almost all Chinese schools.
84. FM, *Annual Report on Education, 1952*, p. 9.
85. FM, *Annual Report on Education, 1950*, p. 6, and First Report of the Central Advisory Committee, p. 7. An earlier attempt to change the terms of Chinese schools in 1946 had been opposed by many Chinese schools, see Director of Education File 95/46.
86. Memorandum by D. Gray, Acting Secretary for Chinese Affairs, 4 December 1951, W. J. Watts Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 320, RHO.
87. See Chapter 1, pp. 30-1.

88. FM, *Annual Report on Education*, 1952, p. 6. The monthly administrative report for May 1952 in CO 1022/449, PRO Kew, stated that the school had a capacity of 560 and an enrolment of 250. The discrepancy in the number of students may be due to the fact that the school also had three Junior Middle classes whose students would only be considered to be teacher trainees when they entered the Senior Normal section of the school.

89. Fenn-Wu Report, p. 19.

90. See the paper by C. E. S. Adkins on 'Chinese textbooks' and 'Extract from Federal Executive Council Minutes, 5 February 1952', in CO 1022/285, PRO Kew.

91. Letter from the Secretary to the Member for Education to the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (formation of this organization will be discussed in Chapter 3), inviting representatives from the teachers to participate in designing new syllabuses and production of new textbooks for the Chinese schools, 10 March 1952, UCSTA Files.

92. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1988, Vol. 1, pp. 31-43. Lim was then an active leader who later became president of the UCSTA; see Chapter 3.

93. The progress of the committees was reported regularly in the Chinese press which also published in full the new syllabuses; see especially *SCJP*, April 1952 and May 1953.

94. FM, *Annual Report on Education*, 1954, p. 38.

95. E. E. C. Thuraingham, the Member for Education, described the main points of the new scheme in a radio broadcast reported in *SCJP*, 27 June 1952.

96. Quotation from Monthly Administrative Report for April 1952, before the scheme was publicly announced, in CO 1022/449, PRO Kew.

97. FM, *Annual Report on Education*, 1952, p. 9.

98. This will be discussed in Chapter 3.

99. See documents explaining the operation of the New Aid Scheme in detail, Ed. Ch. Kn. File 15/52, ANM.

100. Undated UCSTA memorandum on the New Salary Aid Scheme in UCSTA Files. This is one of the documents not reprinted in *Jiaozong Jiaoyu Yanjiu Zhongxin* (comp.), *Jiaozong 33nian*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, 1987. See, however, statements by Lim Lian Geok and the Kuala Lumpur Chinese School Teachers' Association which made basically similar points; both reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 309-12.

101. This will be discussed in Chapter 4.

102. For financial implications of the concessions made in response to representations from the Chinese school teachers, see three documents on the New Salary Aid Scheme dated 19 May 1952, 11 November 1952, and 6 June 1953 in Director of Education File 483/1952, ANM.

103. FM, *Annual Report on Education*, 1953, p. 29.

104. Interview, Alan Young, 9 September 1981, Penang. Young informed me that there was a special report on the new aid scheme but I have not been able to locate this report so far in any of the Education Files in the Arkib Negara Malaysia nor in any of the Colonial Office Files.

105. This Report was submitted by Donald MacGillivray to Sir John Martin at the Colonial Office, 15 May 1954, CO 1030/266, PRO Kew. An initial report written in November 1952 was mentioned but I have not been able to locate this. 'An expurgated shortened version' was prepared, with the more critical and frank comments of the original writers removed, for discussion in the Executive Council. An

even shorter version was produced for circulation by the Colonial Office; see 'Federation of Malaya: The Chinese Schools', High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 22 March 1955. All are in the same file.

106. Ibid.

107. Ibid. Chung Ling was also highlighted in the Fenn-Wu Report as setting a pattern for other Chinese secondary schools. See Fenn-Wu Report, p. 22.

108. Ibid.

109. Monthly Administrative Report for March 1953, in CO 1022/449. Lim Lian Geok, who was a teacher in the secondary section of the Confucian School in Kuala Lumpur, attended the conference. See his *Huiyi pianpian lu*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, n.d., pp. 47-57, for his impressions of the conference.

110. Circular from Education Department, 28 April 1953 in Education Department (Pentadbiran) File 1274, Vol. 1, ANM.

111. See various applications and responses from the Education Department in Education Department (Pentadbiran) File 1274, Vols. 1-2, ANM.

112. Reply from E. M. F. Payne, Assistant Director of Education to the Han Chiang High School in Penang in Education Department (Pentadbiran) File 1274, Vol. 1, ANM.

113. See, for example, the appeal from the Superintendent of Education in Johore, 12 January 1954, in Education Department (Pentadbiran) File 1274, Vol. 1, requesting the Assistant Director of Education to approve in principle the application by Chung Hwa School in Muar to start secondary classes because there was 'an acute problem' of insufficient provision of secondary education for students in Chinese vernacular schools.

114. This will be discussed in Chapter 6.

115. According to FM, *Annual Report on Education*, 1953, p. 56, no 'National Schools' were set up during the year.

116. Questions on the implementation of education policy were raised by Dato Abdul Razak on 20 March 1953; Datin Puteh Mariah on 25 November 1953, and Mohammed Eusoff on 26 November 1953; see FM, *Proceedings of Federal Legislative Council*, Sixth Session, on dates referred to.

117. Ibid., 7 January 1954 and 8 January 1954.

118. See Karl von Vorvys, *Democracy without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, p. 109, for the results of municipal elections in 1952 and 1953, and Ch. 5, for a more detailed discussion of political changes from 1952 to 1955.

119. For general accounts of these political developments, see Von Vorvys, *Democracy without Consensus*, Ch. 5; Means, *Malaysian Politics*, Ch. 10; Khong Kim Hoong, *Merdeka*, Ch. 5. They can tracked in some detail through the enclosures in CO 1022/81, CO 1022/191, CO 1030/309, and CO 1030/311 in PRO Kew. See also Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj, *Looking Back: Monday Musings and Memories*, Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1977 and *Political Awakening*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1986; as well as T. H. Tan, *The Prince and I*, Singapore: Sam Boyd Enterprises and Mini Media Pte. Ltd., 1979.

120. FM, *Report of the Special Committee Appointed by the High Commissioner in Council to Consider Ways and Means of Implementing the Policy Outlined in the Education Ordinance, 1952 in the context of diminishing financial resources of the Federation* (Council Paper No. 67 of 1954); cited henceforth as the White Paper of 1954.

121. Thomas Hunter, the Chief Education Officer of Malacca, pointed this out in his draft annual report for 1955. Hunter hoped that this unsatisfactory state of affairs would be remedied by the central government soon. See Draft Report on Education for 1955, Thomas Hunter Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 133, RHO.

122. See Fennel, 'Commitment to Charge', pp. 282-90.

123. 'Education in the Federation of Malaya: A Working Paper for the Report of the Mission to Malaya', by I. S. Falk, Ph.D., Consultant for Social Services with the assistance of Ruth Falk, BA, July 1954, in CO 1030/52, PRO Kew. The published version was milder; see *The Economic Development of Malaya: Report by the International Bank for Research and Development*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University, 1955, Technical Report 9, pp. 439-501.

124. Letter from MacGillivray to Sir John Martin of the Colonial Office, 17 September 1954, and Letter from MacGillivray to Sir Louis Chick of the IBRD Mission to Malaya, both in CO 1030/50, PRO Kew.

125. MacGillivray's proposal first appeared in Enclosure 62 in CO 1030/51. It then underwent several drafts after circulation through several officials in the Colonial Office in June and July 1955. Enclosure 70, 'Sir Donald MacGillivray's Proposals for National Schools in Malaya', was the final version. See Enclosures 62-81 of CO 1030/51, PRO Kew.

126. Enclosure 70 in CO 1030/51.

127. Letter from Treasury to Cruikshank in Colonial Office, 19 August 1955, Enclosure 78 in CO 1030/51.

128. See Letter from MacGillivray to Cruikshank in the Colonial Office, 11 September 1955, CO 1030/51, PRO Kew, thanking him for his help in trying to put his proposals through to the Treasury. MacGillivray informed Cruikshank that the Alliance government had already appointed a Committee to review Education Policy. This was the Razak Committee which will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Genesis of the Chinese Education Movement

THE release of the Barnes Report in June 1951 precipitated a sense of crisis in Chinese society. To the Chinese school teachers, the Barnes Report's recommendation that all vernacular schools should be abolished and replaced by a single system of primary schools teaching in English and Malay sounded like the death knell of Chinese education. They immediately began organizing themselves to come to the defence of the Chinese schools. The first national-level meeting of teachers was held in August 1951. The United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA), an organization representing Chinese school teachers throughout Malaya, was formed in December 1951.

Community leaders who sat on the Management Committees (MCs) of the Chinese schools were the second major component of the movement to defend the Chinese schools. It was the MCs which made most of the decisions for the schools. Therefore, their views and the extent to which they were prepared to continue providing financial support was a critical factor in deciding the future of the schools. In November 1952, leaders of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) joined teachers and MCs of Chinese schools at a meeting which symbolized the inception of the Chinese Education Movement. The inclusion of the MCA, an organization formed to unite the Chinese politically, provided the Chinese education organizations with a direct channel to the most important local politicians emerging in Malaya in the crucial years before independence. This chapter discusses the political orientations, organization, and leadership of the three groups that came together in the Chinese Education Movement.

The end of the Second World War marked the beginning of a new era for the Chinese living in Malaya. The Malayan Union would have provided citizenship rights to 83 per cent of the Chinese then resident on the peninsula as 62.5 per cent of them were born locally and 21.3 per cent had lived in Malaya since or before 1930.¹ The Federation of Malaya agreement subsequently

reduced the numbers of Chinese who qualified for citizenship. Nevertheless, its provisions, together with amendments introduced after 1952, enabled more than a million Chinese to obtain citizenship by 1953.² The right to citizenship meant that the Chinese had to make a clear choice as to where their political loyalties lay. A new phase in which the Chinese had to work out a new political identity as citizens of Malaya had begun. What did this new political identity mean in terms of their cultural identity? What would happen to the language, culture, and schools of the Chinese in the future? The leaders of the Chinese Education Movement began to formulate answers to these questions as they grappled with the problem of the future role of the Chinese schools.

The Chinese School Teachers

Teachers in the Chinese schools were a poorly paid group which enjoyed no job security at all. Before 1941, teachers' salaries ranged from \$25 to \$50 per month. In 1946 salaries had improved to a range stretching from \$65 to a maximum \$263.³ But, in fact, most teachers found themselves being paid at the bottom of this range. Senior Normal graduates, for example, were paid \$65 to \$85 per month while those with more years of experience might earn from \$90 to \$120. Only secondary school teachers or principals earned \$200 and above per month. By comparison, teachers of English schools were paid in the range of \$240 to \$400, with even higher salary scales for university graduates.⁴ This disparity in pay between Chinese and English schools was a source of dissatisfaction and frustration for teachers in the Chinese schools.

Chinese school teachers did not enjoy security of tenure in their jobs. They were employed on yearly or six-monthly contracts and contract renewals depended entirely on principals or the MCs of the schools concerned. Any change in the MC, or the principal of the school, could mean loss of employment for the school's teachers. Needless to say, the teachers did not enjoy the benefits of annual increments, medical treatment, or retirement schemes. The plight of the teachers was well captured in this description in the 1952 *Annual Report on Education* (p. 9): 'The teachers in Chinese schools have always been insecure as wage-earners in this country, with the inevitable shifts and straits and lack of professional dignity and social status which have made them poor itinerants, packing bag and baggage for the annual mass migration to other jobs in other schools.' The teachers described their pay and working conditions as worse than that of domestic servants!⁵

Despite their poor pay, Chinese school teachers were respected members of an immigrant society which placed a high value on education. As an educated élite, the teachers were looked upon as opinion leaders. On their part, the teachers saw themselves as having a moral duty to lead because of their education and position as intellectuals. The tradition in which they had been educated taught that 'learning was for this world and that it had a moral and social purpose.'⁶ Within this basically Confucian tradition, those with knowledge had the duty to propound and uphold what was right. The highest admiration was always reserved for 'those who were fearless in their pursuit of principles and who followed their ideals no matter what the obstacles and, most of all, were brilliant in their ability to articulate these ideals'.⁷ In the twentieth century, this traditional world-view was overlaid by a newer concept of political activism as the intelligentsia in China became the leaders of modern nationalistic movements.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, the Chinese school teachers in Malaya played a dominant role in the political life of the Chinese. They were active participants of China-orientated nationalistic activities. Supporters of both the Kuomintang (KMT) and the Communist Party of China (CPC) could be found amongst their ranks. Politically committed teachers sought, in turn, to influence their students. As a result, they were targets of British surveillance and control. All teachers were required to register with the colonial authorities after the 1920 Registration of Schools Ordinance was passed. A careful record of the teachers was kept. Those whom the Central Criminal Registry thought were undesirable were refused registration, and therefore employment, as teachers. Sometimes they were deported back to China. A teacher whose registration had been approved would be given a lecture by a colonial official in something like the following terms: 'You must remember that you are not now in your own country and that you must teach nothing which is likely to cause disaffection against the State of Johore [for example] which is a Malay state. You must not teach politics and you must not take part in anti-British activities.'⁸

When the Japanese invaded Malaya, Chinese who had been involved in *huaqiao* nationalism or supportive of anti-Japanese activities were amongst the victims of the infamous *suying* (or purification by elimination) campaign in which thousands of Chinese were rounded up for summary execution.⁹ Amongst them were Chinese school teachers and students.¹⁰ The most politically committed amongst them may have joined resistance forces in the

jungle under the leadership of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) or guerrilla groups organized by the KMT. Some sought refuge in villages in the rural outskirts or remote areas. For example, David Chen the headmaster of Chung Ling High School in Penang found refuge with friendly Chinese villagers in the Cameron Highlands for the entire duration of the Occupation.¹¹ Many turned to other trades and occupations to survive. Lim Lian Geok, a teacher at the Confucian School in Kuala Lumpur, spent the Occupation years rearing pigs for a living.¹² A few, like Chou Man Sha, who was a Chinese school teacher in Penang when the war began, were forced to learn Japanese and teach in Japanese in the handful of Chinese schools which opened during the Occupation.¹³

After the Japanese surrender in September 1946, most of the teachers who had survived helped in the rehabilitation of the Chinese schools. David Chen returned to his post as headmaster of the Chung Ling High School; Lim Lian Geok sold all his pigs and used the proceeds to help rebuild the Confucian School, and Chou Man Sha helped to found the Beng Teik School in one of Penang's most densely populated working-class districts. Chou subsequently became the school's headmaster. All three men were to play leading roles in the formation of the UCSTA in 1951.

A survey of the Chinese schools in 1945 by T. P. Cromwell, the Assistant Secretary for Chinese Affairs, found that the CPM and KMT were engaged in a fierce competition for control over the schools. Both parties were allowed to function as legal political organizations after the British took over. The CPM tried to control the Chinese schools through its subsidiary organizations, the Culture Association, the Peoples' Committees, the Women, and Youth Organizations. The KMT's influence was exerted through its consular staff and its local supporters, usually to be found amongst the MCs and some staff of the schools. Cromwell found the Culture Association in control of some schools and signs of KMT influence in others. There were reports of teachers being threatened or even killed. One frightened headmaster tried to avoid trouble by flying a number of different flags and displaying a portrait of Stalin beside that of Sun Yat Sen.¹⁴

After the Emergency was declared in June 1948, the British reimposed registration of teachers and schools. There was a tight control on political activities. The Special Branch sometimes carried out raids in the schools and many Chinese school teachers were aware of government informers amongst their colleagues and

students.¹⁵ Surveillance was directed at supporters of the CPM which was banned after the declaration of the Emergency. The KMT was not banned until May 1949 and some of its branches remained open till September. The KMT consuls remained at their posts until the middle of 1950 when the People's Republic of China was recognized by the British. Even then, the influence of the KMT amongst both teachers and MCs was left largely untouched. Despite the fact that the KMT was a patently China-orientated political party, the British used it as a counterbalance to the influence of the CPM.¹⁶ As a result the KMT influence remained strong amongst the Chinese in Malaya throughout the 1950s.

Until 1941 the political orientation of most of the Chinese school teachers would be typical of what Wang Gungwu has characterized as Group A Chinese in his analytical model of different political orientations amongst the Chinese in Malaya. Group A Chinese, according to Wang, consisted mainly of first-generation migrants born and educated in China for whom China continued to be the centre of their political lives.¹⁷ Before 1941, the teachers who were politically active were involved mainly in the *huaqiao* nationalistic movement and other China-orientated activities. They had not addressed themselves to the local political scene as a group and were not even organized to bargain for better pay or working conditions.

Teachers in a few states had begun to organize Chinese School Teachers' Associations (CSTA) before the Japanese invasion, but as a social group the teachers were, in Lim Lian Geok's words, 'a basin of loose sand' lacking in co-ordination and leadership.¹⁸ Three CSTAs were formed before the war—in Penang, Malacca, and Muar.¹⁹ The Kuala Lumpur CSTA was officially inaugurated in 1949 though the first steps towards its formation had begun in 1946.²⁰ By 1946, the *Annual Report on Education* recorded that there were CSTAs in all states except Pahang, Kelantan, and Trengganu.²¹ Some CSTAs were based in a town, others covered a district, and yet others represented all the Chinese school teachers of an entire state (see Table 3.1).

From the CSTAs' own description of their activities before 1951, they functioned principally as mutual benefit organizations much like any other Chinese social organization or professional guild. The Kuala Lumpur CSTA, for example, provided its members with financial assistance in case of death and illness as well as when they retired.²² The North Perak CSTA took up the issues of

TABLE 3.1
Chinese School Teachers' Associations in the
Federation of Malaya, 1960

State	Name of Organization	
	English	Chinese
Selangor	Kuala Lumpur Chinese School Teachers' Association (CSTA)	吉隆坡华校教师公会
	Klang and Coastal District CSTA	巴生滨海华校教师公会
	Selangor Chinese Senior Normal Graduates Association (CSNGA)	雪兰莪高师同学会
Perak	Perak Association of Chinese School Teachers' Organizations	霹雳华校教师会联合会
	Ipoh City CSTA	怡保市华校教师公会
	Hua Yi Rural District CSTA	华怡乡区华校教师公会
	Kampar CSTA	金宝华校教师公会
	Dinding CSTA	大定华校教师公会
	Lower Perak (Anson) CSTA	下霹雳 (安顺) 区华校教师公会
	North Perak (Taiping) CSTA	北霹雳 (太平) 华校教师公会
	Batang Padang (Bidor) CSTA	巴登巴当 (美罗) 华校教师公会
	Perak CSNGA	霹雳华文高师同学会
Perak Chinese School Teachers Training Classes Graduates Association (CSTTCGA)	霹雳华校师资训练班同学会	
Penang	Penang and Province Wellesley Association of Chinese School Teachers' Organizations	檳威华校教师公会
	Penang CSTA	檳城华校教师公会
	Penang CSNGA	檳城高师同学会
	Penang CSTTCGA	檳城华校师资训练班同学会
Kedah	South District (Kulim) CSTA	吉打南区 (居林) 华校教师公会
	Central District (Sungai Patani) CSTA	吉打中区 (双溪大年) 华校教师公会
	North District (Alor Star) CSTA	吉打北区 (亚罗士打) 华校教师公会
	Kedah and Perlis CSTTCGA	吉坡华校师资训练班同学会
Perlis	Perlis CSTA	玻璃市华校教师公会
Trengganu	Trengganu CSTA	丁加奴华校教师公会
Pahang	East Pahang (Kuantan) CSTA	东彭 (关丹) 华校教师公会
	Bentong District CSTA	文冬区华校教师公会
	Raub District CSTA	劳勿区华校教师公会
	Lipis District CSTA	立卑区华校教师公会
	Temerloh District CSTA	淡马鲁区华校教师公会

TABLE 3.1 (continued)

State	Name of Organization	
	English	Chinese
Negri Sembilan	Negri Sembilan State CSTA	森州华校教师公会
	Negri Sembilan CSNGA	森美兰华文高师同学会
Malacca	Malacca CSTA	马六甲华校教师公会
	Pay Fong High School CSNGA	培中华文高师同学会
	Malacca CSTTCGA	马六甲华校师资训练班同学会
Johore	Johore Association of Chinese School Teachers' Organizations	柔佛华校教师会联合会
	South Johore (Johore Bahru) CSTA	柔南(新山)华校教师公会
	Central Johore (Batu Pahat) CSTA	柔中(峇株)华校教师公会
	Muar District CSTA	麻坡区华校教师公会
	Kluang District CSTA	居委区华校教师公会
	Segamat District CSTA	昔加末华校教师公会
	Xin Wen Long CSNGA	新文龙华文高师同学会

Source: *Jiaoshi Zazhi*, 1, 3 (May 1960).

cost of living allowance and medical benefits for teachers with MCs in their region.²³ The Malacca CSTA asked the state Education Department to specify that the 100 per cent increase in aid to be given to Chinese schools in 1951 should be used 'to increase the meagre salaries of teachers'.²⁴ Though some efforts to fight for improvements in teachers' pay and working conditions had begun, the CSTAs did not function as unions. Nor was there any attempt to bring Chinese school teachers in different states together in a pan-Malayan organization until 1951, although the Malacca CSTA had made such a suggestion in December 1950.²⁵

Leadership of the UCSTA

According to one of the founder members of the UCSTA, the teachers realized the urgency of forming a national organization only after the Fenn-Wu Committee met them during the Committee's survey of Chinese schools in the peninsula between February and April 1951. As a result of discussions with the Fenn-Wu Committee, the teachers were alerted to the implications of the Barnes Committee's recommendations even before the

report was published.²⁶ Hence they were prepared to act immediately after the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports were released. On 24 and 25 August 1951, a month after the release of the Fenn-Wu Report, representatives of 12 CSTAs from nine states in Malaya met in Kuala Lumpur. A resolution condemning the recommendations in the Barnes Report and supporting the Fenn-Wu Report was passed. The meeting agreed to set up a pan-Malayan organization to co-ordinate the views and activities of all CSTAs in the country. An organizing committee was elected to draft a Constitution and to convene the inaugural meeting of the proposed organization.²⁷

The inaugural meeting of the UCSTA was held on 24 and 25 December the same year. This meeting accepted the draft Constitution and the Inaugural Manifesto of the UCSTA. The three main objectives of the UCSTA, according to its Inaugural Manifesto, were to promote Chinese culture and defend Chinese education, to improve Chinese education through co-operation with the government, and to safeguard the interests and improve the working conditions of the Chinese school teachers.²⁸ The Constitution provided for the leadership of the UCSTA to be rotated amongst its constituent members, the various CSTAs at town, district, or state levels. Each year a Presiding Unit would be elected and the Executive Committee of the CSTA elected to be the Presiding Unit would form the Executive Committee of the UCSTA.²⁹ This was a system common amongst pan-Malayan Chinese social organizations.

In 1951, when the UCSTA was formed, there were 6,369 Chinese school teachers. This represented the potential strength of the organization while the more than 200,000 students in the Chinese schools reflected the possible breadth of influence of the teachers as a social group. Though the financial resources of this group of poorly paid teachers were meagre, they were an important group politically. In October 1951 the CPM changed its strategy from concentrating on armed conflict to consolidating its mass support through building up links with potential open front organizations.³⁰ The UCSTA in particular and Chinese school teachers in general were an important social group to the CPM. This was known to the British who were on the look out for those with any links to or even sympathies for the CPM. There was, in addition, the KMT which had been banned in 1949. Its stalwarts were on the lookout for organizations to penetrate and use.

The delicate situation that the UCSTA's leaders were in was highlighted by the fate of its first president. The Penang CSTA was

elected the first Presiding Unit of the UCSTA at its inaugural meeting in December 1951. Its president, David Chen, became the first president of the UCSTA. Born and educated in China, Chen had come to Malaya to be the headmaster of the Chung Ling High School in 1931. He was a graduate of Zhingling University in Nanjing and had taught for a few years in Indonesia before coming to Malaya.³¹ Under his leadership, Chung Ling had grown into the biggest and most prestigious Chinese secondary school in the country. Chen was a founder member of the Penang CSTA and a leader who was widely respected by his peers.³² He was one of the few CSTA leaders who were effectively bilingual and able to communicate directly with Education Department officials. Politically Chen was a well-known and high-profile supporter of the KMT.

On 4 February 1952, two days after he had chaired the first meeting of the UCSTA Executive Committee in Penang and barely two months after he had assumed office as the UCSTA's first president, David Chen was shot at point-blank range outside the office of the Penang CSTA. The Penang CSTA was then located on Macalister Road, one of the major thoroughfares in the city, and Chen was about to get out of his car to enter the building when he was shot. He died within minutes of the shooting.³³ A few weeks before his death, Chen was known to have received death threat letters. It was generally believed that Chen was the target of assassination by the CPM because of his KMT affiliation.³⁴

In fact, unknown to the public, the CPM did claim responsibility for his death. An issue of *The Red Lamp*, the publication of an underground CPM unit amongst Chung Ling students, stated that 'David Chen was the most iniquitous reactionary element, who knew only how to be loyal to the British Imperialists and to the KMT reactionaries. Impudently and without fear he carried on his anti-revolution/anti-Communist/anti-progressive activities. He was so stubborn and persistent in his own self destruction that in the end our Army was obliged to eradicate him.'³⁵ At the other extreme, David Chen's standing as far as the colonial government was concerned is clear from the special tribute paid to him in the 1952 *Annual Report on Education* (p. 2). This described him in the following terms: 'a distinguished educationist and a man of outstanding personality and great moral courage. His clarity of mind and independence of judgement will long be missed by those who have the welfare of the children of this country at heart.' According to a British source, David Chen was the leader of the KMT group within the UCSTA and with his death, the KMT group in the UCSTA 'lost its nerve'.³⁶

Chou Man Sha depicted the atmosphere amongst Chinese school teachers in Penang following Chen's assassination as one of 'general fear and panic'. The secretary of the Penang CSTA, and therefore of the UCSTA, disappeared. For two months, both the Penang CSTA and the UCSTA were without a president and secretary. Up to 5 April the Penang CSTA was unable to find people willing to fill these two posts and Chou Man Sha was left to hold the fort as the acting president.³⁷ It was only at the end of April that Lee Po Wen, a teacher in the Chung Hwa Confucian School in Penang, was finally persuaded to take on the twin posts of president of the Penang CSTA and the UCSTA.³⁸ A tall, quiet, and unassuming man, Lee spoke very little English. His Mandarin was heavily accented as Lee had been educated in his native dialect, Hainanese. A distinct contrast to David Chen, who was known to be a dynamic and controversial figure, Lee was, by his own admission, a reluctant leader who had been persuaded to be a caretaker president only until the next general meeting of the UCSTA.³⁹

In December 1952 the Ipoh CSTA was elected the Presiding Unit of the UCSTA. Its president, Tsai Jen Ping, was the UCSTA's next president. Tsai was headmaster of the Yuk Choy School in Ipoh, a leading Chinese school in Perak. Tsai, too, was born and educated in China and spoke little English. During his tenure as president, he requested to conduct all correspondence with the colonial government in Chinese, a request which the Director of Education rejected.⁴⁰ Neither Lee nor Tsai seemed to have the temperament or the dynamism to propel the UCSTA into the centre stage of Chinese politics. In fact, during their terms of office, Lim Lian Geok, as president of the Kuala Lumpur CSTA, was already playing a more prominent role.

The Kuala Lumpur CSTA was the first to come out with detailed criticisms to the New Salary Aid Scheme when this was announced in June 1952. Lim recognized this as an important decision the Chinese schools would have to make, prepared a long article on the scheme, and called a meeting of the Kuala Lumpur CSTA to discuss it. One of the main points raised by Lim was that the salaries offered to Chinese school teachers were not on par with those paid to teachers in English schools.⁴¹ The Assistant Director of Education, E. M. F. Payne, invited Lim to the Education Department for a long discussion on the benefits of the scheme. Payne then sent H. R. Howse, the Superintendent of Chinese Schools in Selangor, to explain the scheme in detail to members of the Kuala Lumpur CSTA.⁴² Based on these discussions, the

Kuala Lumpur CSTA then published a report on the merits and deficiencies of the new aid scheme.⁴³

Later, in August 1952, it was again Lim who suggested to the UCSTA Executive Committee that they should request a meeting with the Special Committee which had been appointed to draft the 1952 Education Ordinance. Lim, together with another Kuala Lumpur leader, Ting Ping Sung, drafted the UCSTA memorandum and presented it to the Special Committee on 2 September.⁴⁴ Lim also played a prominent role in two meetings with representatives from the MCs and the MCA in November 1952 and April 1953 which led to the formation of a Central Committee on Chinese Education. The Kuala Lumpur CSTA, which had been a driving force within the UCSTA for two years, was duly elected the next Presiding Unit in December 1953 and Lim became president of the UCSTA. In December 1954, the UCSTA Constitution was amended to allow a Presiding Unit to be elected for successive terms. This indicated a recognition both of Lim's leadership qualities as well as of the need for continuity of leadership within the UCSTA. From 1954 until 1960, the Kuala Lumpur CSTA remained the Presiding Unit and Lim the president of the UCSTA. In 1960 the UCSTA Constitution was amended again to provide for members of the Executive Committee to be elected on an individual basis. Lim was again elected president under this new system.⁴⁵

Like many other UCSTA leaders in the 1950s, Lim was born and educated in China. He migrated to Malaya most probably in 1927 and from 1935 onwards he taught in the secondary section of the Kuala Lumpur Confucian School.⁴⁶ In 1951, when he was elected president of the UCSTA, Lim was 50 years old. A small, thin, and frail-looking man, his manner of dress was so casual as to make him appear almost unkempt. He led a modest style of life, living in an *atap* house in a Malay kampong on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur and using an old bicycle as his means of transport.⁴⁷ He is remembered by many people as an eloquent and rather fiery orator in Chinese but his lack of knowledge of English hampered his communication with both colonial officials and MCA leaders.⁴⁸ His speeches and his writings reveal a man who had a rather provocative streak as well as a spirit of bravado.⁴⁹ Fiercely proud of his cultural heritage, Lim was adamant that the Chinese schools should have a legitimate place in Malaya. More than any other UCSTA leader, it was Lim who built up the image of the UCSTA as a leading Chinese organization. Colonial officials

and, later, UMNO leaders found Lim abrasive because of his outspoken views and penchant for scoring debating points.

A notable aspect of Lim Lian Geok's leadership is that despite the limited financial resources of the teachers and the many political strictures they were working under, he was able to carve out a new niche for a different kind of Chinese leadership which was not based on the power or prestige of wealth. He relied on his skills of articulation to project himself as a voice speaking for Chinese aspirations. Lim exploited to the full the status of the teachers as an educated class whose views would be heard as well as respected. Chinese newspapers, and friendship links with reporters and editors, were the main channel through which Lim reached out to his audience and kept the UCSTA constantly in the public eye as an opinion leader and an important pressure group. Through a steady stream of press releases, pamphlets, and speeches, Lim cast himself and the UCSTA in the role of a loud and irrepressible critic of official policies and a staunch defender of Chinese interests. As a result, the UCSTA, or *Jiaozong* as it was usually referred to in Chinese, became an organization that was widely known amongst the Chinese-educated Chinese and a force that could not be ignored by politicians.

An Alternative Vision of the Nation

In August 1951 teachers like Lim Lian Geok and Chou Man Sha were galvanized into activity because they were convinced that the Chinese schools were facing 'a crisis of life and death'. The teachers looked upon themselves as the custodians of Chinese education and, by extension, of Chinese language and culture. They felt that it was their *yizhu*, or moral duty, to arouse public interest on the issue and whip up support to defend the schools' right to exist.⁵⁰ The UCSTA leaders began as a voice of protest against colonial policies on education which they saw as seeking to impose an Anglo-Malay hegemony on the Chinese by excluding the Chinese schools as well as the Chinese language and culture from the Malayan mainstream. Their first objective was to claim a legitimate place for the Chinese language, the Chinese schools, and Chinese culture *within* the boundaries of the national. This developed gradually into an alternative vision of the Malayan nation which emphasized that acceptance of its multi-ethnic, multilingual, and multicultural characteristics was essential to interracial integration and was a source of the nation's strength.

This vision took several years to take coherent form but it was

UCSTA leaders like Lim Lian Geok who played a key role in articulating the rhetoric of this new political vision for Malaysians of Chinese descent.⁵¹ There were other Chinese who shared in this vision, most notably Tan Cheng Lock who came from a very different background altogether from Lim Lian Geok and the Chinese school teachers.⁵² But Lim Lian Geok's articulation of this vision is different from Tan Cheng Lock's in two important ways. First, Lim reached out to the Chinese-educated who were a larger and therefore more significant segment of Chinese society. As one indication of this, in 1953 there were 52,500 Chinese studying in English schools compared to more than 234,000 enrolled in Chinese schools.⁵³

Second, Tan Cheng Lock as a Straits Chinese who came from a family which had lived in Malacca for generations would be a typical Group C Chinese in Wang Gungwu's classification. Group C Chinese consisted mainly of local-born Chinese who had stopped looking on China as the focus of their political lives and were already committed to some kind of Malayan identity.⁵⁴ For Group C Chinese, Malayan citizenship helped to make this identity clearer and stronger. It did not call for a complete reorientation. For Chinese like Lim Lian Geok, however, acquisition of citizenship was the beginning of the difficult transition from being Group A to becoming Group C Chinese.

In September 1951 Lim Lian Geok became a Malayan citizen by application under the provisions of Clause 125 of the Constitution.⁵⁵ Up to 1950, only an estimated 150,000 Chinese had become citizens by application.⁵⁶ Few among the older Chinese school teachers who had come from China applied for citizenship so early. According to Chou Man Sha, this was because becoming a Malayan citizen then was still equated with being a British subject in the minds of many of the teachers. Unlike the Straits Chinese who took pride in being loyal British subjects, the Chinese-educated abhorred this as a form of colonial subjugation. Chou acknowledged that he applied for citizenship in 1953 when it was impressed upon him that as a non-citizen his credibility as a spokesman on the Chinese education issue would be suspect.⁵⁷ Lim's application for citizenship in 1951 indicated an astute recognition on his part that there could be no question of ambivalence as far as political identity or loyalty was concerned. If he intended to continue living and working in Malaya and, above all, if he aspired to be a leader of the Chinese in Malaya, he had to commit himself unequivocally to citizenship and a new political identity.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that while the acquisi-

tion of citizenship can be dated, the change in political orientation was a slow metamorphosis that took many years. Some never did complete the metamorphosis, retaining an emotional attachment to China that never really died. Those with a deep sense of attachment to Chinese culture, like Lim Lian Geok, found in the concept of the Chinese as a *minzu* (ethno-cultural community) a way of marrying a Malayan political identity with the retention of core elements of Chinese culture. As more first-generation Chinese immigrants like Lim Lian Geok and Chou Man Sha acquired Malayan citizenship, they became an important new subgroup within Group C Chinese. Group C became a larger and more complex category while Group A withered in size and significance. The cultural assertiveness of this new type of Group C Chinese, represented by Lim Lian Geok, rankled many Malays who felt that the Chinese should be prepared to assimilate culturally as well as politically.⁵⁸ Within Group C, there were Chinese who were more prepared to yield to Malay views on questions of language and culture. These differences are important to understanding the later conflicts between UCSTA, MCA, and UMNO leaders.

The UCSTA's first few statements focused mainly on the issues of language and mother tongue education. As teachers they were of the opinion that 'the most effective language medium at the primary school level is that which the children know best', that is, their own mother tongue. Malaya was a multiracial country where the Chinese comprised half the population; therefore 'the schools of the various races should be given equal treatment'.⁵⁹ The UCSTA's Inaugural Manifesto argued further that for any race to use its advantaged position to 'discriminate against or seek to destroy the culture of another race' would lead to divisiveness amongst the races.⁶⁰

In their memorandum to the Special Committee in September 1952, the UCSTA described the Chinese schools as an 'important component within the educational set-up of the country'. The government was called upon to provide equal rights and opportunities to vernacular schools for the various racial groups as this was 'a legitimate right of all the component groups within a multiethnic society'.⁶¹ In a pamphlet addressed to 'the Chinese public' in November 1952, the UCSTA called on the Chinese to unite in the struggle for a *hefa tiwei*, or legitimate status, for Chinese education in Malaya. This slogan has come to represent the UCSTA's position since 1951 up to the present. Any attempts to exclude the Chinese schools from the national education system should be opposed because this contravened 'the principles of justice and the

legitimate rights of component communities to cultural and educational freedom'.⁶²

The imprint of the Chinese school teachers' earlier Group A perspective and a certain confusion of political orientations can be seen in some of their early statements. The Kuala Lumpur CSTA's statement on the Barnes Report, written in August 1951 most probably by its president Lim Lian Geok, still referred to the Chinese schools in Malaya as *huaqiao jiaoyu*, or overseas Chinese education. It referred to the Chinese living in Malaya as *huaqiao* but described them as people who 'looked on Malaya as if it was their homeland'. Most Chinese were loyal to Malaya, said the statement, because Malaya was where they and their families lived and where their property was located.⁶³ The vocabulary of the temporary sojourner still marked the emerging perspective of a person settling into a Malayan locale. Up to 1954 the UCSTA still wanted the birthday of Sun Yat Sen to be a public holiday for the Chinese schools, a request which the Education Department rejected. A holiday in honour of Confucius was, however, accepted.⁶⁴

Chinese culture is frequently referred to in UCSTA statements as the legacy of an ancient and great civilization as well as 'one of the most refined [cultures] in the world'.⁶⁵ The teachers' great pride in their cultural heritage was sometimes expressed in supercilious terms. As an example, David Chen, in his speech as first president of the UCSTA on 25 December 1951, said that 'Malaya itself has, as yet, no culture of its own. Its culture will be a mix of Eastern and Western cultures. And of the Eastern half, a large part will come from China's culture.' For this reason, said David Chen, the UCSTA must safeguard the continued existence of this culture and not allow it to be destroyed so that it could contribute to the development of a Malayan culture.⁶⁶ The teachers frequently spoke of Malaya as a bare country which had been developed through the combined efforts of Malays, Chinese, and Indians. These views grated on Malay nationalists for whom the peninsula had been the site of Malay history and culture long before the waves of Chinese immigration began in the twentieth century.

When the UCSTA leaders became involved in the drafting of a Malayan curriculum and writing guide-lines for new textbooks for the Chinese primary schools in 1951, they were forced to come to grips with the problem of balancing between their attachment to 'China's culture' and the need for more Malayan content in the curriculum of the Chinese schools. At their first meeting in August 1951, the teachers laid down the following three principles for the

writing of new textbooks. First, the emphasis should be on *Zhongguo wenhua*, or China's culture; second, those knowledgeable on the education of the Chinese should be involved; and third, local educational materials should be used.⁶⁷ The teachers acknowledged the need for 'materials of local interest' but felt that what was taught in the Chinese schools must 'reflect the special characteristics of the culture of the Chinese people'.⁶⁸

An anecdote from Lim Lian Geok's memoirs illustrates how the old China orientation still popped up as a spontaneous response while the Malayan perspective came from more self-conscious reasoning. Lim was one of the senior staff of Chinese schools invited to a seminar by the Education Department in March 1953. The teachers suspected that the purpose was to persuade them to drop the history and geography of China from the school curriculum and were therefore on the defensive. During a discussion on geography, a government official proposed that Europe, America, and Australia should be the first three continents to be studied, followed by Asia, which would include China. When Lim objected to this proposal he was asked which country he thought should come first. Lim's immediate response, by his own account, was 'China'. Then after he explained that according to educational principles students should start with what was most familiar to them, Lim proceeded to describe what would be an ideal syllabus. This time Malaya came first, followed by South-East Asia, then the rest of Asia including China.⁶⁹

Working on school syllabuses and textbooks was the teachers' first experience in translating into concrete terms their claim that the Chinese schools could play an important role in integrating young children into Malayan society and inculcating loyalty to Malaya. Chan Yik King, an Inspector of Chinese Schools, who worked closely with UCSTA leaders on the new syllabuses and textbooks for Chinese primary schools for many years starting from 1951, found them to be sincere in trying to reorientate the curriculum to a Malayan perspective. Nevertheless, as Chan pointed out, the teachers were only beginning to face the contradictions between their desire to sustain Chinese culture and the requirements of a Malayan perspective. This emerged particularly during discussions of history and geography.⁷⁰ The history syllabus that was finally agreed upon for the Chinese primary schools was divided into three parts, of which 50 per cent was devoted to the history of China, 30 per cent to the history of Malaya, and 20 per cent to World History.⁷¹ China still got more space than Malaya!

Up till November 1952, UCSTA leaders' sights were focused

purely on the objective of a legitimate place for the Chinese schools with little awareness that this objective would be linked with the question of Chinese being recognized as one of the official languages of the country. According to Lim Lian Geok, it was only after UCSTA leaders met with Sir Donald MacGillivray, then the Deputy High Commissioner, on 8 November 1952, that he realized that the two issues were closely related.⁷² Present at the meeting were MacGillivray, E. E. C. Thuraisingham, the Member for Education, the Director and Assistant Director of Education, as well as the Attorney-General, who was the Chairman of the Special Committee on Education. Representing the UCSTA were Lim Lian Geok and Sha Yuan Roo from the Kuala Lumpur CSTA and Chou Man Sha and Waung Yoong Nien from the Penang CSTA.

MacGillivray's main purpose was to assure the teachers that the government was not trying to eliminate the Chinese schools or to destroy Chinese culture. The teachers were more interested in trying to understand why the Chinese could be accepted as citizens but their schools could not be accepted into the national education system. MacGillivray's answer to this question was that national schools could not use Chinese as a medium of instruction because Chinese was not one of the official languages of the country. The teachers realized, for the first time, that their objective of claiming a legitimate place for the Chinese schools must include fighting for Chinese to be accepted as official language.⁷³

After this revelation from MacGillivray, the official language issue was incorporated into the UCSTA's subsequent statements. However, when UCSTA leaders were engaged in negotiations with UMNO leaders, they were asked to forgo their campaign for the recognition of Chinese as an official language in exchange for UMNO's acceptance of Chinese schools within the national education system. But the official language issue surfaced again as a problem for the Chinese secondary schools, and the UCSTA, when the language to be used in public examinations became a key issue after the Razak Report.

MCs: Social and Historical Background

In 1946, 90 per cent of the Chinese schools were run by MCs who were elected by, and from the ranks of, the benefactors of the school. It was the MCs' responsibility to mobilize the benefactors of the schools in regular fund-raising campaigns whenever new buildings or equipment was needed. It was the MCs who must find the money to pay the school staff and the resources to keep the

schools going from year to year. Thus whilst it could perhaps be said that the Chinese school teachers' livelihood depended on the survival of the schools; the survival of the schools depended, in effect, on the MCs. No Chinese school could survive without an MC, however inept some of its members might be, for it was through the MC's social influence that funds to sustain the school could be mustered. Thus the British were always careful not to force drastic changes on the MCs. Should the MCs withdraw their financial support for the schools, the state would then have to take over the running as well as capital expenditure of the schools. This was a financial burden the British were not prepared to shoulder.

The small Chinese schools in rural and semi-rural areas were usually run by village- or district-level leaders. Members of the MCs of the bigger schools in the towns were, however, usually the biggest or richest businessmen in the town if not in the state. These were usually men who were already acknowledged leaders of their communities. Such men were typical of the third of Wang's categories of political orientation amongst the Chinese in Malaya. Group B Chinese were 'hardheaded and realistic' in their political lives, directing their activities to 'safe and achievable goals' rather than distant and vague ideals.⁷⁴ The leadership and power of Group B Chinese was based in the complex network of Chinese organizations usually referred to as *shetuan* (literally, social organizations). To understand the location of the MCs in Chinese society, it is important to understand a little about the *shetuan*.

Shetuan is the umbrella term conventionally used in Chinese to refer to the whole range of organizations based on clan, regional, and occupational links. Such organizations were set up by migrant Chinese, as mutual benefit associations, to take care of their common interests as they settled in a new and strange environment. In Malaya, some *shetuan* were known to have existed from as early as the late eighteenth century but the majority were formed as the number of migrants increased in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. A 1946 study conducted by the Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee in Taiwan found that there were 1,400 *shetuan* in all in Malaya and Singapore while another study, based on a survey of a more loosely defined category of 'Chinese societies' found that there were, in the Federation alone, a total of 1,562 such societies in 1949.⁷⁵

The same person could be a member, and a leader, of several *shetuan*, for example, of a surname or clan organization, a professional guild or trade association, as well as of a number of regional associations as he identified himself with Chinese from the same

village, county, or province. The entire network of *shetuan*, with their overlapping membership, provided the structural framework for those who were wealthy and ambitious to work their way up to the apex of the *shetuan* power structure. The most important Chinese organizations in the state were the Chinese Chambers of Commerce and the Chinese Assembly Halls.⁷⁶ The *shetuan* network was, as G. W. Skinner observed, the 'internal power structure' of migrant Chinese communities.⁷⁷

The leadership of *shetuan* was dominated by men of wealth. Amongst Chinese immigrants who had emigrated in pursuit of a better life, wealth was the criterion of success, the main indicator of social status, and a basic qualification for becoming a leader.⁷⁸ To gain entry to leadership status in any *shetuan*, a man had first to make substantial financial contributions to the organization in question. As Wan Ming Sing pointed out in his study of leadership in Selangor, a man had to be secure enough in his business ventures to have the time and energy to participate actively in the activities of the *shetuan*, if he was to be an effective and not just a nominal leader.⁷⁹ The tremendous resources required to become leaders meant that there was a 'monopoly of leadership' held by the wealthiest.⁸⁰ These men, by virtue of their leadership positions, were expected to be the 'benefactors and custodians of the community'.⁸¹

The tumult of the Second World War and the problems of living under a different and more terrifying political master during the Japanese Occupation had a devastating effect on the image and influence of Group B leaders. The Japanese had marked out wealthy men in positions of social prominence as targets from whom to extract money and as centres of influence over the Chinese population. In March 1942 a group of prominent Chinese leaders were ordered by the Japanese authorities to collect \$50 million as a 'Gift of Atonement' for pre-war anti-Japanese activities by the Chinese. In addition, they were instructed to organize Overseas Chinese Associations to marshal Chinese support for and ensure their co-operation with the Japanese regime. Participation in the Overseas Chinese Associations was difficult to avoid for the individuals who had been targeted by the Japanese. However, in the eyes of younger Chinese, all those who associated with the Japanese were looked upon as either 'traitors' or 'collaborators'.⁸²

When the British returned in 1945, they found that 'the old Chinese *towkay* had, for the time being at least, entirely lost his leadership of the community'.⁸³ The *shetuan* had ceased functioning completely during the Occupation and the *shetuan* leaders' role

as the 'benefactors and custodians' of the Chinese had been lost to the CPM and the CPM-led Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA). It was the CPM and MPAJA which provided the leadership for resistance to the Japanese during the Occupation. Thus, when the Malayan Union proposals were announced by the British there was little response from the *shetuan* leadership who had not, as yet, recovered from their wartime hiatus. Many of the older Group B Chinese were ambivalent regarding the issues of citizenship and nationality because of a persistent orientation towards China. They were, at the same time, uncertain of what the new Constitution portended. The political situation in China in 1946 was complex and uncertain, the local situation no less so with Malay nationalism on the rise and the tussle for influence between the CPM and KMT even more open than before the war. It is necessary to keep in mind that CPM influence was at its peak in the immediate post-war years. Amongst the Chinese businessmen, however, there were more KMT supporters and this continued to be the case for many years. Thus when the Malayan Union proposals were announced, some *shetuan* leaders in Kuala Lumpur met to discuss the issues involved with the KMT Consul. They decided to adopt a wait and see attitude as they were anxious to preserve dual nationality.⁸⁴

By January 1947 when the British set up a Consultative Committee to consider non-Malay views on the Federation of Malaya proposals, some *shetuan* leaders had formed clearer opinions and realized the importance of assuming their role of speaking on behalf of what they perceived to be the interests of the Chinese. The Chinese Chambers of Commerce of Malacca, Perak, and Selangor as well as nine other *shetuan* submitted memoranda to the Consultative Committee.⁸⁵ For a brief but significant period, the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce, representing all the state-level Chambers, joined the PUTERA-AMCJA in opposing the Federation proposals. Chinese businessmen in all the states gave their full support to the hartal called by the PUTERA-AMCJA in October 1948.⁸⁶ This showed that by 1948 Group B leaders had begun to realize that new channels of political activity were necessary. They could not confine themselves to the internal politics of the *shetuan*. In February 1949, when the MCA was formed, *shetuan* leaders provided the MCA with the essential local bases at the district and state levels.

Just as it had taken some time for the *shetuan* leaders to recover their pre-war influence, similarly it took some time for the MCs of the Chinese schools to re-establish their control as the CPM

exerted strong local influences in several areas. A survey of the Chinese schools in November and December 1945 found a mixed picture. In some places, the CPM forces seemed to be ascendant. For example, the MC of one Chinese school in Klang was too frightened to accompany Cromwell, the Assistant Secretary for Chinese Affairs, during his visit to the school. In Perak, two schools were still closed because their MCs were 'too nervous' to reopen them. In the Kuen Cheng School in Kuala Lumpur, the MC avoided a clash with the CPM forces then controlling the school by doing nothing beyond paying rent for the school. In some places, however, the MCs seemed to have made a comeback. In Menglembu, Perak, the CPM forces had lost out to a Lee Khun Mun, who convened a meeting of local Chinese to support him in reopening the school. The school had previously been supported by his father as well as himself. In Penang, a group of wealthy and prominent Chinese had re-established their control over three schools which were all reported to be 'functioning smoothly'.⁸⁷

Slowly, the businessmen were able to re-establish their positions on the MCs. They were aided by two factors. First, the MCs were needed in their old role of providing money, especially necessary to repair wartime damage. Second, the British supported all those known to be disaffected by Communism, in particular those known to have KMT sympathies. Reports on the Chinese schools in 1948 and 1949 indicate strong and open KMT affiliation in many schools with frequent reports of the KMT Consul visiting Chinese schools.⁸⁸ After the Emergency was declared in June 1948, the MCs position was further strengthened as the CPM forces went underground. The Chinese schools faced a tremendous influx of pupils in the post-war years. The role of Group B leaders was very important in providing the financial resources needed by the schools during this critical period of their growth.

Until the New Salary Aid Scheme was implemented in 1953, the MCs had total authority over the hiring and firing of staff. However, since many of the MCs were often not knowledgeable about educational matters, it was not unusual for them to rely on teachers and principals of the schools for advice when it came to matters such as curriculum, textbooks, and the selection of additional teachers. Some MCs entered into the day-to-day running of the school much more than others. Chin Chee Meow, the chairman of the MC of Kuen Cheng Girls' School in Kuala Lumpur for many years, used to visit the school several times a week. He would inquire into, and provide his opinions on, almost every aspect of

the running of the school.⁸⁹ On the other hand, Ong Keng Seng, the chairman of the Chung Ling High School MC, left the running of the school completely in the hands of its headmaster. In the case of Chung Ling, it was the headmaster rather than the MC who made the major decisions of the school from its curriculum to the language of instruction and even to initiating negotiations for special aid for the school from the government in 1955.⁹⁰ In contrast, the headmaster of the Chan Wa High School in Seremban was completely left out when the MC decided to accept full assistance from the government in October 1957. He resigned at the end of the school year in protest against a decision he could not agree with. The man behind Chan Wa's decision was Yap Mau Tatt, the chairman of the Chan Wa MC, who almost single-handedly initiated and closed the deal with the government on behalf of his school.⁹¹ As the MCs of different schools varied so much in the exercise of their powers, any attempt by the government to reduce these powers was likely to be viewed differently. The MCs were thus a less cohesive group than the teachers.

Another point to keep in mind is that the MCs, who came from the ranks of businessmen and community leaders, were usually more amenable than the teachers to strike what they considered to be realistic compromises with the powers that be. They were less likely to adhere rigidly to principles that seemed untenable. As Wang Gungwu has observed of Group B Chinese, they 'rarely expressed themselves on questions of political ideals and long-term political goals'. Though this did not mean that they abstained completely from all political activity, they were always careful to ensure that such activities did not prejudice their interests and did not 'damage their credit with the local authorities'.⁹² In short, while the MCs might express the same views as the teachers, as businessmen they would be far more cautious when it came to actions that might bring them into conflict with the power of the state.

The UCSCA: Organization and Leadership

After the release of the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports, the Chinese school teachers immediately began to form the UCSTA to mobilize their forces on a peninsula-wide basis. Unlike the teachers, the MCs did not feel the same need to set up a new organization. Instead, they used their control of the *shetuan* network to respond to the two reports. On 7 July 1951, barely a week after the Barnes

Report was released, the Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Chinese Assembly Hall jointly convened a meeting of representatives from MCs of Chinese schools and *shetuan* in the state to discuss the Report.⁹³ In the next two months, similar meetings were organized in Selangor, Penang, Kedah, Negri Sembilan, Malacca, and Johore.⁹⁴ Following these meetings, memoranda opposing the Barnes Report and supporting the Fenn-Wu Reports were submitted to the colonial government.

The main difference between these memoranda and those submitted by the Chinese school teachers was a greater emphasis on the right of the Chinese to be consulted on such an important policy matter. This was based on the argument that the Chinese constituted a significant proportion of the population. One memorandum claimed that the Chinese comprised 'almost half the population of Malaya'. Another contended that 'the Chinese and Indian populations totalled more than half the entire population and contribute to the revenue of the country'. A third asserted that 'the Chinese population in the Federation and Singapore, which are geographically one territory, is greater than the Malay population'.⁹⁵

With regard to the substantive proposals of the Barnes Report, the memoranda from the MCs and *shetuan* raised similar criticisms to those submitted by the teachers. All memoranda opposed the Barnes Report because it 'not only makes no provision for the teaching of Chinese in the proposed national schools but also suggests the elimination of Chinese vernacular schools'. Another opinion constantly expressed was that 'every race in this country has its own tongue, written and spoken, its own religion'. Any attempt to suppress these differences would 'divide the races of this country and plunge it into strife and consequently decadence and darkness'. As part of this more pluralistic vision, the memoranda frequently emphasized that 'loyalty and allegiance to a state are not necessarily won through the adoption of one or two national languages or by the adoption of a single culture'. 'A true Malayan citizenship', it was argued, 'could only be built upon mutual respect, tolerance, understanding and the strict practice of democratic principles based on equality.' Long-term planning for any society must be 'founded on the collective wisdom and consent of the people as a whole'.⁹⁶

The memoranda from the MCs and *shetuan* were similar to those submitted by the teachers in seeking a legitimate place for the Chinese schools within the national system alongside the other

schools. They defended the principle that children should be taught first of all in their own mother tongue, and upheld the right of the Chinese schools to be provided with equal treatment, and to be accepted as an integral part of the Malayan system of education. One memorandum described the Fenn-Wu Report's recommendation for a 200 per cent increase in aid to the Chinese schools as 'inadequate' and most demanded aid equivalent to that given to Malay and English schools. The Associated Chinese Chamber of Commerce called on the government to bear the entire cost of primary education in the various languages.⁹⁷

There were no attempts to bring the MCs of all the Chinese schools together under an umbrella organization until the announcement of the New Salary Aid Scheme in 1952. The need for co-ordination in responding to this proposal from the government prompted the first meetings of MCs at state level. The MCs of Chinese schools in Perak, Johore, Kedah, and Negri Sembilan met in August 1952 to discuss the new aid scheme and resolved then to form Chinese School Committee Associations (CSCAs) in these states.⁹⁸ Later in 1952 the Penang and Kelantan MCs met to discuss the New Salary Aid Scheme and the CSCAs of these two states were formed in 1953.⁹⁹ The Johore CSCA was the only CSCA to be formed before the New Salary Aid Scheme was proposed. According to Wong Yoke Nyen, it was formed in early 1951.¹⁰⁰

The structure of the CSCAs was basically the same in all the states. The MC of every Chinese school in a state was automatically a constituent member of the CSCA in that state and would be invited to send two delegates to a biennial meeting to elect the Executive Committee of the state CSCA. The Executive Committee of the CSCAs usually came from MCs of the biggest Chinese schools and were all based in the biggest towns or cities in the state. They were usually men who sat on the MC of more than one school, apart from leadership positions in several *shetuan*. Tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 show the positions held by CSCA leaders in Selangor, Perak, and Penang.

From Table 3.2 we can see that the major figures in the Selangor CSCA were Ang Khe Tho, Cho Yew Fai, Chong Khooon Lin, and Chin Chee Meow. Both Cho Yew Fai and Ang Khe Tho were described in a study of Chinese leadership in Selangor as typical examples of Chinese leaders who emerged into prominence through their contributions to and involvement in a wide range of social organizations and Chinese schools. Ang had, in addition, played a major role in the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall.¹⁰¹

TABLE 3.2
Leaders of the Selangor Chinese School Committees' Association

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position in the CSCA</i>	<i>MC Position</i>	<i>Shatuan Position</i>
Ang Khe Tho	Chairman (1953-5)	Chairman, Kuen Cheng Girls' School (1945-6, 1948-9, 1955-60) Vice-Chairman, Kuen Cheng (1950-4) Chairman, Chung Hwa School (1949-54)	President, Selangor CAH (1948-55) Vice-President, Selangor CCC (1946-58)
Chin Chee Meow	Honorary General Secretary (1953-5) Chairman (1956-64)	Secretary, Kuen Cheng (1945-54) Member, Confucian School	Executive Committee Member, Xuelane Jiayin Huiguan Executive Committee Member, Selangor CCC (1946-60) Executive Committee Member, Selangor CAH
Cho Yew Fai	Committee Member (1953-7) Treasurer (1958-61)	Member, Confucian School	Honorary Secretary Selangor CCC (1946-58) Executive Committee Member, Selangor CAH (1935-6)
Chong Khoon Lin	Treasurer (1953-7) Committee Member (1958-61)	Chairman, Confucian School	President, Xuelane Jiayin Huiguan President, Xuelane Guangdong Huiguan (1954-61)

(continued)

TABLE 3.2 (continued)

Name	Position in the CSCA	MC Position	Shetuan Position
Leung Cheung Ling	Vice-Chairman (1953-9)	Vice-Chairman, Kuen Cheng (1955-60) Member, Confucian School	President, Malaya Guangdong Huiguan Lianhehui (1955-9) President, Selangor CCC (1955-8) President, Selangor Chinese Miners Association President, Malayan Chinese Miners Association Trustee, Selangor CAH President, Jilongpo Guangyu Huiguan Vice-President, Xuelane Guangdong Huiguan Vice-President, Xuelane Guangzhou Huiguan Vice-President, Selangor CCC (1957-8) Executive Committee Member (1948-56, 1959-60)
Wen Tien Kuang	Honorary General Secretary	Member, Kuen Cheng	Not available.

Sources: Dongzong Chuban Zu (comp.), *Dongzong 30nian*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSCA, 1983; *Guangdong Huiguan Lianhehui 1967 nianbao*, Kuala Lumpur, 1967; Huang Kunfu, *Mahua Shanghui shi*, 1974; *Kuncheng Nuzi Zhongxue liushi zhounian jinian tekan*, Kuala Lumpur, 1968; *Pili Jiaying Huiguan qishi zhounian xinsha luocheng kaimu tekan*, Ipoh, 1975; *Pili Keshu Gonghui kaimu jinian tekan*, Ipoh, 1951; and *Xuelane Zhonghua Dahuitang qingzhu tushisi zhounian jinian tekan*, Kuala Lumpur, 1977.

- Notes: 1. Tables 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 represent only a selective listing as it has not been possible to identify all posts held by each individual as some school magazines and *shetuan* publications do not list these.
2. Posts held after 1960 are generally not listed.
3. Where the source of information does not provide dates of posts held, these are stated in the relevant columns without dates.

TABLE 3.3
Leaders of the Perak Chinese School Committees' Association

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position in the GSCA</i>	<i>MC Position</i>	<i>Shetuan Position</i>
Ong Chin Seong	Chairman (1953-9)	Vice-Chairman, Yuk Choy School (1951-7) Vice-Chairman, Perak Girls' School (1951-5) Member, Poi Lam School (1951-8)	Executive Committee Member, Perak CCC (1947-58)
Choong Sam	Vice-Chairman (1953-9) Chairman (1959-60)	Vice-Chairman, Yuk Choy (1952-3) Chairman, Yuk Choy (1954-9) Vice-Chairman, Perak Girls' (1951-3) Chairman, Perak Girls' (1954-9)	Executive Committee Member, Perak CCC (1951-9) Vice-President, Pili Jiayin Huiguan (1952-3) President, Pili Jiayin Huiguan (1954-7) (after which he was appointed Honorary President)
Foong Seong	Treasurer (1953-9)	Vice-Chairman, Yuk Choy (1952-7) Member, Yuk Choy (1958-9) Vice-Chairman, Perak Girls' (1954-7) Member, Perak Girls' (1958-9)	Treasurer, Perak CCC (1947-8, 1951-4) Executive Committee Member, Perak CCC (1949-50, 1955-60) Founder Member and office-bearer of Perak Chinese Miners' Association

(continued)

TABLE 3.3 (continued)

Name	Position in the GSCA	MC Position	Shetuan Position
Yeoh Kim Tian	Auditor (1953-9)	Member, Yuk Choy (1948, 1959-60) Member, Perak Girls' (1951-9) Chairman, Poi Lam (1955-8) Member, Poi Lam (1959-60)	Not available
Peh Seng Koon		Member, Yuk Choy (1948) Vice-Chairman, Yuk Choy (1959-60) Member, Perak Girls' (1951-3, 1956-7) Vice-Chairman, Perak Girls' (1958-60) Member, Poi Lam (from 1960)	President, Pili Fujian Gonghui (from 1954) Vice-President, Mailaya Fujian Huiguan Lianhchui Executive Committee Member, Perak CCC (1947-55) Vice-President, Perak CCC (1955-60) Vice-President and President, Malayan Rubber Traders' Association
Cheong Chee		Chairman, Yuk Choy (1948-53) Chairman, Perak Girls' (1951-3)	Vice-President, Perak CCC (1947-54)

Sources: Dongzong Chuban Zu (comp.), *Dongzong 30nian*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSCA, 1983; *Pili Fujian Gonghui fushu Peinan Zhongxue chuzhong piye tekan*, Ipoh, 1957-61; *Pili Nuzi Zhongxue sanshi zhounian jinian tekan*, Ipoh, 1961; *Pili Zhonghua Zonghanghui liushisi zhoun-*

ian ji xinsha luocheng jinian tekan, Ipoh, 1970; Song Zhemei (ed.), *XinMa renwu zhi*, Hong Kong: Southeast Asia Research Institute, 1969; and *Yucai Zhongxue xiaokan*, Ipoh, 1948 and 1953-63.

Notes: As for Table 3.2.

TABLE 3.4
Leaders of the Penang Chinese School Committees' Association

<i>Name</i>	<i>Position in the CSCA</i>	<i>MC Position</i>	<i>Shetuan Position</i>
Ong Keng Seng	Chairman (1953-62)	Chairman, Chung Ling High School (1946-60) Vice-Chairman, Penang Girls' School (1948-9) Chairman, Penang Girls' (1950-60) Member, Phor Tay School (1947-60)	Executive Committee Member, Penang CCC (1946-8, 1950-60) President, Penang CCC (1949-50) Chairman, Tongan Jinxia Huiguan (1956-60)
Saw Seng Kew	Treasurer (1953-8)	Secretary, Chung Ling (1946-60) Secretary, Penang Girls' (1948-50) Vice-Chairman, Penang Girls' (1951-7) Chairman, Phor Tay (1947-60)	President, Penang CCC (1954-8) Executive Committee Member, Penang CCC (1958-60)

(continued)

TABLE 3.4 (continued)

Name	Position in the GSCA	MC Position	Shetuan Position
Lee Guat Cheow	Committee Member (1953-8)	Asst. Secretary, Chung Ling (1946-60) Treasurer, Penang Girls' (1948-60) Treasurer, Xiehe Xuexiao (1957-60) Chairman, Xiehe Xuexiao (1957-1960)	Treasurer, Penang CCC (1947-60)
Tan Boon Peng	Committee Member (1953-8)	Member, Chung Ling (1957-60) Asst. Secretary, Penang Girls' (1952-5) Secretary, Penang Girls' (1956-60) Member, Phor Tay	Executive Committee Member, Penang CCC (1950-2)

Sources: *Bincheng Tongan Jinxia Gonghui jinxu jinian tekan*, Penang, 1973; *Binzhou Zongshanghui jinxu jinian tekan*, Penang, 1975; *Fujian Nu Xuexiao sanshi zhounian jinian tekan*, Penang, 1950; *Binhua Nuzi Zhongxiaoxue sishi zhounian jinian tekan*, Penang, 1960; *Puti tekan*, Penang, 1947; *Bincheng Puti Zhongxue xinixaoshe luocheng tekan*,

Penang, 1961; *Xiehe xiaoxue ji ershitu zhounian jinian tekan*, Penang, 1953; *Xiehe Zhongxue sishi zhounian jinian tekan*, Penang, 1968; and *Zhongling Zhongxue xiaokan*, Penang, 1946 and 1951-61.

Notes: As for Table 3.2.

Chong Khoon Lin and Chin Chee Meow were both born and educated in Malaya and represented a younger generation of Group B leaders. Chong was educated in an English school and his knowledge of English made him more acceptable to the colonial government as well as enabled him to play a wider range of roles. He was appointed by the British to sit on the Central Advisory Committee on Education in 1951 when this Committee met to consider the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports. He was elected to the Federal Legislative Council as part of the MCA team in the July 1955 elections.¹⁰² Chin Chee Meow was Chinese-educated and had taught for a few years in a Chinese primary school before deciding to join his father's business concern.¹⁰³ As chairman of the Selangor CSCA, Chin was to play a more active role than the other three in the United Chinese School Committees' Association (UCSCA) after its formation in 1954.

Two other leaders of the Selangor CSCA who played important roles in the UCSCA were Leung Cheung Ling and Wen Tien Kuang. Leung and Wen came from slightly different backgrounds from the other Selangor CSCA leaders. Both were university graduates and fluent in English as well as Chinese. Leung was born in Hong Kong and held a degree from the University of Hong Kong. He had begun his career in Malaya as an Inspector of Chinese Schools but resigned from this post to enter the world of business after 1945.¹⁰⁴ Leung was a nominated member of the First Federal Legislative Council and one of the founder members of the MCA. He was appointed by the British to sit on both the Central Advisory Committee on Education as well as the Special Committee which drafted the 1952 Education Ordinance.

Wen's educational credentials were even more impressive. After graduating from a university in China, Wen had gone to study in the United States. There he obtained a Master's degree in philosophy from the University of Columbia in New York.¹⁰⁵ Wen's command of both English and Chinese, especially his ability to write well in English, was his greatest asset apart from the fact that he was Chong Khoon Lin's son-in-law. Wen, a full-time employee of the MCA from 1952 to 1958, was put in charge of the MCA's cultural and educational platform. During this period, he was also an active member of the Selangor CSCA and, through this, of the UCSCA. Wen was for many years the most important link between the three components within the Chinese Education Movement.¹⁰⁶

The Selangor CSCA was more dynamic and alert in responding to various matters affecting the Chinese schools than the CSCAs

of the other states. The Selangor CSCA was the first CSCA to respond to the New Salary Aid Scheme. It called a meeting of MCs of Chinese schools in the state to discuss this new scheme on 17 August 1952 after which a memorandum was sent to the Member for Education. After a reply was received from the Member for Education, the Selangor CSCA decided to convene a national-level meeting of MCs and teachers from Chinese schools to discuss the implications of the new aid scheme on 9 November 1952.¹⁰⁷ This meeting can be regarded as a natural climax to those already held at the state levels to discuss the New Salary Aid Scheme. The significance of the meeting changed after the MCA was included and representatives from the teachers, managers, and the MCA decided at the meeting to form a joint organization to fight for Chinese education.

The UCSCA itself was formed much later. A meeting of representatives from all state-level CSCAs to inaugurate the UCSCA was convened only in August 1954.¹⁰⁸ The Constitution of the UCSCA provided for a standing committee to be elected biennially at a general meeting to which each state CSCA would send three delegates.¹⁰⁹ From its inauguration, UCSCA leadership devolved on the Selangor CSCA. The chairman of the Selangor CSCA was the first president of the UCSCA and remained in this position until 1962. In this capacity, Chin Chee Meow worked closely with Lim Lian Geok, who respected him personally as a man who 'stood by his principles'.¹¹⁰

The Malayan Chinese Association

The Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was formed on 27 February 1949. There are several studies of the MCA which credit different people with the origins of the organization.¹¹¹ For the purposes of this discussion, it is more important to note the three general points of agreement in these studies. First, the impetus for the formation of the MCA was directly related to the Emergency. The fact that support for the CPM came mainly from the Chinese had resulted in 'a slanderous and traitorous image of the Chinese community'.¹¹² The MCA was formed to repair this image. It was intended as a gathering point for Chinese to demonstrate their loyalty to Malaya in general and support for the government in its war against the CPM in particular. Second, the founding members of the MCA consisted of Chinese who were then members of the Legislative Councillors, such as H. S. Lee, Yong Shook Lin, and Leung Cheung Ling. Heng Pek Koon's book

differs from earlier studies in giving Tan Cheng Lock a bigger role in the MCA's formation. Heng regards the formation of the MCA as an extension of the Malayan Chinese League which Tan tried to set up in May 1948.¹¹³ Third, Henry Gurney played an important role in giving the organization his enthusiastic support and in getting UMNO leaders like Dato Onn Jaafar to accept the need for such an organization amongst the Chinese.

Gurney saw the MCA's role, rather narrowly, as essentially an anti-Communist platform for the Chinese. He wanted MCA leaders to declare at their inaugural meeting that they were anti-Communist and to state that the principal purpose of the organization was 'to promote and assist in the maintenance of peace and good order for the attainment of peaceful and orderly progress in Malaya'.¹¹⁴ The founders of the MCA, however, wanted a broader role for their organization. This is indicated in their statement of the MCA's primary objectives in the inaugural rules of the organization. These were firstly 'to promote and maintain inter-racial goodwill and harmony in Malaya', and secondly 'to foster and safeguard the social, political, cultural and economic welfare of the Malayan Chinese by legal or constitutional means'. At the insistence of Gurney, the maintenance of peace and good order was included as the third objective of the MCA.¹¹⁵

Tan Cheng Lock, the first president of the MCA, had had a long and distinguished career of public service before the war as a Legislative Councillor and a member of the Executive Council. He had retired in 1935 disillusioned and frustrated because he had failed to convince the colonial government to take action on issues which mattered most to him.¹¹⁶ Tan had decided then that should he return to public life it would not be to work within the British colonial system again. Instead, he hoped to 'work among members of the public and organize them into a strong political body'.¹¹⁷ Tan had mooted the idea of a Malayan Chinese organization in 1934. He had also started discussing the idea of a Chinese political party with Yong Shook Lin before the Second World War began.¹¹⁸

Tan Cheng Lock spent the Occupation years in India where he continued presenting his views as a Malayan Chinese to the British government. On his return to Malaya after the Occupation, Tan became a vocal supporter of the Malayan Union.¹¹⁹ However, this turned out to be a futile exercise. Tan Cheng Lock returned to Malaya in June 1946 when the British had already decided to withdraw the Malayan Union plan. Angered that the non-Malays had not been consulted during discussions on the Federation of

Malaya proposals and were being presented with a *fait accompli*, Tan decided to join the political groupings which had come together under a Council for Joint Action to oppose the Federation agreement. The Council for Joint Action wanted a united Malaya including Singapore, full self-government with a fully elected central legislature, and citizenship with equal rights for all who were permanently resident in, and undivided in their loyalty to, Malaya. The Council for Joint Action subsequently expanded into the first multiracial political coalition in Malaya, the PUTERA-AMCJA. Tan Cheng Lock was its president. In this capacity, Tan addressed several mass gatherings organized by the PUTERA-AMCJA. He was, in effect, the leader of what was a nationalist anti-British movement until the PUTERA-AMCJA fell apart just before the declaration of the Emergency in June 1948.¹²⁰ According to Heng Pek Koon, from May 1948 Tan had already begun exploring another avenue for political action in the form of the Malayan Chinese League.¹²¹ This was several months before the formation of the MCA was mooted in December.¹²²

When Tan Cheng Lock became president of the MCA in February 1949, he was already 65 years old. His two years with the PUTERA-AMCJA had given him his first taste of mass-based politics. He had worked closely with English-educated leaders of the Malayan Democratic Union, a component of the PUTERA-AMCJA as well as Malay and Chinese leaders who came from left-wing and radical political organizations. Now, as president of the MCA, he stood at the opposite end of the political spectrum. While the PUTERA-AMCJA had been supported by the CPM, the MCA had within its ranks many Chinese leaders who had been prominent KMT supporters or leaders. This probably was why he was the target of a grenade attack in April 1949.¹²³ But Tan Cheng Lock was undeterred. After recovering from his injuries, he continued with his efforts to build the MCA into an organization which could effectively represent Malaysians of Chinese descent. As MCA president, he travelled to speak at openings of MCA branches in different parts of the peninsula, calling on MCA members to shoulder all the responsibilities of citizenship, but encouraging them at the same time to insist on their legitimate rights.¹²⁴

From February 1949 to September 1951, Tan Cheng Lock was also a member of the Communities Liaison Committee. This was a small group of English-educated leaders from different ethnic groups which held a series of closed door meetings to hammer out some compromises on issues on which Chinese and Malay leaders

had opposing views. The most important amongst these was the question of citizenship rights for the Chinese. Apart from Tan Cheng Lock, 10 other MCA leaders were involved in the Communities Liaison Committee. Through these meetings, a working relationship as well as friendship ties were established amongst the top English-educated élite in the country. It was, in many ways, a precursor of the consociational pattern of negotiations adopted later by the Alliance coalition. For the MCA leaders who took part in these meetings, it was an important channel through which they established close ties with British officials as well as Malay leaders.¹²⁵

The MCA leaders who were nominated to participate in the Communities Liaison Committee represented its leadership at the national or central level. This was made up of wealthy Chinese who were mostly English-educated and who were either successful businessmen or professionals. Men like Tan Cheng Lock and Yong Shook Lin, typical of Wang's Group C type of Chinese, helped to give the MCA the image of an organization of Chinese who were truly orientated towards Malaya. However, such men commanded little mass support as they were cut off culturally and sometimes even linguistically from the majority who were Chinese-educated and more Chinese in their identity and orientation. Few among the MCA's top leaders, except perhaps for H. S. Lee, had a base in the *shetuan* network. They lacked an organizational base from which to recruit membership and command mass support in Chinese society.

This weakness of the top echelon of MCA leadership was overcome when many Group B Chinese responded to the formation of the MCA by taking on leadership of the MCA at the state, district, and town levels. After the MCA's inauguration in February 1949, it was established *shetuan* leaders like Lau Pak Khuan, president of the Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Chinese Assembly Hall; Ong Keng Seng, president of the Penang Chinese Chamber of Commerce; and, H. S. Lee, president of the Selangor Chinese Chamber of Commerce who formed MCA branches in their respective states. State and district branches of the MCA were frequently housed in the premises of the leading *shetuan* with the president or chairman of that *shetuan* serving as the chairman of the branch or ward in question. The *shetuan* network provided the MCA not only with the most influential Chinese leaders at the local level but also the ready-made organizational bases for membership recruitment.¹²⁶ Through the *shetuan* network, the MCA's membership grew quickly because members of a *shetuan* frequently

followed their leader in joining the MCA. In November 1949, eight months after the MCA's inaugural meeting, its membership had reached 103,000. By February 1953 the MCA's membership strength had doubled to 250,000.¹²⁷

Another factor that helped the MCA membership to grow in its early years was the role played by well-known KMT members and supporters who joined the new organization because of their anti-Communist political ideology. After the KMT was banned in May 1949, the MCA became a focal point for ex-KMT leaders, some of whom transferred the organizational bases they had built up in the now defunct KMT over to the MCA. Amongst those with a KMT background who became well-known MCA leaders were Lau Pak Khuan, Leong Yew Koh, and Ong Chin Seong in Perak; H. S. Lee, Ang Khe Tho, and Cho Yew Fai in Selangor; Ong Keng Seng and Saw Seng Kew in Penang; and Yap Mau Tatt and Lee Tee Siong in Negri Sembilan. So dominant was the KMT presence in the MCA that the list of MCA state leaders in the 1950s is said to resemble a list of the pre-war KMT leadership.¹²⁸ As a result of these factors, the MCA was able, within three years of its formation, to emerge 'as the most significant competitor to the Communists in wooing the allegiance of the bulk of the Chinese'.¹²⁹

The combination of three different types of leaders who joined or supported the MCA for different reasons was a source of strength in helping the MCA to establish itself in the first few years. However, it was also the source of a fundamental weakness. The MCA could not possibly be a special type of *shetuan*, a convenient replacement for the defunct KMT, and develop into a modern political party for Malaysians of Chinese descent, all at the same time. Heng Pek Koon has described this situation as a confusion of three different ideological approaches within a single organization 'leading to confusion and uncertainty over the party's exact identity'.¹³⁰ More than this, it was a source of contradictions and internal conflict which became more marked after 1953 when the MCA formed a coalition with UMNO and became part of the Alliance.

These problems were not so apparent in the first three years of the MCA's existence when its activities were largely related to the problems faced by Chinese living in Malaya in the context of the Emergency. At this stage, the organization's work revolved mainly around helping New Villagers who had been dislocated by the colonial government's resettlement drive. The MCA's activities then resembled those of a humanitarian or welfare organization rather than those of a political party.¹³¹ These activities, though

useful to building up the MCA's image as an organization working for Chinese interests, contributed to the lack of clarity of long-term direction.

In June 1950 Tan Cheng Lock had begun to express concern that unless the MCA had a clearer sense of purpose and a tighter organization, it would die a natural death with the end of the Emergency.¹³² The following year, he wrote a Memorandum on the MCA's organization warning that the MCA was in danger of becoming 'a basin of loose sand held together by the mere name of the MCA'. He suggested that reorganization was needed to enable the MCA to become 'an effective political force'.¹³³ In 1952 the MCA did begin to consolidate its organization by recruiting three full-time personnel at the party's headquarters to strengthen the central committee's control over the party and to broaden the range of the organization's activities. T. H. Tan was appointed the Chief Executive Secretary and Wen Tien Kuang was recruited as the Under-Secretary in charge of the Benevolent, Social, and Cultural (Education) Subcommittee.¹³⁴ T. H. Tan was to play an important role in UMNO-MCA relations throughout the 1950s while Wen was a central figure in the MCA's relationship with the UCSTA and UCSCA.¹³⁵

As part of its reorganization efforts in 1952, the MCA invited Victor Purcell and Francis Carnell to visit Malaya as the organization's advisers. Purcell and Carnell agreed that it was time for the MCA to make a clear redefinition of its role. In their report, the two visitors outlined three possible scenarios in the future development of Malaya. If the British remained in control of the peninsula for an indefinite period, the MCA should become a powerful communally based political party standing up for Chinese interests. But if the British withdrew and Malaya became an independent country, then the various ethnic groups would have to work out some system of sharing political power. In this scenario, too, the MCA's role would be that of a political party representing Chinese interests but committed to the growth of parliamentary democracy. Finally, the MCA would have no role to play if Malaya came under communist rule or was ruled solely by Malays. In short, their advice was that the MCA's future role should be that of a political party representing the Chinese in Malaya.¹³⁶

However, Tan Cheng Lock himself was ambivalent about the role of the MCA as a political party because he was personally not in favour of communally based political parties. Through the Communities Liaison Committee, Tan Cheng Lock and Onn Jaafar

had been drawn together. As a result, both had become committed to the ideal of a non-communal political party. According to Heng Pek Koon, both Onn and Tan tried to 'decommunalize' their respective organizations, the UMNO and MCA. However, both failed in convincing their rank and file to go along with their ideas. When Onn left UMNO to form the IMP, Tan Cheng Lock, together with many other MCA leaders like Yong Shook Lin, gave the IMP their full support. They did not, however, leave or disband the MCA.¹³⁷

The Kuala Lumpur Municipal elections in February 1952 was the turning-point. An electoral pact had been made purely at the local level between H. S. Lee, the chairman of the Selangor MCA, and Dato Yahaya bin Abdul Razak, the chairman of the UMNO election committee. This was due to the intervention of Ong Yoke Lin, another Selangor MCA leader.¹³⁸ The UMNO-MCA combination defeated IMP candidates in 9 out of 12 seats. After this success, H. S. Lee wrote to Tan Cheng Lock suggesting that UMNO and MCA leaders should meet to discuss further co-operation. Tan replied that he was ready to meet with the Tunku and arrangements for a meeting were soon made.¹³⁹ From this point on, according to Tregonning, Tan Cheng Lock's 'dallying with the IMP ended'.¹⁴⁰ However, Heng Pek Koon contends that Tan did not cut off all links with Onn's IMP until 1953 when Onn began attacking the MCA as part of a KMT fifth column that was trying to make Malaya a province of the China.¹⁴¹ Onn turned on the MCA because his IMP was threatened by the UMNO-MCA combination which continued to defeat the IMP in local-level elections in several other states. His attacks on the MCA clinched the final decision for MCA leaders. The institutionalization of the UMNO-MCA relationship into a formal Alliance began from February 1953. A year later, in October 1954, the inclusion of the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) completed the formation of the Alliance as a coalition involving the three major ethnic groups in the country.¹⁴²

The MCA and the Issue of Chinese Education

Up to November 1952, the MCA as an organization had made no statements on the controversy surrounding the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports or on the 1952 Education Ordinance. This silence should not be interpreted as lack of interest or concern amongst individual MCA leaders. Tan Siew Sin, Tan Cheng Lock's son and a well-known MCA figure in his own right, had

delivered perhaps the most critical speech on the Barnes Report in the Legislative Council when the Report was discussed in September 1951. Two other MCA leaders, H. S. Lee and Leung Cheung Ling, were members of the Special Committee which drafted the 1952 Education Ordinance. They could, and did, in this capacity present some Chinese views to the Committee. But they were bound as members of the Committee to support the Ordinance when it was presented to the Legislative Council in November 1952.¹⁴³ The MCA's position was therefore quite different from that of the teachers and the MCs.

There is no evidence to support Lim San Kok's contention that the Central Committee of the MCA had expressed satisfaction with the Report of the Special Committee. There are also no grounds for his statement that Tan Cheng Lock wanted the 1952 Ordinance to be accepted as a *fait accompli*.¹⁴⁴ In fact, on 9 November 1952, Tan Cheng Lock led MCA representatives to a joint meeting of teachers and managers. At this meeting, the MCA representatives joined the teachers and MCs of Chinese schools in opposing the policy proposed in the 1952 Ordinance. However, two weeks later, MCA members in the Legislative Council joined other Legislative Councils in accepting the 1952 Education Ordinance. All this points to the lack of a clear policy on Chinese education that was binding on all members of the MCA, as well as lack of co-ordination amongst MCA leaders.

The MCA's decision to join the teachers and managers in November 1952 is not surprising given that it was then trying to organize itself into an effective political party. Through links with the Chinese school teachers and managers, the MCA could reach out to a broader base of support amongst the Chinese-educated Chinese. As a political party representing the Chinese, the MCA could not ignore an issue that had attracted so much attention within Chinese society. Many of the MCA's state- and district-level leaders came from the ranks of *shetuan* leaders which had already come out against the Barnes Report. There were also MCA leaders at the state levels who were active members of the state CSCAs. Wen Tien Kuang, the MCA's newly appointed Under-Secretary, was a member of the Selangor CSCA which was the convenor of the 9 November meeting. It was through Wen that the MCA came to be included in the meeting.¹⁴⁵ The MCA's participation in the Chinese Education Movement could be seen as an extension of its links with *shetuan* at the local level.

Nevertheless, there were some MCA leaders who felt uneasy about the MCA going beyond these links and coming out openly

in support of the Chinese school teachers or becoming closely linked with them. This is indicated by T. H. Tan's words of caution to Tan Cheng Lock before the latter attended the 9 November 1952 meeting. T. H. Tan had been asked to comment on a draft of Tan Cheng Lock's speech for the meeting. He took the opportunity to warn Tan Cheng Lock that 'the MCA should not expose itself too much by taking part in a very controversial issue'.¹⁴⁶ But Tan Cheng Lock decided that the MCA should attend the meeting. During the meeting, he unequivocally committed himself and the MCA to a defence of the legitimate right of the Chinese schools to exist and be considered part of the Malayan system of education.

As it was Tan Cheng Lock who led the MCA into the Chinese Education Movement, it is necessary to discuss some of the possible reasons which may have led him to this decision. First, Tan had taken a consistent interest in the education of the Chinese. In his earlier career as a Member of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, he had advocated free primary education in English so that English could become the common basic language to unite all Malaysians. But he also argued that the colonial government should support schools for Chinese in their own language. In addition, Tan was in favour of the Chinese language being taught to all Chinese. This, he said, was desirable so that the Chinese 'may preserve their customs, institutions and manners and be conversant with ancient Chinese classics and culture'.¹⁴⁷ Tan had a strong interest in Chinese culture himself. His speeches were frequently dotted with quotations from the Chinese classics.

More specifically, on the issue of education in the mother tongue, Tan Cheng Lock had stated in his 'Memorandum on the Future of Malaya', written in 1943, that 'the Chinese must necessarily receive instruction through the medium of their mother tongue as they can best develop themselves along the lines of their own culture and tradition in which they can take deep root'. In another memorandum written in India where he had sought refuge during the war years, Tan contended that English education should be available to the large numbers of Malaysians who demanded it but argued at the same time that the government must also support the Chinese schools. This was because a large section of Chinese desired to have education in Chinese. The education policy that Tan proposed for post-war Malaya was 'universal compulsory education for all races through the medium of their respective mother-tongue'.¹⁴⁸ Tan was not only supportive of the Chinese schools in Malaya, he also supported the proposal to set

up the Nanyang University.¹⁴⁹ From his speeches as MCA president, his general position was that the Malayan Chinese should give their undivided *political* loyalty to Malaya but this was entirely consistent with their maintaining a distinctly Chinese *cultural* identity.

Tan Cheng Lock's general views on language and education, therefore, were surprisingly similar to those being articulated by the Chinese school teachers. He, too, thought it was legitimate for the Chinese to seek to preserve their language, schools, and culture while becoming loyal citizens of Malaya. Though he was a Straits Chinese who did not speak Chinese himself, this linguistic gulf did not prevent him from sharing some of the ideas and values of the Chinese school teachers who were first-generation immigrants. In fact, the UCSTA leaders found themselves revising their stereotype of a Straits Chinese as someone without any knowledge or love for Chinese culture after they met Tan Cheng Lock. They found that Tan had a surprising interest in and a genuine love for Chinese culture. As a result, they developed a healthy respect for him and were prepared to accept his leadership.¹⁵⁰

The MCA's relationship with the two Chinese education organizations not only strengthened its own position as a Chinese political party. It was through Tan Cheng Lock's leadership that the Chinese school teachers and the MCs were brought into the mainstream of interethnic bargains that had to be made during the critical pre-Merdeka years. The next chapter will discuss the first meeting between the three major components of the Chinese Education Movement. This set off a series of events which culminated in a historic bargain between the Chinese education organizations and UMNO leaders in January 1955.

1. K. J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, 1965, p. 75.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 92. See Visu Sinnadurai, 'The Citizenship Laws of Malaysia', in Tun Mohamed Suffian, H. P. Lee, and F. A. Trindade (eds.), *The Constitution of Malaysia—Its Development: 1957–1977*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 69–100 for a brief survey of the 1952 amendments to the 1948 provisions for citizenship. See Wong Yoke Nyen, 'The Role of Chinese Organizations in Malayan Politics (1945–1957): Special Reference to Citizenship and Education', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1981, Ch. 3 for a discussion of reactions from Chinese organizations to these changes in citizenship provisions.

3. MU, *Annual Report on Education*, 1946, p. 28.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 89. The range of Chinese school teachers' pay before and after

1945 was obtained from Director of Education File 101/47, Director of Education File 69/51 and Ed. Ch. Kn. File 15/50, ANM.

5. Inaugural Statement of the UCSTA, 3 February 1952, reprinted in Jiaozong Jiaoyu Yanjiu Zhongxin (comp.), *Jiaozong 33nian*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, 1987, pp. 12-13.

6. Wang Gungwu, *The Chinese Intellectual: Past and Present*, Faculty of Arts and Social Science Lecture No. 2, Singapore: National University of Singapore, 1983, p. 3.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

8. T. P. M. Cromwell, 'Report on Survey of Chinese Schools in Malaya, 3 November 1945 to 21 December 1945', in BMA Dept/16/15, ANM. Cromwell was then the Assistant Secretary for Chinese Affairs in the Malayan Union.

9. See Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star over Malaya: Resistance and Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983, pp. 20-4 for a detailed description of the *suqing*.

10. See, as an example, the tribute to teachers and students of Chung Ling High School in Penang who died during the Japanese Occupation in *Bincheng Zhongling Zhongxue xiannan sishen rongai lu*, Penang, 1947.

11. From David Chen's description of his wartime experiences in *ibid.*

12. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1990, Vol. 2, p. 195.

13. Interview with Chou Man Sha, 14 March 1980. Chou had migrated from China in 1937 and had taught at several different schools in the peninsula before he became headmaster of the Beng Teik School in Penang, a school which he helped found, after the war. Chou was one of the leading figures in the Penang Chinese School Teachers Association. See also *Zhongling Zhongxue xiaokan: fuxing tekan*, Penang, 1946, p. 51, for an account of Chinese school teachers' lives during the Japanese Occupation.

14. T. P. M. Cromwell, 'Report on Survey of Chinese Schools in Malaya, 3 November 1945 to 21 December 1945', in BMA Dept/16/15, ANM.

15. Interviews with Chou Man Sha, Penang, 6 May 1980; Lim Lian Geok, Selayang (Selangor), 11 July 1982; and Waung Yoong Nien, Penang, 22 October 1980. Waung was headmaster of the Chung Ling High School from 1952 until he retired in 1972. There will be more discussions of this school and Waung's role in its history in Chapter 6. For an example of Special Branch raids on Chinese schools, see Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 23-30.

16. Malcolm Macdonald, for example, thought that the revival of the KMT's influence was one way to combat communism. See 'Minutes of a Conference Held under the Chairmanship of the Governor-General at 10 a.m. on Thursday, 26 June 1947 in the Governor-General's Office in Singapore', in John Dalley Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 254, RHO. A letter from J. F. Nicoll, Governor of Singapore, to J. Higham in the Colonial Office, 2 September 1952, in CO 1022/198, PRO Kew, referred to Gurney's propensity to look on the KTM as a useful counterbalance to the CPM when Gurney was High Commissioner.

17. Wang Gungwu, 'Chinese Politics in Malaya', first published in 1970; reprinted together with some of his other writings, in Wang Gungwu, *Community and Nation: China, South-East Asia and Australia*, St Leonards, NSW: ASAA in association with Allen and Unwin, 1992, pp. 251-81. Subsequent citations are from this publication.

18. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, p. 175.

19. On the Penang CSTA, see Shaweng, 'Bincheng Huaxiao Jiaoshihui huishi',

- SPJP, 12 March 1983. Shaweng is the *nom de plume* of Chou Man Sha who was a founder member of the Penang CSTA and one of its active leaders. On the Muar CSTA see *Mapo Huaxiao Jiaoshihui ershiwu zhounian jinian tekan*, Muar, 1976, p. 11. For the history of the Malacca CSTA and other CSTAs, see *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 689-739.
20. See Wu Zhichao, 'Jilongpo Huaxiao Jiaoshihui', in *Xuelane Zhonghua Dahuitang wushisi zhounian jinian tekan*, Kuala Lumpur, 1977, pp. 799-805 and Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, pp. 174-9. A report on Chinese school teachers in Pelajaran R of S Kota Bharu File 37/48, mentions that the inaugural meeting of the Kuala Lumpur CSTA was held on 4 September 1948. This date is not stated in either Wu's or Lim's account of the history of the organization.
21. MU, *Annual Report on Education*, 1946, p. 108.
22. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, p. 178.
23. See the report of the Perak CSTA's activities after 1945 in *Beipili Huaxiao Jiaoshihui sanshi zhounian jinian tekan*, 1976, p. A16.
24. Letter from Senior Inspector of Schools in Malacca, conveying the Malacca CSTA's request to the Assistant Director of Education, 14 November 1951, Director of Education File 995/47, ANM.
25. See the letter from the Malacca CSTA to other CSTAs, 5 December 1950, reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 291.
26. Interview with Chou Man Sha, Penang, 14 March 1980. Wu Teh Yao of the Fenn-Wu Committee confirmed that the Fenn-Wu Committee was informed what the main recommendations of the Barnes Report were and did discuss them with Chinese school teachers and community leaders when the committee visited various towns. Interview with Wu Teh Yao, Singapore, 9 December 1980.
27. See the minutes of the first meeting in August and the declaration issued after the meeting, reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 297-8 and 300-1 respectively. See also the accounts of the origins of the UCSTA given by Lim Lian Geok and Loot Ting Yee in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 6-11.
28. The Inaugural Manifesto of the UCSTA, reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 12-13.
29. A copy of this first Constitution of the UCSTA was given to me by Chou Man Sha. See also *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 299-300.
30. A new CPM directive to this effect was issued on 1 October 1951; see Gene Hanrahan, *The Communist Struggle in Malaya*, first published 1954; Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1971, Ch. 6 and Appendix I for text of the Directive.
31. See special supplement on David Chen's death in *Zhongling Zhongxue xiaokan*, Penang, 1952.
32. Interview with Chou Man Sha, 13 March 1981, Penang.
33. *Straits Echo* and *SPJP*, 5 February 1952.
34. Interview with Chou Man Sha, Penang, 13 March 1981; Chan Yik King, Penang, 17 October 1980; and Johnson Lam, Penang, 22 January 1981. Chan was then Inspector of Chinese Schools in Penang while Lam was then a member of the MC of the Chung Ling High School.
35. This quotation from Issue No. 4 of *The Red Lamp* was provided in Part I, p. 1 of 'A Report by the Superintendent of Chinese Schools Penang on Chung Ling High School', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. The context in which this report was written will be discussed in Chapter 6.
36. See 'The Problem of Subversion in Chinese Schools in the Federation', 1 September 1955, name of author not given, in W. J. Watts Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 320, RHO.

37. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Executive Committee of the UCSTA, 5 April 1952', UCSTA Files. The secretary had been with David Chen and had just got out of the car when Chen was shot.

38. 'Minutes of an Emergency Meeting of the Executive Committee of the UCSTA, 22 April 1952', UCSTA Files.

39. Interview with Lee Po Wen, Penang, 23 September 1981.

40. Letter from Tsai as President of the UCSTA to the Director of Education, 21 March 1953 in Education Department (Pentadbiran) File 829/1953, ANM. Tsai's reason for the request was the Chinese teachers did not know English. The Director of Education, L. D. Whitfield, replied on 31 March 1953 rejecting the request.

41. SCJP, 13 July 1952. Lim's statement is reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 309-10. The UCSTA Executive Committee did not meet to discuss the scheme until a week later; see SCJP, 22 July 1952.

42. Lim Lian Geok, *Huiyi pianpian lu*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, n.d., p. 30.

43. SCJP, 22 July 1952, reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 311-12.

44. Lim Lian Geok, *Huiyi pianpian lu*, pp. 1-7.

45. Loot Ting Yee, 'Huajiaozong ershiwunian dashi ji', *Jiaoshi Zazhi*, 11, 2 (1976): 1-5.

46. See note 9 in Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, pp. 190-6, for an explanation of the problem of determining the exact year when Lim first arrived in Malaya. For an account of Lim's life, see Tan Liok Ee, 'Descent and Identity: The Different Paths of Tan Cheng Lock, Tan Kah Kee and Lim Lian Geok', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 68, 1 (1995): 1-28.

47. Huang Yun Yo, 'Wo suo renshi di Lin Lianyu xiansheng', first published in *Jiaoshi Zazhi*, 3, 1 (1980): 7-8; reprinted in UCSTA Secretariat (comp.), *Zuhun Lin Lianyu*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1991, pp. 64-8. Huang was the headmaster of a Chinese school in Johore and an active member of the UCSTA himself. He was elected UCSTA president in 1962.

48. Lim makes constant references to his need for translators when meeting with colonial officials and also when he met Tan Cheng Lock in his memoirs; see *Fengyu shiba nian*, *passim*.

49. Lim's speeches will be frequently cited from various sources. In 1961 Lim wrote several short essays on the early years of the UCSTA's activities on the Chinese education issue which were published in the *Jiaoshi Zazhi*, the UCSTA journal. These were collected into a book and published as *Huiyi Pianpian lu*. This and the issues of *Jiaoshi Zazhi* containing his essays were banned by the government in 1961. In 1986, a year after his death, *Lianyu Shicun*, a collection of his poems; *Wugou ji* and *Zhaying ji*, two collections of Lim's earlier writings consisting mainly of short essays on a wide range of topics; and *Huawen jiaoyu huiyu lu*, a collection of his press statements and speeches dealing with Chinese education were published by the Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee. In 1990 the Committee published *Fengyu shiba nian*, a two-volume collection of Lim's recollections of major episodes of the UCSTA's activities and his own role in them. These were written in 1962 but Lim left instructions that they were only to be published after his death.

50. Interview with Chou Man Sha, Penang, 14 March 1980, and interview with Lim Lian Geok, Selayang (Selangor), 28 August 1980.

51. See Tan Liok Ee, *The Rhetoric of Bangsa and Minzu: Community and Nation in Tension on the Malayan Peninsula, 1945-1957*, Centre for Southeast Asian Studies Working Paper No. 52, Clayton: Monash University, 1988, for a fuller discussion of conflicting concepts of the nation in post-war Malaya.

52. See Tan Liok Ee, 'Descent and Identity', for a comparative discussion of Tan Cheng Lock's and Lim Lian Geok's political lives.
53. Figures compiled from FM, *Annual Report on Education, 1953*.
54. See Wang Gungwu, 'Chinese Politics in Malaya', *passim*.
55. See the copy of Lim's certificate of citizenship by registration, dated 25 September 1951, in UCSTA Secretariat (comp.), *Lin Lianyu gongminquan an*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1989, p. 311. Clause 125 enabled persons who had resided in the Federation for 15 out of 20 years preceding his or her application to obtain citizenship; see Sinnadurai, 'The Citizenship Laws of Malaysia', p. 71.
56. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process*, p. 84. In 1950, the total number of Chinese who had become citizens was estimated to be 500,000, of which 350,000 had become citizens by operation of law.
57. Interview with Chou Man Sha, Penang, 13 March 1981.
58. For an extended discussion of this conflict, see Tan Liok Ee, *The Rhetoric of Bangsa and Minzu*.
59. 'Memorandum from Presidium of a meeting of Chinese Teachers Unions of Various States and Settlements in the Federation of Malaya, 14 September 1951', in Director of Education File 555/51. See *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 301-2 for the Chinese version of this statement.
60. 'The Inaugural Manifesto is reprinted in full in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 12-13.
61. 'Memorandum from the UCSTA to the Select [sic] Committee on Education', 1 September 1951, UCSTA Files. See *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 312 for the Chinese version.
62. The UCSTA pamphlet, dated 3 November 1952, explaining why colonial policies on education must be opposed, is reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 315-16.
63. See the text of the statement, reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 295.
64. See the 1954 Annual Report of the UCSTA, reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 234.
65. As, for example, in the UCSTA statement to the Special Committee on Education in September 1952, reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 312-13.
66. See the full text of David Chen's speech, reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 177.
67. 'Minutes of Meeting of Representatives of CSTAs in Malaya, 24-25 August 1951', reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 298.
68. First Annual Report of the UCSTA, reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 231.
69. Lim Lian Geok, *Huiyi pianpian lu*, pp. 47-57.
70. Interview with Chan Yik King, Penang, 17 October 1980.
71. *SCJP*, 24 May 1952. The Chinese dailies reported frequently on progress in the writing of new syllabuses and textbooks for the Chinese primary schools throughout 1952.
72. Lim Lian Geok, *Huiyi Pianpian lu*, pp. 8-14. MacGillivray had written to the UCSTA in January 1952 suggesting a meeting with the Chinese school teachers. See Letter from Secretary of the Deputy High Commissioner to the President of the UCSTA, 5 January 1952, UCSTA Files. As far as I could ascertain, no other meeting took place before 9 November 1952.
73. *Ibid.*
74. Wang Gungwu, 'Chinese Politics in Malaya', p. 253.
75. See Wong Yoke Nyen, 'The Role of Chinese Organizations', p. 41, for the first figure. The second comes from Wan Ming Sing, 'The History of the Organizations of the Chinese Community in Selangor with Particular Reference to

Problems of Leadership, 1857-1962', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1967, p. 11. These two studies provide very good discussions of the roles of the *shetuan* in the social and political life of the Chinese in Malaya. See Yen Ching-hwang, 'Early Chinese Clan Organizations in Singapore and Malaya, 1819-1911', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 12, 2 (1981): 62-92, for an account of the earliest clan organizations.

76. For an idea of the range of *shetuan*, see listings of the *shetuan* in Selangor and Penang in *Xuelane Zhonghua Dahuitang wushisi zhounian jinian tekan*, Kuala Lumpur, 1977 and *Binzhou Huaren Dahuitang qingzhu chengli yibai zhounian xing-sha luocheng kuzumu jinian tekan*, Penang, 1983, respectively. Wong Yoke Nyen, 'The Role of Chinese Organizations', pp. 28-40, has detailed discussions as well as graphs illustrating the interlinking hierarchy of *shetuan* organizations. See Huang Kunfu, *Mahua Shanghui shi*, Kuala Lumpur: Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce, 1974, for discussions of the Chambers of Commerce; *Xuelane Zhonghua Dahuitang*, and *Bingzhou Huaren Dahuitang* for the histories of the Selangor and Penang Chinese Assembly Halls.

77. G. W. Skinner, 'Overseas Chinese Leadership: Paradigm for a Paradox', in G. Wijeyewardene (ed.), *Leadership and Authority: A Symposium*, Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1968, pp. 191-207. See also his *Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community of Thailand*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1958.

78. Wang Gungwu, 'Traditional Leadership in a New Nation', in G. Wijeyewardene (ed.), *Leadership and Authority: A Symposium*, pp. 208-22; reprinted in Wang Gungwu, *Community and Nation*, pp. 231-50.

79. Wan Ming Sing, 'The History of the Organizations of the Chinese Community in Selangor', pp. 143-6.

80. T'ien Ju Kang, *The Chinese in Sarawak: A Study of Social Structure*, London School of Economics Monograph on Social Anthropology No. 12, London, 1953, p. 74.

81. Wan Ming Sing, 'The History of the Organizations of the Chinese Community in Selangor', p. 146.

82. For more detailed discussions, see Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star over Malaya*, Ch. 2 and Akashi Yoji, 'Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 1, 2 (1970): 61-89.

83. Victor Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, first published 1948; Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 265.

84. Wong Yoke Nyen, 'The Role of Chinese Organizations', pp. 92-3.

85. See FM, *Report of the Consultative Committee Together with the Proceedings of Six Public Meetings: A Summary of Representations Made and Memoranda Considered by the Committee*, Kuala Lumpur, 1947.

86. See Yeo Kim Wah, 'The Anti-Federation Movement in Malaya, 1946-1948', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 4, 1 (1973): 31-51, for a detailed discussion of PUTERA-AMCJA activities.

87. 'Report on Survey of Chinese Schools in Malaya, 3 November 1945-21 December 1945', in BMA Dept/16/15, ANM.

88. This is very clear from reports on Chinese schools in various states in Pelajaran R of S Kota Bharu File 37/48, ANM.

89. Interview with Zhai Zhaoxun, Kuala Lumpur, 7 April 1982. Zhai was the headmistress of the Kuen Cheng Girls' School during the early 1960s when Chin was Chairman of the MC. She had taught in the school for many years before becoming its headmistress.

90. See Chapter 6.

91. See Chan Suet Mien, 'Kontroversi Penukaran Taraf Sekolah Menengah Chan Wa, Seremban, Oktober 1957-Disember 1957', BA academic exercise, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1994/5 for a detailed case study of this school.
92. Wang Gungwu, 'Chinese Politics in Malaya', p. 253.
93. *SCJP*, 8 July 1951.
94. *Ibid.*, 8 July 1951-30 September 1951.
95. From 'Memorandum on Malay and Chinese Education in Malaya from Chairman of a Meeting of Representatives of Chinese Schools and Associations in the State of Johore'; 'Memorandum on the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports from a Meeting of Representatives of Chinese Associations and Schools in Penang, 13 September 1951'; and 'Memorandum from Chairman of a Meeting of Representatives of Chinese Educational Institutions and Public Bodies in Perak, 16 August 1951', all in Director of Education File 555/51, ANM.
96. From 'Memorandum on the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports from the Penang Chinese Chamber of Commerce'; 'Memorandum from Pro-tem Chairman of Conference of Delegates from Chinese Associations and Schools in South Kedah'; 'Memorandum from Chairman of a Meeting of Representatives of Chinese Educational Institutions and Public Bodies in Perak, 16 August 1951'; and 'Memorandum from Chairman of Joint Meeting of Chinese School Committees and Principals in Penang, 18 August 1951' respectively, all in Director of Education File 555/51, ANM.
97. These citations are from memoranda in Director of Education File 555/51.
98. See *SPJP*, 3 August 1952, for a report of the Johore meeting; *KWYP*, 4 August 1952 and *SCJP*, 19 August 1952 for reports of meetings in Perak; *SPJP*, 10 August 1952 for a report of the Kedah meeting; and, *SPJP*, 26 September 1952 for a report of the Negri Sembilan meeting.
99. See the histories of the various CSCAs in Dongzong Chuban Zu (comp.), *Dongzong 30nian*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSCA, 1987, Vol. 1, pp. 28-199.
100. Wong Yoke Nyen, 'The Role of Chinese Organizations', p. 204. However, according to *Dongzong 30nian*, p. 143, the Johore CSCA was established in 1949.
101. Wan Ming Sing, 'The History of the Organizations of the Chinese Community in Selangor', p. 147 and *Xuelane Zhonghua Dahuitang*, p. 22.
102. *Pili Jiaying Huiguan qishi zhounian xinsha luocheng kaimu tekan*, Ipoh, 1975, p. 607.
103. *Ibid.*, p. 558.
104. *Guangdong Huiguan Lianhehui 1967 nianpao*, Kuala Lumpur, 1967, p. 143.
105. Wen's educational background was mentioned in the biodata of his father-in-law, Chong Khoon Lin; see n. 102 above.
106. See Lim Lian Geok's portrayal and assessment of Wen's role in *Fengou shiba nian*, Vol. 1, *passim*.
107. *SCJP*, 31 August 1952 and *KWYP*, 10 November 1952, which described the background of the 9 November meeting.
108. See *Dongzong 30nian*, Vol. 3, p. 570, for a short history and Vol. 2, p. 277, for minutes of the first meeting.
109. See *Dongzong 30nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 23-4.
110. Interview with Lim Lian Geok, Selayang (Selangor), 2 April 1982.
111. In chronological order, they are Margaret Roff, 'The Malayan Chinese Association: 1948-1965', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 6, 2 (1961): 40-53; Margaret Clarke, 'The Malayan Alliance and Its Accommodation of Communal Pressures, 1952-1962', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1964; Chan Heng Chee,

'The Malayan Chinese Association', MA thesis, University of Singapore, 1965; Roy Haas, 'The MCA, 1958-1959: An Analysis of Different Conceptions of the Malayan Chinese Role in Independent Malaya', MA thesis, Northern Illinois University, 1967; Lim San Kok, 'Some Aspects of the Malayan Chinese Association, 1949-1961', *Journal of the South Seas Society*, 26, 2 (1971): 31-48; Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia: A History of the Malaysian Chinese Association*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988.

112. Chan Heng Chee, 'The Malayan Chinese Association', p. 19.

113. Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, p. 57.

114. Dispatch from Gurney to Higham, 10 February 1949, CO 537/4242, PRO Kew.

115. *Ibid.* Citations from the MCA's inaugural rules are from the copy enclosed in Gurney's dispatch.

116. See Soh Eng Lim, 'Tan Cheng Lock and His Leadership of the Malayan Chinese', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, 1, 1 (1960): 29-55; K. G. Tregonning, 'Tan Cheng Lock: A Malayan Nationalist', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 10, 1 (1979): 25-76; Tjoa Hock Guan, 'The Social and Political Ideas of Tun Datuk Sir Tan Cheng Lock', in Kernal Singh Sandhu and Paul Wheatley (eds.), *Melaka: The Transformation of a Malay Capital, c.1400-1980*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1983, Vol. 1, pp. 299-323; Tan Liok Ee, 'Tan Cheng Lock', Paper presented to the National Seminar on Malaysian Biography, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1986; Yeo Siew Siang, *Tan Cheng Lock: The Straits Legislator and Chinese Leader*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications, 1990; and, Alice Scott-Ross, *Tun Dato Sir Cheng Lock Tan: A Personal Profile by His Daughter*, Singapore: Alice Scott-Ross, 1990.

117. Tregonning, 'Tan Cheng Lock: A Malayan Nationalist', p. 46.

118. *Ibid.*

119. See Tan Cheng Lock, *Malayan Problems from a Chinese Point of View*, Singapore: Tannso, 1947, for Tan's memoranda and speeches on the Malayan Union as well as during the Japanese Occupation.

120. See Cheah Boon Kheng, *The Masked Comrades: A Study of the Communist United Front in Malaya, 1945-1948*, Singapore: Times Books International, 1979, and Yeo Kim Wah, 'The Anti-Federation Movement', for detailed discussions.

121. Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, p. 57.

122. According to most accounts of the MCA (see citations in n. 111 above), discussions towards its formation began in December 1948. This is confirmed by Gurney's dispatch to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 19 December 1948, CO 537/4242, PRO Kew. Gurney's dispatch stated that Chinese members of the Legislative Council had by then taken the first steps towards the formation of a Malayan Chinese Association.

123. For documents related to this incident in Tan Cheng Lock's life, see TCL 21.18-18a, TCL 3.145 and 'Letter to Dato Sir Cheng Lock Tan from Anonymous Malayan Communist', dated 18 May 1950 and translated on 23 May 1950, in *A Collection of Correspondence of Sir Cheng Lock Tan*, TCL 26.15, all in TCL/ISEAS.

124. There are numerous collections of his speeches during the first two years of the MCA's history in the Tan Cheng Lock Papers in Arkib Negara Malaysia as well as at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore.

125. A complete set of the minutes of the Communities Liaison Committee is available in Folio 23, TCL/ISEAS. See also discussions in Karl von Vorvys, *Democracy without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, pp. 96-104 and Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, pp. 147-56.

126. For a detailed discussion see Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, Chs. 4 and 6.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
128. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
129. Chan Heng Chee, 'The Malayan Chinese Association', p. 19.
130. Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, p. 86.
131. See *ibid.*, Ch. 5, for a detailed description of the MCA's activities relating to the Emergency.
132. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
133. 'Memorandum on the Organization of the MCA', 28 October 1951, in *A Collection of Speeches and Writings of Tan Cheng Lock*, Tan Cheng Lock Papers, Arkib Negara Malaysia; cited henceforth as TCL/ANM.
134. See MCA Annual Report for 1952, TCL/ANM.
135. See T. H. Tan, *The Prince and I*, Singapore: Sam Boyd Enterprise and Mini Media Pte. Ltd., 1979, for his own account of his participation in the political events of the 1950s and his close relationship with Tunku Abdul Rahman. Wen's role will be discussed in Chapters 4 and 5.
136. See 'Report on a Visit to Malaya from 20th August to 20th September 1952 at the Invitation of the MCA by Victor Purcell and Francis Carnell', TCL 13.18 in TCL/ISEAS. Purcell and Carnell's visit caused some problems between the MCA and UMNO (see Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, p. 107) as well as with Templer, the High Commissioner (see correspondence relating to tension between Purcell and Templer in CO 1022/85, PRO Kew).
137. Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, pp. 156-8.
138. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
139. See correspondence between H. S. Lee and Tan Cheng Lock, February 1952, TCL 9.33-35, TCL/ISEAS.
140. Tregonning, 'Tan Cheng Lock: A Malayan Nationalist', p. 68.
141. Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, p. 171.
142. See Clarke, 'The Malayan Alliance and Its Accommodation of Communal Pressures'; Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process*, Ch. 5; Means, *Malaysian Politics*, Ch. 11; R. K. Vasil, *Ethnic Politics in Malaysia*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1980, Ch. 3 for discussions on the Alliance's early years.
143. See Chapter 2, pp. 61-3.
144. Lim San Kok, 'Some Aspects of the Malayan Chinese Association', p. 40.
145. See Chapter 4, p. 135.
146. See TCL 13.21A and TCL 13.21C, TCL/ISEAS.
147. From Text of Tan Cheng Lock's Speech to the Straits Legislative Council on 12 February 1934, in *A Collection of Speeches by Datoek Sir Cheng-lock Tan*, TCL/ANM.
148. Tan Cheng Lock, 'Memorandum on the Future of Malaya' (p. 27) and 'Comments on the Association of British Malaya's Memorandum on the Reconstruction of Malaya', in his *Malayan Problems from a Chinese Point of View*, pp. 59-60.
149. See text of radio broadcast of a discussion on the proposed Nanyang University between the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Malaya, Sir Sydney Caine, and Tan Cheng Lock, 30 January 1953, TCL/ANM.
150. Interviews with Lim Lian Geok, Selayang (Selangor), 11 July 1982, and Chou Man Sha, Penang, 6 May 1980. See also Lim Lian Geok's *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, p. 75.

A Historic Bargain

First Coming Together, 9 November 1952

ON 9 November 1952, a meeting of teachers and managers of Chinese schools from all the states in the Federation of Malaya was called. The original objective was for these two groups to arrive at a common decision on the New Salary Aid Scheme for Chinese primary schools. The meeting acquired far greater significance for two reasons. First, a delegation of Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) leaders led by its president, Tan Cheng Lock, was present. Second, leaders of the three organizations decided to form a joint committee to oppose the proposed 1952 Education Ordinance and to defend the future of Chinese education in Malaya. In the event, the meeting extended for two days and was immediately hailed in the Chinese press as an unprecedented show of unity in support of Chinese education.¹ The 9 November meeting, in fact, launched a close working relationship between the MCA and the two Chinese education organizations which lasted until July 1959.

Since the release of the Barnes Report in July 1951, there had been many meetings called by various Chinese organizations to rally to the defence of Chinese education. In 1952 teachers had been involved in meetings to discuss the new curriculum and new textbooks for Chinese primary schools. The announcement of the New Salary Aid Scheme in June 1952 precipitated another round of meetings as those responsible for the Chinese schools tried to work out the implications of the scheme. They were suspicious of British motivations behind the increase in aid when the official objective of education policy was to exclude the Chinese schools from the proposed national system. Meetings to discuss the New Salary Aid Scheme had brought the teachers and managers together. Given the many overlaps between Selangor Chinese School Committees' Association (CSCA) and MCA leadership at the state levels, MCA leaders were already involved as well. But the MCA, as an organization, was as yet not involved. There is good reason, therefore, to see the 9 November meeting as a natural

coming together of the three groups with the most obvious reasons to be involved at a time when concern over the Chinese schools was at its height.²

The idea of calling a national-level meeting of teachers and managers from all the states first came up during a CSCA meeting on 17 August 1952. This had been called to discuss the New Salary Aid Scheme.³ Lim Lian Geok has claimed in his memoirs that he was the one who suggested the national-level meeting. Wen Tien Kuang, who was also present at the meeting as a member of the Selangor CSCA, then suggested that the MCA should be included. Wen indicated that the MCA would not only like to take part but would be prepared to bear the costs of organizing the meeting, including the costs of travel, board, and lodging for delegates. Wen's suggestion was accepted and as a result he became the main organizer of the 9 November meeting.⁴

Wen was then the MCA's Under-Secretary for Social and Cultural Affairs. It is very plausible that from Wen's dual position, as a member of the Selangor CSCA and an MCA man seeking to expand the MCA's role in social and cultural issues, he recognized this as a good opportunity for the MCA to establish links with two important groups in Chinese society. After the 9 November meeting, Wen went on to play a key role in sustaining the MCA's relationship with both the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA) and the United Chinese School Committees' Association (UCSCA).

Until the 9 November meeting, the MCA had not taken an official stand on the issue of the status of Chinese schools in the future system of education of Malaya. Tan Cheng Lock's speech at the 9 November meeting was the first public signal from the MCA president that he was prepared to pledge his personal support, and that of the MCA, to the cause of Chinese education. In his speech, Tan declared unequivocally that: 'at this critical juncture in the history of the growth and development of Chinese education and culture in Malaya ... its cause has the full support of the MCA which stands for the democratic principle of equality, without discrimination of race, class or creed'.⁵ Tan began his speech by supporting the principle of education in the mother tongue on the grounds that this, according to expert opinion, was the most effective way of teaching young children. Education in the mother tongue, said Tan, would also strengthen Chinese culture and tradition. Most important of all, the Chinese in Malaya, especially those who spoke Chinese at home, should be educated in their mother

tongue because 'a man's native speech is like his shadow, inseparable from his personality'.⁶ This phrase later became a favourite quotation of UCSTA leaders who frequently cited it as an example of how knowledge of the mother tongue was valued even by Chinese like Tan, who did not themselves know Chinese.

The 9 November meeting made three major decisions. First, a resolution opposing the Report of the Special Committee and the 1952 Education Ordinance was unanimously accepted. A memorandum conveying this stand and detailing the reasons for Chinese opposition to the Ordinance was sent to the High Commissioner immediately after the meeting. The memorandum was signed by Wen Tien Kuang, on behalf of the MCA; Lee Po Wen, on behalf of the UCSTA; and Ang Khe Tho, on behalf of the Chinese school managers.⁷ Second, the meeting decided to set up a joint organization at the national level which would be devoted to the task of defending Chinese education in the country. As a first step, a Presidium of three—with one representative each from the teachers, managers, and the MCA—was elected. The Presidium was responsible for working out the structure of the proposed organization and convening the next meeting. The MCs in the states which did not have a CSCA were asked to organize one immediately so that the Management Committees (MCs) of Chinese schools in all states would be able to send formal representatives to the next meeting.

Third, on the issue of the New Salary Aid Scheme, the meeting decided to set up a Subcommittee of nine—with three representatives each from the teachers, managers, and the MCA—to review all the details and negotiate for better terms with the government. H. R. Howse, the Superintendent of Chinese Schools in Selangor, had been given time at the beginning of the meeting to explain the scheme. Howse realized that the Chinese school teachers and managers were reluctant to accept the scheme because they suspected it of being a precursor to the implementation of the 1952 Education Ordinance. He assured his listeners that this was not the case; the new aid scheme was not tied in any way to the provisions of the 1952 Education Ordinance. He urged them therefore to consider the scheme purely on its own merits.

The MCA was represented at the 9 November 1952 meeting by its president, Tan Cheng Lock; its secretary-general, Leong Yew Koh; the chairman of its Cultural Subcommittee, Leung Cheung Ling; its agent-general, Yap Mau Tatt, and Wen Tien Kuang.⁸ With this high-level representation, the decisions of the November 1952 meeting may be considered to be binding on the MCA. In

addition, the MCA president's speech left no room for doubt as to the MCA's stand. It should be recalled, however, that the MCA had two representatives on the Special Committee which drew up the 1952 Education Ordinance, H. S. Lee and Leung Cheung Ling. Minutes of the meetings of the Special Committee indicate that Lee and Leung made some attempts to present Chinese views to the Committee but they ultimately went along with the Committee's majority decisions.⁹ As members of the Committee, they would have been bound to support the Bill when it was presented to the Legislative Council. But no one, including Leung Cheung Ling himself, raised this problem at the 9 November meeting.¹⁰ No one suggested the possibility of an MCA directive to its Legislative Councillors to vote against the 1952 Ordinance.

The decisions made at the November 1952 meeting immediately received the support of Chinese organizations. Numerous telegrams were sent to the High Commissioner endorsing the resolutions adopted at the meeting.¹¹ But this had no obvious effect on the colonial government. Two weeks later, on 21 November, the 1952 Education Ordinance was duly presented to, and unanimously accepted by, the Federal Legislative Council. Legislative Councillors from the MCA were party to this decision as none of them spoke up or voted against the Ordinance. The MCA leaders who had joined the teachers and managers in condemning the 1952 Education Ordinance during the 9 November meeting had not directed their colleagues in the Legislative Council to act in accordance with the resolutions of the meeting. This placed the MCA leadership in an embarrassing position at the next meeting with the Chinese school teachers and managers especially as the MCA wanted to propose that the Central Committee on Chinese Education, formed for the purpose of opposing the 1952 Ordinance, should be placed under the MCA.

A Central Committee on Chinese Education

The second meeting of teachers and managers together with MCA leaders was held on 19 and 20 April 1953. The main purpose was to discuss the formation of a Central Committee on Chinese Education. The MCA wanted this Committee to be formed as the MCA Chinese Education Committee; in other words, as a sub-committee of the MCA. This would give the MCA more control over the new joint Committee. But the Chinese education organizations preferred the Committee to be a separate and independent body.

In his memoirs, Lim Lian Geok recounts that he was pressured by Wen Tien Kuang to issue a press statement saying that he agreed that the proposed Central Committee on Chinese Education should come under the MCA. Lim apparently relented because Wen would otherwise have delayed convening the meeting. That would mean no progress on joint actions to oppose the 1952 Education Ordinance. Lim admitted that he planned to defeat the MCA's proposal during the meeting itself. This, however, did not happen because of Tan Cheng Lock's stirring performance at the meeting.¹²

Lim's discussion of the lobbying prior to the April 1953 meeting clearly suggested that he recognized the benefits of placing the new Committee under the MCA. Were the Committee to seek registration as a new and independent body, it might not have obtained the approval of the colonial government. As a subcommittee of the MCA, the Committee could be immediately functional. This was critical if the momentum of opposition to the 1952 Ordinance was to be maintained. Lim also clearly recognized Wen as a man who had the talents needed to defend Chinese education. The UCSTA had no one with the same ability to convey its position effectively, in English, to colonial officials, MCA leaders, and the world outside that of the Chinese-educated. With the MCA's direct participation, the Committee would not only speak with a stronger voice, it could also call on the MCA's financial resources. However, placing the Committee under the MCA would enable the MCA to claim that it represented the Chinese community on the issue of Chinese education. This Lim Lian Geok was not happy to accept. Lim's reservations on this matter were shared by many of the other Chinese school teachers and managers. The issue of placing the Committee under the MCA was the subject of a very long discussion during the April 1953 meeting. A detailed reconstruction of this meeting will help us understand some of the dynamics of power between the three main components in the Chinese Education Movement.¹³

Wen had lobbied Lim Lian Geok before the meeting because he knew that the MCA could not carry its proposal for the joint Committee to come under the MCA without support from some of the teachers and managers. There were 14 representatives from the MCA at the April 1953 meeting. All 14 had voting rights. However, the teachers and managers had twenty official representatives and therefore 20 votes each. In addition, the UCSTA was given another two additional votes on the basis that it had parti-

cipated in the November 1952 meeting as an organization separate from the state Chinese School Teachers' Associations (CSTAs).¹⁴ This representation structure was clearly unfavourable to the MCA. Even if the proposed joint Committee had equal representatives from each of the three groups, the MCA would still be placed in a vulnerable position. The MCA could overcome this problem and have more control over the proposed joint Committee, only if the proposed joint Committee came under the MCA.

Wen had placed himself and the MCA in a strategic position by taking over the costs and the organization of the 9 November meeting. As a result, he had been elected secretary of the 9 November 1952 meeting as well as convener of the New Salary Aid Scheme Subcommittee. Wen was thus in a position to play a central role at the April 1953 meeting as well. An indication that Wen had successfully lobbied other delegates to the April 1953 meeting to accept MCA leadership is the fact that there was no contest for the post of chairman of the meeting. Tan Cheng Lock was elected chairman even though he was personally not present at the first session. Chong Khoo Lin from the Selangor CSCA acted as temporary chairman until Tan joined the meeting in the afternoon.

As secretary, Wen had arranged for the meeting to begin on a positive note with a report from himself on the success of the New Salary Aid Scheme Subcommittee. Wen reported that the government had conceded on most of the main points raised by the Subcommittee. In particular, the government had agreed to bear the costs of providing annual increments, and to adjust salary scales so that no one would suffer any loss in pay as a result of their school agreeing to accept the scheme; it had also agreed that all future changes to the curriculum of the schools would be made after consultations with teachers through the Textbook Committees. The Subcommittee had then issued a statement on 20 January 1953 calling on the Chinese primary schools to accept the scheme. This was a distinct change from the earlier position of suspicion and uncertainty towards the new aid scheme. The credit was being claimed by the Subcommittee which, under Wen's leadership, had succeeded in bringing definite benefits to the teachers.

After Wen's report, Leong Yew Koh tried to bring forward the discussion on the Central Committee on Chinese Education on grounds that some of the MCA's representatives had to leave the meeting early 'for other important engagements'. In a vote,

Leong's suggestion was rejected by the delegates. The meeting continued with discussions of various other details of the New Salary Aid Scheme. During this discussion, Lim Lian Geok proposed that the meeting reject the New Salary Aid Scheme Subcommittee's suggestion that the same scheme should be extended to the Chinese secondary schools. Lim wanted the MCs of the schools to undertake to improve teachers' salaries without any more aid from the government. He was supported by Sha Yuan Roo, from the Kuala Lumpur CSTA, who pointed out that government aid always came with strings attached. She argued that it was better if the schools tried to improve themselves without being obligated to the government.

Lim's suggestion, which may be taken as taking a 'purist' stand on government aid, was overwhelmingly rejected.¹⁵ From the discussion on Lim's proposal, it appeared that Chinese secondary schools were losing staff to the primary schools because, with the New Salary Aid Scheme, primary school staff now had better pay and working conditions. The MCs of the secondary schools would obviously have to increase pay to their teachers to keep them from leaving. Rejection of Lim's proposal indicated that the MCs and teachers were prepared to accept the extension of the New Salary Aid Scheme to Chinese secondary schools even if it meant increased governmental control over these schools.

The next item on the agenda was the issue of further action on opposing the 1952 Education Ordinance. The Kuala Lumpur CSTA had tabled a motion 'to bring to the attention of government that as the [*sic*] public opinion opposing the Ordinance was not aired in the Legislative Council, Chinese members of the Council cannot adequately represent the Chinese in Malaya'. Leung Cheung Ling and Leong Yew Koh, both Legislative Councillors, objected to this motion. Leong explained that he was no expert on education and that 'no one had ever mentioned to me about [*sic*] the problems of the Education Ordinance 1952 before it was passed'. This was a lame excuse as he was present at the November 1952 meeting during which MCA representatives had agreed to oppose the Ordinance. Other MCA members acknowledged that the MCA might have been insufficiently co-ordinated in their position on the issues of education and culture in the past. They suggested that the party was now better organized to work together with the teachers and managers on these issues. Having made his point, Lim Lian Geok agreed to withdraw the Kuala Lumpur CSTA's motion 'to avoid misunderstanding'.

At this point, Tan Cheng Lock joined the meeting, just in time to take part in the debate on whether the Central Committee on Chinese Education should come under the MCA. The minutes of the meeting support Lim Lian Geok's recollection that it was Tan Cheng Lock who succeeded in swinging the mood of the meeting to the MCA's favour. Tan first gave a speech which praised Chinese culture and reiterated his support for Chinese education. He then called on the meeting to support the formation of the Central Committee on Chinese Education under the MCA. He reasoned that 'when the Chinese school committees and teachers of the one part and the MCA of the other combine and pool their resources together it must inevitably lead to the whole organization of Chinese education in Malaya being put on a strong, firm and satisfactory basis'.¹⁶ Tan was then challenged by Loh Ching Chua from the Penang CSCA to declare clearly the education policy of the MCA. The Penang CSCA had joined other CSTAs and CSCAs in submitting a motion for the proposed joint committee to be an independent body. Loh explained that his organization supported Tan Cheng Lock personally but wanted the Central Committee to be an independent body 'lest somebody else with little love for Chinese Education should become the next President of the MCA'. If this happened, said Loh, 'our organization will either be doomed or become a tool'.

In response, Tan began by stating frankly that having the proposed Committee within the MCA would definitely benefit the MCA. But, said Tan, it would also benefit the proposed Committee which 'might not be so strong as it would be if associated with and acting in co-operation with the MCA'. Furthermore, said Tan, it was not simply a question of 'being under the MCA' because for the MCA it was also 'a very serious responsibility if you come in with us'. Turning to the possibility that some delegates were worried about associating with the MCA because it was a political party, Tan pointed out that abstention from politics was not really possible. Those who refrained from association with political parties or political activities would find that Chinese education was compromised by all kinds of laws over which they would have no control. As to whether some other president of the MCA may be antagonistic to Chinese education, Tan claimed that 'such a situation is unthinkable and impossible'. This was because the Constitution of the MCA required it 'to protect the interests of the Chinese not only politically but economically, culturally, educationally and in every other respect'. Tan concluded by stating

that anyone who did not support the cause of Chinese education was not Chinese and any future president of the MCA who was opposed to Chinese education could be sacked by the Chinese.

However, Tan Cheng Lock made a very clear distinction between political loyalties and cultural attachments. He reminded his audience that politically the Chinese had to demonstrate their unequivocal loyalty to Malaya because '[no] man can serve two masters'. He called on the Chinese to be 'absolutely one with the other domiciled communities of this country, especially the Malays'. In their intellectual, religious, and cultural lives, however, they could remain 'Chinese to the marrow of our bones'. This was why it was incumbent on any MCA president to support Chinese education and Chinese culture.

It was Lim Lian Geok's impression that the part of Tan's speech that had an astounding effect on all those who were present was his declaration that 'if the Chinese do not love their own culture, the English will not recognize them as English, the Malays will also not recognize them as Malays, and they will become people with no ancestry. On this earth, only animals such as pigs, cattle, ducks and chicken are not bothered by questions of ancestry. Therefore Chinese who do not love their own culture will be no better than such animals.'¹⁷ According to Lim, everyone present was 'terribly moved' by Tan's statement. Loh Ching Chua then declared that he would be happy to place the struggle for Chinese education under the 'wise and enlightened leadership' of Tan Cheng Lock.¹⁸

The minutes of the meeting indicate, however, that some of the teachers would still have preferred to have some time to discuss the issue amongst themselves. Lee Po Wen from the Penang CSTA proposed that a decision on the matter should be postponed to the second day. His suggestion was seconded by Sha Yuan Roo from the Kuala Lumpur CSTA. However, this suggestion was turned down without much protest from the majority and a vote was taken immediately after Tan's speech. The decision to place the Central Committee on Chinese Education under the MCA, making it therefore the Malayan Chinese Association Chinese Education Central Committee (MCACECC) was accepted with 26 votes in favour and 4 against.¹⁹ This division of votes showed that the MCA had obtained an additional 12 votes, to its own 14, from the teachers and managers.

In coming together to form the MCACECC, all three component organizations agreed that the MCACECC would be the common forum for discussions on all issues related to Chinese education.

The MCACECC would henceforth represent the Chinese schools in all negotiations with the government and would assist the schools in solving their financial difficulties. It was, above all, the MCACECC's responsibility to 'strive for the equal status of Chinese education in the educational system of this country'. The MCACECC's Constitution provided for equal representation of 10 delegates each from the three component organizations. The presidents of all three organizations were also *ex officio* members of the Committee. The interests of the three separate component organizations were further safeguarded by two other provisions. These were firstly, the right to veto any resolution should all the representatives from any one organization find it unacceptable and secondly, a caveat on decisions affecting the internal affairs of the three organizations.

This caveat did not, apparently, apply to the issue of Chinese education because the MCACECC was to be 'the highest organ to decide on matters relating to Chinese education within the MCA'. This meant that the Chinese school teachers and managers could, through the MCACECC, exert direct influence on the MCA's stand on Chinese education. However, the MCA's leadership of the MCACECC was underlined by the stipulation that its president would automatically be the chairman of the MCACECC.²⁰ MCA control over the MCACECC was ensured when Wen Tien Kuang and Chong Khoo Lin, both MCA representatives on the MCACECC, were elected secretary and treasurer at the first official meeting of the MCACECC in August 1953. Lim Lian Geok from the UCSTA was elected assistant secretary and Ang Khe Tho from the Selangor CSCA assistant treasurer.²¹ Wen and Chong could be regarded as also representing the interests of the managers as they were both active members of the Selangor CSCA.

Through the chairman and secretary, the MCA could exercise effective control over the MCACECC, for example in determining the dates and agenda of meetings. However, if the teachers and managers stood together in presenting resolutions to the MCACECC, the MCA would be able to extricate itself only by vetoing the problematic resolution. This could prove to be politically embarrassing. Such situations were later avoided by putting more controversial issues through a smaller subcommittee to work out a solution amenable to all sides. In the initial phase of collaboration within the MCACECC, such problems did not as yet arise because the main target of MCACECC opposition was the education policy of the colonial government.

A Common Stand on Chinese Education

A memorandum signed by representatives of all three components of the Chinese Education Movement was sent to Sir Gerald Templer, the High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya, immediately after the November 1952 meeting. This stated that the meeting had agreed on the following main points: 'the use of the mother tongues of the composite races as the main teaching media for the proposed National schools, granting equal opportunities to the development of Malay, Chinese, and Indian education, and adopting English as a compulsory subject with the view to making it a common language for all'.²²

The Report of the Special Committee was criticized because it proposed that grants-in-aid to Chinese schools should be withdrawn as soon as sufficient national schools were built. This was tantamount to 'dealing the Chinese schools a crushing death blow'. The provisions of the 1952 Education Ordinance were charged with having 'a serious demoralizing effect on the Chinese community in general and the Chinese schools in particular'. The High Commissioner was asked to repeal those aspects of the Ordinance which were detrimental to the interests of Chinese education. National schools in which Chinese was the medium of instruction should be established because this was the only way in which the Chinese language and culture could be preserved. The government's policy of imposing uniformity of language was more likely to bring about discord than create national unity. What was needed was a more liberal policy on language which would win the hearts of the Malayan people.²³

After the second meeting in April 1953, another letter reiterating the same points was sent to Sir Gerald Templer. This was signed by Tan Cheng Lock as chairman of the MCACECC and dated 12 May 1953. The High Commissioner replied on 6 July.²⁴ Templer's main argument was that unity through a common language was essential in Malaya's situation. He also repeated another favourite contention of British officials: the principle of teaching in the mother tongue was not valid in Malaya. Templer made it clear that Chinese was not acceptable as one of the national languages of the country and Chinese schools were not acceptable as national schools. He denied, however, that the government's intention was to destroy the Chinese schools. The Chinese school teachers were accused of opposing colonial policy purely from self-interest, to safeguard their livelihood. The Chinese were criticized for pursu-

ing a separatist policy in seeking exclusive protection for their language and culture.

The MCACECC met in August 1953 to discuss Templer's reply. A draft response, probably written by Wen Tien Kuang, had already been prepared for discussion at the meeting. The final version was published subsequently as a pamphlet entitled *Memorandum on Chinese Education in the Federation of Malaya* and bore Tan Cheng Lock's name as the author. It was, in fact, the work of Wen and T. H. Tan, the Chief Executive Secretary of the MCA.²⁵ This memorandum can be regarded as the manifesto of the Chinese Education Movement of the 1950s, as it collated systematically all the arguments which various Chinese organizations had made in defence of a legitimate role for Chinese education in Malaya and in opposition to the colonial government's policy of excluding Chinese schools from the national mainstream. It reiterated the arguments against a single language in a multi-ethnic society, asserted the educational merit of teaching in the mother tongue, and maintained that the preservation of diverse languages and cultures would enrich the development of a Malayan culture. The *Memorandum on Chinese Education* rejected Templer's contention that Chinese aspirations to preserve the Chinese schools and Chinese culture stemmed from a separatist or exclusivist mentality. A legitimate place for the Chinese language, schools, and culture was based on the principles of equality and justice.²⁶ The Memorandum had no effect on the colonial government but it served a useful purpose for the MCACECC. It established a basic position acceptable to all three organizations and became a reference point for the position which the MCA's partners in the MCACECC thought the MCA should take in its negotiations with UMNO within the Alliance.

Differing Political Considerations

After the April 1953 meeting, the MCA maintained a publicly consistent position on Chinese education. It was now clearly opposed to the 1952 Education Ordinance. This was frequently publicized in its official organ, the *Malayan Mirror*, which often carried reports of meetings of the MCACECC on its front page.²⁷ Tan Cheng Lock referred to the MCA's opposition to colonial education policy in his speech to the MCA Annual General Meeting on 27 December 1953.²⁸ There were no obvious signs of serious disagreement within the MCACECC as long as its focus

was on making representations against the colonial government's policies. This impression is supported by what Lim Lian Geok has to say about the early period of the MCACECC in his memoirs. Lim reports that he had a good working relationship with Wen who kept him informed and consulted him regularly.²⁹

Being part of the MCACECC, however, did not stop the UCSTA from keeping up with its own separate publicity campaign. It kept the Chinese-educated public informed of its activities both within the MCACECC as well as outside of it through its own press releases and pamphlets published in Chinese. For example, a pamphlet explaining the MCACECC position, together with translations of the letters exchanged between the MCACECC and the High Commissioner, was published on 26 July 1953.³⁰ In May 1954 the UCSTA published a long rebuttal of the High Commissioner's statement that the education policy contained in the 1952 Ordinance had gone through a democratic process since it was unanimously accepted after an open debate in the Legislative Council. This rebuttal detailed all the statements which Chinese organizations, including the UCSTA and the MCACECC, had made in opposition to the ordinance.³¹

When the President of the United Nations (UN) General Assembly visited Malaya in August 1954, the UCSTA submitted a memorandum stating that there had been widespread Chinese opposition to the 1952 Education Ordinance. The memorandum pointed out that colonial policies had discriminated against Chinese schools.³² In his memoirs, Lim Lian Geok offers an intriguing account of how Wen Tien Kuang tried to assist Lim who wished to present this memorandum personally to the President of the UN General Assembly. But Leung Cheung Ling, who was evidently in the position to nominate the Chinese representatives who would be presented to the President of the UN General Assembly, deliberately excluded Lim because he knew that Lim's intention was to present a memorandum opposing official policy.³³

Regardless of the veracity of this particular story, it is significant that it was the UCSTA and not the MCA or the MCACECC which presented a memorandum to the President of the UN General Assembly. The MCACECC did not take any comparable action though Wen may have helped Lim in writing the memorandum in English. This was probably because the MCACECC had decided in August 1953 to defer taking its case to the United Nations or to send a delegation to the Colonial Office in London

until its 'Memorandum on Chinese Education' had been submitted and a response received.³⁴ Lim's prompt action in taking advantage of the President of the UN General Assembly's visit to submit a UCSTA memorandum indicates the difference in political style between the MCA leadership which tended towards restraint and a UCSTA leadership which took every opportunity to publicize its case. Similarly, UCSTA leaders had wanted to send a memorandum to the Colonial Office but were advised against doing so by Tan Cheng Lock because, in Tan's view, it would be 'disrespectful of the High Commissioner of Malaya'.³⁵

The MCA generally acted with more restraint than the UCSTA because MCA leaders like Tan Cheng Lock had learnt from their experience in the Communities Liaison Committee that sometimes discreet negotiations behind closed doors could be more effective than loudly publicized protests. Second, while the UCSTA's range of activities centred mainly on Chinese education, the MCA as a political party had to take care of a wider range of issues. Throughout 1952 and 1953, for example, the MCA was contesting in a number of local-level elections and building up a working relationship with the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). The MCA leadership had to balance between the pressures exerted upon it within the MCACECC by the Chinese school teachers and managers on the one hand, and the need to consider Malay political sensitivities on the other.

Since the first meetings to explore a formal relationship between UMNO and MCA began in March 1952, the MCA had sought to strengthen its ties with UMNO. The UMNO-MCA relationship had been strained as a result of the visits of Victor Purcell and Francis Carnell in August 1952. But it had been strengthened by the electoral successes of the UMNO-MCA partnership in local-level elections in various states throughout 1952 and 1953. The MCA's ability to support the UMNO-MCA partnership financially in electoral contests and its willingness to provide financial assistance to UMNO, through the establishment of a Malay Welfare Fund, further cemented this relationship. By the middle of 1953, after Onn began attacking the MCA as a Kuomintang (KMT) organization and a Chinese fifth column trying to make Malaya a province of China, the rift between MCA leaders and Dato Onn had become irreparable. Tan Cheng Lock abandoned any further association with Onn's Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) in favour of consolidating the MCA's relationship with UMNO.³⁶ The UMNO-MCA Alliance then began its attempts to

outbid Onn's IMP as the foremost nationalist political party by pushing for a faster transition to self-government and independence.³⁷

The IMP, having performed badly in electoral contests against the UMNO-MCA Alliance, was not in favour of pushing ahead with elections for an elected majority in the Legislative Council. But the Alliance, confident of its electoral strength, wanted the first Federal elections to be held by the end of 1954. UMNO and MCA leaders had started a series of Round-table Conferences beginning in January 1954 to thrash out a common platform on key issues in preparation for the first Federal elections. At one of these meetings, the Alliance accepted a position paper on education written by Dato Abdul Razak. This paper stressed the need to make primary education available to all children in the relevant age-groups. The more contentious issues of language of instruction and the position of the Chinese and Indian schools within the national system were not addressed.³⁸

Alliance leaders moved more determinedly towards self-government by sending a delegation to London in May 1954. When this failed, the Alliance withdrew all its members from the Legislative and Executive Councils in June 1954. By this time, the MCA was, as Heng Pek Koon observed, 'sharing the limelight with the UMNO at the forefront of the independence movement'.³⁹ These developments explain why in 1954 the MCA leaders' attention was already shifting away from further actions against the 1952 Education Ordinance. In the rapidly changing political context, MCA leaders knew that the future shape of education policy would be determined within the Alliance, and therefore by what the MCA could negotiate with UMNO leaders. These changes were indicated at an MCACECC meeting held in August 1954 to discuss the MCA platform on education. Further opposition to the 1952 Ordinance was set aside. Tan Cheng Lock still expressed his opposition to the 1952 Ordinance but he reminded his audience that 'our anxiety should not dim our perspectives, and whatever we say or do, we should always bear in mind the educational demands of our fellow races who inhabit this land'.⁴⁰

On their part, the UCSTA leadership recognized the change. But they perceived that this meant keeping up pressure on the MCA through the MCACECC. The UCSTA submitted several resolutions for inclusion in the MCA platform on education. One of them asked for 'free primary education in the mother tongue'. Another, and more controversial, resolution was for Chinese to be

recognized as an official language. Addressing the August 1954 meeting of the MCACECC, Lim Lian Geok expressed his admiration for Tan Cheng Lock and praised the MCA as 'an effective body to promote the unity of the Chinese'. But he noted that the MCA would need the full electoral support of Chinese voters and hinted that the teachers would give the MCA their full support if the MCA continued the fight 'to win equal rights on education for all races'. MCA leaders steered the meeting away from controversy by not putting any of these resolutions to the vote. Instead, the meeting agreed that the 'Memorandum on Chinese Education' should be the basis of the MCA platform and a subcommittee with representatives from each of the component groups was appointed to make suitable revisions for this purpose.⁴¹

Despite this careful manoeuvre, the MCA leadership faced problems with UMNO leaders after the *Singapore Standard*, an English daily, reported that the MCACECC meeting had agreed that the national school plan be scrapped and that Chinese should be an official language. Two days after the MCACECC meeting, T. H. Tan wrote to Tan Cheng Lock informing him that Tunku Abdul Rahman and Dr Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman were upset by the *Singapore Standard* report and had requested an urgent meeting of the Alliance Round-table to discuss the matter. The Tunku had handwritten the message 'I have seen and approve' on T. H. Tan's letter to indicate that the letter was conveying a message from him. T. H. Tan reported to the MCA president that he had already taken action to control any damage to the MCA by writing to the *Singapore Standard* to clarify that the MCACECC meeting had made no such decisions on the MCA's behalf. In fact, all suggestions from Chinese school teachers and managers had been handed to a subcommittee for consideration.⁴²

In his letter, T. H. Tan expanded at length on the concerns of UMNO leaders who felt that the publicity given to the MCA's activities on the language and education issues could be used by Dato Onn as further evidence for his accusation that UMNO had sold out Malay interests to the MCA. Tan Cheng Lock was told that UMNO leaders were keeping the Malay Teachers' Association, which was demanding that Malay should be the only language in the country, at arm's length. The implication was that the MCA should do the same with the Chinese school teachers. UMNO leaders, said T. H. Tan, were 'not convinced that Chinese teachers, mostly imported material, trained in China can ever bring a Malayan outlook to bear on our educational problems'.

Besides, he added, it was known that 'the worse communist cells were still to be found amongst them'. T. H. Tan suggested that it was time to consider if the MCACECC was being taken too far. The main concern was that the MCA should not 'find that the Chinese teachers will be dictating policy to us, instead of looking to us for guidance and advice'. T. H. Tan's misgivings were shared by other MCA leaders such as H. S. Lee and Leung Cheung Ling, who thought the Chinese reports on the MCACECC meeting were even more damaging to the MCA than the report in the *Singapore Standard*.⁴³

Wen Tien Kuang, the main middle man for the three groups within the MCACECC, wrote a different message to Tan Cheng Lock. He explained that the fuss was due mainly to the report that the MCACECC had adopted a resolution that Chinese should be an official language in Malaya. But it was clear from the minutes of the meeting that this was not true. He had accordingly explained the matter personally to the Tunku. Wen told Tan Cheng Lock that H. S. Lee himself had been party to a memorandum from the Chinese Chambers of Commerce which had asked that Chinese should be made an official language. Wen pointed out that, all things considered, the Chinese school teachers had 'behaved in quite a restrained manner and have not made any demands which can be considered unreasonable'.⁴⁴

The Tunku had decided that it was time to rein in the MCA on the education issue. He wrote to Tan Cheng Lock pointing out that he (the Tunku) and H. S. Lee had signed the Report of the Special Committee and supported the 1952 Education Ordinance with the national interest uppermost in their minds. As a result, they had both become the targets of criticism by Malays and Chinese. He warned Tan Cheng Lock that education was a 'sore question' which could prove to be 'a big obstacle' to UMNO-MCA understanding. Such issues should be trashed out within the UMNO-MCA Round-table. Emphasizing that it was necessary to overlook a number of racial claims in order to attain independence, the Tunku asked Tan Cheng Lock as a 'thoroughbred Malayan' to be prepared to forgo the support of China-born Chinese if these people could not be won over 'to your way of thinking'.⁴⁵

This series of correspondence indicates the beginnings of problems between the MCA and UMNO leaders on the ethnically divisive issues of language and education. It also shows that there were divisions within the MCA leadership on how to balance its working relationship with UMNO against the need to sustain its support

base within Chinese society in general and the Chinese school teachers in particular. At the same time, certain personal antagonisms between the MCA and UCSTA leaders became significant. Some MCA leaders, such as H. S. Lee, Leung Cheung Ling, and Leong Yew Koh, had been the target of sharp criticisms levelled by the Chinese school teachers during the April 1953 meeting of MCA leaders with teachers and managers. H. S. Lee and Leung Cheung Ling had been members of the Special Committee, together with the Tunku. They may have felt, like the Tunku, that they were working in the national interest when they supported the 1952 Education Ordinance and resented being picked on as targets by the teachers. However, the Chinese school teachers looked upon them as 'turncoats' or 'renegades' who had 'sold out' Chinese interests by supporting the policies of the colonial power. These terms surface in Lim Lian Geok's memoirs especially with reference to Leung Cheung Ling and Leong Yew Koh whom he refers to as *minzu bailei*, or traitors of Chinese interests.

Lim Lian Geok knew that he had made enemies of these three MCA leaders.⁴⁶ It is perhaps significant to note that both H. S. Lee and Leong Yew Koh were amongst the MCA leaders who were well known to have KMT affiliations.⁴⁷ H. S. Lee, as Lim Lian Geok himself recognized, was a formidable enemy. He was an extremely powerful figure due to his base in many major *shetuan*, his position within the Federal Legislative and Executive Councils, and his close personal relationship with the Tunku and other UMNO leaders. H. S. Lee, apparently, was convinced that Lim Lian Geok was a rabble rouser and a Communist. Lim claimed that the colonial government ordered an investigation into his political background as a result of a report by H. S. Lee against him to the High Commissioner. This investigation, ironically, resulted in Lim being cleared of such suspicions.⁴⁸

At about the same time that Tan Cheng Lock received the letters from T. H. Tan and the Tunku expressing their unease with the influence of the Chinese school teachers on the MCA, Tan was meeting as well as corresponding with the British High Commissioner, Sir Donald MacGillivray. Tan Cheng Lock was meeting roughly once every two months with the High Commissioner in his capacity as respected elder statesman and president of the MCA.⁴⁹ Tan's correspondence with MacGillivray up to early October shows that he was still emphasizing that the MCACECC represented the voice of the Chinese on the issue of education. He had asked MacGillivray to consider

the MCACECC's demand that the colonial government amend the clauses in the 1952 Education Ordinance which were detrimental to the Chinese schools and also double government aid to Chinese secondary schools. In more general terms, Tan sought to impress on MacGillivray that the basic aspiration of the Chinese was to be 'accorded equal treatment in the Federation'.⁵⁰

MacGillivray's response was far from encouraging. He refused to entertain the MCACECC as an organization that could speak on educational issues because one of its components, the MCA, was a political party. Educational issues, said MacGillivray, should not be discussed with political parties. MacGillivray also rejected the possibility of any further increase in aid to the Chinese schools. Instead, he wanted Tan Cheng Lock to convince the Chinese school teachers and managers that there was no threat from colonial policy to the Chinese schools. Referring to the White Paper which had just been released, MacGillivray asked Tan to try and prevent the teachers from obstructing the establishment of 'national classes' in vernacular schools.⁵¹

In reply, Tan Cheng Lock maintained his disagreement with the 1952 Ordinance but agreed to try and allay the fears of the Chinese on the proposals of the White Paper because he understood the need for all schools 'to partake of the essential characteristics of the national school system'. Faced with the High Commissioner's views of the MCACECC, and perhaps with the views of the UMNO leaders which had just been conveyed to him fresh on his mind, Tan agreed to reassess the MCA's participation in the Central Committee on Chinese Education.⁵² Whether these were truly Tan's views or whether his letter was intended purely as a polite rejoinder, the storm provoked by the White Paper soon after probably convinced Tan that he could not hope to 'allay the fears' of the Chinese.

With the release of the White Paper in October 1954, the UCSTA and UCSCA renewed their protests against colonial education policies. The White Paper provided the UCSTA with fresh grounds for accusing the British of trying to eliminate vernacular schools by imposing education in English on all Malayan children. Lim Lian Geok condemned the cutbacks in expenditure on vernacular schools and proposed establishment of 'National streams' as blatant examples of the colonial government's attempts to annihilate Chinese education. The 'National streams' were intended to destroy the essential characteristic of the Chinese schools by a process of *canshi*, or gradual ingestion. The term *canshi* is normally

used to refer to the consumption of mulberry leaves by silkworms. Lim used it to graphically portray the process by which classes teaching in Chinese would be slowly overtaken by those teaching in English until there were no more classes in Chinese left.⁵³

The UCSTA immediately issued a statement opposing the White Paper because it threatened to 'destroy the essence' and 'change the character' of the Chinese schools. All the Chinese schools were asked to resist attempts by the Education Department to force them to open up 'National streams' as proposed in the White Paper. A pamphlet to the same effect was printed for general distribution.⁵⁴ The UCSTA's call to 'Smash the White Paper!' was supported by a chorus of protests from various other Chinese organizations. First, the CSCAs in the various states held meetings to ensure that all the MCs within their respective states stood together in refusing to accept any 'National classes' in their schools.⁵⁵ The UCSCA sent a memorandum to the High Commissioner condemning the White Paper as an attempt to suppress the Chinese schools' growth and development. The White Paper's proposals to cut back expenditure on education was criticized as short-sighted.⁵⁶ The CSTAs of Penang, Perak, Selangor, and Johore mobilized *shetuan* in their states to oppose the White Paper. They were soon joined by *shetuan* in the other states.⁵⁷

The climax to this gathering storm of protests against the White Paper came in December when the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (CAH) convened a big meeting of *shetuan* from several states. During the meeting emotional calls were made for all Chinese to rally to the defence of the Chinese schools which were being threatened with extinction through gradual conversion. The Associated Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the students of Chinese secondary schools joined in the protests against the White Paper.⁵⁸ UCSTA leaders went to Malacca twice in November to see Tan Cheng Lock to request for the MCACECC to take action against the White Paper. Tan agreed to schedule a meeting of the MCACECC for 14 January 1955.⁵⁹ After the December meeting of *shetuan* convened by the Selangor CAH, Wen Tien Kuang wrote to Tan Cheng Lock informing him that 'the entire Chinese community is very angry about the White Paper and there is talk of *hartal* and strike'.⁶⁰

Interestingly, there were also protests against the White Paper from Malays who similarly thought that the White Paper's proposals meant the ultimate conversion of Malay primary schools into English schools.⁶¹ The colonial government was thus being

accused by both Malays and Chinese of trying to impose English education on all Malayans against their wishes. The strong response to the White Paper partly expressed the generally nationalistic mood stirred up by the Alliance's campaign for a quicker transition to political independence.

With the first Federal elections due the following year, UCSTA leaders realized that they should take this opportunity to push their demands. Towards the end of October 1954, the UCSTA published a special pamphlet on the Federal elections addressed to its members as well as to parents of Chinese school students throughout Malaya. The UCSTA regretted that only a small proportion of the Chinese would be eligible to vote in the forthcoming elections but pointed out that this underlined the need for greater political awareness amongst the Chinese living in Malaya. UCSTA members, as school teachers, were helping to instil an appreciation of the need to live in harmony with other races, and feelings of loyalty and patriotism toward Malaya, in their students. The pamphlet added that the UCSTA had been working with the MCA through the MCACECC to win a legitimate place for Chinese education in the country. The UCSTA was willing to extend the same spirit of co-operation towards UMNO, the MCA's political partner, because UMNO was an 'enlightened' Malay political party.

The main point in the UCSTA pamphlet was to indicate that the organization was prepared to give its support to the Alliance in the forthcoming elections if the Alliance's election manifesto included a statement on education that met with the aspirations of the Chinese community. These aspirations were outlined explicitly in the pamphlet. First, Chinese schools should be accorded an equal position with the other schools in the country. Second, there should be free primary education in the mother tongue. Third, Chinese should be recognized as an official language. The pamphlet, in conclusion, promised that the UCSTA would call on all Chinese school teachers and parents of pupils in Chinese schools to vote for any party or candidate which indicated their sympathy and support for the UCSTA's position on Chinese education.⁶²

The first Federal elections must have loomed large in the minds of UMNO and MCA leaders as they watched the protests against the White Paper of 1954. Whether the Alliance could harness these strong feelings against colonial policies on education and convert them into electoral support for the coalition depended on the Alliance's ability to strike the right balance in its electoral platform on education. Under these circumstances, it is easy to understand

why Alliance leaders decided to meet with UCSTA leaders in early January 1955.

The Malacca Meeting, 12 January 1955

On 12 January 1955, a meeting was held in which a historic bargain was struck between the Alliance and the UCSTA. The meeting was held in Tan Cheng Lock's house in Malacca. There is no documentary basis to determine who proposed the meeting or how it originated. Amongst Tan Cheng Lock's papers of this period, there is unfortunately no record on the first moves towards this meeting, though the minutes of the meeting are available.⁶³ From Lim Lian Geok's account of the meeting in his memoirs, the initiative clearly did not come from the UCSTA. Lim states that he received a telephone call from Wen Tien Kuang on 6 January notifying him that some top-level Alliance leaders wished to meet with UCSTA leaders on 10 January. Wen called again two days later to change the date to 12 January.⁶⁴

When he was interviewed in 1983, the Tunku confessed that he could no longer recall the meeting itself. However, after discussing the context of the meeting and the main points as recorded in the minutes, the Tunku agreed that the meeting with UCSTA leaders was most likely part of the Alliance leaders' attempts to broaden their electoral support amongst non-Malays in the run-up to the first Federal elections.⁶⁵ On the UCSTA side, Lim Lian Geok, when interviewed, stated that the UCSTA had by then realized that there was no other way for the UCSTA to safeguard the future of Chinese education except to arrive at a consensus with the local leaders who were most likely to inherit the reins of government from the British.⁶⁶

Present at the meeting, according to the minutes, were Tunku Abdul Rahman, Dr Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman, Aziz Ishak, and Bahaman Samsuddin from UMNO; Tan Cheng Lock, Leong Yew Koh, H. S. Lee, Ong Yoke Lin, T. H. Tan, Goh Chee Yan, Leung Cheung Ling, and Wen Tien Kuang from the MCA; Chong Khoon Lin, Cho Yew Fai, Ong Keng Seng, and Chua Tian Keong from the UCSCA; and Lim Lian Geok, Sha Yuan Roo, Tsai Jen Ping, Sim Mow Yu, and Kung Cheong Thai from the UCSTA. Kung, a teacher in the Chung Ling High School in Penang, was, apparently, a last-minute substitute for Waung Yoong Nien, the headmaster of Chung Ling, who was unable to be present when the date was changed from 10 January to 12 January.

The meeting was held behind closed doors but a crowd of reporters, who had got wind of the meeting, were milling outside the house.⁶⁷

The Malacca meeting is historic because it resulted in a pact between the Alliance and the UCSTA. Though Lim Lian Geok alleges that there were some inaccuracies in the minutes which were written by Wen Tien Kuang, his own account concurs with the minutes on the *substance* of the *main* points of the agreement.⁶⁸ Lim's account, in fact, gives an even clearer impression that the meeting was essentially a quid pro quo between the Tunku as UMNO and Alliance leader and Lim Lian Geok as the main UCSTA representative.⁶⁹ The following reconstruction of the meeting draws mainly from the wording of the minutes of the meeting with Lim's recollections used as a point of comparison.

The UCSTA went to the meeting with a prepared statement. This emphasized that the teachers were opposed to the education policies of the British because these were intended to promote English education at the expense of vernacular education and to make English the exclusive language at the expense of local languages. The colonial government was also accused of trying to limit the growth of education 'to lower the standard of literacy to perpetuate its colonial rule'. The colonial government's treatment of the 1,300 Chinese schools in the Federation was described as 'grossly unfair'. Having portrayed the colonial government as the main enemy, the UCSTA's demands were then couched in a relatively mild and reasonable language. The main demand was that the Chinese should be allowed to preserve their language and culture because the languages and cultures of all the peoples living in one country should be accorded due respect. In specific terms, the UCSTA said that it was 'only asking that government allow us to continue opening new classes to cater for school-less children, and assist us with the usual meagre grant'. On language, the UCSTA's position was that 'if Malaya is an independent country, the first language should be Malay and the second should be Chinese'.⁷⁰

After reading the UCSTA statement, the Tunku indicated that he was quite ready to agree that 'if the Alliance were returned to power, it would see to it that the Chinese were given a chance to preserve their schools, language and culture'. He also agreed, during discussion on this point, that 'this constituted a promise to try and amend the Education Ordinance, 1952, and the White Paper on Educational Policy'. On the question of the Chinese schools opening new classes to provide education for children who were

deprived of the opportunity to receive an education, the Tunku pledged that the Alliance would 'give favourable consideration' to the UCSTA's request that \$2 million extra aid be given to the Chinese schools.

Having acceded to the UCSTA's demands on these two points, the Tunku then asked the UCSTA to concede on the issue of Chinese as an official language. Referring to the UCSTA statement that Chinese should be the second language, after Malay, in independent Malaya, he remarked that this was tantamount to asking for Chinese to be one of the official languages of the country. He then came straight to the point, saying that he could not agree to this because 'the people, especially the Malays, were not ready for it'. As the leader of UMNO, said the Tunku, he could not 'go against the people even if he were in sympathy with the request'. Lim Lian Geok is then reported to have said that the Chinese school teachers 'did not, in the least, wish to jeopardize the Alliance's changes of winning the elections'. After some urging by other UMNO leaders, Lim indicated that he was prepared to accept the advice of Tan Cheng Lock, who had counselled the UCSTA to shelve the question of official languages.

At that point, Aziz Ishak asked Lim to give a formal assurance that the issue of Chinese as an official language 'would not be brought up again until after the Federal Elections'. Lim did so with an explicit reference to the assurances given by the Tunku earlier in the meeting. Lim asked, in turn, that Alliance's election manifesto should explicitly state that the existence and development of the Chinese schools would not be jeopardized. This, after some discussion, was rephrased as 'it would not be the Alliance's policy to destroy the schools, language and culture of any race'.⁷¹

Lim's account differs from the foregoing in two main respects. The first is a relatively minor point as far as the substance of the bargain is concerned. Lim presents the bargain as beginning with a request from the Tunku to concede on the official language issue. Lim agreed to this after turning to Tan Cheng Lock for advice. The Tunku is then asked, in return, to repeal the 1952 Education Ordinance and to provide the \$2 million in aid to Chinese secondary and primary schools. Though the order is reversed, the substance of the agreement may be considered to be the same. Written in a more conversational style, Lim's account reports the Tunku as having referred explicitly to Dato Onn as the political enemy waiting to make use of the issue of Chinese as an official language to accuse UMNO of selling out to the Chinese. This, said

the Tunku, could cause the Alliance to lose the elections. Tan Cheng Lock reportedly said that the Chinese school teachers should support the Alliance, which was a party seeking to reconcile the different races. Dato Onn, on the other hand, was described as likely to embark on anti-Chinese policies should he come to power.

The other and more important difference is Lim's inclusion of the meeting's discussion on the content of the press statement to be issued to the reporters waiting outside. Here he reports that he agreed, after some pressure from Dr Ismail, to delete the word 'temporarily' from the press statement stating that the UCSTA had agreed to drop the issue of Chinese as an official language. He did this because he was persuaded by UMNO leaders that to insert the word 'temporarily' would take away the political effect of the UCSTA's concession. At the same time, he was assured that the minutes would record the understanding that his agreement was to drop the issue only temporarily and not indefinitely.⁷² The minutes *did* record that Lim only agreed to shelve the official language issue until after the Federal elections. But as the minutes were not publicly released, Lim lamented that the press statement which excluded the word 'temporarily' caused him to be immediately criticized for having 'sold out' on a fundamental demand of Chinese society without sufficient gains in exchange.⁷³

Such an assessment of the bargain struck at the Malacca meeting is unjustified. The agreement arrived at in Malacca on 12 January 1955 consisted of four main points which were recorded in both accounts. First, the Alliance agreed that, if it came into power, it would amend those provisions in the Education Ordinance and the 1954 White Paper which threatened the existence of Chinese schools. If necessary, it would also rewrite education policy. Second, the Tunku agreed that the Alliance would provide an extra \$2 million in aid for the Chinese schools to assist them in their expansion. Third, the Alliance election manifesto would pledge that the party's policy was not to destroy the schools, language, and culture of any race. Fourth, the teachers agreed that 'the question of Chinese becoming one of the official languages would not be brought up again until after the Federal elections'.

Whether the Alliance leaders would stick to their side of the bargain remained to be tested after the election. But in terms of a quid pro quo bargain, the UCSTA could hardly be accused of having 'sold out' Chinese interests in making this pact with the Alliance. The Malacca meeting, in fact, laid the groundwork for the Alliance's education policy after it came into power. The Chinese

schools were accepted into the national education system. The UCSTA leaders, in exchange, only agreed to drop the official language issue temporarily. They could not have foreseen then that the official language issue would emerge as a problem when the question of the language to be used in public examinations arose later.

The immediate effect of the Malacca meeting was that it allowed the MCA to keep a rein on further activities by the MCACECC as far as the White Paper was concerned. Two days after the Malacca meeting, Tan Cheng Lock reported the main points of the agreement to the MCACECC. The MCACECC then agreed, as a matter of principle, to continue its opposition to the Education Ordinance and White Paper as these remained the legislation in force on education. However, the resolutions submitted by the UCSTA and Malacca CSTA calling for more radical actions such as a *hartal* and demonstrations against the White Paper were set aside. Such actions would only antagonize the government and the Malays without bringing any benefits.⁷⁴ The UCSTA was persuaded to await the results of the July elections and take no further action against the colonial government.

The Malacca meeting also helped the national MCA leadership to restrain its own leaders who wanted to push the Alliance to accept Chinese as an official language. Leong Chee Cheong, a member of the Selangor MCA Working Committee, wrote on 5 January 1955 to Tan Cheng Lock asking the MCA Central Working Committee to discuss the adoption of a multilingual policy in Malaya.⁷⁵ In reply, Tan Cheng Lock conveyed the main points of the Malacca meeting to Leong. Leong was assured that his request would be raised at the forthcoming Alliance Executive Committee meeting but was told that it was 'unwise' to allow the question of the status of the Chinese language 'to retard progress towards self-rule'.⁷⁶

At the Alliance Executive Committee meeting on 7 February, the MCA reported that H. S. Lee and Leung Cheung Ling had tried to placate Leong who, as president of the Federation of Selangor Guilds and Associations, was regarded as too influential a figure to be ignored. Leong was told that the MCA would not be pursuing the official language issue, 'in view of the agreement reached with the Chinese teachers on 12 January'. According to the minutes, the Tunku also inquired if the Chinese school teachers were satisfied with the Malacca meeting and he was told that they were.⁷⁷

The essential points of the Malacca agreement were written into

the Alliance's manifesto for the July 1955 elections. The Alliance Election Manifesto pledged 'to allow the vernacular schools their normal expansion'; 'to encourage rather than destroy the schools, language or culture of any race living in the country'; and 'to accord equal treatment to all aided schools'. The 1952 Education Ordinance and the White Paper would be re-examined as they were unacceptable to the people of Malaya. The Alliance would ensure that its education policy would be 'acceptable to the people of Malaya', 'would promote their cultural, economic, social and political development as a nation', and would promote Malay as the National Language of the country.⁷⁸

As the general framework of an education policy, this was a dramatic reversal from British statements of policy since 1950. The understanding reached at the Malacca meeting was an important breakthrough for the Chinese Education Movement which had made some major gains through the bargain made at the historic meeting. But, like all political bargains, the Malacca meeting had not gone into any of the specifics or the concrete details of education policy. There was no explicit mention during the Malacca meeting or in the Election Manifesto that both the Chinese primary and secondary schools would be accorded a legitimate place within the national system. How the Chinese schools were to be integrated into the national system was not spelled out. The test of translating the bargain into concrete provisions would begin after the Alliance came into power and became responsible both for the formulation of education policy and its implementation.

1. The Chinese press carried detailed reports of the two-day meeting. See, for example, *SCJP* and *CKP*, 10 and 11 November 1952.

2. This view was suggested by a prominent MCA official of the early 1950s who granted me several interviews in 1982, when I was conducting research towards my Ph.D., on condition of anonymity.

3. This was stated in some newspaper reports of the 9 November meeting, for example, *KWYP*, and *Lianbang Jipao*, 10 November 1952. The *Lianbang Jipao* no longer exists.

4. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1988, Vol. 1, pp. 45-7.

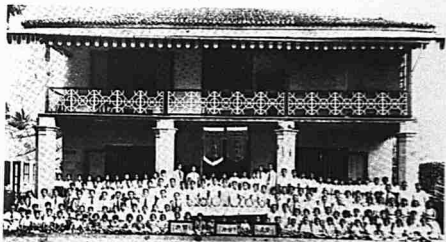
5. 'Speech by Dato Sir Cheng Lock Tan at the Conference of Chinese School Committees and Teachers on 9 November 1952 in the Selangor Assembly Hall, Kuala Lumpur', in *A Collection of Speeches by Datuk Sir Cheng-lock Tan, TCLNA*.

6. *Ibid.*

7. 'Memorandum on the Report of the Special Committee and 1952 Education Ordinance from the Presidium of the Meeting of Representatives of Chinese School



1. The *Wufu Shuyuan*, believed to have been founded in 1819, was housed in the building of the Cantonese District Association on Chulia Street in Penang. (Photo by Dr Leong Yuh Kwong)



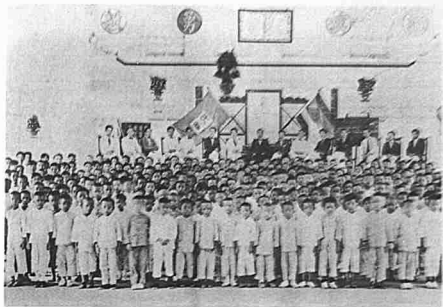
2. Staff and students of Pay Fong School in Malacca soon after its foundation in 1913. (Reproduced from *Peifeng Washinian jinxi jinian tekan*, Malacca, 1963)



3. A small Chinese school in Negri Sembilan, 1937: Chung Hua Chinese Primary School in Ladang Geddes, Bahau. (Photo courtesy of Arkib Negara Malaysia)



4. SRJK (C) Khai Cee, Perak, typical of many small Chinese schools housed in two-storey shophouses. (Photo courtesy of Huazi Resource Centre, Kuala Lumpur)



5. Staff and students of Confucian School, Kuala Lumpur, May 1926. (Photo courtesy of Huazi Resource Centre, Kuala Lumpur)



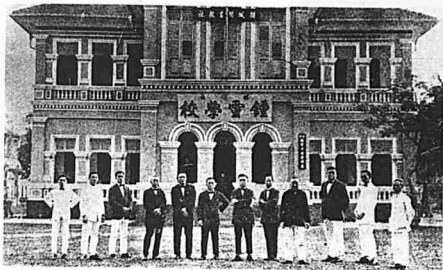
6. Confucian High School, Kuala Lumpur, in the 1960s. (Photo courtesy of Huazi Resource Centre, Kuala Lumpur)



7. Staff and students of Foon Yew School in Johore Bahru celebrating the school's 25th Anniversary in 1938. (Photo courtesy of Huazi Resource Centre, Kuala Lumpur)



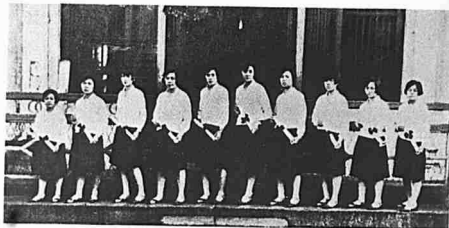
8. Foon Yew High School in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy of Huazi Resource Centre, Kuala Lumpur)



9. Chung Ling High School, Penang, in 1935. The school was then housed in the premises of the Penang Philomathic Society on Macalister Road. (Reproduced from *Zhongling Zhongxue xiaokan*, 1953)



10. Chung Ling High School in the 1950s. (Photo courtesy of Huazi Resource Centre, Kuala Lumpur)



11. The first batch of teachers who graduated from the normal class system of Fukien Girls' School, 1930. (Reproduced from *Fujian Nu Xuexiao sanshi zhounian jinian tekan*, Penang, 1950)



12. Kuen Cheng Girls' School, Kuala Lumpur, in the 1960s. (Photo courtesy of Huazi Resource Centre, Kuala Lumpur)



13. Chin Chee Meow, first president of the UCSCA. (Photo courtesy of UCSTA)



14. David Chen, first president of the UCSTA. (Photo courtesy of UCSTA)



15. Four UCSTA presidents: (from right) Lee Po Wen, second president; Tsai Jen Ping, third president; Lim Lian Geok, fourth president; and Huang Yun Yo, fifth president. (Photo courtesy of UCSTA)



16. First meeting of representatives of Chinese school teachers, August 1951. (Photo courtesy of UCSTA)



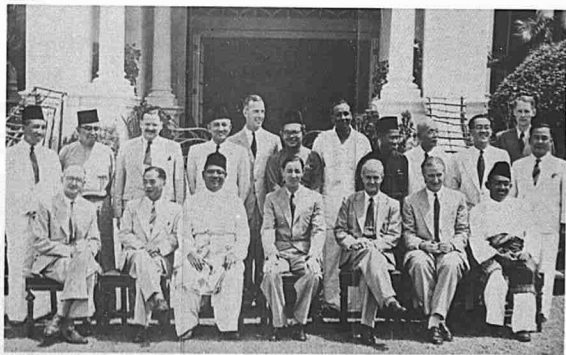
17. Tan Cheng Lock speaking at the November 1952 meeting of teachers, managers, and MCA leaders. On his left, also standing, is Wen Tien Kuang. (Photo courtesy of UCSTA)



18. First meeting of representatives of Chinese school teachers, managers, and MCA leaders, November 1952. Seated in the front row are Wen Tien Kuang (1st from left), Leong Yew Koh (7th from left), Tan Cheng Lock (8th from left), H. S. Lee (10th from left), Chou Man Sha (3rd from right), and Ong Keng Seng (5th from right). Lim Lian Geok is in the second row, standing (3rd from left). (Photo courtesy of UCSTA)



19. The Malacca meeting, January 1955. In the centre, facing the camera, is Tunku Abdul Rahman with Tan Cheng Lock on his right. (Photo courtesy of UCSTA)



20. The High Commissioner and members of the Federal Government, 1955. Seated in the front row are H. S. Lee (2nd from left), Tunku Abdul Rahman (3rd from left), Sir Donald MacGillivray (centre), and Dr Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman (1st from right). In the back row are Dato Abdul Razak bin Hussein (2nd from left), Too Joon Hing (1st from right), and Leong Yew Koh (3rd from right). (Photo courtesy of Arkib Negara Malaysia)



21. First meeting of the Razak Committee, 30 September 1955. (Photo courtesy of Arkib Negara Malaysia)



22. The Alliance Mission to London for the Merdeka talks, January 1956: (from left) Dato Abdul Razak, H. S. Lee, T. H. Tan, Tunku Abdul Rahman, and Dr Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman. (Photo courtesy of Arkib Negara Malaysia)



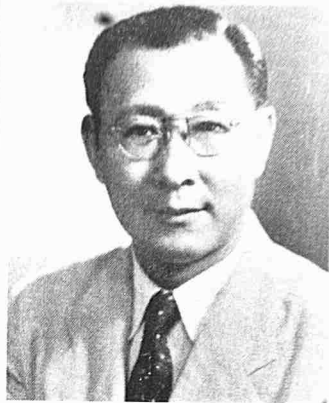
23. Chung Ling students gathered in the school hall after declaring a boycott of classes on 2 April 1957. (Photo courtesy of Mr Han Kok Foo)



24. The Inspector of Chinese Schools, Chan Yik King, in conference with the headmaster and staff of Chung Ling High School, 2 April 1957. In the centre, with tie and wearing glasses, is Chan Yik King; to his left, also with glasses and wearing a vest is Waung Yoong Nien, the headmaster. (Photo courtesy of Mr Han Kok Foo)



25. Ong Keng Seng, chairman of the Chung Ling High School Management Committee. (Photo courtesy of Huazi Resource Centre, Kuala Lumpur)



26. Waung Yoong Nien, headmaster of Chung Ling High School. (Photo courtesy of Huazi Resource Centre, Kuala Lumpur)



27. Student demonstrations in Penang, November 1957. (Photo courtesy of Keong Wah Yir Peh, Penang)

1957年4月2日钟灵中学学生抗议改制发生学潮，学生用血指写出“爱吾华文、爱吾钟灵”。



28. The banner which the Chung Ling students put up proclaiming their love for their school and for the Chinese language, April 1957. (Reproduced from Dongzong Chuban Zu, *Dongzong 30nian*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSCA, 1983, Vol. 3, p. 609)



29. Lim Lian Geok, founder member of the Kuala Lumpur CSTA and president of the UCSTA, 1954-61. (Photo courtesy of UCSTA)



30. Leong Yew Koh, a member of the Talib Committee. (Photo courtesy of UCSTA)

Committees and Teachers in the Federation and Representatives of MC', 14 November 1952, in Member for Education File 71/52, ANM.

8. See reports of the meeting in *CKP* and *SCJP*, 10 November 1952.

9. The minutes of all but two of the meetings of the Special Committee are available in Selangor Secretariat File 2143/51, ANM.

10. Press reports did not record H. S. Lee's presence at the 9 November meeting but the photograph of those who attended the meeting (see Plate 18) shows H. S. Lee in the front row. According to Lim's account in *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, p. 49, H. S. Lee did come to the meeting but he left displeased after he failed in his bid to be elected chairman of the meeting.

11. Enclosures in Member for Education File 71/52 included telegrams and letters from various Chinese organizations in Malacca, Selangor, Kedah, Negri Sembilan, Perak, Johore, and Pahang. See also *SCJP* and *CKP*, 12-20 November 1952.

12. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 62-73.

13. 'Minutes of Second Meeting of Representatives of Chinese School Committees and Teachers in the Federation and Representatives of the MCA, 19 and 20 April 1953', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. The Chinese version of this is available in Jiaozong Jiaoyu Yanjiu Zhongxin (comp.), *Jiaozong 33nian*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, 1987, pp. 328-35. All subsequent citations in the ensuing discussion of this meeting are from the same source, unless otherwise stated.

14. The teachers and managers had two official representatives with voting rights from each state, with Kedah and Perlis grouped as one unit.

15. According to the minutes, there was only one vote, presumably Lim's, in favour of his motion. Sha presumably abstained.

16. The full text of Tan's speech was appended to the minutes.

17. Lim Lian Geok's rendition of Tan's speech at the meeting in his *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, p. 67. In the minutes, the part of Tan's speech which comes closest to Lim's recollection is the following: '... if the Chinese don't know Chinese, they cannot be Chinese ... , they cannot be Chinese if they do not practise Chinese customs and traditions, and if they are not Chinese, they cannot be Malays or Englishmen or Indians. They will be described as pariahs.'

18. *Ibid.*

19. 'Minutes of Second Meeting of Representatives of Chinese School Committees and Teachers in the Federation and Representatives of the MCA, 19 and 20 April 1953', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

20. The Constitution of the MCACECC was appended to the Minutes of the April 1953 meeting. The Chinese version is reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 335-6. See Appendix 1 for the English version.

21. 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the MCACECC, 23 August 1953', TCL/NA.

22. 'Memorandum from the Presidium of the Meeting of Representatives of Chinese School Committees and Teachers in the Federation and Representatives of the Malayan Chinese Association', 14 November 1952, in Member for Education File 71/52, ANM.

23. *Ibid.*

24. Letter from Tan Cheng Lock to Sir Gerald Templer, 12 May 1953 and Letter from Sir Gerald Templer to Tan Cheng Lock, 6 July 1953, both in TCL/ANM. The Chinese versions are available in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 336-7.

25. See 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the MCACECC, 14 August 1953' and 'Minutes of Meeting of Special Committee on the Education Ordinance, 1952',

undated, both in TCL/ANM. See also 'Minutes of a MCACECC Meeting, 21 August 1954', TCL. 13.27, TCL/ISEAS.

26. Tan Cheng Lock, *Memorandum on Chinese Education in the Federation of Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, 1953.

27. See, for example, *Malayan Mirror*, Vol. I, Nos. 2, 4, and 7 (1953) and Vol. II, Nos. 6, 7, 10, and 18 (1954).

28. Text of Tan Cheng Lock's Speech to the MCA Annual General Meeting, 27 December 1953, in TCL/ANM.

29. See Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 62-73.

30. This pamphlet entitled 'Malaya Lianhebang Huaxiao Jiaoshihui Zonghui gonghan' was found in the UCSTA Files. It is not amongst the historical documents published in *Jiaozong 33nian*.

31. KWYP, 28 May 1954.

32. 'Memorandum on Education Ordinance, 1952, Federation of Malaya, addressed to Madam Vijayalakshmi Pandit, President of the United Nations General Assembly, 14 August 1954', in English, in the UCSTA Files. The Chinese version is reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 347-8.

33. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 90-3.

34. 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the MCACECC, 14 August 1953'.

35. 'Minutes of a UCSTA Working Subcommittee Meeting, 6 April 1955', UCSTA Files. Lim referred to Tan's advice in explaining to the Subcommittee why the Memorandum had not been sent.

36. See Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia: A History of the Malaysian Chinese Association*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988, pp. 159-73.

37. See Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, Chs. 6 and 7; Gordon Means, *Malaysian Politics*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970, Ch. 10; Khong Kim Hoong, *Merdeka: British Rule and the Struggle for Independence in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Institute for Social Analysis, 1984, Ch. 5; Karl von Vorys, *Democracy without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1975, Ch. 5 for more detailed discussions.

38. 'Minutes of an Alliance Round-table Conference, 28 January 1954', TCL. 8.18, TCL/ISEAS. For minutes of two other round-table conferences, see TCL. 8.15 and TCL. 8.19.

39. Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, p. 179.

40. See the text of Tan Cheng Lock's speech to the meeting, TCL. 8.27A, TCL/ISEAS. For background documents relating to the meeting, see TCL. 15.98 and TCL. 15.98A. For the minutes, see TCL. 8.27.

41. 'Minutes of the Meeting of the MCACECC, 21 August 1954'.

42. Letter from T. H. Tan to Tan Cheng Lock, 25 August 1954, in TCL/ANM. A copy of T. H. Tan's letter to the *Singapore Standard* was enclosed.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Letter from Wen Tien Kuang to Tan Cheng Lock, 9 September 1954, TCL. 8.97, TCL/ISEAS.

45. Letter from Tunku Abdul Rahman to Tan Cheng Lock, 1 October 1954, TCL/ANM. In his letter, the Tunku referred to a Mr Liem Tien Kuang who made arrangements to discuss the matter with him. This must have been Wen.

46. This comes out in various parts of *Fengyu shiba nian*; see in particular Vol. 1, pp. 45-57 and 90-4.

47. This is mentioned in many studies of the MCA and its leadership. See, for example, Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, p. 85.

48. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 133-4.

49. See Letter from Tan Cheng Lock to Wu Lian Teh, 10 November 1954, TCL 8.50B, TCL/ISEAS, referring to these meetings.
50. Letter from Tan Cheng Lock to Sir Donald MacGillivray, 11 October 1954, TCL 13.38, TCL/ISEAS. This letter was sent to Lim Lian Geok, Leung Cheung Ling, as well as the Tunku for their prior approval; see TCL 8.30, TCL/ISEAS.
51. Letter from Sir Donald MacGillivray to Tan Cheng Lock, 15 October 1954, recounting the issues they had discussed at a meeting on 13 October 1954, TCL 13.40, TCL/ISEAS.
52. Letter from Tan Cheng Lock to Sir Donald MacGillivray, 21 October 1954, TCL 13.45, TCL/ISEAS. See also TCL 13.54B.
53. GKP, 10 October 1954. See also Lim Lian Geok, *Huayi pianpian lu*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, n.d., pp. 15-23 and *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 95-106.
54. Copy of original pamphlet, 18 October 1954, UCSTA Files; reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 348-9.
55. GKP and SCJP, 10-18 October 1954. See also the discussion in Wong Yoke Nyen, 'The Role of Chinese Organizations in Malayan Politics (1945-1957): Special Reference to Citizenship and Education', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1981, pp. 216-32.
56. A copy of the memorandum from Ang Khe Tho, President of the UCSCA, to the High Commissioner, dated 28 December 1954, is available in TCL 13.56, TCL/ISEAS.
57. Throughout the months of November and December, there were reports of such meetings in the Chinese dailies.
58. These developments in November and December 1954 were reported in detail in all the major Chinese dailies. For the *shewan* meeting convened by the Selangor CAH, see GKP, 17 December 1954.
59. KWYP, 8 November 1954. See also the same daily's report on 2 November 1954 of an earlier meeting and Lim's account in his memoirs of his trip to Malacca to see Tan Cheng Lock over the White Paper in *Fengyu shiba nian*, pp. 97-8.
60. Letter from Wen Tien Kuang to Tan Cheng Lock, 4 January 1955, TCL 13.61, TCL/ISEAS.
61. See T. R. Fennel, 'Commitment to Change: A History of Malayan Education Policy, 1945-1957', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1968, pp. 282-90.
62. Copy of pamphlet, 25 October 1954, UCSTA Files. It is reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 350-1.
63. 'Minutes of a Meeting on 12th January 1955 at the Residence of Dato Sir Cheng-lock Tan in Malacca', TCL 9.55, TCL/ISEAS. See Appendix 2 for details.
64. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, p. 108.
65. Interview with Tunku Abdul Rahman, Penang, 26 May 1983.
66. Interview with Lim Lian Geok, Selayang (Selangor), 2 April 1982.
67. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, p. 108.
68. Lim's main complaint is that Wen gave himself a bigger role by recording that it was Wen who said some of the things that were in fact stated by Lim. See *Fengyu Shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 111 and 115.
69. *Ibid.*, pp. 108-18.
70. See 'Statement on Chinese Education by the Federation of Chinese Teachers' Association Distributed by Their Chairman, Lim Lian Geok, at the Meeting', TCL 9.55A, TCL/ISEAS. See *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 360, for the Chinese version.
71. 'Minutes of a Meeting on 12 January 1955'.

72. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, p. 111.
73. *Ibid.*
74. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the MCACECC, 14 January 1955', TCL/ANM.
75. Letter from Leong Chee Cheong to Tan Cheng Lock, 5 January 1955 in TCL 14.81D, TCL/ISEAS.
76. Letter from Tan Cheng Lock to Leong Chee Cheong, 21 January 1955, TCL 14.81B, TCL/ISEAS.
77. 'Minutes of First Alliance Executive Committee Meeting, 7 February 1955', TCL 16.37, TCL/ISEAS.
78. 'Merdeka within Four Years', 1955 Alliance Election Manifesto, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. The section of the Manifesto on education is reproduced in Appendix 3. This is from the full 42-page version of the Manifesto which, according to Heng Pek Koon, was only for limited distribution while an abridged version was released for public consumption. See her detailed discussion of the Manifesto in *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, pp. 200-16.

Crucial Compromises, August 1955–August 1957

THE first Federal elections were held on 27 July 1955. The Alliance contested all 52 seats with United Malays National Organization (UMNO) candidates being fielded in 35 constituencies, Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) candidates in 15, and Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) candidates in two. The coalition won a landslide victory, winning all but one seat and thus became the party to form the first locally elected government with jurisdiction over all internal matters.¹ The Cabinet was headed by Tunku Abdul Rahman as the first Chief Minister. The education portfolio was held by Dato Abdul Razak Hussein and Too Joon Hing, the secretary-general of the MCA, was appointed the Assistant Minister of Education. The Alliance had swept into power on the election platform of 'Merdeka within four years'. As it turned out, Merdeka came within two years, in August 1957. The two years between August 1955 and August 1957 were politically tense years in which Chinese and Malay leaders had to strike at crucial compromises on a number of difficult issues in order to achieve independence.

To some extent, the groundwork for these compromises had been laid in the private understandings reached between UMNO and MCA leaders before the July 1955 elections. These covered a wide range of issues, including citizenship based as the principle of *jus soli*, special rights for the Malays, and a privileged position for the Malay language. But these issues became subject to open and contentious debate when discussion of the Merdeka Constitution began. The January 1955 Malacca agreement between UMNO and United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA) leaders provided a general framework for a new approach to education. But this, too, had still to be translated into a workable policy.

A month after the elections, a Committee headed by Dato Abdul Razak Hussein, the Minister of Education, was appointed. The rest of the Razak Committee was made up of representatives from the component parties of the Alliance. There were eight

representatives from UMNO, five from the MCA, and one from the MIC. The five MCA representatives were Too Joon Hing, Leung Cheung Ling, Lim Chong Eu, Goh Chee Yan, and Lee Thean Hin. The task of the Razak Committee was to

examine the present Education policy of the Federation of Malaya and to recommend any alterations or adaptations that are necessary with a view to establishing a national system of education acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole which will satisfy their needs and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation, having regard to the intention to make Malay the national language of the country whilst preserving and sustaining the growth of the language and culture of other communities living in the country.²

The Razak Committee, clearly, would have to balance a very complex set of factors in reformulating education policy. Since the Committee comprised representatives from the Alliance's component parties, its ability to arrive at 'a national system of education acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole' would be a test of the Alliance formula of consociationalism. Could the Alliance find an education policy that would take care of all the considerations contained in the Razak Committee's terms of reference? Equally important, would this new policy fulfil the demands of a rapidly growing population and also be acceptable to the people as a whole? Finally, would an education policy determined by Alliance leaders provide a legitimate place for the Chinese schools within the national mainstream? For the Chinese education organizations, the Razak Report was the first test of the validity of the pledges made by UMNO leaders at the Malacca meeting.

The Razak Committee met between September 1955 and April 1956. The Razak Report was presented to the Legislative Council in May 1956 and the new Education Ordinance was passed by the Legislative Council in March 1957. There was a parallel set of developments which began in January 1956, when the Alliance and the Colonial Office reached an agreement on the immediate steps to be taken towards independence. The process of writing the Merdeka Constitution began in mid-1956 and was completed shortly before Merdeka on 31 August 1957. This virtual concurrence in timing between the discussions on a new education policy and the negotiations over the Merdeka Constitution resulted in decisions on education becoming entangled with the constitutional compromises which were struck between UMNO and MCA leaders on the eve of Merdeka.

Change of Posture for the MCACECC

The Malayan Chinese Association Chinese Education Central Committee (MCACECC) had been formed when the main target of Chinese opposition was the colonial administration. But with the MCA now part of the Alliance government, changes were required in the posture, tone, and tactics of the MCACECC. Although this affected the MCA more than the UCSTA, the UCSTA leaders recognized that they should be less combative now in their approach. The UCSTA sent a congratulatory telegram to the Tunku on the Alliance victory and its representatives made courtesy calls on the new Chief Minister and Minister of Education.³ At its first meeting after the July elections, the UCSTA Executive Committee noted that it should now act on the assumption that the new government would be more receptive to suggestions on education policy. Three subcommittees were formed to formulate the UCSTA's suggestions on general policy, secondary education, and salary schemes for teachers.⁴

UCSTA leaders made it clear, however, that their cordiality did not imply a change in position on substantive issues. During their courtesy call on the new Minister of Education, the UCSTA delegation asked him to repeal the 1952 Education Ordinance.⁵ When UCSTA leaders met with the new Chief Minister, they reminded him of his promise of an additional \$2 million in government aid to Chinese schools.⁶ At a tea hosted by the Kuala Lumpur Chinese School Teachers' Association (CSTA) in honour of the Minister of Education, Lim Lian Geok reiterated his hope that the Chinese and Indian schools would find a place, together with Malay and English schools, in the future national education system.⁷ Lim included a similar message in his congratulatory letter to Tan Cheng Lock on the MCA's success in the elections.⁸ In short, the UCSTA leaders constantly reminded the Alliance leaders of their pre-election pledge to draft a new education policy which would provide equal opportunities for all the community-based schools. After the Razak Committee was appointed, a UCSTA delegation visited Tan Cheng Lock in Malacca and requested an MCACECC meeting to draft a common submission to the Committee.⁹

On their part, the MCA leaders were aware that they would now have to tread much more carefully in working with the UCSTA. The Chinese press frequently gave prominence to statements made by UCSTA leaders. The issue of an additional \$2 million in aid to Chinese schools, for example, was widely reported in the Chinese press after the UCSTA leaders' meeting with the Tunku.

Bearing in mind that UMNO leaders had been angered by the publicity surrounding the discussion of the official language issue at an MCACECC meeting the previous year, MCA leaders tried to prevent such problems from arising again. When the MCACECC meeting was convened on 15 October, MCA leaders reminded the UCSTA leaders not to be overly impatient or aggressive in pushing their demands. Speaking as the chairman of the MCACECC, Tan Cheng Lock commented that 'it was not fair to embarrass the government with all kinds of demands which, in fact, would automatically be met if basic principles were accepted'. Too Joon Hing, who spoke after Tan, also called for more patience and less pressure on the new government. Too explained that the \$2 million extra aid had to be implemented 'in accordance with proper procedure'. He said that the issue of government aid for vernacular schools was being considered by the Razak Committee. He anticipated good news when the work of the Committee was done, implying thereby that any increase in aid would only come after the Razak Committee had written its report.¹⁰

Tan Cheng Lock proposed that the MCACECC should establish a working subcommittee to reduce the necessity for calling full MCACECC meetings because open discussions 'could sometimes be misrepresented and distortions could lead to misunderstanding'. Among other things, the Working Subcommittee would 'examine and when necessary amend resolutions submitted to the Committee' and 'deal with problems of Chinese education which may arise from time to time'.¹¹ Thus the Working Subcommittee was intended to pursue in a quiet manner issues brought by the UCSTA to the MCACECC. Two issues raised by Lim Lian Geok during the meeting—the \$2 million extra aid to Chinese schools and recognition of Chinese as one of the official languages of the country—were immediately handed over to the Working Subcommittee instead of being subject to discussion. According to the minutes of the meeting, Lim had already been told that the major office-bearers of the MCACECC were not in favour of including the official language issue in the agenda. Lim explains in his memoirs that he raised the issue after the elections to emphasize that he had only agreed to drop the issue temporarily at the Malacca meeting.

Despite their caution, MCA leaders maintained a strong working relationship with the UCSTA leaders throughout the tenure of the Razak Committee. There were three main reasons for this. First, all three organizations within the MCACECC agreed on

basic issues and recognized the strength of speaking with one voice. The MCACECC meeting in October 1955 decided to send one memorandum to the Razak Committee. The main points of this memorandum which had been agreed upon during the meeting were (a) an affirmation that the Malayan national education system should be based on common objectives, (b) a common content syllabus, (c) the use of the mother tongue as the medium of instruction, (d) free primary education for six years, and (e) equal treatment in all respects for the schools of the various communities.¹² When the MCACECC memorandum was submitted to the Razak Committee, its accompanying letter emphasized that the MCACECC was 'the authorized representative' of all the Chinese schools.¹³ In this capacity, the MCACECC was later invited to send a delegation to meet the Razak Committee on 16 March 1956.¹⁴

Second, the MCACECC Working Subcommittee served as an important liaison between the five MCA members of the Razak Committee and the Chinese school teachers and managers. The MCA representatives on the Razak Committee met several times with the MCACECC Working Subcommittee to discuss some of the ideas being considered by the Razak Committee. Two of these meetings were held in the evenings on the days when the Razak Committee had met in order to discuss issues considered by the Razak Committee earlier in the day.¹⁵ According to Lim Lian Geok, these confidential meetings were arranged on the orders of Tan Cheng Lock. Lim had impressed upon Tan that the MCA representatives on the Razak Committee, not being familiar with the Chinese schools, might not see the implications of some proposals if they did not consult the teachers and managers.¹⁶ By early 1956 Tan Cheng Lock was prevented by ill health from playing an active role in the MCA and the MCACECC.¹⁷ However, the MCA members of the Razak Committee continued their meetings with UCSTA leaders who found them sincerely concerned about Chinese education.¹⁸ This close relationship between the MCA and UCSTA maintained through the MCACECC Working Subcommittee helped to keep the UCSTA loyal to the MCA when problems of implementation surfaced after the Razak Report was released.

Third, the UCSTA leaders' faith in the Alliance was sustained because the Minister of Education himself was willing to maintain regular dialogues with them. Razak promised to brief MCACECC representatives on the main points of his committee's Report

before it was presented to the Legislative Council. He met with the MCACECC on 6 May, 10 days before the Report was discussed in the Legislative Council. He met them again in early June when problems surfaced over the interpretation and implementation of the Report. Lim Lian Geok's memoirs mention several occasions when he met Razak privately during the two years when Razak was Minister of Education.¹⁹ The UCSTA leaders felt that as long as the Minister remained accessible to them, direct negotiations with him offered the best chances of resolving difficulties faced by the Chinese schools.

The Razak Report

The task before the Razak Committee was formidable. As soon as the Committee embarked on substantive discussions, its Malay and non-Malay members expressed conflicting views on the essential features of a national system of education. The Malay point of view, as expressed by Zainal Abidin bin Sultan Mydin, Abdul Aziz bin Haji Abdul Majid, and Abdul Hamid Khan, was that the National Language should be the basis for the development of a Malayan nation and a national culture. Therefore the Malay language should be the sole medium of instruction in the national system of education. Zainal Abidin specifically proposed a system in which national primary schools taught only in Malay and the other vernacular schools were permitted to exist only as private and unaided institutions.

On the other hand, the non-Malay members, for example Too Joon Hing and V. T. Sambanthan, emphasized the importance of using the mother tongue as the language of instruction and argued that this was critical to the preservation and sustenance of the languages and cultures of the respective communities. How could a single national system incorporate a multiplicity of languages? Sambanthan proposed that the national system should include vernacular schools teaching in the mother tongue until the fourth year of primary school. From the fifth year on, all schools would use the national language as the medium of instruction. A different proposal was made by Lim Chong Eu, who wanted the primary schools teaching in different languages to be accepted into the national system provided they all taught the national language as a compulsory subject.²⁰

The Razak Committee had the benefit of learning from the problems faced by the post-war colonial government. The 1952

Education Ordinance had proposed that existing vernacular schools should be replaced by a whole new system of 'National schools'. Within two years financial constraints had made this an impossible objective. The White Paper of 1954 then proposed the alternative of converting existing vernacular schools into English schools through 'National streams'. Opposition from both Chinese and Malays had shown how unacceptable this proposal was. Meanwhile, the colonial government was unable to provide sufficient places to children reaching school-going age. Professor Falk, the education consultant of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) mission to Malaya, had pointed out that there was a crisis facing Malaya in terms of meeting the demand for education. Recognizing the urgency of the matter, the Alliance government had pledged to make primary education available to all children who reached schooling age.

The Razak Committee took a different approach to the formulation of education policy from that adopted by earlier committees. First, the Committee confined its recommendations basically to what could be achieved within the next ten years rather than what might be desirable in the long term.²¹ This was one way in which the Committee avoided a deadlock over questions of 'ideal' or 'ultimate' objectives. Second, the Committee emphasized that its 'primary task' was to recommend an education policy '*acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole*'.²² With this in mind, the Committee sought compromise solutions whenever it was faced with conflicting views from its members.

We can discern both these considerations in the Razak Committee's approach to primary or basic education which resulted in policy recommendations quite different from those of the 1952 Education Ordinance. At its fourth meeting, the Razak Committee decided that a single type of national primary school was 'impracticable in existing conditions' and accepted Lim Chong Eu's proposal of incorporating all four existing streams of primary schools into the national system.²³ The Razak Committee hoped that by strengthening and expanding the existing primary schools, the country would achieve the target of providing places in school for all children between six and seven years of age by 1960.²⁴

The Razak Report recommended that 'a variety of Primary schools falling into two broad types' should be accepted within the national system of primary education. Schools teaching in the national language would be known as standard primary schools

while those teaching in other languages were to be known as standard-type primary schools.²⁵ Malay and English were to be compulsory subjects in standard-type primary schools while Mandarin and Tamil would be taught in standard schools when 15 or more parents requested such instruction.²⁶ There would be government aid 'on the same terms' to both the standard and standard-type primary schools. Both types of schools would also be staffed with teachers with similar levels of professional qualifications.²⁷ All the teachers would be emplaced within a unified teaching service, thus abolishing the different and disparate salary scales paid to teachers in the past.²⁸ These recommendations provided all four streams of primary schools, in principle, with equal standing within the national system regardless of differences in their language of instruction. This was a significant departure from the policy contained in the 1952 Education Ordinance.

Another distinctive feature of the Razak Report was its emphasis on common content rather than the imposition of a single language of instruction as the basis for national integration and unity. The Report described common syllabuses in all Malayan schools as the 'crucial requirement of educational policy' and 'an essential element in the development of a Malayan nation'.²⁹ A common curriculum, according to the Report,

is the key which will unlock the gates hitherto standing locked and barred against the establishment of an educational system 'acceptable to the people of Malaya as a whole'. Once all schools are working to a common content syllabus, irrespective of the language medium of instruction, we consider the country will have taken the most important step towards establishing a national system of education which will satisfy the needs of the people and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation.³⁰

A common curriculum was considered the most important step towards a national system. But, in paragraph 12, the Razak Report envisaged that 'the ultimate objective of educational policy in this country must be to bring together the children of all races under a national education system in which the national language is the main medium of instruction, though we recognize that progress towards this goal cannot be rushed and must be gradual'. This statement of an 'ultimate objective' became a point of controversy as it was perceived by the Chinese education organizations to be contradictory to the Report's general philosophy that common content was the key to national integration. However, the Razak Report made no recommendations on the time-frame or on the

steps to be taken towards this 'ultimate objective'. There was an entire chapter in the Report on the development of Malay as the national language, suggesting perhaps that the Committee saw the strengthening of the language as a prerequisite to be worked on in the next ten years.³¹

Significantly, the Razak Committee did discuss the possibility of standard-type primary schools converting into standard primary schools. After accepting Lim Chong Eu's proposal to accept primary schools teaching in different languages into the national system, the Committee decided that English primary schools should begin converting into standard primary schools in a reverse process to that proposed by the White Paper of 1954, that is, from English to Malay.³² When the meeting reconvened the following day, Razak announced 'for the confidential information of the Committee' that 'the government had decided to admit all children who had applied for admission to English primary schools in 1956'.³³ No reasons were given by the Minister for this sudden decision on the part of the government but the circumstances suggest that it was related to the decision the day before to begin the process of converting existing English schools into schools teaching in Malay.

Some members of the Razak Committee seemed uneasy with the decision to convert the English schools into Malay schools. At the next meeting of the Razak Committee, Sambanthan opposed the earlier decision protesting that he was not present when this decision was made. The Director of Education, who attended all meetings and played an active part by presenting position papers on several important issues, joined Sambanthan in opposing the conversion of English schools into Malay schools. There is no record of the ensuing discussion in the minutes to show why the Committee then decided to amend its earlier decision. The minutes recorded only that the Committee agreed that the 'long-term objective' should be 'to convert all schools into standard primary schools in which the medium of instruction shall be the Malayan national language'. This was recognized as a 'lengthy' process which should begin with the introduction of national language streams in non-Malay government schools 'as quickly as possible'.³⁴ Non-Malay government schools, it should be noted, did not refer to the Chinese schools as these were not government but aided schools. From the available minutes of the Razak Committee's meetings, this appeared to be the only occasion when the Committee discussed the 'ultimate objective' of Malay becoming the main medium of instruction.

The Razak Report's recommendations on primary schools were unambiguous. The main consideration, at the primary level, was to provide a basic education to all children reaching school-going age. The Committee decided in favour of incorporating the four existing streams of schools into the national system. A common curriculum provided the basis for integrating the different streams into a national system. When it came to secondary education, the Razak Committee found it far more difficult to reach an agreement. Unlike at the primary level, there were only two types of secondary schools then: those teaching in English towards the Cambridge School Certificate examinations and those teaching in Chinese towards the Chinese School Leaving examinations. As seen in Chapter 2, the colonial government's policy towards the Chinese secondary schools was to limit their expansion while pushing them towards using more English and accepting the same curriculum, textbooks, and examinations as the English schools. The colonial government's objective was to create essentially just one system of secondary education, teaching in English.

The problem before the Razak Committee therefore was whether to continue the policy of the colonial government or to accede to the demands of the Chinese education organizations that Chinese should be accepted as a medium of instruction at the secondary level. Razak's proposal that 'the ultimate aim is to establish one type of national secondary schools' was opposed vehemently by Goh Chee Yan and Lee Thean Hin, who insisted that secondary schools teaching in Chinese should be allowed.³⁵ A letter from Goh Chee Yan to Razak revealed that the committee 'had nearly come to a deadlock on the question of secondary education'.³⁶

The Razak Committee discussed the question of a single type of secondary schools on 15 December. That evening MCA members of the Razak Committee met with the MCACECC Working Subcommittee to review the same issue. The minutes of the MCACECC Working Subcommittee meeting reported vaguely that those present thought a single pattern of secondary schools was acceptable 'if diversity is allowed'. But whether diversity referred to different medium of instruction was not explicitly stated.³⁷ Significantly, Lim Lian Geok wrote to Leung Cheung Ling—as Chairman of the MCACECC Working Subcommittee meeting with MCA representatives on the Razak Committee—to protest that the issue of medium of instruction was specifically discussed and should have been recorded in the minutes.³⁸

The compromise solution which the Razak Committee adopted for secondary education was, in the end, based on a paper on secondary education prepared by E. M. F. Payne, the Director of Education.³⁹ The Committee agreed to accept the following, rather convoluted, paragraph from Payne's paper as the basis of its recommendations for secondary education:

While it is considered that the ultimate aim should be the establishment of a single pattern of secondary education, with appropriate diversity within the unity of this pattern, if the present disruptive education diarchy is to be removed, it is envisaged that until such schools became the general and accepted pattern, the pupils of both the English secondary and the Chinese middle schools should be fitted to enter post-school institutions together and to be admitted to commerce and industry on an equal footing. In the Chinese schools this means, and will mean for some time to come, more teaching in the medium of English as well as better, more economic teaching procedures, using Kuo Yu as the medium of instruction. In the English schools this means better language teaching of Kuo Yu and Tamil; and in both English and Chinese schools particular attention must be paid to the acquisition of a sound knowledge of good Malay by all pupils.⁴⁰

This paragraph can be read as saying that Chinese schools can continue to teach in Chinese. At the same time, it can also be read as advocating 'more teaching in the medium of English'. It does not explicitly forbid the use of Chinese as a medium of instruction nor does it unambiguously state, as in the case of the primary schools, that the national system would comprise different types of secondary schools teaching in different languages.

The Razak Report's recommendations on secondary education can certainly be interpreted as allowing for diversity in the medium of instruction. It is stated in the Report that the Committee saw 'no reason for altering the practice in Chinese secondary schools of using Kuo Yu as a general medium' except that these schools would be required to teach both English and the national language.⁴¹ Students selected for secondary education were to be admitted to 'the secondary school using the language medium of the parents' choice'.⁴² But the key paragraph on the question of a single-type of secondary school refers to 'flexibility of curriculum', not language, and identifies the important feature of 'a common final examination':

Recognizing that the aim of secondary education is to train employable and loyal Malayan citizens and that one of its primary functions is to foster and encourage the cultures and languages of the Malayan community, we

recommend that the aim should be to establish one type of National Secondary School where the pupils work towards a common final examination, but where there is sufficient flexibility in the curriculum to allow schools or parts of schools to give particular attention to various languages and cultures.⁴³

In the recollection of Lim Chong Eu, the Razak Committee reached a consensus that Chinese secondary schools would begin conforming to the national policy by first adopting the new common curriculum. This was expected to take at least six years to come into full effect. But no change in medium of instruction was expected immediately. As the Razak Committee had decided to make recommendations only for the next 10 years, it did not address the medium of instruction in the long term.⁴⁴ This was another instance in which the Committee adopted a compromise solution that it thought to be workable for the short term. Nowhere is it stated in the Razak Report that all national secondary schools must teach in the same language or that the Chinese secondary schools must convert to teaching in English.

The Razak Report recommended three public examinations. The first was a screening examination for selecting primary school graduates for admission into secondary schools. The second, to be known as the Lower Certificate of Education (LCE), would be held at the end of the third year of secondary education. The LCE was to be a promotional examination, for admission into upper secondary classes. Finally, there was the Malayan Certificate of Education (MCE) examinations which would mark the completion of secondary education.⁴⁵ These examinations were evidently not intended to be the basic qualifications for entering the Civil Service as a separate examination for this purpose was recommended by the Razak Report.⁴⁶ The language in which these examinations were to be conducted was not specified in the Report.⁴⁷ When the medium of examination became a subject of controversy later, both Too Joon Hing and Goh Chee Yan protested that this was never explicitly discussed during the proceedings of the Committee.

It was the new public examinations proposed by the Razak Report that became the main problem between the Minister of Education and the MCACECC. The MCACECC leaders assumed that the medium of *examination* would not be a problem once the issue of the medium of *instruction* was resolved.⁴⁸ When an MCACECC delegation met the Razak Committee on 15 March, their main concern was to emphasize that different media of instruction should also be permitted at the secondary

level. But other issues, such as recruiting more Malaysians to serve in the higher ranks of the Education Department, were raised. In addition, the delegation raised issues relating specifically to the Chinese schools such as the promised \$2 million extra aid, increased intake of pupils, and training of Malay teachers for Chinese schools.⁴⁹

The issue of the medium of instruction at the secondary level was raised again when the MCACECC leaders met the Minister of Education on 6 May. The purpose of this meeting was for the Minister to brief them on the main points of the Report before it was publicly released. When asked specifically about the issue, the Minister was reported to have agreed that vernacular languages could be used as languages of instruction at all post-primary institutions and even that the proposed examinations for secondary students would be conducted in the medium of instruction. On 'the ultimate objective' contained in paragraph 12 of the Report, the Minister explained that this was not a substantive recommendation of the Report but part of the terms of reference of the Committee. Therefore he assured them it would *not* be incorporated into the new Legislation on education.⁵⁰

This last point was highly significant to the MCACECC because paragraph 12, in stating the 'ultimate objective' of the national language becoming the main medium of instruction, could threaten the future of Chinese schools admitted into the national system. MCACECC leaders immediately wrote to the Minister to ask him for written confirmation on the main points in his briefing.⁵¹ Both the MCACECC and the UCSTA also sent out letters to state CSTAs and Chinese School Committees' Associations (CSCAs) asking them to send in their views on the Razak Report.⁵² Many CSTAs responded by supporting the MCACECC on the points it had already raised with the Minister. The fact that the MCACECC had not raised the issue of Chinese as an official language was noticed by some of the CSTAs which reminded the MCACECC to raise this issue.⁵³ The Chinese press, in general, supported the MCACECC position.⁵⁴ The overall Chinese response to the Razak Report was positive. Two aspects of the Report were usually highlighted in approval: first, that the 1952 Education Ordinance would be repealed and second, that, for the first time, Chinese schools would be accepted into and promised equal treatment within the national system of education.

Unfavourable responses to the Razak Report came, in fact, from Malay individuals and organizations. The Minister of Education referred to Malay criticisms of his Committee's Report when he

presented it to the Legislative Council on 18 May 1956. The better part of his speech was used to defend the Razak Report against these criticisms. Razak mentioned that a Malay daily had alleged that by giving 'statutory recognition to English and other languages', the Report in effect 'eliminates the Malay language'. In reply, Razak pointed out that the Report had made several proposals aimed at developing the Malay language to enhance its status as the national language of the country. Realizing that the lack of secondary education in Malay was a major source of Malay resentment, Razak promised that the government would establish Malay secondary schools as soon as teachers and physical facilities were available. At the same time, he emphasized, a 'spirit of give and take' was essential to achieve the objectives envisaged in the Report.⁵⁵

Many Malay backbenchers who spoke after Razak were very critical of the Report indicating that the UMNO rank and file thought that the Razak Committee had gone too far in accommodating non-Malay demands. A number of them, for example, Nik Hassan, Engku Muhsein, Haji Ali, Haji Ahmad, Raja Musa, and Ibrahim Fikri, maintained that only the national language should be accepted as the medium of instruction within the national system of education. Raja Musa contended that having various types of schools 'would defeat the aim of undivided loyalty to this country'. Haji Ali regretted that the Malay language was not accorded its rightful place as it was not used at all as a medium of instruction at the secondary level. Two other speakers were concerned that allowing other languages to be used as media of instruction was the first step towards giving them an official status. The Razak Committee was also criticized, by Abdul Khalid and Ibrahim Fikri, for lacking the courage to set a target date for the adoption of Malay as the *sole* medium of instruction.

In reply, Razak pointed out that 'the proposal of the Committee is to convert all government and government-aided schools to "standard schools" in which Malay will be the medium of instruction' but this was an objective that could be achieved only in the long run. Razak explained that 'this proposal cannot be implemented forthwith' because first the teachers had to be trained and then the language itself had to be developed. However, Razak reminded the Malay legislators that 'although we have decided that the Malay language and culture should be accorded a special place in this country, we cannot disregard or decline to accept the culture of the other races'. This point was given more emphasis by Dr Ismail Dato Abdul Rahman when he spoke in support of the

Razak Report. Dr Ismail pointed out that independence was not only for the Malays but also for the other communities who lived in the country. He then went on to say that if the Malays required non-Malays to discard their own languages or 'wish their languages to be relegated to the background or to be wiped out', then the Malays would be guilty of behaving like 'imperialists'. It was, in his view, enough that non-Malays recognized that 'this [is] a Malay country and that the [national] language is Malay'.⁵⁶

Though both Razak and Dr Ismail had made a plea for Malays to take a more open attitude towards the languages and cultures of the non-Malays, Razak's second speech indicated that he did consider paragraph 12 to be a substantive recommendation. Yet he had assured the Chinese school teachers and managers in his private meeting with them a week earlier that paragraph 12 was not part of the policy being recommended by the Razak Report and as such would not be included in the new Education Ordinance. It thus appeared that paragraph 12 could serve two different political purposes. As a statement of ultimate objective, it could be used to satisfy Malay demands. On the other hand, non-Malays could be placated by emphasizing that there was no proposal yet to move towards this far-off objective and the Report's other recommendations, in fact, allowed for the diversity and plurality of schools to continue.

Non-Malay Legislative Councillors generally spoke in support of the Razak Report. Among them were K. L. Devaser, K. Thaver, S. O. K. Ubaidulla from the MIC, and V. T. Sambanthan, Lim Chong Eu, and Goh Chee Yan, who were members of the Razak Committee. According to Lim Chong Eu, the Razak Report provided a fine balance by recommending 'the inter-weaving of the various immigrant cultures of this country . . . around a strong and dominant theme of the Malay language, our national language, and of Malay culture'. Goh Chee Yan was more guarded in his praise of the Report. The Razak Report should be supported, said Goh, because it recommended the inclusion of Chinese, Indian, and English primary schools within the national system and allowed flexibility in the medium of instruction in secondary schools. But he cautioned that if the Report was not implemented 'sincerely and conscientiously', the repeal of the 1952 Education Ordinance might turn out to be 'a repeal only on paper but not in fact'.⁵⁷

These proved to be prophetic words. Within a few weeks, the rapid implementation of the Report indicated that the introduction of public examinations could be used to advance policies similar to

those formerly pursued by the colonial regime with respect to the Chinese secondary schools. In fact, the new examinations became instruments through which Chinese secondary schools could be more effectively pressured into changing their language of instruction to English. The medium of examinations thus became, for the Chinese secondary schools, the problematic point in the implementation of the Razak Report.

Rapid Pace of Implementation

Two weeks after the Razak Report was accepted by the Legislative Council, the Ministry of Education took action on two public examinations proposed by the Report. A circular issued by the Controller of Examinations, G. D. Muir, announced that the first LCE examinations would be conducted in November 1956. This circular explained that the examination would be used for admission into certain grades of the government service, into teachers' training programmes for primary school teachers, and also as the basis for promotion into upper secondary classes if schools so desired.⁵⁸ A few days later, on 29 May, Chinese primary schools in Selangor received a circular from the Controller of Examinations forwarded by the Superintendent of Chinese Schools stating that students who wished to be admitted to secondary schools in 1957 must enrol for the first Malayan Secondary Schools Entrance Examination (MSSEE) to be conducted towards the end of 1956.⁵⁹ Similar circulars would have been sent out in other states.

This implementation of the Razak Report's recommendations was unexpectedly rapid. The Report's recommendations had not been translated into a new Education Ordinance. The new common curriculum for secondary schools, which was to be the basis of the common examinations, was not even ready. The Committee to work on a new secondary school curriculum had only been set up in May 1956. It was not possible for the Razak Report's recommendation that all secondary schools should teach the National Language to be implemented as yet. Yet the LCE examinations circular required all candidates to sit for the National Language paper. The most crucial question of all, to the Chinese education organizations, was the language in which the LCE examinations were to be conducted.

The rapid pace with which the Razak Report's proposals were translated into action continued. On 22 June the Minister of

Education announced that the government had decided to give the Chung Ling High School in Penang 'full assistance' because it 'conformed with the new education policy of the government'. A year earlier, in July 1955, there had been a furore in Chinese education circles when the colonial government had offered full assistance to Chung Ling. This would have put government aid to the school on par with that normally given to English schools. Special treatment for Chung Ling was part of British attempts to induce other Chinese secondary schools to follow Chung Ling's policy of extensive usage of English as a teaching language to prepare students for the Cambridge School Certificate examinations. In August 1955 the Alliance government had decided to silence the controversy by announcing that the issue of full assistance to Chung Ling had been placed 'in cold storage'.⁶⁰ The fact that, a year later, Chung Ling was selected by the Alliance as the first Chinese school to receive 'full assistance' from the government indicated that the Alliance, like the colonial administration, wanted Chung Ling to be the prototype for other Chinese secondary schools. In other words, Chinese secondary schools must follow Chung Ling's example and teach mainly in English to qualify for full aid from the government.

On 26 June the government announced that a Special Qualifying Test for teachers would be instituted immediately as the basis for non-graduate teachers to gain entry into the Unified Teaching Service proposed by the Razak Report.⁶¹ This proposal affected the vast majority of teachers who were non-graduates and became a source of disaffection amongst teachers with the Razak Report. In early August, the Ministry of Education began 'Operation Torch'—a nation-wide registration exercise for children between 6 and 7 years of age—to ascertain the kind of primary schools parents intended to enrol their children. This was to enable the government to provide sufficient places in schools of the parents' choice.⁶²

In December 1956 the government sent out a circular to all secondary schools informing them of the conditions of full assistance to National-Type Secondary Schools. The scheme of full assistance was intended to be operational by January 1957. One of the conditions specified in the circular was that schools receiving full assistance must prepare their students to sit for both the LCE and MCE examinations.⁶³ The examinations and the language in which they were to be conducted thus became important for a

second reason. Chinese secondary schools would have to prepare their students for these examinations in order to be accepted into the national system as National-Type Secondary Schools.

The rapidity with which the Ministry of Education was acting on the Razak Report's recommendations, even before the new Education Ordinance had been promulgated, was remarkable. This was commented on by T. R. Fennel, who researched changes in post-war education policy in Malaya for his doctoral thesis in 1968. Fennel found that 'many decisions were being taken and acted on—and *then* submitted to the [Legislative] Council for its approval'. He raised this point in interviews with the Tunku, Dr Ismail, and T. H. Tan. These Alliance leaders agreed that 'agreement on most policy was hammered out within the Alliance, and only then presented to the Legislative Council for its approval'.⁶⁴ This is significant because it suggests that the rapid implementation of the Razak Report was more likely to have come from the Minister with the agreement of his Alliance colleagues rather than from the British civil servants who remained in control of the Ministry of Education between June and December 1956. However, it is equally important to note that provision of full assistance to Chung Ling and examinations in English for Chinese secondary schools were very much in line with what the British had been doing before the Alliance took over. There would, in other words, have been no dispute between the Minister and his civil servants on these issues.

For the MCACECC leaders, the six months following the acceptance of the Razak Report by the Legislative Council in May 1956 were months of feverish activity as they tried to stop implementation of the Report which they considered to be inconsistent with the spirit of the Report. The MCACECC leaders engaged in several meetings and rounds of correspondence with the Minister of Education. There was some initial anxiety over 'Operation Torch' because only English schools were designated as centres when the registration exercise began. It was only after representations by the MCACECC that Chinese schools were also used as registration centres.⁶⁵ For the teachers, there was also the requirement of a qualifying test to enter the Unified Teaching Service and other problems relating to the point of admission to the service. But none of these issues could compare in importance with the issue of the language to be used in public examinations.

Dispute over the Medium of Public Examinations

As soon as the first circulars on the MSSEE and LCE examinations were sent out by the Ministry of Education, the MCACECC called on all the Chinese schools not to register their students for the examinations until the language of the examinations was clarified. School principals were reminded that the examination issue had important ramifications for all Chinese schools and they were asked to await further information from the MCACECC.⁶⁶ On 4 June, Wen Tien Kuang announced that the Director of Education had written to the MCACECC stating that the LCE examination would definitely be conducted in English.⁶⁷ On 8 June, MCACECC leaders met with the Minister of Education to discuss the matter. The MCACECC delegation raised three difficulties with the LCE examinations; the medium of examination, the absence of a common syllabus, and the refusal to allow students in Junior Middle Three to take the examinations when it was recommended for Form III students in English schools.⁶⁸

After the meeting, Wen Tien Kuang told reporters that there was no problem with the MSSEE examinations as the Minister had clarified that these would be conducted in the various media of instruction. However, the Minister insisted that the LCE would only be conducted in English because it was intended to be the basis of recruitment into the Civil Service. But he had agreed that the examination would not be compulsory for Chinese school students in 1956 and would not be used as the basis for selecting recruits into teachers' training colleges.⁶⁹ This last point was important as otherwise there would be no supply of trained teachers for the Chinese primary schools.

Immediately after the meeting, the MCACECC wrote to the Minister for written confirmation on the clarifications he had made. From the MCACECC letter, it appeared that the Minister had agreed that Chinese secondary schools would be accepted into the national system if they taught Malay as a compulsory subject.⁷⁰ The Minister replied on 12 June. In his letter, the Minister stated that the LCE examination would be optional in 1956 because National-Type Secondary Schools as recommended in the Razak Report 'had not yet come into existence'. The Minister then stated that the LCE would be set initially only in English but would later be set in Malay, too, because these were the two official languages of the country. There was no mention of the possibility that the LCE might also be conducted in Chinese. The Minister proposed

a compromise solution for the Chinese secondary schools; a promotion examination at the same level as the LCE to be conducted in Chinese because Chinese 'may be a general medium of instruction' in National-Type Secondary Schools. This examination would be accepted as a qualification for recruiting trainee teachers but would not be recognized as a qualification for entry into other departments of government service. As for the MCE, it would only be conducted in the official languages of the country.⁷¹

On 12 June the Minister also replied to the MCACECC's earlier letter of 8 May asking for confirmation of various points of clarification regarding the main recommendations of the Razak Report. The most important point dealt with paragraph 12 which Razak had verbally assured the MCACECC would not be included in the 1957 Education Ordinance. In his letter, Razak clarified that this paragraph 'referred to the ultimate objective which need not necessarily be attained during the transition period'. He then went on to say that 'no true Malayan would deny that the *ultimate* objective of educational policy in this country must be to bring the children of all races under a national education system in which the national language is the *main* medium of instruction'.⁷² Nevertheless, Razak reassured the MCACECC that the educational system would continue to cherish and preserve the ancestral cultures of its diverse people by, for example, providing 'reasonable facilities' for learning the Chinese language. He also said that 'there will be Malayan National-type Secondary Schools using Malay, Kuo Yu or English as the *main* medium of instruction'.⁷³

The MCACECC found the Minister's replies unacceptable. They thought that his written replies stated new positions rather than confirmed views he had expressed in person during his meetings with them. The MCACECC replied to both of Razak's letters of 12 June immediately, on 12 June itself. In the reply which dealt specifically with the LCE examinations, the MCACECC insisted that if the Minister accepted different media of instruction in the secondary schools, then he should also accept examinations in the respective media of instruction. To do otherwise would be illogical. The letter went on to say that 'it would become an international laughing stock if we were to insist that the examination must be in English and be based on the English school syllabus, while allowing different medium and syllabus in the Chinese schools'.⁷⁴ In a pointed reference to the status of the Malay language which

the MCACECC suspected was on the Minister's mind, the MCACECC letter asked 'how an examination through the medium of English can enhance the chances of Malay becoming the national language?' The Minister was reminded that the MCACECC had 'repeatedly stated that it is our intention to uphold the status of Malay as a national language, and to make it a compulsory subject in Chinese schools'. It was not, therefore, 'an issue between Chinese and Malay but one which threatens to relegate Chinese and Malay to entirely minor places in this country'. For these reasons, an LCE examination which was to be conducted only in English would be 'definitely at variance with the Alliance platform'.⁷⁵ The implication was that it was colonial bureaucrats in the Education Department who were trying to relegate Chinese and Malay to minor places while promoting English as the medium of public examinations.

This allegation was stated explicitly in the second of the MCACECC's letters to Razak on 12 June which dealt with paragraph 12 of the Razak Report. Razak's letter had asked the MCACECC to accept 'the ultimate objective' stated in paragraph 12 in principle though not as an immediate target. But this was not how the MCACECC leaders had understood him when he met with them in person in early May. The MCACECC's letter pointed out the discrepancy between what he had said verbally during his two meetings with them in May and June and what he had written in his two letters of 12 June. This, the MCACECC letter suggested, was because 'your letters represent the view of the Education Department and not what actually took place between us during the last two meetings'.⁷⁶ In the next few months, the MCACECC continued this strategy of accusing British officials in the Education Department of distorting the Razak Report to pursue their old policies. The MCACECC did so in part because they thought it was true.⁷⁷ But it was more likely a tactic to give the Minister room for manoeuvre to return to the position he had first taken.

Given Malay responses to the Razak Report, however, this was most unlikely. When Razak presented his Committee's report to the Legislative Council in May 1956, he had already indicated the extent to which he was under attack because the Razak Report was seen as being too liberal towards other languages. Opposition towards the Razak Report continued to build up amongst Malay school teachers in June and July. Dato Onn's Party Negara used

the Razak Report to accuse UMNO of selling out Malay interests to the MCA on education policy.⁷⁸ Razak was as yet unable to fulfil Malay demands for Malay secondary schools, a point on which he had been pressed during the debate on the Razak Report. He would find it difficult to justify conducting a public examination in Chinese specially for Chinese secondary schools.

From the MCACECC's point of view, the introduction of public examinations had given an unexpected twist to the issue of medium of instruction. The MCACECC leaders found that the Minister was ready to concede, even in writing, that the Chinese secondary schools could continue to teach in Chinese. But he was insistent that public examinations could only be conducted in the official languages of the country. The certificates from the new public examinations would almost certainly become prerequisites for higher education and good jobs. An education in Chinese which could not yield these all-important certificates would provide very little social mobility. The Chinese secondary schools were now caught between the pragmatic consideration of safeguarding the future socio-economic mobility of their students and standing firm on the principle of education in the mother tongue. If only official languages could be used in public examinations, then the way out of this dilemma would be to have Chinese recognized as an official language.

There was good reason for leaders of the Chinese education organizations to think in such terms in June 1956. In January 1956 the negotiations in London between Alliance leaders and the Colonial Office had established agreement on the pace of action towards independence. The most crucial stage would be the writing of the Merdeka Constitution. In June the Reid Commission, which had been appointed to prepare the constitutional framework for an independent Federation of Malaya, was in the country to obtain views and submissions from Malaysians. For some Chinese, this was seen as the best opportunity to raise the issue of Chinese as an official language together with other constitutional rights which they felt they should possess. At this critical point, both in the acceptance of the Razak Report and in the determination of the constitutional position of the Chinese in independent Malaya, the MCA and the UCSTA faced different but related problems.

The MCA's Predicament

When the Reid Commission invited submissions from the public, the MCA faced a serious division within its own ranks. As a component of the Alliance, the MCA was bound by a coalition decision that all three members of the coalition would agree on one common submission to the Reid Commission. The Alliance leaders had to work out a compromise among themselves which they would then have to persuade their rank and file to accept.⁷⁹ But this precisely would be the strength of a single submission from the three component parties in the Alliance. No other organization in the country would be able to claim that it had succeeded in working out an acceptable balance between the contending claims of the different races. The problem for the MCA was that many of its rank and file felt that the writing of the Merdeka Constitution was *the* opportunity for the Chinese to gain the rights and equal status which had been denied them by the 1948 Federation of Malaya Constitution. They wanted the MCA to speak out strongly for the Chinese and did not wish to see the MCA's voice muffled by the constraints of bargaining within the Alliance. As Lau Pak Khuan, chairman of the Perak MCA, put it, 'in having to abide by the policies of the Alliance, the MCA will not be able to fight effectively for equal rights for the Chinese on the citizenship issue as well as in education'.⁸⁰

The disagreement between national MCA leaders (who wanted to work within politically feasible limits) and many of the MCA's state-level leaders (who wanted the MCA to use this opportunity to fight for a better deal for the Chinese) resulted in the *shetuan* being used as the base for an outright challenge to the MCA's claim to be the political representative of the Malayan Chinese. State-level MCA leaders like Lau Pak Khuan who held leadership positions in major Chinese organizations began to mobilize the *shetuan* between February and April 1956. The climax to these meetings was a mammoth gathering of *shetuan* representatives planned for 27 April 1956. More than 1,000 representatives from 454 *shetuan* throughout Malaya were expected to gather in Kuala Lumpur to adopt a set of demands to be presented to the Reid Commission. By this time, the *shetuan* position had already crystallized into four main demands: the principle of *jus soli*, five years' residence as the minimum requirement for those born outside Malaya to acquire citizenship, equal rights for all races, and official status for the languages of all three major ethnic groups.⁸¹

These demands, in effect, called for a reversal of the basis of the Malayan nation from that of the 1948 Federation agreement back to that of the Malayan Union. The national MCA leaders who were working closely with UMNO leaders considered such demands to be unrealistic. The Malayan Union had been firmly rejected once by the Malays. UMNO itself was born out of the struggle against the Malayan Union and its leaders were unlikely to agree to any proposals which represented a reversion to it. After the failure of the IMP, Dato Onn Jaafar had formed the Party Negara which was taking the position of defending Malay interests in juxtaposition to what Onn portrayed as UMNO's willingness to make concessions to the MCA. In 1956 UMNO branches were expressing opposition to the principle of *jus soli*. The *shetuan* demands were thus unlikely to be accepted by UMNO leaders.

Confronted with what amounted to a rebellion from its state- and district-level leadership, the national MCA leaders could not afford to ignore entirely the demands being made through the *shetuan*. The four major organizations, dubbed the 'Big Four' by the Chinese press, which were organizing the April 1956 *shetuan* meeting were the Federation of Selangor Chinese Guilds and Associations (led by Leong Chee Cheong), the Selangor Chinese Assembly Hall (CAH) (led by Cho Yew Fai), the Perak CAH (led by Lau Pak Khuan) and the UCSTA (led by Lim Lian Geok). Apart from Lim Lian Geok, the other three were all MCA leaders. Leong, Cho, and Lau had chosen to speak as *shetuan* leaders because this freed them from the constraints the MCA faced as part of the Alliance. A separate set of demands from a nation-wide gathering of *shetuan* would definitely undermine the MCA's claim to represent Chinese views. There was even a proposal that the *shetuan* should form a nation-wide Federation of Chinese Guilds and Organizations as the political rival of the MCA. If this had materialized, the MCA could have been decimated by an exodus of its state- and district-level leaders.⁸²

In a bid to prevent such a deep split in Chinese society, UCSTA leaders visited Tan Cheng Lock and his son, Tan Siew Sin, on 13 April in Malacca to appeal to the MCA to close ranks with the *shetuan*.⁸³ They were not successful. But the MCA announced shortly afterwards that it would fight for the inclusion of *jus soli* in the Alliance submission to the Reid Commission.⁸⁴ However, the MCA could not go any further because its top leadership had already agreed with UMNO leaders that special rights for the

Malays would be maintained in exchange for *jus soli*. The MCA then tried to draw some *shetuan* leaders over to its position. Three days before the big *shetuan* meeting, Selangor MCA leaders organized their own meeting of *shetuan* leaders to explain the MCA position and to restrain the *shetuan* from submitting a separate memorandum.⁸⁵ But this proved futile.

The 27 April meeting organized by the 'Big Four' was duly held.⁸⁶ Subsequent to the meeting, a memorandum endorsed by 1,094 *shetuan* was submitted to the Reid Commission. This memorandum claimed to represent the views of the Chinese in general.⁸⁷ However the MCA was able to avert the more serious threat of a national Federation of Chinese Organizations which might have evolved into a rival Chinese political party. The proposed Federation of Chinese Guilds and Organizations did not materialize because the UCSTA and the Selangor CAH withdrew their support for the formation of such an organization.⁸⁸ The reasons why UCSTA leaders made this decision will be discussed in the next section of this chapter. But it is interesting to note here that it was Too Joon Hing who approached Lim Lian Geok for the latter's help in countervailing the formation of the proposed Federation of Chinese Guilds.⁸⁹ Too's relationship with Lim was established through the MCACECC Working Subcommittee's frequent meetings with MCA representatives on the Razak Committee. By late April, the Razak Report was about to be released and the UCSTA leaders knew they could not afford to lose their working relationship with the MCA at that critical stage.

In the first week of May, the Razak Report was released and the Minister of Education met with MCACECC leaders to brief them on the Report. The initial response to the Razak Report from Chinese education organizations was generally favourable. In June, however, the rapid pace of implementation of some of the Report's recommendations caused unease and suspicion. The Minister's insistence that public examinations for secondary schools could only be conducted in the official languages of the country had become the main issue of contention. If this problem was not satisfactorily resolved, the MCA would certainly face problems from the UCSTA and United Chinese School Committees' Association (UCSCA) leaders. Having barely weathered a rebellion from within its own ranks, the MCA could not risk a breakup of the MCACECC. The leaders of the Chinese education organizations provided a useful link, as well as leverage, between the MCA and the *shetuan*.

Two different methods were used by the MCA leaders to handle this problem. The first was to prevail on Razak to relent on the examinations issue by approaching him privately and personally. T. H. Tan was the first of three top MCA leaders who appealed to Razak on the LCE examinations. In his letter to Razak on 16 June, T. H. Tan addressed what he thought might be Razak's main political consideration: that public examinations conducted in Chinese would elevate Chinese to the status of an official language. This fear was 'entirely without foundation' in T. H. Tan's view because the official languages of the country were clearly specified in its statutes.

The reason why the LCE could not be conducted only in English, T. H. Tan argued, was because the Razak Report had clearly stated that 'diverse media of instruction would be allowed *before and after* the LCE'. Chinese education organizations were unhappy with Razak's proposal of an examination in Chinese equivalent to the LCE because if it was equivalent, then 'logically and in all fairness' it should be also called the LCE, with Chinese inserted in parentheses if this was necessary. It was obvious that once the LCE and MCE became the only recognized certificates, promotional examinations or school leaving certificates 'will be of no value'.⁹⁰ This was indeed the crux of the matter. The compromise the Minister offered did not provide any meaningful alternative as it was not recognized for any purpose except for promotion to upper secondary classes. As a result, Chinese school teachers saw this promotional examination as a way of restricting intake into upper secondary classes in the Chinese schools without any of the benefits of the LCE itself.

T. H. Tan failed to persuade the Minister. On 20 June he informed Wen Tien Kuang that Razak still insisted that the proposed examination in Chinese could not be called the LCE even if it was equivalent in standard to it.⁹¹ Meanwhile, Wen Tien Kuang had forwarded copies of the correspondence between the MCACECC and the Minister to Too Joon Hing to ask for his advice on the next course of action. Copies of the same letter were also sent to all the Chinese members of the Razak Committee as well as to Tan Siew Sin.⁹² Tan Siew Sin responded to Wen Tien Kuang's letter indicating that he thought that 'this matter is so important that if no solution is reached' then it must be taken up to the 'highest levels in the Alliance'. He advised Wen to prepare a paper giving quotations from the Minister of Education's letters next to relevant quotations from the Razak Report so that

'everyone can see at a glance that the Department is contradicting in writing the recommendations of its own Committee'.⁹³ There is no record of any action which Tan Siew Sin may have taken to bring the issue up to the 'highest levels in the Alliance'. However, at the next meeting of the MCACECC on 14 August, called specifically to discuss the Razak Report, Wen reported that MCA leaders had met with Razak after consultations with Tan Cheng Lock. As Tan Cheng Lock was by this time no longer politically active, it was most likely Tan Siew Sin who arranged the meeting with Razak.

Too Joon Hing wrote a personal letter to Razak on 8 September. Too's main argument was that as the Razak Report permitted diverse media of instruction in National-Type Secondary Schools, this should also mean diverse media of examination. This was only logical as it was 'entirely unreasonable to teach students in one language and examine them in another'. Too claimed that the Razak Committee had never discussed the medium of the LCE examination explicitly. The Committee would not have unanimously agreed to examinations in English as this was 'out of line with our policy'. In Too's view, the Minister's statement that the LCE was intended as a qualification for the Civil Service was a 'poor and dangerous explanation'. The government would not be able to absorb the hundreds of thousands of LCE certificate holders in the years to come, said Too.⁹⁴

Apart from approaching the Minister of Education, the MCA leaders also tried to ensure solidarity within their own ranks before facing the UCSTA and the UCSCA. A meeting of the MCA Cultural and Educational Subcommittee was held on 13 August to brief the MCA delegates to the MCACECC meeting scheduled for the next day. The MCA delegates were told that a rift within the Alliance must be avoided at this stage because after four months of negotiations, the Alliance partners had succeeded in thrashing out the main points for its submission to the Reid Commission. It was emphasized that the MCA should on no account let the education issue cause a split with the Malays 'because during this period when we are fighting for our independence there is the danger that this might lead to a split with the Malays over political, economic and other questions, and the result will be unthinkable'. At the same time, the MCA 'could not concede too much ground as this will result in our not getting a proper place in the cultural or political field'. The meeting is reported to have agreed that the MCA 'should ask that Chinese should be included as an official language'.⁹⁵

It should be noted here that this stand fell within the rubric of the Alliance's submission to the Reid Commission. By August 1956 Alliance leaders had agreed that the official languages issue was one of the areas in which component parties could submit different views. The position of both the MCA and MIC was that Chinese and Tamil should be recognized as official languages in addition to Malay and English while UMNO's position was that the two official languages of the country should be Malay and English.⁹⁶ This, however, was only a political expedient which bought time for all three components of the Alliance. A decision would have to be made when the time came to agree on the language provisions of the Merdeka Constitution proper.

On the Razak Report specifically, the MCA's position was that it was 'not entirely defective in principle' except for paragraph 12 which 'should be deleted'. In any case, there should be no opposition to the Report itself as 'it is already an accomplished fact'. Direct criticisms of the Minister of Education and the government were to be avoided by attributing problems of implementation of the Report to 'distortion ... by certain expatriate officials in the Education Department that has incensed public opinion and caused annoyance'. The government would, however, be asked to 'rescind all unreasonable regulations which had been issued'. The MCA delegates were told that Razak, after being approached by MCA leaders, had proposed that an Alliance Education Working Subcommittee be set up. This would comprise five delegates from each of the three component parties and its function would be 'to help ensure that all future education ordinances and educational policy will be drawn up in a more reasonable manner'.⁹⁷

The MCACECC meeting held the next day, 14 August 1956, was a full plenary session with an additional 96 observers invited from CSTAs, CSCAs, and some Chinese schools.⁹⁸ It was the first meeting of the MCACECC since the release of the Razak Report. The meeting was chaired by Goh Chee Yan as Tan Cheng Lock was unable to attend due to ill health. When Too Joon Hing spoke at the beginning of the meeting, he acknowledged that 'the Education Department has issued several directives which have aroused the deep suspicion and consternation of Chinese educational circles'. However, he maintained that the Razak Report was 'a vast improvement on the Education Ordinance 1952' and he called for the 'intricate problems confronting Chinese education' to be approached 'coolly and with moderation'. Too left the meeting after his speech because he thought that as both MCA secretary-

general and Assistant Minister of Education it was 'rather inconvenient' for him to participate in the discussion.

Wen Tien Kuang strove for a similar balance between pointing out the positive features of the Razak Report and criticizing the Education Department's insistence on holding the LCE examinations in English as 'ridiculous' and 'contrary to the provisions of the Education Report'. Wen reported that the Working Subcommittee of the MCACECC 'had done all they could in connection with the education policy'. As a result Razak had given an assurance that paragraph 12 of the Report would not be included in the new Education Ordinance. The MCA leaders, too, had lodged strong protests to the Minister of Education against 'the repeated distortion of the Education Report' because they realized that the issues involved 'concerned the life and death of Chinese education'. Razak had agreed, after seeing MCA leaders, that all questions pertaining to education policy would in future be first referred to the Alliance Education Working Subcommittee. The Minister had assured MCA leaders that 'he would not carry out any educational measures without the agreement of the MCA' and that he 'would rather resign than play a lone hand'. Wen's main purpose was to show representatives from the Chinese education organizations that their dissatisfaction was not being ignored by Alliance leaders and to convince them to continue working through the MCACECC. The meeting then proceeded to list the issues which the MCACECC should pursue with the Minister. The more important among them were to ensure that paragraph 12 was omitted from the new Education Ordinance, the mother tongue was accepted as a medium of instruction in post-primary education, and all examinations were conducted in the medium of instruction. The MCACECC meeting also agreed to oppose the Teachers' Special Qualifying Test.

A press statement was released by the MCACECC secretariat following the meeting. This condemned in very strong terms the Education Department's decision that the LCE would be conducted in the medium of English, its stipulation that four years of Chinese secondary education would be considered the equivalent of three years in the English schools, and its demand that Chinese secondary schools must conform to national policy by using English as their medium of instruction. On each of these points, a relevant paragraph or clause of the Razak Report was cited to show that what the Director of Education and his officers were doing was inconsistent with the spirit of Alliance policy as stated in the

Razak Report. The statement concluded with a condemnation of the Director for 'paying lip service to the importance of Malay' when his actions showed that 'his real interest is in the promotion of English'.⁹⁹

The strongly worded press statement, directed at Ministry officials, sought to placate the MCA's partners within the MCACECC. But it avoided criticizing the Minister himself so as not to offend the MCA's partner in the Alliance. This may have been effective as a tactic of political brinkmanship but there was no denying that Razak had given no indication of yielding on any of the points raised by the MCACECC. The proposed Alliance Education Working Subcommittee could, perhaps, prevent new problems from arising but it did not have the authority to reverse decisions already made.

By this time, the UCSTA leaders knew that directing criticisms at 'colonial bureaucrats' was at best a useful tactic. In his speech at the August MCACECC meeting, Lim Lian Geok had joined in the MCA's attack on 'colonial bureaucrats' who had 'distorted the actual meaning of the Education Report'. But, as Lim pointed out, 'the Minister of Education not only failed to restrain them but acted as their shield'. Furthermore, when Education Department officials claimed that they were acting in accordance with the recommendations of the Razak Report, 'the elected government never repudiated them'.¹⁰⁰ The UCSTA leaders were under no illusions that the Razak Report could have been continually distorted without the Minister's knowledge or consent. It was Razak himself who announced the government's decision to give full assistance to Chung Ling. Razak may not have personally drafted his letters to the MCACECC of 12 June, but he had signed them. Why then was the UCSTA prepared to go along with the MCA's ploy of sticking the blame on the colonial bureaucrats and avoiding criticism of the Minister?

The UCSTA's Dilemma

When the dispute between the *shetuan* and the MCA over submissions to the Reid Commission began in early 1956, the UCSTA found itself torn between its affinity with the *shetuan* position on constitutional issues and its relationship with the MCA. The imminent release of the Razak Report made it imperative for the UCSTA to maintain its close links with MCA and, through it, with UMNO. At the same time, the UCSTA leaders did not want to see an open split between the MCA and the *shetuan* because this

would weaken the Chinese position in the pre-Merdeka constitutional bargaining. The UCSTA appealed to the MCA leadership to join the *shetuan* in their demands on behalf of the Chinese. When this failed, they decided to join the other three major *shetuan* in organizing the 27 April meeting.¹⁰¹ But the UCSTA together with the Selangor CAH decided to withdraw their support for the formation of a Federation of Chinese Guilds and Organizations. As a result, what was intended as a direct political challenge to the MCA did not materialize.

The UCSTA's purpose in joining the *shetuan* in their separate submission to the Reid Commission was never intended as a challenge to the MCA but, in fact, to support the MCA in fighting for better terms from UMNO. This was the message which Lim Lian Geok conveyed to Too Joon Hing when the latter came to see him before the 27 April meeting. Too was told that the UCSTA would not support the formation of any new organizations that would result in an open split in Chinese society. The UCSTA's main objective was to strengthen Chinese unity to obtain better citizenship rights for the Chinese.¹⁰² But Lim later revealed that one of the reasons that led him to withdraw UCSTA support for the proposed Federation of Chinese *shetuan* was that he suspected that Kuomintang (KMT) remnants in Malaya intended to use it as their new front.¹⁰³

Nevertheless, the UCSTA joined the *shetuan* meeting on 27 April and was a signatory to their submission to the Reid Commission. This was because the four demands identified by *shetuan* leaders captured, in Lim Lian Geok's opinion, 'the real voice of the Chinese public'.¹⁰⁴ The UCSTA had made essentially the same demands in a memorandum submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in August 1955 and to a group of visiting British Members of Parliament in March 1956.¹⁰⁵ UCSTA leaders also felt morally bound to join other *shetuan* in their submissions on behalf of the Chinese because they had consistently maintained that the UCSTA stood for the legitimate rights of the Chinese as a distinctive component of Malaya's multi-ethnic society. Finally, a common submission with the *shetuan* was an opportunity for the UCSTA to show that its demand for Chinese to be recognized as an official language was a common aspiration shared by a substantial majority of Chinese in Malaya. The UCSTA, in fact, sent a separate letter to the Reid Commission emphasizing this point.¹⁰⁶

After the release of the Razak Report in May 1956, the UCSTA's attention focused again on the education issue. Lim Lian Geok's first response to the Report was quite positive.

Speaking to reporters after the MCACECC had been briefed by the Minister on the main points of the Report on 6 May, Lim indicated that the Report met several of the principles which the UCSTA had been fighting for. He mentioned specifically the repeal of the 1952 Education Ordinance, the acceptance of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, the inclusion of Chinese schools into the national system, and equal treatment for teachers in all schools.¹⁰⁷ When problems arose over the LCE examination, Lim avoided an open confrontation by writing directly to the Minister to seek an assurance that the examination would be conducted in Chinese. In his letter of 22 May, Lim pointed out that a common syllabus for secondary schools was not yet ready and also raised the problem of Junior Middle III students not being allowed to sit for the examination. The National Language had not yet been introduced as a compulsory subject in all secondary schools but was specified as a compulsory paper in the LCE examinations. For all these reasons, the Minister was asked to postpone the examination so that difficulties with the examination could be satisfactorily resolved.¹⁰⁸

The UCSTA Executive Committee met a day after the MCACECC's second meeting with the Minister on 8 June. During this meeting, the Minister had insisted that the LCE examination could only be conducted in the official languages of the country. This led the UCSTA to decide that the LCE examination, as proposed for 1956, was 'against the spirit of the Razak Report'. Chinese schools would be asked not to enrol their students for the examination that year.¹⁰⁹ However, the UCSTA did not issue any public statements until after the Minister's written reply was received on 12 June. On 18 June, the UCSTA issued an open letter to all parents to explain that the LCE was 'unacceptable' because the medium of examination was not Chinese and Junior Middle III students were not treated on par with Form III students. This was why the UCSTA was asking all Chinese school students not to register for the LCE examinations in 1956.¹¹⁰ Though this was, in fact, a call for a boycott of the LCE, the UCSTA statement was intentionally couched in non-confrontational terms. Parents were informed that the Minister himself had agreed that the LCE was not compulsory for Chinese school students that year. Therefore the UCSTA's call to parents not to register their children for the examination could not be construed as going against the government.

Though UCSTA leaders were very troubled by the LCE examinations, they were reluctant to come out in open conflict with the Minister of Education. The reasons for this can be found in the minutes of the UCSTA Executive Committee meeting of 9 June. At this meeting, Lim Lian Geok described the process by which the Razak Report was drafted as 'much more democratic' than any of the policy statements on education in the past. He pointed out that the Minister had met several times with representatives of the UCSTA, the report had been translated into Chinese, and, most important of all, the Minister had assured UCSTA leaders that paragraph 12 of the Report would not be incorporated into the new Education Ordinance.¹¹¹ The responses of other CSTAs so far also indicated that they found the general policy recommended in the Razak Report acceptable.¹¹² In short, the Chinese school teachers recognized that there had been significant gains for Chinese education with the Razak Report. These outweighed the problems surfacing in its implementation. Although the Minister was firm on the medium of public examinations, he had reiterated the Razak Report's acceptance of Chinese as a medium of instruction in secondary schools. Under the circumstances, it was more realistic to try and safeguard what had been gained than to risk all by adopting an outright oppositionist stand. Thus the UCSTA leaders went along with the MCA's strategy of placing the blame on expatriate officials in the Education Department in the hope that there would still be room for further negotiations, and perhaps concessions from UMNO.

The requirement that all non-graduate teachers must pass a Special Qualifying Test before they could be admitted into the Unified Teaching Scheme provided the UCSTA with just the issue to mobilize its members in a show of strength without directly confronting the Alliance government. Here was an issue clearly of implementation and the UCSTA was not alone in opposing the Special Qualifying Test as Malay teachers also objected to it. An Emergency General Meeting of the UCSTA was called on 29 July to protest against this test. It was attended by more than 1,000 Chinese school teachers from different states. Emotions ran rather high during the meeting. Lim Lian Geok claimed that Education Department officials had alleged that the president of the UCSTA was a rabble rouser with little support from his rank and file members. He therefore asked for a clear show of support for the UCSTA. The meeting agreed unanimously to back the UCSTA's

stand on education policy. The UCSTA was asked to continue the struggle for Chinese to be recognized as an official language. There were, however, no criticisms of the Razak Report and no resolutions on the examinations issue.¹¹³ The UCSTA leaders were still banking on quiet negotiations to resolve this problem.

Throughout the next two weeks, the CSTAs in various states organized their own meetings to protest the Special Qualifying Test for teachers.¹¹⁴ Lim Lian Geok travelled to a number of states to address these meetings. There are three notable features in these speeches. First, he voiced criticisms of certain aspects in the implementation of the Razak Report in addition to the test for teachers. But he did not criticize the Report itself and refrained from outright criticisms of Alliance leaders. Lim continued to identify 'colonial bureaucrats' in the Education Department as the source of distortions of the Razak Report.¹¹⁵

Second, there was a significant new theme in these speeches. As Lim called on the teachers to support the UCSTA in its fight for legitimacy and equal status for the Chinese language and the Chinese schools, he spoke too of the need for the Chinese to identify themselves politically with Malaya, to be sensitive to the insecurities felt by the other races, and to assist those who were more deprived and less developed. This message was contained in his speech to the Klang CSTA on 10 August 1956 when he emphasized that the Chinese must be single-minded in their loyalty to Malaya. When he addressed a CSTA meeting in Malacca on 13 August, he called on the Chinese school teachers to inculcate in their pupils a patriotic commitment to Malaya and a willingness to work with other races.¹¹⁶

A third theme was the importance Lim gave to the objective of independence. This came out clearest in his speech to the UCSTA General Meeting in December 1956 when he said: 'At this point, the most important principle we must hold on to is the attainment of Independence. Absolutely everything must be decided on the basis that it does not harm Independence. This means that if some things we are fighting for may disadvantage the Independence struggle, then we must cope with them in the spirit of tolerance.'¹¹⁷ The third theme is especially significant because it explains why the UCSTA's posture was moderate and restrained in comparison to its abrasive style of a few years ago. Like the rest of the country, Lim and other UCSTA leaders were swept by the general fervour to be free of colonial domination. Four years later, in explaining why the UCSTA went along with the Razak Report despite the

problems surfacing in its implementation, Lim said that the UCSTA stand in 1956 and 1957 was 'unity above all, independence above all'.¹¹⁸

Lim may have faced some resistance from other UCSTA leaders in taking this position as the Minister of Education's stand on the LCE examinations showed no signs of softening. On 12 August, for example, the Perak CSTA was reported to have called for the Razak Report to be opposed because it failed to provide a position of parity for the Chinese schools.¹¹⁹ Lim himself sometimes seemed uncertain if he had judged the situation correctly. On one occasion, he described the future of Chinese education as 'gloomy' because the Razak Report was, after all, 'not so different from the Barnes Report'. Referring perhaps to the problems the MCACECC was having with the Minister, he commented that 'what is said by government officials is often different from what is written'.¹²⁰ But two days later, he praised MCA Legislative Councillors and, in particular the Assistant Minister of Education, for having done their best to win a fair deal for Chinese education.¹²¹

Part of the reason for Lim's uncertainty perhaps was the need for the UCSTA to be constantly on the look-out for what seemed to be deliberate attempts to disadvantage the Chinese schools. For example, when Operation Torch began, the Education Department designated only English schools as registration centres. This was seen as a move to direct parents to register their children in English schools to increase their enrolment at the cost of Chinese schools. It was only after the UCSTA and the MCACECC requested the Ministry to also use Chinese schools as registration centres that this was done. The UCSTA then mobilized its members and the *shetuan* to alert parents to register their children in Chinese schools.¹²²

A deeper note of disillusionment had crept in by 14 August when the Minister remained adamant that public examinations could only be conducted in the official languages. A few months later in December, the conditions for Chinese schools to be accepted as National-Type Secondary Schools stated clearly that they must prepare their students for the public examinations which were to be conducted only in English. This contradicted the Minister's earlier agreement with the MCACECC that Chinese schools could be accepted into the national system if they taught Malay as a compulsory subject. The UCSTA pressured the MCA to convene a meeting of the MCACECC immediately. The MCA

leaders tried to meet with the Minister before calling a meeting but were, apparently, unsuccessful.¹²³ After several reminders from the UCSTA, a meeting was finally convened on 22 February 1957. The MCA was conspicuously under-represented with Goh Chee Yan, Wen Tien Kuang, and Too Joon Hing being absent. The meeting was run instead by Chin Chee Meow and Lim Lian Geok.¹²⁴

The meeting unanimously agreed to reject the conditions stated in the November circulars which would require the Chinese secondary schools to 'convert' to English schools. Full assistance and acceptance into the national system thus came to be derogatorily described as 'conversion'. A 15-man subcommittee to be headed by Goh Chee Yan was set up to negotiate for amendments to the conditions with the government. All schools were called upon not to accept full assistance until the subcommittee had arrived at some agreement with the Minister. During the discussion on this subject, Lim Lian Geok announced that the chairman of Chung Ling High School in Penang had indicated that the school was prepared to reconsider its acceptance of full assistance to stand together with the MCACECC.¹²⁵

The following month, the 1957 Education Ordinance, incorporating the policy recommendations of the Razak Report, was presented to the Legislative Council. This was passed on 7 March 1957 without any dissenting speeches from UMNO backbenchers, in contrast to when the Razak Report was debated. The provisions of the Education Ordinance were described by the Minister of Education as 'the maximum agreement possible under present conditions of education in this country'.¹²⁶ When he presented the Razak Report to the Legislative Council, Razak had spent most of his time answering Malay objections to the Report. In presenting the 1957 Education Ordinance, Razak spent most of his time addressing the issues that had been brought up by the MCACECC. The MCACECC had submitted several amendments to the Education Ordinance for the Minister's consideration but these were basically not incorporated.¹²⁷ Razak did make one significant concession in his speech. He gave an assurance that schools which did not accept the government's conditions for full assistance would still continue to receive aid on a per capita basis. This reduced the pressure on the Chinese schools to make an immediate choice between losing government aid or changing their medium of instruction. Aid to Chinese secondary schools continued until the 1961 Education Act replaced the 1957 Education Ordinance.¹²⁸

Three important features of the new Education Ordinance made it palatable, even if not completely acceptable, to the UCSTA. First, there was an explicit acceptance of Chinese primary schools within the national system in accordance with the recommendations of the Razak Report.¹²⁹ Second, the definition of National-Type Secondary Schools in the Ordinance specifically stated that such schools could teach in Chinese or Tamil, and not just in the official languages of the country.¹³⁰ Third, and most important of all, the 1957 Education Ordinance did not state that the ultimate objective of policy was to make Malay the sole medium of instruction.¹³¹ On this point, the Minister had kept faith with the MCACECC. Paragraph 12 of the Razak Report was, as he had promised them, excluded from the statement of policy in the 1957 Education Ordinance.¹³² For all these reasons, Lim Lian Geok publicly acknowledged that the 1957 Education Ordinance was an improvement on the 1952 Ordinance.¹³³

UMNO leaders may have been prepared to make some compromises on these points in the 1957 Education Ordinance because they realized that the MCA was then in difficult straits over the Merdeka Constitution. The Reid Commission's proposals were released in February 1957. They were based largely on the Alliance's submission but differed from it in three important aspects. First, the Commission rejected the specification of Islam as an official religion. Second, it recommended that Malay special rights should not be written into the main body of the Constitution but should be part of the temporary or transitional clauses which would be reviewed 15 years after independence. Third, on the question of official languages, the Reid Commission recommended that for a period of 10 years or more, to be determined by Parliament, Chinese and Tamil should be recognized along with English and Malay as official languages of the country. As one study has commented, the Reid Commission 'placed greater emphasis on the multiracial aspect of the nation'.¹³⁴ UMNO, however, decided that it could not accept these three recommendations of the Reid Commission. UMNO's partners in the Alliance were pressured to stand together in rejecting them. This placed UMNO in a tenable position *vis-à-vis* its base in Malay society but placed the MCA in an invidious position as far as Chinese society was concerned.¹³⁵

Completely disillusioned with the MCA's decision to stand by its partner in the Alliance and reject the Reid Commission's proposals which came much closer to Chinese aspirations, the *shetuan* decided to send a delegation to London to take their views directly

to the Colonial Office.¹³⁶ This move immediately came under fire from UMNO and MCA leaders. The Tunku described the *shetuan* leaders as a collection of die-hard KMT elements who had no loyalty to the country and were out to obstruct the attainment of Merdeka. MCA leaders also denounced the *shetuan* leaders as seeking to divide the Chinese and accused them of uncertain loyalties towards the country.¹³⁷

Lim Lian Geok was one of the four men nominated by the *shetuan* to present its case in London. He and other UCSTA leaders again had to decide where they stood. The UCSTA Executive Committee met on 27 April to decide on its representative in the *shetuan* delegation to London. Lim Lian Geok himself was not in favour of joining the *shetuan* delegation and was able to persuade his committee that the UCSTA should nominate someone else to replace him.¹³⁸ Lim Lian Geok has given several reasons for this decision. In his assessment, the *shetuan* delegation had little chance of success because the persons nominated were inept and a poor representation of Chinese leadership. A year earlier, he had withdrawn UCSTA support for the formation of a grand federation of Chinese organizations because he too had suspected that the *shetuan* leaders pushing for this were KMT elements, as the Tunku alleged. All this added up to the realization that not only would participation in the *shetuan* delegation be fruitless but it might also damage the credibility of the UCSTA.¹³⁹ Lim, once again, decided that the UCSTA should not openly be at odds with the MCA because there was still a need to work in unity with the MCA for the sake of the Chinese. Nevertheless, what comes across clearly in his own account of this episode is the uncertainty and anxiety in his own mind, and in the minds of those who called to advise him, as to whether he had made the right decision.¹⁴⁰

The overwhelming importance of Merdeka as a national political imperative and the need for Chinese unity had led the UCSTA to continue to work with the MCA and within the rubric of what could be gained from negotiations with UMNO. Through this strategy, the UCSTA had gained the repeal of the 1952 Education Ordinance and its substitution by the 1957 Ordinance. The Razak Report had provided a legitimate place for Chinese primary schools within the national system. As for the secondary schools, there appeared to be some leeway for manoeuvre although the government had remained firm on the question of official languages being used for public examinations. The adoption of the Merdeka Constitution, in effect, rendered the recognition of Chinese as

an official language a lost cause. Further negotiations on the conditions for the Chinese secondary schools to be accepted within the national system were postponed till after Merdeka. But, even before Merdeka, all the problems discussed in the foregoing chapters had come to a head in the leading Chinese secondary school. The next chapter examines the politics of Chinese education, in microcosm, at the level of this particular school.

1. For detailed discussions of the July 1955 elections, see T. E. Smith, *Report on the First Federal Election of Members to the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur, 1955; K. J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965, pp. 175-200; Gordon Means, *Malaysian Politics*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970, Ch. 11.

2. FM, *Report of the Education Committee 1956*, Kuala Lumpur, 1956, p. 1; cited henceforth as the Razak Report.

3. *SCJP*, 30 July 1955.

4. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the UCSTA Executive Committee, 14 August 1955 and 15 August 1955', UCSTA Files. The meeting was reported in detail in *SCJP* and *CKP*, 15 August 1955 and 16 August 1955.

5. *SCJP*, 13 August 1955. The UCSTA was represented by Lim Lian Geok and Ting Ping Sung. They were accompanied by Wen Tien Kuang. Also present at the meeting were Too Joon Hing and Leong Yew Koh from the MCA.

6. *CKP*, 15 October 1955.

7. *SPJP*, 15 October 1955.

8. Letter from Lim Lian Geok to Tan Cheng Lock, 30 July 1955, UCSTA Files.

9. *SCJP*, 11 September 1955.

10. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the MCACECC, 15 October 1955', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

11. *Ibid.*

12. Copy of the MCACECC Memorandum to the Razak Report, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

13. Letter from Wen Tien Kuang, as Secretary of the MCACECC, to the Secretary of the Minister of Education, 24 October 1955, Gwee Yee Hean Personal Collection.

14. Letters from Secretary to the Minister of Education to Wen Tien Kuang, 14 December 1955 and 7 March 1956, Gwee Yee Hean Personal Collection.

15. 'Minutes of a Meeting between Chinese Members of the Razak Committee and the Working Subcommittee of the MCACECC, 24 November 1955' and 'Minutes of a Meeting between Chinese Members of the Razak Committee and the Working Committee of the MCACECC, 15 December 1955', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. The fourth meeting of the Razak Committee was held on 24 and 25 November and the fifth meeting was held on 15 and 16 December; see Razak Report, p. 2. From interviews with both Too Joo Hing and Lim Lian Geok, there were more than two meetings but minutes of the other meetings were not available.

16. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1988, Vol. 2, p. 145.

17. According to K. G. Tregonning, 'Tan Cheng Lock: A Malayan Nationalist', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, 10, 2 (1979): 75, Tan Cheng Lock suffered a bad fall on 8 March 1955 after which he was no longer capable of keeping up with an active political life. Alice Scott-Ross, *Tan Dato Sir Cheng Lock Tan: A Personal Profile by His Daughter*, Singapore: Alice Scott-Ross, 1990, p. 299, says that Tan never fully recovered his normal strength after slipping into a coma for 48 hours as a result of an operation on a leg fracture sometime in the first half of 1955. According to the minutes of the October 1955 MCACECC meeting, Tan attended and chaired the meeting. Tan was also present during the historic Baling Talks with representatives of the CPM in December 1955. From the beginning of 1956, however, Tan was consistently absent from MCACECC meetings.

18. Interview with Lim Lian Geok, Selayang (Selangor), 2 April 1982.

19. For example, Lim mentions three occasions on which he met with Razak over different aspects of the Chung Ling High School drama (discussed in Chapter 6). See Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 179-97.

20. 'Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Committee Appointed to Review Educational Policy Held in the Conference Room, Federal House, Kuala Lumpur, on 13 and 14 October 1955', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. All minutes of Razak Committee meetings subsequently cited are from the same source.

21. The Razak Report, para. 8, states that the Committee decided to define its terms of reference as 'the practical one of planning for the immediate future, which might be defined as the next ten years'.

22. *Ibid.*, para. 9.

23. 'Minutes of Education Committee Meeting Held on 24 November 1955 at 11.30 a.m. in the Chief Secretary's Room'.

24. Razak Report, para. 13 (b).

25. *Ibid.*, para. 54.

26. *Ibid.*, para. 63.

27. *Ibid.*, paras. 54, 55, 122, and 129.

28. *Ibid.*, paras. 46-52 on 'The Teaching Profession'.

29. *Ibid.*, para. 119.

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*, paras. 17-28.

32. 'Minutes of Education Committee Meeting Held on 24 November 1955 at 11.30 a.m. in the Chief Secretary's Room'.

33. *Ibid.* All meetings of the Razak Committee stretched over two days.

34. 'Draft Minutes of the Education Committee Meeting Held on 15 and 16 December 1956 Beginning at 10.30 a.m. in the Chief Secretary's Room, Kuala Lumpur'.

35. 'Minutes of Education Committee Meeting Held on 24 November 1955 at 11.30 a.m. in the Chief Secretary's Room'.

36. Letter from Goh Chee Yan to Dato Abdul Razak, 12 December 1955, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

37. 'Minutes of a Meeting between Chinese Members of the Razak Committee and the Working Subcommittee of the MCACECC, 15 December 1955', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

38. Letter from Lim Lian Geok to Leung Cheung Ling, 24 December 1955, Gwee Yee Hean Personal Collection.

39. It should be noted here that Payne had been Assistant Director of Education dealing particularly with the Chinese schools before he became Director. He

would be very familiar with the objectives of the Education Department with regard to the Chinese schools for the past few years.

40. 'Draft Minutes of the Education Committee Meeting Held on 15 and 16 December 1955 Beginning at 10.30 a.m. in the Chief Secretary's Room, Kuala Lumpur'. The paragraph cited was extracted from Education Committee Paper No. 51 by E. M. F. Payne.

41. Razak Report, para. 72.

42. *Ibid.*, para. 73.

43. *Ibid.*, para. 70.

44. Interview with Lim Chong Eu, Penang, 2 March 1985.

45. Razak Report, paras. 75-80.

46. *Ibid.*, para. 82.

47. *Ibid.*, paras. 74-80, Appendix 3 on the LCE and Appendix 4 on the MCE.

48. Interviews with Lim Lian Geok, Selayang (Selangor), 2 April 1982, and Too Joon Hing, 9 May 1980, Ipoh.

49. 'Minutes of the Seventh Meeting of the Education Committee Held on 15 and 16 March 1956.'

50. The meeting was reported in all major Chinese dailies; see *CKP*, *SCJP*, *NYSP*, 7 May 1956.

51. Letter from Wen Tien Kuang and Lim Lian Geok, as Secretary and Assistant Secretary of the MCACECC, to the Minister of Education, 8 May 1956, UCSTA Files.

52. *SCJP*, 9 May 1956 and 10 May 1956.

53. Comments from the Perak, Johore, Penang, Kedah, and Malacca CSTAs were published in *SCJP*, 9, 13, and 16 May 1956. See also *SPJP*, 15 and 20 May 1956. The official language issue was raised by the Perak and Kedah CSTAs.

54. See, for example, *SPJP*, 8, 10, 11, and 15 May 1956; *SCJP*, 9 May 1956; *CKP*, 12 May 1956; and *KWYP*, 9 and 13 May 1956.

55. FM, *Proceedings of the Second Federal Legislative Council*, First Session, 16 May 1956.

56. *Ibid.*

57. *Ibid.*

58. Copy of LCE Circular No. 1 (Director of Education File 2364), undated, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. The circular specified that schools should return completed forms stating approximate number of candidates by 26 May. Therefore it would have been sent out at least a week before. Another indication of the probable date of the circular is that Lim Lian Geok wrote to the Minister of Education on 22 May 1956, pointing out various problems with the examination; see n. 108 below.

59. Copy of circular from the Controller of Examinations, with an accompanying letter to heads of Chinese schools in Selangor, from A. F. Young, Superintendent of Chinese Schools in Selangor, 29 May 1956, Gwee Yee Hean Personal Collection.

60. See Chapter 6, pp. 222-3.

61. *SCJP*, 27 June 1956 and *CKP*, 29 June 1956.

62. *CKP* and *KWYP*, 3 August 1956.

63. Copy of circular to schools with an accompanying letter from the Director of Education to all state Chief Education Officers, 7 December 1956 (Member for Education File 171/54), Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. See Appendix 4 for details.

64. T. R. Fennel, 'Commitment to Change: A History of Malayan Education Policy, 1945-1957', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hawaii, 1968, p. 471 (*emphasis in original*). The three Alliance leaders were interviewed in November 1968.

65. *SCJP*, from 9 August 1956 to 26 August 1956. See also Lim Lian Geok, *Huayi pianpian lu*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, n.d., pp. 58-67.

66. The letter from Wen Tien Kuang and Lim Lian Geok was published in full in the *SPJP*, 30 May 1956.

67. *SPJP*, 5 June 1956.

68. *SCJP*, *CKP*, and *NYSP*, 9 June 1956.

69. *Ibid.*

70. Letter from Wen Tien Kuang and Lim Lian Geok to the Minister of Education, 9 June 1956, UCSTA Files.

71. Letter from Minister of Education to the Secretary-General, MCACECC, on the Lower Certificate of Education Examinations, 12 June 1956, UCSTA Files.

72. Letter from the Minister of Education to the Secretary-General of the MCACECC, on the Education Report 1956, 12 June 1956, UCSTA Files (*emphasis in original*).

73. *Ibid.* (*emphasis in original*).

74. Letter from Wen Tien Kuang and Lim Lian Geok to the Minister of Education, on the Lower Certificate of Education, 12 June 1956, UCSTA Files.

75. *Ibid.*

76. Letter from Wen Tien Kuang and Lim Lian Geok to the Minister of Education, on the Education Report 1956, 12 June 1956, UCSTA Files.

77. In Lim Lian Geok's discussions of the tussle over implementation of the Razak Report in his memoirs, he says several times that he thought the colonial bureaucrats were responsible for 'distortions' of the Report.

78. See the detailed discussion of Malay response to the Razak Report in Fennel, 'Commitment to Change', Ch. 15.

79. On the Merdeka Constitution, see Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process*; Means, *Malaysian Politics*, Ch. 12; Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia: A History of the Malaysian Chinese Association*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1988, Ch. 8.

80. *NYSP*, 19 March 1956.

81. For more detailed discussion, see Wong Yoke Nyen, 'The Role of Chinese Organizations in Malayan Politics (1945-1957): Special Reference to Citizenship and Education', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1981, pp. 119-21 and also her 'Chinese Organizations and Citizenship in Post-war Malaya, 1945-1958', *Review of Southeast Asian Studies*, 22 (1982): 1-58; Wan Ming Sing, 'The History of the Organizations of the Chinese Community in Selangor with Particular Reference to Problems of Leadership, 1857-1962', MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1967, pp. 114-25; and Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaya*, Ch. 8. For a discussion of these developments from the viewpoint of a major change in leadership of the Chinese, see Tan Liok Ee, 'Chinese Leadership in Peninsular Malaysia: Some Preliminary Observations on Continuity and Change', in Leo Suryadinata (ed.), *Southeast Asian Chinese: The Socio-Cultural Dimension*, Singapore, Times Academic Press, 1995, pp. 109-38.

82. Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, Ch. 8 and Wong Yoke Nyen, 'The Role of Chinese Organizations', pp. 116-44.

83. *CKP*, 14 April 1956.

84. *SCJP*, 24 April 1956.

85. *Ibid.*

86. Detailed reports of this meeting were carried in all the Chinese dailies; see, for example, *SCJP* and *CKP*, 28 April 1956. See also Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian* Vol. 2, pp. 2-9, for his account of the background to and his part in the meeting.
87. 'Confidential Memorandum Submitted to the Reid Constitutional Commission by the Pan-Malayan Federation of Chinese Associations as Reflecting the Views of Chinese Opinion Generally in the Country on Constitutional Reform in Malaya', UCSTA Files.
88. See the reports in *CKP*, 18-20 April 1956.
89. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, pp. 4-5.
90. Letter from T. H. Tan to Dato Abdul Razak, 16 June 1956, Gwee Yee Hean Personal Collection.
91. Copy of handwritten note from T. H. Tan to Wen Tien Kuang, 20 June 1956, Gwee Yee Hean Personal Collection.
92. Letter from Wen Tien Kuang to Too Joon Hing, 14 June 1956, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.
93. Letter from Tan Siew Sin to Wen Tien Kuang, 26 June 1956, Gwee Yee Hean Personal Collection.
94. Letter from Too Joon Hing to Dato Abdul Razak, 8 September 1956, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.
95. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the MCA Central Cultural and Education Committee, 13 August 1956', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. This committee was headed by Y. T. Lee and there were seven other members; all but one were MCA delegates to the MCACECC meeting the next day.
96. Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, p. 227.
97. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the MCA Central Cultural and Educational Committee, 13 August 1956.'
98. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the MCA Chinese Education Central Committee, 14 August 1956', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. All quotations from speeches in the ensuing discussion are from this source.
99. Copy of the MCACECC Press statement, released after the 14 August meeting, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.
100. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the MCA Chinese Education Central Committee, 14 August 1956.'
101. 'Minutes of a Meeting of UCSTA Executive Committee, 19 April 1956', UCSTA Files.
102. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, pp. 2-9.
103. Lim stated this in an interview with Wong Nyuk Nyen; see her 'Chinese Organizations and Citizenship in Post-war Malaya', p. 25. In his own memoirs, Lim is less explicit, stating merely that he had reservations about the motives of the *shetuan* leaders who were pushing for the formation of a Chinese organization as a political rival to the MCA; see *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, pp. 1-9.
104. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, p. 3.
105. *SCJP*, 23 August 1955 and 23 March 1956, respectively.
106. Letter from the UCSTA to the Chairman and Members of the Independent Constitutional Commission, 2 July 1956, UCSTA Files.
107. *SCJP*, 7 May 1956.
108. Letter from Lim Lian Geok to the Minister of Education, 22 May 1956, UCSTA Files.
109. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the UCSTA Executive Committee, 9 June 1956', UCSTA Files. A detailed report of the meeting is also available in *CKP*, 10 June 1956.

110. The statement was published in full in *SCJP* and *CKP*, 18 June 1956.
111. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the UCSTA Executive Committee, 9 June 1956', UCSTA Files.
112. The responses of other CSTAs to the Razak Report were published in the Chinese dailies between 16 May 1956 and 1 June 1956.
113. *SCJP* and *CKP*, 30 July 1956.
114. *SCJP* and *CKP*, 1-15 August 1956.
115. See, for example, his speech reported in *CKP*, 25 July 1956.
116. *CKP*, 11 August 1956 and 14 August 1956.
117. This speech is reprinted in *Jiaozong 33nian*, pp. 181-2.
118. *SCJP*, 21 August 1960. This point was made in rebutting Leong Yew Koh, who accused him of inconsistency in supporting the Razak Report but opposing the Talib Report.
119. *SCJP*, 12 August 1956.
120. *CKP*, 23 July 1956.
121. *Ibid.*, 25 July 1956.
122. *SCJP*, from 9 August 1956 to 26 August 1956. See also Lim Lian Geok, *Huiyi pianpian lu*, pp. 58-67.
123. See *SCJP*, 27 January 1957 and 5 February 1957.
124. 'Minutes of an Emergency Meeting of the MCACECC, 24 February 1957', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.
125. *Ibid.*
126. FM, *Proceedings of the Second Federal Legislative Council*, 7 March 1957.
127. See 'Memorandum Proposed by the MCACECC Forwarded to All Chinese Members of the Legislative Council "for Perusal and Necessary Action", 30 January 1957, by T. H. Tan', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.
128. This will be discussed in Chapter 7.
129. Federation of Malaya, Education Ordinance, 1957, sect. 2.
130. *Ibid.*
131. Section 3 of the Ordinance simply reiterated the entire general paragraph in the Razak Report that the national system of education must be acceptable to the people, promote their cultural, social, economic, and political development as a nation, uphold Malay as the national language but also preserve the languages and cultures of the other peoples living in Malaya. There was no statement of ultimate objective in this paragraph.
132. This is stated several times in Lim Lian Geok's memoirs.
133. *SPJP*, 26 April 1957.
134. Heng Pek Koon, *Chinese Politics in Malaysia*, p. 228.
135. See discussions in *ibid.*, Ch. 8.
136. *CKP*, 15 April 1957.
137. *Ibid.*, 16 April 1957 and 17 April 1957.
138. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the UCSTA Executive Committee, 27 April 1957', UCSTA Files.
139. Interview with Lim Lian Geok, Selayang (Selangor), 2 April 1982. See also Wong Yoke Nyen's discussion on the same topic based on an interview with Lim in her 'Chinese Organizations and Citizenship in Post-war Malaya', p. 27.
140. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, pp. 11-23.

Renegade or Prototype: Chung Ling High School, Penang

Surprise Announcement, 6 July 1955

ON 6 July 1955, Waung Yoong Nien, the headmaster of Chung Ling High School in Penang, announced to the staff and students of the school that its Management Committee (MC) was in the process of negotiating for an increase in aid from the government. If successful, this would put future government aid to Chung Ling on par with that usually given to English schools. Waung assured his staff and students that increased government aid would not 'adversely affect the school's curriculum nor disrupt its established teaching and administrative practices'. As if in anticipation of just such a criticism, Waung added defensively that he was not someone who would *chumai* (sell out or betray) Chinese education. Waung's announcement was reported in detail in the Chinese press the following day.¹

Three days later, the Chinese press carried a statement on the same subject which was issued by Ong Keng Seng, the chairman of Chung Ling's MC. Ong explained that the school had approached the Education Department for more aid in January 1953 because it was facing financial difficulties. Although the government was generally not prepared to increase aid to Chinese secondary schools, Chung Ling was being considered as a special case because of the school's reputation. Ong added that the MC of the school had made a decision on 3 July after carefully considering all the implications of a special increase in aid from the government.²

The revelations of the headmaster and the chairman of the MC of Chung Ling came as a surprise to those closely involved in Chinese education issues for several reasons. First, the Malayan Chinese Association Chinese Education Central Committee (MCACECC) had since August 1953 been trying to get the colonial government to double the existing rate of aid to Chinese secondary schools without any change in the conditions of aid. The colonial government, however, had been trying to impose more

use of English as a condition for increasing aid to secondary schools. Ong Keng Seng, as the chairman of the Penang Chinese School Committees' Association (CSCA), regularly attended MCACECC meetings. Waung was the president of the Penang Chinese School Teachers' Association (CSTA) and a member of the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA) Working Subcommittee which met regularly to deal with issues confronting the Chinese schools.³ Thus both men were aware that the MCACECC was trying to get all the Chinese secondary schools to close ranks on the issue of aid from the government. Why then had they decided that Chung Ling should strike out on its own, break ranks with the other schools, and turn its back on the MCACECC leadership?

Secondly, the timing of the announcement was strange. The first Federal elections were due in July 1955. After the elections, education policy would be handed over to the first elected local government. Should the Alliance win, an overhaul of education policy was generally expected as this had been promised in its manifesto. Why was Chung Ling being considered as a special case at this point in time, just weeks before the elections? Were British officials in the Education Department determined to pull Chung Ling over to their side before the department came under the control of a new government?

Finally, it seemed incredulous that the school was in such deep financial trouble that it had to appeal for more government aid. Some of the wealthiest men in Penang were the benefactors of the school. If Chung Ling could not survive without more government aid, how could the other Chinese secondary schools? In fact, the school's accounts as reported in the school's annual magazines did not indicate that the school was in the red until 1956, a year *after* the school had decided to approach the government for more aid.⁴ The headmaster's refusal to reveal any details regarding conditions for the increase in aid aroused further misgivings. What conditions were being imposed and what benefits were being promised?

In fact, unknown to the MCACECC and the public then, the terms for the increased aid had already been agreed upon *before* the headmaster's announcement on 6 July. On 5 July, MacGillivray had written to Sir Christopher Cox, Education Adviser in the Colonial Office, enclosing a copy of the agreement to be signed with the school which he hoped would be 'the pattern in the future for all Chinese middle schools in the Federation'.⁵ This is con-

sistent with Ong's statement which revealed that the Chung Ling MC had come to a decision on 3 July. Both MacGillivray and Cox thought that getting Chung Ling to sign this agreement would be a 'real achievement' for L. D. Whitfield, the Director of Education.⁶ Chan Yik King, then the Inspector of Chinese Schools in Penang and an important link between the school and the Education Department, recalled that 'headquarters in Kuala Lumpur impressed clearly on me that extra expenditure was worth it if we could get Chung Ling on our side'.⁷

The copy of the agreement enclosed with MacGillivray's letter to Cox was undated but paragraph 2 in the agreement indicated that it could come into effect from 1 June 1955. According to the agreement, Chung Ling would, in effect, become a fully aided 'Conforming Secondary School'. This meant that there would be no aid for any non-secondary classes. Significantly, at the beginning of the 1955 school year, Chung Ling had stopped running primary classes to become a totally secondary school.⁸ This indicated that the school already knew about, and was preparing itself to fit in with, one of the conditions of the agreement. Another indication that direct and close relationship between the Education Department and Chung Ling had begun well before July 1955 is the fact that in 1953 the school had on its teaching staff a Cambridge University graduate sent by the Education Department as the school's English adviser.⁹

Conforming schools, as defined in the 1952 Education Ordinance (still in force in July 1955), must use either English or Malay as their medium of instruction.¹⁰ Chung Ling was already doing this in its Senior Middle section but would presumably have to make some changes to its lower secondary section.¹¹ The agreement also specified that all Senior Middle III students of the school must sit for the Cambridge School Certificate examinations by 1957 if possible and in 1958 at the latest. The school would also have to conform to various government specifications on fees, syllabuses and curriculum, number of classes, and age limits of students by year of study. The future recruitment of staff should, it was also specified, not be restricted to Chinese. The school stood to gain by an immediate increase in aid of \$61,230 per annum. Chung Ling staff would, after necessary administrative adjustments, be placed on the same terms and conditions of service as the staff of aided English schools while a special personal-to-holder salary scale would be worked out for the headmaster.¹²

The High Commissioner, Donald MacGillivray, as seen in Chapter 2, was determined to try and leave behind a legacy of multiracial English schools in the Malayan education system. The White Paper of 1954 had attempted to begin a gradual process of converting vernacular schools into multiracial schools teaching in English. MacGillivray had tried, while he was on home leave in the summer of 1955, to obtain a special pre-independence package of British aid to start 300 special schools. The main objective was to consolidate the policies outlined in the 1952 Ordinance before the first locally elected government could take education policies in a different direction.¹³ In the same way, if Chung Ling, the premier Chinese secondary school, became a 'Conforming School' in line with the 1952 Education Ordinance, then it would be a victory for British policies towards the Chinese secondary schools. Thus it is not too difficult to understand why the colonial government was treating Chung Ling as 'a special case' in July 1955.

But Chung Ling's decision to negotiate on its own with the British led to the school's headmaster and its MC being labelled, by their students and their colleagues in Chinese education circles, as 'collaborationists' who were working with the colonial government against the interests of Chinese education. Why did the school, and its headmaster, decide to break ranks with the MCACECC in July 1955? To answer this question, some understanding of the school's history, in particular its teaching policies, is essential.

From Pioneer to Prototype

The Chung Ling School was founded in 1917 by the Penang Philomathic Society, one of the many reading clubs established in Malaya by supporters of Sun Yat Sen in the early twentieth century. The school began with three teachers and 81 students, all enrolled in primary classes. A few years later, the society found it impossible to bear the financial burden of running the school. There was also an urgent need for a secondary school in Penang. A meeting of Chinese community leaders in Penang was called by the society in 1922. This meeting—held on 11 November 1922—decided that the school would henceforth be supported by donations from the public and be managed by a committee elected by the benefactors of the school. In January 1923 Junior Middle classes were started in the school and it was renamed the Chung Ling High School.¹⁴

Chung Ling was a pioneer in many ways. It was the first Chinese school in the Malayan peninsula to offer secondary education in 1923.¹⁵ Two other Chinese schools in Penang—the Chung Hwa Confucian School and the Fukien Girls' School, which was later renamed the Penang Chinese Girls' School—started their secondary sections four years later in 1927.¹⁶ Elsewhere in the peninsula, lower secondary or Junior Middle classes were started a year or two after Chung Ling.¹⁷ By 1931 Chung Ling had started its Senior Middle or upper secondary classes and in 1946 it was the only Chinese school with a full complement of Junior and Senior Middle classes.¹⁸ Given the limited facilities for secondary education in other states, Chung Ling's enrolment increased rapidly as many students came from outside Penang to study at the school. They were accommodated in the school hostel. In 1935 the school moved into new buildings at a spacious site in Ayer Itam. These buildings, together with later extensions, are currently still housing the Chung Ling High School.

David Chen, who joined the school as its headmaster in 1931, was a major figure in Chung Ling's early development and growth. Chen remained headmaster of the school for the next 20 years, except for a brief interval of two years when he went to China. The school was closed during the Japanese Occupation but as soon as the Occupation ended Chen was back at his post. Chen was known to be a dynamic and energetic headmaster who shaped the policies of the school. A man of strong political convictions, Chen had kept his school in the forefront of *huaqiao* nationalistic activities in the 1930s. One tragic result of these activities was that many staff and students of the school were executed by the Japanese during the *suijing*.¹⁹

Chen was a Kuomintang (KMT) supporter who never disguised his political affiliation. The Chung Ling School Magazine of 1938, for example, prominently displayed photographs of Sun Yat Sen and Chiang Kai Shek. It also reported the frequent visits of the KMT Consul in Penang to the school. Chung Ling continued to have a close affiliation with the KMT after 1945. In 1947 it was identified as one of the Chinese schools which followed a KMT directive to set up *San Min Chu I* Youth Corps to train and organize young Chinese along military lines.²⁰ Chen played a major role in the formation of the Penang CSTA and the UCSTA. He was respected by his peers and when the Penang CSTA was elected the first Presiding Unit of the UCSTA, Chen became the UCSTA's first president. His term of office came to a dramatic end when he was assassinated on 4 February 1952.

After Chen's death, Waung Yoong Nien, who had taught in Chung Ling since 1937, took over as headmaster. He remained in this post until he retired in 1970. Both Chen and Waung were university graduates and first-generation immigrants from China. Waung was also president of the Penang CSTA for a few years. However, while Chen's reputation as a respected leader was enhanced by his untimely death, Waung went through a period when he was ostracized by his peers because of his central role in Chung Ling's dealings with the colonial government. A special supplement on Chen's death in Chung Ling's School Magazine of 1952 paid tribute to him as 'a martyr of Chinese education'. Waung, on the other hand, was labelled by some of his critics as 'a traitor to the cause of Chinese education'.

In July 1955, when the drama began, Chung Ling was already the premier Chinese school in Malaya. David Chen's dynamic leadership was one factor in the school's steady growth. In addition, the school had consistently been supported by wealthy benefactors and highly respected community leaders. There were few changes in the MC which ran the school, particularly in the post-war years when essentially the same group of men, led by Ong Keng Seng, sat on the MC between 1946 and 1962 (Table 6.1). Many of these men also sat on the MCs of other Chinese schools in Penang and were members of the Penang CSCA (see Table 3.3). Yet Chung Ling's MC reportedly played a negligible role in the determination of school policy. Its principal activity was to collect funds for the school and it left the administration of the school entirely to the headmaster. Throughout the school's history, it was the headmaster then who moulded the character of the school.²¹

From the time David Chen became the headmaster, he set out to make it the premier Chinese school in Malaya. He spent his first three years developing the school's physical facilities. After the school moved into its new premises in 1935, Chen began to devote more of his time to consolidating the quality of education provided by the school. Chen pursued policies that were intended to make Chung Ling graduates the equal of products from the leading English schools. He wanted Chung Ling graduates to have the opportunities for tertiary education and careers that were not normally available to Chinese school students. Chen's ideas were exceptional for a Chinese school headmaster in the 1930s.

In 1934 Chen decided that students in Senior Middle I classes should attain a standard of English equivalent to that of Standard

TABLE 6.1
Members of the Management Committee of Chung Ling High School, 1946-1962

<i>Year</i>	<i>Chairman</i>	<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	<i>Secretary-General</i>	<i>Treasurer</i>	<i>Others</i>
1946	Ong Keng Seng	Xu Shengli Li Rijun	Saw Seng Kew	Tan Cheng Tit	Lee Guat Cheow
1948	Ong Keng Seng	Xu Shengli Gu Guoyao	Saw Seng Kew	Tan Cheng Tit	Lee Guat Cheow
1950	Ong Keng Seng	Xu Shengli Gu Guoyao	Saw Seng Kew	Tan Cheng Tit	Lee Guat Cheow
1952	Ong Keng Seng	Khaw Gim Leong Tang Yuesheng	Saw Seng Kew	Tan Cheng Tit	Lee Guat Cheow
1954	Ong Keng Seng	Khaw Gim Leong Tye Kok Leong	Saw Seng Kew	Tan Cheng Tit	Lee Guat Cheow Johnson Lam
1956	Ong Keng Seng	Khaw Gim Leong Tye Kok Leong	Saw Seng Kew	Tan Cheng Tit	Lee Guat Cheow Loh Ching Chua
1958	Ong Keng Seng	Khaw Gim Leong	Saw Seng Kew	Tan Cheng Tit	Lee Guat Cheow
1960	Ong Keng Seng	Khaw Gim Leong Loh Poh Heng	Saw Seng Kew	Tan Cheng Tit	Lee Guat Cheow
1962	Ong Keng Seng	Khaw Gim Leong	Saw Seng Kew	Tan Cheng Tit	Lee Guat Cheow

Source: *Zhongling Zhongxue xiaohan ji lishi zhounian jinian tekan*, Penang, 1977.

Note: Pinyin is used for names for which the usual form used by the person is not known.

Eight in English schools. Special classes in English were introduced the next year to help Chung Ling students to achieve this goal. In the same year, seven Chung Ling students sat for the Junior Cambridge examination. Of these, four passed. Chen then decided, in 1936, that the school's Senior Middle classes would follow the Cambridge examination syllabuses.²² This meant a progressive shift to using English texts as well as using English as a medium of instruction. The success of Chen's policy may be gauged by the fact that by 1946 Chung Ling counted among its alumni a professor at an American university, a medical practitioner in Penang, and a civil engineer in Bangkok.²³ To upgrade the standard of teaching in English, Chen sent seven of the school's staff to be trained in English Normal classes in 1947.²⁴ By 1951 when the Fenn-Wu Committee visited various Chinese schools in Malaya, it found that the Senior Middle classes in Chung Ling were using English textbooks for all subjects except Chinese language and literature.²⁵

The bilingual policy which David Chen introduced in Chung Ling may have been modelled after some secondary schools and universities in China which were established and run by missionary bodies, like Zhingling University where Chen had studied.²⁶ In Malaya, David Chen's policy was a rational and pragmatic way of adapting a Chinese school to fit the demands of the local situation. Secondary school graduates with Senior Cambridge certificates could be employed in the Civil Service and had better chances of getting a university education. The latter consideration became very important after 1949 when the University of Malaya was established and henceforth became the cheapest and most accessible place to obtain a university education. After the Communist victory in China, moreover, Chinese school students from Malaya could no longer go to universities in China.

Not surprisingly, Chung Ling was regarded by colonial officials as a model for the other Chinese schools. This was especially true after the Second World War, when the British wanted English to become the main medium of instruction within the Malayan system of education. Official reports often gave Chung Ling special attention. For example, the 1949 *Annual Report on Education* described Chung Ling as 'an exceptional school' which had 'demonstrated what can be done in Chinese schools by using English as the medium of instruction for certain subjects and by successfully preparing boys of its secondary department for the Senior Cambridge as well as the Chinese school leaving examina-

tions'.²⁷ Chung Ling was consistently cited as a model when the Education Department began pressurizing other Chinese schools to promote higher standards of English and to prepare their students for the Senior Cambridge examination in the early 1950s.²⁸

David Chen tried to exploit this high official regard for Chung Ling for the school's benefit. In August 1951 Chen specifically mentioned the fact that Chung Ling was 'setting a pattern in Chinese Middle school education for the other schools to follow' when he wrote to the Senior Inspector of Schools to appeal for a special increase in aid to the school. This was needed because, of the seven teachers the school had sent for Normal Training in English in 1947, four had been lost to English schools which paid higher salaries. Chen pleaded that it was absolutely essential for him to retain the remaining three. The three teachers had been 'instrumental in building up the English department of the Chung Ling High School to its present position of pre-eminence among Chinese schools'. They were responsible for 'teaching English as a subject and using it as a medium for teaching other subjects'. Chen's request for more government aid to keep the teachers was granted by the Education Department.²⁹

Up to this time, Chung Ling was still the only Chinese school with a complete complement of lower and upper secondary classes. In 1950 its secondary enrolment alone was more than double that of the second largest Chinese secondary school, the Confucian High School in Kuala Lumpur (Table 6.2). Throughout the 1950s the Chung Ling school hostel housed over 300 students as students from outside Penang continued to come to Chung Ling. As the school regularly had more applicants than places, it was able to select the best students for its intake each year through a special entrance examination.³⁰ This helped the school to produce consistently good examination results.

The demand for places in Chung Ling showed that parents thought highly of the education offered by the school and felt that an education in Chung Ling would boost their sons' chances of success in life. The Yuk Choy School in Perak, apparently, was regularly asked by parents to follow Chung Ling's example.³¹ Chung Ling also exerted an influence on other schools when its students or some of its staff went to teach in these schools. Evidently, the Wah Lian School in Taiping adopted a bilingual policy after a former teacher of Chung Ling became its headmaster.³² In short, by the early 1950s, many Chinese parents had come to value the benefits that students stood to gain from being bilingual.

TABLE 6.2
Enrolment in Major Chinese Secondary Schools in Malaya, 1950

State	School	Enrolment
Penang	Chung Ling High School	1,255
	Fukien Girls' School	295
	Chung Hwa High School	217
Perak	Yuk Choy School, Ipoh	527
	Nan Hua School, Sitiawan	339
Selangor	Confucian School, Kuala Lumpur	592
	Kuen Cheng Girls' School, Kuala Lumpur	271
	Tiong Hua School, Kuala Lumpur	258
Negri Sembilan	Chung Hua School, Seremban	206
Malacca	Pay Fong School	263

Source: Enclosure entitled 'Particulars of Middle and Senior Normal Schools, February 1950', Director of Education File 186/1950.

Note: There were 24 other schools with enrolments below 200 which were excluded from the table.

In Chung Ling, Chen's policies were continued after his death by his successor, Waung Yoong Nien. Waung's ambition was to make Chung Ling the equal of the Penang Free School, the oldest and best known English secondary school in the country. One important way to achieve this objective was to upgrade the quality of teaching in Chung Ling by employing more graduate teachers. But this required more substantial annual expenditures on teachers' salaries than could be sustained by public donations. Waung felt that the constant need for the headmaster and teachers to be involved in donation drives to collect money for the school was a drain on their time and energy. He had little difficulty convincing the MC of Chung Ling that the solution lay in increased financial aid from the government.³³

For both David Chen and Waung Yoong Nien, it was not essential for a Chinese school to teach *entirely* in Chinese. They thought it more important that Chinese schools should produce students with high academic standards and good employment prospects even if that meant using more English. For Waung, it was sufficient that Chinese language and literature continued to be taught in the school.³⁴ His was precisely the kind of thinking which

British officials in the Education Department wanted to spread to all the Chinese secondary schools. But this did not at all match the views of UCSTA leaders like Lim Lian Geok or the MCACECC's position in 1955. Hence, Waung and his school became the target of criticism soon after his 6 July 1955 announcement that Chung Ling was being considered specially for more government aid.

The Controversy Begins, July–September 1955

The students of Chung Ling were the first to respond to their headmaster's announcement. Immediately after the announcement, the class monitors of the school held a meeting. They decided to establish a committee to survey student opinion.³⁵ On 18 July, the Chung Ling students presented a memorandum to their MC. The main message conveyed by the students was that, given the critical situation facing Chinese education, Chung Ling should stand with other Chinese schools rather than unilaterally seek to advance its own interests. The students volunteered to pay higher fees if their school was really in financial need. This, they said, was a token of their 'devotion to the cause of Chinese education and their commitment to safeguarding its survival'.³⁶

At a meeting of the UCSTA Working Subcommittee on 10 July, Waung was reminded that the MCACECC had been accepted as the sole spokesman in all negotiations with the government. He was asked why the school was conducting its own negotiations and to provide any information that might prove useful to the other schools. Waung reportedly declined to reveal more than what was already contained in the Chung Ling chairman's press statement.³⁷ From Waung's uncooperative attitude, the other UCSTA leaders realized that he had decided not to align himself or his school with the MCACECC position. They also knew that there was no way they could force him to do so.³⁸

Meanwhile, the Chinese press had been publishing unfavourable comments on Chung Ling's move. One article, claiming to be based on interviews with 'influential Chinese educationists', politely called on the school's MC to reconsider its decision. Another criticized the school for making a 'selfish' move that undermined the unity of the Chinese schools and was against the long-term interests of Chinese education. The author of the second article asked why the negotiations seemed to be shrouded in secrecy. Why was the headmaster or the chairman of the school's MC unwilling to talk about the conditions for the increased aid

especially if these were, as they claimed, not detrimental to the school or against the interests of Chinese education?³⁹

On 12 August, 12 students from various Chinese secondary schools in Penang were arrested. Seven of them were Chung Ling students, five of whom were hostelites who had been arrested on the school's premises. The students were detained by police for questioning in connection with their possible involvement in 'subversive activities'.⁴⁰ A day after the arrests, the headmaster posted a school notice calling on students to be calm and to refrain from 'rash actions which would only bring about undesirable consequences'. There was again a curiously defensive tone to the notice which assured students that the school 'would never betray innocent youth' nor 'sell out Chinese education'.⁴¹

From a confidential report written by the Superintendent of Chinese Schools, it turns out that the arrests, code-named 'Liberty Lightship', were made 'to strengthen the Managerial and staff position'. According to this Report, the Special Branch had been monitoring the Chung Ling students for signs of radicalization due to the recent visit of some students from Singapore Chinese schools to Chung Ling.⁴² The Special Branch was concerned about the visits by Singapore students because in May 1954, students of Chinese secondary schools in Singapore had staged dramatic strikes in protest against a national registration exercise.⁴³ The Special Branch in Penang had apparently found that Chung Ling students were preparing to conduct sit-down strikes and protest meetings against the school's negotiations for increased government aid. The Report noted that the arrests were made to remove some of the 'troublemakers' as well as 'to serve as a warning to the boys that if they pushed defiance to the limit then Government intervention would follow'.⁴⁴ On 10 September, a month after the arrests, the Director of Education issued a secret circular to all state Education Departments giving the names of the Chung Ling students who had been arrested and advising against their admission to schools in their states.⁴⁵ All this was not public knowledge then.

On 17 August, a few days after the arrest of the students, the staff of Chung Ling held a long meeting to discuss the issue of increased aid.⁴⁶ The next day, the headmaster met with the school staff to brief them on the implications of increased aid for the school and to ask for their views on possible improvements in pay and working conditions.⁴⁷ On 20 August Waung Yoong Nien left for Kuala Lumpur, accompanied by Chan Yik King the Inspector

of Chinese Schools in Penang, apparently to continue negotiations with Education Department officials.⁴⁸ Chung Ling seemed determined, despite the negative feedback it had been receiving, to go on with its negotiations with the government. Both the UCSTA and the MCACECC decided it was time to write officially to Chung Ling's MC to request them to stop the negotiations.⁴⁹

In his reply to the MCACECC, Ong Keng Seng explained that the school had originally asked for government aid to be increased to the per capita rate of \$100 per student. This request was rejected and the possibility of aid on the same terms as those for aided English schools was suggested by the Education Department. The MC of Chung Ling had been assured that the terms of such aid would not lead to the school losing its essential character, or *bianzhi* (which carries the connotation of being a turncoat). But Ong revealed that the increased aid to Chung Ling was intended to be the prototype, or *lanben*, for other Chinese schools because the government regarded Chung Ling as a school which 'conformed to acceptable standards'.⁵⁰

This was exactly what the MCACECC leaders had feared. Once the conditions of aid to Chung Ling became the prototype for aid to other Chinese secondary schools, then they would all have to follow the Chung Ling practice of preparing students for the School Certificate and teaching all subjects, except for Chinese language and literature, in English. Chung Ling could claim that it did not have to change its character to get aid as a 'Conforming School' under the terms of the 1952 Education Ordinance. But many of the other schools, unlike Chung Ling, were not practising a bilingual policy. With Ong's letter, the MCACECC felt justified to insist that Chung Ling should consult and involve the MCACECC in its negotiations with the government. The MCACECC sent another letter telling the Chung Ling MC that it had no right to offer Chung Ling as a prototype for Chinese schools without the other schools' knowledge or consent.⁵¹ But although the MCACECC could remonstrate or protest, it had no power over Chung Ling. The Chung Ling MC was not obliged to and did not accede to the MCACECC's demands.

Meanwhile, the Chung Ling staff produced a memorandum which also appealed to the MC to suspend negotiations for increased aid. The staff memorandum objected to some of the conditions of the increased aid which the headmaster had apparently revealed to them before he left for Kuala Lumpur. One of these conditions was that future staff recruitment would not

be restricted only to Chinese. In addition, all appointments and dismissals would in future be approved by the Education Department. The staff were also unhappy that Chung Ling would be categorized as a 'Conforming School', together with other aided English schools. The Chung Ling staff felt that this meant the school would lose its 'Chinese identity'.

As for conditions governing the students, the staff objected to the requirement that Chung Ling would have to abide by specified age limits for its pupils according to their year of study. The staff were against this condition because the Chinese schools had never limited students by age nor had they ever rejected students for being 'too old'. As all Senior Middle students of the school would be required to sit for the Senior Cambridge examinations in future, the students would have no choice in this matter and the school would lose its autonomy in determining the school's curriculum.⁵² Kong Xiang Tai, a Chinese language and literature teacher in Chung Ling, issued a separate and more strongly worded statement in which he condemned acceptance of the conditions of increased aid as a 'sell-out'. He called on the MC of the school to close ranks with the other Chinese schools.⁵³ The constant use of the term 'sell-out' in reference to Chung Ling's intention to accept increased aid reflected the prevalent feeling that the government was using more aid as a form of economic blackmail to force Chinese schools to convert into schools teaching in English.

Meanwhile, the Alliance had won the first Federal elections in July 1955 and the Razak Committee to rewrite education policy had been appointed on 27 August. On 4 September the Assistant Minister of Education, Too Joon Hing, visited Penang. On his arrival, Too informed reporters that he would meet the Chung Ling MC to discuss the issue of increased government aid to the school.⁵⁴ While in Penang, Too met with members of the Penang CSTA. This meeting with the CSTA was arranged by Lee Po Wen, a former president of the UCSTA who knew Too personally as both were Hainanese and had met through activities in their provincial association. A Chinese daily claimed that it was the Penang CSTA which impressed upon Too that public opinion among the Penang Chinese was opposed to the government selecting Chung Ling for special treatment as a model for the other Chinese schools.⁵⁵ Before he left Penang on 5 September, Too declared that no agreement had as yet been reached between the government and the Chung Ling MC.⁵⁶

A week later, on 13 September, Chung Ling was notified by the Penang Education Office that the government's offer of increased aid would lapse if no reply was received from the school within three days.⁵⁷ When asked about this, Too confirmed that the letter was a mere formality to bring the matter to a close as the Alliance government had decided that the entire matter should be placed 'in cold storage' for the time being. The Assistant Director of Education confirmed that the matter was being shelved and added that Waung would be leaving shortly for a six-month stint in the United States on a Fulbright Fellowship.⁵⁸

It would appear from this series of events that the decision to shelve special aid to Chung Ling was made after Too Joon Hing's visit to Penang. This concurs with Lim Lian Geok's account of the Chung Ling story except that Lim claims to have played a crucial role by speaking directly to Razak, the Minister of Education.⁵⁹ However, when Waung returned from Kuala Lumpur in late August, he had indicated that Chung Ling's deal with the government might not come through because of 'technical details involving staff salaries'.⁶⁰ In all probability, the Alliance government found it prudent to set aside a controversial matter which had been initiated by the colonial government. There was reason to do since the Razak Committee had just been appointed to revise education policy. However, a month after the Razak Report was accepted by the Federal Legislative Council in May 1956, Chung Ling re-emerged into the limelight, this time as the Alliance's prototype for Chinese secondary schools.

First Breach in the Ranks, June 1956

On 22 June 1956 Dato Abdul Razak announced that his government had decided to increase aid to Chung Ling, which he described as 'the Federation's biggest Chinese High School'.⁶¹ On the same day, the Penang Settlement Government, as the local authority administering education policy, issued a statement which explained that Chung Ling would be receiving 'full assistance'. This meant 'an immediate reduction in the fees paid by the pupils and the payment of a grant equivalent to the whole of the teachers' approved salaries' by the government. Chung Ling had been selected as the first Chinese school to receive full assistance because the school had consistently maintained 'standards which satisfy the regulations under the present law, and are also in

conformity with the spirit of the recommendations of the new education report'. All the conditions for full assistance were said to be in accordance with the spirit of the new education policy.⁶² The Director of Education, in a separate statement issued in Kuala Lumpur, added that full assistance would also be given to any other Chinese secondary school which 'fell in line with the new education policy'.⁶³

All three statements did not state exactly what the conditions of full assistance to Chung Ling were. When asked about this, Ong Keng Seng said simply that 'the terms are generous' and 'within the framework of the new education policy'. The new education policy, he added as if in self-defence, 'was acceptable to the president of the UCSTA'.⁶⁴ By that, Ong perhaps meant that it was therefore acceptable for Chung Ling to go along with the terms of 'full assistance'. There was, however, widespread suspicion that one of the conditions of full assistance was that Chung Ling had to register its students to sit for the Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) examination that year.

In June 1956 the MCACECC was still trying to get the Minister of Education to agree that this examination should be set in Chinese as well as English. All the Chinese secondary schools had been asked not to enrol their students for the LCE examination until this issue had been resolved.⁶⁵ But Chung Ling had unilaterally accepted the government's terms of full assistance. And, significantly, Chung Ling was the only Chinese school that was fielding candidates for the LCE examination in 1956. The details of full assistance to Chung Ling were not to be known until April 1957 when the MC was forced by circumstances to reveal the conditions it had agreed to in June 1956. By then, the government had already publicized the conditions of full assistance for secondary schools which indeed required that all students must sit for the LCE. The Minister had also made it clear that public examinations such as the LCE could only be conducted in the official languages of the country. Thus in June 1956, as much as in July 1955, Chung Ling's move independently of the other schools marked its willingness to capitulate on a point that the other schools and the MCACECC were still trying to battle against.

A long article criticizing Chung Ling's action was published in several Chinese dailies the day after the Minister of Education's announcement. Two main points were raised in this article. First, it was morally reprehensible for Chung Ling to disregard the need for unity when this was so crucial to the MCACECC's position.

Chung Ling was criticized for breaking with the MCACECC and UCSTA when important clarifications of the Razak Report were still being sought by these two organizations. In particular, Chung Ling was criticized for fielding a few hundred students for the LCE examination in 1956. This deliberately flouted the MCACECC's request to all Chinese secondary schools not to register students for the examination that year.

Second, the article pointed out that the Alliance government's policy towards the Chinese secondary schools appeared to be no different from that of the colonial government. By picking on Chung Ling with its bilingual policy as a prototype for the other Chinese secondary schools, the newly elected government clearly showed that its objective was to convert the Chinese secondary schools ultimately into schools teaching in English. The other schools were warned not to be enticed by the government's offer of full assistance because the price to be paid was to give up the principle of teaching in the mother tongue.⁶⁶ In other words, the full assistance offered by the Alliance, like the increase in aid from the British, was a form of economic blackmail.

The MC of Chung Ling made an attempt to defend its action at the end of July 1956 with a long and carefully argued statement issued by Ong Keng Seng. It is very likely that this statement was actually written by Waung Yoong Nien, the headmaster, for Ong, like many older-generation Chinese businessmen, usually needed a speech-writer for his statements and speeches.⁶⁷ Whoever its real author was, this statement provided the first sustained defence of the school's point of view and explains why the MC's decision to accept full assistance was unanimous.⁶⁸ Ong's statement pointed out that the school had practised the bilingual policy initiated by David Chen for more than 20 years. As a result, Chung Ling students had performed well in both the Chinese School Leaving examination and the Cambridge School Certificate examination in English. The school's graduates consequently had been able to enter not only Nanyang University in Singapore and Chinese universities in Taiwan and Hong Kong but also universities in Australia, Europe, and the United States. Ong's statement then asked why this policy was being criticized as unacceptable or damaging to Chinese education when Chung Ling students were a source of pride to the school in particular and Chinese schools in general.

In addressing the issue of full assistance directly, Ong noted that Chung Ling had obtained full assistance without changing the

school's policy of bilingualism. If the Chinese education organizations maintained that more government aid was acceptable as long as the schools were not compelled to change their policies or characteristics, Chung Ling had upheld this principle. Why then, the statement asked, was the school being branded a 'renegade' or 'turncoat'?⁶⁹ What the statement did not address was that the largest and most prestigious Chinese school had parted ways with the MCACECC on the principle that teaching and examining in the Chinese schools must be conducted in the Chinese language. But Chung Ling had not been an adherent of this principle for almost 20 years.

The anger generated by Chung Ling's 'betrayal' was directed mainly at Waung who was cast as the villain responsible for the school's decision.⁷⁰ Waung was embarrassed by his fellow-teachers when he chaired a meeting of the Penang CSTA on 4 August. This had been called to protest the Special Qualifying Test for non-graduate teachers to enter into the Unified Teaching Service proposed by the Razak Report. As soon as Waung had called the meeting to order and explained the procedure to be followed, Kong Xiang Tai, the Chung Ling teacher who had issued a critical statement against his school in August 1955, launched into a scathing attack on Waung as a man who had betrayed the cause of Chinese education.

When Waung tried to defend himself, he was soon interrupted by someone who shouted from the floor that Waung had exceeded the time limit of five minutes for each speaker he had earlier stipulated as chairman of the meeting. Taken aback, Waung sat down and the meeting descended into disorder as several members heckled Waung. Unable to restore order to the meeting, Waung was finally persuaded by the other CSTA leaders to leave because his presence was diverting the meeting from its main objective. After he left, the meeting proceeded to discuss the Special Qualifying Test for teachers.⁷¹ This incident demonstrated to Waung that his position as president of the Penang CSTA was untenable. A month later, he resigned from this position and withdrew from all further involvement with the UCSTA.⁷²

Waung also became the target of a local smear campaign. Posters defaming him appeared in some streets in Penang but their contents were supposedly so libellous that the local Chinese daily only reported where they had appeared but refrained from publishing the contents.⁷³ Waung himself was occasionally abused while walking along the streets of Penang.⁷⁴ On 11 September Waung

called a press conference to defend himself. He declared that his conscience was perfectly clear and that he had not 'sold out' Chung Ling or the cause of Chinese education. It was unfair, said Waung, that he was being singled out for opprobrium—even if Chung Ling had 'sold out'—because all major decisions of the school were made not by the headmaster but by the MC of the school. In the process of defending the MC's position, however, Waung left no doubt that he himself agreed with it.⁷⁵ Following Chung Ling's acceptance of full assistance, Waung had to contend with an even greater source of opposition—the Chung Ling students themselves.

The Students Demonstrate, November 1956

One of the reasons why Waung and the Chung Ling MC wanted more government aid was that they hoped the government could then play a bigger role in controlling radical political activism amongst the students.⁷⁶ The Chung Ling school authorities may have been especially nervous because before David Chen's assassination in February 1952, there had been four other killings involving Chung Ling teachers and students. In October 1949, a Chung Ling teacher by the name of Boey Eng Eng was shot dead, and in October 1951, the school's acting headmaster, Tan Chong Gak, was killed. Two Chung Ling students also died at the hands of unknown assassins between 1950 and 1952.⁷⁷ After David Chen's death, the government claimed to have uncovered and broken a Communist cell—the 'Red Lamp' group—in March 1953 when some of its leaders were arrested by the police. This group had claimed responsibility for David Chen's killing and the government believed that the same group was responsible for the other four deaths.⁷⁸ After Waung took over as headmaster, he, together with the discipline master,⁷⁹ imposed very strict restrictions on a wide range of student activities. Students who ignored or flouted school regulations were either blacklisted or expelled.

In other Chinese secondary schools, there was increased surveillance after October 1951 when the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) changed its strategy and began to recruit school students for its cultural cadres. Following the radical actions by Singapore students in May 1954, the government watched more closely for signs of radicalization among Chinese secondary school students in the Federation.⁸⁰ A CPM document found in Pontian, Johore in August 1954 revealed that the local branch of the CPM had

received a party directive to concentrate its attention on improving links with secondary school students. Among other things, this directive suggested that cadres should 'encourage students to voice their demands; for example, if they are not pleased with the school administration or with the conduct of a teacher, we are to seize the opportunity to urge them to oppose the school authority or the teacher'.⁸¹

In July 1955, Chung Ling students had protested mildly—with a memorandum—against the school authorities on the issue of special aid. But this had prompted the Special Branch to immediately act to pre-empt any further student activism by arresting a few students whom it identified as the leaders. Within the school, control over extra-curricular activities became even tighter after July 1955. For example, early in 1956, the headboy of the school was dismissed from his post and banned from extra-curricular activities because he and some other students had planned a concert to raise funds for the Nanyang University. Another student was expelled because he was collecting funds for the UCSTA Building Fund. The reason given by the school authorities in both cases was that the activities had been carried out without prior approval.⁸² The tight control and harsh punishments meted out created a tense atmosphere in staff-student relations. After a few months of simmering resentment, the students came out in open defiance.

On the morning of 23 November 1956, about 1,000 Chung Ling students left their classrooms, gathered in the school compound, and declared a boycott of all classes.⁸³ When the students refused to heed the calls of the headmaster and the discipline master to return to their classes, the school's MC and officials from the Education Department in Penang were called in. Chan Yik King (Inspector of Chinese Schools in Penang), Philip Egerton (Superintendent of Chinese Schools in Penang), Tye Kok Leong (acting chairman of the Chung Ling MC), Tan Cheng Tit (treasurer of the MC), and Loh Ching Chua (member of the MC) in turn called on the students to disperse—but to no avail. While Loh continued trying to communicate with the student leaders, the others withdrew to the headmaster's office.

After an hour or so, the students presented Loh with 10 demands. These were:

1. The MC would guarantee that no pupil would be punished or arrested by the police because of the demonstrations.
2. The class monitors' right to hold meetings should be restored.
3. Restrictions on the *Xuebao* should be removed and circulation

of Issue Number 41 permitted.

4. Students expelled because of Issue No. 41 of *Xuebao* were to be reinstated.
5. The headboy arrested by police should be reinstated as a student.
6. The headmaster, discipline master, and adviser of English should resign immediately.
7. A new teacher knowledgeable in Chinese should be appointed teacher in charge of curriculum.
8. All examinations should be postponed till the troubles were resolved.
9. All the terms of full assistance should be announced by the MC.
10. The students should be permitted to publish their own statement on the day's happenings.⁸⁴

Several of these demands related to punishments meted out by the school authorities to student leaders. These will be discussed below. But, significantly, one of the students' demands was that the MC of the school should reveal the terms of full assistance from the government. The students' demand that the headmaster, discipline master, and head of the English section should resign was related to both discipline in the school and the issue of full assistance. Having made their demands, the student leaders declared that the sit-in would continue until the MC had come to a decision. A meeting of the MC was scheduled for 5 p.m. because Ong Keng Seng was expected to have returned to Penang by then.

By this time, the Ministry of Education had been informed about the student demonstration. Ministry officials were worried that the demonstrations might disrupt the Senior Cambridge examination which was being conducted in the school hall. But the students did not enter the school hall till after the examination ended at 2.30 in the afternoon. At this point, some students left to buy food. The students claimed that this showed that their demonstration was spontaneous and there was no premeditated intention to barricade themselves in the school as the Singapore students had done in May 1954.⁸⁵ The police, however, viewed the students' move as a sign that they were preparing themselves for a barricade. The riot police was called and tension mounted with its arrival on the scene.

Meanwhile, the government had been preparing the Closure Order for the school. When these arrived at the school at 4.50 p.m., the Inspector of Chinese Schools and the Officer in Charge of

the Police Department (OCPD) entered the school hall. The Inspector of Chinese Schools read the Closure Order and the OCPD ordered the students to disperse. When they showed no signs of doing so, they were warned that they would be forcibly evicted. When this ultimatum was ignored by the students, the government officials left the school hall after which the riot police fired a few rounds of tear-gas at the students. As the students rushed out of the school hall, some were arrested and the rest driven off the school grounds. An immediate search of the school premises by Special Branch teams found little evidence of Communist infiltration beyond 'quantities of prejudicial literature including songs and slogans which glorified the theme of struggle and an open letter to the Management Committee accusing the Headmaster of treachery and demanding that he be dismissed'.⁸⁶ The school was guarded by police and riot squad men for the next few days and arrangements were made to send all boarders home.⁸⁷

In a nation-wide radio broadcast that night, Dato Abdul Razak announced that Chung Ling was being closed under the provisions of Emergency Regulations 41 (b). The Minister explained that the government had intervened because the students had 'shown no respect for the headmaster and the school authorities'. Drastic actions had been taken 'to prevent a small group of students from disrupting the majority who wished only to pursue their studies in peace'.⁸⁸ The Chief Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, also defended the government's actions as 'necessary in order to prevent the situation from deteriorating'.⁸⁹ Razak arrived in Penang the next day to personally look into the situation.

Generally public opinion seemed to be that the government had over-reacted. Only the *Kwong Wah Yit Poh*, a newspaper with a history of affiliation with the KMT, thought that the demonstration was due to Communist infiltration in the school and praised the government for its swift action against 'subversive elements'.⁹⁰ Most other editorials in the Chinese press criticized the riot squad for having acted hastily and the government for being too harsh on young idealistic students.⁹¹ This was also the view expressed in statements by Lim Lian Geok as UCSTA president, Lim Kean Siew, a Socialist Front leader, as well as the Chung Ling Old Boys Association. An MCACECC statement called for a full inquiry into the incident.⁹²

Two days after the 23 November demonstration, the students issued an open letter to the public.⁹³ This letter, and a subsequent

student memorandum,⁹⁴ indicated that the school's acceptance of full assistance in June 1956 was the major cause of the student unrest. In both documents, the students referred to their feelings of 'shame and anger' at the manner in which their school had 'betrayed the cause of Chinese education'. Three separate reports on the Chung Ling student demonstration, including one written by the Superintendent of Chinese Schools (who had access to information from Special Branch sources), also pinpointed the issue of full assistance as the single most important reason for the student demonstration on 23 November.⁹⁵

The headmaster and discipline master's tight control of student activities and the harsh manner in which they dealt with students who contravened the school's regulations further fuelled the frustration and anger of the students. The students' resentment against unreasonable restrictions was vividly expressed in their detailed memorandum on the 23 November incident. The series of events which led directly to the demonstration began with the expulsion of the editor of Issue Number 41 of *Xuebao*, the student newspaper, on 5 November. Another member of the editorial board was blacklisted and the entire editorial board was warned that their behaviour had been reported to the Education Department and the Special Branch. The school authorities were angry with the editorial board of Issue No. 41 because it had failed to ensure that all the contents of that issue had been vetted and approved before publication. This was a rule that the *Xuebao* editorial board was required to strictly observe.

The headboy of the school and a deputation of other students had then met the headmaster to appeal against the punishments. But the headmaster would not relent. Instead, the police detained and interrogated the headboy. Subsequently, more students were then summoned to the headmaster's office for interrogation. To make matters worse, the interrogator was the head of Chung Ling's English section, a man by the name of Fisher-Short. Both Fisher-Short and Baxter whom he had replaced were appointees of the Education Department. To the Chung Ling students, Fisher-Short symbolized the colonial government's presence in their school. After the interrogation by Fisher-Short, six more boys were expelled. The MC was then asked by government officials to put up a notice 'fully endorsing the actions taken by the headmaster in ordering the ring-leaders to leave the school'. The students were warned that 'if there is any demonstration or attempt to engineer a school strike, the school will be closed'.⁹⁶ At this point, the

students said, 'our frustration and anger at the oppressive atmosphere in the school had reached an intolerable limit'.⁹⁷ They decided to begin a boycott of classes on the morning of 23 November.

A Beleaguered Management Committee

As soon as the boycott of classes began, Philip Egerton urged the Chung Ling MC to close the school immediately. Tye Kok Leong, the acting chairman, refused to make a decision until Ong Keng Seng had returned and the MC had met at 5 p.m. As soon as Ong arrived in Penang, Egerton emphasized the urgency of ending the students' sit-in before nightfall. But Ong also insisted on waiting until the MC had met. State government officials then issued the closure orders which were brought to the school at 4.50 p.m.⁹⁸ At 5 p.m. Ong Keng Seng was informed that the riot police were about to take action at the school. The entire MC arrived at the school just in time to see the students scattering amidst clouds of tear-gas. Later that evening, the MC resumed their meeting. A statement was then issued. The MC condemned the students' behaviour but expressed regret that the government had intervened before the MC had a chance to make a decision.⁹⁹

Barely a week later, on 5 December, the school dismissed two of its teachers. One of them was Kong Xiang Tai, the teacher who had openly criticized Waung during the Penang CSTA meeting in August. The other was Ren Yunong, a Chinese language and literature teacher. On 5 December, the Chung Ling staff released a statement supporting the school's decision of accepting full assistance from the government.¹⁰⁰ This fuelled speculation that Kong and Ren had been dismissed because they refused to subscribe to the staff statement. When asked about the dismissals, the headmaster refused to comment. On 10 December, some Chinese newspapers reported that the two teachers had been dismissed at the insistence of the Education Department. Other Chinese secondary schools in Penang were warned not to employ them.¹⁰¹

The MC then came under pressure from the government to take disciplinary action against the students involved in the 23 November demonstration. The Penang Education and Health Committee, acting as the local authority administering education matters in the state, met the Chung Ling MC on 24 December to demand that the leaders of the demonstration be expelled. The MC apparently responded that 'they were not strong enough to withstand the

heavy criticism that would follow'.¹⁰² Some members of the MC told reporters that they had disagreed with the government's demand to expel 70 students.¹⁰³ Four days later, on 29 December, another meeting was convened at which Sulaiman bin Dato Abdul Rahman, the Assistant Chief Minister, and Too Joon Hing, the Acting Minister of Education, met with the Chung Ling MC. Also present were Dr N. K. Menon, the chairman of the Penang Education Committee, Waung Yoong Nien, Chan Yik King, Philip Egerton, and Lim Chong Eu. This was the government's second attempt to convince the Chung Ling MC that 'the ringleaders must be expelled'.¹⁰⁴ Members of the MC seemed to have protested rather feebly during the meeting. Only Ong Keng Seng and Tye Kok Leong participated actively in the deliberations. The other MC members spoke briefly or not at all.¹⁰⁵

Tye opposed expulsion several times on grounds that there was no proper evidence against the students who had been listed for expulsion. He also argued that the government should not be involved when the students had infringed school discipline and not the laws of the land. Both arguments were rejected by the government representatives. Too pointed out that the question of evidence would be considered when the students appealed. The Assistant Chief Minister maintained that the matter had become a public issue and the government therefore had the right to be involved. The headmaster also argued in favour of expelling all those identified as 'ringleaders' because 'pupils who make speeches and abuse the headmaster must not be allowed to return to the school'. Waung claimed that some of the students who took part had been recognized and must, therefore, be expelled. After the MC acknowledged that they could not guarantee that there would be no further student trouble, their protests against expelling such a large number were not heeded. The MC finally agreed that expulsion orders would be issued by the school but the government would then establish a Committee of Inquiry to hear appeals against expulsion from the students. Tye then requested to be dissociated 'from all responsibility for this decision'.¹⁰⁶

That afternoon, Ong discussed the actual number to be expelled with the Chief Education Officer and the headmaster of the school. Although he again pleaded that expulsion of more than 10 students was too heavy a burden for him to carry, he left the final decision in the hands of the Chief Education Officer and headmaster. Expulsion orders were eventually issued to 69 students by the Registrar of Schools.¹⁰⁷ Tye Kok Leong issued a statement

condemning the expulsions as 'harsh and unjust'. He maintained that the matter should have been left in the hands of the MC.¹⁰⁸ But Tye stood alone as the other members of the MC decided to go along with the government's decision in the hope that the expulsions would help maintain order in future.¹⁰⁹

Despite the controversy surrounding the school since July 1955, Chung Ling had little difficulty attracting new students. The school received 500 applications at the end of 1956 when it could only take in 300 new students.¹¹⁰ When the school reopened on 6 January 1957, the police were on stand-by as each student entered the school after his letter of admission for the year had been checked by a teacher. The atmosphere was tense as some of the expelled students gathered on a grass verge outside the school. They refused to leave until Ong Keng Seng had spoken to them and agreed to meet them later in the afternoon. Too Joon Hing, who was also in Penang, met the students together with Ong and advised them to appeal to the Committee of Inquiry.¹¹¹

The parents of the expelled students had appealed to the MC to readmit their sons, arguing that, while they did not condone infringement of school discipline, expulsion was not the proper way to teach young people to be law-abiding citizens. The MC was asked to defend its right to make decisions in the interests of students.¹¹² But by then the MC no longer had the power to readmit the students. The Committee of Inquiry hearings were held in Kuala Lumpur and Sungai Petani, away from Penang where there would be more sympathy for the students. At the end of March, the Committee announced that only 16 students were to be reinstated.¹¹³ Further appeals from parents and the MC were made but the government stood firm.

On 2 April some Chung Ling students attempted to organize a boycott of the end of term examinations. The school authorities identified three students as the instigators and they were immediately expelled by the headmaster.¹¹⁴ This sparked off another demonstration the next morning which involved the majority of the students in the school. The students hung up a long cloth banner with the characters 'Love Our Chinese Language, Love Our Chung Ling' written in blood drawn from their fingers. The headmaster immediately announced the closure of the school and the students were persuaded to disperse by some teachers.¹¹⁵ The following day, the school expelled another 10 students who were accused of being ringleaders of the demonstration.¹¹⁶ This sparked off sympathy demonstrations by students in two other Chinese sec-

ondary schools in Penang—Han Chiang and Chung Hwa Confucian. Both schools were immediately closed to prevent further unrest.¹¹⁷

The Penang Labour Party, the General Workers' Union, and the Penang branch of the Socialist Youth League organized a petition to reinstate all the expelled students.¹¹⁸ The Georgetown Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) and the MCACECC decided to conduct their own inquiries into the causes of the student unrest. Commentators on the Alliance's first major electoral setback in local-level elections in Penang in December 1956 thought that disaffection over the way the government had handled the Chung Ling affair was one of the causes for the Alliance losing electoral support.¹¹⁹

After the government's announcement of the Twenty Conditions for schools to be accepted as National-Type Secondary Schools in December 1956, the Chung Ling MC came under pressure again, this time from the Chinese education organizations. The Twenty Conditions, which included the requirement that students must sit for public examinations, were unanimously rejected by delegates to a MCACECC meeting in February 1957. Ong Keng Seng, who was present at the meeting, made a gesture of solidarity by promising that Chung Ling would stand with the other Chinese schools and withdraw from full assistance. A meeting of Chung Ling's *dongshi*, comprising the Board of Directors biennially elected by all the school's benefactors, was then called on 30 April to reconsider the school's stand. This indicated that there were Chung Ling benefactors who were disturbed by the controversy that had arisen from decisions made by the MC, a smaller group elected by the *dongshi*.

At this meeting, the agreement for full assistance which Chung Ling had signed with the government in June 1956 was finally revealed.¹²⁰ It was indeed clear that the conditions that Chung Ling had agreed to were identical to the Twenty Conditions. But nine months after its complicity with the Education Department, it was going to be extremely difficult for the school to extricate itself from the agreement. Ong informed Chung Ling's *dongshi* that he had received a letter from the Education Department stating that all monies which had been paid by the government must be refunded if the school decided to withdraw from all assistance.¹²¹ With this sobering thought, the *dongshi* adjourned their meeting without any decision. Perhaps the *dongshi* had on their minds the example of Tye Kok Leong. The government had, on 24 April,

refused to accept Tye's registration as a member of the MC of the Han Chiang High School.¹²² This was an indication that punitive action might be taken against those who, like Tye, openly challenged or opposed government actions.

The preparations for Merdeka delayed negotiations between the government and the MCACECC on the Twenty Conditions. As the MCACECC appeared less likely to succeed, the Chung Ling MC became less inclined to pay the costs of withdrawing from full assistance. At the next meeting of Chung Ling's *dongshi* on 14 May, some members openly doubted whether the MCACECC could succeed in getting any concrete results. Again no decision for Chung Ling to withdraw from full assistance was made.¹²³ In fact, Chung Ling never withdrew from full assistance. June 1956 therefore stands as the historical date when the first, the biggest, and the most prestigious Chinese secondary school broke ranks with the MCACECC and fell in line with the government's policy for secondary education.

Chung Ling's breakaway from the MCACECC in 1955 and 1956 was still remembered with some bitterness by the older leaders of the UCSTA when they were interviewed in the early 1980s. They felt that Chung Ling had served as the catalyst which speeded the fall of the other schools. In Lim Lian Geok's memoirs, Waung is castigated as the chief villain (*zuikui*) who sold out (*chumai*) Chinese education. Lim portrays Waung as a man who collaborated with colonial bureaucrats to gain better pay for himself.¹²⁴ On his part, Waung was aware that his peers still regarded him as a 'renegade' even decades after the controversy had died down. He insisted, however, that subsequent developments in the Chinese schools had proved that Chung Ling's acceptance of full assistance in June 1956 was a far-sighted decision.¹²⁵

Whatever one's verdict might be on the entire Chung Ling episode, Waung was instrumental in allowing Chung Ling to be used by both the colonial administration and the Alliance government to achieve their objectives. That the headmaster, and the MC, of Chung Ling permitted their school to be appropriated as a model for state policies should not, however, detract us from appreciating the historical significance of the controversy over Chung Ling. This controversy highlighted a dilemma faced not only by Chung Ling but by all the Chinese secondary schools in the 1950s, and it is a dilemma which they face to this day. Can the Chinese schools bring their students into the educational mainstream which is essential for their socio-economic advancement

and still uphold the use of Chinese as the medium of instruction when this is not an official language of the country? The crux of the dilemma is: social mobility versus cultural attachments.

Since the 1930s, Chung Ling had opted for a bilingual policy as one way out of this dilemma. The MCACECC, and more particularly UCSTA, leaders sought a different resolution by calling for more use of Chinese to reduce the hegemony of English in the mainstream education system. But until and unless qualifications in Chinese had an equivalent social and economic value to those in English, the strategy of the Chinese education organizations had little chance of success. Chung Ling was the first school to bow to the demands of realism. The dilemma of the other Chinese schools became more pronounced after Merdeka when the issue of Chinese as an official language was closed and UMNO leaders refused to yield on using Chinese in public examinations. As for the MCACECC, it soon fell apart in the wake of an UMNO-MCA political crisis which occurred just before the 1959 general elections.

1. See, for example, *SCJP* and *SPJP*, 7 July 1955.

2. *SCJP* and *SPJP*, 10 July 1955.

3. The UCSTA Working Subcommittee was set up in December 1954 to assist the Executive Committee; see 'Minutes of the First Meeting of the UCSTA Working Subcommittee, 16 December 1954', UCSTA Files.

4. This is apparent from consulting the school magazines from 1951 to 1957.

5. Letter from MacGillivray to Sir Christopher Cox, 5 July 1955, CO 1030/266, PRO Kew. A copy of the same agreement in Director of Education File 2397, Vol. 1, ANM, is dated 3 June 1955.

6. *Ibid.*, and reply from Cox, 8 July 1955.

7. Interview with Chan Yik King, Penang, 17 October 1980.

8. The 1955 Chung Ling School Magazine reported that the school had stopped running pre-secondary classes that year to concentrate on secondary education.

9. His name, according to the staff list in the 1953 Chung Ling School Magazine, was given in Chinese as Bai Luosan. I was told by Chan Yik King that his name was Baxter. This is confirmed by enclosures in Jabatan Pelajaran Pulau Pinang File 0603, ANM, which deal with Fisher-Short, who was appointed by the Education Department in Kuala Lumpur as its 'education adviser' to Chung Ling on 5 September 1955 to replace Baxter. Both Baxter and Fisher-Short were paid from Federal funds.

10. See Chapter 2, p. 63.

11. From the list of textbooks in the Chung Ling School Magazine for 1952 (pp. 64-7), Junior Middle I classes used Chinese textbooks for all subjects except English but by Junior Middle III, English textbooks were used for all subjects

except chemistry, Chinese, history, and geography. In 1953, Junior Middle III classes used English textbooks for all subjects except Chinese, history, and geography. Both in 1952 and 1953, all classes from Senior Middle I onwards used English textbooks for all subjects except Chinese. Senior Middle classes studied English literature texts such as Dickens' *Great Expectations*, Sheridan's *The Rivals*, and Goldsmith's *The Stoops to Conquer*. The English textbooks used for other subjects, recognizably similar to those used in English schools in the 1950s and 1960s, were clearly orientated towards the Cambridge School Certificate examinations (for example, Holderness and Lambert's *School Certificate Chemistry*).

12. A copy of the agreement was enclosed with MacGillivray's letter to Cox, 5 July 1955, CO 1030/266, PRO Kew.

13. See Chapter 2, pp. 72-6.

14. This account of the school's history is drawn from *Bincheng Yueshubao She ershi zhounian jinian tekan*, Penang: 1933, pp. 157-9 and *Zhongling Zhongxue xiaokan: Zhonghua Minguo ershiqi nian*, Penang: 1938.

15. An earlier attempt was made in 1918 when the Bincheng Huaqiao Zhongxue was founded but this closed down after a year. See Wen Zhiqian, 'Bincheng Huaqiao Zhongxue yu Cai Yuanpei', *SPJP*, 6 June 1982.

16. For histories of the schools in their special commemorative publications, see the list in the Bibliography.

17. See Tay Lian-soo and Gwee Yee Hean (eds.), *Malaxiya Xinjiapo Huatwen Zhongxue tekan tiyao fu xiaoshi*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, Jabatan Pengajian Tionghua, 1975, p. 9.

18. MU, *Annual Report on Education*, 1946, p. 27.

19. The school published a special commemorative magazine honouring the staff and students who died during the Japanese Occupation; see *Bincheng Zhongling Zhongxue xunnan shishen rongai lu*, Penang: 1947.

20. W. L. Blythe referred to the example of Chung Ling specifically in discussing KMT influence in the Chinese schools in his 'The Chinese in Malaya: Cultural Background', Paper prepared for the Carr-Saunders Committee on University Education in Malaya, April 1947, in W. L. Blythe Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 116, RHO.

21. Interviews with Waung Yoong Nien, 4 April 1980; Tan Cheng Tit, 16 October 1980; and, Johnson Lam, 22 January 1981, all in Penang. Tan and Lam were, when interviewed, the only surviving members of the CLHS MC of the 1950s.

22. From the account of significant events in the school's history in the 1938 issue of the school magazine.

23. MU, *Annual Report on Education*, 1946, p. 31.

24. See Letter from David Chen to Senior Inspector of Schools, 15 August 1951, Director of Education File 590/51, ANM.

25. FM, *Report of a Mission Invited by the Federation Government to Study the Problem of the Education of the Chinese in Malaya: Chinese Schools and the Education of Chinese Malaysians* (Council Paper No. 35 of 1951), p. 22; cited henceforth as the Fenn-Wu Report.

26. Interview with Loot Ting Yee, Kuala Lumpur, 10 April 1980. Loot was then vice-president of the UCSTA. The same view was expressed in Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1990, Vol. 1, p. 179.

27. FM, *Annual Report on Education*, 1949, p. 80.

28. See Chapter 2, pp. 68-70.

29. Letter from David Chen to Senior Inspector of Schools, 15 August 1951

and reply from Senior Inspector, 21 September 1951, Director of Education File 590/51, ANM. See also the reference to extra payment authorized by Penang in response to CLHS's appeal for help in August 1951 in CO 1022/285, PRO Kew.

30. Information on the schools's entrance examination and hostel was drawn from the school magazines, 1950-5.

31. Interview with Yu Xindang, Ipoh, 18 March 1980. Yu was a Chinese school teacher in Ipoh.

32. Interview with Loot Ting Yee, Kuala Lumpur, 10 April 1980.

33. Interviews with Waung Yoong Nien, Penang, 4 April 1980 and 22 October 1980.

34. Interview with Waung Yoong Nien, Penang, 4 April 1980.

35. *SPJP*, 8 July 1955.

36. *Ibid.*, 19 July 1955.

37. *CKP*, 11 July 1955.

38. Interviews with Lim Lian Geok, Selayang (Selangor), 28 August 1980 and Chou Man Sha, Penang, 6 May 1980.

39. See for example, *SCJP*, 25 July 1955 and 2 August 1955.

40. *SPJP*, 12 August 1955.

41. The full text of the headmaster's notice was printed by *SPJP*, 13 August 1955.

42. 'A Report by the Superintendent of Chinese Schools Penang on the Chung Ling High School', undated, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers; cited henceforth as 'Report by SCS on CLHS'. According to the Foreword, this report was written after the student demonstrations in April 1957 which are discussed later in this chapter. The author's name was not given in the report itself but the Superintendent of Chinese Schools in Penang then was Philip Egerton.

43. See Yeo Kim Wah, *Political Development in Singapore, 1945-1955*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1973, pp. 183-201 and Richard Clutterbuck, *Riot and Revolution in Singapore and Malaya*, London: Faber and Faber, 1973, Ch. 5.

44. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, p. 4.

45. Copy of circular from Director of Education to Chief Education Officers in all States and Settlements, 10 September 1955, Enclosure 7 in Director of Education File 1008/52, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

46. *SPJP*, 18 August 1955.

47. *Ibid.*, 19 August 1955.

48. *Ibid.*, 21 August 1955.

49. *SCJP*, 21 August 1955.

50. *Ibid.*, 1 September 1955.

51. *SPJP*, 7 September 1955.

52. *Ibid.*, 29 August 1955.

53. *Ibid.*, 10 September 1955.

54. *Ibid.*, 5 September 1955.

55. Copy of special feature on the CLHS on the front page of the *Kin Pao*, 16 September 1955, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. The *Kin Pao* is no longer in publication. In his memoirs, Lim Lian Geok claims that Too was going to Penang to sign the agreement with Chung Ling and Lim was the one who pre-empted this by asking Penang CSTA leader, Chou Man Sha, to arrange for a meeting with Too while he was in Penang. See Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, p. 181.

56. *SPJP*, 6 September 1955.

57. *NYSP*, 13 September 1955.

58. *SCJP*, 14 September 1955.
59. In Lim Lian Geok's account of the Chung Ling story, the decision to put the offer of special aid to Chung Ling in 'cold storage' was made by Razak after Lim personally spoke to him on the matter; see his *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, p. 181.
60. *SPJP*, 21 August 1955.
61. *Straits Times*, 26 June 1956. A similar report was carried the same day in all the Chinese dailies.
62. *Ibid.*
63. *GKP*, 27 June 1956.
64. *SPJP*, 27 June 1956.
65. See Chapter 5, p. 196.
66. *SPJP*, 27 June 1956. See also the article on Chung Ling in *SCJP*, New Year Supplement, 1 January 1957.
67. This was mentioned by several Chinese leaders in Ong's generation during interviews and discussions held with them about the Penang scene in the 1950s.
68. Interview with Tan Cheng Tit, 16 October 1980 and Johnson Lam, 22 January 1981, both in Penang.
69. *SPJP*, 30 July 1956.
70. For a very blunt critique written as an exposé of Waung's personal motives, see Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 179-97.
71. See *SPJP*, 5 August 1956, for a detailed report of the meeting.
72. *Ibid.*, 27 September 1956.
73. *Ibid.*, 15-17 August 1956.
74. Interview with Waung Yoong Nien, Penang, 22 October 1980.
75. *SPJP*, 12 September 1956.
76. Interviews with Waung Yoong Nien, 22 October 1980; Tan Cheng Tit, 16 October 1980; and Johnson Lam, 22 January 1981, all in Penang.
77. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 1, p. 2.
78. *Ibid.* The 'Red Lamp' group in Chung Ling is also mentioned in 'Report on Subversion in Chinese Schools', dated 1 September 1955, in Papers of W. J. Watts Papers, MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 320, RHO.
79. Chinese schools usually appointed one of the more senior teachers as 'discipline master' to deal particularly with the discipline of students.
80. See various files on communist activities in schools in CO 1030/263, CO 1030/264, CO 1030/267, and CO 1030/360 and also discussion on this topic during Directors of Education meetings in CO 1030/47, all in PRO Kew.
81. Enclosure 2 in CO 1030/263, PRO Kew.
82. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, p. 7.
83. This account is based on 'Report by SCS on CLHS'; 'Report of the Committee Established by the Five-Ward Branches of the Georgetown MCA on the Disturbances in the Chinese Middle Schools of Penang, with Particular Regard to those Occurring in the Chung Ling High School', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers, cited henceforth as the 'Penang MCA Report on CLHS'; and newspaper reports, in particular *SPJP* and *SCJP*, 24 November 1956.
84. This is a summary of the substance of the 10 demands which are given in full, in English translation, in 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, pp. 11-12, and in the original in Chinese in the Chinese newspaper reports cited above.
85. From interviews with three former CLHS students who were amongst the 69 expelled in connection with the demonstration.
86. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, p. 15.
87. *SPJP*, 24-27 November 1956 and 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, p. 15.

88. *SPJP*, 24 November 1956. According to the 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, p. 12, the Emergency regulation used to close the school had been gazetted only that morning to legalize the closure of the school.
89. *Ibid.*, 25 November 1956.
90. *KWYP*, 26 November 1956.
91. See, for example, the editorials in *SPJP*, 26 November 1956; *NYSP*, 26 November 1956; *CKP*, 28 November 1956; and *SCJP*, 27 November 1956.
92. *SCJP*, 26 November 1956; *CKP*, 29-30 November 1956.
93. *SPJP*, 26 November 1956.
94. 'Zhongling Zhongxue yiyan ershan shijian, beikaichu tongxue beiwang lu', mimeographed, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers; cited henceforth as 'Tongxue beiwang lu'.
95. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', 'Penang MCA Report on CLHS', and 'Findings of the Special Committee Appointed by the MCA Central Working Committee to Investigate into the Causes of the Incidents in the Chinese Schools in Penang', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers; cited henceforth as 'Report of MCA CWC'.
96. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, p. 9.
97. 'Tongxue beiwang lu'.
98. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, pp. 12-15.
99. *SPJP* and *CKP*, 24 November 1956.
100. *SCJP* and *CKP*, 5 December 1956.
101. *SPJP* and *NYSP*, 10 December 1956. See also Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 194-6 where Lim claims that he raised the case of the two teachers directly with the Minister of Education.
102. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, p. 16.
103. *SPJP*, 25 December 1956.
104. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, p. 16.
105. 'Minutes of a Meeting Held by the Assistant Chief Minister and the Minister for Education with the Chung Ling Standing Committee on Saturday, 29 December 1956 at 1.15 pm in the Settlement Council Chamber, Penang', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. Reports of the meeting were also carried in the *SPJP* and *SCJP*, 30 December 1956.
106. *Ibid.*
107. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, p. 17.
108. *SPJP*, 31 December 1956.
109. Interviews with Tan Cheng Tit, 16 October 1980 and Johnson Lam, 22 January 1981, both in Penang.
110. *SPJP*, 14 December 1956.
111. *Ibid.*, 7 January 1957.
112. *Ibid.*, 13 January 1957.
113. See reports of the hearings in *NYSP*, 17 February 1957; *CKP*, 23 December 1957; and *SCJP*, 28 March 1957.
114. *SPJP*, 3 April 1957.
115. *Ibid.*, 4 April 1957.
116. 'Report by SCS on CLHS', Pt. 2, pp. 20-1 and *SPJP*, 6 April 1957. See also letters of students from Han Chiang and Chung Hwa Confucian included in 'Report of MCA CWC'.
117. *SPJP*, 8 April 1957.
118. *CKP*, 9 April 1957.
119. *NYSP*, 4 December 1956. See also R. K. Vasil, *Politics in Plural Society: A Study of Non-communal Political Parties in West Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford

University Press, 1971, p. 118.

120. *SPP*, 1 May 1957.

121. *Ibid.* Letter from the Registrar of Schools to the Supervisor of Chung Ling, 29 April 1957, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

122. *SPP*, 25 April 1957.

123. *Ibid.*, 15 May 1957.

124. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 179-97.

125. Interview with Waung Yoong Nien, Penang, 22 October 1980.

Crisis and Dissolution, September 1957–December 1961

Impasse, September–November 1957

IN the post-Merdeka Cabinet reshuffle, Mohammed Khir Johari was appointed to the post of Minister of Education while Dato Razak moved over to the portfolio of Internal Affairs and Defence. Two weeks after Merdeka, on 13 September, the Malayan Chinese Association Chinese Education Central Committee (MCACECC) requested a meeting with the new Minister of Education to discuss outstanding issues concerning the Chinese schools.¹ The MCACECC had appointed a subcommittee headed by Goh Chee Yan to conduct negotiations with the government for modifications to the Twenty Conditions for Chinese secondary schools to be accepted as National-Type Secondary Schools (NTSS). MCACECC leaders were still hoping for a softening of the government's stand on these conditions and the medium of public examinations. Two additional problems had emerged which required negotiations with the new Minister. First, the Ministry of Education had sent out circulars to all aided secondary schools requiring them to begin enforcing the age limits for pupils which were recommended in the Razak Report. Second, circulars were sent out to all schools regarding the setting up of Boards of Governors.²

The Razak Report had recommended age limits to be progressively imposed starting from 1957 to ensure that children reaching school-going age would find places in schools. Schools were asked to follow the age limits for various standards stated in the Report and begin denying places to pupils older than the specified maximum ages. Pupils who had reached their seventeenth birthday must leave the primary schools and pupils who had reached their twenty-third birthday must leave secondary schools. Each year the maximum age would be reduced so that by 1960 all schools would have adjusted to the age tables specified in the Report.³ The Razak Report had also recommended that Boards of Governors should

be set up in all schools. It recommended a standard structure for these boards in which the government, ex-pupils, and any organization connected with the school would have the right to nominate representatives to the Board of Governors in addition to the owners of the school.⁴

The Chinese schools had reason to be anxious over both issues. Unlike the English schools, the Chinese schools had never adhered to age limits. The philosophy of the Chinese schools was to accommodate any student willing and able to continue studying. The Razak Report had noted that the problem of over-aged students was most serious in the Chinese schools. Going by the standard ages specified in the Report, 80 per cent of pupils in the Chinese schools were over-aged for their year of study and 24 per cent were beyond school-going age.⁵ A United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA) survey found that if the prescribed age limits were enforced in the Chinese secondary schools, a total of 6,121 pupils would be asked to leave from 1958 to 1960. In 1958 alone, 2,740 pupils would have to leave school. The UCSTA protested that it was inhumane and unreasonable to deny these pupils a chance to finish their education.⁶

The Chinese schools had traditionally been run by Boards of Directors (*dongshi*) or Management Committees (MCs) elected from the benefactors of the school. The new regulations governing the constitution of Boards of Directors gave the benefactors the right to nominate three individuals who would be designated as trustees of the school. The rest of the Board would consist of three nominees each by the government, the Parents' Association, and the Ex-Pupils' Association. With the new structure, the government would have a direct role in the management of every school while the benefactors' influence would be drastically reduced.

The MCACECC could not get an appointment with the new Minister until 2 November 1957. This, Lim Lian Geok has claimed, was because factionalism within the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) was getting more serious as Tan Cheng Lock had become incapacitated by ill health. Cheng Lock's son, Siew Sin, led one faction within the MCA that was antagonistic to the UCSTA. From Lim's account, this faction was trying to edge the MCACECC out of the picture by getting the new Minister of Education to deal solely with the MCA Cultural and Education Subcommittee headed by Y. T. Lee on all matters involving Chinese education.⁷

Significantly, the delay put the MCACECC in a weaker position in its claim that the Twenty Conditions for full assistance were unacceptable to Chinese secondary schools. In the first week of October, two Chinese schools had followed Chung Ling's example and signed agreements with the government to convert to NTSS. These were the Chan Wa High School in Seremban, Negri Sembilan, and the Chinese High School in Segamat, Johore. The reasons which the MCs of these two schools gave for their decisions were essentially the same as those given by the headmaster of Chung Ling. These were better employment and higher education prospects for their students, financial stability for their schools, improved working conditions for their staff, and a reduction of the parents' burden by not having to raise school fees.⁸

The conversion of the two schools appeared to have been arranged just before the MCACECC met the new Minister of Education. The Segamat Chinese High School's decision to convert was announced on 27 October, just days before the MCACECC was due to meet the Minister. In the case of Chan Wa in Seremban, the first announcement was made in the first week of October. The school had then come under a barrage of criticism in the Chinese press which was almost a repetition of what had happened in June 1956 when the government announced Chung Ling's acceptance of full assistance. The MC of Chan Wa nevertheless proceeded to sign the agreement to convert into a NTSS with the government on 16 October. On 30 October, the eve of the MCACECC's meeting with the Minister, the school's MC had called a press conference to defend its decision. The chairman of the MC of Chan Wa was Yap Mau Tatt. He was regarded as the man behind the school's decision to convert.⁹ But Yap was a member of the MCACECC Working Subcommittee assigned to negotiate for changes to the conditions. Yet not only had he led his school in direct conflict with the MCACECC's position, he had even defended his school's decision to sign up for full assistance as 'bringing only benefits and no harm'.¹⁰

When Chung Ling accepted full assistance and converted into a NTSS in June 1956, the MCACECC had lost from its ranks the biggest and most prestigious Chinese secondary school. With two more schools following suit, there were signs of crumbling support for the MCACECC's claim that the government's Twenty Conditions were not acceptable to all Chinese secondary schools. The MCACECC was represented by its Working Subcommittee

Student Demonstrations, November 1957

On 14 November 1957, one month before Foon Yew's decision to forgo all government aid, students from six major Chinese secondary schools—three in Penang and three in Kuala Lumpur—staged demonstrations to protest the imposition of age limits. They also objected to the government's decision that public examinations could not be conducted in Chinese. The schools involved were Chung Ling, Han Chiang, and the Penang Chinese Girls' High School in Penang, and the Confucian High School, the Kuen Cheng Girls' School, and the Chung Hwa High School in Kuala Lumpur. The Penang students appeared to have been more daring and organized. The boys from Chung Ling and Han Chiang marched from their schools to the Penang Chinese Girls' High School. There they congregated with the girls who were preparing to barricade themselves in the school building. Their plans were foiled when the boys were dispersed by tear-gas. Some students were arrested and all three schools were immediately closed.²⁰

The Education Department in Penang had been forewarned by the Special Branch to get the MCs of the Penang schools to be on hand to help restrain the students. Although some members of the MC of the Penang Chinese Girls' High School were at the school early on the morning of 14 November, they found that the students had already locked the school gates and refused to listen to the MC's advice to disperse.²¹ No action was taken by the riot squad against the Kuala Lumpur schools whose students dispersed voluntarily after Lim Lian Geok and Wen Tien Kuang visited each of the schools and appealed to the students to stop their demonstrations.²² Lim then issued a statement as UCSTA president calling on all students to be calm and to leave matters in the hands of the MCACECC. A similar statement was issued by the MCACECC.²³

A second round of demonstrations erupted in Chinese schools in other towns from 17 to 19 November. Students in four major Chinese secondary schools in Ipoh and one school each in Kampar and Batu Gajah boycotted classes to demonstrate their solidarity with the Penang and Kuala Lumpur students. The demonstrations in Ipoh were dispersed after the riot squad and police used canes on the students. Photographs of police wielding canes on female students led to protests against police brutality from opposition parties, and public sympathy swung to the students.²⁴

The Minister of Education met with the MCs of the three

schools in Penang after the demonstrations. It was announced that 24 students from the schools would be expelled.²⁵ This sparked off more demonstrations in other schools. On 21 November, students from Foon Yew in Johore Bahru, as well as Chinese schools in Seremban, Bidor, and Sitiawan boycotted classes and demonstrated to express their support for the Penang students. Police broke up the demonstrators after which the schools were also closed.²⁶ Within a week, the demonstrations had spread to Alor Star, Muar, and Rengit while back in Penang, fresh demonstrations broke out in Han Chiang and the Chung Hwa Confucian High School.²⁷

After the first round of student demonstrations, the Minister of Education had immediately alleged that the students were being instigated by communist infiltrators.²⁸ His views were echoed by an editorial in the *Straits Times* which claimed to discern the 'hidden hand' of the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) behind the students' actions.²⁹ The government's determination to impose age limits on students in secondary schools was intended to prevent younger students from coming under the influence of older students, who were thought to be more likely to have been infiltrated by the CPM.³⁰ There might well have been CPM cadres among the older students in the Chinese secondary schools. A report on Chinese secondary students in Singapore in 1956 had claimed that the party was placing more emphasis on reaching out to younger Chinese at that time. This claim was based on a captured CPM document which directed party cadres 'to be active among the Middle school students' because 'the work of winning support from school children and organizing them to struggle is more important than military activities'.³¹ However, until November 1957, there were no signs of radical student activities in the Federation. After the demonstrations, the government offered no evidence of Communist involvement.

The Penang students claimed that they were demonstrating in support of the MCACECC's efforts to get public examinations to be conducted in Chinese and for the age limits to be relaxed.³² So did the students in Kuala Lumpur.³³ Lim Lian Geok suspected a different kind of 'hidden hand' behind the demonstrations. He believed that the students in Kuala Lumpur had been instigated to demonstrate by people who wanted to implicate the MCACECC. But he did not indicate who these people might be and offered little evidence that the same group had been active among students in so many different towns.³⁴ A different view, and one that was

probably most widely held among the Chinese, was offered by the *Nanyang Siang Pao*. This Chinese daily thought that the student demonstrations were essentially 'rash actions by exuberant youngsters who felt genuinely threatened by the age limits'. Some students, said the *Nanyang Siang Pao* editorial, were also panic-stricken at the idea of having to sit for examinations in what was, for most of them, a foreign language. Without these fears and frustrations, the students would not have come out in force in so many different towns.³⁵

Whatever their motivations, the student demonstrations commanded nation-wide attention. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong referred to the demonstrations in his speech to the Federal Legislative Council on 4 December. So did several other national leaders. Speaking in the Legislative Council, the Tunku criticized the students for trying 'to throw their weight around and intimidating the government'. Khir Johari and Razak both defended the police actions against the students with Khir warning that the government would not allow the country to be run by 'thugs'. United Malays National Organization (UMNO) back-benchers generally supported the government and called for tighter control and discipline over students in future.³⁶

The student demonstrations were of no help to the MCACECC when it attempted to meet the Tunku as their last resort to overcome the impasse on the two issues of conditions for conversion and medium of examinations. The Tunku refused to meet the MCACECC until 'the students and their teachers showed that they respected the laws of the country'.³⁷ This suggested that the Tunku thought that the Chinese school teachers had either instigated their students to demonstrate or had supported them. The MCACECC's impasse remained. From the beginning of 1958, the possibility of any breakthrough on the issues facing the Chinese secondary schools became inextricably linked with the political problems faced by the MCA.

The MCA on a Tightrope, November 1957–July 1959

The drafting of the Merdeka Constitution had led to the MCA being accused of having betrayed Chinese interests because the MCA had stayed within the parameters of what was acceptable to UMNO. As a component party of the Alliance, the MCA had to go along with the Alliance position of rejecting the proposals of the Reid Commission to allow multiple official languages and to impose a time-frame on Malay special rights. As a result, the MCA

was criticized as a Chinese political party which had failed to stand up for Chinese rights. The MCACECC's failure to obtain concessions from the UMNO leaders on the conversion and examination issues further damaged the MCA's image. It was becoming increasingly clear that UMNO leaders took the Razak Report to mean that Chinese secondary schools must change their medium of instruction in order to be accepted within the national system.³⁷

In 1955, when the MCA contested in the first Federal elections, it had contributed to the Alliance's handsome victory largely because it faced no challenge in the competition for Chinese votes. But the situation had changed soon after. In December 1956 MCA candidates suffered their first electoral set-back in local elections in Penang when the party lost five seats to the Labour Party. These elections were held less than a month after the first Chung Ling students' demonstration in November 1956. The Tunku himself had referred to public unhappiness over the Chung Ling issue as one of the possible reasons for the Alliance's bad performance in the Penang local elections. In contrast to the MCA position, the Labour Party's submission to the Reid Commission had argued for a secular state, equal rights for all Malayan citizens, and a multilingual policy in the schools and legislative councils. In 1957, the Labour Party went on to win control of the Georgetown Municipal Council, a power base it retained until 1966. The Labour Party's challenge to the MCA was strengthened after 1957 when it formed the Socialist Front with the *Parti Rakyat*. This enabled the Labour Party to concentrate its attention on the urban Chinese working-class voters while the *Parti Rakyat* worked on Malay support. As a result, the Labour Party's influence spread beyond Penang to other urban centres in Selangor, Malacca, and Negri Sembilan.³⁸

The MCA was confronted with another challenger when a by-election held in Menglembu, Perak, on 23 November 1957 launched the Perak-based Peoples' Progressive Party (PPP) into prominence. The PPP's D. R. Seenivasagam, who had lost badly when he contested this seat in 1955, succeeded this time in defeating the MCA candidate despite the latter's backing by top-ranking leaders of the Alliance, including the Prime Minister. In the Menglembu by-election, the MCA candidate was not endorsed by local Chinese leaders who, still rankled by their split with the MCA over constitutional issues, chose to support the PPP. Moreover, the by-election was held immediately after the student demonstrations of November 1957. D. R. Seenivasagam and his brother S. P. Seenivasagam, both lawyers, had bailed out students who

were arrested in Ipoh during the demonstrations and subsequently defended those who were charged in court. The student demonstrations and government policy on Chinese education were prominent issues in the by-election campaign.³⁹

The MCA was shaken by this electoral trend. Whereas Chinese voters had, in 1955, accounted for only 11.2 per cent of the total electorate, they would by 1959 comprise 35.6 per cent.⁴⁰ To compete effectively against the Labour Party's and the PPP's appeal to Chinese voters, the MCA had to deliver on issues which were important to large sections of Chinese society. Chinese education and the fate of the Chinese secondary schools were among the most important of those issues. Under these pressing circumstances, MCA leaders became divided on how to balance between the MCA's position *vis-à-vis* UMNO within the Alliance and the MCA's claim to be a party representing Chinese interests.

Within the Federal Legislative Council, where Seenivasagam cast himself in the role of a spokesman of Chinese education, MCA leaders had to carefully dissociate themselves from his strident criticisms of the Alliance. But MCA back-benchers and leaders were compelled to express their sympathy for the Chinese schools. When the student demonstrations were discussed in the Legislative Council, for example, MCA Legislative Councillors voiced their misgivings over the implementation of the Razak Report. Foo See Moi, an MCA back-bencher, condemned the students for resorting to violence but urged the government to look into the reasons behind the student unrest. These, he suggested, had to do with the imposition of age limits and the problem of medium of public examinations. S. M. Yong, another MCA back-bencher, maintained that the imposition of age limits in schools which were not fully aided was not recommended in the Razak Report. Yong described the requirement that students had to sit for examinations in English when they were being taught in Chinese as 'absurd'. The government should immediately review its implementation of education policy because, according to Yong, dissatisfaction over this issue had led not only to the student demonstrations but also to the Alliance's losses in Municipal and Town Council elections.⁴¹

S. M. Yong's position was supported by two other MCA Legislative Councillors, Tan Suan Kok and Chew Swee Ee. During the debate on the Supply Bill for 1958, both Tan and Chew called for a review of implementation of education policy. They were joined by Lee Thean Hin, a member of the Razak Committee, who

pointed out 'how deeply and seriously this matter has agitated the minds of the Chinese public' and how it 'had placed the position of the Chinese leaders in the Alliance in a very invidious situation'. Too Joon Hing and Lim Chong Eu, two other members of the Razak Committee, were more circumspect in their speeches. Too appealed to the government to 'treat with sympathy and tolerance' the problems which the Chinese schools were facing as they adjusted to the national system. Lim Chong Eu, as the Alliance whip, could not make any direct criticisms of policy. At the same time, he could not deny that there were problems. He dexterously combined support for the Razak Report in principle with references to the constant personal communication going on between him and the Minister of Education to indicate that a satisfactory solution might yet be found. He referred specifically to the examination and conversion issues as transitory problems which could be solved with 'patience and tolerance'.⁴²

The UMNO leaders gave no indication that they would yield on either of those two issues. A few days before Lim Chong Eu's speech, the Minister of Education had in fact referred to public examinations in the official languages as a 'mainstay' of official policy and stated that schools which did not prepare students for such examinations could not be regarded as 'conforming schools'. When presenting his Ministry's estimates during the debate on the Supply Bill for 1958, Khir Johari also defended government policy on Chinese education. He pointed out that Chinese had been accepted as a medium of instruction in both primary and secondary schools, that the government was planning to expand facilities for training teachers for the Chinese schools, and finally, that government grants to Chinese primary and secondary schools for 1958 were estimated to total \$44 million.

When Razak spoke during the debate on the Supply Bill for 1958, he emphasized that Chinese schools were entitled to equal treatment with other schools in the national system provided they were prepared to conform to policy. This, said Razak, was because 'if we do give opportunities and privileges, there must go with them responsibilities'. One of these responsibilities was to prepare students for public examinations. According to Razak, 'the whole object of this education policy is to make the pupils employable in the government and employable in the interest of the country'. Razak maintained that promotional examinations such as the MSSEE could be conducted in the medium of instruction but public examinations such as the LCE and MCE which were

intended also as qualifications for employment must be conducted in the official languages.⁴³

The examinations issue, and the related issue of the Twenty Conditions for full assistance to Chinese secondary schools, dragged on unresolved. They provided Seenivasagam with material with which to keep baiting the MCA in the Legislative Council. In October 1958, Seenivasagam proposed a motion that the government should immediately appoint a Committee to review education policy. S. M. Yong and other MCA Legislative Councillors who had called for a review of education policy in December 1957 had to maintain a discreet silence as Alliance back-benchers. It was left to Lim Chong Eu to speak against the motion. He acknowledged that there had been criticisms of the manner in which education policy had been implemented but argued that a review was premature when the implementation was still in the transitory stage. He described existing problems as 'difficulties that necessarily arise in the transition period of the introduction of this new policy'.⁴⁴

In December 1958 MCA leaders returned to a more critical stance when the Minister of Education pointed out during his presentation of the estimates for 1959 that there had been a large saving on grants to Chinese secondary schools because the response to the government's offer of full assistance 'has not so far been enthusiastic'. Too Joon Hing pointed out that the Chinese schools' reluctance to accept full assistance was due to the requirement that students must sit for examinations in English. Too insisted that he could not find a single paragraph in the Razak Report which said that the public examinations must be conducted only in the official languages. Besides, to ask students to sit for examinations in one language when they were being taught in another made an 'intellectually impossible and impractical' demand on the students. Lee Thean Hin asked rhetorically if such a demand was not 'unfair and unjust'.⁴⁵

One reason why the MCA leaders were adopting a more assertive tone in the Legislative Council towards the end of 1958 was that their quiet negotiations with UMNO leaders had not yielded results. In March 1958 the Tunku finally agreed to receive a delegation from the MCACECC and to consider the memorandum presented to him. But since he did not reply, the meeting and the memorandum were essentially fruitless.⁴⁶ Another reason for the stronger views being expressed by some MCA leaders in December 1958 was a change of leadership in the party. In March 1958 Lim Chong Eu was elected the MCA president and Too

Joon Hing the secretary-general. As we shall discuss in the next section, the MCA's new leaders shifted to a more aggressive strategy to strengthen the party's appeal to Chinese voters in preparation for the general elections expected in 1959.

In April 1958 the new MCA leadership resumed direct negotiations with Razak on Chinese education issues. Razak renewed his offer of a special promotion examination for students in Junior Middle III to serve as a substitute for the LCE examination.⁴⁷ This proposal had previously been rejected by the MCACECC in June 1956. Nevertheless, a meeting of the MCACECC was arranged for June 1958. The MCACECC had not met since November 1957. The June 1958 meeting of the MCACECC was called by the new MCA leadership to re-establish the party's links with the two Chinese education organizations. The MCA leaders who were antagonistic to the UCSTA had lost out in the March 1958 party elections.

The UCSTA, on its part, was more favourably disposed to the new MCA leadership as both Lim Chong Eu and Too Joon Hing had worked closely with them during the period in which the Razak Report was written. Lim Lian Geok was quite unimpressed by Tan Siew Sin and H. S. Lee, the leaders of the two other factions within the MCA. Faced with intransigence from the new Minister of Education, the UCSTA saw a glimmer of hope in the new MCA leaders. At a UCSTA Executive Committee meeting in May to prepare resolutions for the forthcoming MCACECC meeting, Lim Lian Geok made it a point to comment favourably on Lim Chong Eu's interest in Chinese education and to express his confidence in the latter's leadership.⁴⁸

The new MCA leadership sought to win the support of the Chinese education organizations to strengthen its own position. When he addressed the MCACECC meeting in June 1958, Lim Chong Eu cited excerpts from Tan Cheng Lock's speeches at MCACECC meetings when the organization was first set up. Conscious of the respect which Tan Cheng Lock had commanded among the Chinese school teachers, Lim Chong Eu assured the meeting that the new MCA leadership was sincere in seeking solutions to the issues facing the Chinese schools. However, like Tan Cheng Lock, Lim Chong Eu reminded members of the MCACECC that it was always necessary to keep in mind the difficulties that confronted Malaya as a multiracial country.

There was at first resistance from UCSTA representatives to the promotional examination proposed by Razak. Yen Yuan Chang, the headmaster of a school in Johore and a member of the UCSTA

intended also as qualifications for employment must be conducted in the official languages.⁴³

The examinations issue, and the related issue of the Twenty Conditions for full assistance to Chinese secondary schools, dragged on unresolved. They provided Seenivasagam with material with which to keep baiting the MCA in the Legislative Council. In October 1958, Seenivasagam proposed a motion that the government should immediately appoint a Committee to review education policy. S. M. Yong and other MCA Legislative Councillors who had called for a review of education policy in December 1957 had to maintain a discreet silence as Alliance back-benchers. It was left to Lim Chong Eu to speak against the motion. He acknowledged that there had been criticisms of the manner in which education policy had been implemented but argued that a review was premature when the implementation was still in the transitory stage. He described existing problems as 'difficulties that necessarily arise in the transition period of the introduction of this new policy'.⁴⁴

In December 1958 MCA leaders returned to a more critical stance when the Minister of Education pointed out during his presentation of the estimates for 1959 that there had been a large saving on grants to Chinese secondary schools because the response to the government's offer of full assistance 'has not so far been enthusiastic'. Too Joon Hing pointed out that the Chinese schools' reluctance to accept full assistance was due to the requirement that students must sit for examinations in English. Too insisted that he could not find a single paragraph in the Razak Report which said that the public examinations must be conducted only in the official languages. Besides, to ask students to sit for examinations in one language when they were being taught in another made an 'intellectually impossible and impractical' demand on the students. Lee Thean Hin asked rhetorically if such a demand was not 'unfair and unjust'.⁴⁵

One reason why the MCA leaders were adopting a more assertive tone in the Legislative Council towards the end of 1958 was that their quiet negotiations with UMNO leaders had not yielded results. In March 1958 the Tunku finally agreed to receive a delegation from the MCACECC and to consider the memorandum presented to him. But since he did not reply, the meeting and the memorandum were essentially fruitless.⁴⁶ Another reason for the stronger views being expressed by some MCA leaders in December 1958 was a change of leadership in the party. In March 1958 Lim Chong Eu was elected the MCA president and Too

Joon Hing the secretary-general. As we shall discuss in the next section, the MCA's new leaders shifted to a more aggressive strategy to strengthen the party's appeal to Chinese voters in preparation for the general elections expected in 1959.

In April 1958 the new MCA leadership resumed direct negotiations with Razak on Chinese education issues. Razak renewed his offer of a special promotion examination for students in Junior Middle III to serve as a substitute for the LCE examination.⁴⁷ This proposal had previously been rejected by the MCACECC in June 1956. Nevertheless, a meeting of the MCACECC was arranged for June 1958. The MCACECC had not met since November 1957. The June 1958 meeting of the MCACECC was called by the new MCA leadership to re-establish the party's links with the two Chinese education organizations. The MCA leaders who were antagonistic to the UCSTA had lost out in the March 1958 party elections.

The UCSTA, on its part, was more favourably disposed to the new MCA leadership as both Lim Chong Eu and Too Joon Hing had worked closely with them during the period in which the Razak Report was written. Lim Lian Geok was quite unimpressed by Tan Siew Sin and H. S. Lee, the leaders of the two other factions within the MCA. Faced with intransigence from the new Minister of Education, the UCSTA saw a glimmer of hope in the new MCA leaders. At a UCSTA Executive Committee meeting in May to prepare resolutions for the forthcoming MCACECC meeting, Lim Lian Geok made it a point to comment favourably on Lim Chong Eu's interest in Chinese education and to express his confidence in the latter's leadership.⁴⁸

The new MCA leadership sought to win the support of the Chinese education organizations to strengthen its own position. When he addressed the MCACECC meeting in June 1958, Lim Chong Eu cited excerpts from Tan Cheng Lock's speeches at MCACECC meetings when the organization was first set up. Conscious of the respect which Tan Cheng Lock had commanded among the Chinese school teachers, Lim Chong Eu assured the meeting that the new MCA leadership was sincere in seeking solutions to the issues facing the Chinese schools. However, like Tan Cheng Lock, Lim Chong Eu reminded members of the MCACECC that it was always necessary to keep in mind the difficulties that confronted Malaya as a multiracial country.

There was at first resistance from UCSTA representatives to the promotional examination proposed by Razak. Yen Yuan Chang, the headmaster of a school in Johore and a member of the UCSTA

Executive Committee, asked why the Chinese schools should accept an examination that would not have the same status as the LCE and yet would restrict the Chinese schools to accepting only those students who passed this examination. Nevertheless, UCSTA and UCSCA representatives were finally persuaded by Lim Chong Eu to accept Razak's offer as a temporary compromise on the understanding that the MCA would continue to press the government to conduct the public examinations in the medium of instruction.⁴⁹

The MCACECC meeting in June was a preparatory step towards further action by the MCA. Three months later, in September 1958, the MCACECC invited more than 250 representatives from Chinese schools and Chinese education organizations to a national conference on Chinese Education. The two-day meeting was held in Ipoh. The choice of Ipoh was probably deliberate to show voters in Seenivasagam's constituency that the MCA was seriously working on the Chinese education issue in close rapport with Chinese education organizations. By this time, Wen Tien Kuang had resigned as an employee of the MCA and attended the meeting as a UCSCA representative. Lee Tee Siong had replaced Y. T. Lee as the chairman of the MCA's Cultural and Education Subcommittee and was, *ex officio*, secretary of the MCACECC. Lee explained in his speech that the purpose of the meeting was 'to consolidate the aspirations of Chinese Malaysians, examine comprehensively all the problems confronting Chinese education and manifest unmistakably the resolute desire of the Chinese for improvements to the status of Chinese education in the national system of Malaya'.⁵⁰ This was a clear signal that the MCA was ready to take the lead again on the Chinese education issue. Lim Chong Eu followed this up by saying that 'the fairest and most effective policy in Malaya (is) education through the mother tongue, for us as well as for the other communities'. This principle, said Lim, had been followed by the Razak Committee which had emphasized that a common content syllabus provided the essential basis for integration.

The UCSTA tested the new MCA leadership with a resolution that Chinese should be recognized as an official language. Lim Chong Eu deftly amended the resolution from being an imperative to a conditional demand. After his amendment, the resolution read: 'If the government persisted that only official languages could be used as medium for public examinations, then the government should forthwith recognize Chinese as an official lan-

guage.⁵¹ In support of his amendment, Lim Chong Eu argued that the MCACECC's main objective should be examinations in the medium of instruction which was more easily backed by educational arguments than the official language issue. Both Lim Chong Eu and Too Joon Hing stressed that the political climate was not conducive to raising the official language issue and that it was very important not to offend other races while pushing Chinese demands.⁵² In fact, recognizing Chinese as an official language would require a constitutional amendment, a most unlikely prospect.

Lim Lian Geok objected to Lim Chong Eu's amendment on the grounds that politically sensitive issues could not be avoided in a situation in which 'politics was being used to control education'. He threatened that the UCSTA would withdraw from the MCACECC if the examination issue was not resolved. The government's insistence on using official languages for public examinations would, in Lim Lian Geok's opinion, eventually force Chinese schools to convert into Malay schools.⁵³ This appeared to be a threat but was, in fact, a clear indication that Lim Lian Geok also recognized the examination issue as the more important issue. In a letter to the *Straits Times* in November 1957, Lim Lian Geok had already distinguished between the issue of using Chinese as a medium of examination and that of recognizing Chinese as an official language. Lim Lian Geok had argued specifically that the UCSTA's insistence on public examinations being conducted in Chinese was not tantamount to a demand that Chinese should become an official language.⁵⁴

Lim Chong Eu's proposal to amend the official language resolution was accepted. The other resolutions met with no difficulty as they were basically reaffirmations of previous MCACECC statements. The meeting also resolved that the MCACECC should organize a larger meeting involving representatives from the *shetuan* the following year. The purpose of the next meeting was to make a clear statement on education policy which was supported not only by Chinese education organizations but also by all the major Chinese organizations. This could then be presented to the government as the united voice of the Chinese on the issue of education.⁵⁵

Reports of the Ipoh Conference provoked criticisms of the MCA from the Malay press and UMNO leaders. An editorial in the *Utusan Melayu* expressed regret that the official language issue was still being raised by the Chinese school teachers after the

Merdeka Constitution had been agreed upon. The editorial accused the teachers and managers of Chinese schools of using the MCA to exert pressure on the government. The government was asked not to succumb.⁵⁶ The secretary-general of UMNO wrote to T. H. Tan, the Alliance honorary secretary, requesting that Lim Chong Eu's speech at the Ipoh Conference be included in the agenda of the next Alliance Executive Council meeting.⁵⁷

In the Legislative Council, Lim Chong Eu also had to defend the MCA's involvement in the Ipoh Conference. He denied Seenivasagam's characterization of the Ipoh Conference as 'a demonstration against the government or an expression of dissatisfaction against the government'. The Chinese education organizations, according to Lim Chong Eu, 'were agreeable that their criticisms and opinions should be transmitted and channelled in a proper manner to be submitted to the government'. Moreover, said Lim, the government was 'giving very sympathetic consideration' to the points raised.⁵⁸

The government's 'sympathetic considerations' did not lead to any concrete results in the next few months. There was no announcement of any new development on the examinations and conversion issues. As the 1959 elections drew nearer, there was also no indication of any pre-election meeting between UMNO leaders and Chinese education organizations such as was held before the 1955 elections. The MCACECC Working Committee went ahead with plans for the National Conference on Chinese Education in the hope that this would push UMNO leaders to agree to a resolution of the two problems which had created an impasse for almost three years.⁵⁹

On 26 April 1959, 1,200 representatives from 747 Chinese organizations throughout the country gathered at the Chinwoo Stadium in Kuala Lumpur to adopt a statement on 'The General Demands of the Malayan Chinese Community on Chinese Education'.⁶⁰ Four main points were made in this statement. First, the mother tongue should be used both as the medium of instruction and examination. Second, there should be equal treatment for all schools including those teaching in the vernacular languages. Third, representatives from Chinese society should be appointed to an Advisory Committee to assist the government in solving problems associated with Chinese education. Finally, there should be a twofold increase in aid to Chinese secondary schools.

There was nothing in these demands, as Lim Lian Geok said in his speech at the meeting, that had not been repeatedly raised by

Chinese education organizations in the past. This showed how little progress had been made in the fight for a proper place for the Chinese schools within the national system. The point of the National Conference was to make a final pre-election attempt. The MCACECC could claim that the statement of the Conference, having been unanimously endorsed by such a large number of Chinese organizations, did represent the views of the Chinese as a whole. Therefore it warranted serious consideration from the government. This point was emphasized in the speeches of Lim Chong Eu as well as Lim Lian Geok.⁶¹ The statement was presented to the Tunku on 29 May with an accompanying letter from Lim Chong Eu as chairman of the MCACECC.⁶² Up till the middle of June, no reply was received from the Tunku.⁶³

With the first parliamentary elections barely a couple of months away, the lack of response from UMNO leaders did not augur well. A confidential letter from the Tunku to Lim Lian Geok on 2 July indicated that the worst was yet to come. The Tunku explained that he was writing to the UCSTA president because he had received information 'on good authority' that the UCSTA was planning yet another conference on Chinese education on 17 July. Lim Lian Geok was warned that problems associated with Chinese education policy had already 'caused confusion and suspicion in the minds of the Chinese masses against the Alliance government'. For the UCSTA to organize the proposed conference was 'tantamount to pointing a pistol at the Alliance'. It would be seen as a threat that 'the teachers will strive to turn the Chinese masses against the Alliance' if their demands were not met. In closing, the Tunku told the UCSTA president that 'the only guarantee that the Alliance will come in again is the solid support of the Malays for the Alliance'. This, said the Tunku, 'would not be forthcoming if UMNO were to be compromised on the education issue at this moment'.⁶⁴

Lim Lian Geok clarified a few days after receiving the Tunku's letter that the UCSTA was not planning any more national conferences on Chinese education.⁶⁵ This was intended to indicate to the Tunku that he had been misinformed on the UCSTA's intentions. But the point of the Tunku's letter to the UCSTA was clear. UMNO's main concern then was to safeguard its own electoral base. There could be no compromise on issues relating to Chinese education in such a situation. The fact that the Tunku's letter to Lim Lian Geok was also circulated to the Alliance Executive Committee indicated that MCA leaders would have been given the

same message: there would be no pre-election compromises. At this juncture, a political storm which had been gathering for several months erupted. Any lingering hopes that an eleventh-hour compromise on the examination and conversion issues might still be reached was washed away in the wake of the storm.

Political Crisis, July 1959

The UMNO-MCA crisis of July 1959 has to be traced backwards to the March 1958 party elections which represented a changing of the guard within the party.⁶⁶ Tan Cheng Lock had been the president of the MCA since its foundation in 1949. By 1958 he was a frail and ailing old man. After a fall in 1955 and an operation which resulted in his going into a coma, Tan Cheng Lock had never fully recovered. In the words of his daughter, he had 'lost his normal faculties'.⁶⁷ With the older Tan incapacitated, his son, Siew Sin, led the party in his father's name. In the March 1958 MCA elections, Tan Cheng Lock was therefore the proxy candidate of the MCA faction led by Tan Siew Sin in close association with Ong Yoke Lin, Leong Yew Koh, and Y. T. Lee.

Lim Chong Eu challenged and defeated Tan Cheng Lock for the post of MCA president. Too Joon Hing, a member of the faction led by Lim Chong Eu, successfully defended his post as MCA secretary-general against Ong Yoke Lin. After these two losses, the Tan Siew Sin faction did not contest the other posts which were won by a group of young professionals based in Kuala Lumpur. Among them were Ng Ek Teong, Yong Pung How, and S. M. Yong.⁶⁸ The new MCA leaders, like their opponents in Tan Siew Sin's group, were English-educated and Westernized in their political outlook. But unlike the men in Tan's faction who enjoyed a close relationship with UMNO leaders and placed top priority on the MCA's working relationship with UMNO, the new MCA leaders advocated that the MCA should be more assertive within the Alliance and take more populist positions on major issues in order to strengthen the party's appeal to the Chinese masses.

The Lim Chong Eu-Too Joon Hing team also had the support of a third faction within the MCA which was led by H. S. Lee. This third faction consisted predominantly of what one researcher has labelled the 'association types', that is, those MCA leaders who were *shetuan* leaders and had their base in the traditional Chinese organizations.⁶⁹ This group also wanted a change in the party's leadership. They were disgruntled with the MCA's performance

during the drafting of the Merdeka Constitution. Like the Lim Chong Eu group, the H. S. Lee faction wanted to see the MCA play a more assertive role on issues affecting Chinese society.

However, the new MCA leadership faced the difficulty of consolidating its control over the party. Although the Tan Siew Sin faction did not occupy the top party posts after March 1958, they commanded important bases of power at state level—Tan Siew Sin in Malacca, Ong Yoke Lin and Y. T. Lee in Selangor, and Leong Yew Koh in Perak. They were able to resist the new leadership from these state bases. For example, when a change in the party Constitution was proposed by the new party leadership, this was blocked by protests from branches in Selangor, Johore, Perak, and Malacca. The stalemate over the party constitution showed that Tan Siew Sin's faction still posed a formidable challenge to Lim Chong Eu's leadership of the MCA. This unhealed divide within the party provided UMNO leaders with a lever to use against the new MCA leaders when the latter decided to take a tough stand against UMNO just before the 1959 elections. From UMNO's point of view, a stronger MCA would pose greater difficulties while a divided and weak MCA would be less resistant to UMNO's dominance within the Alliance.⁷⁰

A second and equally important difficulty facing the new MCA leaders was that they were viewed with apprehension and suspicion by the Tunku and other UMNO leaders with whom they did not enjoy a well-established personal relationship.⁷¹ The Tunku did not feel obliged to select MCA leaders for Cabinet posts on the basis of their standing within the party. A notable example of this was when Too Joon Hing defeated Tan Siew Sin for the post of MCA secretary-general in May 1956, Tan was retained in the Cabinet while Too was dropped as Assistant Minister of Education in the post-Merdeka Cabinet reshuffle. The Tunku himself justified dropping Too from the Cabinet by saying that Too's sympathy for the Chinese education organizations made him ineffective in executing official policy.⁷²

Significantly, members of Tan Siew Sin's faction had rarely been publicly associated with the Chinese education issue while the MCA leaders who had spoken on this issue in the Federal Legislative Council came mainly from the group led by Lim Chong Eu. Lim Lian Geok considered the Tan Siew Sin faction to be antagonistic to the UCSTA and averse to its influence on the MCA through the MCACECC. According to Lim Lian Geok, Y. T. Lee from the Tan Siew Sin faction, had tried to use his

leadership of the MCA Cultural and Education Committee to prevent the MCACECC from having direct access to the Minister of Education. The MCACECC was revitalized as an important channel of communication between the MCA and the Chinese education organizations only after Lim Chong Eu took over leadership of the MCA in March 1958.

The MCA's role in the Ipoh Conference in September 1958 and the National Conference on Chinese Education in Kuala Lumpur in April 1959 exacerbated UMNO leaders' distrust of the new MCA leaders. UMNO leaders felt that as a partner within the Alliance, the MCA should not be joining the teachers and managers in putting pressure on the government. Since Merdeka in August 1957, UMNO had faced pressure from Malay school teachers to act in the opposite direction on education policy, that is, to make Malay the sole medium of instruction in all national schools. But the issue that caused UMNO leaders to come under most criticism was the lack of progress on Malay secondary schools. When the Alliance government failed by January 1958 to establish Malay secondary schools, the Federation of Malay Teachers' Associations had called on its members, who comprised an important majority of UMNO members, to resign from UMNO. Between June and September 1958, the Tunku had been meeting with the Malay school teachers to assure them of UMNO's commitment to the development of Malay education.⁷³

The atmosphere in the few months preceding the 1959 elections became increasingly fractious and tense. While the MCA was concerned at the threat it faced from the Socialist Front and the PPP, UMNO leaders were more worried by the serious challenge posed by the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP), and to a lesser extent by Onn's Party Negara. UMNO leaders clearly thought they were fighting a battle of political survival for the Tunku stepped down as Prime Minister in April 1959 in order to concentrate on campaigning for the elections. The first testing ground would be the state elections. The results of the Kelantan and Trengganu state elections came as a shock to UMNO leaders. In Kelantan, the Alliance was soundly defeated by the PMIP, which won 28 seats while the Alliance managed to hang on to just 2. In Trengganu, the Alliance managed to win 7 seats but still lost control of the state to the PMIP which won 13 seats while Party Negara won 4.

After the losses in Kelantan and Trengganu, UMNO leaders were in no position to consider any compromise on the Chinese education issue as this would damage its image in the eyes of

Malay voters. The Tunku's letter to Lim Lian Geok, accusing the UCSTA of pointing a pistol at the Alliance, was written in June after the Alliance's losses in Kelantan and Trengganu. The Alliance had to make sure it won the parliamentary elections to stay in power. But the PMIP wins in Kelantan and Trengganu had a different effect on the MCA leaders who became anxious that the party should demand an allocation of 35 (or one-third) out of the 104 seats in the parliamentary elections. This would be the only way in which the MCA could safeguard the Chinese against any unfavourable changes to the Constitution given that a two-third majority was required for constitutional amendments. A provisional allocation accepted by the Alliance National Council was that the MCA should get 31 or 32 seats. Meanwhile, Razak and Lim Chong Eu had been meeting regularly to work out an UMNO-MCA agreement on both the allocation of seats and the Chinese education issue.

On 24 June 1959, Lim Chong Eu wrote a private letter to the Tunku to explain the MCA's desire to be allocated 35 seats. Lim Chong Eu's letter also revealed that he had arrived at an agreement on the examinations for Chinese secondary schools issue with Razak which would circumvent the impasse over the conditions for Chinese secondary schools to receive full assistance as part of the national system of education. Lim Chong Eu asked that this should be written into the Alliance election manifesto. The agreement worked out between Lim Chong Eu and Dato Razak was stated in the letter as follows:

Until such time as Malay is fully developed and teaching facilities of Malay are adequately provided in all schools, schools may hold examinations for the purpose of promotion in the medium of instruction.

And provided that Malay shall be a compulsory subject, these promotion examinations shall be recognized by the government as of equivalent standard to the national certificate examinations and accepted as a qualification for the purpose of conforming to the new policy.⁷⁴

It was the release of this private letter by Yong Pung How as the MCA's publicity chairman and its publication in all the leading dailies in the country on 10 July that stopped all the ongoing discussions between Razak and Lim Chong Eu and sparked off an UMNO-MCA crisis.⁷⁵ On 10 July the Alliance National Council was scheduled to make a final decision on the allocation of seats before nomination day on 15 July. The Tunku took the MCA's action in releasing a private letter for public consumption as a

mark of bad faith, indicating that the MCA leaders were prepared to break from the Alliance. In his reply to Lim Chong Eu, the Tunku made it clear that, as far as he was concerned, there could be no room for discussion now that the MCA had made its demands 'public and unequivocal'.⁷⁶ It was now up to the MCA to make concessions if it intended to stay within the Alliance.

In a series of behind-the-scenes meetings, negotiations, and more exchanges of letters over the next two days, Lim Chong Eu tried to work out an agreement with the Tunku that would keep the Alliance intact. But it soon became apparent that Lim Chong Eu would not be able to hold the MCA together on the terms demanded by UMNO leaders while the split within the MCA provided UMNO leaders with the means of keeping the Alliance intact. Tan Siew Sin contended that neither the Chinese education issue nor the exact number of seats to be allocated to the MCA was so critical as to warrant a break with UMNO. He revealed that, with the elections just around the corner, his group was working closely with UMNO leaders with the primary purpose of keeping the Alliance intact. On the other hand, Yong Pung How and Too Joon Hing were insistent that the MCA should stand firm on the demands made in Lim Chong Eu's letter to the Tunku, especially since they were now public knowledge.

On 12 July, the MCA General Committee voted in favour of accepting the Tunku's terms for staying within the Alliance. These were, firstly, that the MCA would be given an allocation of 32 candidates and, secondly, all Alliance candidates, including those from the MCA, were to be selected by the Tunku. It was also made clear that there would be no specific statement on the Chinese education issue in the Alliance Election Manifesto.⁷⁷ However, Ong Yoke Lin announced a week later that the agreement reached between Razak and Lim Chong Eu on this matter would still be implemented.⁷⁸

Unable to abide by the MCA's decision which he described as 'abject surrender', Yong Pung How resigned from the party, convinced that the MCA 'is no longer able to carry out even the main objects for which it was formed'.⁷⁹ Too Joon Hing, S. M. Yong, and Chin See Yin also announced that they were leaving the MCA. More resignations followed. Finally, Lim Chong Eu resigned from the MCA presidency, describing his position as 'untenable'. He left the country towards the end of July for medical treatment.⁸⁰ Thus the MCA lost a significant number of its leaders and members just before the 1959 Parliamentary elections.

For the UCSTA leaders who had hoped that the Lim Chong Eu group might succeed in winning some concessions from UMNO, the political crisis ended their hopes. Their allies within the MCA had been cast out into the political wilderness. Their relationship with the group now in control of the MCA had not been good in the past. Immediately after the crisis, Tan Siew Sin met privately with UCSTA leaders to prevail on them to accept Razak's offer of promotional examinations in Chinese. Tan Siew Sin had already stated that he did not think the Chinese education issue serious enough to warrant a split with UMNO. His main argument when he met the UCSTA leaders was that to compete effectively for better employment and higher education opportunities, Chinese school students had to acquire a high standard of English. They had to show the same competence in public examinations as students from other schools. It was neither practicable nor viable in Tan's view to insist on public examinations being conducted in Chinese.⁸¹

Tan's views were similar to those of Waung Yoong Nien and of Yap Mau Tatt who had, respectively, led the Chung Ling and Chan Wa schools into accepting the government's terms for full assistance. Theirs was a pragmatic view which presumed that the Chinese schools must adjust to the demands of the local situation, even if this meant that the Chinese schools taught most subjects in English and continued only the teaching of Chinese language and literature in the Chinese medium. This was, politically, a more realistic position. The UMNO leaders had not wavered from their stand that public examinations could only be conducted in the official languages of the country since July 1956. Both the Tunku and Khir Johari considered the idea of public examinations in Chinese quite unacceptable. For them, the Chinese school teachers' insistence on this point only confirmed that the latter were not prepared to accept the demands of national integration.⁸²

The UCSTA leaders, however, regarded UMNO's refusal to conduct examinations in Chinese, when the Education Ordinance clearly provided for Chinese to be accepted as a medium of instruction, as unreasonable. To them, the medium of examination had to follow logically from the medium of instruction. They did not accept that this would elevate the Chinese language nor did they consider that it was a slight on the position of Malay as the national language. The presidents of the UCSTA and UCSCA issued a joint statement in August 1959, after meeting Tan Siew Sin, still insisting that examinations should be conducted in the

medium of instruction.⁸³ But the chances of realizing this objective had become very slim now that the two Chinese education organizations had lost their link to the MCA, and, to the Alliance.

*Battle for the Secondary Schools,
August 1960–December 1961*

In the 1959 Parliamentary elections, the Alliance won 74 out of 104 seats and again formed the Federal government. It did not perform as well as in the 1955 elections. The MCA lost 12 out of 31 contests with the gains going to the PPP in Ipoh and the Socialist Front in Penang and Selangor. In Negri Sembilan, the MCA lost two seats to former MCA leaders who contested as independent candidates.⁸⁴

In the Cabinet reshuffle after the elections, Khir Johari was replaced by Abdul Rahman Talib as Minister of Education. A committee headed by Talib was appointed in February 1960, to review education policy.⁸⁵ The Talib Committee had just 9 members, compared to the Razak Committee's 15. The relative representation of the three component parties in the Alliance remained roughly similar with five UMNO representatives (including Khir Johari), one Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) representative, and three MCA representatives (Leong Yew Koh, Wong Pow Nee, and Koh Kim Leng).⁸⁶ For the Chinese education organizations, however, there was a vast change. When the Razak Report was being drafted, MCA representatives on the Razak Committee had maintained close contact with the UCSTA. But this was no longer the case when the Talib Committee was drafting its report. The UCSTA wrote to the three MCA representatives, emphasizing the importance of having public examinations conducted in the medium of instruction and urging them to safeguard the interests of Chinese education. But the MCA representatives on the Talib Committee did not reply. The UCSTA and UCSCA also received no reply from the government in response to their request to be directly represented on the Talib Committee.⁸⁷

In 1956 the MCACECC had presented a single memorandum which expressed the united voice of Chinese education organizations throughout the peninsula. In the absence of a functioning MCACECC, the UCSTA tried a different strategy of getting more voices to speak on behalf of the Chinese schools. The UCSTA submitted its own memorandum and requested all component members of the UCSTA to submit separate memorandums to the

Talib Committee in support of the UCSTA memorandum. The main points of the UCSTA memorandum were support for education policy as stipulated in Section 2 of the 1957 Education Ordinance, emphasis on a common curriculum as the basis of integration, establishment of an Education Advisory Council for Chinese education, and insistence that the medium of examination should be the medium of instruction.⁸⁸ A total of 28 Chinese teachers organizations submitted memorandums to the Talib Committee. The Johore teachers and managers submitted a common memorandum. Memorandums were also sent by other Chinese organizations such as the Kuala Lumpur Federation of Chinese Guilds and Associations and Chinese Associations in Perak. But the UCSCA did not send a memorandum and neither did most of the state Chinese School Committees' Associations (CSCAs).⁸⁹ The three major components in the MCACECC no longer spoke with one voice on issues affecting the Chinese schools.

The Talib Report was released in August 1960. It departed from the approach taken by the Razak Committee which had upheld the principle that an education policy that was to provide a basis for national integration must at the same time fulfil the legitimate cultural aspirations of the different ethnic groups and be acceptable to the people of Malaya. The Talib Report declared that the objective of satisfying 'the legitimate aspirations of each of the major cultural groups who have made their home in Malaya' was 'incompatible with an education policy designed to create national consciousness and having the intention of making the Malay language the national language of the country'. Primary education in the language of the family would be allowed to continue. But, secondary education 'paid for from public funds shall be conducted mainly in the medium of one of the two official languages with the intention of ultimately using the national language as the main medium of instruction'. Other languages and literatures could still be taught, but only as subjects.⁹⁰ The latitude provided by the Razak Report to secondary schools to teach in different languages had disappeared.

Moreover, the Talib Report categorically stated that both the LCE and MCE examinations—being 'official, national and public examinations' and 'linchpins in our national secondary system of education'—should be conducted only in the official languages of the country.⁹¹ Accordingly, the Report proposed that government examinations being conducted specially for Chinese secondary schools would be phased out. Starting from 1961, all pupils in

aided Chinese schools must prepare their students for the LCE and MCE examinations. Chinese schools which did not do so would lose all government aid.⁹²

The Talib Report, therefore, required the Chinese secondary schools to change their main medium of instruction to conform to the national education system. Their students were now to be taught in the language in which the public examinations were to be conducted. The Talib Report noted that this would 'do away with one of the most unsatisfactory aspects of the existing system whereby many pupils are at a permanent disadvantage with their fellows as regards employment prospects and develop an outlook fundamentally different from that of other Malaysians'.⁹³ The Chinese secondary schools must make a choice. If they conformed to national policy as defined by the Talib Report, they could not continue teaching in Chinese. If they continued to teach in Chinese, they must forgo all government aid.

The Talib Report made two important recommendations aimed at increasing and extending general access to education. First, it recommended the abolition of fees at the primary level beginning in 1962 so that the country would move towards the provision of universal free primary education. Pupils in the Chinese primary schools would also enjoy this benefit. Second, the Report recommended that students should be kept in school until the age of 15. Pupils whose MSSEE results were too poor to be admitted into the academic stream of secondary education would be accommodated in post-primary classes offering an emphasis on technical and vocational subjects until they reached the age of 15.⁹⁴

The Minister of Education highlighted these two recommendations when he presented his Committee's report to Parliament on 10 August 1960. He argued that these provisions ensured that the national education system could now offer equality of access and opportunity to all Malaysians. He stressed, at the same time, that the recommendations of the Report did not threaten Chinese culture. Primary education in the Chinese language would be maintained and would now be provided free as part of the national system. In addition, Chinese would continue to be taught as a language in secondary schools.

The Minister claimed that the Report had offered the Chinese secondary schools a way of fitting into the mainstream of the educational system. If they accepted it, their students would have better employment prospects in future. Various measures would be taken to assist the schools and their students in adjusting to this

change. For example, the Talib Report recommended that students spend the first year of secondary school preparing themselves for the change in medium of instruction. The Report made other recommendations regarding the placement of Chinese secondary school staff in government pay schemes. In addition, the government would post more teachers of Malay and English language to the Chinese schools.⁹⁵

The Talib Report was debated in Parliament a week after its release. There were no prior meetings with either Chinese school teachers or managers. The Minister, however, met with the MCA leaders. According to newspaper reports of this meeting, the Minister assured the MCA leaders that Chinese schools which converted to national-type schools in accordance with the principles of the Talib Report, could use up to one-third of the normal school hours to teach in Chinese. The Minister also undertook to discuss with the MCA all details regarding the implementation of policy.⁹⁶

In a last-ditch attempt to resuscitate the MCACECC as their line to the MCA and, perhaps, to UMNO, the presidents of the UCSTA and UCSCA requested Cheah Toon Lock, now MCA president, to convene an MCACECC meeting to discuss the Talib Report. Letters were sent by the UCSTA and UCSCA in September and in October. The MCA president replied to the October letter, saying that arrangements were being made for an MCACECC meeting.⁹⁷ But no further news of a meeting was received. The UCSTA and UCSCA decided to call a meeting of all the Chinese secondary schools on 5 November 1960. There was a sense of urgency as the Chinese press had reported that schools in some states were already considering accepting the government's terms.⁹⁸

The 5 November meeting was attended by more than 100 representatives from Chinese schools and education organizations throughout Malaya. The meeting unanimously adopted eight resolutions, basically rejecting the recommendations of the Talib Report for Chinese secondary schools. The Chinese secondary schools were asked to opt out of the national system and forgo government aid, if the government refused to change its stand.⁹⁹ There was little likelihood of the Alliance government doing so especially since MCA leaders had stated that the party supported the Talib Report. A day before the UCSTA-UCSCA meeting of 5 November, the MCA president had written to say that 'it is obvious that the MCA cannot attend such a meeting' as the Talib

Report had already been approved by Parliament. Instead the MCA president invited a representative each from the UCSTA and UCSCA to meet with MCA leaders on 30 November.¹⁰⁰ The MCA's invitation was accepted and the UCSTA and UCSCA presidents met twice with MCA leaders before the end of 1960.¹⁰¹ These meetings were futile because since the release of the Talib Report in August the UCSTA and MCA had taken diametrically opposed positions on the Talib Report.

The release of the Talib Report sparked a furious debate that went on for more than a year. The UCSTA, led by Lim Lian Geok, condemned the Report as a weapon that was being used by the government to destroy Chinese education. The government, represented by spokesmen from UMNO and MCA, maintained that the Talib Report offered Chinese education in the country a fair deal. In the middle of this debate were the MCs of the 70 Chinese secondary schools to whom both sides appealed. For these 70 schools, the uncertainty since the release of the Razak Report in May 1956 had been replaced by the clarity of the Talib Report. They could either convert to teaching in English or lose all government aid.

Through press statements, radio talks and speeches, the MCA leaders strenuously supported the Talib Report. Cheah Toon Lock, Leong Yew Koh, H. S. Lee, and Lee San Choon were prominent in joining the Minister of Education and Khir Johari in calling on the Chinese schools to accept the Talib Report. The same basic points in favour of the Report were repeatedly made.¹⁰² In calling on the Chinese schools to accept conversion, some MCA leaders, for example Y. T. Lee and Chong Shih Guan, also vouched for the government's 'sincerity in protecting Chinese education and culture'.¹⁰³

The UCSTA launched its campaign after its Executive Committee met on 12 August, two days after Parliament had accepted the Talib Report. Lim Lian Geok expressed 'extreme disappointment' with the Report.¹⁰⁴ Lim released a long statement rebutting the Minister's claim that the Talib Report did not threaten Chinese education or culture. Whereas the Razak Report had recognized the Chinese secondary schools as part of the educational mainstream, Lim contended, the Talib Report required Chinese secondary schools to become English, and perhaps later Malay, schools. The Talib Report could only mean 'the immediate annihilation of the Chinese *secondary* schools'. Furthermore, unlike the Razak Report, the Talib Report proposed 'the gradual

extermination of Chinese *primary* schools' because it explicitly stated that all schools within the national system must ultimately teach in the national language. Lim reiterated the UCSTA's position that Chinese schools did not obstruct the inculcation of national consciousness but would help to integrate Chinese children into Malayan society.¹⁰⁵ The UCSTA's position was backed by supporting statements issued by various Chinese School Teachers' Associations (CSTAs).¹⁰⁶

The sharpest exchanges in the debate over the Talib Report were conducted between Lim Lian Geok and Leong Yew Koh, a member of the Talib Committee and then the Minister of Justice. Able to debate Lim in the Chinese language, Leong led the MCA polemic against the UCSTA with a constant flow of speeches and statements on the good points of the Talib Report, the Alliance government's record on Chinese education, and the importance of young Chinese having opportunities to higher education and socio-economic mobility. Lim Lian Geok led the UCSTA in what he described as 'the final battle for the survival of Chinese education'. He pledged to oppose the Talib Report 'to the bitter end' because it was 'more potent and dangerous' than the 1952 Education Ordinance. It threatened the Chinese secondary schools with immediate destruction by forcing them to change into English schools.¹⁰⁷ The polemic between Leong Yew Koh and Lim Lian Geok became bitterly personal and was marked by insults and name-calling. Leong compared Lim to an itinerant salesman extolling the virtues of his own goods, calling him a 'charlatan' and a 'cheat' who made an issue out of the survival of Chinese education purely 'to take care of his own bread and butter'. Lim denounced Leong as a *hanjian*, that is, a traitor of the Chinese people, and accused him of having 'sold out Chinese interests' for his own personal gain.¹⁰⁸

Lim Lian Geok's speeches took on an increasingly belligerent tone. Totally disenchanted with the Alliance, he observed that there had been three different Ministers of Education since the Alliance came into power in 1955. Each Minister in turn failed to live up to the assurances given by his predecessor. Lim called on the MCs of Chinese schools to uphold their proud tradition of *zili gengsheng* and survive through self-reliance. He appealed to the teachers to sacrifice the attraction of better pay for the preservation of Chinese education and culture. But Lim Lian Geok's messages were beginning to sound like heroic voices in the wilderness as he himself bitterly acknowledged, several decades later. He lamented

that even before the MCs made the final decision to convert to national schools, most of their teachers were already busy calculating the likely increases to their salaries.¹⁰⁹

However, the principals of some of the secondary schools which eventually accepted conversion denied that it was better pay alone that led their schools to convert. They had to consider the long-term prospects for their schools and students. Financial instability would impair the quality of education in their schools while their students would be disadvantaged in the competition for jobs and higher education opportunities if they did not have the LCE and MCE certificates.¹¹⁰

During this critical period, when the MCs of the Chinese secondary schools came under direct pressure from the government, the UCSCA nominally remained united with the UCSTA. Chin Chee Meow, president of the UCSCA, issued statements together with Lim Lian Geok. But most of the state CSCA were conspicuously silent. Perhaps this was because their leaders were also state MCA leaders. But, more likely, most of them, being pragmatic businessmen, saw futility in the UCSTA's heroic stance.

Since 1956, despite repeated appeals from the MCACECC, the government had not backed down from the Twenty Conditions for the acceptance of Chinese secondary schools into the national system. The Talib Report now confirmed that there was not the remotest possibility of any change in the government position. Besides, for members of the MCs familiar with the perennial problem of finding sufficient funds for their schools, conversion had the merit of bringing full assistance from the government. This was an especially important consideration in those states, such as Penang and Perak, where the same group of people sat on the MCs of several schools. Chinese leaders in these two states pointed out the difficulties they would face if all the schools simultaneously had to forgo government aid.¹¹¹

In early 1961 the government intensified its campaign to get the Chinese secondary schools to accept conversion. During the months before the Education Act was promulgated in October 1961, several pamphlets in Chinese were issued which reiterated the benefits of conversion: lower fees, better employment and higher education opportunities for students, better pay and more secure working conditions for teachers, and, reduced financial burden for the MCs.¹¹² More effective, perhaps, were the meetings which state education departments held with the MCs of Chinese secondary schools in their respective states urging them to accept the govern-

ment's terms. State MCA leaders in Perak, Penang, and Selangor also met informally with influential members of Chinese school MCs, urging a similar decision.¹¹³ The Minister of Education visited various states to meet with the MCs of major Chinese secondary schools to reassure them that they had little to lose by accepting conversion.¹¹⁴

Finally, the government decided to silence Lim Lian Geok. On 12 August 1961, Lim was asked to show cause why his citizenship should not be revoked. In issuing this notice to Lim Lian Geok, the Registrar of Citizens alleged that Lim had, since 1957, 'shown himself by speech and action to be disloyal and disaffected towards the Federation'. Lim was accused of 'deliberate misrepresentation of government education policy in a manner calculated to excite disaffection towards the Yang di Pertuan Agong and the Federation of Malaya'. Further, Lim was said to have made 'emotional appeals of an extreme communal nature calculated to promote feelings of ill-will and hostility between different races in the Federation in a manner likely to cause violence'.¹¹⁵ On 19 August 1961, the Registrar of Teachers in Selangor revoked Lim's registration as a teacher.¹¹⁶ The UCSTA protested the action against its president and organized a fund-raising campaign to support his appeal against the revocation of his citizenship.¹¹⁷ One UCSTA leader recalled that the government's action against Lim Lian Geok 'turned the tide'. More and more schools began to opt for conversion.¹¹⁸

For the MCs which finally accepted conversion, two assurances from the government were important. First, converted schools could still teach in Chinese for up to one-third of normal school time. Second, and more importantly, the Minister decided that the schools which converted would be allowed to set up branches to accommodate over-aged students as well as those pupils whose results in the primary schools leaving examinations were not good enough for admission into government secondary schools.¹¹⁹ These two issues had led Foon Yew in Johore to decide to forgo government aid even before the Talib Report. But now the other schools were allowed a branch school which would maintain the Chinese school tradition of not rejecting any students while the main school provided Chinese students the opportunity to enter into the mainstream of national education.

Many schools began to heed the government's call to convert before the end of 1961. Meetings of benefactors of each school were called to make this major policy decision. In some cases, the

benefactors' meetings merely endorsed the decisions of the influential members of the schools' MCs, showing that the main debates had taken place before the meeting. In Penang, for example, benefactors' meetings for the Phor Tay High School, the Penang Chinese Girls' School, and the Union Secondary School were called on the same day, within an hour of each other, with the same person chairing two of the three meetings.¹²⁰

In the case of the Poi Lam High School in Ipoh, however, the MC's decision to accept conversion was not upheld by the school's main sponsor, the Perak Hokkien Association. When the Executive Committee of the Hokkien Association took a vote on the issue, the result was eight votes against conversion, six in favour and one abstention. The issue was then raised at the Council of the Association which voted by secret ballot at a meeting in March 1961. The Council, too, was divided. Twelve votes were cast in favour of conversion and 12 against. The decision on conversion was postponed. There is, unfortunately, no record of how the Executive Committee finally decided in December 1961, to accept conversion.¹²¹ Perhaps by then the Perak Hokkien Association saw scant wisdom in opposing the trend: almost all the Chinese secondary schools in Perak had decided to accept conversion. Chong Soon Fan, the president of the Perak CSCA and a state MCA leader, announced in early January 1962, that with the decision of the last two schools to also convert, 'Perak now has a 100% record and we are proud of it'.¹²²

Throughout November and December, there were reports of schools in Penang, Trengganu, Kelantan, Kedah, Pahang, and Selangor announcing their decision to convert.¹²³ In Kuala Lumpur, two schools converted, but the remaining two chose to be 'independent' (Tables 7.1 and 7.2). The Confucian High School, where Lim Lian Geok had been a senior teacher, decided to convert only after holding two meetings of the MC and two meetings of the benefactors of the school—even then the decision was not unanimous.¹²⁴ Johore proved to be the stronghold of resistance. Six schools joined the camp of independent schools while four decided to convert. The Minister of Education reported to Parliament in January 1962 that by the end of December 1961, 54 out of a total of 71 schools had converted. With this, the government claimed that it had won over the majority of the Chinese secondary schools.¹²⁵ But there were 15 schools which never converted. These followed Foon Yew's example, opted out of the national system, and returned to the tradition of being *minban xuexiaos* or community-supported schools.

TABLE 7.1
Chinese Secondary Schools Which Converted to National-Type
Secondary Schools, 1961

<i>State</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Name of School</i>
Kedah	3	Chio Min (Kulim); Keat Hwa (Alor Star); Sin Min (Sungei Patani)
Penang	9	Chung Ling; Chung Hwa Confucian; Dato Kramat Convent; Heng Ee; Jit Sin; Penang Chinese Girls; Phor Tay; Sacred Heart; Union Secondary
Perak	14	Ave Maria Convent (Ipoh); Chong Hwa (Bidor); Dinding Secondary (Lumut); Hua Lian (Taiping); Nan Hwa (Sitiawan); Pei Yuan (Kampar); Perak Girls (Ipoh); Poi Lam (Ipoh); Sam Tet (Ipoh); San Min (Telok Anson); Shing Chung (Sungei Sipur); Tsung Wah (Kuala Kangsar); Yuk Choy (Ipoh); Yuk Kwan (Batu Gajah)
Selangor	7	Catholic High (Petaling Jaya); Chong Hua (Kuala Lumpur); Chung Hwa (Klang); Confucian High (Kuala Lumpur); Kwang Hua (Klang); Yoke Kuan (Sekincan); Yu Hwa (Kajang)
Negri Sembilan	3	Chan Wa (Seremban); Chi Wen (Bahau); Chung Hwa (Kuala Pilah)
Malacca	3	Yok Bin; Malacca Chinese High; Pulau Sebang Chinese Secondary
Johore	4	Pai Chee (Muar); Pei Chun (Pontian); Pei Hwa (Muar); Seg Hwa (Segamat)
Trengganu	1	Chung Hwa Wei Sin
Kelantan	2	Chung Cheng (Kota Bharu); Chung Hwa (Kota Bharu);
Pahang	8	Cameron Highlands Secondary; Catholic High (Bentong); Chung Ching (Raub); Chung Hwa (Kuala Lipis); Hwa Lian (Mentakab); Khai Mun (Bentong); Kuantan Secondary; Triang Secondary
Total	54	

Source: Jiaozong Jiaoyu Yunjiu Zhongxin (comp.), *Jiaozong 33nian*, Kuala Lumpur, 1987, p. 469.

Note: Three other schools, two in Perak (one founded in 1960 and the other in 1961) and one in Perlis (founded in 1961) were not included in this list because they, unlike the schools listed above, conformed to government policy from the beginning.

TABLE 7.2
Chinese Secondary Schools Which Did Not Convert
to National-Type Secondary Schools, 1961

State	Number	Name of School
Penang	1	Han Chiang
Selangor	4	Kuen Cheng (Kuala Lumpur); Tsun Jin (Kuala Lumpur); Hin Hwa (Klang); Pin Hwa (Klang)
Negeri Sembilan	2	Chung Hwa (Seremban); Chung Hwa (Port Dickson)
Malacca	1	Pay Fong
Johore	6	Chung Hwa (Kluang); Chung Hwa (Muar); Chung Hwa (Rengit); Chinese High (Yong Peng); Chinese High (Batu Pahat); Foon Yew (Johore Bahru)
Total	14	

Source: Jiaozong Jiaoyu Yanjiu Zhongxin (comp.), *Jiaozong chengli sanshisan zhounian: Huamen jiaoyu shihao* (zhongce), Kuala Lumpur, 1984, p. 48.

Note: The total should be 16 but two schools in Perak were left out by the above source. They are Shen Jai (Ipoh) and Yu Ching (Pantai Remis). Shen Jai was founded in 1960 and Yu Ching in 1962.

1. *SCJP*, 14 September 1957.

2. Reports of circulars received by schools in different states were published in *SCJP*, 11 May 1957; *SPJP*, 9 August 1957, 18-20 October 1957; and *CKP*, 18-19 October 1957.

3. Razak Report, paras. 110-14, Appendix 5 and 6.

4. *Ibid.*, para. 40 and Appendix 8. These boards were called Instruments of Management, in the case of primary schools, and Instruments of Government, in the case of secondary schools, in the 1957 Education Ordinance, sect. 43-45.

5. *Ibid.*, para. 110.

6. Letter from UCSTA to Chairman of MCA Cultural Subcommittee, 9 October 1957, reprinted in Jiaozong Jiaoyu Yanjiu Zhongxin (comp.), *Jiaozong 33nian*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, 1987, pp. 402-4.

7. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1990, Vol. 2, pp. 35-44.

8. See *SPJP*, 5 October 1957, and *CKP*, 7 October 1957 and 28 October 1957, for reports on the two schools' decision; see *CKP*, 8 October 1957 and *NYSP*, 31 October 1957, for statements by the MCs of the schools.

9. For a detailed study of the controversy over Chan Wa's decision to convert in October 1957, see Chan Suet Mien, 'Kontroversi Penukaran Taraf Sekolah

Menengah Chan Wa, Seremban, Oktober 1957–Disember 1957', BA academic exercise, Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1994–5.

10. *GKP*, 28 October 1957.

11. *SPJP*, 3 November 1957. See also the MCACECC statement prepared for the meeting with the minister in *Jiaozhong Jiaoyu Yanjiu Zhongxin* (comp.), *Jiaozhong chengli tanshisanian: Huawen jiaoyu shiliao*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, 1984, Vol. 1, pp. 49–50.

12. Lim Lian Geok, *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, p. 37.

13. The full text of the Minister's letter and the press statement issued by him was reproduced in *SPJP*, 8 November 1957.

14. 'Minutes of an Emergency Meeting of the MCACECC on 11 November 1957', Gwee Yee Hean Personal Collection. See also *GKP* and *SPJP*, 12 November 1957 for reports of the meeting.

15. *Ibid.*

16. This was ascertained from the official record of minutes of the UCSCA Executive Committee held in the UCSCA office.

17. *GKP*, 30 October 1957.

18. *SCJP*, 8 November 1957.

19. *Ibid.*, 19 December 1957.

20. *SPJP* and *NYSP*, 15 November 1957.

21. Interview with Chan Yik King, Penang Inspector of Chinese Schools, 16 March 1981.

22. Reports of the demonstrations were carried in all the major dailies; see *SCJP* and *NYSP*, 15 November 1957. *SPJP*, 15 November 1957, had more details on the Penang demonstrations. See also Lim Lian Geok's account of the demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur schools in his *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 209–21.

23. See *SCJP*, 18 November 1957 and 5 December 1957, for Lim's statement and the MCACECC statement, respectively.

24. *Ibid.*, 18 November 1957 and 20 November 1957. See also Richard Clutterbuck's discussion in his *The Long, Long War: The Emergency in Malaya, 1949–1960*, London: Cassel, 1967, p. 31.

25. *SPJP*, 19 November 1957.

26. *SCJP*, 22 November 1957.

27. *Ibid.*, 26–28 November 1957.

28. *Ibid.*, 17 November 1957.

29. *Straits Times*, 19 November 1957. See also its editorial on 24 November 1957.

30. Interview with Chan Yik King, Penang, 17 October 1980.

31. 'The Singapore Chinese Middle Schools' Students' Union', Singapore Legislative Assembly Session Paper No. 53 of 1956, p. 1. See also Clutterbuck, *Rise and Revolution in Singapore and Malaya, 1945–1963*, London: Faber and Faber, 1973, Ch. 7 and Yeo Kim Wah, *Political Development in Singapore, 1945–55*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1973, Ch. 5, for more discussions of CP/M activities amongst secondary school students.

32. *SPJP*, 27 November 1957.

33. See Lim Lian Geok's account of his meeting with students in various schools in Kuala Lumpur in *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 1, pp. 209–21.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *NYSP*, 21 November 1957. See also its editorial on 24 November 1957.

36. *FM, Proceedings of the Second Federal Legislative Council*, 4 November 1957.

for the Agong's speech; 5 December 1957 for the Tunku's speech; and 7 December 1957 for the others.

37. According to a report in the *NYSP*, 22 December 1957.
38. R. K. Vasil, *Politics in a Plural Society: A Study of Non-communal Political Parties in West Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 115-21.
39. *Ibid.*, pp. 232-3.
40. K. J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967, pp. 187 and 200.
41. FM, *Proceedings of the Second Federal Legislative Council*, 7 December 1957.
42. *Ibid.*, 12 December 1957.
43. *Ibid.*, 11 December 1957.
44. *Ibid.*, 22 October 1958.
45. *Ibid.*, 11 December 1958.
46. Annual Report of the UCSTA, 1958, UCSTA Files. See also Lim Lian Geok's account of this meeting in his *Fengyu shiba nian*, Vol. 2, pp. 36-44.
47. Letter from Lee Tee Siong to Too Joon Hing, 17 May 1958, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. See also *CKP*, 18 May 1958.
48. 'Minutes of UCSTA Executive Committee Meeting', 27 May 1958, UCSTA Files.
49. *CKP*, 2 June 1958.
50. 'Mahua Gonghui Huawen Jiaoyu Zhongyang Weiyuanhui zhaokai quanMa Huawen jiaoyu dahui jilu', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers; cited henceforth as 'QuanMa Huawen jiaoyu dahui jilu'. According to the *NYSP*, 21 September 1958, there were 260 representatives present at this meeting.
51. *Ibid.*
52. *Ibid.*
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Straits Times*, 29 November 1957.
55. 'QuanMa Huawen jiaoyu dahui jilu.'
56. *Daily Press Summary No. 217/58*, 28 September 1958.
57. Letter from the Secretary-General of UMNO to T. H. Tan, 17 December 1958, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.
58. FM, *Proceedings of the Second Federal Legislative Council*, 22 October 1958.
59. 'Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Working Committee of the MCACECC, 14 November 1958' and 'Minutes of the Fourth Meeting of the Working Committee of the MCACECC, 22 March 1959', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.
60. This statement is reproduced in full in *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 430. See *GKP*, *NYSP*, and *SCJP*, 27 April 1959, for detailed reports of the meeting. See Appendix 5 for details.
61. *GKP* and *SCJP*, 27 April 1959.
62. Annual Report of the UCSTA, 1959, UCSTA Files.
63. 'Minutes of a UCSTA Executive Committee Meeting, 19 June 1959', UCSTA Files.
64. A copy of this letter was appended to the 'Minutes of a Meeting of the Alliance Executive Committee Held on Thursday, 2 July 1959, at 4.30 p.m. in Kuala Lumpur', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. It is reproduced in *Jiaozong 33nian*, p. 84.
65. *SFJP*, 14 July 1959.
66. See Roy Haas, 'The MCA, 1958-1959: An Analysis of Different

Conceptions of the Malayan Chinese Role in Independent Malaya', MA thesis, Northern Illinois University, 1967, Chs. 4-7; Daniel Eldridge Moore, 'The UMNO and the 1959 Elections', Ph.D. thesis, University of California, Los Angeles, 1960, Ch. 8; Chan Heng Chee, 'The Malayan Chinese Association', MA thesis, University of Singapore, 1965, Ch. 3; Vasil, *Politics in a Plural Society*, pp. 25-31 and Lee Kam Hing, 'MCA dalam Peralihan 1956-1959', in *Malaysia: Sejarah dan Proses Pembangunan*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1979, pp. 208-17, for accounts of the UMNO-MCA crisis of July 1959.

67. Alice Scott-Ross, *Tan Dato Sir Cheng Lock Tan: A Personal Profile by His Daughter*, Singapore: Alice Scott-Ross, 1990, p. 299.

68. 'Minutes of a Meeting of the MCA General Committee, 23 March 1958', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

69. Lee Kam Hing, 'MCA dalam Peralihan'.

70. See R. K. Vasil, *Ethnic Politics in Malaysia*, New Delhi: Radiant Publishers, 1980 and Karl von Vorys, *Democracy without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975, for detailed discussions of the dynamics of intra-Alliance politics.

71. This point is made in several of the studies cited above. It was confirmed personally by the Tunku in an interview in Penang on 26 May 1983. The Tunku said he always felt that Tan Cheng Lock, Tan Siew Sin, H. S. Lee, and Ong Yoke Lin were frank and open with him while the new breed of MCA leaders were not.

72. Interview with Tunku Abdul Rahman, Penang, 26 May 1983.

73. John Funston, *Malay Politics in Malaysia: A Study of UMNO and PAS*, Petaling Jaya: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980, pp. 50-1. See also discussions of UMNO's political problems on the eve of the 1959 elections in Moore, 'UMNO and the 1959 Elections'.

74. The full text of the letter was printed in all newspapers on 10 June 1959 after it was released by MCA Headquarters.

75. Haas, 'The MCA, 1958-1959', pp. 155-7.

76. Reply from the Tunku to Lim Chong Eu, as cited in Moore, 'UMNO and the 1959 Elections', p. 297.

77. See detailed reports in *CKP*, 13 July 1959 and discussions in citations in n. 66 above.

78. *CKP*, 21 July 1959.

79. From the statement issued by Yong, as cited in Haas, 'The MCA, 1958-1959', p. 169.

80. *Ibid.*, pp. 169-71.

81. See *SPJP*, 14 July 1959, for statements issued by Lim Lian Geok and Liu Huai Kook, vice-president of the UCSTA, after their meeting with Tan Siew Sin. Tan no longer remembered this particular meeting but confirmed that these were his views then and have remained his views since. Interview with Tan Siew Sin, Kuala Lumpur, 16 October 1982.

82. Interviews with Tunku Abdul Rahman, Penang, 26 May 1983, and Mohammed Khir Johari, Kuala Lumpur, 16 March 1985.

83. *CKP*, 7 August 1959.

84. See Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process*, Ch. 6 and Gordon Means, *Malaysian Politics*, London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1970, Ch. 14, for discussions of the 1959 elections.

85. *SCJP*, 19 February 1960.

86. FM, *Report of the Education Review Committee, 1960*, Kuala Lumpur: 1960, p. ii, cited henceforth as the Talib Report.
87. Annual Report of the UCSTA, 1960, UCSTA Files.
88. *Ibid.*
89. See Appendix 9 of the Talib Report.
90. Talib Report, paras. 17-20.
91. *Ibid.*, paras. 173-4.
92. *Ibid.*, paras. 164, 183, and 187.
93. *Ibid.*, para. 184.
94. *Ibid.*, Chs. 4 and 5.
95. FM, *Proceedings of the First Parliament, First Session, 10 August 1960*.
96. *SCJP*, 8 August 1960.
97. Letters from Lim Lian Geok and Chin Chee Meow to Cheah Toon Lock, 20 September 1960 and 17 October 1960; letter from Cheah Toon Lock to Lim Lian Geok and Chin Chee Meow, 22 October 1960, UCSTA Files.
98. Annual Report of UCSTA, 1960.
99. *SCJP* and *CKP*, 6 September 1960. The *SCJP* estimated that there were 130 representatives from 70 schools while the *CKP* reported that there were more than 100 persons representing 69 organizations and schools.
100. Letter from Cheah Tun Lock to Lim Lian Geok and Chin Chee Meow, 4 November 1960, UCSTA Files.
101. Annual Report of the UCSTA, 1960.
102. These were usually published in full in the Chinese press. The *SCJP*, for example, carried such statements intermittently from the beginning of August 1960 until August 1961.
103. *Siaran Akhbar*, Chinese version, 12 November 1961.
104. 'Minutes of a UCSTA Executive Committee Meeting, 12 August 1960', UCSTA Files.
105. See text reproduced in *Jiaozong 33mian*, pp. 438-9.
106. *SCJP*, 20 August 1960-16 October 1960.
107. All quotations taken from a selection of Lim's speeches on the Talib Report from August 1960 to August 1961, as reprinted in UCSTA Secretariat (comp.), *LinLiang Gongan*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1988. This volume also contains a selection of Leong Yew Koh's main speeches during the same period.
108. *Ibid.*
109. Interview with Lim Lian Geok, 2 April 1982.
110. Interviews with Fu Jingxi, then headmistress of Phor Tay Secondary School, Penang, 14 September 1981; Huang Huizhen, then headmistress of Union Institution, Penang, 24 March 1982; and Huang Qingyi, then headmaster of Poi Lam Secondary School, Ipoh, 19 March 1980.
111. Interviews with Choong Han Leong, 10 October 1980 and Tan Hoay Eam, 16 January 1980, both in Penang; also interviews with Yeoh Kim Tian, 26 November 1980 and Tan Koon Poon, 30 August 1982, in Ipoh.
112. Pamphlets entitled *Huawen jiaoyu yu wenhua wendi*, *Malaya Lianhebang jiaoyu zhengce gangyao*, and *Zhi gewei fumu jiazhang de yifong gongkai xin*, issued by the government, undated but all related to explaining different aspects of the Talib Report, Too Joon Hing Personal Papers. See also cyclostyled pamphlet entitled *Government's Education Policy: Questions and Answers*, 10 July 1961, ANM.

113. This was substantiated by interviews: Chan Yik Kiang, then Inspector of Chinese Schools in Penang, 17 October 1980 and Choong Han Leong, then a member of the Management Committee of several Chinese schools in Penang, 10 October 1980; Tan Koon Poon, Bai Rui Xiang, Wei Zhenguao, all members of the Management Committee of the Poi Lam High School in Ipoh on 19 March 1980; Lim Hong Too, then the headmaster of the Chung Hwa High School in Muar, 15 December 1980. MCA leaders in Kuala Lumpur, for example, played a key role in getting the Confucian High School to convert. See Jiaozong Jiaoyu Yanjiu Zhongxin (comp.), *Huawen Zhongxue gaizhi zhuanji*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, 1986, pp. 34-8.
114. Some of these were reported in the Chinese press; see, for example, *SCJP*, 20 September 1960, 11 March 1961, 9 August 1961, and 28 September 1961.
115. *Straits Times*, 12 August 1961. See the full text of the Registrar of Citizen's Notice of Intention to Deprive Citizenship in UCSTA Secretariat (comp.), *Lin Lianyu Gongminquan an*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1989, pp. 11-12.
116. See Notice of Revocation of Registration as Teacher in *ibid.*, pp. 14-15.
117. See *Jiaoshi Zhazhi*, Vol. 3 No. 1 (June 1962), containing various speeches and articles by UCSTA leaders on the Lim Lian Geok affair. Lim's protracted fight against the revocation of his citizenship was taken up to the Privy Council. He finally lost this battle in November 1964. See *Lin Lianyu Gongminquan an* and the discussion of Lim's case in Visu Sinnadurai, 'The Citizenship Laws of Malaysia', in Tun Mohamed Suffian, H. P. Lee, and F. A. Trindade (eds.), *The Constitution of Malaysia—Its Development: 1957-1977*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 87-8.
118. Interview with Loot Ting Yee, Kuala Lumpur, 10 April 1980.
119. These points were made by the interviewees cited in nn. 111 and 113 above. The Minister's concession on these two points were also reported in *CKP*, 16 July 1961 and *Siaran Akhbar*, 24 October 1961.
120. *KWYP*, 16 October 1961.
121. '1961nian Pili Fujian Gonghui huiwu baogao shu' and '1962nian Pili Fujian Gonghui huiwu baogao shu'.
122. *Straits Times*, 23 January 1962.
123. *KWYP*, 16 October 1961 and *SCJP*, intermittently in November and December 1961.
124. See Jiaozong Jiaoyu Yanjiu Zhongxin, *Huawen Zhongxue gaizhi zhuanji*, pp. 34-8.
125. FM, *Proceedings of First Parliament*, Third Session, 18 January 1962. See note to Table 7.1 for possible reasons for the inconsistency in numbers of schools cited by the Minister and Chinese education sources.

Conclusion

THE history of the Chinese Education Movement, from its genesis in 1951 to its dissolution in 1961, can be subdivided into three main stages. There was a period of initiation from 1951 to 1954 in which the main objective was opposition to British policies. This was followed by a second stage, from January 1955 to August 1957, in which leaders of the movement entered into crucial compromises with Alliance leaders. In the third stage, which began after Merdeka, there was confrontation and crisis leading finally to the dissolution of the movement in 1961. At each of these stages, the Chinese Education Movement was part of major social and political changes in Chinese society which were, in turn, related to the larger transformations going on in Malayan society.

The underlying factor which gave the Chinese Education Movement its *raison d'être* was the existence of Chinese schools in every town and practically every village with a substantial Chinese population. These schools had been established, financed, and managed entirely by the Chinese themselves. There was deep emotional attachment to the schools which were looked upon as community projects, agencies of cultural transmission, as well as institutional symbols of self-reliance. More importantly, the schools served a social need which the British were unable or unwilling to meet. This was especially clear from 1945 to 1955 when the Chinese schools experienced particularly dramatic growth to meet the massive demand for education from a permanently settled and rapidly growing Chinese population.

Yet these schools faced an uncertain future because the prevailing British and Malay view was that the Chinese schools were barriers to the integration of young Chinese into Malayan life. The Barnes Report of 1951 called on both the Chinese and Indians living in Malaya to accept a single system of schools teaching only in English and Malay and to abandon their own languages, schools, and cultures. The objective of British policy, stated more clearly in the 1952 Education Ordinance and the 1954 White Paper, was to create a single system of schools which taught mainly in English. Official policy, therefore, threatened to totally exclude the Chinese

schools from the national education system.

The release of the Barnes Report in 1951 was the catalyst which activated a movement to defend the Chinese schools. The Chinese Education Movement gathered strength between 1951 and 1954 as the colonial government persisted in its policy of promoting English education as the basis of Malaya's national education system. Chinese school teachers saw the promotion of English as an attempt by the British to strengthen their hegemony over Malaya before political independence was attained. Supporters of the Chinese schools feared that the colonial government would, with the support of Malay leaders, close the Chinese schools or force them to convert into English or Malay schools. These are the historical roots of recurrent anxieties, persisting until today, that the powers of the state can, at any time, be used to eliminate the Chinese schools.

The British did not succeed in closing down, or edging out, the Chinese schools for two reasons. First, with the Emergency at its height, the colonial government was reluctant to take harsh measures against the Chinese schools as this would have alienated more Chinese. Second, and no less important, the British were simply not able to provide alternatives to the Chinese schools which were meeting a critical need for more education created by the post-war baby boom.

Forced to accept that the Chinese schools were not easy to displace, the British initiated changes that ironically paved the way for the eventual incorporation of the Chinese schools within the national system. A new system of aid, introduced in 1952, brought the primary schools within the ambit of tighter state control. More significantly, starting from 1952, new syllabuses and textbooks were specially produced for the Chinese schools. This helped the schools to shed some of their alien character and become more Malayan in orientation.

The main objective of the Chinese education movement, from the very beginning, was to secure a *legitimate* place for the Chinese schools within the future national education system of the Federation of Malaya. Chinese school teachers were the most vocal and active group within the Chinese education movement. This group has often been type-cast as 'narrow chauvinists' or 'extremists' who failed to recognize, or refused to meet, the demands of integrating into Malayan society. However, this study has shown that the teachers were aware of the need for the Chinese to adjust to a changing political world and realized that they

needed to engage in interethnic bargains and compromises in the Malayan situation.

First, the teachers helped to bring about changes in the Chinese schools. They realized that the schools must discard their old China orientations and take on the new task of educating young Chinese to be future citizens of Malaya. At its inaugural meeting in 1951, the United Chinese School Teachers' Association (UCSTA) resolved that Malay should be taught in all Chinese schools. From 1952 UCSTA representatives worked closely with officials in the Education Department to produce textbooks with a Malayan orientation to replace those imported from China.

Second, UCSTA leaders like Lim Lian Geok, who had become Malayan citizens, began to articulate a new political identity for the Chinese. Between 1951 and 1954, the UCSTA became an important new voice in Chinese politics in Malaya. The UCSTA leaders espoused a vision of the Malayan nation as a multi-ethnic and multicultural society in which there would be equal treatment and respect for the languages and cultures of all races. The Chinese schools, they argued, had a legitimate place together with Malay and Indian schools within a Malayan system of education. The debate over education policy and the future of the Chinese schools thus became part of a larger discourse on the status and rights of the Chinese within the Malayan nation. This took the Chinese education issue into the centre of Malayan politics.

The emergence of the UCSTA had coincided with the MCA's attempt to establish itself as the political voice of the Chinese. A period of exceptional unity within Chinese society began in November 1952 when Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) leaders joined teachers and Management Committees (MCs) of the Chinese schools to mount a common campaign in defence of Chinese education. With the formation of the Malayan Chinese Association Chinese Education Central Committee (MCACECC), three important groups within Chinese society were brought together under the MCA's leadership. Through the MCACECC, Tan Cheng Lock won the confidence of the UCSTA leaders and drew them into the interethnic bargains being conducted within the Alliance as Malaya headed towards political independence.

The historic January 1955 meeting in Tan Cheng Lock's home in Malacca marked the beginning of the second stage in the history of the Chinese education movement. At this meeting, United Malays National Organization (UMNO) leaders promised not to destroy the languages, schools, and cultures of the various races. In

exchange, the UCSTA undertook not to raise the issue of Chinese as an official language until after the 1955 elections. Moreover, the Chinese teachers agreed to support the Alliance in the elections while the Alliance promised a change in education policy if it came to power.

The essence of this bargain became part of the Alliance Election Manifesto for the July 1955 elections and formed the basis of the Razak Committee's recommendations in 1956. Historically, therefore, the Malacca meeting and the Razak Report should be considered part of the pre-independence pact between the leaders of the two major ethnic groups in this country. It was through this historic bargain that the Chinese education movement won a place for the Chinese *primary* schools *within* the national system of education.

The Razak Report departed from British policies by emphasizing a common curriculum as the key to integrating the Malay, Chinese, Tamil, and English primary schools within the national system of education. The contentious issue of a single language of instruction was side-stepped by focusing on the more urgent objective of making primary school education available to every child. The Report also allowed secondary schools to teach in different languages but specified that all schools in the national system must prepare their students for two new public examinations. The language in which these public examinations were to be conducted became the critical issue. Leaders of the Chinese education movement wanted the examinations to be conducted in Chinese but UMNO leaders thought that public examinations should only be conducted in the official languages of the country.

Between 1956 and 1957, attempts to resolve the examinations issue, and the related problem of accepting Chinese secondary schools within the national system, were delayed by, and became entangled with, negotiations on the Merdeka Constitution. During this critical period, all sides refrained from pushing their demands to the hilt. The main reason for exercising restraint was the common objective of wanting an end to British rule.

Until Merdeka was achieved in August 1957, the UCSTA, MCA, and UMNO were locked in an intricate balancing of positions. The UMNO and MCA leaders had to defend the Alliance position on key points of the Merdeka Constitution in the face of conflicting demands from Malays and Chinese. On education policy, the Alliance kept to the main points of the Malacca agreement in drafting the 1957 Education Ordinance while a final decision on the

terms for accepting Chinese secondary schools into the national system was postponed. In return, the UCSTA leaders helped to stave off a *shetuan* challenge to the MCA while the MCA leaders continued to persuade UMNO leaders to relent on the examinations issue.

But both the UCSTA and MCA leaders were unrealistic in hoping for a change of mind by UMNO leaders on the examinations issue after Merdeka. In fact, UMNO leaders had throughout wanted public examinations to be conducted only in the official languages of the country. Three factors further militated against any compromise from UMNO. First, UMNO leaders were antagonized by peninsula-wide demonstrations by Chinese secondary school students in November 1957 and refused to engage in any more discussions on the issue. Second, the MCA leadership was split between those who wanted to push harder for concessions from UMNO and those who refused to jeopardize unity within the Alliance. Third, and most importantly, UMNO leaders faced mounting criticisms from the party's rank and file, Malay school teachers and younger Malays, for being too slow in establishing Malay secondary schools and too soft on the issue of Malay as the sole medium of instruction.

As the 1959 general elections loomed, UMNO leaders were far too concerned about the party's support from the Malay electorate to consider making any concessions to the Chinese. Confrontation between UMNO and the MCA became inevitable as a new MCA leadership pushed for concessions from UMNO in order to win more Chinese electoral support for the Alliance. The unresolved issue of examinations for Chinese secondary schools was a contributory factor to the mounting tension between the UMNO and MCA. This finally erupted in a political crisis in July just before the parliamentary elections. In the fall-out after the crisis, the Chinese Education Movement was one of the casualties.

Thus July 1959 was the turning-point for the Chinese Education Movement. The UMNO-MCA crisis ended with the departure of those MCA leaders who had maintained close links with the UCSTA. The MCACECC died a quiet death and the UCSTA was marginalized by the Alliance. The UCSTA leaders felt betrayed when UMNO leaders rejected all further negotiations with the UCSTA and ignored the latter's views in the writing of the Talib Report and the 1961 Education Act. After the release of the Talib Report, the UCSTA and MCA, formerly allies within the Chinese Education Movement, hurled bitter recriminations

and accusations at each other. The unity symbolized by the MCACECC had ended. The MCA never recovered its position as *the* premier Chinese political party, a position it had commanded between 1955 and 1959. Without the MCA as its ally, the Chinese Education Movement lost its political arm and, at the same time, its claim to undivided support within Chinese society.

The passing of the 1961 Education Act signalled the final break between the UCSTA and the Alliance. There was no further ambivalence on the issue of language. Public examinations for secondary schools would only be conducted in either English or Malay. The Act stipulated that the Chinese schools must *convert* to schools teaching in English in order to receive full government aid as Sekolah Menengah Jenis Kebangsaan or National-Type Secondary Schools. To gain acceptance into the national system, therefore, the schools must stop teaching in Chinese.

The Chinese secondary schools immediately became the site for a battle between the MCA in alliance with UMNO against the UCSTA as both sides fought to win the schools to their respective positions. Many of the teachers, principals, and the MCs who lived through the 'battle for the Chinese secondary schools' in 1961 remember it as a time of intense debate and endless argument. Many of them, when interviewed in the early 1980s, vividly recalled how they agonized over which way their schools should go. On the one hand, full government aid offered the prospect of financial stability, better pay and more secure working conditions for teachers, and more opportunities for students. On the other hand, there was the moral appeal of the UCSTA to retain the essential character of a Chinese school by teaching in Chinese.

A few years earlier, a similar battle had been fought over the Chung Ling High School in Penang, the premier Chinese secondary school in the Federation. The drama over Chung Ling's conversion in 1956 had highlighted the deep divide within the school, and within Chinese society, between the pragmatists who were prepared to forgo the use of Chinese as a medium of instruction for full government aid and those who saw this as a betrayal of fundamental principles. In 1961 the other Chinese secondary schools faced the same dilemma—of choosing between socio-economic advancement and cultural attachments and also between the benefits of belonging within the national mainstream and the uncertainties of an autonomous existence outside it.

By the end of 1961, 54 out of 70 schools had accepted the government's terms. For the UCSTA, there was only the consolation

that the 16 schools which refused to join the national system included some of the biggest and best known of the Chinese secondary schools. The UCSTA lost its leader when the government revoked Lim Lian Geok's citizenship and denied him the right to continue with his profession as a teacher in August 1961. But Lim continued to be regarded as the greatest figure in the Chinese Education Movement and has been deified after his death as the movement's martyr.¹

For a decade after the battle over the conversion of the Chinese secondary schools in 1961, both the UCSTA and United Chinese School Committees' Association (UCSCA) lost their fervour and dynamism. After the formation of Malaysia in September 1963, the Chinese Education Movement paled in significance compared to the conflict between the Alliance and the Malaysian Malaysia movement led by Singapore's Peoples' Action Party which ended with Singapore's separation from Malaysia in 1965. There was a brief flurry of excitement just before the National Language Act was enacted in 1967 when Sim Mow Yu, then president of the UCSTA as well as vice-chairman of the MCA Youth Section, tried to resurrect the issue of Chinese as an official language. Sim was expelled from the MCA in a move that clearly showed that the MCA did not want to be implicated in the UCSTA's campaign.²

Throughout the history of the Chinese Education Movement from 1951 to 1961, the UCSCA had been the less active and quieter of the two Chinese education organizations. In the 1970s, however, the UCSCA became more prominent and dynamic after it was reinvigorated by the entry of new leaders, including several young and highly educated professionals. In contrast, the UCSTA lost much of its former vigour probably because most Chinese school teachers, except for those in private Chinese schools, were now government employees.

The new UCSCA leadership responded immediately to a renewal of interest in Chinese education which was generated by the campaign to save the private Chinese secondary schools in Perak. These had begun as branches of those schools which had joined the national system in 1961. Their existence was threatened by very low enrolments and poor facilities. The campaign which began in Ipoh in early 1973 rapidly spread to the smaller towns and outlying districts of Perak. It drew strong support from virtually all levels of Chinese society. Barbers, hawkers, shopkeepers, trishaw-pedlars, and taxi-drivers contributed a day's income to help save the schools. From Perak the campaign then spread to

Selangor and was soon dubbed 'The Renaissance of the Independent Chinese Secondary Schools'.³

The UCSCA established a Working Committee to investigate the problems of the Chinese secondary schools operating outside the national system. This Committee's proposals gave the schools a fresh sense of purpose and direction. Since the mid-1970s, the UCSCA has tried to draw all 37 private Chinese secondary schools on the peninsula and 23 similar schools in Sabah and Sarawak into an organized system of *Duli Zhongxue*, or Independent Chinese Secondary Schools (ICSS), that could compete more effectively with the National-Type Secondary Schools.

Several working committees set up by the UCSCA designed a common curriculum and produced new textbooks in Chinese specially for the ICSS. The UCSCA has also been conducting two examinations paralleling the two major public examinations for national secondary school students. These examinations are not recognized by the Malaysian government but the UCSCA has succeeded in getting them recognized as the basis for entry into a wide range of tertiary institutions in Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, the United States, and Australia. More recently, the ICSS examinations have also been accepted by the private colleges in Malaysia which conduct twinning programmes with universities abroad.⁴

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the renewed interest in the ICSS has manifested itself in donation drives to provide the schools with new buildings or better facilities and recruitment campaigns to increase student intake. From Perak and Selangor, this campaign has spread to other states, including Kelantan and, more recently, to Penang. Thus, the ICSS have recovered from their doldrums in the 1960s and today have succeeded in attracting a sizeable number of students in many states.⁵

In 1974 the UCSCA also started a campaign to establish a Chinese university in Malaysia, an idea first mooted by the UCSTA in 1967. The UCSCA leadership organized a *yiren yiyuan*, or a dollar a person, fund-raising campaign to demonstrate the extent of Chinese support for the proposed Merdeka University. But the Barisan Nasional government rejected the application to set up the Merdeka University. The Merdeka University was the centre of a political controversy that persisted until a Federal Court ruling in 1982 upheld the government's decision to disallow such an institution.⁶

The Merdeka University campaign attracted mass Chinese support, even from those who were not Chinese-educated, because it

became a channel for Chinese frustrations with the New Economic Policy (NEP). The NEP was launched in 1971 to remedy social and economic problems diagnosed as the underlying causes of the May 13 racial riots in 1969. Implementation of the NEP restricted non-Malay admission into tertiary institutions and set ethnic quotas for recruitment and promotion to higher level jobs in the public sector. Most non-Malays felt that they were discriminated by such measures.

Three other factors contributed to non-Malay fears of Malay political dominance in the 1970s. Following almost immediately after the 1969 riots, the Minister of Education invoked Clause 21 (b) of the 1961 Education Act to proclaim that the conversion of English primary schools into Malay schools would begin in 1971. This was followed, in 1977, with a similar change in medium of instruction for English-medium secondary schools, including the former Chinese schools which had joined the national system in 1961. By 1983 universities were required to use Malay as the main medium of instruction. Thus, more than 25 years after the Razak Report, the ultimate objective of Malay being used as the main medium of instruction was realized.

Second, UMNO's position within the ruling coalition became much stronger after the replacement of the tripartite Alliance with a multiparty coalition, the Barisan Nasional. Third, in the cultural sphere, the government began to promote what it proclaimed as a National Culture Policy, the central feature of which was that Malay culture should be accepted as the core component of Malaysian culture. This prompted major Chinese organizations, including the UCSTA and UCSCA, to respond with counter-statements that a truly Malaysian culture must provide more space for the cultures of other ethnic groups.

The resurgence of the Chinese Education Movement in the 1970s thus began in a political atmosphere of increased ethnic polarization and greater interethnic tension. A detailed reconstruction of this second phase lies outside the scope of this study. But the foregoing is sufficient as a basis for some comparisons with the original movement. The most significant common factor in both phases is that the Chinese education issue became a central focus of Chinese politics because it was bound up with other issues facing the Chinese. Support for Chinese education issues represented support for Chinese rights which were perceived as being denied or threatened by state policies.

Between 1951 and 1961, the main objective of the Chinese Education Movement was to win a place for the Chinese schools *within* the national education system. This was part of a larger struggle in which the Chinese were seeking a definition of their rights as citizens in a new nation-state. From 1971, however, the main focus shifted to supporting Chinese educational institutions *outside* the national system, such as the ICSS and the proposed Merdeka University. This was part of Chinese efforts to find alternative channels for education, through self-reliance and community-based institutions, when the public sector could not meet their expectations due to the NEP.

Another notable difference in the revived Chinese Education Movement of the 1970s was that it became more broad-based and better known outside Chinese-educated circles. Through the Merdeka University issue, the *Dongjiaozong*, the Chinese acronym referring jointly to the UCSTA and UCSCA, came to be known as a defender of Chinese rights. In the 1980s, the *Dongjiaozong's* concerns reached outside the limitations of Chinese politics when its leaders began to join non-communally based Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in opposing government policies and legislations beyond the issues of language, education, and culture.

The *Dongjiaozong's* participation in the broad-based opposition to the 1981 Societies (Amendment) Act was one notable example. Its support for the Papan citizens' protest against the location of a dump for radioactive waste in their neighbourhood was another. More recently, the *Dongjiaozong* has joined several NGOs in protests against the government's failure to provide public access to Environmental Impact Assessments of the Bakun Dam in Sarawak before embarking on its implementation.⁷

In addition, the *Dongjiaozong* leaders have since 1982 variously experimented with different entry points into electoral politics. In 1982, the *Dongjiaozong* leaders openly campaigned on behalf of two candidates fielded by the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia, a Chinese-based component party within the ruling Barisan Nasional. This was part of a pre-election pact between the Gerakan and the *Dongjiaozong* which subsequently broke down after the *Dongjiaozong* leaders were criticized by their detractors within the organizations and by the opposition Democratic Action Party (DAP) for, in effect, supporting the Barisan.

In the 1986 general elections, the *Dongjiaozong* leaders did not openly support any party or candidates in the elections but were

believed to have engaged in discussions with Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS), the major Malay opposition party. In the prelude to the 1986 elections, PAS was exploring ways of getting non-Malay electoral support. This generated much discussion amongst Chinese organizations and in the Chinese dailies as to whether links with PAS represented a viable way to mount a more effective challenge to the Barisan Nasional coalition. In 1990, a handful of well-known *Dongjiaozong* personalities left the Chinese education organizations to contest the elections as DAP candidates, to presumably strengthen non-Malay opposition to the Barisan. After these experiments, the two Chinese education organizations have since returned to a non-partisan stand in electoral politics.

Finally, both phases of the Chinese Education Movement bear an important similarity—they ended with repressive state action. The UCSTA's campaign against Alliance policy in 1961 ended with its president being deregistered as a teacher and being deprived of his citizenship. In 1987 there was, for a fleeting few months, a rare display of Chinese unity on an issue related to Chinese education when the *Dongjiaozong* leaders were joined by MCA, Gerakan, and DAP leaders in a mammoth protest against the appointment of non-Mandarin-educated Chinese to key administrative posts in Chinese primary schools. The appointment of Chinese who are not literate in Mandarin to key posts in Chinese schools is seen as one of the ways in which administrative powers can be used to dilute or erode the 'essential characteristics' of the schools.

As if in a replay of the mounting tension which led to the UMNO-MCA crisis of 1959, the furore over the issue of appointments contributed to an intense quarrel between UMNO and its partners in the Barisan Nasional—the MCA and Gerakan. However, the tense atmosphere of October 1987 evoked not memories of the 1959 crisis but fears of another interethnic conflagration resembling the 1969 riots. In the end, the crisis was defused but only after the government detained 119 persons, among them the presidents of both the UCSTA and UCSCA, a vice-president of the UCSTA, as well as two other persons closely associated with the UCSCA.

The 1990s have, so far, been a period of relative calm as the Malaysian economy came out of the economic recession of the 1980s and consistently registered impressive rates of growth. The Barisan Nasional won one of its most impressive electoral victories in 1995 when it captured 162 out of 192 seats in the Federal

Parliament. It was within such a scenario that a new Education Bill was passed in December 1995. In comparison to the 1961 Education Act which it replaced, there was markedly less tussle or excitement before, during, and after the passage of the new Bill. Nevertheless, the new Bill does imply some significant changes for the Chinese schools.

The 1961 Education Act, which remained in force for 34 years, drew a clear distinction between schools within the national system which were supported by public funds and those outside the system which were relatively free of state control but had to rely totally on private funding. This distinction has now been abolished by the Education Bill of 1995 which emplaces *all* schools *within* the national system.⁸ But inclusion within the national system does not mean that all schools will be supported by the state. Rather, as explained by the Minister of Education when he presented the Bill in Parliament, the main objective is to provide the state with more control over the private schools.

The 1995 Bill states that Malay should be the *main* medium of instruction within the national system. Whether this means that the majority of the schools must use Malay or that all schools are to teach mainly in Malay is presumably open to interpretation. In addition, the new Bill also requires all schools to conform to a National curriculum and to prepare their pupils for prescribed examinations.⁹ The 1995 Education Bill, therefore, sets a different kind of framework for the ICSS which had since 1961 functioned relatively free of direct state control as privately funded schools.

Now technically part of the national system, the ICSS may come under any regulations issued by the Ministry to all private schools. But other private schools, unlike the ICSS, do not teach in Chinese and are run as commercial enterprises, not community-funded institutions with a history of affiliation with the Chinese Education Movement. Thus new anxieties have arisen that the ICSS could lose some of their autonomy as well as some of their special characteristics.

The Minister of Education has given his assurance, both in Parliament and during meetings with Chinese leaders outside Parliament, that the new Bill will not change the status quo as far as the ICSS are concerned.¹⁰ This implies that the ICSS will be allowed to continue teaching mainly in Chinese. The Minister has also given his assurance that the UCSCA will be allowed to continue conducting its two major examinations for the ICSS. But these are assurances given orally and were not written into the Bill

itself. It is true that the new Education Bill gives the Minister of Education the power to waive, or impose, many of its specific provisions. But this, in fact, opens up a wider range of issues for negotiations and therefore also for dispute. Anxieties over the ICSS are therefore likely to persist and could mount if and when the Minister decides to impose, rather than to waive, some of the provisions which impinge on the ICSS.

On the other hand, the new Education Bill has removed one persistent source of concern for the Chinese Education Movement in the past. The Chinese primary schools now appear to have a more secure position within the national system. Primary schools teaching in Malay are still known as National Primary Schools, distinguishing them from those teaching in Chinese and Tamil which are differentiated as National-Type Primary Schools. But, unlike in the 1961 Act, there is now no clause empowering the Minister to convert schools of the latter type into National Primary Schools.

Will the implementation of the 1995 Education Bill lead to yet another resurgence of interest in Chinese education issues, thrusting the *Dongjiaozong* again into the centre stage of Malaysian politics? From our comparison of the original Chinese Education Movement of 1951 to 1961 and its resurgence from 1971 to 1987, it is clear that both phases coincided with crucial periods of social and political transformation in Malaysian society. In both phases, Chinese education became a central issue in Chinese politics in Malaysia because it was closely linked to a wide range of issues affecting many Chinese. Whether interest in Chinese education issues will surge dramatically once more will, therefore, depend on whether another historical moment arises in which issues related to Chinese education become linked once again with questions of political status and cultural identity as well as with issues of access to education opportunities and social mobility.

1. See UCSTA Secretariat (comp.), *Lin Lianyu xiansheng rongai teji*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1986 and also UCSTA Secretariat (comp.), *Zuhun Lin Lianyu*, Kuala Lumpur: Lim Lian Geok Foundation Committee, 1991.

2. For some discussion of this, see Margaret Roff, 'The Politics of Language in Malaya', *Arian Survey*, 7, 5 (1967): 316-28 and Tan Puay Ching, 'The Role of the UCSTA in the Struggle for Chinese Education and Language Status, 1960-1969', *Southeast Asian Journal of Educational Studies*, 21/22 (1984/5): 1-78.

3. For a survey of this, see Huawen Duli Zhongxue Gongweihui (ed.), *Pilizhou Huawen Duzhong fuxingshi*, Ipoh: Perak CSCA, 1976.

4. For a brief discussion of the ICSS in the early 1980s, see Tan Liok Ee, 'Varying Responses to Changing Demands: Chinese Independent Schools in West Malaysia', in Jennifer Cushman and Wang Gungwu (eds.), *Changing Identities of the Southeast Asian Chinese since World War II*, Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 1988. See also Dongzong chuban xiaozu (ed.), *Disan jie quanguo Huawen Duli Zhongxue xingzheng renyuan yantaohui ziliao ji (chouyinben)*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSCA, 1983 for reports by UCSCA officials on various aspects of ICSS development.

5. Foon Yew High School in Johore, the first to 'go independent' in 1958, is today the biggest of the ICSS. In 1992, it had 5,552 students while three other ICSS in Johore had enrolments of well over 1,000. In Kuala Lumpur, Chung Hwa had an enrolment of 4,135 in 1992 while two others had enrolments of over 1,000. There were, in 1992, a total of 46,576 pupils enrolled in ICSS in Peninsular Malaysia and another 11,636 pupils in ICSS in Sabah and Sarawak. For a national survey of the ICSS in 1992, see Dongjiaozong Quanguo Huawen Duzhong Gongweihui (ed.), *1992nian Huawen Duzhong zaijie xuesheng wenjuan diaocha baogaoshu*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSCA, 1992 and *1992nian Malaixiya Huawen Duli Zhongxue ziliao diaocha baogaoshu*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSCA, 1992.

6. See Loot Ting Yee (ed.), *Jiaoshi Zhazhi Duli Daxue Zhuanhao*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, 1968 and Jiaozong Jiaoyu Yanjiu Zhongxin (comp.), *Jiaozong 33nian*, Kuala Lumpur: UCSTA, 1987, pp. 555-66, for accounts of the Merdeka University campaign. For a discussion of the Federal Court decision, see Visu Sinnadurai, 'Rights in Respect of Education under the Malaysian Constitution', in F. A. Trindade and H. P. Lee (eds.), *The Constitution of Malaysia: Further Perspectives and Developments*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1986, pp. 46-58.

7. On the Societies Act, see Gurmit Singh, *Malaysian Societies: Friendly or Political*, Petaling Jaya: Environmental Protection Society Malaysia, 1984; on Papan, see Sahabat Alam Malaysia, *Papan Radioactive Waste Dump Controversy*, Penang, 1984.

8. See Section 16 of the 1995 Education Bill. The only exceptions are schools for expatriate children.

9. See Sections 17-19 of the 1995 Education Bill.

10. For the Minister's assurances when presenting the Act in Parliament, see *Pernyataan Resmi Parlimen*, Dewan Rakyat, Parlimen Kesembilan, Penggal Pertama, 1995, ruangan 60-61.

Appendices

APPENDIX 1 Constitution of the MCACECC

1. Name and Address:

This Committee shall be called 'The Malayan Chinese Association Chinese Education Central Committee' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Committee'). The Committee shall be attached to the Malayan Chinese Association Headquarters.

2. Objects:

The objects of the Committee so long as they are designed to protect and promote Chinese culture, without prejudice to the objects of the Malayan Chinese Association, shall be:

- (a) To study, decide and act on the policies pertaining to Chinese education in the Federation, without being involved with political problems.
- (b) To unite the School Committees and the teachers so as to improve the Chinese schools and to promote the cause of Chinese education in the Federation.
- (c) To discuss, promote and manage the affairs pertaining to the development and amelioration of the Chinese schools in the Federation.
- (d) To improve the relationship of the School Committees, the teachers and other related bodies.
- (e) To help or represent the Chinese schools in the Federation in any negotiation with the Government on all matters relating to Chinese education.
- (f) To strive for the equal status of Chinese education in the educational system of this country.
- (g) To assist Chinese schools in the Federation in solving their financial difficulties.

3. Organization:

- (a) The Committee shall consist of 10 representatives each of the Malayan Chinese Association Headquarters, the Chinese School Committees' Association and Chinese School Teachers' Association in various parts of the Federation plus 3 *ex officio* members (the President of the Malayan Chinese Association, the

President of the Federation Chinese School Committees' Association and the President of the Federation Chinese School Teachers' Association).

- (b) The Committee shall be the highest organ to decide on matters relating to Chinese Education within the Malayan Chinese Association.
 - (c) The President of the Malayan Chinese Association shall be the *ex officio* Chairman of the Committee. In any meeting when the President is unable to attend, he shall appoint a representative from among the Committee members to preside.
 - (d) The Committee shall have besides the Chairman one Treasurer, one Assistant Treasurer, one Secretary-General and one Deputy Secretary-General, to be appointed by the Committee from amongst its members, and shall have the power to employ, when necessary, certain number of Assistant Secretaries.
 - (e) The Committee shall not interfere with the internal affairs of the Malayan Chinese School Committees' Associations and Teachers' Associations and shall not necessarily be bound by the decisions of the said respective bodies.
 - (f) The decisions of the Committee affecting the internal affairs of the Malayan Chinese School Committees' Association and Teachers' Association shall not be executed unless the consent of the said respective bodies has been first obtained.
4. Election and Appointment of Members:
- (a) Members of the Committee shall be elected in the following manners: Every State or Settlement School Committees' Association shall elect a representative (Kedah and Perlis to elect only one) to be a member of the Committee with a total of 10 representatives in the Federation; every State or Settlement Teachers' Association shall do likewise; and the MCA Headquarters shall send 10 representatives. In addition, there shall be 3 *ex officio* members, making a total strength of 33 persons.
 - (b) In the case of a State or Settlement being unable to elect constitutionally its representatives, the Chairman shall appoint certain persons in their stead, so long as these other persons are from the same organization in the same State or Settlement.
 - (c) The term of the Committee members shall be two years, but the nominating bodies may change or replace their representatives from time to time.
 - (d) Members of the Committee shall be persons interested in and acquainted with Chinese Education. They must also be able to attend frequently meetings of the Committee.
 - (e) Any member of the Committee absenting himself from two consecutive meetings without sufficient excuse shall automatically cease to be a member of the Committee, and the vacancy shall be filled by the nominating body.

5. Veto:
The Committee shall be bound by a system of veto. Any resolution vetoed by all the representatives of either the Malayan Chinese Association, or the School Committees' Association or the Teachers' Association who are present at the meeting (at least half of the representatives of the constituent body must be present) shall be dropped.
6. Meetings:
At least 2 meetings of the Committee shall be convened every year. The quorum of a meeting shall be 15. Members shall be notified of the meeting at least four (4) weeks prior to the meeting.
7. General Meetings:
The Committee shall have the power to call meetings to discuss matters relating to Chinese education in any form and at any time when it deems fit.
8. Advisory Committee:
The Committee may, when necessary, appoint and organize an Advisory Committee but the duties of the said Advisory Committee shall be limited to giving advice.
9. Subcommittees:
The Committee shall have the power to appoint subcommittees to deal with various specific problems when it deems fit.
10. Finance:
 - (a) The running expenses of the Committee shall be borne by the Malayan Chinese Association.
 - (b) Funds required by the Committee for special purposes shall be raised by the constituent bodies and their representatives on the Committee depending on the needs required.
 - (c) All monies of the Committee shall be kept and managed jointly by the President, Secretary Generals and the Treasurers with the proviso that the principles laid down by the Committee must be adhered to.
11. Amendment to Rules:
The Rules of the Committee may at any time be amended upon the majority decision of the members present, but the proposal to amend the Rules shall have been placed on the Agenda of the meeting when it is proposed to discuss the amendment of the Rules.
12. Dissolution:
The Committee upon the proposal of all the representatives of any two of the three constituent bodies shall be declared dissolved by the Malayan Chinese Association.

Source: 'Minutes of the Second Meeting of Chinese School Committees and Teachers in the Federation and Representatives of the Malayan Chinese Association', Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

APPENDIX 2

Minutes of a Meeting on Chinese Education on
12 January 1955 at 5 p.m.

at the Residence of Dato Sir Cheng Lock Tan in Malacca

Present:

Tengku Abdul Rahman	Mr Cho Yew Fai
Dato Sir Cheng Lock Tan	Mr Ong Keng Seng
Mr Leong Yew Koh	Mr Chua Tian Keong
Dr Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman	Mr Goh Chee Yan
Inche Aziz bin Abdul Ishak	Mr Lim Lian Geok
Inche Bahaman bin Samsuddin	Miss Sha Yun Yeo
Col. H. S. Lee	Mr Chai Jen Pin
Mr Leung Cheung Ling	Mr Shen Mo Yu
Mr Ong Yoke Lin	Mr Kung Cheong Thai
Mr Chong Khoon Lin	Mr T. H. Tan
	Mr Wen Tien Kuang

Mr Lim Lian Geok, Chairman of the Federation Chinese Teachers' Association, distributed copies of a written statement on Chinese Education (attached) to the above-named Alliance leaders and the representatives of MCA Chinese Education Central Committee, Chinese teachers and Chinese school managers.

Tengku Abdul Rahman opened the meeting by stating that he agreed with the following statement made by teachers: 'Our textbooks are now being revised to suit the Malayan background. We want to improve our Malay and English studies. We want to train our pupils to be loyal Malaysians and improve our relationships with other schools, Malay, English and Indian. But we also want to preserve our schools, our language and culture.'

Sir Cheng-lock joined in by emphasizing the special importance of making Chinese loyal Malaysians, as there had been much accusation from various quarters that Chinese were disloyal and that they wanted to turn Malaya into the 19th Province of China.

Tengku Abdul Rahman said that if the Alliance were returned to power, it would see to it that the Chinese were given a chance to preserve their schools, language and culture.

Mr Wen asked if this constituted a promise to try to amend the Education Ordinance, 1952, and the White Paper on Educational Policy, which were considered a threat to the existence of Chinese schools. The Tengku's reply was in the affirmative.

Col. Lee said this should not imply that the Alliance, if it won the elections, would be bound to amend the Education Ordinance and the White

Paper. He suggested that the Alliance could only consider the question, as there would be other parties in the future Council holding different views on the matter.

Sir Cheng-lock said that, at his last meeting with the High Commissioner, the latter mentioned that there was only one word ("replace") in the Ordinance which might be undesirable to the Chinese: The High Commissioner was prepared to consider deletion of that word.

Mr Lim Lian Geok said that there was no question that the Ordinance threatened the existence of Chinese schools, as there was provision there to replace Chinese schools with national schools and to withdraw grants-in-aid to Chinese schools (Sections 18 to 20). This must be corrected through legal procedure.

The meeting agreed that if there were provisions in the Education Ordinance and the White Paper which threatened the existence of Chinese schools, the Alliance should consider amending them, but the proper time to do that would be after the Alliance came to power.

Tengku Abdul Rahman further stated that while he, in principle, did not dispute that Chinese schools should be allowed to open new classes, as mentioned in the statement by the teachers, he would like to know approximately how much recurrent expenditure this would entail.

Mr Wen replied that both the managers and the teachers had an informal discussion yesterday and that they agreed that the Chinese schools would require in 1955 an extra sum of two million dollars to allow normal expansion and increase of salaries—one million for primary schools, and another million for secondary schools.

Sir Cheng-lock said that the High Commissioner, in a letter to him, mentioned that Government was spending on Chinese pupils studying in both English and Chinese schools \$136.50 per capita. This was higher than what the Malay pupils were costing the Government. The argument, however, was that Chinese education should be separated from English education.

Mr Wen pointed out that the figure quoted by the High Commissioner did not tally with that quoted by the Member for Education, and it was not known which figure was right, if right at all.

Mr Lim Lian Geok said that if the figure of \$136.50 per capita quoted by the High Commissioner was right, then the expenditure in 1955 on the education of Chinese in both English and Chinese schools (numbering in all 330,000 i.e. 70,000 in English schools and 260,000 in Chinese schools), would be about forty-five million dollars. But only about five million dollars had been earmarked for 260,000 pupils in Chinese schools in the Federal budget for 1955, and it was clear that most of the remaining forty million would go to the 70,000 Chinese students in English schools. He questioned the justice of this.

Dr Ismail asked if, by increasing the grant by two million dollars to Chinese schools, it would mean that the Government should reduce the expenditure on educating Chinese pupils in English schools?

Tengku Abdul Rahman stated that this would complicate the issue. Two million dollars were comparatively a small sum and the Alliance should be able to give favourable consideration to this request.

Mr Wen pointed out that even if this were additional to what was already given, it would work out only at a few additional dollars extra per capita.

The meeting was generally of the opinion that the extra two million dollars as recurrent expenditure for Chinese schools should be considered favourably.

Tengku Abdul Rahman read out the following sentence from the written statement of the teachers: 'If Malaya is an independent country, the first language should be Malay and the second should be Chinese.'

This, Tengku stated, would imply that Chinese would be one of the official languages in this country. He could not agree to this as he thought the people, especially the Malays, were not ready for it. The UMNO, of which he was the President, must abide by the wishes of the Malay people. He could not go against the people, even if he were in sympathy with the request.

Others present joined the Tengku by stating that our political enemies were watching the Alliance carefully in this matter and trying to make use of this as a weapon to break up the Alliance. Already it was alleged that Malays (UMNO) has been bought over by the Chinese.

The teachers were urged to realize that the large majority of the voters in this country were Malays, and nobody could afford to go against their wishes.

Mr Lim replied by saying that judging from the number of people using the Malay and Chinese languages as means of communication, it would not be wrong to say that Malay was the first language and Chinese was the second language. However, the Chinese teachers did not, in the least, wish to jeopardize the Alliance's chances of winning the elections. In this matter, the teachers would listen to the advice of their leader, Sir Cheng-lock, who had urged that the question of official languages be shelved.

At this point, Inche Aziz formally suggested that Chinese teachers should give an assurance that the question of Chinese becoming one of the official languages would not be brought up again until after the Federal Elections.

Mr Lim Lian Geok, on behalf of the teachers, stated that in view of the assurances given by the Tengku earlier in the meeting, Chinese teachers would give the assurance asked for by Inche Aziz. But he, in turn, wanted an assurance that the Alliance, in its election platform, would specifically state that the existence and development of Chinese schools would not be jeopardized. Tengku Abdul Rahman stated that in view of possible misgivings which might arise out of this, he would only recommend mentioning in the Alliance platform that the educational policy based on the White Paper (which was, in turn, based on the Education Ordinance, 1952) would be re-examined. The Chinese teachers must have confidence that

he would carry out what he promised. Furthermore, there were so many of the Alliance Round-table members present, and they, too, had agreed to what he said.

Col. Lee suggested that the Alliance could mention in the platform that it would not be the Alliance's policy to destroy the schools, language and culture of any race. The meeting agreed.

The teachers and managers were satisfied with this, having been first assured that Chinese schools would be allowed normal development within the limits of finance.

Col. Lee mentioned that in the view of the Government, it would not be appropriate to place the Chinese Education Central Committee under the MCA, which is a political party. If the Government were to consult the MCA on educational matters, it would also have to consult other political parties.

Mr Leong Yew Koh stated that as Chinese education was a matter which affected Chinese community, the MCA should deal with Chinese education in accordance with the objects of the Association. There was nothing to stop Government from consulting anybody or any parties if it so wished.

Mr Wen explained that Chinese education, as distinct from Malay education, needed protection by the Chinese themselves. The Chinese must present a united front in view of the danger facing Chinese schools. Chinese education was the heart of the Chinese community, and for this reason, the MCA must not, and could not, avoid the issue. The MCA needed the support of Chinese education circles as much as the latter needed the support of the MCA.

Mr Leong Yew Koh enquired as to why the managers and the teachers carried on separate negotiations with Government. This should be the sole responsibility of the Central Education Committee.

Mr Wen explained that this was done as a follow-up action of the negotiation between Sir Cheng-lock and the High Commissioner. Actually both the managers and the teachers were not empowered to negotiate with the Director of Education. They were merely asked to hear what he had to say. They must report back to the Central Education Committee for necessary decision.

The meeting terminated at 6.30 p.m.

Source: Too Joon Hing Personal Papers; also available in Tan Cheng Lock Papers (Document IX/155), Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore.

APPENDIX 3

Extract from 'Merdeka within Four Years'—Alliance Election
Manifesto for the 1955 Federal Election

Education

1. The Alliance policy in regard to Education, briefly, will be:
 - (a) To give top priority to Education in general;
 - (b) To reorientate Education to a Malayan outlook;
 - (c) To increase literacy;
 - (d) To increase education facilities including the building of schools of a utilitarian rather than luxurious type and the introduction of morning and afternoon sessions in more schools;
 - (e) To expand the establishment of secondary modern schools and vocational schools;
 - (f) To give financial assistance to Muslim religious schools in appropriate cases;
 - (g) To allow the vernacular schools their normal expansion;
 - (h) To encourage rather than destroy the schools, language or culture of any race living in the country;
 - (i) To re-examine the Education Ordinance 1952 and the Federal Legislative Council Paper No. 67 of 1954 on Education;
 - (j) To review the provisions of the Business Licensing and Registration Ordinance which was enacted to finance Education;
 - (k) To train more teachers locally;
 - (l) To provide free primary education as soon as possible.

National Schools

2. The Alliance policy is to establish a type of national school that will be acceptable to the people of Malaya and will meet with their needs in promoting their cultural, economic, social and political development as a Nation, so as to facilitate the fulfilment of the Alliance aim to adopt Malay as the National language of the country.
3. The Alliance is convinced that the introduction of National School features into vernacular schools as envisaged in the Federal Legislative Council Paper No. 67 of 1954 is not acceptable to the people.

Malayanization

4. As already stated, one of the cardinal points of the Alliance educational policy is to reorientate Education to a Malayan outlook.
5. The Alliance considers that the standardization of textbooks is most important. Textbooks similar in substance with Malayan outlook should be produced in all the languages used in the country, i.e. English, Malay, Chinese and Tamil. Our children should be taught to think as Malaysians.

6. Every encouragement should be given to extra-curricular activities, such as Boy Scouting, Girl Guiding, Cadet Corps, etc., to provide the opportunity for the children of all races to mix freely and grow up in friendship. Inter-school meetings will be a great help in this matter.

Scholarships

7. As a general principle, Federal scholarships should be centrally controlled. Scholarships should be awarded for studies abroad, for studies in our own schools and Universities, and for post-graduate studies abroad. Bursaries and other assistance will be provided for deserving and needy students.

Private or Ra'ayat Schools

8. Every encouragement will be given to private or ra'ayat schools run by voluntary bodies, religious bodies and public organizations, so long as they conform to the national education policy. Financial assistance will be given to such schools within the limits of Federal finances.

Other Types of Schools

9. Existing provisions for religious instruction, estate schools, special schools, secondary modern and vocational schools, and other forms of useful education for aborigines and others, will be continued, and steps taken to effect improvements wherever possible and desirable.

University of Malaya

10. The Alliance will press for the establishment of more faculties in the Federation. Among the more urgently needed are the departments of Public Administration, Commerce, Agriculture, Accountancy, Engineering and Law.

Other Universities

11. The Alliance will encourage the development of Universities, as it considers that the more Universities the country has, the better for the people.

Grants-in-Aid

12. In view of the Alliance policy outlined above, the Alliance will make every effort to accord equal treatment to all aided-schools within the limits of Federal finances, so that more opportunities will be given to all children of school age to receive education.

APPENDIX 4
Twenty Conditions for Conversion into
National-Type Secondary Schools, December 1956

Ref. M. for E. 171/56

Ministry of Education
Federation of Malaya
Federal House
Kuala Lumpur
7th December 1956

Supervisor,

Sir,

The Minister for Education, Federation of Malaya, acting upon the advice of the 15-man Advisory Committee on Education, has decided that existing Secondary Schools who agree to convert the whole or a part of their schools to National-Type Secondary Schools may be offered grant-in-aid appropriate to such National-Type Schools w.e.f. 1st January 1957 for those parts so converted.

Attached to this letter as Schedule 'A' are the conditions to which existing Secondary Schools must agree to conform before full grant-in-aid can be paid.

In the case of the present Aided English Schools the aid will be unchanged if they conform. The most important new conditions will be that they must introduce the teaching of the National Language and arrange for the teaching of the Muslim Religion for Malays progressively in Form I in 1957, in Forms I and II in 1958, in Forms I, II and III in 1959 etc. They will also have to make arrangements for the teaching of Malay, Chinese and Tamil to those pupils whose parents request it (if 15 or more so request). They will have to follow the syllabuses and allocation of time to subjects laid down under Regulations made by the High Commissioner-in-Council.

In the case of the present unaided English Schools, the same principles will apply but more reorganization and raising of standards, both physical and educational will usually be necessary. The ages of pupils must also be brought within the proper limits for all classes. It may, however, be possible for some unaided English Schools to qualify for full aid in 1957 for the first year of the course if they limit admissions to the 1st year (Form I) and who are of the correct age. In this way, an unaided English School could be converted into an aided National-Type Secondary School progressively, one form per year, over a period of five years.

In the case of the Chinese Secondary Schools, it will also be necessary for the school to conform to the same syllabuses and the allocation of time

to subjects laid down by the High Commissioner-in-Council. The normal secondary school course will be for five years but it will, however, be permissible to have a preliminary Remove Class before the first year for those pupils who are of the correct age and come from a primary school using a different main language medium or where the necessary second language medium is not up to the required standard. The approval for this must be obtained from the Minister. The teaching of the National Language will also have to be introduced progressively starting with Form I and Remove in 1957 in exactly the same way as in other National-Type Secondary Schools. As these changes can only be carried out gradually it will usually be necessary to bring them in progressively starting with full conformity and full aid for those first year and Remove classes which are composed of pupils who are educationally qualified and within the limits of age allowed by the Education Report, 1956. Naturally the other higher classes not converted to the new type will continue on their present footing.

In all schools the number of classes in the Remove and first year eligible for the full grant upon conversion must be such as will produce a pattern of school with such number of streams that will ensure that the school will not exceed the limits recommended in para. 105 of the Education Report 1956, except with the special permission of the Minister. This may mean planning for another school building for which an application for capital grant could be made subject to two years' notice being given. In some places it may be necessary to establish new schools.

Owing to the complicated structure of the total salaries of teachers in some existing Secondary Schools, a basic salary for each teacher employed in respect of the new aided first year classes would be not less than each such teacher's salary as at 1st November 1956. School fees would also be fixed by the Minister and, generally speaking, in the case of existing Chinese medium schools would mean a substantial reduction thereby lightening the parents' burden.

Many existing Secondary Schools have long-standing connections with primary schools. Whilst there is no desire to interfere with such arrangements fully aided National-Type Secondary Schools, after having accepted for entry qualified pupils from the Primary Schools with whom they are connected, would be expected to give next preference for entry to those primary school pupils who have passed the Primary to Secondary Promotion Examination from other primary schools. Again the age limits for entry to Secondary Schools recommended at Appendix No. 6 to the Education Report 1956, would be enforced.

It would, therefore, be appreciated if you would discuss this offer at a formal meeting of your school committee and after consultation with the Chief Educational Officer of your region, signify your agreement or otherwise in the letter attached as Schedule 'B' to this letter.

The payment of additional grant must inevitably depend upon the provision of funds for this purpose by the Legislature. Nothing in this

letter must, therefore, be taken as binding the Government to pay full grant to your school though it is hoped that it will be possible to do so if your school accepts.

(E. M. F. PAYNE)
Director of Education
Federation of Malaya

Schedule 'A'

- (i) To govern the school with an Instrument of Government or Instrument of Management as the case may be, with Articles of Government or Rules of Management as recommended in the Education Report, 1956 and in accordance with the provisions of any regulations or rules made under the aforesaid ordinance or any other written law.
(Based on Appendix 8 of the Report and Section 23 of the Education Ordinance, 1952).
- (ii) To enter into an Agreement with the appropriate authority.
- (iii) To make arrangements for religious instruction as recommended by para. 121 of the Report of the Education Committee, 1956 and for the teaching and learning of the National Language and the English Language in the school in such classes as the Minister shall direct and for the teaching of the Chinese and Tamil languages where the parents of fifteen or more pupils so desire and where these languages are not used as the main medium of instruction.
(Para. 71 of the Education Report, 1956 and application of para. 63 to Secondary Schools)
- (iv) To ensure that the time tables and syllabuses for the courses of instruction are in accordance with those approved by the High Commissioner-in-Council for the appropriate type of school.
(Conditions laid down in Appendix 7)
- (v) That no child born in Malaya or of Malayan parents outside Malaya who is of the correct age and educationally eligible for the standard or form for which he or she applies shall be refused admission to a vacancy in the school solely on account of race or religion.
(Conditions laid down in Appendix 7)
- (vi) That no child shall be admitted to any class or retained in any class who is above the age prescribed by the Minister in rules except with the approval as provided for in these rules.
(Conditions laid down in Appendix 7)
- (vii) To provide such teachers with such minimum qualifications as the Minister shall direct within the establishment provided for in the

- Agreement and undertake that this establishment shall not be altered in regard to persons, numbers of persons or their status without the consent of the appropriate authority.
- (viii) To provide such accommodation for approved classes and such playing space as shall be laid down by the Minister in rules and undertake that such accommodation or playing space shall not be increased, decreased or in any way altered without the consent of the appropriate authority.
 - (ix) Not to allow the total number of pupils on the register of the school to exceed the number laid down in the Agreement nor the number of pupils in any one class to exceed forty without the consent of the appropriate authority given in writing.
 - (x) Not to allow the number of classes in the school to exceed the maximum set out in the Agreement without the consent of the appropriate authority.
 - (xi) To admit if required by the Minister to appropriate classes in the school with remission of school fees pupils nominated by the appropriate authority up to 20 per cent of the number of places provided in the new buildings subsidized as to not less than half of the cost from capital grants by such appropriate authority.
(Capital grants condition in Appendix 7)
 - (xii) To maintain and uphold discipline among the pupils of the school in obedience to the proper orders of the Governors or Managers, Headmaster or Assistant Masters of the school.
 - (xiii) To collect from teachers and other employees of the school such contributions by deduction from salary as may be established by law for the purpose of any approved Provident Fund or Pension Scheme and to collect fees from pupils according to rules made by the Minister.
 - (xiv) To provide in the school facilities for teaching practice at the request of the Minister for teachers-in-training under any approved scheme of training.
 - (xv) To maintain standards of Education appropriate to the type of school and course as are in the opinion of the Chief Inspector of Schools satisfactory.
 - (xvi) To provide a five-year course of secondary education with a Malayan orientation appropriate for children between the ages of twelve and nineteen: 'Provided that where pupils pass from a primary school using one language medium to a secondary school using another language medium it shall be permissible to provide for such pupils a transitional class to be known as remove for the year before commencement of the normal secondary school course.'
 - (xvii) Not to admit to the school except with the written consent of the Ministry any pupil who has not been selected for secondary education by an examination approved by the Minister.

- (xviii) To arrange the curriculum of the school in such a way as to prepare candidates after the third year of the five-year course for the Lower Certificate of Education.
(Para. 76)
- (xix) Not to allow any pupil, except with the written consent of the Minister, to proceed to the final two years of the five-year secondary school course unless such pupil has satisfied the promotion requirements laid down by the Minister.
(Para. 75)
- (xx) To arrange the curriculum of the school in such a way as to prepare candidates in the fifth year of the five-year secondary school course for the Federation of Malaya Certificate of Education and/or for the Cambridge Overseas School Certificate.

Source: Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

APPENDIX 5
Statement of the National Conference
on Chinese Education, 1959

The Federation of Malaya is a Nation populated by a number of races of people. As a basis for the founding of such a nation the question of the sharing of rights and obligations on an equitable basis among the various communities forming the nation is of the utmost importance being an absolute principle which must necessarily be observed and receive primary consideration.

Numerically according to the 1956 Census figures the population of Malaya comprised approximately 3,050,000 Malays, 2,370,000 Chinese and 740,000 Indians. The Malays who exceed the Chinese by 680,000 therefore, form the largest portion of its population while the Chinese form the second principal race constituting the country's population. After hundreds of years, the Chinese way of life has now become an inherent and permanent feature of the Malayan way of life. It is, therefore, only natural for the sentiments and wishes of the Chinese community to be accorded due consideration and respect in our national affairs.

Ever since colonial days, the question of Chinese Education in this country has become somewhat complex and confused. It is true that it has so far not enjoyed the rightful recognition which it rightly deserves. The obstacle to a satisfactory solution of this problem lies with the claim for equality in education for the various communities; a question to which the Government must necessarily accord its due consideration.

The Malayan Chinese Association Chinese Education Central Committee, the Federation Chinese School Committees Association, the Federation Chinese School Teachers' Associations and other legally constituted Chinese Guilds and Associations and Schools of the Federation of Malaya, representing the Chinese at a Conference held in Kuala Lumpur today the 26th of April 1959, have unanimously passed the following resolutions representing views reflecting the general need which those dedicated to the cause of Chinese Education in Malaya consider necessary and rightful.

Today, the vast majority of the Chinese in this country have become Malayan citizens owing undivided allegiance to this country, and we have therefore to educate and exhort our children to regard Malaya as their object of loyalty. However, our age-old culture, language and mother-tongue, handed down to us for generations will continue to be sustained and preserved under the Federal Constitution, and we consider it to be our sacred right to learn, utilise and develop our mother tongue and language.

We therefore strongly urge that Chinese Education should be accorded a proper place in the educational system of this country.

We firmly believe that our views are just and reasonable and in presenting this manifesto, we feel that we have not gone beyond the bounds of our basic inherent rights. We are united in our determination to work for the achievement of our objectives.

Kuala Lumpur
26th April 1959

National Conference on Chinese Education

General Demand by the Malayan Chinese Community
on Chinese Education

We resolved:

1. That for the education of the various communities the main medium of instruction in the vernacular schools shall be in the mother tongue:
 - (a) The main medium of instruction in the vernacular schools of the various communities shall be in the mother tongue.
 - (b) The medium of Examinations shall be in the same language as the medium of instruction.
 - (c) The National Language (Malay) shall be a compulsory subject in the curriculum of the vernacular schools but the use of the mother tongue shall remain the main medium of instruction and Examinations.
2. That the education for the various communities shall be accorded equitable and fair treatment:
 - (a) The Education for the various communities as provided through vernacular schools shall be included to comprise or form part of the educational system of this country.
 - (b) The budgeting for ALL educational expenditure provided for ALL schools shall be in fair proportions.
 - (c) The remunerations for teachers of vernacular schools shall be on equal basis.
 - (d) Equal opportunity for the training of teachers for secondary and primary schools.
 - (e) Grants for construction of school buildings and equipment shall be on a fair and equitable basis.
 - (f) Equitable and fair opportunity for the normal development and expansion of ALL schools.
 - (g) All children and youths should be given equal opportunity for admission to schools and trainings.
 - (h) To establish junior and advanced vernacular vocational schools in which the main medium of instruction is in the mother tongue.
 - (i) Every encouragement should be given to the people to establish by their own efforts more schools and classes.
 - (j) Students from all schools should have similar opportunities of employment on graduation after examinations.

3. That Government should appoint an advisory Committee to be known as 'Chinese Educational Advisory Committee', whose members shall be comprised to represent the Chinese educational organizations to assist Government in solving Chinese educational problems.
4. That the Government be requested to increase the present grant-in-aid to Chinese Secondary Schools by 100 per cent.

Source: Too Joon Hing Personal Papers.

Glossary

Aik Hwa 益华
Ang Khe Tho 洪启读

baihua 白话
Baijia xing 百家姓
Beng Teik 明德
bianzhi 变质

canshi 蚕食
Chan Wa 振华
Chan Yik King 陈翼经
Cheah Toon Lock 谢敦祿
Chen, David 陈允恩
Cheong Chee 张珠
Chi Wen 启文
Chiang Kai Shek 蒋介石
Chin Chee Meow 陈济谋
Chio Min 觉明
Cho Yew Fai 曹尧辉
Chong Hwa 中华
Chong Khoon Lin 张昆灵
Chong Shih Guan 张士元
Chong Soon Fan 张逊凡
Chong Teik 崇德
Chongwen Ge 崇文阁
Choong Han Leong 庄汉良
Choong Sam 钟森
Chou Man Sha 周曼沙
Chua Tian Keong 蔡天恭
chumai 出卖
Chung Ling 钟灵
Chung Hua 中华
Chung Hwa 中华
Chung Hwa Confucian 孔圣庙中华
Chung Hwa Wei Sin 中华维新
Chung Shan 中山
Chung Wah 中华

Confucian School 尊孔
Cuiying Shuyuan 萃英书院

Dongjiaozong 董教总
dongshi 董事
Dongzong 董总

Eng Chuan 颖川

Foo Wan Thot 胡万铎
Foon Yew 宽柔
Foong Seong 冯相
Fu Jingxi 傅晴曦
Fujian 福建
Fukien Girls' School 福建女校
fixing 复兴

gaizhi 改制
Goh Chee Yan 吴志渊
Guang Han 光汉
Guangdong 广东
Guangzhou Tingzhou Huiguan
广州汀州会馆

Han Chiang 韩江
hanjian 汉奸
hefa tiwei 合法地位
Heng Ee 恒毅
Hin Hwa 兴华
Hock Chew 福州
Hokkien Hoay Kuan 福建会馆
Huang Huizhen 黄惠珍
Huang Qingyi 黄清益
Huang Yun Yo 黄润岳
huaqiao 华侨
huaqiao jiaoyu 华侨教育

- hui guan* 会馆
 Huizhou Huiguan 惠州会馆
- Jiaozong 教总
 Jit Sin 日新
- Kang Youwei 康有为
 Keat Hwa 古华
 Khai Mun 白文
 Khaw Gim Leong 许锦亮
 Kheng Tian 坤田
 Khoo 邱
 Khoon Aik 群益
 Khor Seng Lee 许生理
 Koh Kim Leng 许金龙
 Kong Min 公民
 Kong Xiang Tai 孔翔泰
 Kua Kia Soong 柯嘉逊
 Kuen Cheng 坤成
 Kwang Hua 光华
 Kwong Hua 光华
- Lam, Johnson 蓝允旋
lanber 蓝本
 Lau Pak Khuan 刘伯群
 Lee Guat Cheow 李月樵
 Lee Hau-shik (H. S.) 李奉式
 Lee Po Wen 黎博文
 Lee Tee Siong 李致祥
 Lee Thean Hin 李典兴
 Lee Y. T. 李润添
 Leong Chee Cheong 梁志翔
 Leong Yew Koh 梁宇泉
 Leung Cheung Ling 梁长龄
 Li Rijun 黎日均
 Lim Chong Eu 林苍佑
 Lim Fong Seng 林晃升
 Lim Hong Too 林鸿图
 Lim Lian Geok 林连玉
 Lim Lian Teng 林连登
 Loh Ching Chua 陆清泉
 Loot Ting Yee 陆庭谕
- Mei Yucan 梅玉灿
minban xueiao 民办学校
minzu 民族
- minzu bailei* 民族败类
 Nan Hua 南华
 Nan Hwa 南华
 Nanhua Yixue 南华文学
 Nanjing 南京
 Nanyang 南洋
- Ong Chin Seong 王振相
 Ong Keng Seng 王景成
 Ong Tin Kim 王天庆
 Ong Yoke Lin 翁玉麟
- Pay Fong 培凤
 Peh Seng Koon 白成根
 Pei Chee 培智
 Pei Chun 培群
 Pei Hwa 培华
 Pei Yuan 培元
 Phor Tay 菩提
 Pin Hwa 演华
pingmin yixue 平民文学
 Poi Lam 培南
- Qianzi Wen 千字文
- Ren Yunong 任雨农
- Sacred Heart 圣心
 San Min Chu I 三民主义
 Sanzi Jing 三字经
 Saw Seng Kew 苏承球
 Seg Hwa 昔华
 Sha Yuan Roo 沙渊如
 Shandong 山东
 Shang Wu 商务
 Shen Ting 沈亭
shetuan 社团
 Si Shu 四书
 Sim Mow Yu 沈慕羽
 Sin Hwa 新华
 Sin Kang 新江
 Sin Min 新民
sihu 私塾
 Sum Sun 三山
 Sun Yat Sen 孙中山

- Tan Boon Peng 陈文炳
 Tan Cheng Lock 陈植禄
 Tan Cheng Tit 陈正直
 Tan Hoay Eam 陈火炎
 Tan Koon Poon 陈根本
 Tan Lark Sye 陈六使
 Tan Siew Sin 陈修信
 Tan Tong Hai (T. H.) 陈东海
 Tan Yeok Seong 陈育崧
 Tang Yuesheng 唐悦生
 Tat Chai 达才
 Teochew 潮州
 Ting Ping Sung 丁品松
 Tong Sian 同善
 Tongan Jinxia Huiguan
 同安金厦会馆
 Too Joon Hing 朱运兴
 Tsai Jen Ping 蔡任平
 Tsun Jin 循人
 Tsung Wah 崇华
 Twang Pik King 庄迪君
 Tye Kok Leong 戴国良

 Union Secondary School 协和中学

 Wah Lian 华连
 Wang Fo Wen 王宓文
 Waung Yoong Nien 汪永年
 Wei Zhenguo 魏振国
 Wen Tien Kuang 温典光
 Wong Pow Nee 王保尼

 Wu Jing 五经
 Wu Teh Yao 吴德耀
 Wufu Shuyuan 五福书院

 Xu Suwu 许苏我
 Xuebao 学报

 Yap Ah Loy 叶亚来
 Yap Kwan Seng 叶观盛
 Yap Mau Tatt 叶茂达
 Yen Yuan Chang 严元章
 Yeoh Kim Tian 杨金殿
 Yit Chee 益智
yiwu 义务
yixue 义学
 Yok Bin 育民
 Yok Eng 育英
 Yoke Kwan 育群
 Yong Pung How 杨邦孝
 Yu Chai 育才
 Yu Hua 育华
yueshubao she 阅书报社
 Yuk Choy 育才
 Yuk Kwan 育群
 Yuk Tsee 益智

 Zhai Zhaoxun 翟兆巽
 Zhang Zhidong 张之洞
 Zhingling 金陵
 Zhongguo wenhua 中国文化
zili gengsheng 自力更生

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