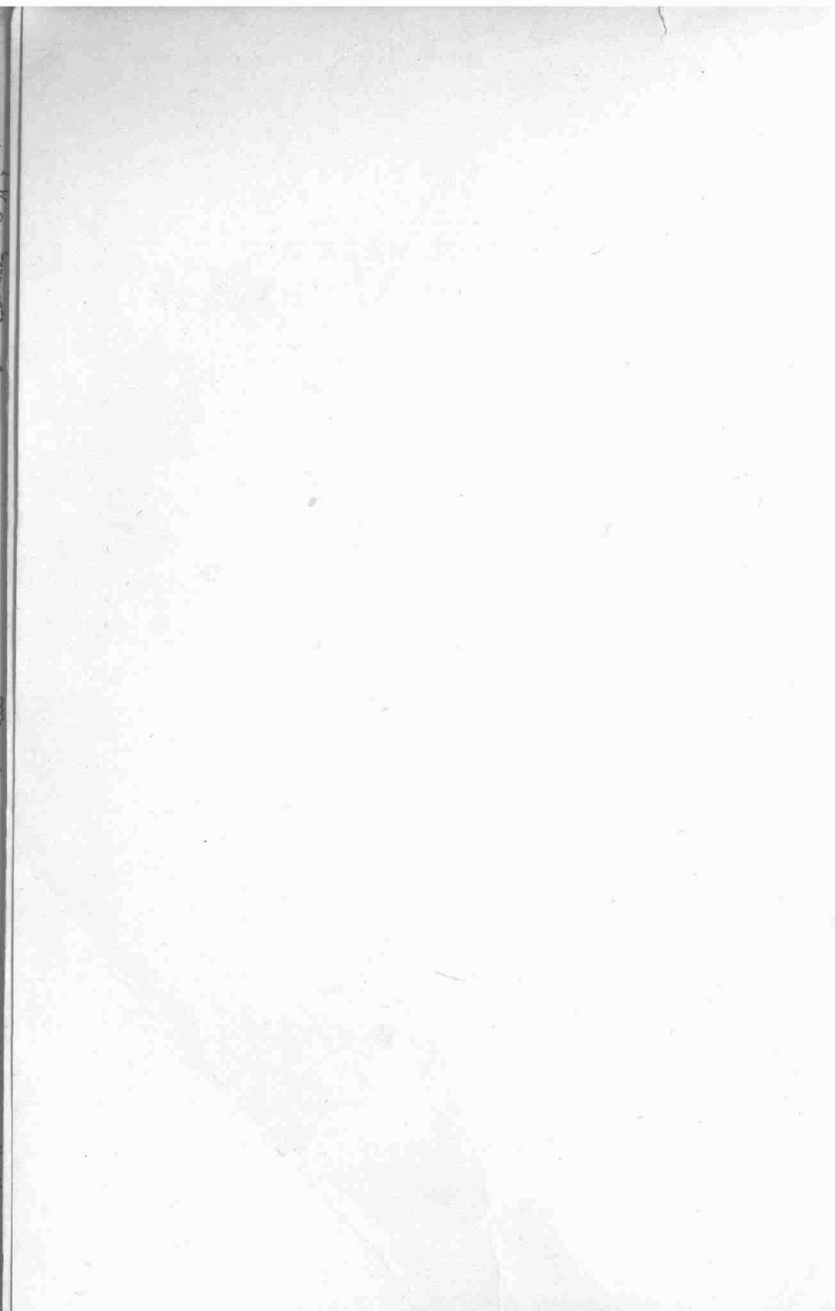




REPORT FROM MALAYA



Dorothy Nixon.
1954

VERNON BARTLETT

Report from Malaya



DEREK VERSCHOYLE
LONDON

0238

First published 1954 by
DEREK VERSCHOYLE LIMITED
14 Carlisle Street Soho Square
London w1
Printed in Great Britain by
Purnell & Sons Limited
Paulton (Somerset) & London

All rights reserved

M

959.51

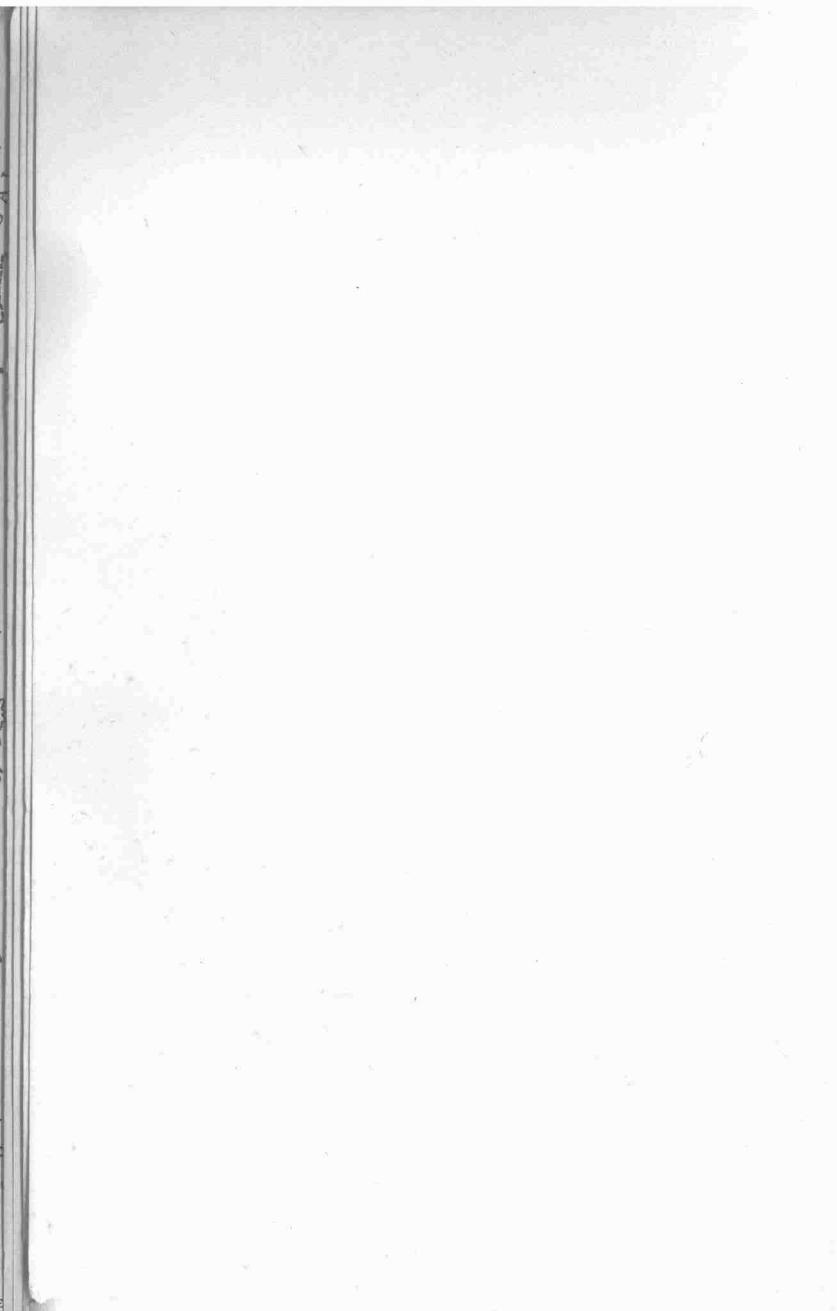
BAR

DN 6538

11 SEP 1972
Perpustakaan Negara

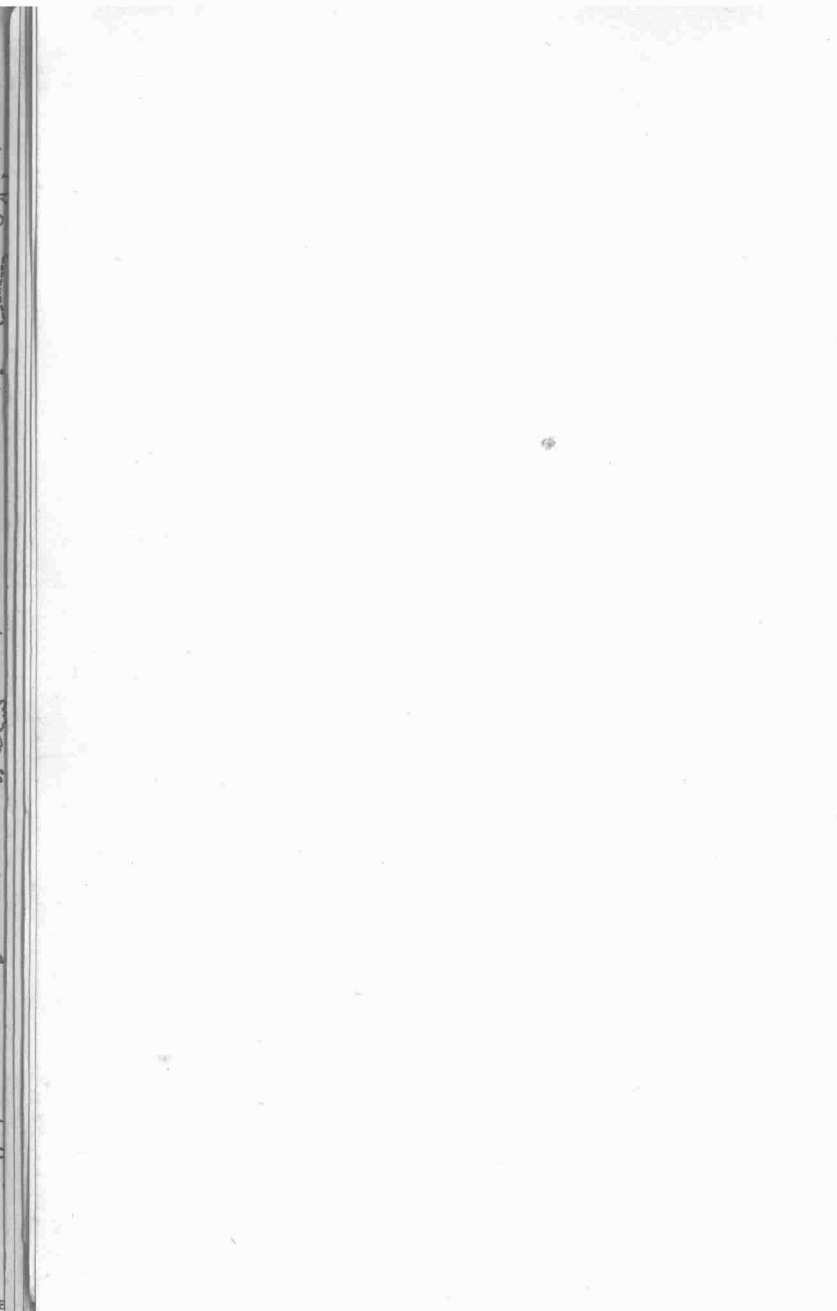
CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>	<i>Page 9</i>
1 The First Adventurers	15
2 Who are the Malayans?	23
3 C.T.s in the 'ulu'	33
4 Yesterday's Squatters: Tomorrow's Citizens	45
5 Men Without History	60
6 'Surrendered Enemy Personnel'	68
7 Operation Service	77
8 Rubber and Tin	84
9 Towards Self-Government	90
10 Malay and Chinese	103
11 The Lion City	113
12 Struggle for South East Asia	122



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1	Chinese junks choke Singapore River	<i>Facing page</i> 32
2	A helicopter in a jungle clearing	33
3	Youthful aborigines	33
4	Hindu finery at the Thaipusam Festival, Penang	48
5	Aborigine family, Malayan jungle	48
6	A pilgrim at Thaipusam Festival	49
7	'A world of tightly-packed and multi-coloured cauliflowers . . .'	64
8	A member of the Security Forces	65
9	British soldiers charge a terrorist camp	80
10	Recruits from the jungle training school	81
11	A lorry being checked by Home Guards	96
12	Armed Special Constables stop a car at an estate barrier	96
13	Derailed coaches of the Day Mail train	97
14	An aerial view of a New Village	112
15	Settlers in a New Village listen to an explana- tion of the vote and secret ballot	113



FOREWORD

THIS is the fourth book I have written since the war, and I have had to preface each of them by the reminder that it is not—repeat not—written for the expert. Why rush in where experts fear to tread? Because the world is changing so rapidly, because new beliefs so threaten civilization, that even the superficial chronicle of these changes may have its uses. After all, war itself is a revolution. It releases new forces that cannot be checked, and can be guided only if their nature is understood. The djinn cannot be thrust back into the bottle—I thought of that one because, as I write these words, the coast of Arabia is a faint, yellow line far away to starboard; we have just left Aden, where, beneath some peaks known as the Asses' Ears, a sprawling new refinery is being completed to render superfluous the installations at Abadan which Persian nationalism has made so nearly useless for the Persian nation.

Nationalism is, of course, the most powerful of these new forces—strangely old-fashioned now that hydrogen bombs may send radio-active clouds carrying death around the world without the least regard to frontiers, but relatively new in Asia, where the impoverished millions are beginning to take an interest in it because they are assured, by Communists and other demagogues, that it will remove their poverty. Naturally, this doctrine of nationalism is not necessarily a danger to civilization; it may only be a fresh expression of it, for each race should have its contribution to make and should be free to make it. But Communism in its present form—despite all the enthusiasm with which it inspires so many young people, anxious to serve something greater than self—is the negation of civilization, since it subordinates to

FOREWORD

the machine, to the Party, the questing spirit of the individual human being and of the individual nation. Communism has won no spectacular victories since it bluffed its way into power in Czechoslovakia in 1948. But in alliance with nationalism it may yet destroy civilization, or make it intolerable for the civilized man.

* * *

By the time this book appears General Sir Gerald Templer will have ceased to be High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya. He will long be remembered there, by most people with gratitude for the enthusiasm which he brought to his job; by a few with rancour, since he was unable to suffer fools gladly and was occasionally a little too hasty in deciding who was a fool. Like most single-minded men, he had no respect for the prejudices and idiosyncrasies, however worthy, of those who did not serve his purpose, which was to end the Emergency.

The Emergency is not ended. Nor will it end when the fighting in the jungle dies down to sporadic banditry spiced with politics. The struggle will then continue in the towns, the schools, the trade unions. For Malaya is strategically and economically the most important country of South East Asia, and South East Asia is, alas, already one of the main battlefields in the cold war.

But on the military side the improvement in Malaya has been very considerable, thanks above all to the imaginative methods now used. The spotlight is now being switched to the civilian—the Tamil rubber-tapper, the Chinese craftsman, the Malay clerk. He will not long remain deaf to the clamour of politics. Will revolution or evolution, 'monolithic' Communism or parliamentary democracy, win his

support? General Templer has been very much alive to this problem of winning the hearts and minds of the people. He has chivvied them to the ballot-boxes. He has attended their village meetings.* He has talked himself to the verge of a nervous breakdown in his desire to make them understand the obligations and benefits of democracy. Will the departure of this astonishingly vital man count as an important victory for the Communists?

Templer has been a tonic in Malaya, but tonics tend to lose their effect if they are taken too often. He is primarily a man of action, and such a leader was needed to deal with a military problem. It would surely have been a mistake to appoint as his successor another man of the same type, even if one could have been found. The new High Commissioner, on the other hand, is essentially a civilian, and I should have thought that what was most needed in Malaya now is a period of calm in which to digest a surfeit of stimulants.

Sir Donald MacGillivray, beneath an astonishingly youthful and diffident appearance, is rated by those who know him best in the Colonial Office as a strong-minded and clear-headed administrator; he is rated by at least some of his colleagues in Malaya as the brains in the Templer administration. In any case, as General Templer's Deputy High Commissioner, he must know better than anybody else how much continuity of policy is advisable or possible. And General Bourne, the new G.O.C., showed, during the Berlin blockade, that he is one of the small but most successful group of political soldiers produced by Britain during the war. He should be able to supply the *panache* which it is not in the new High Commissioner's nature to supply.

★ ★ ★

Both High Commissioners, Templer and MacGillivray, have insisted that the struggle in Malaya is not primarily a military one. More than most, it will be won or lost 'in the hearts and minds of men'. This small book is an attempt to explain why Communism so nearly disorganized the country, and yet has failed to do so, why it has been unable to arouse that nationalist enthusiasm which might have swept it into power. And my excuse for writing it after only two very brief visits to that country—one, a year before the Emergency began in June 1948; the other, at the beginning of this year—is that the more of us there are to dispel prevailing illusions about Malaya, the better.

I shall hope, during your reading of this book, to convince you of three things. One, that the campaign of the bandits in the jungle—correctly but clumsily referred to in official documents as 'Communist Terrorists' (C.T.s for short)—does not represent any kind of Malayan nationalist movement. Two, that, in the absence of any genuine Malayan loyalty to override the existing racial rivalries between Malay, Chinese and Indian, progress towards self-government is as swift as is sensible. Three, that Malaya, despite the Emergency, is one of the happiest countries in the world, with possibly less colour prejudice than in any other plural society. These are convictions I had not expected to reach when I accepted General Templer's suggestion that I should come out to Malaya to see things for myself.

* * *

On so short a visit one is tremendously dependent upon other people. One cannot hope to see much for oneself. I was fortunate enough to travel (by car, jeep, armoured truck, aeroplane, helicopter, and an exceptionally comfortable

FOREWORD

air-conditioned sleeping coach) from Singapore in the south to Kroh, on the Siamese frontier, in the north; from Penang and Malacca on the west coast to Kota Bahru on the east coast; and into the deep jungle to a lake so remote that probably not more than two or three Europeans had visited it in the twenty-five years before the war. But I should be a conceited fool if I were to base my judgements on my own small experience; I base them on the opinions of the very many people whom I was fortunate enough to meet.

There were too many of them for me to thank them by name, and I apologize to them for this ungracious way of expressing my gratitude for their help and hospitality. But I should be still more ungracious were I not to express my special thanks to General Sir Gerald Templer and A.D.C. Peterson, his Director of Information, who between them made it possible for me to see so many people in so short a time; to Sir Patrick McKerron, who has shown the greatest kindness in helping me to correct some of my major errors in my manuscript; to the Hon. R. P. Bingham, British Resident in Penang; to the Hon. M. C. ff. Sheppard, British Adviser in Negri Sembilan; to Lieutenant-General Sir Hugh Stockwell, General Officer Commanding in Malaya while I was there; to Sam Gray, 'Jock' Morrison and other members of the staff of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank; to Lawrence Deller, of the Federation Press Department, who was my lively companion on so much of my journey; to G. G. Thomson, Director of the Public Relations Office, Singapore; to Geoffrey Mortlock and Ian Stanbury, Information Officers in Penang and Kelantan; to John Batten, Information Officer at Malaya House, London; to Robin Cruikshank of the *News Chronicle*, but for whom I should have got no nearer Malaya than Victoria Station or London Airport; and to

FOREWORD

Pamela Young, who has dealt so patiently and so encouragingly with my manuscript. My broadcasts on Malaya have already got me into such trouble there that I hasten to add none of these persons should be blamed for such opinions as I may express.

A word about the photographs. Those of the aborigines—except for a few I took myself—were taken by Mr. James J. MacPherson, surgeon at the Kelantan State Hospital—who flew with me to Fort Iskandar. I am most grateful for his permission to reproduce them here. And my gratitude also goes to the Department of Information in Kuala Lumpur, to the Public Relations Office in Singapore and to Malaya House in London for their great help in this matter. If my prose does not stimulate your interest in Malaya, their pictures should do so.

This book is dedicated to my wife, with my apologies for breaking my promise, given when I had finished *Struggle for Africa* a little more than a year ago, that I would never again write a topical book. My excuse must be that, like the housemaid's illegitimate baby, it's only a little one.

VERNON BARTLETT

Chapter One

THE FIRST ADVENTURERS

THE first British settlement in Malaya was on Penang Island—'Pinang' being Malay for the betel nut which reddens the chewer's teeth and causes him to bespatter the pavements with blood-red spittle.

In front of the Supreme Court in Georgetown, the island's one town, stands a statue to Captain Francis Light, and probably not one school-child or adult in a hundred in the British Isles or one in a thousand elsewhere could tell you anything about him. The Japanese threw this statue into a naval store during their occupation, and when it was recovered after the war its bronze sword was missing. Swords are uncommon weapons nowadays, so the British Military Administration had one made for him; to this day Captain Light's weapon is made of wood.

More than forty years before Sir Stamford Raffles bought Singapore Island on an indefinite lease for roughly £400 a year, Francis Light, also a servant of the Honourable East India Company, started this settlement on Penang. His story provides one more instance of the astonishing way in which the British Empire was built up almost without the knowledge, and sometimes against the wishes, of the British Government. In 1877 the Sultan of Zanzibar offered to concede sovereignty, with very minor reservations, over his own island and the coastal plain on the mainland to Sir William Mackinnon, chairman of the British India Line, but he had to refuse the offer, at least for some years, because he could get no official support. Official responsibility for the Protectorate of Uganda was accepted very reluctantly only

when the Imperial British East Africa Association had lost so much money there that it announced its intention to curtail its losses and withdraw. In 1890 Rhodes acquired the Rhodesias without the help of a single soldier from the United Kingdom, and more than thirty years went by before the British Government accepted responsibility for these immensely wealthy territories. Malaya provides its own examples of this reluctant imperialism.

In 1771 the Sultan of Kedah offered to Francis Light, then working on behalf of a firm of merchants in Madras, a concession at the mouth of the Kedah river, in return for a promise of help against his enemies in Siam to the north and in Selangor to the south. 'Had I authority to act,' Light wrote at the time, 'neither Danes, Dutch, French or anyone else should drive me out. . . . Be assured that neither at Acheen' (at the north-western tip of Sumatra) 'or here or any other port to the east will you be able to make a settlement unless you act with spirit and authority.'

But he was not given the authority to match his spirit, although the Dutch were extending their control over the East Indies and although the Malay pirates were doing increasing damage to shipping passing through the Straits of Malacca—in comparison with them the famous pirates of the Barbary coast were genial and gentle. It was not for another fifteen years, in 1786, that Francis Light, acting on behalf of the East India Company, was able to conclude a treaty with the Sultan for the possession of Penang, not far south of the Kedah river.

It was then an almost uninhabited island covered with jungle. H. P. Clodd¹ records that Light became so impatient with the difficulties of clearing the ground—the timber was

¹ *Malay's First British Pioneer*, by H. P. Clodd (Luzac & Co., London).

'so exceeding hard that the tools doubled like a piece of lead'—that he stimulated the woodcutters into greater activity by loading a cannon with a bag of silver dollars and firing it into the virgin forest. 'John Company' did not share his impatience; it left him for ten months before it took any action on his urgent request for small reinforcements, and its action then included a suggestion that the settlement might be abandoned altogether.

To his request for the creation of a judiciary the Company left it to him 'to preserve good order in the Settlement as well as he can by confinement or other punishment', and it was shockingly slow to give the Sultan of Kedah the money and military assistance that had been promised to him. In the absence of this expected declaration that the Sultan was under British protection, his enemies in Siam and Selangor were encouraged to attack him, and Dutch, French and Danish rivals of the Company were encouraged to replace Britain in the Sultan's favour.

In the end, peace was made with Kedah, and the land opposite Penang, the present Province Wellesley, was acquired—but only in 1810, fourteen years after Light's death—for an annual payment of roughly £500. Light himself died a poor man, and he would probably have been appallingly in debt if, as was the custom in those days, he had not been a private trader as well as a Governor. His expenses, he reckoned, were exactly double his official salary. 'History', he wrote, 'shows no Examples of the first Adventurers making fortunes, it is sufficient that hereafter they are spoke of.'

The first charter relating to Penang was granted to the East India Company by King George III in 1807. In a second charter, granted nineteen years later, the island of

Singapore and the town and fort of Malacca were annexed to Prince of Wales' Island, or Penang. In 1855 Penang, Malacca and Singapore became the Crown Colony of the Straits Settlements. And so they remained until after the 1939-45 war, when Singapore retained the status of a Crown Colony, but Penang and Malacca were absorbed into the new Federation of Malaya. Malacca, by far the oldest of the three territories, is now a most pleasant and dreamy place, with a 'millionaire's row' of Chinese houses backing on to the sea shore to remind you that there has been a prosperous Chinese colony there for five hundred years; with a ruined Portuguese church which provided a temporary tomb for St. Francis Xavier; and with fortifications built by the Portuguese and the Dutch before the British finally acquired it in 1824.

The Portuguese, who were probably the most intrepid explorers the world has ever seen, but whose methods of carrying Christianity to the heathens were of doubtful morality, are said to have acquired Malacca in the first place by a trick which was, I believe, well known in Africa but was new to the Malays. They showered presents upon the Sultan, Ahmed Shah, and asked in return that they should be given ground 'to the extent of what the skin of a beast may cover'. They then took the skin, rent it into cords and built, on the not inconsiderable area these cords enclosed, a storehouse with what they declared to be 'apertures that the white men require for windows', but which turned out to be apertures for guns to protect their fort.

In both Penang and Malacca the Chinese have a special position. The mere accident of birth in one of the Straits Settlements automatically makes them British subjects.

whereas Chinese in other parts of the Federation may be either subjects of one of the Malay Sultans, can become Federal citizens by operation of law or by registration, or may have no status as Malaysians at all. There is still quite a stream of pregnant Chinese women into one or other of these Settlements so that their children may be born British. And these Chinese show a strong British loyalty which comes as a surprise at a time when some people demand so loudly that the remaining links between them and the United Kingdom should be snapped. Heaven knows that the dilatory, mean and cowardly behaviour of the East India Company, the predecessor of the Colonial Office in this part of the world, was not such as to arouse a strong feeling of loyalty. Indeed, in 1808 the Company actually decided to destroy Malacca and orders were given to dismantle its fortifications. By a lucky accident, Raffles happened to be convalescing there after a breakdown in Penang, and his long report on its value finally saved the place.

The British Empire acquired Singapore, like Penang and Malacca, almost absent-mindedly and because the man on the spot left it with no alternative. Sir Stamford Raffles, Lieutenant-Governor of Bencoolen (all that Anglo-Dutch political bargaining had left to the British of the Malay Archipelago), was only thirty-seven when he landed on Singapore Island on January 29th, 1819. Some five centuries earlier there had been a prosperous trading centre here under the name of Singapura, the 'Lion City', but in 1819 there were no lions there, and very few other animals except an unbelievable number of rats. The highest estimate of its population at that time that I have seen is 300; 150 is the more widely accepted figure. Less than a dozen acres had been cleared of mangrove swamp and jungle. Raffles made

an agreement with the Malay Governor of the island and with the Sultan of Johore-Lingga, whereby he was allowed to found a trading centre, for which he revived the grandiose and ancient name. In less than ten years its annual trade was worth nearly £3,000,000 a year, and it is now one of the most luxurious cities in the world and one of the ten largest ports.

Singapore, wrote Raffles two years after its foundation, 'is all and everything I could wish, and if no untimely fate awaits it, promises to become the emporium and pride of the East. I learn with much regret the prejudice and malignity by which I am attacked at home, for the desperate struggle I have maintained against the Dutch. Instead of being supported by my own Government, I find them deserting me, and giving way in every instance to the unscrupulous and enormous assertions of the Dutch. . . . The great blow has been struck, and though I may personally suffer in the scuffle, the nation must be benefitted'.

Sir Stamford Raffles died six years later, on the eve of his forty-fifth birthday, worn out by the worries and fevers incurred in the service of the East India Company. While he was the eminently successful Governor of Java he sought to make his administration 'not only without fear, but without reproach', and he was probably the finest Empire-builder, in the best sense of the words, ever produced by the United Kingdom. But on retirement, instead of the pension to which he felt himself entitled, almost the last communication he received from 'John Company' was a bill for more than £22,000. At that time, Singapore, his creation, was already immensely prosperous, but his widow was dunned for nearly half this sum. One item for which she had to pay was the cost of his mission to found this Settlement.

The Straits Settlements were handed over to the British Government in 1867; five years later it informed the Singapore Chamber of Commerce that traders who chose to jeopardize their lives and property by trying to develop the Malay States of the Peninsula could expect no help and protection from the British Government. In the same year, however, leading Chinese merchants appealed to London to intervene in what they called 'the half-civilized States of the Malayan Peninsula'. Hundreds of their fellow-Chinese were working in the tin mines in Perak, and Guy Wint¹ quotes a visitor to Perak some twelve years earlier as writing: 'Like vultures to a carcase, all robbers, thieves and murderers collected round the mines, ready to despoil, by every means, anyone who had anything worth taking'. Malays used to bet on the number of coins in a Chinese miner's pocket and then murder him to find out whether the number was odd or even. 'Pair' or 'Impair' as the croupiers have it at Monte Carlo. It was this Chinese appeal, as much as any desire to further British commerce, that impelled the British Government to institute the system of British Residents in the Malay States, appointed 'with the full consent of the native Government', to help the maintenance of law and order.

Both these pioneers, Light and Raffles, showed an affection for the people they governed which does not fit in at all with the picture so often drawn for us of the ruthless imperialist. Light received several requests that he should take over the island of Ujong Salang, known to the British at that time as Junk Ceylon, some two hundred miles north of Penang. He had lived there for several years and was loved and respected by all classes of its inhabitants. As Superintendent of the Settlement of Penang he was reproached by some of his

¹ *The British in Asia* (Faber).

countrymen for adopting in many respects 'the dress manners and mode of living of the Malays'. As for Raffles there are very many examples of his consideration and friendliness towards the Malays, and Munshi Abdullah, his Malay teacher, wrote in his *Autobiography* that Raffles 'spoke in smiles'.

This book is an attempt to give an objective account of the situation in Malaya today. But I make no excuse for the unfashionably 'imperialist' tone of this preliminary chapter for one cannot understand the political climate of today if one forgets that the British did not arrive in Malaya as conquerors. The various Sultans were so weakened by wars and so unable to maintain order inside their own frontiers that they were not very unwilling to accept British protection. Perak was the first State to ask for a British Resident in 1874; the others followed within a few years. Since the Resident was accepted in an advisory capacity his influence was exercised through the existing form of government. The Sultans, in their agreements with Great Britain, pledged themselves to accept that advice, but they were never conquered; their powers are still considerable and their prestige among their people remains high.

Guy Wint is an author of integrity, and not one who could be called an imperialist, an upholder of 'colonialism'. I quote his summing up of Malaya. 'In less than half a century, the country was transformed from an anarchist pirate land into a neat territory with perfect security and with roads and health services among the best in any Asiatic country.'

But this is the country in which, of all territories in the British Commonwealth, Communism has become the greatest menace and has been nearest to a victory. How and why?

Chapter Two

WHO ARE THE MALAYANS?

WHAT is Malaya and who are the Malaysans? Those questions need an early answer, for the nature of Malaya explains why the Communists have so nearly succeeded, and the nature of the Malaysans explains why they have just failed to do so.

I admit that only a few months ago I was not sure of the difference between a Malayan and a Malay. Perhaps, I thought, the one was the more courteous form to use, just as it is now considered more courteous, for reasons nobody seems to know, to say 'Chinese' instead of 'Chinaman' and 'Asian' instead of 'Asiatic'. There is, in fact, an important difference, for a Malayan is anybody—be he Malay, Chinese, Tamil, Eurasian or European—whose home is in Malaya, whereas a Malay is a member of a large race of whom about 3,000,000 live in Malaya, and more than 70,000,000 in Java, Sumatra and the other islands of Indonesia.

Nobody is quite sure where the Malays came from originally, although many of them claim to be descended from Alexander the Great. Their language is related to Sanskrit. Dr. Victor Purcell¹ writes that their origin is as much disputed as that of the gypsies. Some seven thousand years ago the first men are believed to have come down the Peninsula and to have crossed the Straits to the Indonesian islands. They may even have pushed on to Australia, whose aborigines would be their descendants. Four thousand years ago a fresh immigration took place from South China, and it may have included members of a fair Caucasian race settled in

¹ See *Malaya: Outline of a Colony* (Nelson).

Indo-China. Hindus and Siamese have mingled with these earlier immigrants to form the modern Malays, most of whom also crossed into the Indonesian archipelago. They have returned in large numbers to the Peninsula within the last century. Since the system of British Residents was introduced their number has increased nearly a hundredfold; that of the Chinese must have been multiplied by many thousands.

And what is Malaya? It is two separate territories, the Malayan Federation and the Crown Colony of Singapore, joined by three-quarters of a mile of causeway but divided by a sad amount of misunderstanding. The Federation, although it is slightly smaller than England and Wales, consists of the nine little States which we used to know as the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States, with the addition of the two Straits Settlements of Penang and Malacca. This bewildering variety of territories grouped under one name has an even more bewildering variety of rulers. There are, in the first place, the Governor of the Crown Colony of Singapore and the High Commissioner of the Federation. In the Federation there are eight Sultans, one Raja and the two Resident Commissioners of Penang and Malacca. Living in Singapore, but reporting direct to London, is Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom in South East Asia, who has the vague though most valuable task of co-ordinating activities in this part of the world, but who is in the awkward position—for himself and for others—of having no executive authority.

In Malaya as a whole there are nearly 3,000,000 Malays and 3,000,000 Chinese, as well as 750,000 Indians or Pakistanis—and a bare 30,000 Europeans. In the Federation, the Malays just outnumber the Chinese; in Singapore,

the Chinese immensely outnumber the Malays. In no other country in the world outside China is the Chinese proportion of the population anything like so high, and the disquiet to which this gives rise in the minds of the Malays is immensely increased by the fact that so many of the Chinese have immigrated within the last seventy years. They are to be found mostly in Singapore, where they form 78 per cent of the population, and up the west coast; in Kelantan, on the east coast, and thus geographically nearer to China, their proportion is only 5 per cent.

The Malays are a charming, courteous and easy-going people. A common phrase among them is 'Tid'apa' which means much the same thing as the Russian 'Nitchivo' or the Spanish 'Mañana'—nothing really matters very much. Sir Hugh Clifford, a former Governor, wrote of them that they 'are indolent, pleasure-loving, improvident, fond of bright clothing, of comfort, of ease, and dislike toil exceedingly'. The description may be a little out of date, but it is still recognizable. The Chinese must be about the most hard-working people on earth, and one cannot expect the Malays always to appreciate these newcomers. There has been encouragingly little friction between these two main races, but until very recently the Chinese never felt at home, and were never encouraged to do so. Nor did many of them show any desire to become Malaysians. Rather like the Indians in Kenya and Natal, they remained foreigners in the land of their birth. If they sent their savings back to the land of their origin, they were accused of bleeding the country white; and if they spent their money on the spot they were accused of trying to buy the country up. They are, of course, the greatest gamblers on earth; even so, it is instructive to see the amount some of them can afford to bet at the Singapore races—

where, incidentally, most of the horses belong to Chinese. Their investment in organized industry may still be smaller than that of the British, but their total economic stake in Malaya must vastly exceed that of any other community.

Since they were foreigners, the Chinese have, until recently, had to pay for their own schools, in which their children were taught that their first loyalty was towards China which supplied most of their teachers and textbooks. There used to be quite a little ceremony each morning when the Chinese flag was hoisted. The fact that the loyalty was expressed to Chiang Kai-shek, and not to Mao Tse-tung, was very little consolation to those who hope to blend the races of Malaya into a Malayan nation. This, incidentally, is a frequent cause of Anglo-American misunderstanding—the Americans, thinking of China, tend to encourage this loyalty towards the Formosa Government, whereas the British can be satisfied only if the Chinese think of Malaya as their permanent home.

The Indians and Pakistanis are not yet of great importance politically. The Pakistanis, being Moslems, intermarry with their co-religionists, the Malays. They present no problem. But very many of the rubber-tappers are Tamils, from southern India. They live on large rubber estates in fairly good conditions, for the industry instituted long before the Emergency what is probably the most comprehensive social-security system in South East Asia. An estate on which there are more than twenty children, for example, must build a school for them and carry the cost of its maintenance. A woman tapper whose husband is also a tapper gets three months' maternity benefits. The Rubber Workers Union, with 53,000 members, is by far the most powerful of the 240 unions in the Federation, whose total membership is

III, 188. The chances are that a Tamil rubber-tapper hardly reaches a town once in two years, and he cannot therefore be very active politically, but Communism is strong in southern India, and most of the Tamils go home after a few years. They are an unstable element in Malaya, and in many cases the 'lines' in which they have to live do no credit to the rubber industry and nothing to lessen their instability.

Also they introduce an element of fanaticism out of keeping with the Malays (although 'amok' is a Malay word). I happened to witness the Hindu Thaipusam festival in Penang in January, when pilgrims or penitents pay their tribute to the God Subramaniam. Each carried a 'kavadi', which is a gaily-decorated but heavy wooden harness normally supported on one shoulder. In several cases the weight of the 'kavadi' was borne not on the shoulder but on dozens of little spears, perhaps a quarter of an inch thick, with their points sticking into the pilgrims' sides. In others the pilgrim had small metal skewers through cheeks or tongue. One man I saw had row after row of safety-pins stuck into his back. The police have put a stop to the man who used to drag his family along in a cart by hooks fixed into his flesh.

The last temple to be visited on this pilgrimage was reached by a long flight of steps, on every one of which sat a beggar (Chinese as well as Hindus making the most of such an opportunity), and the sight of these dazed pilgrims being encouraged and helped up these steps by their relatives and friends was one of the most revolting I have ever seen. Some of the men with spears in their sides still kept up a queer kind of shuffling dance. Men and women with skewers through their tongues slobbered and sweated. One man rolled in the dust seven times round the temple. All were in a trance and were probably beyond pain; during the

whole day I saw no drop of blood, except when half a dozen barbers in a long shed had trouble while shaving the heads of infants and small children brought on the pilgrimage for the first time—sixty cents for the barber; one dollar forty cents for the temple. Each pilgrim brought a coconut which was broken in front of the idol. The milk washed the idol's feet and some of it was collected and carried away. Inside the temple the skewers and spears were removed, and within half an hour there was no scar to be seen.

Quite early in the day I had noticed one old woman with a skewer through her grotesquely swollen tongue. I had thought she was anyhow half-witted. But I happened to be at the upper temple when she emerged from it with the skewer removed. She sat down on a stone and began to comb her hair, and within a few minutes she had so changed in appearance that I should have taken her for a dull and respectable grandmother out for the day to see the show. I had brought a camera with me, but hesitated to use it to record this religious but revolting ceremony. I need not have worried, for whenever the camera was noticed on-lookers obligingly got out of the way, and the pilgrim, however deep his trance, seemed aware that he was being photographed and intensified his dance for my benefit.

The whole emphasis of Thaipusam is one of rejoicing, and the children, in their bright new clothes, have a wonderful time of it. Perhaps this contempt for pain, this mortification of the flesh, is good for the soul. Nevertheless such religious fanaticism is very alien to the Malays, whose Mohammedanism is of a tolerant and easy-going variety. 'Upon the bulk of Malayan peoples', wrote Sir Hugh Clifford,¹ 'their religion sits but lightly.' As for the

¹ See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

Chinese, they mingle their religious enthusiasm with such cynicism that they throw away money at a funeral to distract the attention of evil spirits from the corpse, but decide that counterfeit money will be good enough for the occasion.

This, then, is one reason why the Communists have so far failed to win their campaign in Malaya—in no sense do they represent a Malayan national movement; and they have failed because they cannot make effective use of nationalism in a country in which the two principal racial groups, Malay and Chinese, are so nearly equal in numbers. In such circumstances nationalism does not make sense. The more nationalism there is, in the racial sense, the less chance there is that the people will learn to 'think Malayan'. And until they do so there is not likely to be a strong demand that the British should go. Malaya, in fact, is almost the only country in Asia in which Communism has not yet managed to do much to stir up nationalism to its own advantage.

* * *

And yet the statistics pay a fantastic tribute to Communist methods. In 1953, 93,000,000 anti-Communist leaflets were distributed, of which 54,000,000 were dropped by the R.A.F. Over 3,500 tons of bombs showered down on the jungle. Roughly 250,000 soldiers, police and home-guards were under arms. Against that expenditure of man-power and munitions, the total casualties since June 1948, when the Emergency began, to March 31, 1954, were: Communist Terrorists killed, 4,947; captured, 1,079; surrendered, 1,359. Police (including auxiliary police, home guards and so on) killed, 1,223; wounded, 1,424. Military killed, 426; wounded, 781.

The graphs are increasingly favourable from the Government's point of view. The worst month was June 1951, when 606 incidents were reported; during the last six months of 1953 the monthly average was 93. In February 1952 the number of rubber trees damaged by slashing was 70,000, and by December of the same year it had dropped to 600. But, even so, there can have been very few campaigns in history in which anything like such vast resources have had to be mobilized to deal with 4,000 or 5,000 rebels. It now costs ten times as much to run the police force in Malaya as it cost in 1947, shortly before the Emergency began—admittedly the force had not then completed its post-war reorganization. This force (which is 85 per cent Malay) is now slightly larger, for a population of under 6,000,000, than is that of the United Kingdom with nearly nine times as many people.

The explanation is provided by the physical nature of the country. The Federation is part of a long peninsula running southwards, for 400 miles from the Siamese frontier to the island of Singapore. It is 200 miles wide, with a central spine consisting of mountains that rise to 7,000 feet. And four-fifths of this country are covered by thick, tropical jungle. With creepers, vines and giant parasite ferns growing out of the tree trunks, a man can easily lie concealed only a few feet from his pursuers. The deep jungle is far easier to pass through than the 'belukar', the growths which follow the clearing of virgin jungle. Here the overgrowth is so dense that, especially where there is much bamboo thicket, a patrol may be able to advance no more than a mile a day. The grasses have edges like saws, and almost every plant has claws or spikes that tear all but the toughest materials. Fallen and rotting trees make progress still more difficult, and much of the jungle is also deep swamp.

While I was in Malaya, in December 1953, two men and one woman of very primitive race and entirely different from the various tribes of Sakai, or aborigines, were reported to have been seen on the Trolak Rubber Estate, some seventy miles on the main road north of Kuala Lumpur. These 'ape-men' hit the headlines in Britain. I visited the estate, and find no reason for disbelieving the evidence of a young Chinese girl, a Malay Home Guard corporal and a Tamil rubber-tapper, each giving evidence in their own language and each describing the low, receding foreheads and the prominent eyebrows which the anthropologist would expect to find but which these illiterates would be most unlikely to invent. The jungle is as old as time, and those who know how nearly impenetrable it is see nothing incredible in the idea that a few very primitive people may have survived in it and have tried to leave it because military patrols, bombs and rockets have now made their place of refuge a place of fear.

But this incident provided an instructive example of our inability in Britain or the United States to imagine what the jungle is really like. For a famous London newspaper at once cabled to the Federation Government offering to shoulder the full costs of an 'expedition' to capture these 'ape-men'. Even if there were no Communist Terrorists, an expedition into such jungle would have less chance of finding these men than I should have of finding the proverbial needle in the proverbial haystack—a needle would at least stay still. And the danger from the Communist Terrorists is still so great that even a picnic by a roadside on which there has been no incident for over a year is looked upon as very rash and foolish.

In Malay the word 'ulu' literally means 'head'. In this sense it was used of the upper reaches of a river, or river

valley. Since the Malays colonized the country from the sea, settling at the mouths of the rivers and gradually working their way up them, 'ulu' has become a convenient term to describe this jungle, which grows in the upper reaches of Malaya's many rivers and, in fact, almost everywhere except on the flat coastal plain, where it has been replaced by rubber or coconut plantations or rice ('padi'). And the 'ulu' gives every advantage to the man who has taken refuge in it. The jungle is not neutral, as Colonel Spencer Chapman affirmed in his admirable book; the advantages it gives to the Communists who live in it explain why roughly a quarter of the national expenditure of the Federation has to be spent on the effort to destroy a few thousand bandits in the 'ulu'.



Chinese junks choke Singapore River, main artery for the colony's entrepot trade.



A helicopter in a jungle clearing.



Youthful aborigines.

Chapter Three

G.T.S IN THE 'ULU'

THE history of Communism in Malaya goes back for a little more than thirty years. In 1922 the Chinese Communist Party opened a bureau in Singapore which soon covered the whole area of the South Seas. Indonesians, who, as I have already pointed out, are themselves Malays, were used to spread the doctrine in the Malay States of the present Federation. They failed. The Malays were not interested, as they are also not interested today, one of the reasons being, no doubt, the very wide gap between even their mild Islamism and Communism.

Chiang Kai-shek's unification of China under the Kuomintang nearly thirty years ago naturally had a great effect in all countries where there were many Chinese. Their secret societies provided teachers in the Chinese schools who preached loyalty towards China, and a Chinese cannot in any case legally divest himself of his Chinese nationality. They, the newcomers to Malaya, began to develop a national movement—but a Chinese, not a Malayan, one.

In 1927 Chiang Kai-shek quarrelled with the Communists who had helped him into power, and the quarrel was reflected in Malaya. The Malayan Communist Party was formed and began a bitter underground war against the Kuomintang. Apart from a few hundred Indians working in the Singapore naval base and in various dockyards, the M.C.P. was from the beginning what it is still today—a party whose membership was overwhelmingly Chinese.

In the early months of World War Two the M.C.P. behaved as all the other Communist parties. It denounced

the 'capitalist, imperialist war', in which it found that the Nazis, as the allies of the Russians, were far preferable to the Americans and the British. When the Germans attacked Russia this attitude changed overnight. The local Communists then offered to help the Singapore authorities, who were criticized somewhat unfairly at home, when the Japanese were advancing down the Malay Peninsula six months later, because they had done so little to take advantage of this belated offer of help. The Japanese invasion of Malaya was complete by February 1942, but throughout the occupation people of all races took refuge in the jungle. Apart from a few Englishmen such as Spencer Chapman, the Communists were by far the most effective in organizing opposition there. They built up the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (M.P.A.J.A.). Their active resistance was curtailed by their shortage of arms, but they did much to keep the spirit of resistance alive, and their jungle camps became highly-disciplined centres for political indoctrination. Later, with arms parachuted to them by the British Force 136, they played quite a part in harassing the Japanese.

The Japanese surrender, accelerated by the use of the first atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, took place in August 1945, a short time before the South East Asia Command in Ceylon could land an Allied invasion force on the Malay Peninsula. In the interval between the surrender and the arrival of the Allies the leaders of M.P.A.J.A. were able to claim, as the Russian Communists were claiming in Europe, that they alone had won the war. Two well-known British trade unionists, Mr. S. S. Awberry, M.P., and Mr. F. W. Dalley, who were subsequently invited by the Governments of the Federation and Singapore to enquire into labour conditions, wrote in their report that 'by the time the British

Military Administration took over in September, 1945, they (the Communists) had set up "cells" dubbed "trade unions" for every type of trade and worker—from miners and rubber workers to cabaret girls. None of these was in the smallest degree representative or democratic'. In December of that year guerrilla forces were paid off and were supposed to hand in their arms. Communist documents show that M.P.A.J.A. hid most of theirs in the jungle against the day when they could create a 'People's Republic'.

The tactics to bring this People's Republic into being were probably decided at a conference held in Calcutta early in 1948 by the World Federation of Democratic Youth and the International Union of Students, attended by Communist delegates from Europe, Russia and many Asian countries, including Malaya. It was then that the Asian Communist parties are believed to have decided to change from industrial agitation through the trade unions to a much more militant activity. The plan the Communists have tried to carry through can be divided into three phases. During the first phase they hoped to create an effective mass movement, accompanied by guerrilla warfare. In the second phase they were to occupy police stations and other official buildings, and to establish certain 'liberated areas'. In the third phase they were to create a 'liberation army' which would link these 'liberated areas' and thus conquer the country.

★ ★ ★

I find some people who doubt the extent to which a rebellion such as that in Malaya is planned in Moscow or Peking. I therefore give a summary of an article, signed Ugrinovich, which appeared in the *Moscow University Herald* on December 9th, 1951, since the policy could not be more frankly stated.

The technique to be used is:

(a) Incite the inherent spirit of nationalism in all classes of the population.

(b) Encourage the formation of an all-national 'united front' which may include the 'vacillating national bourgeoisie' and the 'petty bourgeoisie and its political parties'.

(c) Wrest leadership of the United Front from these two latter groups in favour of the working class and its political party, the Communist Party.

(d) Develop the United Front into a purely working-class and peasantry organization in the form of an alliance 'of the two basic classes which constitute the overwhelming majority of the working people of the population of colonial and dependent territories'. The 'alliance' should be led by the working class, the Communist Party.

(e) 'Form, when possible and where possible, powerful people's liberation armies, skilful in battle with the enemy, under leadership of the Communist Party'. The struggle of the masses must be identified with the armed struggle.

'The struggle of the masses'—in Malaya—was made principally through the trade unions. As in European trade unions, the Communists tried to get the key positions, and the Government's encouragement of new unions in a country which knew so little of labour organizations made their task all the easier.

Early in 1948 the Singapore police learnt that the Singapore Federation of Trade Unions was planning for April the largest strike of its career—it had struck in January against the Harbour Board's decision to decasualize its labour, which

the Federation had, in fact, always urged it to do. But this second strike was to be a much bigger affair, and the police discovered so many leaflets inciting to bloodshed that the Government decided to arrest and banish the people who had distributed them. They also arrested members of an illegal 'Singapore Workers Protection Corps'—illegal because it had not been registered under the Societies Ordinance. Hand-grenades were thrown in the dock area to intimidate men who wanted to remain at work.

It was just at this time that the Communist-controlled Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions announced its plans for May Day—a mammoth meeting, followed by a mammoth procession. The Police Commissioner agreed to the meeting but banned the procession, whereupon the federation announced that the procession would nevertheless take place. The Government replied by banning the meeting as well.

The Singapore Federation of Trade Unions had lost that round. The Workers Protection Corps had been demoralized and broken. The dock strike had failed. The Communists tried again. On May 10th one of the largest rubber factories on the island was burnt down. At another rubber factory one of the demands put forward by the strikers was for the use of a particular machine that had, in fact, been in use there for twenty years. Other strikes were ordered on equally flimsy pretexts. Mr. S. S. Awberry and Mr. F. W. Dalley, whose report I have already mentioned, condemned the way in which the Pan-Malayan Federation of Trade Unions 'call strikes but pay no strike pay or similar benefits; frame demands but carry out no negotiations, preferring to remain in the background and act as "the power behind the throne" while pushing forward trade-union leaders with whom they interfere and often

intimidate. They claim to give unions advice and help, but in practice they leave the officers of the affiliated unions to do the negotiations and then prevent settlements being made when, as is generally the case, they disagree with the provisional agreement arrived at'.

The arrests of one or two strike leaders and the deportation to China of many men who had distributed literature inciting to violence began to have their effect. The Communists transferred their activity to the mainland.

An Indian member of the Federal Council, Mr. V. M. N. Menon, warned the Government that 'hardly a day passes without violence on the labour front. The Indian labourer is proverbially docile and tolerant, yet no regard is now given to the moral value of life, and chaos reigns supreme. Definitely there must be something more serious behind these bubbles of crime than meets one's eye'. An employer in Penang who had given evidence against a trade-union leader who was convicted for intimidation was murdered in the street in broad daylight. In Perak the local chairman of the Planting Industries Employers' Association said that there was 'wholesale armed disregard for the law, intimidation, gangsterism, murder'. Employers and employees, especially in the country's most important industries, rubber and tin, were threatened or murdered. The M.P.A.J.A. became the M.P.A.B.A.—Malayan People's Anti-British Army—and later the Malayan Races Liberation Army. But the name did not alter the fact that nearly all its members were Chinese.¹

The State of Emergency was proclaimed after three

¹Many of the details of this period are taken from a most useful little *Handbook to Malaya and the Emergency*, published officially in Singapore by the Information Offices concerned.

European planters were murdered on June 16th, 1948, just outside the little town of Sungei Siput, near Ipoh. The manager of the Elphil Rubber Estate was writing up his log-book—'and I have to point the company's attention to . . .' he had written, when he was shot dead through the window of his house. The other two Englishmen were tied up and a gang of Chinese turned a machine-gun on them.

Along the route of the dismantled railway from Gemas to Kota Bahru, in the eastern and less populated half of the Peninsula, the guerillas became active. They took over the police stations at Bertam and Gua Musang, in a very remote part of the Peninsula. In Gua Musang (which means 'Cave of the Civet Cats') there was the biggest 'battle' of the war, with nearly thirty killed on either side, before their attempt to create a 'liberated area' was crushed by the arrival of Government reinforcements. As their leaders admitted three years later, they had committed their forces at too early a stage; they had neither enough men nor enough supplies. And without adequate supplies they had been forced to live off the country, which meant that they had alienated the sympathy and support of the very people they needed for their mass movement.

Thus the C.T.s have been compelled to withdraw into the deep jungle while they try to organize mass support. The next chapters will outline the measures by which the Government is checking that effort. The progress of that effort means that Communist activity is likely to be concentrated again rather in the towns than in the 'ulu', although it is quite probable that the guiding brains in the Politburo are still in the deep jungle, distributed in different areas, each with its Independent Platoons, its Propaganda Organization,

and its Armed Work Force, partly military and partly political. These areas are linked to each other, and to the outside world, by a system of couriers who know as little about each other as Nunn May and Karl Fuchs knew about their fellow-spies in the atomic field.

Most of the Communist propaganda prepared in the deep jungle is duplicated, but it is very well done. I have before me two issues of a Chinese paper, *Current Affairs News*, for November 30th and December 13th, 1953. This is quite reasonably produced by the 'Humanity Press', Perak, and the copies were taken from two C.T. couriers who were killed by the West Yanks near Sungei Siput on December 29th. Each courier was carrying about a hundred copies.

The contents of *Current Affairs News* deal almost entirely with international Communism, such as the World Trade Union Congress in Vienna in October. The British pre-Christmas strikes, involving about 2,000,000 workers are described as the most important strike since 1926. It is generally noticeable that when events are favourable in the international field the propaganda devotes much space to 'the brotherhood of man'—and the Communist successes in Indo-China must be reckoned as a severe setback for the Malayan Government. At other times the propaganda is more local. In 1948 the Communists gained recruits by stating that the authorities were arresting all trade unionists. When identity cards were issued this was alleged to be preparatory to mass arrests. When the Korean war began people were told that the Government intended to ship workers by the thousand to fight in Korea.

The men and women in the jungle are, of course, only one side of the Communist movement. In the long run the activity in the towns and villages may be the more difficult

to control and to check. Here there is a branch of the Communist Party known as Min Yuen (literally 'the Helpers'), which collects food for the terrorists and, in common with the genuine Chinese secret societies and the American gangsters of the nineteen-twenties, blackmails the richer citizens into providing money. I came across one case in which a Chinese citizen found it advisable to pay up more than £6,000 in one sum. Min Yuen probably outnumbered the actual C.T.s by at least four to one, and it can always supply fresh recruits for the jungle when they are wanted.

In the early days of the Emergency the terrorists made a point either of damaging rubber trees on European estates by slashing the bark or of compelling the tappers to hand over much of the latex they collected. This they took to some neighbouring Chinese estate, where it was mixed with the owner's latex, and most of the proceeds of the manufactured rubber was handed over to the C.T.s. At one time as much as one-fifth of the European rubber output was stolen in this way, and Dato Sir Chenglock Tan, one of the leading Chinese in Malaya, has described the pilfering and marketing of rubber as a vast and highly organized business.

★ ★ ★

Despite heavy casualties, there may still be nearly as many Communists in the jungle as when the Emergency began. It is, of course, impossible to give figures with much assurance, since there must be a lot of 'unseen wastage'. Undoubtedly some C.T.s desert and manage to slip back unidentified into civilian life—every Chinese has more than one set of names; there may be as many as six different names for one perfectly harmless individual. As there are also half a dozen dialects,

differing as much as one European language from another, a man may escape the observation of the police even without giving himself a set of illegal aliases. Other C.T.s have died in the jungle. Others—and many of them—have been ‘eliminated’ by the Communist Party because their loyalty became doubtful.

But it is probable that the C.T.s are not fewer than 3,000 and not more than 6,500. Were it not for this ‘unseen wastage’, the police could be more precise for they know almost every C.T. by name. Their files contain his photograph and other details about him or her. They can tell you, to within a mile or two, where each individual is operating in the ‘ulu’. But for many reasons, some of which I have already given and others which must be described later, they cannot put their hands on him.

Probably the Min Yuen plays a prominent part in collecting new recruits, and one important fact is that the quality of these new recruits has steadily fallen in the last two years. In a country whose prosperity is so dependent upon the export of two commodities, one might have expected the collapse of world prices of rubber and tin to be of immense benefit to the Communists. So far this has not been the case, for the basic wage is still guaranteed; and the worker knows that, although conditions may be difficult, they would be much more difficult still in the ‘ulu’. The principal result of the fall of prices has been that Min Yuen has found it more difficult to collect funds—Chinese merchants are less able to buy tranquillity by paying ‘squeeze’. Besides, the Communist Terrorists are not easy to please, and certainly would not welcome anybody who managed to reach one of their camps.

They select their recruits carefully, although previous

political activity is not essential. Min Yuen may pick out a likely-looking young Chinese and ask him to leave some food in some place where the C.T.s can pick it up. Should he do so—whether because he is sympathetic towards them, because he is tempted by the offer of money, or because he is frightened—his fate is decided. He is told that the police may have heard of his misdemeanour, or may hear of it in the near future; would he not be wise to take refuge in the 'ulu' to escape arrest? And the chances, of course, are that he will do so. He will not dare not to do so, for it is worth noting that, whereas most of the police casualties have been suffered by Malays, the civilian victims of the C.T.s have been among their fellow-Chinese. Up to the end of March 1954, 1,561 Chinese civilians had been killed, as against 308 Malays, 208 Indians, 99 Europeans and 66 aborigines.

The offer of education is a great attraction to a potential recruit, and the C.T.s will probably teach him more than he would have learnt in an ordinary school, even if there had been one in his neighbourhood—they have to fill in so many hours in the damp, deep green jungle, and their indoctrination is more likely to be useful and effective if it is accompanied by a certain amount of ordinary education. To what extent there is also a spirit of comradeship, I do not know, for the C.T.s who surrender—when they become 'S.E.P.s', or Surrendered Enemy Personnel—give accounts that are obviously biased, and 'C.E.P.s'—Captured Enemy Personnel—are very uncommon; in the jungle the trigger finger has to move quickly. But even if the recruit proves politically obdurate he can still be very useful. For reasons to be explained later, the C.T.s must now grow much more of their food by cultivating small clearings in the jungle, and the new

recruit can be put on to this work with no fear that he will be able to escape.

The steps taken by the Federal Government to win this war will be described in the next two chapters. I end this chapter with the reminder that the help afforded to bandits by the jungle is not new. In 1831 British forces fought a humiliating campaign, known as the Naning War, in the northern part of the Straits Settlement of Malacca. Penghulu (i.e. village headman) Dool Syed revolted. Before his few followers could be dispersed £100,000 had been spent, and it took the troops ten weeks to cover the last twelve miles, the goal of which was only twenty-two miles from Malacca town. And people in Britain found it as difficult then as they do now to put adequate blame on the jungle.

Chapter Four

YESTERDAY'S SQUATTERS: TOMORROW'S CITIZENS

IN THE dining-car from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur a civilian standing at the bar was demonstrating to the O.C. Train the excellence of his revolver. He had drunk two or three whiskies more than were good for him, and we all hoped the darned weapon was not loaded.

Every train carries its armed guard, and is preceded by a trolley that runs along the line to make sure it has not been damaged. Nevertheless, through the window of my comfortable, air-conditioned sleeper I stared out at the dark jungle with some disquiet. Despite every precaution, it would be so easy to blow up the train, and in the 'ulu' near Segamat, one of the towns on the railway, there is one C.T. who is an expert in the manufacture of electric mines.

In 1952 there were 229 attacks of one kind or another on the railways and 35 trains were derailed. Five passengers were killed and 29 were injured. But nowadays trains are not often attacked for two reasons. One is that such attacks would antagonize public opinion at a time when the only hope for the C.T.s is to gain some measure of mass support. The other, and more important, reason is that an incident on the railway would enable the Federation forces to cordon off the area and to comb it thoroughly. The troops of today are equipped to move quickly and silently. These men in jungle green, with high canvas boots and floppy-brimmed hats, bear very little resemblance to the barrack-square soldiers with heavy, nail-studded boots, heavy packs and heavy rifles.

The Japanese found it necessary during the war to cut back the undergrowth on either side of the main road. The British have done the same, but in so hot and damp a climate the plants grow high enough in a month to put the odds immensely in favour of the ambushers. Nevertheless hold-ups, too, have become uncommon. There have been a few attacks on vehicles recently in Johore, the most southerly State of the Federation, but this may be rather a confession of Communist weakness than a boast of strength—some owners of buses and other vehicles escaped attack even in the worst times, and their degree of immunity is generally believed to be in direct ratio to the 'squeeze' they paid. With the shortage of money and the lessening risk, these companies may have stopped their payments, and one or two of them are being made to suffer. In most areas rubber planters still go around in armoured jeeps, their homes are surrounded by barbed wire, and their estates are watched over by Special Constables. But the C.T.s are now definitely on the defensive; they, more often than the police or the soldiers, are the victims of ambushes.

This improvement has various causes besides the improvement in the training of troops. Direct attack on the jungle, as I have already suggested, is worse than useless. Patrols by the Police Field Force or the Army are increasingly effective, but a man does an average of 700 hours 'jungle-bashing' before he kills a Communist. Many of the troops are National Service men; on the whole they accustom themselves to the green gloom of the jungle surprisingly well. But they are haunted by the feeling that they are being watched, and yet they very seldom see their watchers.

They *are* being watched. Not only by C.T. scouts, ready to warn their headquarters when to break camp, but also by

the aborigines. Some of the C.T.s have spent twelve years in the 'ulu', and are therefore likely to be more skilled in jungle warfare than the British troops who are hunting them. The Malays, who form most of the police patrols, have more experience. But none—except, probably, the Gurkhas—can rival the aborigines, of whom some 100,000 have their homes in this sinister and beautiful world.

So one aim of the military authorities is to win the active collaboration of the aborigines. These people whom civilization has passed by have suddenly become a most important factor in the maintenance of civilization. The second aim is to cut the links between the C.T.s and the outside world. The third is to prevent them from growing inside the jungle the food they can obtain only with increasing difficulty from outside.

★ ★ ★

I take the second aim first—the destruction of links with the outside world. The most important step towards its achievement is the one which is least understood in England—the creation of New Villages. During the great slump between the two world wars thousands of Chinese who had immigrated from China to work in the tin mines found themselves unemployed. Still more of them were brought to the verge of starvation when the Japanese invaded Malaya. So they did what their ancestors have done for many centuries in China—they found a little plot of land and cultivated it even more intensely than the Belgians or the Dutch. Land in Malaya belongs to the Sultans, and their Governments would have hesitated to give land to the Chinese, so the Chinese squatted wherever they could in remote spots on the fringes of the jungle. They are the people who, willingly or unwillingly, have provided most of the recruits and the food for the C.T.s.

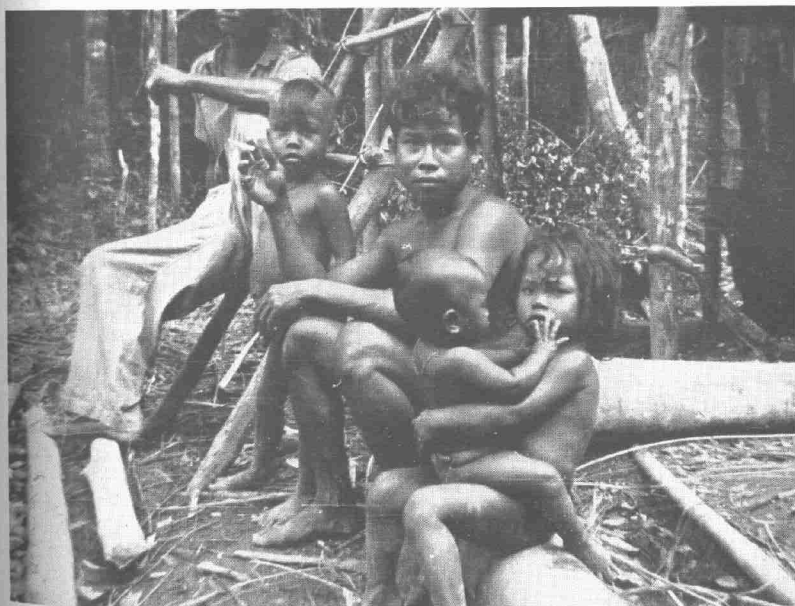
Far less important have been the Malays. Until the British came to build one of the best road systems to be found in any colonial territory, the rivers provided the only communications, and Malay hamlets, or kampongs, were built on stilts along the river banks. The roads and the railway have drained many of the people from these villages; those who remained have been as much at the mercy of the Communists as the Chinese squatters. It is important to realize that the number of civilians the C.T.s have murdered is more than twice that of police killed, just as the number of police killed is more than double that of the fatal casualties in the army.

In the early days of the Emergency many of the Chinese squatters and a few of the Malays were detained under the Malayan equivalent of Article 18B in war-time Britain. So, too, were known Communists and fellow-travellers in the towns. Three years ago there were some 11,000 persons in detention, now there are fewer than 2,000. But 26,000 Chinese have been deported. They are brought down in closely-guarded lorries to Port Swettenham and put on board Norwegian ships, with their brand-new bicycles and other capitalist luxuries. Port Swettenham knows well enough when they are coming, for its main street echoes to their revolutionary songs and their shouted insults. They have the satisfaction of shaking their fists at the police. Then they go aboard, and are so glad to be returning to China that the Norwegian crew needs no armed guard. The Chinese Communist Government has shown astonishing reluctance to receive these returning heroes, and old-fashioned bribery has been necessary before they have been allowed ashore.

The policy of detention is preventive, not punitive, and the rehabilitation methods seem to be both sensible and



Hindu finery at the Thaipusam Festival, Penang.



Aborigine family, Malayan jungle.



A pilgrim at Thaipusam Festival. Note the spears on which the Kavadi rests.

successful. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Of several thousands who have been 'rehabilitated' fewer than 1 per cent have again come to the attention of the police for political activity. The Rehabilitation Centre for Chinese at Taiping is one of the most exhilarating places I visited in Malaya. The young men undergo eight months' training under the supervision (at that time) of an Englishman as young as themselves, and I have never sensed a more cordial atmosphere in a place of this kind. I should say without hesitation that the pupils, or whatever they should be called—I resist 'rehabilitates', although I daresay that it is the official word—leave the centre not only well equipped to earn their livings but also with some understanding of the duties, as well as the benefits, of democracy. And this understanding is exceptionally rare among the Chinese, whose self-sacrifice is beyond praise, but is normally limited to the members of the family.

But the real problem before the Government was not how to treat men who were suspected of sympathy towards Communism, but how to block the many channels through which the Communists might obtain supplies from outside. While those channels remained open there was no possibility of crushing this revolt which has brought so much misery to Malaya. The only possible remedy was to remove both Chinese and Malays from the jungle fringe.

Sir Henry Gurney, General Templer's predecessor as High Commissioner—assassinated by the C.T.s in October 1951—initiated the policy of the New Villages. Lieutenant-General Sir Harold Briggs, the Director of Operations, organized and carried it through, and he did so with an energy which is all the more remarkable when one remembers that he had nothing like the powers entrusted to General Templer. His

health broke under the strain, and he died in 1952. But he does deserve the credit—which he most generously gets from General Templer—for his work on a plan which has rehoused one-tenth of the population of the country; which has built 550 New Villages at a cost, to date, of nearly £11,000,000; and which has given Malaya a better chance of becoming a successful democracy than anything else that has happened to it in the last hundred years. Furthermore, it was a policy which, by its nature, was bound to be welcomed with raised eyebrows in the clubs of Pall Mall and with angry protests at Liberal and Labour meetings; its harshness might easily have intensified racial feeling to an appalling degree, since it meant that thousands of Chinese were compelled to leave their homes and to live in villages surrounded by barbed wire—generally to keep the villagers in, but sometimes to keep the terrorists out.

I believe that the experiment has succeeded. Succeeded from the social as well as from the military point of view. Let me take the example of Sungei Buloh, which has now become a suburb of Sungei Siput, where, as already mentioned, the Emergency began. My visit to this village chanced to coincide with that of a Government veterinary surgeon, an Indian, who had come to inoculate the dogs against rabies and the chickens against fowl pest. It was as though I had arrived on some national fête day. Everybody was out to enjoy himself or herself. Even the dogs found that their fear of the syringe and the operating table was soon overcome by the excitement of seeing so many other dogs.

The Government had provided the one metalled main road. The villagers themselves, with some financial help from the Government, have built side roads, culverts and so on themselves. They have their own bean factory, pig farm

and fish-pond—in real Chinese style, with the pig manure draining into the fish-pond and the water from the fish-pond being poured on to the bean-shoots to keep them fresh. The outer barbed-wire fence still remains, but mainly as a protection—it has been removed on the side between the village and the town, and has been replaced by a row of papaya trees, because the pepsin from the papaya fruit is good for the children's digestion. There is a flower garden, from which flowers are sold to other villages.

This village was started in 1951. It is run by a council, elected by universal adult suffrage. This council employs two roadmenders and two gardeners. At one place, where the road was unusually wide, I saw a notice: 'Private cars only.' And until three years ago all its inhabitants were living in or on the edge of the jungle, with no amenities, no chance of education for their children, and with the constant fear of being involved in this war between the C.T.s and the authorities. They are contented to stay put.

It would, of course, be absurd to claim that all the 550 New Villages are equally successful. Many of them are still short of land—the Malays see no reason why good land should be handed over to Chinese newcomers, and a Chinese without his little plot of land is as unhappy as a Cockney without his pub. If land is made available it is probably too far from the village to be useful. This is particularly the case in Johore, where the plan was first put into operation; in the haste to build the villages far too little care was taken over their siting, and it was later found that suitable land was not available. Even when it is available the practices in land tenure vary greatly—absurdly—from State to State, and immensely complicate the policy of issuing long-term titles to these new villagers. Another handicap is, I imagine, that

most of the Resettlement officers have been recruited overseas, and thus have no personal knowledge of the ways of the Chinese. Only about one Resettlement Officer in eight is himself a Chinese. Lastly, there are villages in which genuine sympathizers with Communism, who should have been detained under the Malayan equivalent of 18B, are sources of discontent. Food is still sometimes thrown over the barbed wire, to be picked up at night by the C.T.s outside.

In such villages the community hall, erected with such encouragement from the Government as the place in which democracy may take root, is quite likely to become the hot-bed of Communism. One remembers the fate of so many similar village halls in Kenya, where they were built for the benefit of ex-servicemen who would find it difficult to fit themselves again into the narrow confines of tribal life. These halls became the centre, not of the community but of intellectual snobbishness on the part of the few men who had travelled. They might read their newspapers upside down, but at least they knew what a newspaper was, and the ordinary villager did not. But these intellectual snobs did not find jobs worthy of what they imagined their deserts to be, so that they gathered in the village hall mainly to grumble, to curse the Government, to prepare the way for Mau Mau. There have not yet been similar developments in the new Chinese or Malay villages, but the possibility cannot be ignored, despite the much higher cultural level of the Malaysians.

But despite these dangers there are now more than 150 New Villages which have reached the third phase of development and produce their own Home Guard. Also they now have their freely-elected councils. And in such elections about 75 per cent of the voters have gone to the poll, as

against under 20 per cent of those qualified to vote in the municipalities. In other words, this growth of democracy on the parish level makes sense to the people; they see its immediate results. But on a higher level they cannot yet comprehend it, and their lack of comprehension should be a warning not to hurry ahead too fast with self-government.

Sungei Buloh, it must be admitted, is one of some fifty exceptionally good villages. There is a block of 400 reasonably good ones, and another block of 100 bad ones—mostly in South Johore, where the resettlement scheme started. Since South Johore is also the nearest part of the Federation to Singapore and the tourist world, it is the worst villages that are the best known.

In these more advanced villages the barbed wire has ceased to have any meaning, although the Chinese are delighted to train their vegetables up it. The Home Guard, if one is still needed, is recruited among the villagers themselves. There are now more than 100,000 Chinese in this service—an astonishing total if one remembers the reluctance of the Chinese to take any part in such activities. (The Kinta Valley, where are most of the tin mines, used to be an exceptionally 'black' area. Nearly two years ago the mine-owners decided to encourage the Chinese to form their own Home Guard there. All their arms, the pessimists predicted, would at once be handed over to the Communists. In fact only one carbine has been lost.) In the old days few of the Chinese squatters had any loyalty to Malaya or any incentive to develop it. Now half a million of them have been grouped into New Villages, with education, electricity, and many other amenities which few of them can have expected ever to acquire. However much this process may be in line with general policy, it has been so

expensive that no Government would have undertaken it except under pressure of the Emergency; the Communists have thus brought unexpected benefits to Malaya, although in a manner they had never anticipated and which they most heartily dislike. Indeed, in some cases resettlement teams collecting squatters and their belongings to take them to New Villages were ambushed three or four times a week, and areas about to be settled were burnt to the ground by C.T.s.

'The one-time so-called squatters have now been resettled,' said Sir Gerald Templer in a broadcast in February 1952, 'but that is by no means the end of the problem; in fact, it is only the beginning. We are now faced with the human problem, and this human problem can only be solved by methods which spring from the heart rather than from the mind. Many of these people have felt that they are not really part of the community and have gained an impression that they are not wanted.

'Do we want this state of affairs to continue, or are we really sincere in our desire that they should be given an opportunity to become useful citizens? If we believe, as we should and must believe, that the latter is the true objective, then every decent man and woman must do his or her share to bring about a change.'

And it is due in very great measure to Sir Gerald and Lady Templer that so great a change has, in fact, been achieved; that in New Villages where one was received with scowls a year ago, one is now given a cordial and friendly welcome.

* * *

The advantages given to these Chinese have aroused a good deal of jealousy and alarm among the Malays. It seems to many of them that, although they supply nearly all the police

and many of the soldiers who are defending Malaya, the Chinese are the people who benefit. Here, again, the Emergency has hastened the normal process of social progress.

In August 1950 the Federal Government started R.I.D.A.—the Rural and Industrial Development Authority—and, although this is not readily admitted, it did so partly to comfort the Malays. Since they live in small and remote kampongs, they would in any case be more difficult to help than the gregarious Chinese; but they find it difficult to understand why even the Chinese, who are grouped in the New Villages because they might otherwise help the Communists, should have the advantages of electricity and piped water. R.I.D.A. is intended to remove their envy.

R.I.D.A. in the State of Kelantan provided me with a consolation after a sore disappointment. My programme in Kota Bahru, the capital of this north-eastern State, had promised me a dinner with the Prime Minister at the Beach of Passionate Love. We could not get there, I learnt, because the monsoon had brought the rains, and the road was three feet under water. Instead, we must dine at the Government Rest House, and they sought to console me by the assurance that the normal Malay name for this beach is the Beach of the Fire Ants and that it is as littered with rubbish as Margate beach on an August Bank Holiday.

There were other consolations in Kota Bahru to justify the bumpy flight over the jungle tree-tops. My neighbour in the aircraft was a jovial Buddhist priest in long saffron robe who explained to me with the help of the map and my pocket diary—for we had no words in common—that the trip we were doing in an hour and a half from Penang to Kota Bahru would have taken him ten days or so by sea. The aircraft

was the only one I know in which the kind of fans one would normally associate with a performance of *The Mikado* are supplied to every passenger. Kelantan is one of the States where the Malays are in the overwhelming majority, and they wear bright and cheerful clothes that are worthy of their beauty. And I was granted an audience, in a building which slightly failed to live up to its title of the Glittering Palace, with the Sultan, who looks a little like a benevolent Mussolini and who shared the open car with the Queen of Tonga during the downpours of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth. His full title is His Highness Tengku Sir Ibrahim ibni Al-marum Sultan Mohamed IV, D.K., S.P.M.K., S.J.M.K., K.C.M.G. We talked, with the help of one of his ministers, about clocks, dogs and motor cars, which are among his favourite subjects of conversation. I avoided the subject of the Coronation.

R.I.D.A.'s consolation was in the shape of its officer there. A tall thin man with an aristocratic beak of a nose and an enthusiasm for his job which has not been damped even by a period as a prisoner of war set to work by the Japanese on the dreaded and infamous Siam-Burma railway. He dashed me up and down the State's few roads to show me a fishpond here, a rice mill there, and a new village somewhere else. He—and others I met—told me how great a part is being played in supplying Malaysians with a more balanced diet by a fish imported from Egypt, the tilapia, which hatches its eggs in its mouth and provides a refuge there for its young in moments of danger. (This same species, I believe, has been introduced into lakes in the Congo, where they have bred at such speed that they have eaten all the weed and are starving; it is now necessary to introduce some other species of fish to keep their numbers down.) The

R.I.D.A. officer explained how he had organized the rice-growers around Kota Bahru into producer co-operatives which now own some twenty-five rice-mills. And he showed me, with immense pride, the new village of Selising, which, with R.I.D.A.'s help, has replaced one that was burnt down and which must be one of the model villages of all Malaya.

The basis of R.I.D.A.'s activities is that the people must be helped to help themselves. It may, for example, give land and materials to the peasants, who build their rice mills and so on by voluntary effort, and at no cost to R.I.D.A. beyond, perhaps, a feast when the work is finished. The market square of Selising, when I visited it, was still a mass of muddy earth being pushed about by a bulldozer, but flanking it were three neat rows of shops—one row Malay, one row Chinese, and one row Indian. Most remarkable innovation of all, and shown to me with immense pride by the R.I.D.A. officer, was a row of water-closets.

At the other end of the country, in Malacca, another R.I.D.A. officer, a young New Zealander, dragged me away from the chance of a bathe in order to visit his own prize village, in the Naning territory, the scene of the humiliating campaign of 1831, mentioned earlier in this book. The district, or Mukim, is called Sungei Buloh—also the name of the Chinese New Village near Ipoh, about which I have already written, (and this is not very surprising, since the name means Bamboo River, and there are plenty of both in Malaya). In one of its villages, Simpang Ampat, the Malays have opened their own co-operative shop, which must be even more unpopular with the owners of the adjoining stores than the early Co-operative Wholesale Society's shops used to be in England. But Sungei Buloh also has its Rubber

Marketing Society, which buys the smallholders' rubber, processes it, and in due course sells the finished product. The average smallholder has three or four acres of trees, many of which are old and must soon be replaced by new stock. So that the supply of latex to the factory need not fail when this happens, the society has now bought its own rubber estate, planted mainly with trees which will last only for another seven or eight years, by which time the replanted trees on the members' smallholdings will come into tapping.

This particular co-operative also owns two fish-ponds (filled with the inevitable and invaluable tilapia and Chinese carp), and it has organized a Rural Credit Society, a Woman's Institute and a branch of the Red Cross. Its village hall does not suffer from the handicap placed upon one other I saw—which had foolishly been built next to the police station, and therefore remained empty—but it looked so new, so clean, so unused, that it increased the fear I expressed when I wrote about the Chinese New Villages that the Government is pushing the people faster and farther than they are yet ready to go.

I should mention yet one more R.I.D.A. officer, quite as keen as his colleagues in Kelantan and Malacca, but—when I saw him, at the end of a long day—less optimistic. Six weeks ago, he explained, rather in sorrow than in anger, the headman in a Malay village had appealed to him, as a matter of great urgency, to supply a tractor to plough up some land for immediate planting. At great inconvenience the tractor had been taken off other work to meet this demand. My friend had just revisited the land and had found that nothing whatsoever had been done with it. The weeds had grown again—they grow very fast in Malaya—and the job now needed to be done all over again. *Tid'apa!*

Lest we should ourselves become complacent and conceited, I quote two sentences from Elspeth Huxley's *Four Guineas*¹ 'It is uphill work, getting people to help themselves. They would rather starve, not as a matter of choice, but because their wish for leisure is even stronger than their wish for food—just as we go on having wars not because anyone wants them, but because some men's wish for power is stronger than their wish for peace.'

¹ Chatto & Windus.

MEN WITHOUT HISTORY

I HAVE described the efforts to prevent the C.T.s from getting their food from outside and the social improvements to which these efforts have given rise—for, although it is certainly true that the New Villages and R.I.D.A. are in keeping with general British policy of training dependent peoples to govern themselves, it would be untrue to suggest that anything like so much progress could have been made had there been no Emergency to break down the normal resistance of officials with budgets to balance. The next aim of the military authorities is to discourage the aborigines from giving any help to the C.T.s.

One of the military discoveries of the Malayan war is the great value of the helicopter. Without it, patrolling in the jungle would be infinitely more difficult and demoralizing. Without it, very little could be done to win over the aborigines. Without it, few severe casualties could be brought out of the 'ulu', since the ground is so rough and the tracks, if any, are so narrow that stretcher-bearers have an almost impossible task. But where there is a clearing half the size of a tennis court a helicopter may be able to land—a larger space is needed, of course, in thickly-wooded country because the suction caused by the rotor blades makes branches bend inwards, and thus reduces the size of the clearing to an alarming degree. The army could use four or five times as many helicopters with ease and gratitude; it is a scandal it has no chance to do so.

I was fortunate enough to visit an aborigine village in southern Pahang, one of the least accessible parts of Malaya.

Thanks to the helicopter, we were there in little more than an hour from Kuala Lumpur. The pilot took a look at me (over thirteen stones) and changed the position of a couple of balancing lead weights on the floor. The wireless operator and I sat on a narrow seat behind him and strapped ourselves in. As the day was very hot, we did not trouble to close the sliding door, and we could look straight down on to the forest fifty feet below us. From the ground the helicopter seems to move slowly; from the seat of the helicopter, flying at that height, it seems to move faster than anything else I have tried except skis or a surf-board. A notice in the cockpit read: 'No aerobatic manoeuvres approved. Do not fly solo from the rear seat.' Since we were flying at less than a hundred miles an hour, we could head straight for a mountain slope and what seemed certain disaster, and then climb over it quite comfortably at the last moment. I have been lucky enough to fly in many kinds of aircraft, from gliders to Comets. I want a helicopter.

Somewhere below me there may have been a military or a police patrol, the members of which might not emerge into the sunlight again for ten days or so. There may have been a Communist camp, with our helicopter interrupting for a few minutes one of their indoctrination classes about Marx and Lenin and Mao Tse-tung. There may have been a few aborigines, hunting with their blowpipes and short, poisoned darts. But all that I could see in every direction was the tops of forest trees. A world of tightly-packed and multi-coloured cauliflowers. Nothing broke this carpet of branches and leaves except an occasional gap where some giant tree had fallen or where growth had been checked by some small and evil-looking lake. Nothing to show that man had yet appeared on the face of the earth.

Our first destination was Fort Iskandar—'Iskandar' being Malay for Alexander, and Alexander reminding the Malays of Alexander the Great, their alleged ancestor. The pilot claimed he could land on a postage stamp, but in this case there was a decent-sized clearing and a dozen aborigine huts, as well as the so-called fort, which was little more than a police barracks built of bamboo and surrounded by a few straggling strands of barbed wire. The place, I was soon to learn, was less a fort than a community centre, from which the aborigines could be supplied with a little rudimentary education, a few simple medicines and such prized luxuries as salt—iodized for choice, since many of them suffer from goitre—which they could not have obtained from the C.T.s. We had been joined by another helicopter, and one of my companions was the British Adviser to Negri Sembilan, who had brought with him an immense bottle of boiled sweets, which were accepted as a matter of course—there was no limit to the strange things done by these large pink creatures who step out of the belly of this roaring monster that drops from the skies.

This was my first contact with the Sakai, as the aborigines are officially called—although they themselves dislike a word which means 'slaves' and prefer to be known as 'Orang Darat', which means 'men of the land', or 'Senoi', which means 'man' and applies in particular to one of the main aborigine groups. One meets them here and there in the populated areas, but of a total labour force in the Federation of more than 500,000 the Sakai contribution is less than 400; many of them die off if they are brought down to the civilized lowlands. They belong to a great variety of tribes, talking a variety of different languages. Some have wavy hair and fairly light skins; some are aboriginal Malays, stoutly built with straight hair and dark skins; some seem to be related

to the aborigines of Australia or even to the pygmies of the Belgian Congo and French Equatorial Africa. There is one quite distinct tribe, the Orang Kanak, whose members are now reduced to thirty-one. But all these people share one sentiment in common—they do not think very highly of civilization.

But now civilization thinks very highly of them. The Communists have in many cases won their confidence and told them all about the bright world of Karl Marx. Hitherto they have learned little about the enemies of the Communists, except through men like Colonel Spencer Chapman who lived throughout the Japanese occupation of Malaya in the deep jungle, and through a few experts such as the late Williams-Hunt, from whose book I have taken most of my details about them. Bombs intended for the C.T.s have occasionally fallen on them, or their cultivation clearings have been destroyed in error. Their jungle, hitherto undisturbed throughout the centuries, has become a strange and unexpected battlefield. I have already mentioned the three 'ape-men' who appeared near the main road from Ipoh to Kuala Lumpur last December. Probably they had decided that the jungle was becoming too uncomfortable and had come to look at the outside world. The first man they saw raised his rifle to fire at them, and they knew enough of civilization to understand what that meant—they threw themselves into a river and escaped. Nothing in the past can have disposed the Sakai very favourably towards the white man.

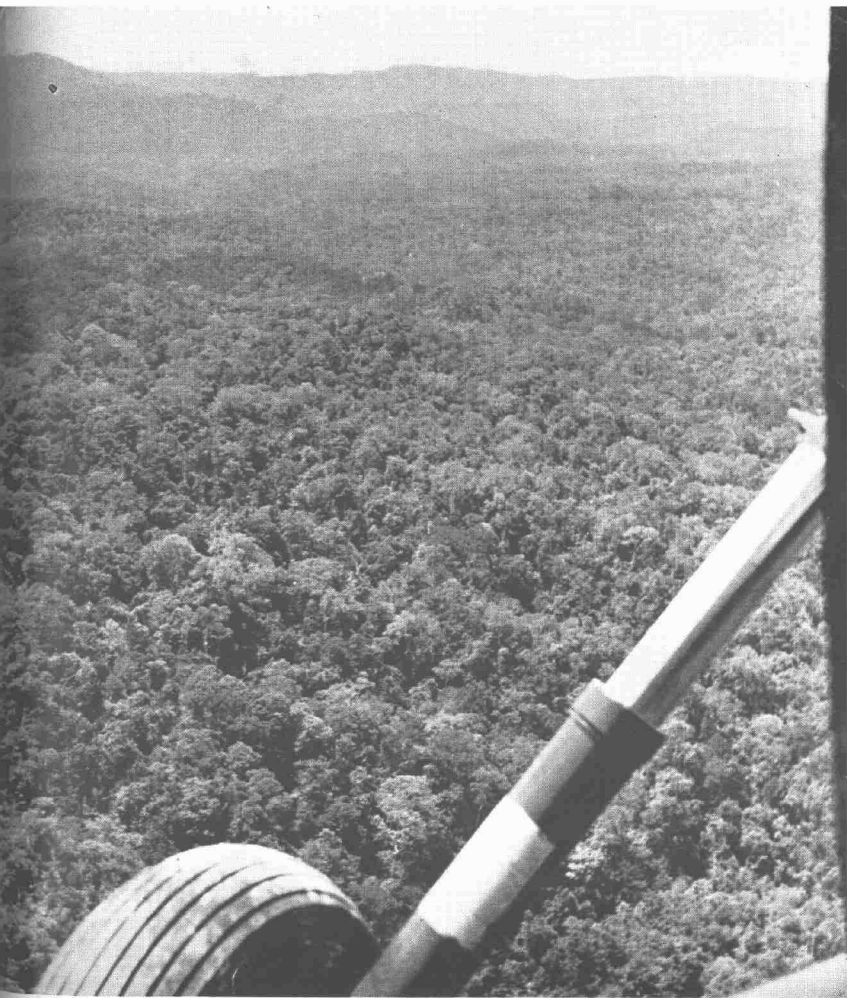
But I have already mentioned the difficulty of defeating the C.T.s if these aborigines can be persuaded to act as their scouts. Hence the jungle forts. By the time our helicopter landed, dozens of Sakai were sitting on their haunches round

the clearing, staring at us with solemn curiosity. One small boy was finally persuaded to let me see a model he had made of a helicopter out of various grasses. Even the propellor and rotor blades could be made to turn, and many a European child, with far better tools and raw materials, would have been proud of this model. Certainly these people do not lack intelligence.

Each community has its hereditary headman, who has complete power. Their houses are built mainly of bamboo and thatched with palm leaves. Those that I saw had little in the way of outer walls and were built on high stilts with a frail bamboo ladder to the front door. The floors were made of split and extremely flexible bamboo. For generations they have traded with the outside world for iron, salt and clothes, but they live for the most part on fruits, roots and such game as they can kill with their blowpipes, made of bamboo and generally far longer than themselves. They play bamboo flutes through their noses, and few of them can count above three—anything more is called 'many'.

Apparently among the Negritos—another of the main aborigine groups in Malaya—it is not unusual for a woman to suckle piglets and puppies that have lost their mothers. Like most primitive peoples, they are haunted by the fear of death and by the spirits of the dead. If a man dies, his house may be burned or the whole community may move on to build a new camp elsewhere. There are strange tabus about wild animals, and since no death is natural some of the Negritos are afraid that they will get themselves into trouble even if they use their cigarettes (smoked by children even before they are weaned) to burn off a leech.

From Fort Iskandar the helicopter took me above a long and deep lake, the Tasek Bera—Lake of Changing Colours—



‘A world of tightly-packed and multi-coloured cauliflowers . . .’ The endless virgin jungle in which the Security Forces carry out an unceasing search for Communist terrorists.



A member of the Security Forces.

to a minute landing ground between the water and the jungle. The children who met us were naked except for a string of beads or a small triangle of coconut shell. The women kept respectfully in the background, whispering about the tall and immaculate British Adviser. A doctor who had been a passenger in the second helicopter treated the more obvious cases of skin troubles while the village headman told us about an inhabitant of the lake which makes the Loch Ness Monster seem insignificant. And whereas I have no belief in the Loch Ness Monster, I do believe in that of Tasek Bera. For this lake had never been visited before the war by more than two or three Europeans—although Spencer Chapman passed within thirty miles of it—and there seems no reason why creatures should not have survived in it as unknown to the outside world as was the coelacanth which, until it was caught a few years ago off the coast of South Africa, was supposed to have been extinct for some fifty million years.

I had heard about this Tasek Bera monster from a young British police officer who had seen it while he was bathing. A second witness was an Indian in the Police Special (Investigation) Branch, so respected for his intelligence and his integrity that he had recently been awarded an O.B.E. The headman, who would probably have been incredulous had we tried to describe to him a bicycle, laughed at our doubts about the monster in his lake. Of course such beasts were there, he explained, although they did not come very often to the surface. He described their heads as being about two feet in diameter, but when he compared their bodies with those of elephants some of his villagers made it plain that he was exaggerating. How, we asked, did this beast move? Had it legs or fins? This puzzled him for some time,

but he suggested, in all solemnity, that perhaps its motive power was the same as that of our helicopter.

What has all this to do with a report on the situation in Malaya? Not very much. My main reason for writing about it is that I should like to rank among the discoverers of an ancient but unknown beast; my lesser reason is that even these few details of it may help to explain how remote and little known is a great deal of this country in which these few C.T.s are able to defy an army.

Possibly my animal may be no more than a rhinoceros, for, unlike the white and black rhinos I have seen at Hluhluwe, in Zululand, some of those of Malaya seem to prefer swamp to pasture, and to be good swimmers. J. R. Logan wrote in his *Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia* in 1850 of the 'badak tapa', or 'recluse rhinoceros', that it 'is frequently found in marshy places, with its whole body immersed in mud, and part of the head only visible'. His journal describes how the aborigines profited from this habit. Towards the end of the rainy season this mud becomes so hardened by the heat of the sun that the rhino cannot escape without great exertion. 'The Semang prepare themselves with large quantities of combustible materials with which they quietly approach the animal, who is aroused from his reverie by an immense fire over him, which being kept well-supplied by the Semangs with fresh fuel, soon completes his destruction and renders him in a fit state to make a meal of.'

I like to believe, however, that my animal is something more uncommon even than a 'recluse rhinoceros'. But less strange, perhaps, than those described by Marco Polo in the province of Karajan, in South China. 'In this province', he wrote, 'are found serpents . . . in bulk they are equal to a

great cask . . . they have forelegs near the head . . . a claw like the claw of a hawk . . . eyes bigger than a loaf of bread . . . mouth large enough to swallow a man whole, garnished with great pointed teeth.' I do not claim all that for the monster of Tasek Bera.

* * *

The third method of destroying the resistance of the C.T.s is to prevent them from growing, in the deep jungle, the food they can no longer get from outside it. In the early days our airmen could easily distinguish the Communist cultivation clearings from those of the aborigines—the former were in neat and tidy rows, as one would expect from the Chinese, who probably share with the Japanese the honour of making more careful and economical use of their land than any other people in the world; the latter were as haphazard and untidy as those of any other nomadic tribes. Recently, the C.T.s have deliberately copied the untidiness of the aborigines.

When a Communist clearing has been identified, the activities of jungle patrols, who will surround the area in the hope of capturing or killing a certain number of Communists, are supplemented by helicopters or slow-flying aircraft from which the crops can be sprayed with plant-poisons. This method may seem ruthless; it is nothing like so ruthless as the methods used by the Communists themselves. Nor, judging by the results of spraying the roadsides near the Siamese border, is it always very effective. It takes much more than an ordinary week-killer to check the super-abundant vegetation of the jungle. Nevertheless, cultivation areas are now being destroyed faster than they can be planted. The jungle has become a place of hunger.

Chapter Six

‘SURRENDERED ENEMY PERSONNEL’

THE daily thunderstorm caused a fresh gust of wind to blow through Taiping police station, and some of the papers on which I was writing my notes fluttered to the floor. A Chinese who was sitting opposite me obligingly picked them up and passed them back to me. As his hand touched mine I reflected that, on the previous morning, with that same hand he had killed his terrorist section leader. According to his own account, he had then eaten the leader's breakfast and had set out to surrender. His companion, who was sitting next to him in the police station, had managed to escape one day earlier, but had taken an extra twenty-four hours to find his way out of the jungle. He was as thin and highly-strung as if he had just been released from a concentration camp.

And so, in a sense, he had. I have already written about the difficulties of moving in the jungle—and doubtless I shall do so again, for it is as much the subject of conversation in Malaya as is the weather in England—and one of the reasons why the war continues is the difficulty men experience in surrendering. There are, of course, no regular paths to the Communist camps, and Federation patrols would find few of them without the help of skilled trackers—mostly Dyaks from Borneo. Such tracks as there are will always be guarded by sentries, and at the first rifle shot every inmate of a camp will slide away to a predetermined hide-out. That is why the statistics show so many camps destroyed and so few contacts with the enemy.

If it is difficult for patrols to find their way to Communist camps, it is even more difficult for a Communist deserter to

find his way back to civilization. He has to pass his own sentries, and the chances are that, once he has left the one small track he knows, he will be hopelessly and irrevocably lost. The two S.E.P.s who faced me across the table in Taiping police station had waited for two months before they had been able to put their plan to escape into operation, and they were able to do so even then only because they and their section leader had been cut off from the rest of their Independent Platoon and had themselves lost their way. When they found themselves near the fringe of the jungle one man had made off. Their leader would never have dreamt of surrender; the obvious thing to do had been to kill him.

As the rain rattled on the roof of the police station I found myself wondering about the conditions in which these men had lived. Even though several of the C.T. camps were quite well built, the climate in the deep jungle remains dank and steamy and sunless and hot. I remembered Colonel Spencer Chapman's¹ grim descriptions of its hardships. How long, I asked, had these men lived in it? Seven years. Why had they gone there in the first place? To fight for democracy and freedom. Thank God, men will always strive to turn these abstract words into reality—and will probably lose much of their zest and interest, like the Swiss and the Swedes, if they come near to success. But I felt a wave of anger mingled with pity as I looked at these two helpless and frightened men who had been misled into making such sacrifices for words they so little understood.

Since direct attack can produce so little result in jungle warfare, the S.E.P. becomes a person of great importance. He is, in a manner of speaking, an old acquaintance, for the

¹ *The Jungle is Neutral*, by Col. Spencer Chapman (Chatto & Windus).

police have details about him. At Sungei Siput, for example, where twelve policemen in the sub-district have been killed, the officer in command showed me a photograph of a football team. The local team as it was just before the Emergency began three or four miles away. That rather nice-looking young fellow in the front row, he told me, was now 'Colonel' Perumal, the local leader of the C.T.s.

And the man who surrenders may have very valuable information. He may be dazed and frightened at first, but he mixes with others who have surrendered long ago. He will be given a pass to go to the local cinema, although his respect for Western democracy may not always be increased thereby. In due course, when the Special Branch are satisfied that the news of his escape is known to his comrades, his photograph may appear on thousands of leaflets, with his personal appeal to his former friends and colleagues to surrender.

Or he may be willing, indeed anxious, to take a much more active part against the Communists with whom he has lived; there seems to be an astonishing lack of loyalty between them. Within a few hours of his surrender he may be guiding a police patrol back into the jungle to ambush a party of C.T.s collecting food or supplies. Are such men to be trusted? The answer seems to be that they are the most trustworthy of the lot, for they know, better than anybody, the kind of fate that would await them if they fell again into Communist hands. When possible, the body of anybody the leaders find it advisable to liquidate is left in some very conspicuous place, with leaflets pinned to it to warn the others.

The readiness of S.E.P.s to join the anti-Communist forces is so considerable that they are now organized in a Special

Operational Volunteer Force (S.O.V.F.), where they receive the same pay as members of the Police Field Force and from which, after some eighteen months of service, they are released unconditionally to return to civilian life.

The police officers in Taiping were a little disappointed in the two S.E.P.s whom I met. Having been cut off for so long from the other members of their Independent Platoon, there was little information of value they could give. Perhaps by now they are back again in the hated jungle as members of S.O.V.F., still fighting in their bewildered way for democracy and freedom.

* * *

Since S.E.P.s are potentially so valuable, a great deal of discussion takes place about the methods by which they can be persuaded to surrender. Some methods have nothing of the old-school-tie attitude about them. Early in January, for example, Sir Gerald Templer ordered that all the rice stores except one in the village of Layang Layang in southern Johore should be closed in order to prevent the villagers from giving further food supplies to the C.T.s. Then along came a cinema van with a loud-speaker. The films were designed to make the people forget their resentment and distress; the loud-speaker informed them that General Templer wanted people to give information in secret about the Communists. Troops from Fiji went round with envelopes containing a number of questions, and early the next morning they collected the answers. The villagers were warned that if they refused to answer harsher measures might have to be employed against them.

Who was supplying food, medicines and so on to the C.T.s? Who were the couriers? Who collected the subscriptions?

Where was the camp of Ho Cheong, the local Communist leader? And what C.T.s, if any, were prepared to surrender? Such were the questions which faced the villagers of Layang Layang—and if these methods seem to you as unpleasant as they seem to me, you may nevertheless conclude, on reflection, that they may be justified if they shorten an Emergency which causes misery throughout the country.

When the names are known of those C.T.s who have had enough of the jungle and would like to surrender, they become the recipients of a flattering amount of attention. Thousands of leaflets may be printed to appeal to them individually. I have, for example, one leaflet on which a photograph shows four jovial and well-dressed young Chinese sitting round a dinner table with a nice white table-cloth. They appeal to their comrades still in the jungle. Chee Peng is told that 'You are being given more work and less to eat than your leaders. This will be changed if you come out of the jungle.' The message to Kieng Yin is: 'You are a courier and have been made to carry messages by jungle routes which are often ambushed by Security Forces. You have been lucky so far and have escaped with your life, but how long will your luck last? Don't lead a dog's life; come out with Chee Peng.' Ah Lam is reminded that 'You have already deserted your organization once, but you were tricked into rejoining by Section Leader Ah Ming. Why go on with your monotonous life when you can live without danger outside the jungle?' And Ah Kieng gets a message which must have done him less than no good. 'We know you are strongly against Communism,' it runs. 'You are afraid to express your views for fear of being eliminated by your leaders. Again you are suffering from beri-beri. Come out now, and you may yet be saved.'

On the reverse side of all the leaflets I have seen are two immense keys—the keys to freedom—and a 'safe conduct' printed in five languages and signed by General Templar. 'The Bearer of this pass', it runs, 'wishes to surrender. He is to be given good treatment, food, cigarettes and medical attention if required. He is to be taken as soon as possible to the nearest senior police officer.' The S.E.P. who picked up my papers at Taiping had arrived with a 'safe conduct' in his hand.

The C.T. must not only be advised to surrender; he must be helped to do so. I have already mentioned that the Communist sentry guarding the track to his camp is a menace both to unauthorized persons who try to reach it and also to unauthorized C.T.s who try to leave it. So in some parts of Malaya the Security Forces are using coloured searchlights at night, and loudspeakers in slow-flying aircraft boom out indications over the jungle about which searchlight to follow to go in a given direction. Green, blue, red or amber lights guide passengers in London's Underground to Piccadilly Circus, or King's Cross, Victoria or Waterloo; colours play an analogous part in helping the C.T. to become an S.E.P.

* * *

There is one part of Malaya where no such persuasions have any effect. Kroh is a small town high in the mountains, and reached by one of the most beautiful roads I have ever seen. There live a young New Zealander—the Assistant District Officer—and his wife, two Australian Red Cross nurses (whose car, on account of the Red Cross on its sides, must be almost the only vehicle within twenty miles that travels without armour or an armed escort) and a police contingent with two or three young European officers. And they have the

depressing task of following the activities of the 7th Independent Platoon of the C.T.s.

Details of some seventy of its members are filed in Kroh police station, but leaflets and broadcasts to them would be useless. They need no cultivation clearings in the jungle. Their leaders have no difficulty in obtaining new recruits. And none of them has surrendered since 1952, for they can get all they need from across the Siamese border, and, in an area where banditry has been practised for generations, they can lead the kind of carefree life Robin Hood is alleged to have lived in Sherwood Forest.

Outside the manager's office at the neighbouring Rahman Hydraulic Mine (where tin has been mined for at least two hundred years) were the skeletons of two burnt-out lorries. The work of the 7th Independent Platoon. Shortly before my visit two members of the platoon had met a Malay peasant with his son and nephew. They killed the father, wounded the son and abducted the nephew. A day or two later the boy came home, with glowing accounts of the way in which his wounds had been treated, with some money in his pocket, and with a letter of apology full of blame of the 'British imperialists' who had made all this kind of thing necessary.

On the other side of the country, across the main mountain spine of Malaya, I found the same sense of frustration. I studied an immense map in the police station. Almost every foot of it was green, to denote the ubiquitous jungle, and it was covered with thousands of curving and zigzagging black lines, to denote the streams. In such country there can be no frontier posts and no effective frontier patrols; and although the Siamese authorities do their best to help, and allow British patrols to operate inside Siam, there can be no major

operations, as in Malaya itself. The Siamese Government could probably not afford a resettlement policy in New Villages, even if it wished to do so. And when it declares a state of emergency because things are going badly in Indo-China, *ipso facto* the difficulties facing British patrols are increased. Then they have to deal, not with Siamese authorities in the nearest town, but with those in remote Bangkok. The police know, for example, where are the headquarters of the 11th Independent Platoon—just outside the area in which they are allowed to operate; they know that Communists go into various Siamese villages openly to give lectures; the only successes they can report are three S.E.P.s in the course of 1953.

The full dangers of this open frontier may not become apparent for some time to come. I have mentioned earlier in this book the three phases of the strategic plan the Communists adopted after the World Youth Conference in Calcutta in 1948—one, the creation of an effective mass movement, accompanied by guerrilla warfare; two, the establishment of 'liberated areas'; three, the linking of these 'liberated areas' and the formation of a 'liberation army'. The plan failed because they committed their forces too soon and lost popular sympathy by living off the land. The more difficult jungle warfare becomes, the more they will be forced to start with the first phase all over again.

But, however encouraging the graph of S.E.P.s may be to the Security Forces, it is never likely to record the surrender of the Communist leaders. Doubtless some of them will manage to creep back into civilian life and to carry on their agitation work in the towns. Others, as far as one can foresee, will have to continue their guerrilla activities, however depleted their small army may become. Shortage of modern

weapons and ammunition is already one of their handicaps, but I have emphasized how much damage a very few men can do with the jungle as their sanctuary.

The day may come soon, and must come some time, when the Emergency is declared to be at an end. As the security precautions are relaxed—and the next chapter contains arguments in favour of relaxation—the damage-capacity per C.T. will rise, and it is difficult to see how those C.T.s who operate in the northern half of the country can ever be cut off from supplies across the Siamese frontier. Developments in Indo-China have brought the Communists, excited by victory, to the borders of Siam. That country is unlikely to prove an effective barrier to the flow of agents, propaganda material and even weapons for the conquest of so rich a territory as Malaya.

Chapter Seven

OPERATION SERVICE

THE war in Malaya is not, as we in Britain are inclined to believe, entirely or even mainly a European soldier's job. The Police Field Force, which consists mostly of Malays with European officers, is primarily a fighting force. It has its patrols in the jungle and has suffered far heavier casualties than those of the Army. The Area Security Units of the police supply protection to an entire area as distinct from the Home Guard, which in most cases protects individual villages.

Even when we come to the Army itself, we find that the Emergency has brought to Malaya a strange variety of soldiers. Apart from six British battalions, there are seven battalions of Gurkhas. There is a Fiji battalion, a battalion of the King's African Rifles, a battalion of Sarawak Rangers, to say nothing of the seven battalions of the Malay Regiment and the new Federation Regiment, consisting of Malays, Chinese, Eurasians, Indians and other Malaysians under the command of a tough-looking brigadier from Malta. Long-haired Dyak trackers from Borneo guide jungle patrols that would otherwise stumble about uselessly in the undergrowth. And these various military formations have somehow to do their jobs without interfering more than is absolutely necessary with the economic life of one of the richest territories in the British Commonwealth.

In Malaya, as in Kenya, the conflicting claims of the soldiers and the civilians have been desperately difficult to reconcile. Until the two jobs of High Commissioner and Director of Operations were united in the person of General Templer there was little hope of ending the Emergency. The

Army and the police were not under an effectively co-ordinated control, and yet, in a war where members of the enemy's supply organization wear no uniforms, the Army had no hope of distinguishing between a Chinese peasant going off quietly to his rice padi and a Chinese Communist on his way to slash an enemy to death.

The attempt to find a compromise between civilian and military needs is not always successful. Its main instruments are S.W.E.C.s and D.W.E.C.s—State and District War Executive Committees. These are intended to co-ordinate the activities of all forces, military and civilian, fighting the Communists. The Administrative Officer, a civilian, is chairman, but in fact the voice of the Army or the Police Special Branch is generally the decisive one—if only because the military problem is simpler and more straightforward than that of the civilian administration. It seems to me that in this respect, but in very few others, the complaints that Malaya lives under a military dictatorship have some measure of justification.

For example, there are many villages in which the curfew is still enforced because the police will take no risks, and yet General Templer has insisted time after time that the war can be won only by winning the hearts and minds of the people. How can this be done, the non-military members of the S.W.E.C. or D.W.E.C. ask, if the villagers are given no freedom? 'If we win the battle in the villages', one leading civil servant said to me, 'we defeat Communism.'

Within the last six months several areas have been declared 'white'. In them Communism has ceased to be a danger. All curfews, all barbed wire around the villages, all restrictions on the movement of food have been abolished. Some risk is, of course, involved, but the chances are that the villagers will

be so pleased to have got rid of these frustrations and annoyances that they will be active allies of the police in preventing a revival of banditry. That, at least, is the theory.

One wonders whether still bigger risks may not be necessary. In my innocence, and in no silly spirit of bravado, I committed the crime of spreading out a groundsheet at the side of a jungle road and sitting there in order to eat our lunch. It was a pleasurable memorable lunch. Immense trees towered above us and a herd, flock, shoal or what-you-will of monkeys jumped from creeper to creeper and from branch to branch, like the daring young man on the flying trapeze. Down in the valley a small boy had shinned up a coconut palm on our behalf and had lopped off the side of a nut, so that we had drink to wash down our sandwiches. A bright green beetle walked away with the crumbs. An immense yellow butterfly hovered over some flax-like blue flowers. I felt safe and rested.

But I was wrong to be there. Although no incident had occurred on that road for over a year, one might still occur; the road was still 'black'. Yet there must come a time when the responsibility for defending the European or other potential victim of the Communists is transferred more from the military or the police to the potential victim himself. How otherwise will it ever be possible to win over the 'hearts and minds of the people'? I have referred elsewhere to the way in which Raffles won trust and popularity because he 'spoke in smiles'. But a smile from the front seat of an armoured car is apt to be lacking in spontaneity and effect. The only village I visited in such a vehicle was the only village in which nobody but the headman had a friendly greeting for us. Possibly the village was so hostile that we had to go there armed; possibly because we went there armed it was so

hostile. And as the C.T.s are driven more on to the defensive it becomes increasingly important to weigh the risk of travelling without an armed escort against the risk of persuading the average Chinese or Malay that the Communists must be exceptionally strong and powerful if so few of them can compel so many Europeans to travel with armed escorts, so many troops to race along the roads in armoured cars.

The police have what is in the long run a more important task than the military one of chasing bandits. They have to persuade the public to look upon them as friends. The Malay for police is 'mata mata', meaning 'eyes eyes', and one of the aims of the Government is not to rob the police of this reputation for vigilance but to emphasize its willingness to be helpful. Its members wear a badge representing two clasped hands and bearing the motto: 'Bersedia Berkhidmat'—'Ready to Serve', and we are, perhaps, approaching the stage when visitors will tell the Malaysians that 'your police are so wonderful'.

Here I want to insert one small paragraph on the Malay language, for in many cases it shows a pleasantly imaginative streak. 'Mata mata gelap', for example, means 'eyes that see in the dark', which, normally shortened to 'gelap', means a detective. The word for ice means, literally, 'water stone' and that for coal means 'fire stone'. In other cases, English has been adopted with a difference. Thus a post office becomes 'pos opis', and to put a car in reverse is 'gustan', from 'go astern'.

'Operation Service' was introduced in December 1952 by Colonel Arthur Young, of the City of London Police, who has now been sent to Kenya to introduce there what he calls 'democratic policing'. Before serving in Malaya he



British soldiers charge a terrorist camp.



Recruits from the jungle training school of the Frontier Branch of the Police crossing a river under active patrol conditions. The training school is situated in Sik, Kedah State.

had been seconded to the Gold Coast. 'Throughout the free world,' he writes,¹ 'the police everywhere are to an increasing extent facing the responsibility for the protection of the community against the enemy within. . . . Bitter experience has made it apparent that democracy is the most vulnerable form of government, since it must tolerate within itself the very force which seeks to destroy it.'

Under Colonel Young's direction the police force has been immensely improved. Training schools for the 42,000 Special Constables who had to be recruited for the Emergency have made it possible to use many of these men in very active Area Security Units, patrolling a whole neighbourhood, instead of waiting on the defensive. The Hendon Police College has its Malayan counterpart at Kuala Kubu Bahru, which gives the rapidly increasing number of Asian officers the chance to develop a pride in their service which it would otherwise be difficult to produce without generations of tradition. And promotion is far more rapid than it used to be.

When Colonel Young first became Commissioner of Police he sent a personal letter to every member of the force. 'With your help,' it began, 'the Federation Police are going to demonstrate to the world that they are the friends of the public whom they wish to serve. The police depend upon the public for co-operation and goodwill. Let us win this by our own merits.' His personal appeal that each recipient of this letter should 'do everything you can . . . to extend kindness and help to those in need' brought an extraordinary response. Instances of service are being reported at a rate of some 20,000 cases a month, and are widely and wisely publicized. Colonel Young has been able to claim that 'other

¹ *Straits Times Annual*, 1954.

police forces have greater renown or perhaps even greater tradition, but no other force in the world has greater honour.' Of that I cannot judge, but I have probably had contact, pleasant or otherwise, with more police forces in different parts of the world than most people, and I am certainly convinced that the forces with the highest reputations of service to the public are those who have least to fear that democracy will be destroyed by 'the enemy within'.

During an Emergency such as that which still plagues Malaya, too much power inevitably comes into the hands of the bureaucracy. That lesson we learnt in Britain during the war. Any report from Malaya should, I think, mention the efforts made to check this tendency. The idea of service is not being limited to the police force. The District Officer, for example, is encouraged to sit under a tree or in the village hall, rather than in his own office, to listen to people's complaints or questions. There are Citizens Advice Bureaux in several of the larger towns. There are nearly a thousand community listening sets and nearly a hundred mobile cinemas. Civil servants are expected to spend some of their evenings visiting various villages in order to explain the nature of their work and its value to the community, and there is no difficulty whatsoever in attending a civics course of one kind or another. Indeed, potential pupils are now becoming so spoilt that it is sometimes difficult to recruit them unless they can be promised some special attraction such as a tea at the Residency or an interview with some minister.

Thus I am once again brought to the belief that progress towards democracy in Malaya, certainly too slow to satisfy the politicians, is quite as fast as it can be if democracy is to succeed. And I ought to qualify all I have written in these last few pages about the successes of 'Operation Service' by

reminding you of the special difficulty of policing a largely Chinese population with a police force which is almost entirely Malay and whose members cannot speak or understand Chinese. That difficulty will persist after the present admirable enthusiasm for 'Operation Service' has disappeared.

Chapter Eight

RUBBER AND TIN

AT KUALA KANGSAR they can show you some trees that have made history. They are not very old as trees go, since they are less than eighty years of age. But they were sent out as young plants, grown in Kew Gardens from seeds smuggled from Brazil by Sir Henry Wickham in the 1870s.

Approximately one-third of the world's natural rubber now comes from Malaya, and the price of this product influences the cost of living in the Federation and Singapore far more than does the price of gold. In the Federation you drive through mile after monotonous mile of rubber estates of which some—those bearing names of owners who are world known—are as clean and tidy as the orchards of Kent, and some are cluttered up with undergrowth and have immense parasitic ferns sprouting from the junctions of the tree trunks and their branches. The mature trees have V-shaped or spiral scars, with a little spout protruding from the lowest point of each scar and a small cup hanging below the spout. And early in the morning before the heat can dry up the flow of milky-looking liquid, the rubber-tappers, mostly Tamils or Chinese, go quietly from tree to tree, cutting off very thin strips of bark to set the latex flowing and later returning to collect the liquid which has dripped into the cups.

The trees begin producing when they are about seven years old. Under the most usual rotational system, they are tapped on alternate days and, according to the tapper's skill, approximately one inch of bark is removed every month. If

the tapper cuts too deeply the tree is wounded and knots are formed which will make tapping difficult in the future. When the trees get too old they are seldom worth the cost and trouble of felling, for their timber is useless except for firewood; one comes across acres of skeletons that have been poisoned with sodium arsenite, which, in no time at all, reduces the grey trunks into powder.

What is the future of rubber? Upon its price more than upon the activities of the Communist Terrorists in the jungle depends the political future of Malaya. In 1950 and 1951 the Korean war sent the prices of both rubber and tin (Malaya's other great export) soaring to giddy heights. Since then American stockpiling has almost ceased and the price of natural rubber has fallen to a level close to that of the American synthetic product. As a result the rubber-tapper's earnings, which are linked by way of a sliding scale to the price of rubber so that he can share in the industry's prosperity, have fallen by one-third. But however anxious the Americans may be to discourage Communism in South East Asia, they can hardly be expected to check the development of so important a domestic industry as their synthetic rubber.

Many consider that in order to improve the competitive position of the Malayan rubber industry replanting with high-yielding (budded or selected seedling) stock must be undertaken on a substantial scale. As long ago as 1919 preliminary investigations were made in Malaya into the potentialities of budded high-yielding stock, and by 1927 budwood was available for commercial plantings. However, broadly speaking, only the more progressive estates have made extensive use of the improved stocks which give significantly greater yields per acre. A high proportion of

Malaya's rubber trees has grown from unselected seedlings and is over forty years old.

The industry is carrying out all kinds of experiments with liquid latex. This is mixed with ammonia to prevent it from coagulating—and not with the usual formic or acetic acid which causes it to coagulate into sheet rubber. Much of the liquid latex is now exported in bulk to be turned into foam upholstery or to be made use of in other ways. Sheet rubber is dried in smoke or into *crêpe* to be hung out of doors in thin sheets like the laundry on washing day.

But will natural rubber be sold at a price which will assure the continued prosperity of Malaya? This some experts believe to be doubtful. Malaya produces less than half the rice she consumes. Even if the three great rice-exporting countries of the world—Indo-China, Siam and Burma—were not all threatened by Communism, so great a dependence on the two exports, rubber and tin, which between them provide nearly 95 per cent of Malaya's export duties, would be unhealthy. One obvious answer would seem to be the development of mixed farming, and many of the larger rubber estates are now also growing oil palms, tea, coconuts, coffee and cocoa.

The European estate manager has no easy time of it in Malaya today. From London he is urged to cut costs; in Malaya he is urged not to increase unemployment. He is in less personal danger than he was two years ago, but the yearly bonus and commission cheques are smaller and in some cases have disappeared. There are not very many locally incorporated rubber companies which today can show a profit, and it seems probable that some estates may go out of production and their workers be dismissed. A long period of rest would do the trees no harm—they can 'stockpile' their latex until the day comes when tapping is again profitable—

but most estates have not the capital reserves which would allow them to remain inactive in the hope that prices will rise again—more than half the total acreage of rubber belongs to Asian estates or smallholdings.

* * *

Malaya exports more tin than any other country; it produces 35 per cent of the world's supply, one-third of the mines being owned by Chinese, who started the industry with primitive methods well before the British arrived, first with their hydraulic mines and later with their dredges. The largest of these fantastic and noisy machines would cover almost half a football field, and it digs the soil to a depth of 135 feet below the surface of the small pond on which it floats and which moves along with it as it works. There are altogether some eighty dredges in Malaya, most of which are much smaller than these ugly, clanking monsters; between them they produce about two-thirds of the country's tin with less than half the employees.

The other main method is that of gravel-pump mining. In this the tin-bearing ground is broken down by water, projected under pressure from 'monitors' against the working face, the resultant mixture of water, sand, mud and tin ore being pumped into a long sloping sluice-box (or 'palong', as it is called locally), where the flow is so regulated that the tin ore falls to the bottom and is retained behind 'stops' while the lighter waste material is washed over the end. There are some 580 of these gravel-pump mines, mostly owned by Chinese. They produce much less tin than the dredges, but they employ far more men. The future of the tin industry is not, therefore, just a matter of concern only to a few rich capitalists or remote shareholders.

Until recently the world's potential annual surplus of some 30,000 tons—an amount equal to about half Malaya's total output—has been taken by the United States for stock-piling. With their huge stock thus accumulated, the Americans have now cut down their buying. Since most of the tin-producing countries are among those whose standard of living badly needs to be raised, the United Nations has produced a draft agreement designed to prevent rapid fluctuations in price and supply and to do away with the hysterical buying of the last few years, in the course of which tin went up far above its normal price. If this agreement were accepted and enforced by all the Governments that matter, the International Tin Committee would hold a buffer stock which it is hoped would be large enough to keep the price stable at a reasonable level. The scheme, which includes compulsory regulation of output, is opposed by some of the most efficient concerns because past experience has taught them that, among other economic difficulties, restriction of output greatly increases the country's cost of production as a whole and interferes with the development of new mining projects, so vital to the future of Malayan economy.

But, despite the increasing efforts to find substitutes, the tin-miner has probably better grounds for optimism than the rubber-planter; 40 per cent of the world's tin is used as tin-plate, which is, in fact, a very thin coating of tin on sheet steel. In 1950 the world production of tin-plate was 5,750,000 tons, but for this only 61,000 tons of tin were used. Solder took 24 per cent of the tin, bronze and brass took 10 per cent, and toothpaste and other tubes took $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. It is difficult to imagine a synthetic tin.

* * *

Between the middle of 1952 and the end of 1953 the national income of Malaya was halved. In 1953 the average price of rubber throughout the year fell to 67 Straits cents a pound compared with 96 cents in 1952 and \$1.69 in 1951. The London prices for tin for the corresponding periods were £732 a ton, £964 and £1,077. These reductions have, of course, greatly added to the difficulties facing the two Governments in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore. Much of the revenue of the Federation Government comes from export duties, and the decline in wages and in the incomes of Malayan smallholders naturally makes for discontent, even though most people realized that the 1951 prices could not possibly last.

Thus the Federation—but less so Singapore, which has a prosperous trade with many parts of the world—is in most serious financial difficulties. Despite a recent grant of £6,000,000 from the United Kingdom, a twenty-five year loan of 30,000,000 Straits dollars from Singapore and a very generous loan of 40,000,000 Straits dollars from the small but rich oil-producing State of Brunei, the Federation is nowhere near balancing its budget. Its revenue is roughly three-quarters of its expenditure. The Emergency, which takes just over one-quarter of the national expenditure, constitutes a most serious drain on resources. There is no immediate prospect that this appropriation will be cut down. One-quarter goes on social services which cannot be reduced at a time when the Government is so determined to win 'the hearts and minds of the people'. One-quarter goes to State and Federal administration, and it is very difficult to see how this high proportion of the expenditure could be reduced in a country which covers only 50,000 square miles and yet is divided into eleven units. Here, even more than in most countries, politics play hell with economics.

TOWARDS SELF-GOVERNMENT

BEFORE the war the Governor of the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Penang and Malacca) was also High Commissioner for the Federated and Unfederated Malay States. The Straits Settlements were a Crown Colony, but the Federated States—Selangor, Perak, Negri Sembilan and Pahang—and the Unfederated States—Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Perlis—were ruled by their own Sultans through the members of the Malayan Civil Service, all the senior members of which were British. Each of these Sultans (a Raja, in the case of Perlis) had a treaty with Britain assuring him both complete autonomy and British protection. The arrangement was obviously uneconomic and antiquated, and during the war the Colonial Office did for once what it is so often accused of failing to do—it planned for the future. It planned a Malayan Union which was intended to turn the Malayan Peninsula into a country worthy of its motto, 'Unity is Strength'.

But the Colonial Office's foresight was accompanied by a serious lack of diplomacy. It was, for the best motives, in far too much of a hurry. Instead of submitting its plan to the Sultans and winning them by slow persuasion to accept a lessening of their powers, it sent the unfortunate Sir Harold MacMichael to bluff and bully them into signing on the dotted line. At that time, with the Japanese barely out of their country, they would have signed almost anything. MacMichael arrived in Malaya on October 11th, 1945; all nine Sultans had signed by December 21st. This haste is all the more shocking when one remembers how much more

care has been taken to consult far more backward peoples in Africa. The Coussey Committee, for example, which drew up the constitution for the Gold Coast, had an African chairman and a membership that was three-quarters African. There was a very quick reaction on the part of the Malays, who had no desire to see their traditional rulers—whom they also respect as their religious leaders—reduced in power. The opposition organized against the plan for the Union was so strong that it had to be scrapped. Only two years later was it possible to get agreement on a plan for a Federation, and it has never been possible entirely to restore Malay confidence in British good faith.

This Federation has a great many handicaps. The fact that it works at all is a tribute to the basic moderation of the Malaysians. The constitution contains a list of subjects reserved for the Federal Government; it leaves the State Governments with the right to legislate on everything not on the Federal list. It would have been far better if things could have been the other way round, and the Federal Government had retained the right to legislate on everything not specifically reserved to the States. Sir Alec Newbould, a former Chief Secretary, has defined all too clearly the difference between the system devised in the Colonial Office and that which was finally accepted in 1948. 'The difference between a Union and a Federation', he wrote, 'is that under Union the component parts derive their authority from the centre, whereas under Federation the authority of the centre is given to it by the units comprising the Federation.'

Each draft Federal law has to be circulated to all the States for comment. Every ordinance starts with the words: 'It is hereby enacted by the High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya and Their Highnesses the Rulers of

the Malay States with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council . . .' The Conference of Rulers established under the Federation Agreement has no executive authority, but it is, in fact, a powerful body. The High Commissioner's special responsibilities include the 'safeguarding of the special position of the Malays and of the legitimate interests of the other communities'. The Conference of Rulers has special rights regarding immigration. Any major change of immigration policy planned by the Federal Government must be agreed to by the Conference.

The Prime Ministers, or Mentris Besar, of each State come with their Sultans to the Conference of Rulers. They are also, at the same time, members of the Legislative Council, the country's future Parliament. This Council consists, at the time of writing, of a Malay Speaker, fourteen Official Members, the nine Mentris Besar, two elected representatives of the Settlement Councils of Penang and Malacca, and fifty Unofficial Members. The 'Legco' advises the High Commissioner, but he retains the right to neglect their advice. For this reason, Sir Cheng-lock Tan, president of the Malayan Chinese Association, dismisses it as 'a glorified debating society'. But the High Commissioner has not, in fact, made use of his right; it is merely one of the precautions taken in all dependent territories on their way to self-government. And the 'Legco' makes the laws like any other Parliament, although these require the assent of both the High Commissioner and the rulers.

A more serious political complaint in a singularly unpolitical country is that all the Unofficials are appointed by the High Commissioner, so that, at least in appearance, the Federation, inhabited by races with centuries of civilization behind them, has much less self-government than backward

African colonies. In this case appearances are deceptive. The Unofficials are appointed by the High Commissioner, but they are nominated by such bodies as the Malayan Trade Union Council, the Malayan Chamber of Mines and the F.M.S. Chamber of Commerce. They thus include the chosen representatives of organized labour, the rubber estates, the tin mines, the learned professions and agriculture. Groups of this kind are far better organized in Malaya than anywhere in British Colonial Africa, and it is almost certainly true that the interests of the people are much more clearly and correctly expressed in the present Legislative Council than they would be in a Legislative Council elected entirely by universal adult suffrage in a country where 60 per cent of the people over the age of fifteen are still illiterate. The experiment of giving illiterates the vote has not been very encouraging in most parts of the world.

Nevertheless, one must sympathize with the leaders of the political parties in the Federation who see nearly all the countries round them achieving complete independence and who read the report of the Rendel Commission for the revision of the constitution of Singapore which was published in February, less than a month after a similar report by an electoral committee of their own Legislative Council in Kuala Lumpur. The Rendel Commission unanimously recommended that Singapore should have an Assembly in which twenty-five out of the thirty-two members would be elected. It will be dealt with in greater detail elsewhere in this book. But the majority report of the committee for the Federation recommended that, at least for the next four-year term, only half the Legislative Council should be elected. This recommendation was not imposed by the British; most of the work of the electoral committee was done

by a working committee consisting of ten Malays, three Chinese, three Indians and three British, with a British chairman.

Both the majority and minority reports agreed that the Official Members and the Mentris Besar should be retained. There would also be six members for commerce, four for plantation interests, four for mining, two for agriculture and two for the trade unions, all nominated by the organizations concerned. For the first time there would be seats in the 'Legco' specially reserved for representatives of the minorities—the Eurasians, the Ceylonese and even the aborigines. There would also be a Secretary for Defence, and a Member for Economic Affairs. On all this there was unanimity in the committee; the differences arose over the elected members. The majority favoured thirty-four elected members and eight additional members nominated by the High Commissioner; the minority favoured sixty elected members. The majority wanted the first Federal elections to be held 'at the appropriate time'; the minority wanted them to be held in November 1954. And this minority expressed the view of the U.M.N.O.-M.C.A. alliance, which brings together the largest parties representing the Malays and the Chinese. I have suggested elsewhere that this alliance is a long way from being a union; the United Malays National Organization and the Malayan Chinese Association hold divergent views on all sorts of problems, but in their common desire to take over political power from the British they have a great and increasing influence. In the Sudan, in Nigeria and elsewhere the Colonial Office has underestimated the way in which the desire for independence may temporarily unite groups with views that seem incompatible; it is in some danger of doing so in the case of Malaya.

Nevertheless the Government's latest decision shows its awareness of this danger. In April 1954 the Rulers and the British Government accepted a compromise between these majority and minority reports. This compromise promises elections as early as possible in 1955 (probably in June) instead of 'at the appropriate time'. And it proposes that there should be fifty-two elected members as against forty-six nominated ones—eighteen more than in the majority recommendation and eight fewer than the minority had demanded.

This means that the Federation will jump from an entirely nominated Legislative Council to one with a majority of elected members, thus omitting the intermediate stage, customary in territories advancing towards independence, of a Legislative Council with a nominated majority. Nevertheless, the first response to this gesture was not encouraging—the U.M.N.O.-M.C.A. alliance has called upon its representatives to resign from the 'Legco' and other official bodies because its full demands have not been met. A strange interpretation of democracy!

It would, anyhow, have been impossible to hold the first elections in November of this year. Those in the much smaller and more homogeneous territory of Singapore took nearly two years to organize. The task of drawing up constituency boundaries would be difficult in any circumstances in Malaya, where racial minorities must be given a fair chance and where the Chinese live in towns while the Malays live in scattered hamlets. It is, of course, doubly difficult during the Emergency. The task of preparing an electoral register is still more complicated; I have mentioned elsewhere that the Communists threaten to assassinate every month two of the volunteers who are preparing a register of tenants in

Penang. Around Kuala Lumpur there are probably at least 10,000 squatters and their families who must somehow be registered. And even such small matters as the training of polling officers, the choice of polling booths and the manufacture of ballot papers and boxes take time. But the leaders of U.M.N.O. and M.C.A. are reluctant to recognize these practical difficulties; they find it easier to suspect, or to accuse, the Civil Service of deliberately delaying the elections.

Their suspicion has this much foundation in fact—Sir Gerald Templer placed very much emphasis on the importance of democracy growing up from the grass roots. He was passionately interested in elections to village councils, which have on the whole been successful, although the extent to which the District Officer is given the power to decide who should be allowed to vote and what the council shall do after it has been voted into office causes a good deal of angry criticism. Elections to municipal councils (Kuala Lumpur, Penang and Malacca) and town councils have been a flop. Probably 70,000 out of the 250,000 people in Kuala Lumpur are entitled to the vote, but only one in ten of these took the trouble to register as a voter. The case of Kuala Lumpur has its parallel in every other town, and this inevitably encourages a good many civil servants to believe that things will go on more or less indefinitely in the same old way. And they won't.

At the top end of the ladder there is a genuine and valuable experiment in democracy. There are ten 'members' who have been Ministers in all but name, and who, by the Government's decision of April 1954, are now to be known as Ministers. At present four of them are Malays, two are Chinese, one is Ceylonese, one is Indian and two are European. There is also the trio of 'ex officio' members who



A lorry being checked by Home Guards before it leaves Tantjong Malim.



Armed Special Constables stop a car at an estate barrier.



Derailed coaches of the Day Mail train on the Kuala Lumpur—Singapore line. This was the fourth derailment in twenty-four hours.

are to be found in every colonial territory—the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney-General.

★ ★ ★

Each of the nine States has a similar legislature on a smaller scale, with the addition of a British Adviser who is a link between the High Commissioner and the State administration. There may not be a tremendous difference, except in name, between the old-fashioned British Resident and the new-fashioned British Adviser—and, indeed, the Resident's full title was 'Resident Adviser'. In the four Federated States the emphasis was on the 'Resident'; in the five Unfederated States it was on the 'Adviser'. But even the latter term now causes some offence and there is a movement on foot to abolish a post which is filled to an increasing extent by the Mentri Besar in each State. This would be done in the interests of economy; State expenditure might be both higher and less useful were these experienced administrative officers to disappear.

The Sultan in each State plays a part rather similar to that of the High Commissioner in the Federation. He is aided and advised by a State Executive Council, and there is a Council of State, with Unofficial Members in the majority, which bears some resemblance to the Federal Legislative Council. Elections to these Councils of State are, of course, easier to organize than those to the Federal Legislative Council. They can be held with less delay, and Johore is giving the lead with elections this autumn. There is, however, the important difference that, whereas the Sultans are very largely constitutional rulers, exercising authority only through their Executive Councils, the High Commissioner is the chief executive authority in the Federation.

Now all these bodies are doubtless necessary in a Federation, but they involve a dangerous strain on the available manpower. So many of the able Malays are in the Malayan Civil Service that at present they are allowed to sit in the Legislative Council or the Councils of State as Unofficial Members—the Chinese and Indians have only recently been allowed to enter the M.C.S., so this dual role does not yet exist in their case. But it is clear that the temptations to misuse power are immensely increased if a man may be both a civil servant and a member of the legislature. Few provisions in British parliamentary life are more rigorously enforced than that which forbids a Member of Parliament to accept an office of profit under the Crown. Such a provision does not yet exist in Malaya; it will do so in a modified form as part of the new plans adopted in April 1954.

There is one more weakness about the Federal constitution compared with that of the rejected Union. Under the latter, Malayan nationality would have been granted automatically to anybody who had been born in the country; under the former, many non-Malays are still excluded from the privilege. The Federation Agreement was amended in September 1952 to enlarge the basis of Federal citizenship. Even so, according to Dato Sir Cheng-lock Tan, president of the Malayan Chinese Association, there are in the Federation 2,808,400 Malays and Malaysians, of whom 2,727,700 are federal citizens or subjects of the Sultans; 2,155,000 Chinese, of whom 1,157,000 are federal citizens; and 651,100 Indians, of whom 222,000 are federal citizens. In all, rather more than 70 per cent of the people are automatically Malayan citizens, and many more can acquire citizenship if they apply for it.

Thousands have not applied. Does this mean that their loyalty resides elsewhere? Probably not. The more reasonable explanation is that they hesitate to take the necessary steps. They must, for example, be able to prove that they were born in the country, and it is not always made as easy as it should be for them to obtain their birth certificates. And, in the case of the Chinese, there is still the basic, traditional, history-long reluctance to play a part in politics or in public affairs. I have referred elsewhere to the Federation Regiment, in which the Government is trying to enlist the active military support of Malaysians other than the Malays, whose own Malay Regiment already has seven battalions under arms; by the end of 1953 this regiment, which was expected to be about 50 per cent Chinese, 25 per cent Indian and 25 per cent Malay, had recruited only 100 Chinese out of a total of about 450. The proportion of Chinese recruits has improved in the last few months, but the most important problem for Malaya is still that of making its Chinese inhabitants think of themselves as Malaysians.

There is one important group of Chinese who hesitate to think of themselves as Malaysians, but not because they have a first loyalty to China. On the contrary, they have for generations been proud to be British—they are the 'Queen's Chinese', natives of the Settlements of Malacca or Penang—and they are as resentful as some of the Europeans in those two territories of the fact that they, unlike the inhabitants of Singapore, have been brought into the Federation against their will. I think that the two most angry men I met in Malaya were one European and one Chinese in Penang who both explained to me that Penang should secede from the Federation, of which their territory had become a part without their consent, and should become a separate Colony.

The Chinese population of Penang is about 278,000, of whom 250,000 are now Federal citizens; in Malacca the Chinese number about 108,000, of whom 90,000 are in this category. And most of those who are at all interested in anything beyond the struggle to bring up a family are aware that they have a proud history as 'Queen's Chinese'. They are British subjects, and they are very frightened that they may lose this status. They, far more than their fellow-Chinese in the States, have played a valuable part in the two world wars. Through their English education—which, for many of them, has included a time at a university in the United Kingdom—they have developed a British, democratic way of thinking. One of the toughest Liberals I have met anywhere was a Chinese editor in Penang. In the terms of the memorandum of the Straits Chinese British Association in Penang to the Federal Elections Committee in Kuala Lumpur, 'Just as the Straits-born Chinese have been born, are living and will die in this country, so in the same way their children and children's children will be born, will live and will die in this country. They know of no other home than Malaya'.

Their loyalty to British ideas does not, however, impel them to share the High Commissioner's conviction that a genuine interest in, and understanding of, local government should precede the advance to full control of the Federal Government. Even they tend to forget that in the only countries where democratic government has struck deep roots there has been a long training, from the parish council upwards, before the grant of universal suffrage. The village Hampdens have played an even more valuable part in defending the integrity of the individual than the great orators in the House of Commons. The traditions of unpaid and unselfish public service have taken centuries to develop in Great Britain, so

that there is some recognition—and, even so, too little of it—that democracy imposes obligations as much as it confers rights. And those officials or others in Malaya who emphasize that the art of self-government is one that is difficult and slow to acquire are not necessarily the die-hard reactionaries they are sometimes said to be.

I quote a few sentences from the memorandum of the 'Queen's Chinese' because they oppose the official policy with a statesmanlike moderation contrasting agreeably with some of the more vehement claims which, by reason of their vehemence, receive much wider publicity. 'Local government is not necessarily the key for opening the door to self-government. The field of legislation in one is strictly limited, but there are no bounds to that of the other. It is one thing to assert that a tie exists between literacy and self-determination and it is quite a different thing to infer as a fact that the people are incapable of casting their votes for representatives who would be able to make known their points of view especially on matters affecting their capacity to contribute to the national purse without which no government can be expected to carry on. "No taxation without representation" is a living force in Federation politics today, not merely a phrase. . . . It is allowable to demand a minimum of capacity from those whose votes decide the destinies of the country, but such opportunities should have been given from the very beginning, and the time has come to put that minimum capacity to the test. . . . If it is a mere matter of favour to admit the "Queen's Chinese" resident in Singapore to political power, surely it is a source of mortification to the "Queen's Chinese" living in the Settlements of Penang and Malacca, now inside the Federation, that they are excluded from enjoying a similar privilege.'

It is a little unfortunate that this same memorandum, in its request for an elected Legislative Council, quotes four examples of British dependent territories which have been encouraged to make a greater political advance. In two of these—Singapore and Trinidad—the experiment stands a good chance of succeeding. But it is still early to claim success for the Gold Coast, and British Guiana has been a lamentable failure.

MALAY AND CHINESE

WITH the Chinese forming nearly four-fifths of the population in Singapore and almost half of it in the Federation, Malaya is unique. There is no country outside China with anything like so high a proportion of Chinese. Even in Siam, where they are immensely influential, they number only about 20 per cent. They are, of course, among the world's most patient and hard-working citizens. Whenever I am sufficiently depressed to doubt the divine qualities of man, I need only to remember the indomitable courage of the ordinary Chinese coolie, so cheerful with so little to hope for, to recover my faith. But the trouble about the Chinese of Malaya has been that, before the war, few of them were accepted as citizens and, as the previous chapter has shown, many of them are still excluded from this privilege although they have never been to China and have no expectation of going there.

Their lack of interest in public and political affairs is traditional; it is a tradition which will die. The experiment of the New Villages is training a new class of Chinese to develop a sense of service to the community. By Chinese law a man cannot divest himself of his Chinese nationality, and one doubts whether even the 'Queen's Chinese', despite their loyalty to the British Commonwealth, can be quite lacking in pride for the way in which Communist China has become one of the world's Great Powers in fact, and not merely by a polite diplomatic fiction. The immense family loyalty shown by the Chinese—and unequalled by any other race in the world except, possibly, the Jews—has for centuries

handicapped China by preventing the growth of a larger loyalty, of a social sense in the Western meaning of those words. There are close observers of Chinese affairs who believe that Communism has developed in China partly because it is definitely in contradiction to this family loyalty, so incompatible with the tendencies of the modern world.

Before 1930 there were roughly two Chinese men to every Chinese woman in Malaya, and this meant that most of the Chinese workers were sending their hard-earned savings back to China. The discrepancy between their numbers has now almost disappeared, and this means that they are settled for good in Malaya. The population of the country is said to be the youngest of any in the world—half its people are under twenty-one. Of the Singapore Chinese in this youthful category, 95 per cent are local-born. They know no country but Malaya. Inevitably they will want to play an increasing part in Malayan affairs. Will they do so under British or under Chinese influence?

Communism in the Far East is anti-European, for it has achieved its successes by allying itself to nationalism. It seems to me much less remarkable that there is an anti-British movement in Malaya than that the movement is not stronger than it is. The riots in December 1950 over the decision that the thirteen-year-old Bertha Hertogh should return to her mother in the Netherlands and not remain married to a Malay teacher were a dreadful reminder how close to the calm surface are the strong and dangerous currents of racial and religious hatreds. For eight days a curfew had to be imposed, and eighteen people were killed. But on that occasion Indians and Indonesians felt that the Moslem religion had been affronted, and their religious

excitement affected the Malay police, who, like all Malays, are Moslems. The Chinese remained quiet and loyal. They are, I should have thought, likely to remain so unless relations between Peking and London should become sensationally more unfriendly.

Another eight days have been remarkable in Singapore's more recent history. The Government contributed 30,000 Straits dollars for Queen Elizabeth's coronation celebrations, but the festivities lasted eight days and must have cost millions. The Chinese have always been known for their love of processions and public rejoicing, but nothing on this scale had ever been known in Singapore. For a population of 1,000,000 the Government Information Office was asked to supply over 100,000 pictures of the Queen. In all honesty, I must add that I found one such picture fastened to the outer wall of an aborigine hut at Fort Iskandar, in the deep jungle, and that the aborigines did not know who she was beyond the fact that she looked beautiful and kind. Such ignorance, however, would certainly not be found among even the humblest citizens in Singapore.

As we shall see in the next chapter, the Chinese there have every reason to be what they appear to be—a busy, thrifty, contented community. In the Federation, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, their grumbles, in so far as they are levelled against the British, are due mainly to the failure of the Government somehow to remove the remaining inequalities between Malays and Chinese. Land cannot be alienated without the consent of the Sultans, and, although there is not much difference between these State lands and Crown lands in Britain, there must be some reluctance on the part of some of the Malays to let the land go to the Chinese. Also there are Malay reserved areas where no

non-Malays may own property, and this shortage of land, as we have seen, is one of the main difficulties experienced in the New Villages. Again, many of the Chinese are citizens of the Federation only by virtue of the fact that they have become subjects of one of the Sultans. It may be difficult for these Chinese to develop a loyalty to a Federation which is part of a Commonwealth controlled or guided mainly from London, a large and legendary city on the other side of the globe; it must be still more difficult, however, for them to develop a loyalty to Sultans of the same race and religion as the Malays who form the other half of their own national community. Dr. Purcell has made some devastating comments on the Federal arms and the Federal flag. 'The flag included the Islamic star and crescent and eleven stripes to represent the eleven fragments (including the new nations) into which Malaya had been shattered by the British nation-builders since 1948. The arms contained krisses representing the traditional profession of the Malay rulers, and two tigers as supporters. But there was not a single thing to suggest the existence of a Chinese, Indian or Eurasian. Yet these, be it noted, were the symbols of their unity that the peoples of the several communities were called upon to revere.'¹

But the Malays are in no mood to make further concessions, and the British Government should not be condemned for remaining loyal to its treaties with their rulers. The pendulum swung too far away from the Malays in the Union constitution, and has swung too far in their favour under the Federation. But in 1948 the most that anybody could do was to get them to agree to this Federation, in which territorial unity was obtained only at the price of communal disunity. Since the Federal constitution was accepted, there

¹ *Malaya: Communist or Free?* (Gollancz).

has been quiet but constant pressure on them to accept the principle that anybody who thinks of Malaya as his permanent home and the principal object of his loyalty should become a Malayan citizen. Another three or four years were needed before they would agree to relax the nationality laws, and it is a most remarkable fact that the amendment to these laws finally went through the Legislative Council in Kuala Lumpur without a dissentient vote. Despite the efforts of the U.M.N.O.-M.C.A. alliance and of the various non-communal political parties, the nub of the problem remains—the Chinese seek recognition before conceding loyalty and all that goes with it; the Malays seek evidence of such loyalty before conceding recognition.

The balance is still heavily weighted in favour of the Malays. For their children education is free in the Malay schools and for those who are selected on merit to attend the English schools; the Chinese schools are private, but they now receive a *per capita* grant of rather over £1,000,000 a year (as against nearly £20,000,000 for the Malays). One of the most dangerous features of Chinese education has now been eliminated—the teachers, many of whom come from a Government Chinese Teachers' Training College at Penang, are now much better paid; the days are over when most of the teachers and their school books were imported direct from China, under the control of local committees whose members were more interested in Chinese nationalism than in education. And more and more children of different races meet in the classrooms of the English language schools. I saw nothing in the Federation more encouraging than the solemn and self-possessed little girls—Chinese, Malay, Indian, Eurasian—in white blouses and bright blue skirts, walking along the roadside on their way to the village school. They,

at least, will grow up with no racial prejudice unless their parents instil it into them.

In theory, but not yet in practice, the Chinese have a justified complaint about the Civil Service. There are, in all, some 86,000 posts, of which about 300 men at the top are members of the Malayan Civil Service. They write M.C.S. after their names as proudly as other people write M.P. or D.S.O. And with reason, for these few officials are responsible for the administration of this very complicated country. Until 1953 only Europeans and Malays were members of the M.C.S.—239 British to 64 Malays. Since then posts have been open to Chinese, Indians or other Asian non-Malays in the ratio of one to every four Malays, but on November 25th of that year General Templer said that there had been only two applications from Chinese and three from Indians.

The Malays complain that the number of Europeans in the M.C.S. is now roughly double the pre-war figure. There are also many Europeans who have come out to work in Government service on short contracts during the Emergency. Among these newcomers are young men with first-class war records, and they have brought new ideas with them which have enlivened the whole service, but the Malays object not only to the British Advisers to their Sultans but also to the fact that, through these civil servants, the State War Executive Committees are almost entirely under British control. On the other hand, the shortage of really efficient Malays for the increasing demands of the Civil Service becomes steadily more acute, although more than 400 Government-financed students have studied abroad since the defeat of the Japanese.

The Malayan Civil Service has been criticized by some

politicians for its alleged desire to prolong the white man's control by supporting a policy of 'divide and rule'. I find no evidence to justify this accusation. I think I have never visited a country in which so much official encouragement is given to various organizations in which people of all races work together. There are, I firmly believe, too many of them. Boy Scouts and Girl Guides, Boys' and Girls' Clubs, Women's Institutes, the Red Cross Society, sports clubs of every kind—they all do admirable work and jostle with each other to attract members and to win financial support until the ordinary little Malayan citizen must begin to wonder what it's all about, to wish that he were not considered quite so worthy of attention. If this is democracy, he must sometimes say to himself, there was quite a lot to be said for the old days of autocracy when he knew his place in the world and needed to show only that amount of activity which was essential to keep him and his family alive. But if, influenced by the enthusiasm of General and Lady Templer, the members of the M.C.S. have shown excessive zeal, they have at least robbed the 'divide and rule' accusation of its basis. One impressive result of this campaign has been the extent to which Malay women are now taking part in political and social affairs—something still very uncommon among a Moslem people.

So much for official measures to encourage racial unity. But both General Templer and his successor, Sir Donald MacGillivray, have insisted time after time that Malayan patriotism cannot be imposed from without or from above; it must develop in the hearts and minds of the Malaysans themselves. Three fairly important political parties—the Independence of Malaya Party, the Party Negara and the Pan-Malayan Labour Party—welcome members of all races.

Two others—the United Malay National Organization and the Malayan Chinese Association—have formed an alliance, and, although their individual aims may prove to be incompatible, they can, in alliance, bring strong pressure to bear on the Government to hasten the transfer of power from the white man.

U.M.N.O., as its name denotes, has a membership of Malays. It came into existence primarily to fight the plan for a Malayan Union, which would very seriously have diminished the political supremacy of the Malays over the other races. It destroyed this Union and now has cause to regret that it restored so much power to the Sultans. In September 1952 its president thus defined its attitude: 'Some Malays consider that other races have no right to this country, but I am glad to say that U.M.N.O. members realize that Malaya has sufficient wealth and resources for fair distribution to all who need them. The Malays ask only that they should be recognized as the indigenous people of this country with rights to make treaties for the welfare of Malaya with our protectors the British.'

M.C.A., the principal Chinese party, was founded as a welfare organization some months after the Emergency began. Most of the Communist Terrorists being Chinese, doubts were arising as to the loyalty towards Malaya of the Chinese community as a whole. M.C.A. sought to remove those doubts. It has been very useful in providing for the Chinese an alternative to Communism. It differs from its Malay ally in demanding that the independent Malaya they both desire should include the Colony of Singapore and in supporting more generous nationality laws than the Malays are yet prepared to grant. Nevertheless on the first occasion when the U.M.N.O.-M.C.A. alliance put up its own candidates—

at the Kuala Lumpur municipal elections in January 1952—it won nine out of the twelve seats, and it has since repeated its success elsewhere.

U.M.N.O. is weakened by the fact that its first president, Dato Sir Onn bin Ja'afar, resigned in 1951 over this very problem of nationality laws and formed the Independence of Malaya Party, which demands the complete co-operation of all races on a footing of equality. As Minister for Home Affairs in the Federal Legislative Council, Dato Sir Onn is Malaya's elder statesman. His party has the support of most of the educated Indians, who, in Malaya as everywhere else, show an exceptional interest in politics. This Independence of Malaya Party may, in turn, amalgamate with the Party Negara, which is strongly supported by the Mentri Besar of Perak and which is likely to become the second main party demanding self-government, but on a wider racial basis than the U.M.N.O.-M.C.A. alliance and in less impatient terms.

M.C.A. is weakened because the Government has banned its lotteries. It started in 1949 as a welfare organization, primarily to help the Government in settling the Chinese squatters in New Villages, and it has recruited a large membership. But by no means all of its members are interested in politics. The great attraction of M.C.A. is, or was, that it raised money for social purposes by running lotteries among them. Much of the money thus collected went to building schools and to other social and welfare work in these New Villages. But the Government came to the conclusion that the rest of the money was being spent for political propaganda. It stopped the lotteries, and M.C.A., in turn, has stopped its financial help for the New Villages. The party is representative rather of the Chambers of

Commerce than of the Chinese in the villages. The loss of its support must count as one of General Templer's few failures.

The Pan Malayan Labour Party, started in 1952, is not very strong, for the workers are not yet fully organized—out of a total labour force of about 1,000,000 there are only some 112,000 trade unionists. But it is genuinely a party of all races, and the rapid development of social legislation will almost certainly lead to its own rapid development. The present leader of this party is an able young man called Mohammed Sopiee, who is a good example of this difficulty of finding enough Malaysians to administer the country efficiently—for part of the time he is a social welfare officer, a paid civil servant, in Penang; for the rest, he is a political organizer. There are many such people in Malaya, and their dual functions are clearly incompatible in a democracy; a Civil Service in which its important members are active on behalf of some political party must become either incompetent (because those members are trying to use the administrative machine for their own political ends) or an aid to corruption and dictatorship.

Sir Gerald Templer, in his despatch of April 10th, 1954, on the national elections for the Federation, recommended that only junior civil servants or those who will in any case shortly be retiring should be allowed to stand as candidates for election to the Legislative Council. The separation of the administrative body, the Civil Service, from the political one, the Legislative Council, is both one of the essentials of a democracy and also one of the most difficult for the unscrupulous—or even the ambitious—to accept.



An aerial view of a New Village. This is one of many set up to give protection from communist terrorists.



Settlers in a New Village listen to an explanation of the vote and secret ballot.

THE LION CITY

THIS book, professedly a report on Malaya, has contained disgracefully little about the smaller but richer part of Malaya, the Crown Colony of Singapore. The reason, of course, is that I have been writing mainly about the Emergency, and that misfortune, although doubtless planned in Singapore in the first place, has hardly affected that fortunate island. 'Why', said one of its leading officials to me, 'should we live in an artificial state of jitters?' And I remembered how, during the world war, on a quiet Saturday afternoon at Fort William in Canada, a good thousand miles from the open sea and four thousand miles from any bomb, I had been suddenly enveloped in a thick cloud of smoke and deafened by the bells of fire engines and the shouts of civil-defence enthusiasts. Such precautions, I thought at the time, were both magnificent and ridiculous. There is no reason, I think now, why Singapore should behave as though it were at war, even though it is so closely linked by geography, sentiment and economic interests to the Federation, with a major campaign on its hands.

But it would be silly to pretend that the Emergency has not seriously deepened the misunderstandings between the twin territories. The chapter on Singapore in the *Handbook to Malaya and the Emergency* opens with these words: 'Singapore's primary role in the Emergency is to keep the peace, both on account of its strategic importance as the Far Eastern H.Q. and supply base for the three Services and on account of its contribution to the economic prosperity of Malaya. Moreover, it has developed its schools, housing and medical service

as an example of the practical constructive achievements of the partnership of East and West in contrast to the empty promises of Communist propaganda.' All of which is sensible and true, but not entirely comforting to estate managers living in bungalows surrounded by barbed wire, or to harassed officials in Kuala Lumpur with an impossible budget to balance, or to Chinese or Malays whose lives have been upset by curfews and police supervision for the last six years.

I have explained in an earlier chapter how the Communists started their activities in Singapore some thirty years ago. It was not, however, until after the quarrel between Chiang Kai-shek and the Chinese Communists in 1927 that the Communists in Singapore became noticeably active, and even then their activity was directed mainly against the Kuomintang. There seemed to be little more to it than a feud between two Chinese secret societies; trade unions had not then been developed sufficiently to provide them with a nicely prepared field for their activity. After the war they had a brief and glorious period in which to organize strikes and to plan the overthrow of authority until their party was again declared illegal and they had to take refuge in the jungle north of the causeway.

On this small island—roughly the size of the Isle of Wight, with its jungle reduced to the size of a park—the police have been able to stop serious incidents. Even so, there have been a score of political murders since 1950 and more than a score of attempted murders. In both cases nearly half the victims have been members of the police force. In 1950 the Governor was wounded by a grenade and one of the largest rubber factories was burnt down, with a loss of more than £1,500,000. The Emergency has taken less sensational forms than in the Federation, but it has added considerably to the cost of the

police, and will inevitably become a greater worry to Singapore again if and when the Communists have to transfer their activities from the jungle to the towns.

In the early days of the Emergency the Communists smuggled men, money, arms and food out of Singapore across the Straits. There is evidence that the Communist organization in Singapore has been controlled by leaders in Johore, and that the C.T.s still try to keep Singapore as a source of supply and a place in which to recuperate. Therefore a system of searchlights exists, and the new Royal Malayan Navy, based on Singapore and financed by it, now patrols the coasts of the Federation. In 1950 Singapore contributed over 4,000,000 Straits dollars to the Federation's Emergency costs, and quite recently it approved a loan of 30,000,000 Straits dollars—nearly £4,000,000. In the view of the people of Singapore this is a very generous grant, since it represents one-seventh of their budget; in that of the people of the Federation, with a revenue three times as great, the grant is less impressive, and they therefore showed themselves less grateful than the people in Singapore had expected.

Again, people in the Federation, still travelling with armed escorts, are apt to feel some jealousy when they read how the Singapore Improvement Trust, which is partly financed by the Government, has been able to build some extraordinarily attractive blocks of flats for Chinese who previously lived in some extraordinarily bad and smelly slums. People in Singapore, on the other hand, are apt to argue that the Federation has landed itself with an impossibly costly administration. The Federation would collapse, they say in Singapore, if their island were under Communist control; Singapore, on the other hand, would exist even if the Federation were Communist. The Federation, people reply in Kuala Lumpur,

does most of the work which makes Singapore so wealthy. Does not Singapore handle roughly three-quarters of Malaya's imports and exports? True, but, like Penang, it has always been a free port and has an entrepot trade which makes it a great port in its own right.

I give one significant set of figures—those of the value of Singapore's exports. In 1950 their value was 2,480,000,000 Straits dollars; in 1951, 4,016,000,000; in 1952, 2,543,000,000. The decrease in 1952 was almost entirely due to the collapse in the world price of rubber. Although there is no restriction on foreign ownership of foreign capital invested, although materials enter without payment of duty, and although profits can be taken out of the Colony again without difficulty, the prosperity of Singapore remains dependent upon the prosperity of the Federation.

There are differences of opinion between the two Governments, based upon the adherence to free trade of the one and the tendency of the other (except, of course, the Penang part of it) to rely on customs duties. But the most powerful divisive force is still the racial one. The Federation Agreement would never have been accepted by the Malay Sultans if Singapore had been included in it. It will be recalled that the Chinese outnumber the Malays in Singapore by more than six to one, whereas in the Federation the Malays slightly outnumber the Chinese; had Singapore been included, the Chinese in the Federation would have outnumbered the Malays. Thus, the Malays distrust the idea of union between the two territories because they do not want to be outnumbered by the Chinese, and the Chinese in Singapore distrust it because they would not wish to see such an accretion of Malay influence, and also because the Federation's finances are in so bad a way.

Under the chairmanship of Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, the Commissioner-General for the United Kingdom, there is now a committee, consisting of official and unofficial members from both territories, to discuss what can be done to lessen misunderstandings. There is already a list of subjects which are co-ordinated—currency, postage stamps, civil aviation and so on—and the committee is trying to expand the list. How can co-ordination be improved under the existing constitution? How can the constitution be further modified without prejudice to the powers of the Sultans? This is the kind of task in which Mr. MacDonald excels, but most of the members of the committee are men of such importance that they cannot often leave their other work, and there can be no marked improvement until many tides have flowed through the Strait of Johore.

Possibly the solution of this problem cannot be found except in a much larger framework. I see no particular reason for disowning some comments I wrote in 1947 shortly before the Emergency destroyed so many hopes for the advancement of South East Asia. Having described the constitutional position of the Federation, I wrote: 'The next obvious step would be to bring Singapore into the Federation, for neither is very powerful without the other. . . . The remaining British responsibilities in this area of South East Asia are North Borneo and Sarawak, each with its Governor and, between them, the minute Protectorate of Brunei, with its Resident Adviser. These are backward territories in which constitutional changes, if brought about by consent and agreement, must be slow. But they will do far better economically, they will have far better schools and hospitals and roads if they are placed under one official instead of three.'

There might come a system, I suggested, 'in which a Governor-General, living in Singapore, would control this large area with the help of a Deputy-Governor of the Malayan Federation, living in Kuala Lumpur, a Deputy-Governor of British Borneo, living in Labuan, and a Deputy-Governor of Singapore. Such a pooling of resources should give a good example to be followed elsewhere in the Colonial Empire.'

But since 1948 it has become clear that such plans, however attractive in theory, cannot be imposed. Union between the Federation and Singapore, if it ever comes, will come only because the Malays and Chinese, as the two largest racial groups, are anxious for it. And possibly in time they may want not only this union, but something larger; an association including the three Borneo territories should please the Malays, by bringing more of them into Malaya, and also the Chinese, since many of the inhabitants of Borneo are non-Malays. Such a Federation would have a population of some eight millions, to say nothing of the immense wealth now pouring into Brunei for its oil in such volume that the inhabitants do not know what to do with it. An obstacle to the scheme would doubtless be that Singapore and the Federation are politically a long way ahead of the three territories of Borneo.

Singapore, despite its small size, is making rapid progress towards self-government. Twelve of the twenty-five members of its Legislative Council are elected, and the Rendel Commission, whose unanimous report was published in February and has been accepted by the Government, proposes that in future it shall have thirty-two members, of whom as many as twenty-five will be elected. There are two main political parties in Singapore—Progressives and Labour—and neither of them has a communal basis. Indeed,

in the 1952 elections one successful European candidate drew his sponsors from eight different races.

* * *

One would have thought that a single glance at the map would have filled the nineteenth-century Englishman with enthusiasm for Singapore. It shares with Suez, Gibraltar, Panama, Malta and Aden the uncomfortable honour of being one of the world's most valuable strategic points, and ships from every part of the world pass through the straits between it and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. As the gateway from Europe, Africa and southern Asia to the Pacific Ocean it is one of the most fascinating of the world's great ports. With its Malays, Chinese, southern Indians and Ceylonese—all races known for their gracefulness—it must surely have a greater variety of beautiful women than any other city. And—less than a hundred miles from the Equator—there is always, all the year round, the rich, restful green of Devonshire in a wet summer.

Singapore has grown too quickly to have architectural distinction. According to my rather antiquated edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 'the town possesses few buildings of any note, but Government House, the law courts, the gaol, the lunatic asylum and the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank are exceptions, as is also the Cathedral of St. Andrew.' There are no early Victorian, colonial-type houses such as those which, so appropriately, surround the cricket field at Bathurst, capital of the Gambia. There is nothing to compare with Cape Town's Groote Schuur, on the one hand, or its university on the other. It has no Arab quarter such as you find at Mombasa or Zanzibar. And it lacks, of course, the magnificent background of the Peak at Hong

Kong, or of the Rock and the distant Spanish mountains at Gibraltar. The highest point on the island, Bukit Timah, is only 581 feet above sea-level.

But two features about Singapore make it very attractive. One is this situation at the crossroads, which brings to it such an astonishing variety of people of every race, creed and colour—its airports dealt with more than 130,000 in 1952. The other is the greenery in the gardens of what, I suppose, must be called its suburbs, although they are no farther from Raffles Square than South Kensington is from Piccadilly Circus.

Within three miles of the centre of the city you can sit on your verandah and watch the golden orioles flashing from tree to tree, and the little brown birds with ash-grey heads—inevitably called 'cigar birds'—hopping about in the coarse grass from which Singapore has to make its lawns. Kingfishers, humming-birds, waxbills, immense, vivid-coloured butterflies, and fewer obnoxious insects than in a garden in England. What more can you want? Since the average temperature in one month differs from the average of all the other months by no more than two degrees, the shrubs and trees shed their leaves whenever it occurs to them to do so, and within three weeks of doing so they are as green as ever. A hundred inches a year is an awful lot of rain, but it keeps Singapore's gardens as beautiful as those of that other amazing equatorial city, Entebbe, the capital of Uganda.

I hate statistics, but here are some about Singapore. In 1939, infant mortality was 130.43 per thousand; in 1951 it was 75.15; in 1952 it was down to 69.97, the lowest figure on record. A few comparable figures—England and Wales, 27; the United States, 29; India, 116; France, 41; New Zealand, 84; Portugal, 94. The birth-rate is almost exactly three times that of the United Kingdom, but in 1950 the

death-rate had sunk below that of the United Kingdom—despite this sensational increase in the population Singapore remains remarkably healthy.

During the war hundreds of British subjects died in miserable conditions on the Siam-to-Burma railway. The survivors have at least the satisfaction of reflecting that their forced labour was in vain. The Japanese used the railway only for a very short time during the war; since the war the Burmese have torn up the line on their side of the Three Pagodas Pass, where it crossed the frontier. Were it now in operation the short cut from the China Sea to the Indian Ocean might have robbed Singapore of much of its importance. As it is, apart from its value as a great port, Singapore is the biggest British military supply base in Asia. Plans for the control of Korea, for example, were taken here. And Malcolm MacDonald is chairman of the British Defence Co-ordination Committee, which consists of the Commanders-in-Chief of the three Services and his own two deputies. This committee advises the Chiefs of Staffs Committee in London. Thus Malcolm MacDonald deals with the Minister of Defence as chairman of the committee. He reports on his many activities in the British and British-protected territories of South East Asia to the Colonial Office. In his dealings with foreign countries—for example, Siam and Indo-China—he is responsible to the Foreign Secretary. It may be said—and it often is said—that he has power without responsibility, since he advises but does not administer. This cannot always be agreeable to other senior officials, harassed and confined by the problems of government. But he may never receive the full credit he deserves for the extent to which he has created the psychological atmosphere in which these problems could be solved.

STRUGGLE FOR SOUTH EAST ASIA

STRATEGY apart, it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of South East Asia. This area produces nine-tenths of the world's natural rubber and two-thirds of its tin. It has the largest resources of oil in the Far East. And, in this area, Malaya alone has, so far, escaped from the virulent attacks of nationalism—a strangely old-fashioned disease in a world which, under the influence of the hydrogen bomb, is moving inevitably towards a choice between world government and chaos.

'Democracy,' wrote the late Dean Inge, 'is only an experiment in government, and it has the obvious disadvantage of merely counting votes instead of weighing them.' It is certainly the one form of government which depends most upon the intelligence of the general public and the integrity of the Civil Service. Bribery which shocks the European is not necessarily more to an Asian or an African than a courteous and natural way of recompensing services rendered or anticipated. But bribery, when the final power rests in the hands of an autocrat, does not menace the system of government itself; it merely means that the particular king may have 'the Bad' or 'the Mean' suffixed to his name in the history books. In a democracy, on the contrary, with the final power in the hands of the people themselves, it corrupts and destroys in precisely the same way as favouritism destroys confidence in a family. Democracy, indeed, is a dangerous system unless the people who call themselves democrats realize that one must give in order to receive.

The United Kingdom has had many centuries of training

for self-government and democracy—which do not necessarily go together, if by self-government one means government by people of one's own race. It has known no foreign invasion for nearly nine hundred years, and doubtless as a result many of its people fail to understand the potency and appeal of nationalism. Also, thus spared the distractions of foreign rule, its people have had plenty of time in which to work out a reasonable system of democratic government. Education for all has led to votes for all. But even in the United Kingdom the experiences of the last decade have emphasized the difficulties of democracy as a system of government. The long tradition of democratic training has made it possible to carry through what amounts to a revolution without bloodshed or bad temper; there is social security from the cradle to the grave. But even the keenest Socialist—or, perhaps, the keenest Socialist above all—has been slightly disconcerted to discover how many people expect to get something for nothing, to receive far greater benefits without increasing production, which alone make those benefits possible.

Without for one moment wishing to claim for the British any quality not possessed by all other peoples (beyond the good fortune of being born on an island which became vulnerable only during the last war), I wonder whether many other races would show greater wisdom in their use of the democratic machine. Certainly the Communist version of democracy would have little appeal to those in Malaya who criticize the High Commissioner's alleged hesitations to grant everybody the right to vote. The following quotation comes from *Light of Dawn Combat News*, circulated in secret to members of the Malayan Communist Party. The Party, one reads, 'is set up on the principle of democratic

centralism. . . . Members, the masses and lower levels must unconditionally obey the orders of the higher levels . . . no matter whether they understand them or whether they have an opinion of their own.'

* * *

There is no such thing as Western civilization; there is civilization. It happens that in this century there is an eager desire in every part of the world—even in the Communist countries—to copy the way of life of Americans and western Europeans. I turn on the radio in Malaya and hear a shrill Chinese voice crooning the latest jazz song; seven years ago the loudspeaker would have given me Asian music. There is no substantial difference of appearance between the cars which bring Mr. Dulles, Mr. Eden, Mr. Molotov or Mr. Chou En-lai to their meetings at the Palais des Nations in Geneva—only the expert would notice that Mr. Molotov's Zis, unlike Mr. Dulles's Cadillac and Mr. Eden's Humber, is bullet-proof. The desire to build great new factories is at least as strong in Peking or Moscow as in Pittsburg or Manchester, and not only because industrialization brings with it material power.

But the Chinese were the pioneers of machinery and, alas, of explosives. Long before the Portuguese tried to convert Malaya to Christianity there were highly-developed Malay and Siamese kingdoms. Indian craftsmen who had settled in South East Asia were producing delicate metal work or beautiful woven materials while my ancestors were painting themselves with woad. The jazz music which blares at me from the loudspeaker in Malaya has come to Asia from Africa by way of America, and I have watched the most primitive African tribesmen dancing in remote parts of

Tanganyika to music the intricate rhythm of which is still beyond the comprehension of other peoples who pride themselves so much on their culture. In an early chapter of this book I referred with distaste to the Hindu festival of Thai-pusam, and yet I have to admit that its pilgrims and penitents show a devotion, a self-abnegation, which is all too rare in Christian countries. It may be that peoples in all continents now look to Western civilization, but Western civilization has its immense debts to the Chinese, the Indians, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Greeks and so many other races remote from western Europe and the United States. And these various contributions to civilization have one essential feature in common—they are based upon the initiative, the independence of mind, the experience of individuals. The constructive contribution of Communism may still prove to be great; it cannot be so while it demands the complete subservience, body, mind and soul, of the individual to the State.

People's China, on April 1st, 1951, wrote this: 'Malaya today is a mirror of British imperialism in its death pangs. The Malayan struggle for national liberation shows that the broad masses of the people are determined to throw British imperialist rule into the garbage can of history.'

I have tried to show in this short book that the 'broad masses' nourish no such determination; that the few C.T.s in the jungle are unrepresentative of the people of Malaya; that there is no 'British imperialist rule' there, unless a slightly paternal attitude in the efforts to pass on the standards of Western democracy to Eastern races can be called imperialism; that, by a demographic accident—the fact that the Malays and Chinese are so nearly equal in numbers—

nationalism *may* take less feverish forms in Malaya than anywhere else in Asia.

The experience of some of Malaya's neighbours since the war should have shown that Communism or some other rigid, dictatorial doctrine is just as likely to result from the too hasty rejection of control by dependent territories as from the too tardy recognition by the controlling power that people will not indefinitely remain dependent. Once the demand for complete independence reaches a certain temperature it is both stupid and criminal to resist it; resistance may involve all the miseries and intolerances of a revolutionary explosion. But equally no Government which has acquired dependent territories has the right to shed its responsibilities for their good government until it is convinced that they have enough men ready and capable to take over that government. The primary reason for government of any kind is not to provide jobs for politicians, however ambitious or able, but to give as many of its people as possible the opportunities of contentment or happiness.

These last words of this book are written in Geneva during the conference on Korea and Indo-China. There could be no better place and time in which to realize the strength of the nationalist flood spreading over Asia. To oppose that flood would be as unwise as it would be unjust—these people have the same right as any other to run their own countries, if and when they want to do so. If and when. So much depends upon the choice of the moment.

Nor can we hope to pass through the process of conceding Malaya her independence without some bad feeling on either side. 'It seems that, however carefully the colonial power may prepare the way for the future,' writes Dr. Purcell, 'the only way in which a nation may develop in

the place of the colony is in opposition to the colonial power.¹ Pandit Nehru and Thakin Nu are only two of several Prime Ministers who have reached their exalted office by way of prison cell.

But, on the other hand, my old friend 'Mike' Pearson, the Foreign Minister of Canada—almost the only man I know who is just as young in spirit as when we used to hunt out the strangest little restaurants in Geneva some twenty years ago—was wise and right in reminding the delegates to the Geneva Conference that 'Asia for Asians' is not the same thing as 'Asia for the Cominform'. Have we the right to be inactive while these Asian countries, in whose formative years we have played so large a part, fall under the control of a system which—as I, for one, most firmly believe; and I have been to Russia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Poland since they acquired Communist Governments—is very much less tolerant and more tyrannical than the British Empire has been, even in its most unregenerate days?

And if we have no such right, what do we do to check Communism? Can a S.E.A.T.O. pact be effective? Will the Asians look upon such a pact as an attempt to defend them or as one to perpetuate 'colonialism'? How do we persuade them to associate their effort with ours? How deep have the roots of democracy struck in Asia? How much has the behaviour of those Europeans who have been unworthy of the power they have wielded in Asia—the men who cannot speak to a person of another colour except in loud and angry tones—obliterated in Asian minds the memory of those other Europeans who have given years of honest and selfless service to raising the standard of less privileged peoples?

I know too little of South East Asia to justify an answer

¹ *Malaya: Communist or Free?* (Gollancz).

to such questions. But it is because I have found in Malaya so much of the courtesy, the kindness, the religious tolerance and the respect for the individual which are the hallmarks of civilization that I believe the Malayans may have as moderating an influence in South East Asia as I believe my own compatriots to have had in Europe. The importance to the rest of the world of their country at the present time could hardly be exaggerated, and it is my hope that this small book may help a little to widen and deepen interest in the problems of Malaya.

Begun at sea, off Aden, February 1954.

Ended at Geneva, May 1954.

