

PART FOUR

THE GERMAN ARGUMENT RECONSIDERED

In Part One discussion centred on German interests and policy in Eastern Asia, especially in the Malay Peninsula and Siam. In Parts Two and Three attention was focused on Britain's attitude towards Germany in relation to British ambitions in the Malay Peninsula and Siam. My main objective throughout was to examine empirical correlation between German activity and the extension of British rule over the Malay states between 1870 and 1909.

Instead of providing a summary in the concluding part, Part Four, I will pull together the strands of my argument by re-examining the question: Did Germany make Malaya British? The answer should also provide us with some insights into the workings of British imperialism in general.

CHAPTER 10

DID GERMANY MAKE MALAYA BRITISH?

The stimulus that led to the present investigation was supplied by Tregonning's paper, "How Germany Made Malaya British". I could not but feel a certain scepticism with his statement, "It is almost possible to say that Germany made Malaya British." Now that the overall picture is fairly clear, it becomes even more difficult to agree with Tregonning. And yet, close to the end of this study, one gets the sense that Germany did have a part to play in the story of Britain's expansion in the Malay Peninsula.

It seems that inherent in the British attitude towards the Malay states was an inclination towards more control and more territory. A major concern, therefore, was the question of how to justify placing these states under British rule. British officials and non-officials gladly furnished excuses to justify making Britain the undisputed master in the Malay Peninsula. One of many such excuses was the rhetoric that if Britain failed to extend her control quickly, Germany would find a pretext for intervention.

Thus, Germany was used as a rationalizing instrument to justify an already present British desire for expansion.

I. Germany: Britain's Excuse for Expansion

In the introduction of this study I touched upon the obvious truth that interpretations of any historical question, especially if it involves a subject-matter of imperialism, can differ greatly according to every researcher's perspective. Accordingly, the bare data presented in the previous chapters can be interpreted in different ways depending on what one sees as evidence. Tregonning has taken the position that Germany "can be seen as a major factor affecting British policy throughout this entire period, from 1874 to 1910", hence his statement, "Germany made Malaya British".¹ But a great deal of confusion is created by Tregonning's variety of interpretation for it ignores the important questions of desire and choice. Tregonning in effect is saying that Britain was reluctant to acquire new territories, and that Germany left Britain with no other choice but to expand. However, this line of argumentation cannot stand up to critical examination.

It was a common characteristic of British imperialism to appear reluctant when acquiring new territories. Hodgkin described this reluctance feature quite neatly:

"In other words ... to appear to acquire colonial territories reluctantly, to give an impression of reluctance to the colonised - and the colonising - society, even to seem to oneself to be reluctant, to write reluctant memoranda and dispatches, to produce evidence of reluctance to ease the work of future imperial

¹Tregonning, "How Germany", p.180.

historians, all this is one of the basic techniques of imperialism."²

The assumed British reluctance of 1873 immediately comes to mind. According to the traditional explanation, Britain was extremely reluctant to intervene directly in the Malay states until Kimberley's well-known instructions to Andrew Clarke reversed the policy of non-intervention. But this explanation is threatened when one considers, as Khoo convincingly points out, that there was a continuity rather than a change of policy. Interventionist activity in the Malay states did occur before formal methods of control were introduced. Giving some examples, Khoo writes:

"Even at random, one can give ample evidence of active interference long before 1874: for example, the bombardment of Trengganu in Nov. 1862 - a result of Governor Cavenagh's partisan stand in the Pahang Civil War; the extraction of \$17,447.04 from the Sultan of Perak in 1874 as compensation for the Ghi Hin Kongsu because of losses sustained during the First Larut War; the 'Rinaldo' incident of 1871, when Sultan Abdul Samad of Selangor was compelled by J.W.W. Birch to appoint Tunku Kudin as 'Wakeel Yamtuan' (this term was suggested by C.J. Irving, Auditor-General of the Straits Settlements). Perhaps the growing example of such interference was the installation of Tunku Long as Sultan Hussein of Johore at a time when the people had already elected their own Yang di-Pertuan, Tunku Abdul Rahman, half-brother of Tunku Long. This was followed up in 1855 with the appointment of the Temenggong of Johore as the 'de facto' ruler of Johore. The Pangkor Treaty of 20th Jan. 1874, therefore, may be more aptly said to mark the beginning of the establishment of British

²T. Hodgkin, "Some African and Third World Theories of Imperialism", in Studies in the Theory of Imperialism, edited by R. Owen and B. Sutcliffe, London, Longman, p.107.

administration in the Malay States."³

It might be added that the desire to intrude in some parts of the Malay Peninsula was present well before the German factor "came into play". For example, when Captain Burney concluded the ambiguous Anglo-Siamese treaties of 1826, the British authorities in India were very pleased because the wording of the treaties was so dubious that "ample opportunities may hereafter offer for extending the protection of the British Government over the States of Kelantan and Trengganu, and thereby relieving them from Siamese supremacy".⁴ Hence, when we consider the period between 1824 and 1873, we find the British reluctance interpretation quite inaccurate.

This brings us to another important, and very curious point. Just as interferences in the Malay states did occur although Britain had declared that no such interferences would take place, it was not uncommon for Britain to proclaim a policy while at the same time following another. This inconsistency in following what was supposed to be official policy is nowhere more evident than in Britain's pronounced belief in the principles of free trade. The rhetoric of the "dangerous" German enterprise and capital in the "unprotected" Malay states was directly contrary to Britain's coveted free trade standards. This very curious behaviour needs explanation.

³Khoo, "The Origin", footnote 1, p.52.

⁴Quoted in R. Emerson, Malaysia: a Study in Direct and Indirect Rule, Kuala Lumpur, Univ. of Malaya Press, p.98.

The contradiction between declared and actual policy arose when Britain pursued a closed-door policy in all parts of the Malay Peninsula not yet under British control. The purely commercial open-door concept, became a closed-door practice in order to gain certain political advantages. The empire-builders purposely confused what was commercial with what was political. The open-door, closed-door dichotomy is easily borne out by the general hostility shown towards German land leases, railways and shipping. Insisting on a political rather than on a commercial interpretation for the Anglo-Siamese Secret Treaty of 1897 is a further example of the contradiction.

But what lay behind the closed-door policy towards German capital and enterprise in the still non-British Malay states? The answer may lie, as Sinclair points out, in the colonial authorities' desire "to preserve a future estate", and to prevent "the bloom rubbed off the plum before it falls into the British lap."⁵

Large-scale German investment was perceived as an obstacle to British expansion. Not because Germany might eventually poke her nose into the affairs of the Malay states, but because economic development in these states might prevent future British political domination. This explains the immense importance exhibited by Straits authorities to obstruct German capital and enterprise from gaining access into the Malay states that were not yet

⁵Quotations from a British official writing about Johor in 1906. Cited in Sinclair, "Hobson", p.344.

under direct British control.

Apart from their antipathy towards German investments, the Straits authorities assumed that all large-scale investments, including British investments, might inhibit future efforts at expansion. Sinclair explains this curious behaviour while taking Johor as an example:

"In the areas not yet fully under British control, like Johore, their attitude might best be described seeking to preserve a future estate. This meant keeping large-scale speculation out. If successful in producing development it might hinder or prevent political control; unsuccessful, it might make the assumption of control unattractive. It was the second of these attitudes which was predominant among the officials. They believed that monopolistic or speculative British companies would probably produce undesirable consequences, one of which was that they would not, in fact, bring about economic development. This view arose from long British experience."⁶

Sinclair's explanation for Johor also applies to the other non-British parts of the peninsula.⁷

Kedah, for example, was always on the verge of financial bankruptcy, only to be saved by the injection of capital from Bangkok. The British explanation that Kedah's recurrent financial difficulties were due to the high cost of lavish royal weddings seems absurd, and it is astonishing how many times this argument was used. The British in fact were to a considerable extent responsible

⁶Sinclair, "Hobson", pp.346-7.

⁷An interesting topic for future investigation might revolve around analysing the attitude of British officials towards all Western enterprise in each Malay state before and during the process of expansion.

for Kedah's chronic economic troubles because they did not allow foreign investment in Kedah. Governor Anderson's remarks tells us why:

"With the introduction of foreign enterprise and capital difficulties with the local authorities and demands for communications and other facilities to industry are inevitable and will be supported by the foreign Government whose subjects are concerned. Once that has been commenced it is difficult to see how England can maintain her claim to these States as within her exclusive sphere."¹⁰

The colonial authorities, of course, could not publicly proclaim that it was their policy to obstruct a Malay state's economic development. Such a policy was in direct opposition with Britain's declared preference to free trade, and would have become untenable in view of her advocacy of the open-door policy elsewhere throughout the Far East.

The magnification of the German threat to achieve certain objectives in the field of shipping is also evident and contrary to the stated policy of free trade. The shipping monopolies had become highly visible and generated an ever-growing dissenting response in the Straits Settlements. The governors wanted to regulate shipping instead of allowing it to be controlled by the shipping firms. The answer was to restore competition under government supervision. Their methods took the form of legislative proposals for breaking up the great monopolies. Although moves were also initiated to counter

¹⁰C.O.273/312, No.43668, Anderson to Lyttelton, 16 November 1905, secret.

Germany's shipping advantage, little could be done to inhibit German shipping. Singapore was a free port and there were certain legal obstacles as well. It seems unlikely that London really viewed German enterprise as a serious threat to British commercial interests. In spite of Germany's spectacular commercial achievements, Britain was still the undisputed commercial master in the East.

Establishing whether there was a collective desire for expansion is, I think, necessary in any analysis of imperialism. It may help illustrate with some clarity particular and relatively constant views, priorities, and traits of behaviour of the actual participants. These might have been the direct product of the collective desire. To quote Hodgkin again (read desired for willed):

"It yet remains true that imperial expansion could not have occurred unless it had been willed by dominant interests within the ruling classes of the imperial powers. The significance of 'accidents' has to be understood within this wider historical context."²

The initiatives for intervention, expansion and control almost always came from Straits officials. These men systematically increased their efforts to bring British rule to the Malay states. Their deep-rooted desire for British expansion is clearly reflected in many of their recommendations, reports and decisions. An argument could be made that the common denominator among most Straits officials was an insatiable desire to expand British control, and territory became the prime satisfier

²Hodgkin, "Some African", p.107.

for that desire.

These so-called men-on-the-spot believed that they acted according to the empire's best interests. Expansion was deemed an act of national virtue. Assuming that all the Malay states would sooner or later fall into the lap of British control, colonial governors viewed it as a means for advancing their own careers. They craved to distinguish themselves by the annexation of new provinces. Captain Jones, the British Minister in Siam, was one of the few British officials who saw this desire clearly:

"In the neighbouring British provinces there are also certain officials who covet to distinguish themselves by the annexation of fresh districts, and who would gladly find an excuse for the same, whose ... views find expression from time to time in the local press, and occasionally in certain London journals."¹⁰

Apart from the desire of making a career for themselves, the governors hoped that they could count on their influence to promote their own commercial speculations in the Malay states after retirement.¹¹

The empire-builders did not want to wait passively to satisfy their empire-building appetite. Instead, they went about consciously producing a multitude of colourful and exaggerated excuses for expansion. Excuses were needed as

¹⁰F.O.422/30, Inclosure 1 in No.19, Report on the Present State of German Interests and Influence in Siam, in Jones to Salisbury, 18 March 1891. It comes as no surprise, therefore, that when Captain Jones was replaced by J.G. Scott as British representative in Bangkok, the move was welcomed by almost all British elements, but not by the Siamese. (Brailley, Two Views, p.107.)

¹¹For obvious examples of this point see Sinclair, "Hobson", p.348.

a veil to hide the desire for expansion. Excuses were needed to obtain the support of superiors, fellow politicians, parliament, the public, and others. Excuses were also needed as an explanation in case any unforeseen problems arose in the future.

An incredible concoction of excuses was produced. Together they were manifestations of the expansionist orientation which we could call the "expansion syndrome". One favourite excuse used was the ethical argument. Expansion was necessary in order to fulfil Britain's "civilizing" and humanitarian mission. Indigenous Malay rulers were portrayed as incapable of government. Straits officials openly disputed Siam's rights in the peninsula and gave vastly exaggerated testimony of Siam's misdeeds towards the local Malay population, who, they assumed, would welcome British rule rather than Siamese.

Along with the ethical considerations, expansion was described as necessary for the future safety of British interests. They justified the need for greater British influence in the peninsula as a deterrent to France's advances into Siam's eastern territories. Preparing a systematic rhetoric of the German threat was one of the main provocations for action of the colonial authorities. Local administrators did not let any opportunity pass without making full use of the German "bogey". They gladly talked about the dangers to British interests if Germany were allowed a foothold on the peninsula. They explained not what would be gained through annexation but what would

be lost through annexation by others. Seeing dangers where in reality there was none, they themselves became persuaded of the German threat. Although the danger was not immediate, they hoped to provoke defensive expansion by increasing the frequency and magnitude of the German threat. These rationalizing arguments were typical, shrewd, and mostly dismissable as mere rhetoric.

Colonial officials picked up many of their arguments from British speculators who "politicized" economic motives for their own self-interest. To gain support for their investments in the Malay Peninsula and Siam, certain interested parties did not hesitate to use rhetoric and the press. The circulation of rumours about possible German intrigues played a major role in conditioning British attitude towards the Germans and the Malay states. These recurring rumours were designed to pressure the British authorities into action. For example, Kiernan points out that:

"the cry of 'India in danger' was a convenient one for financiers and concession-hunters, as well as historians; for anyone with an eye on Burmese timber, Yunnan railways, Malayan rubber, or Persian oil. It was a plausible excuse for all businessmen found in compromising situations, an unanswerable claim for official backing. If there had been space-travellers in those days India would have been a compulsory reason for Britain to take part in the race to the moon."¹²

But it is a mistake to believe that the British speculators were overly successful in manipulating the

¹²V.G. Kiernan, "Farewells to Empire", The Socialist Register, 1964, New York, 1964, p.270.

authorities for their own self-interest. In fact, other than adopting the use of the German "bogey" as an instrument to achieve certain political objectives, the colonial politicians generally showed little interest in accommodating their commercial wishes.

The governors were not alone in their ambition for more control. They were supported by public opinion of the British community. A statement that reflects this support appeared in the "Straits Times" in 1891 under the title "The Consolidation of the Malays":

"It is agreed that the ... annexation of the Native States of the Malay Peninsula to the Straits Settlements is becoming a matter of practical politics. That these Native States must some day be annexed is taken as a matter beyond the need of argument, and on the present point - that they should be annexed shortly - public opinion seem on the whole much in favour of the policy of annexation."¹²⁹

The interests of the Straits governors and that of the Colonial Office were essentially the same. There never was serious tension between them. The policy line taken by the Colonial Office largely reflected the Straits governors' wish for expansion. London wanted the authority of the colonial government preserved and the smooth running of the colonies maintained. To achieve this, it was necessary to actively support the governors' ambitions of consolidating and extending British control over the Malay states.

The Colonial Office supported most of the governors' recommendations and suggestions because their knowledge of

¹²⁹The Straits Times, 4 July 1891. Emphasis added.

the area was almost entirely dependent on the information supplied by these officials. It was constantly "urged that the advice of those who know should prevail." In the case of Swettenham for example, the Colonial Office supported his policies "because he knows better than any living man the problems in the Malay Peninsula."¹⁴

Thus, there was general agreement that a forward policy was desirable. It is not surprising then that the Colonial Office, except in isolated instances, took the side of the governors when differences of opinion arose with the Foreign Office. The Colonial Office gave way only when the Foreign Office was unrelenting, and resumed its support for the governors at a later date.

The Foreign Office and the colonial authorities in many ways agreed in their perception of Germany. For example, there was no dispute between them over the importance of providing careful safeguards against foreign powers acquiring a foothold between Burma and the F.M.S. This concern is clearly reflected in the British treaties with France and with Siam.

Yet, since the 1880s, the Foreign Office censured all interference by the British colonial authorities in the affairs of the Malay states tributary to Siam. Why? The explanation has something to do with timing and the limits of British bargaining power. The Foreign Office, whose responsibility it was to formulate British policy towards Siam and her dependencies, did not oppose the idea of

¹⁴C.O.273/296, Minute by Lucas, 14 January 1903.

expansion as such, but a northwards move had to wait for the proper occasion to present itself. The strategy of waiting for the proper opportunity to act is borne out by the following example: When Swettenham suggested the acquisition of all the strategic islands belonging to the Siamese Malay states, Lansdowne refused saying that the "moment does not seem well chosen for an attempt to obtain from [Siam] the cession of the whole of these islands."¹⁵

However, this does not automatically imply that the Foreign Office had indefinitely abandoned the prospect of extending British control over Siamese Malay territories. Nor does it suggest that the Foreign Office viewed the acquisition of these provinces as undesirable. The denial of Siam's recurrent requests for an international treaty guaranteeing her independence clearly reflects the Foreign Office's intention to keep alive the possibility of future expansion. At no time did the Foreign Office officially abandon that choice. On the contrary, the prospect was strengthened and maintained; treaties kept open Britain's option for acquiring territories, and coercion was implemented by implicit political and economic methods.

For a long time it was the fear of provoking a French reaction on Siam's eastern borders that prevented Britain from acquiring Siam's Malay provinces. It seemed safer to maintain Siam as a buffer state between the two powers

¹⁵F.O.422/56, No.33, F.O. to C.O., 25 February 1902, secret.

until the buffer was no longer required. According to Archer:

"Siam is kept up by Britain to form a buffer between French and British possessions, until such time as the buffer proves useless."¹⁶

This foreign policy goal made it imperative to limit British action within certain parameters according to available bargaining strength. Thus, it was the limits set by the French factor that delayed Britain's expansion into the Siamese Malay states.

If, as might be argued, the Foreign Office only reluctantly agreed to add more territory into the British fold, then why was Siam's offer to exchange territory in return for Britain relinquishing certain privileges so readily accepted? And why did Britain insist on obtaining even more territorial concessions than had been originally offered? There would have been no need for accepting Siam's offer if Britain was satisfied with the areas already held, and there would have been no problem of keeping them. But the desire for territory was always greater than the territory already held. The Foreign Office was not unwilling to forsake some very significant privileges and advantages in Siam, such as extra-territoriality and jurisdiction rights, in exchange for Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu and Perlis.

Siam's reason for making the offer also gives evidence confirming Britain's inclination towards

¹⁶C.O.273/287, No.46965, Archer to Lansdowne, 29 September 1902, secret. Emphasis added.

expansion. Bangkok had quite easily perceived the fact that British officials, and especially those of the Straits Settlements, desired to acquire from Siam her Malay provinces. British behaviour gave rise to Siamese feelings of suspicion, so that Siam was obviously very keen to get British meddling out of the way.

Another important reason for Britain's acceptance of Siam's offer can be attributed to the gradual improvement of relations with France. Germany and France had already recognized Britain's desire to acquire the entire Malay Peninsula long before Britain advanced her frontiers northwards. Britain gained indirect control of much of the Siamese Malay provinces by the Secret Treaty of 1897. It was widely understood that it was only a matter of time when Britain extended direct political control. After the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, and especially after the Siamese-French Treaty of 1907, there remained no reason to withstand the colonial authorities ardour for expansion. Thus, Britain's expansion took place within an internationally recognized territorial context.

It has been argued that the Secret Convention of 1897 was a failure in British diplomacy towards the Malay Peninsula, generating more problems than it was supposed to solve.¹⁷ And yet, Numnonda takes the position that Britain from the start intended to use the secret treaty as an instrument to secure the Siamese portion of the Malay Peninsula:

¹⁷See for example Chandran, "The British", p.159.

"the idea of inserting Article 3 [in the Secret Treaty of 1897] was not so much to secure trade advantages for Britain as an object in themselves, but rather to prevent foreigners from obtaining special leases of land and special trading rights as a means to an end. In other words, gradually to establish thereby political control in those regions."¹

Indeed, the secret treaty was quite valuable to Britain by the fact that her commercial, political and strategic interests in the Siamese Malay states were enhanced. The secret treaty allowed British authorities to use the rhetoric of outside interferences to prevent German capital and enterprise from entering these states, promoting British influence instead. The clauses of the secret treaty were particularly useful during the Anglo-Siamese railway dispute.

¹Numnonda, "The Anglo-Siamese", pp.54-5. Emphasis added.

II. Concluding Remarks

To conclude, I will recapitulate my interpretation of how Germany was used to rationalize and justify British expansion in the Malay Peninsula.

There was no such thing as a "blueprint" or "grand design" for expansion. It could be said, however, that British officials and non-officials possessed a sort of imperial syndrome or collective desire for more territory and more power. But this does not mean that Britain's expansionist tendencies can be explained by the sole factor of desire. It cannot be denied that outside factors also had a role to play. The manner of British expansion was determined by the interaction between internal and external factors. Yet, it was not internal and external factors in themselves that led to expansion, but how they were defined and used to influence the minds of the decision-makers.

Accordingly, a full explanation of Britain's expansion in the Malay Peninsula is radically incomplete if it fails to take into consideration how the German factor was manipulated and used for the purpose of justifying and rationalizing expansion. Here lies the weakness with the "German Argument" as presented by Tregonning. It is an explanation that portrays Britain as a reluctant power who was left with no other choice than to impose colonial rule over the Malay Peninsula by developments occurring outside her control. It is hard to

imagine that Germany was directly responsible for producing Britain's treaties with the Malay rulers installing Englishmen as residents and advisors. It is also hard to imagine that it was because of Germany that Britain concluded the Anglo-French Declaration of 1896, the Secret Treaty of 1897, the British-Siamese Boundary Agreement of 1899, the 1902 treaty over Kelantan, the Anglo-French Agreement of 1904, and finally the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909. In most cases we see the same pattern of requests being made by the Straits officials for more control which eventually gained London's approval.

Britain's security concerns should be seen as part of the general context within which British expansion took place. It should be clear by now that the need for security was blatantly exaggerated. Apart from being a convincing argument to disguise the desire for certain privileges, the value of the security argument lay in the possibility of keeping it vague and ambiguous to the point where it could be developed and redefined to fit any objective and situation, political or commercial. Britain equated security with the total absence of external threats which is subjective, unreasonable, and impossible. Over-concern for security was certainly a peculiarity of British foreign and colonial policy of the period.¹⁹

Expounding the fear of Germany started and continued for the purposes of gaining advantages of various kinds.

¹⁹On this see Kiernan, "Farewells", p.270.

Defensive arguments were prepared reactions to imagined dangers to vital interests. In fact, as the study shows, British interests were never threatened by Germany in the way they were made out to be. The attitude of the British official towards Germany facilitated a larger political aim: the control of the Malay Peninsula. Expounding the danger of Germany to British interests in the East was intended to produce the mechanism for expansion. We saw the beginning of this mechanism in 1873-4, when Britain began controlling the affairs of some Malay states. The British officials' efforts were finally rewarded with the signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 9 August 1909. British control over the Malay Peninsula was almost complete.

This makes the so-called necessary connection between German activity and British expansion emerge as a fictitious idea if it is taken to mean that Germany caused Britain to take upon herself the administration of the Malay states. Compared with how fast Africa was partitioned between the powers, Britain's expansion in the Malay Peninsula was relatively slow. There was no move in the direction of a scramble among the imperialist powers for the Malay states. This clearly suggests the absence of a foreign threat such as Germany, which also explains the slowness of Britain's expansion.

British imperial expansion in the Malay Peninsula during the years 1873-1909 was due to a collective desire for more control, more territory, and more power. This

desire on the whole remained relatively constant and did not change with the switch of government. Britain pushed for territorial aggrandizement in the Malay Peninsula during both Liberal and Conservative governments. To think that British expansion owed its origin to their wish to forestall German intervention is inaccurate. Rather, the German factor provided a persuasive rationalizing instrument for British expansionist forces who fabricated rumours that Germany was ready to enter the Malay Peninsula. Such rationalization conveniently justified the extension of British rule while covering up other hidden motives. In this sense British expansion in the Malay Peninsula was influenced just incidentally by Germany. The German factor in itself did not cause that expansion. Only Britain was responsible for the circumstances that forced the process of extending her frontiers. The implication, therefore, that Britain's expansion was determined only by external factors is entirely unjustified.

This leads us inevitably to consider the difficult question of motive. If the fear of Germany was manipulated, much like the ethical and humanitarian notions, to justify the fulfilment of a desire to expand, what then should we consider to be the motives behind this desire? A satisfactory answer to this question would require a thorough investigation into the minds of every British official who was actively involved in the decision-making process. But this would be extremely difficult because their motives were very likely a product

of both rational and non-rational forces, and there is no suitable way of examining hidden and unexpressed motivating forces in history. For this reason, it is enough to say here that imperialism is largely the outcome of a process in which all kinds of variables enter into its determination.

Without denying the rationalizing effect Germany had on British imperialism, one cannot state "a priori" that "Germany made Malaya British", for in fact, most of the material presented in this study does not support that view. It seems more accurate to say that, along with many other factors, Germany was used to justify making Malaya British.