

SING-MALAY RELATIONS IN MALAYA

1945-1955

AN ACADEMIC EXERCISE SUBMITTED TO
THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS WITH HONOURS

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A505991940

UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA

SINGAPORE

1960

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particularly the Chinese, and the hazards of the recent war had accelerated the process. SYNOPSIS added to their fears. Malay associations sprang up in a bid to fight for the repeal of the Union.

Immediately after the Japanese War and several months after the establishment of the British Military Administration in September 1945, Malaya witnessed widespread Sino-Malay clashes, particularly in areas around Batu Pahat in Johore, Teluk Anson and Bagan Datch in Perak. The cause of such violent animosity characterised by physical and bloody clashes between the two main races in Malaya - the Malays and the Chinese - was the fear of the former of Chinese political ambitions, as characterised by the emergence of the Chinese Communist guerillas from the jungles, immediately after the war, to establish control over several strategic points throughout the country. To avoid losing their political sovereignty, hitherto safeguarded by the British overlordship, the Malays, led by their penghulus and kampong chiefs, the most prominent and renowned being Penghulu Salleh of Batu Pahat, sought to rid themselves of this so-called Chinese "menace". The religious grievances of the Malays must also be taken into consideration; Malay resentment reached its highest pitch when their religious and moral values were infringed upon, as they were by the Communists. Community leaders at this time were kept very busy, trying to bring about a peaceful settlement. Complete control of the situation was not established until late 1946.

Malay fear of their political submergence was again seen by their strong reaction towards the Malayan Union Proposal in 1946. This had called for a common citizenship for all the peoples domiciled in the country, so that there would be unity and a common purpose among the various races. The Malays feared being absorbed by the immigrant races; the economic impact of the alien races,

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particularly the Chinese, and the hazards of the recent war had accelerated the process and had added to their fears. Malay associations sprang up in a bid to fight for the repeal of the Union. In the face of strong Malay opposition, and only a lukewarm interests of the non-Malays especially the Chinese, for whose benefit the Union had been designed, the British Government reverted to its former policy of maintaining the special position of the Malays, by implementing the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1 February 1948. The Chinese protested against the stringent regulations governing the Citizenship Clause as contained in Clause XII of the Agreement, to no avail. Sino-Malay relations were not improved by the Emergency, officially declared in June 1948.

The problem of education must necessarily be included in an exercise on Sino-Malay relationship in Malaya. Education on which the perpetuation of individual cultures lay, caused no small anxiety among the Chinese. The pre-war educational system, with its complexities of various streams of schools, had not helped to create a Malayan outlook among the different races. This was felt necessary in post-war Malaya. Coupled with the rapid rise of Malay nationalism, attempts were made to make the teaching of the Malay language compulsory in Government and Government-aided schools. The various attempts at formulating a common educational policy met with strong opposition from all sides. The already unsettled field of education became a battleground for the Malays and the Chinese. The National School Scheme, as advocated by the Barnes Report of 1950 and the Education Ordinance 1952, met Chinese disapproval; they felt that such schools were not national in the true sense of the word - they should be called Malay National schools, wherein pupils would be able to learn no other oriental language except Malay. By late 1955, the educational problem of Malaya still remained unsolved.

Racial unity was needed if Malaya was to emerge an independent nation. Hence, in an atmosphere of racial suspicions and tension, two communal parties were brought together. The Alliance between UMNO and MCA won the mass support of the population by its emotional anti-colonial slogan of Merdeka or freedom. It succeeded in pressing for Federal Elections for a Legislature with an elected majority. Its overwhelming success at these elections - it won 51 out of the 52 elected seats - can be summed up in Tengku Abdul Rahman's word: "...our tremendous success resulted from this issue of independence and nothing else". The causes for divisions between the races still remained in the background. Hence, it had been predicted that the achievement of merdeka and the disappearance of the British colonial authority would bring about a critical situation - one similar to that of 1945/46, when Sino-Malay animosity flared up into open rupture.

Great Britain has lived up to her pledges to grant Malaya independence. Merdeka Day for Malaya was 31 August 1957. Compromises between the races were effected. However, communalism has not been wiped out. The recent elections in August and September 1959, with the sweeping victory of the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party in the predominantly Malay populated States of Kelantan and Trengganu, shows that Malaya has a long way more to go before communalism can be said to be a thing of the past. What is needed in Malaya is the evolution of a truly Malayan society, which can only emerge with a common socio-cultural base embracing all the communities. Until such a time, communalism when placed in the hands of a ruthless politician, can become a dangerous weapon.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

ALLIANCE	THE ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANISATION (U.M.N.O.), THE MALAYAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION (M.C.A.) AND THE MALAYAN INDIAN CONGRESS (M.I.C.).
A.M.C.J.A.	ALL-MALAYA COUNCIL OF JOINT ACTION
C.L.C.	COMMUNITIES LIAISON COMMITTEE
I.M.P.	INDEPENDENCE OF MALAYA PARTY
M.C.A.	MALAYAN CHINESE ASSOCIATION
M.I.C.	MALAYA INDIAN CONGRESS
M.P.A.J.A.	MALAYAN PEOPLE'S ANTI-JAPANESE ARMY
M.P.A.J.U.	MALAYAN PEOPLE'S ANTI-JAPANESE UNION
P.M.I.P.	PAN-MALAYAN ISLAMIC PARTY
R.I.D.A.	RURAL AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
U.M.N.O.	UNITED MALAYS NATIONAL ORGANISATION

CHAPTER ONE

SINO - MALAY OUTBREAKS

The interim period between the end of the Japanese War and the entry of an effective British Military Administration into Malaya saw the occurrence of several incidents resulting in the deaths of many hundreds of Chinese and Malays at each other's hands.¹ This sudden flare-up of Sino-Malay hostility into open rupture, resulting in large-scale massacres of men, women and children, tended to become widespread throughout the Peninsula, when fortunately the establishment of law and order by the British Military Administration and the intervention of community leaders throughout Malaya, put a stop to it. However, fears of these two main races in Malaya for each other were too great to make possible the complete curbing of racial outbreaks.

Facts regarding these massacres are hard if not impossible to come by. If there are official reports, they are not accessible, and most in authority prefer to forget that they even happened and those who were involved have their own versions of the story.² However, this chapter is not concerned with the mere events of the massacres. What is more important is the roots of this Sino-Malay racial disease. How did this racial outbreak come about? Why was it

1 In this academic exercise, the Indonesians are also referred to as Malays. They were also involved in these racial clashes - the Bugis in Johore, especially in the Batu Pahat, Muar and Pontian Districts; the Bajjarees in Perak, especially in the Bagan Datch, Teluk Anson and Sungai Manik Areas; the Minangkabaus in Negri Sembilan.

2 Some incidents of Sino-Malay clashes were read to me from private police files by police officers. Other incidents were related to me by community leaders. The MS. of Mr. Yeoh Guan Leong has been most helpful. Mr. Yeoh is the present Chinese headman of Bagan Datch Area, Perak. He played a part in the pacification of Sino-Malay hostilities in Perak during the period discussed.

that only the Chinese and the Malays were the only races involved in plural society Malaya, and why not the Indians? Considering that the Chinese have been living in Malaya for many centuries, why did this racial clash come about as late as it did? What effects did these open conflicts have on later Sino-Malay relationship? What efforts were made to bridge up this wide gap between both races and how far were they successful?

Racial consciousness, which invariably results in racial tension had existed in Malaya before the Japanese War. However this feeling had slumbered under the surface. This tension existed as a result of the presence of equally numerical races - the Malays and the Chinese - each having a strong hold over the other. In brief, the Chinese had economic stranglehold over the Malays, while the latter had political and administrative power.¹ This so-called balance of power, when maintained provided for the smooth running of racial relations, but which when broken resulted in open conflicts, as happened in Malaya during the last few months of the Japanese occupation and the immediate post-war months, when fears and suspicions of these two main races, stimulated and enlarged by war, ran high.

It is noticeable¹ that the Malays think of their relationship with the Chinese prior to the Japanese invasion as being

¹ Refer to the Introductory Chapter p.5

[Dr. Kenneth O.L. Burridge, as a Research Fellow of the Social Research Unit with the University of Malaya, conducted a field survey in the Batu Pahat District of Johore, the noodle point of Sino-Malay massacres. From personal interviews with local inhabitants, he was of the opinion that Sino-Malay relations pre-war were satisfactory. The above is quoted from his book: "Racial Relations in Johore". Reprinted from the Australian Journal of Politics and History. Vol. II No.2 May, 1951.- and his unpublished work: "A Report on Fieldwork in Batu Pahat, Johore" Social Research Unit University of Malaya, February 1956.

reasonably satisfactory. Malay antagonism towards the Chinese was latent. Their outlook with regard to their system of social order has been influenced by the peacefulness and non-militant characteristic of the Sufi Order of Islam. This Sufi teaching of the "self-same Universal spirit that accounted for the identical expressions found in the doctrines of different religions have made it possible for the plural societies that have existed in Malaya to live side by side peaceably and with a spirit of tolerance...."¹ It was this Sufi teaching that had guided the Malays from the path that might lead them into the threshold of chauvinism. It is paradoxical that this Sufism which had been responsible for the non-militant character of the Malays and hence, the peaceful existence of the different races in Malaya, may be said to be responsible also for the racial outbreaks, by its very teachings of mysticism.² In fact, one of the exponents of Sufism, a Moslem saint with a large following of disciples, Penghulu Salleh³ was responsible for gathering together the Malays at Batu Pahat in his campaign against the Chinese.

Moreover, however much the Malays might have disliked the Chinese or disapproved of them, there was no pertinent issue

1 Syed Naguib Al-Attas: Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised among the Malays. University of Malaya, Singapore 1959 p.29

This view is also supported by Professor S.Q.Patimi, Visiting Professor of Urdu, University of Malaya, Singapore 1957 - 1960

2 Refer to page 8

3 Penghulu Salleh was a Moslem saint, reputed to have supernatural powers. It is most unfortunate that he passed away a few months ago in April 1959. When asked by Syed Naguib Al-Attas why he led in the campaign against the Chinese - an act prohibited by the non-violent Sufistic teaching of Islam, Penghulu Salleh replied that he had a vision from one of the Moslem saints, warning him against Chinese Communist attacks. Hence, he struck first, leading a large group of his followers, attacking Chinese sections of villages in the Batu Pahat Area.

between them as peoples. Religion and language tended to isolated the Chinese as a group from the body politics even though the same indices go a long way towards consolidating their grip on economic affairs. On the whole, apart from the few Chinese who became Moslems, and who by doing so, moved into the Malay milieu without necessarily entirely vacating the Chinese, the two sections of the population lived their lives in quite different and not necessarily related environments. The Chinese shopkeepers, agents and traders in the Malay kampongs produced no problems in the Malay environment - in fact, they were complementary to the needs of the Malay population. Hence, their relationship was economic, leaving aside their moral, kinship and religious values.¹

This placid racial scene was drastically altered during the Japanese occupation. The war, as always, intensified nationalism - in this case it was Malay nationalism, making the position of the immigrant races a very difficult one. Before the war, the ways of life of either section had been overtly respected by the other - the Chinese made no inroad on Islam. Chinese pig-breeders took care not to offend the susceptibilities of the Malays, and for their part, the Malays raised no objections to Chinese modes of life and worship.² The war, however, recruited to authority the kind of men who would and did throw these considerations aside.

One of the first acts of the Japanese after taking over Singapore was to conduct a purge of the Chinese community in which

1 Kenneth O.L. Burridge: Racial Relations in Johore, Reprinted from the Australian Journal of Politics and History Vol. II No. 2 May 1957 p. 164

2 Kenneth O.L. Burridge p. 166

those suspected of anti-Japanese and pro-Chungking sentiment were imprisoned and disposed of. One scans the pages of the leading war-time newspapers in Singapore, the Shonan Shimbun and the Syonan Times, practically in vain for any good word for the Chinese. On the other hand, the Malays were given preferential treatment. They were allowed by the Japanese to remain in their privileged positions in the Government as before the war and often they were entrusted with higher offices than they had enjoyed under the British hands.¹ It is evident that increased hostility between the Chinese and the Malays resulted from the Japanese occupation. That this was entirely the result of a deliberate Japanese policy is held by many people, who feel that to prevent the races from uniting against them, the Japanese deliberately caused racial ill-feeling, misunderstanding and uprisings. However, in my opinion, this is less certain. The interests of the Japanese in maintaining racial harmony for reasons of economic development and of defence was as pertinent to Malaya as elsewhere in Southeast Asia. But the circumstances in Malaya were such that the Chinese, with their numerical strength and their economic power, posed a special problem for the Japanese. There was a fundamental difference in attitude towards the Japanese occupation between the Chinese, who resisted (it must be remembered that China at this time had been at war with Japan for several years) and the Malays, who were generally co-operative,

¹ Abdul Latiff bin Sahan: Political Attitudes of the Malays 1945 - 1953, University of Malaya, Singapore 1959 p. 3

and many of whom welcomed the change since it promised to put an end to what they considered to be the economic and political encroachments of the Chinese on their preserves.¹ Malay co-operation naturally made them the chosen instrument of the Japanese, so that, as it were, there were seemingly two opposing parties - the Malays, generally on the side of the Japanese fighting against the Chinese. The police force, composed mainly of Malays, was used by the Japanese to keep the Chinese community under control and to suppress Chinese resistance movements - this gave rise to inter-community feeling which had its repercussions after the liberation.

The war forced on the Chinese and the Malays roles which brought them into closer contact and more intimate relationship. Previously, they were not brought together socially. The urban areas had contained predominantly Chinese residents, and the rural areas, Malays. Chinese vegetable and squatter areas were all sited far from Malay kampongs. All were upset by the necessity for food cultivation during the Japanese period. Japanese treatment of the Chinese sent thousands fleeing to the countryside for safety. Thus were engendered situations and conditions which gave rise to more chances for developing differences. The existence in the same territory of large groups of Chinese, who were non-Moslems, constituted a problem when Moslem politico-religious values were infringed. Nothing but suspicion and enmity resulted and the Malays were aroused to a realisation of the so-called Chinese "menace" which according

1 Victor Purcell: The Chinese in Modern Malaya Singapore, 1956 p. 37

to them began to encroach on their land. Conflicts were inevitable when the Malays attempted to deal with this problem.⁷

The Japanese occupation witnessed the emergence of numerous resistance groups conducting guerilla warfare ¹ against the government. The most prominent was the underground movement of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union (MPAJU), an almost entirely Chinese organisation controlled by the Malayan Communist Party, and supporting the Communist guerillas, known as the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) known also as the "Three Star Army" from its badge - one star for each of the races in Malaya, the Chinese, the Malays and the Indians - but, it was in essence, as in the case of all resistance groups, a Chinese force, working with the British, who in May 1943 sent reconnaissance parties of Force 136 ² to negotiate an agreement by which the MPAJA pledged itself to co-operate with the Allied forces during the reconquest of Malaya. On the other hand, there were relatively few Malays or Indians among the guerilla forces. The resulting situation was a virtual civil war - (in retaliation for guerilla raid, the Japanese-led Malay units attacked Chinese communities which were held responsible for the activities of the guerillas. As a counter-retaliation and to obtain supplies, the guerillas attacked Malay communities, so that a vicious circle developed. ³)

1 For an interesting account of guerilla-fighting, read F. Spenser Chapman: The Jungle is Neutral London, 1949

2 Victor Purcell: The Chinese in Modern Malaya p.35
C.H. Fenner, a member of Force 136 and the present Commissioner of Police in Malaya (1959 -) has confirmed this.

3 Willard H. Elsbree: Japan's Rule in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940 - 1945 Cambridge, 1953

However, it was not until the surrender of the Japanese to the Allied Forces that widespread racial clashes developed. After the liberation, the guerilla-forces controlled by the Malayan Communist Party and composed mainly of Chinese, filled in quickly the political vacuum vacated by the retreating Japanese. The Malays saw in this well-organised political group and force a threat to Malay sovereignty and position¹ and also a violation to their religious values]- Islam is against the doctrine of Communism. Full scale retaliation against the collaborators of the Japanese, mainly Malay military police and informers, were carried out. All the while, no kampong was free from fear of communist reprisals.² In carrying out these reprisals, the Communist Chinese did not consider the religious feelings of the Malays as Moslems. Often times, the religious and moral values of the Moslems were attacked. Communist executions were horrible, corpses were mutilated, desecrated and burial rites opposed to those of the executed traitor were carried out. These were very painful to the Malays, and Malay resentment reached its highest pitch in the kampongs surrounding Batu Pahat which saw the Malays, organised into troops and led by their penghulus or chiefs,³ the most prominent of whom, as we have just seen⁴ was Penghulu Salleh, popularly known as Panglima Salleh, go into action, carrying out a series of mass executions of the Chinese, regarding them

1 Interview with Dato Onn bin Jaafar, Johore Bharu, October, 1959
Dato Onn, during this time of racial outbreak, was a District Officer at Batu Pahat, Johore. He did a lot in bringing about peace in that area.

2 Interview with C.H.Fenner, the Commissioner of Police in Malaya, September, 1959 Kuala Lumpur.

3 Interview with Dato Onn bin Jaafar, October 1959

4 Refer to page 3 Footnotes.

as Communists, and hence a political danger.¹ Malays were armed with "parang panjang" or scythes, which they used for harvesting padi or for cutting grass. In the Bagan Datch Area, Malay blacksmiths did a rearing trade, and parangs which would normally fetch about \$10/- a piece were being sold at as high as \$25/- to \$30/-.¹ Malay opportunists took advantage of this panic and in late 1945 toured the Malay kampongs, selling magic copper rings, guaranteed to make the wearers bullet-proof, as the Communist Chinese were thus armed. "Selendang Merah" or red scarves were seen carried by the Malays, as they were thought to ensure the wearers proof against any weapons.² These superstitious beliefs of the Malays, influenced by the mysticism of Sufism, gave rise to what the police term the "invulnerability cult", still practised in Malaya today. The belief that they were invulnerable to weapons probably must have encouraged the Malays, by this time worked into a frenzy, in their anti-Chinese campaign. Everywhere in Batu Pahat, were seen Malays, thus armed with "parang panjang", often times covered with "selendang merah".³

Mass executions of the Chinese by the Malays were carried out in full swing. According to an eye-witness⁴ the Batu Pahat River was red with blood. Malay executions often took the form of hacking by parangs and axes and the setting on fire of the houses of the would-be victims. Of course, these attacks were

1 Mss. of Yeoh Guan Leong, Chinese headman of Bagan Datch District Perak.

2 Mss. of Yeoh Guan Leong.

3 Interview with police officer, stationed at Batu Pahat.

4 Interview with the police officer.

not allowed by the Chinese to go on unretaliated. (Clashes in which there had been provocations and losses on both sides were most serious in the Perak River area.¹ On 30 December 1945, a party of about 100 Chinese attacked the Malay population of the village of Iambor Kanan, north of Teluk Anson, Perak and killed some 3 Malays and injured 14. Chinese losses were estimated at 25 killed.² In Kuala Pilah District, on 6 November 1945, a crowd of some 300 - 400 Malays attacked and killed 40 Chinese, a large proportion of whom were women and children.³ Similar conditions prevailed over widespread areas, in kampongs throughout Malaya, where Malays lived in close vicinity to Chinese families of squatters and shopkeepers. (The Teluk Anson Relief Committee gave the aggregate of the Chinese losses in Lower Perak as 165 dead, 9 wounded and properties valued at \$1,860,000 destroyed.⁴

At this point, we may ask ourselves why [it was that the Indians were not involved.] After all, like the Malays, they collaborated with the Japanese. (However, their collaboration with the Chinese, unlike that of the Malays, was understandable, seeing that they had a purpose - the liberation of their mother-country India, from British bondage. Moreover, their leader, Subha Chandra Bose was a Socialist and this probably did much with regard to Indo-Chinese relations in Malaya. But what about Indo-Malay relations? According to Professor Fatimi,⁵ anti-Indian sentiment was

1 Parliamentary Debates (Hansard) House of Commons Official Report Vol. 421 25 March - 18 April, 1946. London: His Majesty's Stationary Office pp. 321, 322.

2 Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 421. The Secretary of State for the Colonies - George Hall's speech in the House of Commons.

3 Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 421.

4 Min Sheng 28.5.46 Weekly Digest of Vernacular Press No. 31.

5 Professor S.Q. Fatimi - Visiting Professor in Urdu, University of Malaya, Singapore 1957 - 1960.

present among the Malays, majority of whom were caught in the clutches of Indian money-lenders, who often proved to be ^{by} oppressive. However, [no Indo-Malay clashes occurred] This may be explained by the fact that Indian Moslems and Pakistanis formed an important proportion of the Indian population, and they were normally the more well-off, always heading the contribution list for any Moslem project, such as the building of a mosque and celebration of some Moslem function like the birthday of the Prophet.¹ Generally, it may be said that the Indian race in Malaya, in the eyes of the Malays, did not pose a threat to Malay sovereignty as the Chinese did. Numerically and economically, they were not as important as the Chinese.

< Malay fear for the Chinese arose with the political ambitions of the Communist guerillas.² Since the Japanese war, they had entered the political field, hitherto a Malay reserve. In reply, some Malays sought ways and means to deal with this so-called Chinese problem. Racial conflicts in Malaya, with particular reference to Sino-Malay relations and the 1945/46 clashes with losses of lives on both sides must also be laid at the door of mass hysteria. The Malays by upbringing and faith are the more sensitive and excitable of the two racial groups. Indeed, the very word ^{+ 'amok'} "amuck" originates from the Malay vocabulary. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica³ it is a nervous affliction to which many Malays are subject. It is a curious trait and the victims

1 Professor S.Q. Fatimi September 1959.

< 2 Dato Onn bin Jaafar feels that the clashes of 1945/46 were not so much a racial problem as a political problem. October 1959 >

3 Encyclopedia Britannica Vol. 14

+ 'amok' derived from the word 'mengamok' in Malay.
(as in English)

tration, the guerilla forces had established control over various
 lose for the time being all self-control and are in a state of
 points of importance throughout the Peninsula. Thus, the Malays
 homicidal mania. Malay antagonism against the Chinese when aroused
 acted in an effort to save their political position - their concern
 as it was during the liberation exploded, resulting in the Malay
 over this was again evident during the years following this unhappy
 masses running amuck. ^{amuck} One racial conflict led to another. Charges
 period. The immediate cause for the outbreaks may be said to be
 and counter-charges were flung at each other, engendering an inter-
 the resentment of the Malays as Moslems when their political-
 racial vendetta - a vendetta based on fear, precipitated by mis-
 religious values were infringed upon/the Communists, under which
 understandings, spurred on by mischiefmakers, and enlarged by
 category they included all Chinese. Religion played a very important
 panic. ¹ The Straits Times Editorial commented: ² "It is the
 part in their lives, influencing their political and social set-up.
 opinion of those most closely in touch with the situation that
 neither the Malays nor the Chinese really wish to be aggressive
 but that each is terrified of being attacked by the other." The
 in 1950. That this case was dealt with constitutionally through
 the courts served only to aggravate the case, for the only imple-
 a Malay left behind many blood relations especially in the kam-
 pong - this was due to the effect of kampong inter-marriages and
 of long rooted inhabitation. Similarly, the social set-up of the
 Chinese was such that they were also a closely-knit community.
 This often led to vengeance which increased considerably the
 death tolls on both sides.

Generally, it may be said that the main or root cause
 ? for Sino-Malay tension during the liberation was the fear of the
 Malays that their political sovereignty was at stake. The absence
 of any authority in the country gave the Chinese guerillas an
 opportunity to turn the country into a People's republic; at this
 period, before the establishment of the British Military Adminis-

1 Straits Times 6.4.46

2 Straits Times Editorial 4.10.46

tration, the guerilla forces had established control over various points of importance throughout the Peninsula. || Thus, the Malays acted in an effort to save their political position - their concern over this was again evident during the years following this unhappy period. The immediate cause for the outbreaks may be said to be the resentment of the Malays as Moslems when their politico-religious values were infringed upon^{by} the Communists, under which category they included all Chinese. Religion played a very important part in their lives, influencing their political and social set-up. When their values were attacked, they used all ways and means to safeguard them. This is well illustrated by the Maria Hertogh case in 1950.¹ That this case was dealt with constitutionally through the courts served only to aggravate the case, for the only implication was that European Christian law was in some way 'better' than Moslem law. This was an attack on the Malay way of life, and

1 The "Maria Hertogh" case resulted in large-scale riots in Singapore, which started on the morning of 11 December 1950 and order was not completely restored until 13 December 1950. As a result of these disorders, 18 people were killed, 173 injured, 22 motor vehicles burnt and 119 damaged by the rioters. This case was the result of a dispute over the custody of a 13-year old child Maria Hertogh, born of Dutch parents and of the Roman Catholic faith. Maria, born on 12 December, 1942 was handed to Che Aminah, a Moslem and wife of an Indonesian businessman, to stay for a few days. However, five days after this, Mrs. Hertogh was interned by the Japanese until the end of the war. Che Aminah brought up the girl in the Moslem faith and the Malay way of life, naming her Nadra. In September 1949, it was discovered that Maria was living in Trengganu with Che Aminah. In April, 1950 the Dutch Consul General in Singapore applied to the High Court for the removal of the girl to the Social Welfare Department. Che Aminah contested the application. The Court passed an order giving the custody of the girl to the Dutch Consul General with liberty to restore her to her parents. But on 1 August 1950 Maria went through a form of marriage to a Malay Mohammedan, Inche Mansoor Adabi. The Dutch Consul-General asked for the declaration that the marriage was illegal. On 2 December 1950, the Judge directed that the girl should be handed to her mother. Mrs. Hertogh placed the girl in the Roman Catholic Convent. (Research Paper on "Causes of Riots and Disturbances in Malaya" by J.G. Ritchie, Deputy Superintendent of the Federation of Malaya Police Force.)

specifically on Malay marriage and adoption, according to the
 would they be allowed to proceed any further.
 Malays, who were ready to defend their values at all costs.

Order was restored with the implementation of the
 British Military Administration. Military patrols kept day and
 night watch on disturbed areas.¹ The Military Administration re-
 ported to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, George Hall
 that it "had always been able to count upon ready support of the
 leaders of both sides to re-establish order."² These leading men
 of the Chinese and Malay communities got together, agreed to make
 peace, and then went about among their respective communities,
 calming and pacifying the peoples, with the result that what looked
 like developing into a very serious situation gave way to order-
 ly and restrained behaviour among the vast majority of those
 concerned.³ Evacuees moved back to the kampongs and small town-
 ships, from where they fled for their lives. In Batu Pahat, Dato
 Onn bin Jaafar, the District Officer played a prominent role in
 restraining and stopping the Malays from continuing their campaigns
 against the Chinese. A vivid account was told me⁴ of how Dato Onn
 in his efforts to bring about a peaceful situation, accosted
 Penghulu Salleh⁵ and his followers, who were advancing to a nearby
 Chinese village to carry out their massacre campaign. Stopping
 them on one of the banks of the Batu Pahat River, he told them to
 go back to their respective homes, for only over his dead body

1 Straits Times 4.1.46

2 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 421 pp.321,322

3 Straits Times Editorial "Sino-Malay Lead" 16.5.46

4 Related to me by a police officer; Confirmed by Dato Onn bin
 Jaafar, Johore Bahru, October 1959.

5 Refer to pages 3, 3

would they be allowed to proceed any further.

Everywhere appeals and pleas were made to the two races to live peaceably together. In connection with the clashes in areas in Perak, a Chinese deputation called on the Sultan of Perak to appeal to him to intervene in order to effect a settlement.¹ He urged for the restoration of Sino-Malay unity and friendship which had existed between them before the arrival of the Japanese.² The Malayan Union Governor, Sir Edward Gent issued an order through the Muar authorities to the Malay penghulus in the Padang area, requiring them to protect all the Chinese in their districts and holding them responsible for any attacks on the Chinese lives and properties there.³

At this time, Dr. Wu Paak-shing, the Chinese Consul-General was being conducted on a Malayan tour. He said that the Chinese Government was gravely concerned over reports of massacres of Chinese by Malays and he had been requested to take this matter up seriously with the local authorities, from whom he had asked assurances that the lives and properties of the Chinese people in Malaya would be given due protection.⁴ He urged the Chinese community to live in harmony with the other races and to co-operate with the Government. He called on the Sultan of Selangor to confer on important matters, mainly the subject of Sino-Malay unity.⁵ "All that is needed is a return of mutual confidence between the races" said Dr. Wu. He proposed to bring about this situation by

1 Straits Times 4.1.46

2 Straits Times 17.4.46

3 Min Sheng 28.5.46 Weekly Digest of Vernacular Press, No. 31

4 Straits Times 1.3.46

5 Straits Times 8.5.46

laying a scheme before the Sultan of Selangor for the formation of a Sino-Malay association with branches all over the country "to promote goodwill between the two most numerous nationalities of the Peninsula, and prevention of future outbreaks of strife and violence which after the Japanese occupation marred relations between the Chinese and the Malays".¹ The Malaysian newspapers were very impressed with this scheme,² especially as Sino-Malay associations all over the country might render valuable service as a common meeting-ground for the advocates of toleration, co-operation and common sense on both sides.

These liberal attempts to develop an intracommunal, all-Malayan national consciousness collapsed because the rapid evolution of Malay nationalism as a result of the Malaysian Union Proposals, which is being dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter, introduced by the British made the Malays hostile towards the non-Malays, particularly the Chinese, for whose benefit the Scheme had been passed. This rift between the two main communities was widened and Sino-Malay relationship in Malaya must be looked at in the Malaysian political context. In electing to support the Malay nationalists by withdrawing the Malaysian Union, which offered an opportunity for the achievement of unity and a common purpose among the various races in Malaya for it gave the non-Malays a chance to identify themselves with the country of their adoption, the British accentuated the gulf by reverting to the pro-Malay policy as evidenced by the Federation Agreement of 1948.³ Sino-Malay rela-

1 Min Sheng 26.5.46 Weekly Digest of Vernacular Press, No. 31

2 Weekly Digest of Vernacular Press.

3 Refer to Chapter II.

tions did not improve with the so-called Emergency or Communist insurrection, officially declared in June, 1948. Every now and again, the police files recorded incidents of Sino-Malay clashes.

It was reported on 26 February 1952 that 50 squatters left the Bajau area near Kulim in Kedah after the murder of 7 Chinese in Selarong Panjang, 13 miles from Kulim town. 4 squatter huts were burnt down by Malays after the murder by bandits of a Malay former special constable.¹ However, such incidents were isolated, unlike the mass massacres of 1945/46.

Widespread communal riots in Malaya ended, but the fears and suspicions of the two races for each other still remained. These fears must be eliminated before Malaya can be said to be wholly free from racial prejudices and open racial conflicts.²

1 Straits Times 26.2.52

2 As late as 1 January, 1957, Malaya experienced racial clashes. During the centenary celebrations of Penang, rumours went around that Penang intended seceding from the Federation. The Malays felt cheated out of one state. From the mainland came Malay youths into Penang, and trouble started at Dato Keramat Road.

The next clash was in Pangkor Island in April, 1959. Here is seen the economic grievance of the Malays. All the trading centres are in the hands of the Chinese living in the best sites and in towns. Malays live in the hinterlands, engaged in cultivation and fishery. The immediate cause for the clash was a minor incident - the son of the penghulu, a hooligan by reputation, annoyed a Chinese girl. This slight incident sparked off a clash which lasted for 10 days.

The above accounts were read to me from Police Files by the OCPD of Malacca.

CHAPTER TWO

POLITICAL RELATIONS

We have seen how racial tension burst forth into a series of communal outbreaks between the Malays and the Chinese, tending to become widespread over the Malay Peninsula, when Chinese Communist guerillas, as a well-organised political force emerged victorious from the jungles to fill in the political vacuum left in Malaya by the retreating Japanese. This organised political force of guerillas, mainly Chinese, threatened Malay political sovereignty and position, hitherto safeguarded by the British.¹ Relations between the Malays and the Chinese during the years following the Japanese occupation of Malaya, must be seen in the light of Malayan political context, with the Malays, now politically awakened and racially conscious, jealously guarding their special privileges and sovereignty, which they felt were being threatened by the Chinese. (They looked at the Chinese in general with suspicious eyes, seeing in them the vanguard to Chinese imperialism and the threat of "Chinaya". (This word was coined by those who believed that Malaya would eventually become a Chinese colony.) This fear of the Malays at being overwhelmed and ruled by the Chinese was emphasised by the Sino-Malay clashes of 1945/46.

Non-Malays in Malaya had never been encouraged to participate in the political and administrative spheres of the country. Whilst the Malays were the subjects of their Sultans, and Indonesian Moslems, who immigrated into Malaya were also recognised as such by the Malay Sultans, the non-Malays of whom the Chinese were

¹ Refer to Chapter I.

were the most numerous, had an indeterminate status in law, though those born in the Straits Settlements were British Subjects. To the various state councils were appointed representatives of the various communities - the Malays, the Indians, the Chinese and the Europeans. Politics in Malaya were based on communal lines - each representative looking after the interest of his community.

No effort was made to integrate politically the non-Malay immigrants. Partly due to this native and Western rejection of them, the strongest political ties of the non-Malays led back to their respective lands of origin, where the centre of their family, racial and cultural associations still lay. They were never encouraged to regard themselves other than "transients" in the country of their residence. For the politically articulate members of this group - mainly the Chinese and the Indians - the significant events were those occurring in China and India as the case might be; the sources of leadership and inspiration were the Kuomintang and the National Congress.

The rapid growth of national consciousness of the Malays fostered by the war made it imperative to reconcile the conflicting claims of the indigenous population and the people of alien origin. This resolved itself into the need to create a sense of unity and common purpose in Malaya and to mould its inhabitants into a single composite community because

There was no sign of unity or conception of common citizenship among inhabitants drawn from a number of races professing various creeds. 1

This need for national unity and the "clumsy and wasteful" pre-war system of administration prompted the Colonial Office in London to effect a new policy with regards to Malaya. On 10 October 1945,

the Secretary of State for the Colonies announced in the House of Commons an outline of the new policy to be adopted in Malaya.

His Majesty's Government has given careful consideration to the future of Malaya and the need to promote a sense of unity and common citizenship Our policy will call for a constitutional union of Malaya and for the institution of Malayan citizenship which will give equal citizenship to those who claim Malaya to be their home. 1

The above statement of the new policy to be adopted in Malaya was published in the local press on 11 October 1945, and at the same time Sir Harold A. MacMichael, the Special Representative of the British Government arrived in Malaya to negotiate with the Malay Rulers on the new policy of the Malayan Union. 2

The first reception of the new proposal was guarded, though it was evident that apprehensions were expressed in the Malay vernacular press, and the Utusan Melayu exhorted the Malays to examine the proposal carefully, for it certainly meant the abandonment by the British of the pro-Malay policy which existed before the war. The cause for this apprehension at this time was the Malayan Union Citizenship clause,³ a vital change affecting the Malays and their relations with the non-Malays, especially the Chinese. A common citizenship was an integral element in any measure directed towards the achievements for unity and a common purpose among the various races in Malaya. It gave the non-Malays an opportunity to identify themselves with the country of their adoption and it was an offer to them to co-operate and take part in the management of affairs on a federal level. It was the recognition of the rights of the non-Malays to a share

1 Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 414, Oct. 9 - 26 1945/46 p. 254

2 Straits Times Editorial 13.10.45

3 Refer to Appendix. I

in the public affairs of Malaya, the throwing open of all the branches of the Government services to non-Malays giving equal rights to all persons domiciled in the country. It meant that the Malays had to compete on equal terms in all fields - political, administrative and economic - with the domiciled population. It was only when it became possible to establish the number of non-Malays who would be able to acquire citizenship immediately that the true extent of the threat to the Malays became apparent,¹ for Malaya is the only country in Southeast Asia, where the immigrant population outnumbers the indigenous.

The Malays were afraid that they might be absorbed by the immigrant peoples. The economic impact of the alien races and the hazards of the war had greatly accelerated the process and added to their fears. The Malays claimed security in their native land and they protested against the new Proposal. The vehicle through which their voices were heard was at first by writing to the Press. However, to facilitate organisation of all the Malays in order to ensure their security, various associations were formed and pre-war ones were revived. These associations had the general object to unify the Malays, to defend and protect the privileges of the Malays in the face of the new proposals.

More details of the Malayan Union plan were revealed with the publication of a White Paper on it on 22 January 1946. In its preamble, the White Paper mentioned that MacMichael, the Special Representative of His Majesty's Government "has concluded

1 In 1947, there were 2,615,000 Chinese in both the Malayan Union and Singapore, as compared to 2,544,000 Malays. There was an enormous increase in the proportion of locally born Chinese. In 1931, no less than one-third the total number of Chinese was locally born. In 1947, the percentage increased to 63.5 and the number of Chinese born in Malaya was 1,196,000.

(Victor Purcell: The Position of the Chinese in Southeast Asia
Institute of Pacific Relations, New York, 1950)

Agreements with the Rulers of the Malay States whereby full powers of jurisdiction in their States are now granted to His Majesty".¹

New waves of protests by the Malays manifested themselves. Telegrams were sent to the British Government and to influential British individuals in Britain, registering their opposition to the Union. The Malay League of Perak, and for that matter, all the associations viewed the proposed Union with greatest concern and apprehension, recording their disapproval against the inclusion of non-Malays into the Malayan Union Citizenship Scheme, which conferred them equal rights, privileges and status. The change in status quo of the country without the express wish of the Malays, they said, was unwarranted.

However, differences existed among the many associations, and to resolve these differences, it was felt imperative by Dato Onn bin Jaafar, the organiser of the Peninsula Malay Movement of Johore, that a congress be held for the Malays. On 1 March 1946, forty-one Malay Associations all over Malaya gathered in Kuala Lumpur to plan on the possibility of organising a central body to ward off "the ignominy of racial extinction" ² for "the Malays as a race have not yet fallen and with the existence of Malay Associations they can gain the political and civic rights which have slipped from their hands".³

(The British proposals to create a single entity called Malayan Union and the establishment of a single union citizenship with "equal rights without discrimination of race or creed" were viewed by the Congress to have the following effects:

1 Parliamentary Debates Vol. 418, Jan. 22 - Feb. 8, 1946/47 p. 58

2 Dato Onn's speech at the opening of the All-Malay Congress on 1.3.46 Reported in the Straits Times 2.3.46

3 Dato Onn's speech reported in the Straits Times, 27.1.46

- (a) the wiping from existence of the Nine Mohammedan Malay Kingdoms or Sultanates... the existence of which had been recognised by His Majesty's Government....
- (b) the wiping from existence of the Malay race along with their land and Rulers;
- (c) the wiping from existence of the several Treaties existing between His Majesty's Government and Their Highnesses the Sultans in violation of the principles of the sanctity of Treaties for which the Allied Nations fought the bloodiest war in history, and of depriving the Malays of their birth rights which was a devastating act on those whose loyalty to the British Crown was unquestioned.¹

The British Government was invited to conduct a full investigation of the conditions, which prevailed in Malaya and to withdraw the proposals, thus restoring the status quo and hence maintaining the special position and privileges of the Malays, because "...the Malays, as a nation, are strongly determined not to touch the Malayan Union proposal even with a yard pole".²

The question of the Malayan Union was discussed in the House of Commons. During this meeting, opposition to the new constitution changes was strongly voiced by a number of Members of Parliament. However, the British Government was determined to carry out the plan into effect, despite opposition. But the proposed Order-in-Council for a Union Citizenship would be postponed until the local inhabitants had had full discussions on the matter.

The Malayan Union Constitution was due to be instituted in Malaya on 1 April 1946, to replace the Military Administration which had been in control since the return of the British to Malaya in September 1945. As a sign of protest "against the forcible imposition of the Malayan Union" the Malays all wore white cloth on their caps - an act of mourning which was to last for a week beginning from 1 April. They stayed away from the installation

¹ Malay Mail 6.3.46

² Malay Mail 6.3.46

ceremony for it was "untenable for them to attend the funeral rites of their birthright and liberty".¹

It was at another Congress, this time at Johore Bahru that the United Malays National Organisation was inaugurated on 11 May - a step towards more efficient and coherent opposition against the Union. Malay resentment against the Union was so strong the UMNO even contemplated taking the Malay grievances to the United Nations.² And when two British Members of Parliament - Captain L.D. Gammans and Lieutenant-Colonel D.R. Rees-Williams - visited Malaya in May and June to investigate conditions, they were greeted by mass rallies and demonstrations, by large assemblies of Malays, carrying posters and shouting slogans: "Hidup Melayu" or "Long live the Malays", "Down with the Malayan Union", "Malays want peace and security" and "Malaya for the Malays".³ "In every hamlet, village and town that we visited we were met by what appeared to be the whole population," wrote ^{Lieut-}Colonel Rees-Williams.⁴

If the Malayan Union plan was met with a storm of protests from the Malays because "the destiny of our race (Malay) is being decided and if Malayan Union in its present form goes through, the Malay people will be like lalang - the long grass which cannot stand up to the elements, but is flattened by every wind that blows",⁵ what then were the reactions and attitude of the non-Malay communities to this plan which was designed to benefit them?

1 Malay Mail 2.4.46

2 UMNO's General Assembly Minutes, 11.5.46, Quoted by Ishak bin Tadin The United Malays National Organisation Under Dato' Onn - 1946-1951 University of Malaya, Singapore 1959.

3 Straits Times 22.5.46

4 D.R. Rees-Williams "The Constitutional Position in Malaya" Pacific Affairs, Vol. XX No. 2 June 1947

5 The Times "Nationalism inflamed by the Union" quoted in Straits Times 12.6.46

The interests of both the Chinese and the Indian communities were largely commercial, and provided that nothing be done which prejudiced their position in the eyes of their countries of origin i.e. China and India - they were not seriously worried about the proposals. (The Chinese press as a whole revealed only a lukewarm interest in the proposals.¹ The non-Malays generally felt the logic of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who declared in Singapore on 19 March 1946 that Indians must choose between being nationals of Malaya or of India, and that if they claimed Malayan citizenship and privileges, they could not at the same time claim the privileges of Indian citizenship. They paused before committing themselves to Malayan citizenship, when they thought of their own countries' greatness and prospects of further greatness.² At a meeting of Chinese individuals and representatives of Chinese organisations held in Kuala Lumpur, the consensus of opinion was that "since Chinese industry...have made Malaya what it is today the greatest number of Chinese in Malaya should be helped liberally and generously to acquire Malayan citizenship".³ There is to be further discussion on the prop. However, the support which the plan received from the Chinese and other non-Malay communities, did not reach anything like the strength of the Malay protests. The reason seemed to be that these communities were still politically apathetic as far as Malayan politics were concerned. They lacked any strong incentive to become politically conscious about Malaya. Moreover, probably due to the war, they had lost most of their leaders either permanently or temporarily through departure overseas and elimination by the Japanese.)

1 Vernacular Press Weekly Digest Jan.-June 1946

2 Malay Mail 5.3.46

3 Straits Times 11.5.46

As a result of the protests from the Malays and the lack of support from the non-Malays, the British Government decided to withdraw the Malayan Union scheme, the first step in this direction being taken as early as March 1946. The UnderSecretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Creech-Jones had said that "...the Order in Council establishing the Malayan Union is only intended to be a framework....the whole of the citizenship and what constitutes citizenship is now referred to Malaya for consultations with all sections of opinion...and no final conclusions will be reached until the exploration has been thoroughly exhausted in Malaya...." ¹ However, consultations were held only with the Malays without any prior announcements or explanations to the general public. On 5 July, 1946 it was announced in the Press that "substantial modifications of the Malayan Union Plan have been made after consultation between Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, Governor-General of the Malayan Union and the Malay Rulers. A Malayan Federation will be substituted for the Malayan Union and a High Commissioner for the Governor....There is to be further discussion on the proposals for a new Malayan citizenship in the Malay States". ² "All circles concerned will be given an opportunity for consultations before decisions are reached by His Majesty's Government on any constitutional changes" wrote the Chief Secretary of the Malayan Union. ³

On 25 July 1946 a Working Committee consisting of representatives of the Government, of Their Highnesses, the Rulers and of UMNO, was appointed to submit agreed views and the terms of reference on which negotiations were to be conducted, ⁴ indicated

1 Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 420, March 4 - 22, 1946/47, p.638.

2 Straits Times 5.7.46

3 Straits Times 5.7.46

a substantial victory for the Malays, for by it the British Government admitted that the Malays occupied a special position and possessed rights which had to be guarded. The Report of the Committee was completed on 18 November, but no final decision was to be reached "until all interested communities have had full and free opportunity of expressing their views".¹

The Consultative Committee set up consisted mainly of influential representatives of the non-Malay communities, to voice their opinions on the new proposals. Findings of this Committee were published in December, and on 17 April 1947, the Constitutional Working Committee prepared the final drafts for the Federation and States' Agreements, which were mainly the original recommendations of the Working Committee, with minor changes. On 1 February 1948, the Federation of Malaya was born, but not without much criticisms from the non-Malay communities. The Federal Constitution, as a whole, favoured the Malays as a race; the British had reverted to their pre-war pro-Malay policy. The Constitution had gone a long way to satisfy the demands of the Malays, at the same time managing to assuage the ever present fear of the Malays that they would be overwhelmed by the non-Malays, especially the Chinese. However, the scheme had been designed to include in a common citizenship for all those, who could fairly be regarded as having Malaya for their true home.² Federal citizenship could be acquired, but unlike that based on the Malayan Union, qualifications for acquiring it were made more stringent.³

Even before the Constitution was instituted, it was severely criticised by the non-Malays, who had hitherto been indifferent to political developments in Malaya. A warning had been made by the

¹ Parliamentary Debates, Vol. 431 1946/47 p.228. Statement of the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

² Federation of Malaya, Summary of Revised Constitutional Proposals July. 1947. Cmd: 7171.

Malayan Daily News ¹ that the move to institute the Federal Constitution would be resisted by the non-Malays on a country-wide basis. "It is high time that other Malayan races concerned challenged the issues involved," the paper continued.

Tan Cheng Lock took up the leadership of opposition against the Federal Proposals, urging the British Government to "have the steadfastness and courage to enforce (the Malayan Union) substantially in its original form..." ² To oppose the Federation Agreement, the All-Malayan Council of Joint Action (AMCJA) was formed in Kuala Lumpur in December, giving as its objection that the Agreement aimed "at cleaving the population in two antagonistic groups viz. Malays versus non-Malays". ³ Its plan for a peninsula-wide boycott of the Constitution met with failure; but Mr. MacDonald privately assured the Chinese leaders that steps would be taken to meet their objections after the Federation Agreement had been put into effect. Clause XII of the Constitution, which had defined and enunciated Federal Citizenship qualifications were unpopular among the Chinese. The Constitution, in essence, was pro-Malay and the Chinese feared that the Malays would exploit the advantages offered by the Constitution to dominate the Chinese politically. ⁴

Hardly had the Constitution time to operate, when political development in Malaya changed for the worse when the out-break of the Communist insurrection in June 1948 made racial issues in Malaya more complicated. Fears of the Chinese and the Malays of one another were intensified. The Malays rallied to the support of the Government, looking upon the Communist as a danger to their country.

1 Malayan Daily News 7.7.46 Vernacular Press Digest No. 36

2 Tan Cheng Lock's telegram to the Secretary of State for the Colonies 18.7.46

3 Tan Cheng Lock: A Collection of Speeches and Writing (Private Publication pp. 33, 34)

4 Tan Cheng Lock: A Collection of Correspondence, (letter to G.L. Peet.)

and their religion. Moreover, the Communists and their sympathisers were mainly Chinese. Racial tension was increased by Malay demand of the execution of a pro-Malay policy as provided by the Federation Constitution and the deportation of suspected Communist sympathisers (mainly Chinese) straight away to China.¹

The political climate for an inter-racial conflict in Malaya was not unfavourable. The two major races - the Chinese and the Malays - drifted further and further apart; another racial clash seemed imminent. The necessity of preventing such a crisis induced community leaders - like Dato Onn and Tan Cheng Lock - to find ways and means to eliminate racial friction. An idea to form a committee consisting of community leaders in Malaya to discuss and study sources of inter-racial friction and to suggest ways and means of eliminating them was thought of. (On 10 January 1949, the Communities Liaison Committee came into being with the main aim of achieving inter-racial particularly Sino-Malay goodwill and harmony. It was imperative that racial harmony should exist; a united front could be formed by the various races against Communist insurrection.)

Racial relations in Malaya were closely connected with political events. (The introduction of the Malayan Union was mistimed; it was inaugurated at a time when feeling between the Chinese and the Malays had never been more bitter.) It aroused Malay passion and resentment, in the face of which the British Government substituted the Federation Constitution, which was resented this time, by the Chinese. Following the formation of the Communities Liaison Committee, a trend was visible in Malaya - the need for inter-racial co-operation and the creation of a common Malayan outlook. This will be discussed in the following chapters.

¹ Majlis Editorial "Chinese on the fence" 24.10.48 Quoted in Ishak bin Tadin, p.33

CHAPTER THREE

RACIAL FACTORS IN EDUCATION

Education may bridge the chasm between different cultural worlds and taking the word in its widest sense, no other bridge is possible.

J.S.Furnivall ¹

[A] plural society, according to Furnivall ² is "a society comprising two or more elements or social orders which live side by side, yet without mingling, in one political unity". Nationalism in such a society tends to exaggerate the differences between the groups by focussing political attention upon the distinct cultural and heritage of each community. Each group demands the right to use its own language, live its own pattern of life and go to its own schools. This was the situation faced by post-war Malaya, when the intensification of racial nationalism created much controversy and anxiety over the question of education with regards to the safeguarding of individual cultures. Education in its cultural aspect has always been a necessary condition of social life and the instrument by which a social unit preserves its distinctive character and even its existence. ³ Hence, each racial group in Malaya jealously guarded its own education, in order to perpetuate its culture. Race relations in Malaya must necessarily include a study of the problem of education in Malaya. However, post-war Malaya also witnessed a trend for a sense of a need for unity among the races, for a common Malayan national outlook, which was sadly lacking. It was realised

¹ J.S.Furnivall: Netherlands India. A Study of Plural Economy
Cambridge 1944, p. 365
² J.S.Furnivall: p. 365
³ J.S.Furnivall: p. 365

that such an outlook could only be created through a common educational policy. Without a common language and a common culture which must necessarily be the foundation of a new nation, any attempt at this ideal would be futile. This need for unity was clearly expressed by Mr. P.C.Au-Yong in the Legislative Council,¹ when he quoted from the Editorial of the Malay Mail of 15 October 1945:

An eminent visiting university professor has been drawing a parallel...between the Malaya of today and the United States of 1790 and has commented upon some very substantial similarities. Out of the United States of 1790 has been built up a great nation with a common spirit of citizenship and loyalty, which has been built upon the basis of a common educational system which has absorbed immigrants of whatever origin and turn them into American citizens. If the Malayan nation is to emerge, the same thing has to be done in this country, the barriers built up by years of communal education broken down and a new outlook created.

It was felt that in con-communal schools where children irrespective of their race or creed, could meet, play and learn together that the foundation of a Malayan unity could best be laid. Attempts were thus made in Malaya to bridge the chasm between the different cultural groups through a common educational policy. However, these various attempts only defeated the very purpose for which they were made - they only aggravated communal ill-feelings and it was not until 1956 that a common educational policy was implemented.

Education in Malaya had always been conducted on communal lines - the four streams of schools being the Malay, Chinese, Indian and English schools. This system had assumed a complex and diverse pattern with each growing in a compartment of its own. It did not help to disperse or decrease the China- India-consciousness of the Chinese and the Indians. It was only in English schools, where all races could be found together and not in vernacular schools that

¹ Proceedings of the Legislative Council - 27 July 1950 Speech of P.C.Au-Yong, p. 329.

A50599/940

racial unity and harmony had been achieved. This state of affairs was not improved by the educational policy formulated in 1946 by Mr. H.R.Cheeseman, the Director of Education in the Malayan Union. This policy declared that all the races in Malaya would receive free primary education in their mother tongue. Thus, for the first time, Chinese and Indian vernacular education, hitherto treated with indifference by the Government, were placed on an equal footing with English and Malay education. The policy thus recognised the perpetuation of the division of schools into racial sections. It was therefore objected to because it would not promote "inter-racial harmony from the Malayan point of view".¹ Even Mr. Cheeseman admitted that "the teachers (of Chinese schools)...had in the first place all to be recruited from China. This precluded a Malayan outlook, and a Chinese oriented curriculum as followed instead of a curriculum adopted to local needs".² However, the importance of English as a language was recognised, and it was to be included in the vernacular schools curriculum as it "will form an important unifying factor among the diversity of races and tongues".³ Lack of funds and the statement in the Report of the Carr Saunders Commission on University Education in Malaya "We have assumed... that English would be the medium of instruction in the University"⁴ were responsible for its non-implementation. To implement it would mean to narrow the field of candidates for entrance into the University to only those in English schools.

1 Speech of Mr.V.M.N.Menon Proceedings of the Advisory Council of the Malayan Union 10 March 1947

2 Annual Report of the Dept. of Education, Malayan Union, 1947. Quoted in Abdul Azim bin Ismail: Problems and Policy in Education in the Federation of Malaya 1945-1952 with special reference to English and Malay Education. University of Malaya, Singapore 1959 p. 23.

3 H.R.Cheeseman: Malaya-post-war policy in Education, The Year Book of Education 1949 .Quoted in Abdul Aziz p.22.

4 Report of the Commission on University Education in Malaya.Govt. Rep. P. 10. K.L. 1948 p.10

Malay nationalism demanded a drastic change in the existing educational system. It desired that the Malay language should be made into one of importance and significance in a new Malaya. This resulted in the motion being put forward on 28 November 1949 in the Federal Legislative Council "that the teaching of Malay and English languages should be compulsory in all Government and Government-aided schools".¹ Moreover, Article 63 of the Federal Agreement says "The official languages of the Legislative Council shall be English and Malay"² and the essential requirements for the status of a Federal Citizen being an adequate knowledge of either English or Malay must have had a great influence on the demands of the Malays. Malay nationalistic fervour demanded that the Malay language be given what the Malays considered its rightful place of importance in Malaya. In fact, Malay extremists would have wanted an all-out effort to educate Malaya in the Malay language;³ but a less drastic course of action was followed. The motion that both Malay and English should be made compulsory subjects in Government and Government-aided schools was approved because one would be "incomplete and insufficient without the other".⁴

English was looked on with favour by the Malays for its economic value. The same could not, however, be said for Chinese and Indian vernacular education. When the Central Advisory Committee on Education reported that the Government "could not withdraw from the financial responsibilities already incurred by its grants to existing

1 Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council, 28 November 1949 p. 533.

2 The Federation of Malaya Agreement, 1948, Govt. Press, Reprinted in 1952.

3 T.H.Silcock: Dilemma in Malaya, London, 1949 p.26.

4 Speech of Dato Zainal Abidin. Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council 28 November 1949, p. 533.

aided Chinese and Indian schools" ¹ and when Mr. M.R.Holgate, the Chairman of the Committee said "...for practical reasons existing Indian and Chinese schools should continue and should be improved in quality and influence" ² Dato Onn bin Jaafar commented: "We are trying to create - not a unity - but...a Babel in this country.... If we want to have dual languages in this country, let us concentrate on them". ³ The Malays in their nationalistic attitude were against the idea of perpetuating and encouraging other vernacular tongues besides their own.

The Chinese unanimously supported the motion, but they felt that the implementation of these subjects should not reduce the teaching hours of subjects taught in the mother tongue of the pupils.

The attitudes of both the Malays and the Chinese towards the educational problem were incompatible. This could lead to a further cleavage between them, and to a situation which would end any hope of achieving inter-racial unity. A compromise was the only solution.

However, racial controversy over this issue was brought to a head by the appointment in 1950 of a Commission on Malay education under the Chairmanship of Mr. L.J.Barnes, to inquire into the educational facilities available for the Malays. ⁴ The strong-pro-Malay bias of the Barnes Report and the failure to include a Chinese in the Committee would not have been of so much importance if the Committee had confined itself to its terms of reference. It chose, however, to make recommendations applying to all races. This brought about a storm of protests from the Chinese. A Chinese member of the

¹ First Report of the Central Advisory Committee on Education in The Federal Legislative Council Minutes and Council Papers. Feb 1950 - Jan. 1951, P. B249.

² Speech of Mr.M.R.Holgate; Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council PP.324,325.

³ Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council, pp.324,325.

⁴ Report of the Committee on Malay Education, 1951.

Legislative Council bitterly criticised it:

...Not a single Chinese or Indian was invited to appear before the Committee or to send in a memorandum, and no one of any race who could speak with some authority on the Chinese or Tamil languages was either invited to appear before the Committee or to send in a memorandum or consulted in any other way; and yet this very Committee, to put it at its very best, has made the most sweeping recommendations regarding Chinese and Indian education in this country. ¹

The Barnes Report believed that the primary schools should be used as an instrument for building up a common Malayan nationality. ² It suggested the creation of single-type primary schools open to pupils of all races. These so-called National Schools would produce pupils, who were bi-lingual in Malay and English. The creation of such schools would entail the eventual disappearance of all Government provisions and assistance of vernacular schools. ³

The Malays clamoured for its implementation. The Chinese criticised it. Fears were expressed - the policy would lead to the suppression of their Chinese culture and language, with the elimination of Chinese vernacular schools; it would result in the loss of the "rice bowls" of the teachers of the vernacular schools. The Chinese aimed at the propagation of their traditional culture; they refused to accept anything malicious that would deny them of the existence of their culture, said the Sin Chew. ⁴ To them, National Schools would not be national in the true sense of the word. In view of the composite population of Malaya, such schools would be more correctly termed "Malay National Schools" wherein a non-Malay child would be able to learn no other oriental language, except Malay. The contented that

1 Speech of Tan Siew Sin. Proceedings of the Federal Legislative Council Feb.1951 - Feb.1952, p. 252.

2 Report of the Committee on Malay Education pp.21,22

3 Report of the Committee on Malay Education p.20

4 Sin Chew Editorial 30.6.52 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press Public Relations, Singapore, No. 27/52.

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schools to be truly national should be given primary education in the Malay, Chinese and Indian languages. They felt that there should evolve in Malaya a culture, not Malay but Malayan.

Impressed by Chinese criticisms, the High Commissioner early in January 1951 invited two experts on Chinese education, Dr. W.F.Fenn and Dr. Wu Teh-yoo to visit Malaya to study the Chinese schools. They were to make a survey of Chinese education with reference to

- (i) bridging the gap between the present communal system of schools and the time when education will be on a non-communal basis with English or Malay as medium of instruction and other languages as optional subjects, and advising on
- (ii) preparation of text books for present use with a Malayan as distinct from a Chinese background and context. ¹

Vigorous reaction greeted the above pronouncement. The depth of concern expressed by the Chinese for the preservation of their culture served to emphasize the nature of the problems involved and the implication of "Malayanisation". In view of the absence of a culture, or even a society which could as yet be called Malayan, "Malayanisation" was interpreted by the Chinese as meaning to make Malay rather than Malayan. Drs. Fenn and Wu came to the conclusion that the marked concern and anxiety of the Chinese for their culture at this time resulted from "a very real feeling that their culture was threatened".² Chinese attitude at this time seemed to be aptly expressed by the Malay proverb: "Biar mati anak, jangan mati adat" which when translated literally reads "Sacrifice your child, but not your tradition". Drs. Fenn and Wu felt that any attempt at the moment to force unwilling fusing of cultures would lead to further cleavage.³ They felt that "the people of Malaya will have to learn to

¹ Report of the Mission on the Education of Chinese in Malaya.
Council Paper No. 35 of 1951.

² Report of the Mission on the Education of Chinese in Malaya.

³ Report of the Mission on the Education of Chinese in Malaya.

learn to understand and appreciate their cultural differences. They should be proud of their spirit of mutual tolerance." ¹ The solution they advocated was:

If it is recognised that Malay is an official language, that English is in the nature of a lingua franca, and that Chinese has important cultural significance, it will be seen that Chinese are likely to choose to be trilingual and should be encouraged to do so. ²

They also felt that Chinese schools should be strengthened and helped to find their proper place in the educational pattern in Malaya.

One single factor emerged from the Barnes and Fenn-Wu Reports - the urgency with which education must be modelled to create a singleness in the plural society and build on it a powerful Malayan nation. They were, however, at variance as to how this unity could be achieved. Fenn-Wu believed that "national unity can and has been achieved despite the existence of many tongues. Canada has English and French; Switzerland has French, German and Italian". ³ On the other hand, where social, economic and political contacts were necessary, there must be a common medium of communication to promote the unity of the Malayan nation. The already unsettled field became a real battlefield. Firing came from all sides against one or the other of these reports.

The Government, through the Central Advisory Committee on Education endeavoured to channel the peoples' thought and opinions into proper perspective. It recommended that all pupils should learn English and Malay throughout the primary course, ⁴ and "in sincere appreciation of the Indian and Chinese cultures" ⁵ Kuo Yu and Tamil should be taught to students of the respective races. The Report of the Committee hardly managed to stop heavy and sustained firing on

¹ Report of the Mission on the Education of Chinese in Malaya.
² Report of the Mission on the Education of Chinese in Malaya.
³ Report of the Mission on the Education of Chinese in Malaya.
⁴ Report of the Central Advisory Committee on Education on the Barnes
 Report on Malay Education and the Fenn-Wu Report on Chinese Education
 1951

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all sides. The Government with the approval of the Legislative Council appointed a Special Committee to recommend legislation covering all aspects of Education. This brought a temporary cease-fire, but peace had not by any means been signed. The Committee presented on November 1952 its unanimous Report, together with a draft Education Bill to the Council. The Report was accepted and with minor amendments, the draft Bill was passed and became the Education Ordinance, 1952. The objects of education included the following: to encourage and enable each community to occupy its rightful place in the mixed society of Malaya; to assist the formation of a unified citizen body that is a Malayan nation, composed of all groups.¹ These objects could best be achieved by multi-racial schools of a National character. A National school, according to the Ordinance was "any school providing for children of all races a six-year course of free primary education with a Malayan orientation...using in the main... the official languages of the Federation, and providing facilities for instruction in Kuo Yu and Tamil"² to those children whose parents so desired it, provided there were not less than fifteen pupils in the same class, who wished to learn. Preference for National Schools was to be given to areas where the Malays predominated, since Malays made up only a small proportion of the enrolment in secondary schools and thereby of entrants to the University of Malaya.

The Chinese were not happy over this policy. "To make English and Malay compulsory but Chinese selective would never enable the children of the Malayan Chinese to receive in their mother tongue the culture and knowledge which they are entitled to," wrote Sin Chew.³

¹ Report of the Special Committee Appointed on the 20th day of Sept. 1951 to recommend legislation to cover all aspects of Educational Policy for the Federation of Malaya, p.2

² Education Ordinance, 1952, pp.11,12

³ Sin Chew Editorial 17.11.52 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press Public Relations, Singapore, No. 47/52.

However, this new policy was not implemented because by the end of 1953, the Federal Government was faced with a deficit of over \$200 million in the Federal Estimates, 1954.¹ The National Schools Scheme, though not abandoned until 1956 was not carried out. The educational problem was not solved. In 1956, the Education Committee, under the chairmanship of Dato Abdul Razak bin Hussain repealed the Education Ordinance of 1952 and introduced new legislations.

One of its terms of reference was "to examine the present Educational policy of the Federation of Malaya and to recommend any alterations or adaptations that are necessary with a view of establishing a national system of education acceptable to the people of the Federation as a whole which will satisfy their needs and promote their cultural, social, economic and political development as a nation, having regard to the intention to make Malay the national language of the country, whilst preserving and sustaining the growth of the language and culture of other communities living in the country".² The Report of the Education Committee, 1956 effected a compromise. By it, was recommended two types of primary schools;

- (i) primary schools with the main medium of instruction in the national language.
- (ii) primary schools with the main medium of instruction in either Kuo Yu or Tamil or English.

The primary function of education was to foster and encourage cultures and languages of the Malayan communities. Whether this policy has solved the educational policy of Malaya, time can only tell.

1 Federation of Malaya Educational Policy, Council Paper No. 67 of 1954. K.L.Govt.Printers 1954.

2 Report of Education Committee, 1956. Govt. Printers 1958. p.1

where there is so little homogeneity and so meager a popular sense of sharing a common destiny." ¹ Sir Oliver Lyttelton, the Colonial Secretary stated on 17 July 1952 in the House of Commons:

...I give as my considered opinion that were we to grant full self-government...to Malaya tomorrow the country would in six months be plunged into such racial strife, conflict and confusion as we have not yet seen. ²

What was needed in Malaya before independence could be achieved was co-operation and unity among all the races.

Dato Onn bin Jaafar, the President of UMNO (1946 - 1951) had realised that communalism coupled with the Communist uprising was the greatest obstacle that had to be faced before any concrete plan for independence could be evolved. He attempted to make UMNO a Malayan national movement, by inducing the Organisation to open its door wide to non-Malays. The Malays were unprepared to accept this radical change which would give non-Malays equal rights with Malay members. Dato Onn resigned from UMNO in 1951 to found the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) with an inter-racial programme. In his new role, he provided a challenge to UMNO and MCA, two of the largest communal organisations in Malaya, which curiously enough, were brought together in an electoral alliance, to contest against IMP for seats in the Local Elections at Municipal and Town Board levels in 1951, 1952 and 1953.

Due to the large numbers of fairly small constituencies to be delimited for the elections, and the separate group-living pattern of the Chinese and the Malays, municipal constituencies alternated between Chinese and Malay majority of voters. ³ Assuming that voting would be on a communal basis, UMNO and MCA each put up candidates in the constituencies in which its community had the majority of voters. This communal sharing of seats spread throughout the Federation. The

¹ Rupert Emerson: ^{Representative} Government in Southeast Asia. Harvard University Press

² Parliamentary Debates 1951/1952 Speech of Oliver Lyttelton. pp55-56

³ Irene Tinker "Malayan Elections: Electoral Pattern for Plural Societies?" The Western Political Quarterly, Vol. IX 1956, Utah, pp264,265.

Alliance won 226 out of 268 various municipal and town council seats.¹

This has led Francis Carnell to conclude:

The Alliance, convincingly proved that the praiseworthy belief of the IMP and the Labour Party that, given a non-communal political platform, a Malay can get elected in a Chinese district, or vice versa, is completely utopian under present conditions in the Federation. 2

Indeed, the IMP and Labour Party had contested on a non-communal platform and had lost. Communalism had been too deep-rooted.)

Conditions in the country were not conducive to the elimination of communalism. In October 1952, the Manchester Guardian Correspondent in Malaya³ reported that tension between the Malays and the Chinese was greater than it had been for two years. Dato Onn supported this opinion; but Mr. Tan Siew Sin⁴ stated that the newspaper's correspondent could not be further from the truth. The Free Press⁵ questioned the wisdom of raising spectres that were best left alone in the evil past; but the Malay Mail⁶ gave its opinion that Dato Onn had never been an alarmist and that his position in the country justified full heed being paid to his statement. There were thus two opinions with regards to inter-racial relations. It seemed as though these beliefs had become a matter of political creed. Indeed, the Singapore Standard expressed the view that all current talks about communalism had arisen from tension between the IMP and the UMNO-MCA Alliance.⁷

It cannot, however, be denied that Sino-Malay relationships were not at their best. The Communities Liaison Committee⁸ had been established in 1949. Composed of leaders of all the communities in Malaya, it had as its aim the studying and eliminating of the causes

1 Economist, June 25, 1955. Quoted in Irene Tinker "Malayan Elections..." pp. 264, 265.

2 Francis Carnell "Constitutional Reform and Elections in Malaya" Pacific Affairs, Sept. 1954 p.233

3 Manchester Guardian Oct.1952. Quoted in Victor Purcell "Malaya: Communist or Free?" London, 1954 p. 112.

4 Manchester Guardian 29.10.52 Quoted in Victor Purcell, p.112.

5 Free Press 11.11.52 Quoted in Victor Purcell, p.112.

6 Malay Mail 11.11.52 Quoted in Victor Purcell, p.112.

7 Singapore Standard. Quoted in Victor Purcell, p.112.

8 Refer to Chapter II, page 29

of inter-racial friction. It had agreed in 1950 that non-Malays must have greater political rights and the Malays must receive more economic aid to create a balance between political and economic powers. The Malays had been required to give up at least part of the favoured position they held under the Federal Constitution. The Chinese had been called upon to make financial sacrifices.¹ However, response of both communities to these proposals had been tepid. The Melayu Raya² commented: "Malays are still suspicious of the plans of the MCA to help Malay economy. The best way for Chinese to win the confidence of the Malays is to admit the fact that the right of administering this country belongs to the Malays."

The Emergency had increased tension.³ By 1952, the Malays, who formed the majority of the Security Forces, thus bearing the brunt of the Emergency, were in a state of frustration. The mobilization of a high proportion of their manpower to combat the Communist terrorists, undoubtedly had a bad effect on their agricultural production. The Rural and Industrial Development Authority (RIDA) had been set up in August 1950 to organise and stimulate rural development of the Malays.⁴ However, it was not coming into operation at any speed. It was criticised in the Legislative Council and at a meeting of UMNO on its disappointing performances.⁵ The Malays saw members of other races making a fortune from the rubber boom, resulting from rearmament and the Korea War. Only they did not seem to be making any headway economically. They were thus suspicious of any new move - most of all, any attempt to amend the

1 T.N.Silcock and Ungku Abdul Aziz in "Asian Nationalism and the West" edited by W.L.Holland, estimated in 1950 that it would "require a sum equal to the whole present revenue - about Str. \$300 million - levied almost every year from the Chinese and devoted to Malay welfare for ten to fifteen years" to raise the Malay economic level on par with that of the other races in Malaya. p. 328.

2 Melayu Raya Editorial 2.2.53 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press, Public Relations, Singapore, No. 6/53.

3 Refer to Chapter II, page 28

4 Council Paper No. 24 Minutes of the Legislative Council of the Federation of Malaya with Council Papers. March 1952 - Feb.1953. p. B126.

constitution, which could only be in the direction of curtailing their privileges to the advantage of non-Malays, especially the Chinese.

The Biggs Plan of resettling Chinese squatters as an anti-Communist measure, launched in 1950 antagonised both the Chinese and the Malays. By it, villages of Chinese settlers were uprooted and planted in areas, where they were less likely to be exposed to communist intimidation and extortion. Such villages, though provided with all amenities, were no better than prisons on a large scale. Rules of road curfew had to be observed, thus imposing hardships on the settlers. On the other hand, such a scheme also received Malay criticism. By the end of 1953, about 550 new villages had been constructed into which about 500,000 squatters, mainly Chinese, had been moved at public cost of more than US\$12 million.¹ The Chinese squatters were given a stake in the country, accessibility, amenities and a village organisation, which not only had they never before known, but which were advantages superior to those enjoyed by the traditionally law-abiding and loyal kampong dwellers.² Indeed the typical complaint by the Malays was that of deploring the neglect of the Malay village by the Government in favour of the new villages.³ The resettlement plan had, in the eyes of the Malays marked an important revision of the British Government's long established pro-Malay policy. It had the "effect of weighting the delicate Sino-Malay political balance definitely in favour of the Chinese".⁴ Thus it certainly added new fuel to the Malays' fear and distrust of the Chinese.

The Chinese too had a long list of grievances. The question provoking the greatest reaction among them in 1952 was that of Education discussed in Chapter III. It was in the domain of higher education that

1 J.K.King "Malaya's Resettlement Problem" Far Eastern Survey, Vol. 23, p. 35.

2 E.H.G.Dobby "Resettlement Transforms Malaya" Quoted in Thompson and Adloff "Minority Problems in Southeast Asia" Stanford, California 1954, p. 35.

3 Warta Negara 22.11.51 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press, No.59/51.

4 Thompson and Adloff "Minority Problems in Southeast Asia" 1954 p.35. By April, 1953 about 100 of the new villages were self-governing.

a clash between the two communities was sparked off. For years, Chinese youths, to obtain a higher a Chinese education, was compelled to leave for China. Chinese wanted facilities for the traditional higher education to be provided locally. There was little evidence that the promise to establish a Chair of Chinese Language and Literature at the University of Malaya to meet this demand would be fulfilled; Chinese businessmen banded together in 1953 to found the Nanyang University. Such a move was opposed by the Malays. They declared that if the University was set up, they would press for the formation of a Malay University.¹ However, a compromise was effected; it was agreed that the medium of instruction of the University would be English and not Chinese.

The Chinese looked upon the restricted qualifications for Federal citizenship as contained in Clause XII of the Federation Agreement of 1948 as a great grievance. The changed attitude towards Malaya of the Chinese, coupled with their vital hold on the country's economy must necessarily be accepted as justifying some of their claims for political security. Also, in view of the fact that Malaya was on its way to independence, it was felt that unless granted citizenship rights, Chinese would have no place in the future government.² This citizenship issue touched the very heart of the Sino-Malay problem.

This situation was not remedied by the Federation of Malaya (Amendment) Ordinance of 1951. Instead, the explanation that the bill was aimed at safeguarding the Malays against their submersion by alien ways of life, and the citizenship would be open only to those who had demonstrated their assimilation "to this country's way of life" ³ caused the Singapore Standard to urge the bill's defeat

1 Utusan Melayu 26.2.53 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press, No. 9/53.

2 Nanyang Siang Pau Editorial 29.10.52 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press, No. 43/52.

3 The Federation of Malaya (Amendment) Ordinance, 1951, p. 16

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"before it spreads the virus of communalism throughout the land".¹

It was however realised that to receive active Chinese support against the Communist terrorists, certain concessions would have to be granted to them. Malays were persuaded to agree to a compromise. A new Federal Citizenship Law was enacted on 15 September 1952. Requirements for citizenship status were substantially relaxed - the Clause benefiting the Chinese was that a person became automatically a subject of a Sultan if he had been born in the State and if one of his parents had

In July 1953, the Government announced a ban on all lotteries sponsored by political parties. On the surface, this measure was non-discriminatory; it hit all political parties. But, it fell hardest upon MCA, which operated by far the biggest lottery and which depended financially in a large measure upon lottery proceeds. The lottery ban provoked widespread anti-government reaction among the Chinese community. Chinese indignation was further fanned by the circulation of the book "Jungle Green" written by Major Arthur Campbell - a book having derogatory comments on the Chinese community as a whole - and bearing General Templer's endorsement "This book is authentic". The MCA in a press release of 1 September 1953 condemned it; by every unofficial Chinese member of the Legislative Council. The right of unrestricted re-entry into Malaya was confined to Federal Citizens and British subjects, all others had to apply for permission each time they wished to return to Malaya after an absence. Mr. Tan Siew Sin, the Publicity Secretary of the MCA alleged that this bill was "a political weapon being used by Government to reduce the number of Chinese in this country" He claimed that "Malayan Chinese in the present environments did not have facilities to learn English or Malay" to enable them to qualify for Federal Citizenship.³

The Chinese regarded as directed against them the Immigration Ordinance; it had had a long and difficult passage through the legislature. In its final form, enforced on 1 August 1953, it was opposed by every unofficial Chinese member of the Legislative Council. The latest anti-Chinese outburst in Jungle Green that the Chinese in this country are faced by many

1 Singapore Standard 11.7.51 Quoted in Far Eastern Survey: September 1951.

2 Tan Cheng Lock: Confidential Memorandum on Malaya, Quoted in Soh Eng Lim: "Tan Cheng Lock: His Leadership of the Malayan Chinese" University of Malaya, Singapore 1959, p.55.

3 Nanyang Siang Pau 29.11.52 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press, No. 48/52.

Other discriminatory legislations enumerated by the Chinese included the Registration and Licensing of Business Ordinance, which aimed at raising 50 percent of the funds required to finance national schools, as advocated by the Education Ordinance, 1952. This was unfair to the Chinese; majority of the commercial firms were Chinese who "will be forced to finance free education in English and Malay against their wishes".¹

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The latest anti-Chinese outburst in Jungle Green should prove conclusively, if proof were needed, that the Chinese in this country are faced by many and powerful enemies.²

Attempts at co-operation and compromise between the two communities were carried out. Concessions to the Chinese included less stringent regulations governing citizenship requirements, the opening of the Malayan Civil Service in December 1952 to non-Malays in the proportion of one to every four Malay appointee. In return, the Malays were to be helped economically. The proposal to introduce

1 Sin Chew Jit Poh 30.10.52 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press, No. 48/52.

2 Quoted in Victor Purcell: "Malaya: Communist or Free?" p. 129. Of the 31 passages objected to by the MCA, the author and publishers later agreed to delete sixteen.

legislative measures to afford Malay opportunities for wider participation in the road transport industry caused anxiety among the Chinese. Nanyang Siang Pau¹ commented "...the adoption of political measures to overcome economic instability will tend to aggravate the disparity and misunderstanding between the Malays and the Chinese."

In this atmosphere of racial disharmony and suspicion, the electoral alliance of the two communal parties was formed to contest for the Municipal Elections. Its clear cut victory made its leaders think seriously about extending its activities into the field of federal politics. At this time, the trend for self-government was clear. On 17 March 1953, an agreement was reached between the leaders of these two parties, on the principle of elections for the Federal Legislative Council, as a first step towards independence. "While not belittling contributions made by other communities," said Tengku Abdul Rahman, leader of UMNO, "I feel that Chinese-Malay understanding is an essential prerequisite for Malayan independence."² On 6 April 1953 at the General UMNO Meeting at Malacca, he absolved the Chinese from any desire for an economic stranglehold and by implication put all the blame for the economic backwardness of the Malays on the British.³

The Alliance called for Federal Elections by 1954 and for the resignation of all UMNO and MCA members from the nominated Federal Legislative Council should this proposal be rejected by the Government. It was noticeable that the Alliance "blue-print" evaded issues leaning towards social and economic factors. The initiators of the coalition did not wish to disrupt the possibility of harmonious relations

1 Nanyang Siang Pau Editorial 2.4.54 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press, No. 14/54.

2 Ten Years of UMNO. The Tengku's Speech 14.8.53. Quoted in Ishak bin Tadin "The United Malays National Organisation under Dato Onn" University of Malaya, Singapore 1959 p. 66.

3 Straits Times 6.4.53 Quoted in Francis Carnell "Constitutional Reform and Elections in Malaya" Pacific Affairs, Sept. 1954 p. 223.

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by discussing and making resolutions on problems, upon which both communities could not agree on. The Alliance was a mere partnership - it did not mean that the communities had succeeded in attaining an identity of interests. Indeed, each was not totally void of its racial sentiments.

Other parties began to formulate their own constitutional "blue-prints". A Federal Elections Committee appointed on 15 July 1953 submitted a report on 1 February 1954 - the majority proposal of the report was for a Legislative Council of 92 with an elected minority of 44; the minority proposal of the report, supported by the Alliance, wanted a Legislative Council of 100 with an elected majority of 60. It asked that elections be held in November 1954; the majority advised against haste. This Report was condemned as one "designed to prolong the Colonial status quo".¹ The Vernacular Press was hostile; many were behind the stand taken by the Alliance that it would be "a disgrace for democracy"² if the majority proposal was accepted. The Alliance had become a major political force.

Fearing that the majority proposal would be accepted, the Alliance demanded for talks with The Colonial Secretary, Sir Oliver Lyttelton in London. Despite the fact that he declined to receive them, the Alliance delegation headed by Tengku Abdul Rahman left for London, and was eventually received. For the first time, the Federation saw an undaunted, persistent and united Sino-Malay political movement. It had challenged the Colonial Secretary's statement of 1952 that independence of Malaya would not be forthcoming until unity among the different races domiciled in Malaya had been established.

By its persistence, the Alliance was responsible for the rejection of the proposal for an elected minority. Provisions were made for the Council of 98 to have 52 elected seats, thus having a

¹ Straits Times 2.2.54 Quoted in Francis Carnell "Constitutional Reform and Elections in Malaya" Pacific Affairs, Sept. 1954, p. 227.
² Utusan Melayu 22.2.54 Weekly Digest of Non-English Press No. 7/54.

majority of 6. The Alliance protested that the majority of 6 was too small. It called for a review of the Election issue, failing which it threatened a boycott of the Elections. This threat was given some weight when the Party withdrew its members from the Legislative Council when it met to debate on the Federal Election Bill. This move failed to alter the fate of the Bill, but it increased the reputation of the Alliance as being the country's most dynamic political power.

Shortly before Nomination Day, the UMNO-MCA Alliance accepted the MIC into its fold. Thus was established a partnership between the three main communities in Malaya. There had been much speculation as to whether voting would be according to communities. Party Negara¹ assumed that it would be; it lost no time in launching a communally-oriented campaign. Dato Onn, its leader, tried to win over the Malays; he advocated "a single nation, with a Malay base".² He warned the Malays that in order to avoid the fate of being made a racial minority in their own country, a quota immigration system encouraging Malaysian immigration should be introduced.³ Wrote "Federal Citizen" to the Straits Times⁴, "If he (Dato Onn) considers Sumatrans are better citizens than those born here...then I say Dato Onn is a communalist".

The Pan-Malayan Islamic Party (PMIP) like Party Negara, also had a communally-orientated programme. It appealed to the Malays on religious ground; in it, was seen the danger that religion could delay or destroy the possibilities of mutual tolerance among the races. It was concerned over the administration of Moslems by non-Moslems - "...according to Islam, there is no separation between politics and

1 Party Negara was formed by Dato Onn bin Jaafar, after the failure of his Independence of Malaya Party, on 28 February 1954.

2 Interview with Dato Onn, Johore Bahru, October 1959.

3 Irene Tinker "Malayan Elections: Electoral Pattern for Plural Societies?" p.275.

4 Straits Times 20.7.55 Quoted in Irene Tinker p.273

and religion. It is a great sin for Islamic peoples to transfer the Government of the Malay States to non-Islam." ¹

It is significant that the Alliance won all but one of the fifty-two elected seats. Most people had agreed with "well-informed observer" quoted by Singapore Standard as saying that "despite party organisation, voting at the Federation's first election was expected to be very much on communal lines." ² However, this was not the case. The Constituency Delineation Commission had created 52 single-member constituencies with no regards to communal groups. It had produced 50 seats with a Malay majority, 2 with a Chinese majority and none with an Indian majority. ³ If voting had been according to communities, one might have expected 50 Malay and 2 Chinese elected members of the Legislative Council. [However, the success of the Alliance's 15 Chinese and 2 Indian candidates was striking.] This success suggests that a great proportion of the voters voted on the basis of party rather than of community. In the event of purely communal voting, Party Negara, the main electoral opponent of the Alliance, would have stood a fair chance of beating the Alliance. UMNO's appeal to the Malays might have diminished as a result of its partnership with MCA and MIC. Even if its popularity had ensured success for its Malay candidates, Party Negara would still have stood to gain if voting had been communal. Of the 20 Malay candidates opposing the Alliance's non-Malay candidates in constituencies with a Malay majority, 8 belonged to Party Negara. 6 of

¹ Statement of Lembaga Kesatuan Melayu of Johore. Quoted in Victor Purcell: Malaya: Communist or Free? p.98.

² Singapore Standard 16.6.55. Quoted in Irene Tinker, p. 267.

³ This was due to the fact that the Malays predominated the electoral rolls. Of the 1,280,000 persons or 80% of those eligible who were registered on the rolls, 84.2% were Malays, 11.2% Chinese and 4.6% mainly Indians. ("Malaya: Elections" Current Notes on International Affairs, Vol. 26, No.8, August 1955) The explanation for the pre-dominance of Malays on the electoral rolls is that some 40% of the Chinese population, mainly of the older generations, were not eligible for Federal citizenship and a high proportion of those eligible were under 21 years of age.

these, were in an advantageous position; they were the only Malay candidates running against the non-Malays.¹ However, none of the Party Negara candidates was returned at the polls.

The allocation of the number of seats to the various communities as represented by UMNO, MCA and MIC was done not without much controversy and dissatisfaction from all sections. In allotting the Chinese 15 seats, Tengku Abdul Rahman risked his political neck among the Malays. Several dissidents left the Alliance over this issue.² During the six-week electoral campaign, Inche Ahmad bin Haji Omar was expelled from UMNO by the Kuala Lumpur Division, on the ground that "he was heard to tell voters to support only Malay candidates in the election."³

The Chinese attacked MCA leadership for co-operation with UMNO. At first, only 12 seats were allotted to the Chinese. Changes had to be made in order to give 15 seats to the Chinese to "stave off a threatened rift" in the partnership.⁴ Even so, the Chinese believed that the number was too small. MCA Secretary-General, Mr. (now Tun) Leong Yew Koh justified the number by saying that the Chinese also expected to receive 10 nominated members. Thus if all the Alliance candidates were to win, the Chinese community would be represented in the Legislative Council by 25 of the 98 members.⁵ Considering that the Chinese made up only 11.2 percent of the electorate though they numbered more than 40 percent of the total population, the obtaining of 25.5 percent of the Legislative Council seats would seem a fair compromise.

1 K. Jeyaratnam "Racial Factors in the Political Development of the Federation of Malaya" University of British Columbia, Canada, 1958.

2 Irene Tinker "Malayan Elections: Electoral Pattern for Plural Societies?" p. 267.

3 Straits Times 15.7.55

4 Straits Times 8.6.55

5 Straits Times 14.6.55

Actually the Chinese obtained 26 seats in all.

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The MIC was promised 2 elected seats, despite the fact that in no constituency did the Indians make up even 20 percent of the electorate, though they totalled at least 10 percent of the electorate in 11 constituencies. 1

The Alliance had won the Federal Elections. The Straits Times welcomed the victory: 2 "perhaps the most welcome feature of the Alliance is that its supporters voted non-communally." Tengku Abdul Rahman agreed: "The result today is the first step towards racial harmony in this plural society country...It is one thing I am damned proud of." 3 What accounted for this clear-cut victory of the Alliance? Reasons for its overwhelming success can be summed up in Carnell's words: 4

The Alliance won on account of its superior party organisation, its success at Municipal, State and Settlement elections, its record of opposition in the old nominated Legislative Council, and its highly emotional anti-colonial slogan of merdeka. ...Its efficiency was the outcome of Chinese business acumen rather than of party organisation in the Western sense. None of the poverty-stricken opposition parties could compete with the vote-catching machine created by the wealthy Chinese tinemagnate, Colonel H.S.Lee, a behind-the-scene organiser of victory.... 4

The cry of merdeka or freedom had been the key of its electoral campaign. Its election manifesto had promised to try to achieve independence within 4 years. Indeed, as Tengku Abdul Rahman admitted after the elections: "Our tremendous success resulted from this issue of independence and nothing else - absolutely nothing else." 5 Independence or Merdeka had gained the Alliance the mass support of all the communities in Malaya. Would it continue to receive such a support after independence has been achieved?

1 Irene Tinker "Malayan Elections...." p. 268.

2 Straits Times 29.7.55.

3 Straits Times 29.7.55.

4 Francis Carnell "Constitutional Reform and Elections in Malaya" pp. 317, 318.

5 Straits Times 29.7.55.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

The racial problem in Malaya was essentially one between the Malays and the Chinese - each tended to offset the other's superiority by its dominance in the political field on the one hand, and the economic field on the other. Issues pertaining to citizenship rights struck at the very heart of the Sino-Malay problem. The demand for less stringent regulations to qualify for Federal Citizenship from the Chinese and the necessity to preserve for political as well economic reasons, the special position accorded to the Malays, had presented a grave and trying problem. The Malays were apprehensive of the fact that lenient citizenship requirements would make them a political minority in their own country.¹ Indeed, Malay hostility towards the Malayan Union (1946) had been more the product of consideration regarding their status vis-a-vis the Chinese. However, the Chinese demands for equal rights, stating that, in addition to having made invaluable contributions to the economic development of the country, they had changed from a primary non-resident population to a largely resident one, could not be ignored. Compromises had to be made, but not without much opposition, dissatisfaction and resentment from both sides.

Sino-Malay animosity had been characterised by widespread racial outbreaks and massacres throughout the peninsula, immediately after the war. This animosity had given way to tolerance, and

¹ In 1946, Singapore had been excluded from the peninsula, and the number of the Chinese in the country had been reduced to 1,880,000 out of total population of 4,905,000. This move had given the Malays approximately 49 percent of the population and a numerical superiority over the Chinese, who constituted 39 percent of the total population figure. There can be little doubt that this consideration must have played a major role in determining the exclusion of Singapore from the Malayan Union in 1946.

tolerance had given way to co-operation, as evidenced in the formation of the UMNO-MCA-MIC Alliance. The leaders of the three communal organisations were convinced that the best way to achieve merdeka was through racial co-operation. Indeed, Sir Oliver Lyttelton, the Colonial Secretary had promised in 1952 that until there was racial unity in the country, Malaya could not hope to obtain any political concessions. The Alliance had presented an undaunted, persistent and united front, although it was a mere electoral partnership. However, (it was felt that it was only a matter of time before the partners would amalgamate into one national group, giving up their communal characteristics.¹ Only united communities would be able to co-operate with one another to achieve national unity and independence. "To build on lesser or any other foundation," according to Mr. Tan Siew Sin,² "must lead to eventual failure and disillusionment. The Alliance is therefore a necessary stage in the growth of Malayan unity".")

Therefore, despite existing racial differences, the Alliance was able to effect an inter-communal political co-operation. It won 51 out of the 52 elected seats in the Federal Legislative Council on 27 July 1955, on the basis of party voting. It was a powerful political force; it was able to overcome the evils of racial division through its ability to make the separatist trends generated by communalism subservient to the call for independence; common opposition to the British colonial rule was thus the cement which held the three communal parties together, and which won the Alliance the mass support of the population during the 1955 Federal Elections. Would the Alliance be as successful once independence was achieved

1 Speech of Leong Yew Koh, Straits Times 1.7.55

2 Tan Siew Sin "The Alliance and the Minorities in Malaya" Eastern World, Vol. IX, No. 3, March 1955, p. 22.

in 1957? It had been said that the achievement of merdeka might signal the end of communal co-operation, unless the differences between the races could be resolved. The 1955 Elections had sidestepped the whole communal problem. The Alliance had not taken a definite stand on explosive issues as the question of citizenship laws, education and the language problem. Such causes for the division between the races had been pushed into the background by the emotional issue of merdeka for Malaya, on which the Alliance had campaigned for votes. "...the Alliance has left in abeyance rather than solved the problem of relations between the Malays and the Chinese, which is the major hindrance to unity in Malaya,"¹ commented the Times Editorial.

It was after the Elections that attention was focussed on the citizenship issue, in preparation for independence. After hard bargaining between the Malays and the Chinese in 1956, the Alliance reached a compromise. MCA and the Chinese had not been satisfied with the citizen law of 1952; they had time and time again clamoured for jus soli, so that all Chinese born in the country, should like the Malays be automatically citizens by birth. Agreement reached was embodied in a memorandum drawn up as a guide to the Reid constitutional commission, appointed to draw up the constitution of the independent Malaya. Provisions were made for jus soli for those born after 1957; the language qualification was to be waived for one year after independence to enable aliens born in the country, and those born outside, who were above forty-five years of age, to acquire citizenship status. The period after the elections was one of bargaining - each community was trying to get as much as possible before independence. It was against a background of Sino-Malay friction, that efforts were made by leaders of each community to reach an agreement.

1 Times London, 29.7.55 Quoted in Irene Tinker "Malayan Elections: Electoral Pattern for Plural Societies?" p. 281.

Great Britain has lived up to her pledges to grant Malaya independence. Merdeka on 31 August 1957 was sealed by a constitution which drew heavily upon the Alliance draft, reflecting the Alliance principle of co-operation, compromise and balance among the races. However, it is wondered whether the new constitution, with its numerous clauses of special privileges to the Malays, would promote a Malayan unity and outlook, by its very nature of making a sharp distinction between the Malays and the non-Malays.¹ As it is, communalism is still strong. The Pan-Malayan Islamic Party in Kelantan and Trengganu - two East Coast States of Malaya, populated predominantly by the Malays - during the recent State and National Elections in August and September 1959, swept the Malay kampongs with its reckless assault on their religious and communal emotions. Then, on the eve of Nomination Day for the National Elections, internal crisis seized the Alliance. This arose from a demand by the MCA that more than a third of the Alliance candidates should be nominated from the MCA.² However, the peril of open conflict between the Malay and the Chinese partners subsided; the Alliance survived.

1 The special rights of the Malays include among many other:

- (i) Extensive reservations where only Malays might own land.
- (ii) Preferential quotas for admission on the government services. In the Malay civil service only one fifth of the entrants might be non-Malays, and in many of the other services their quota was one quarter.
- (iii) Preferential quotas for licenses for the operation of certain businesses, particularly road haulage and passenger vehicles for hire.
- (iv) Preference to Malays in the awarding of scholarships and in other forms of educational assistance.

2 The requirement for any amendment of the constitution is two-thirds majority votes in both houses in Parliament. This move by MCA, that one-third of the Alliance candidates should be nominated from its organisation, was probably aimed against any attempts at constitutional amendments, to the disadvantage of the Chinese populace.

However, a trend, though slight, was visible during the elections. The emergence of the Socialist Front, an inter-communal party, which found considerable favour in the urban areas indicated that class consciousness was emerging. Of the 40 constituencies, dominated by the Chinese vote, 24 went to the Alliance and half that number to the Socialist Front. Together the two parties polled 65.2 percent of the total votes in the State elections and almost exactly the same percentage in the parliamentary polling.¹ It is hoped that the awareness of class relationships will replace racial consciousness.

The future of a successful Malayan nation will have to depend on a common socio-cultural base to embrace all the communities. This process will depend on the ability of the leaders of the country to convince the non-Malays that they have more in common with the Malays and with each other, than with members of their own races coming in as immigrants. The Malays will also have to be convinced that any increase in political power to the non-Malays will mean a readjustment within the same unit, and not from unit to another. Such a process will have to be gradual. When it is done, a Malayan Nation will be born, and communal friction will be a thing of the past.

¹ The Straits Times Annual for 1960 : "Malaya in Election Year"
by Lee Siew Yee.

APPENDIX IMALAYAN UNION CITIZENSHIP

10.

.....

The policy of His Majesty's Government is to promote a broad-based citizenship which will include, without discrimination of race or creed, all who establish a claim, by reason of birth or a suitable period of residence, to belong to the country. It is proposed, therefore, to create by Order in Council Malayan Union Citizenship. The following persons will acquire Malayan Union Citizenship:

- (a) persons born in the territory of the Union or the Colony of Singapore.
- (b) persons who at the date on which the Order in Council becomes operative have been ordinarily resident in those territories for ten years, out of the preceding fifteen. (In calculating the fifteen years' period, the period of the Japanese occupation will be disregarded).

APPENDICES

It will be possible for persons to acquire Malayan Union citizenship after five years' ordinary residence in the Malayan Union or Singapore. British subjects who acquire Malayan Union Citizenship will not thereby lose their British nationality. Save with the consent of the Governor, no person who is not a Malayan Union Citizen will be admitted to public office or membership of Central or Local Councils.

Those acquiring Malayan Union Citizenship otherwise than by birth will be required to obtain allegiance to the Malayan Union.

11.

APPENDIX IMALAYAN UNION CITIZENSHIP

PART XII

FEDERAL CITIZENSHIP

....

10.

The policy of His Majesty's Government is to promote a broad-based citizenship which will include, without discrimination of race or creed, all who establish a claim, by reason of birth or a suitable period of residence, to belong to the country. It is proposed, therefore, to create by Order in Council Malayan Union Citizenship. The following persons will acquire Malayan Union Citizenship:

124.

(a) persons born in the territory of the Union or the Colony of Singapore.

(b) persons who at the date on which the Order in Council becomes operative have been ordinarily resident in those territories for ten years, out of the preceding fifteen. (In calculating the fifteen years' period, the period of the Japanese occupation will be disregarded).

It will be possible for persons to acquire Malayan Union citizenship after five years' ordinary residence in the Malayan Union or Singapore. British subjects who acquire Malayan Union Citizenship will not thereby lose their British nationality. Save with the consent of the Governor, no person who is not a Malayan Union Citizen will be admitted to public office or membership of Central or Local Councils.

Those acquiring Malayan Union Citizenship otherwise than by birth will be required to obtain allegiance to the Malayan Union.

11.

.... take the Malay language and conform to Malay custom;

(c) any other person born before, on or after the appointed day in any of the territories now to be comprised in the Federation, both of whose parents were born in any of such territories and were or are, at the date of the birth of such person, or thereafter became or become, permanently resident in such territories.

Malayan Union and Singapore. Statement of Policy on Future Constitution.
Command 6724, H.M.S.O., London, January 1946, p.5.

Provided that, where any person is born after the death of his father, he shall be deemed to be a Federal Citizen if his father at the time

of his death was a Federal Citizen.

APPENDIX II

PART XII

FEDERAL CITIZENSHIP

ACQUISITION OF FEDERAL CITIZENSHIP

BY OPERATION OF LAW.

124. (1) On and after the appointed day, the following persons shall be Federal Citizens:

- (a) any subject, whether born before, on or after the appointed day, of His Highness the Ruler of any State;
- (b) any British subject born in either of the Settlements before, on or after the appointed day who is permanently resident in the territories now to be comprised in the Federation;
- (c) any British subject born before, on or after the appointed day, in any of the territories now to be comprised in the Federation, whose father either
 - (i) was himself born in any of the territories now to be comprised in the Federation; or
 - (ii) was or is, at the date of the birth of such British subject, or thereafter became or becomes, permanently resident in such territories;
- (d) any person born before, on or after the appointed day in any of the territories now to be comprised in the Federation who habitually speaks the Malay language and conforms to Malay custom;
- (e) any other person born before, on or after the appointed day in any at the territories now to be comprised in the Federation, both of whose parents were born in any of such territories and were or are, at the date of the birth of such person, or thereafter became or become, permanently resident in such territories;
- (f) any person whose father is, at the date of that person's birth, a Federal Citizen; Provided that, where any person is born after the death of his father, he shall be deemed to be a Federal Citizen if his father at the time

- (1) of his death was a Federal Citizen.
- (2) Notwithstanding the provisions of sub-clause (1) of this clause, no person shall become a Federal Citizen on the appointed day who has been absent from the territories now to be comprised in the Federation for a period of seven years or upwards immediately prior to the appointed day, unless the High Commissioner in Council certifies that such person has maintained substantial connection with any of such territories during such period.
- (3) For the purpose of this clause:
- (a) in sub-clause (1) the expression "subject of His Highness the Ruler of any State" means any person who
 - (i) belongs to an aboriginal tribe resident in that State; or
 - (ii) is a Malay born in that State, or born outside the Malay States of a father who was, at the time of birth of such person, a subject of the Ruler of that State; or
 - (iii) is a person naturalised as a subject of that Ruler under any law for the time being in force;
 - (b) the word "Malay" means a person who
 - (i) habitually speaks the Malay language; and
 - (ii) professes the Muslim religion; and
 - (iii) conforms to Malay custom;
 - (c) a person shall be deemed to be "permanently resident" in the territories now to be comprised in the Federation who has completed a continuous period of fifteen years' residence in any one or more of them, whether such period he completed before, on or after the appointed day;
 - (d) the word "continuous" in relation to a period of residence shall not be construed as excluding such period of absence as are not inconsistent with essential continuity of residence;
 - (e) the words "father" and "parents" mean respectively father and parents, by blood, but not by adoption, of children whether legitimate or illegitimate.

ACQUISITION OF FEDERAL CITIZENSHIP BY APPLICATION

125. (1) Subject to the provisions of this clause, the High Commissioner may grant a Certificate of Citizenship conferring the status of a Federal Citizen on any person not being a minor child who makes application therefor in the prescribed form and satisfies the High Commissioner:

(a) that either

(1) he was born in any of the territories now to be comprised in the Federation and has been resident in any one of more of such territories for eight out of the twelve years preceding to application; or

(11) he has been resident in any one or more of such territories for fifteen years out of the twenty years immediately preceding his application; and

(b) that he is of good character; and

(c) that he has an adequate knowledge of the Malay or English language; and

(d) that he has made a Declaration of Permanent Settlement in the form set out in the First Schedule to this Agreement; and

(e) that, if his application is approved, he is willing to take the Citizenship Oath in the form set out in the First Schedule to this Agreement.

Provided that the requirements of paragraph (c) of this sub-clause shall not apply in the case of any person who shall apply for Federal Citizenship within a period of two years from the appointed day and who, at the time of his application, is of the age of forty-five years or more and who has been residing in any one or more of the territories now to be comprised in the Federation for a period or periods amounting to at least twenty years.

(2) Except in the case of minor children falling within sub-clause (3) or sub-clause (4) of this clause, a Certificate of Citizenship granted under this clause shall not be given to the applicant or take effect until the applicant has taken the Citizenship Oath.

(3) If a person obtains a Certificate of Citizenship under this clause, the High Commissioner, may, if he thinks fit on the application of that person, also grant at the same time a Certificate of Citizenship in respect of any minor child of the person born before the date of the grant of the Certificate and ordinarily resident with such person in the Federation.

(4) Where a person who has applied for a Certificate of Citizenship dies before the Certificate is granted to him, the High Commissioner may declare that any minor child, whose name has been included in the application, shall be deemed to be a Federal Citizen in like manner as if the person applying for the Citizenship had survived and his application had been granted, and a Certificate of Citizenship may thereupon be issued in respect of such child.

(5) For the purpose of this clause:

"adequate knowledge" of the Malay language means

(1) in the case of a person who applies for Federal Citizenship within a period of two years from the appointed day, ability to speak that language with reasonable proficiency; and

(ii) in the case of any other person, ability to speak that language and, unless presented by blindness or other physical cause, read and write it, in the Malay or Rumi script, with reasonable proficiency.

It is essential that steps should be taken by the Government to improve the social and economic conditions of the Malays, who are the mainstay of the economy of the Federation.

"minor child" means a person who has not attained the age of eighteen years reckoned according to the Georgian calendar.

For this purpose, organization should be set up and provided with the necessary finances:

LOSS OF FEDERAL CITIZENSHIP

(1) to improve the kampungs and to provide housing, transport, communications, health and educational requirements therein;

126. (1)

(ii) to encourage, assist and provide training for Malays;

(iii) to plan and aid in the development of Malay industrial, agricultural, and economic life.

It is essential that these organizations should keep themselves advised continuously of the general needs of the Malays within their jurisdiction and that they should work in co-operation with District Officers, Penghulus, and Ketuans.

Immigration: It is essential that immigration into the Federation should be reduced to the absolute minimum and that those immigrants now in the Federation who are not prepared to settle and make permanent homes in Malaya should be assisted, if they wish to be repatriated to their homeland.

Subjects of the Malay Rulers: International law recognises the right of a state to prescribe who shall be its nationals by its own written laws, but, in the absence of such laws, determine nationality by the place of birth.

Nationality in the Settlements of Penang and Malacca is prescribed by Imperial Act of Parliament, namely the British Nationality Act 1948.

Federation of Malaya Agreement 1948 (Reprinted January 1952), Government Press, Kuala Lumpur. pp.40, 41, 42, 43.

In *Hagri Sabilan*, who was declared by the Court to have been a natural-born subject of that State but an alien in Selangor.

The Committee considers that each Council of State should enact similar legislation prescribing nationality in that State, but that the place of birth should be applied in its entirety by reason of international complications which might follow.

APPENDIX III

COMMUNITIES LIAISON COMMITTEE'S PROPOSALS

FOR FEDERAL CITIZENSHIP

It is urgent that practical steps should be taken by the Government to improve the social and economic well-being of the Malays, with the object of ensuring their full participation in the economic life of the Federation.

For this purpose, organization should be set up and provided with the necessary finance:

- (i) to improve the kampongs and to provide housing, transport, communications, health and educational requirements therein;
- (ii) to encourage, assist and provide training for Malays;
- (iii) to plan and aid in the development of Malay industrial, agricultural, and economic life.

It is essential that these organisations should keep themselves advised continuously of the general needs of the Malays within their jurisdiction and that they should work in co-operation with District Officers, Penghulus, and Ketuas.

Immigration: It is essential that immigration into the Federation should be reduced to the absolute minimum and that those immigrants now in the Federation who are not prepared to settle and make permanent homes in Malaya should be assisted, if they wish to be repatriated to their homeland.

Subjects of the Malay Rulers: International law recognises the right of a State to prescribe who shall be its nationals by its own written laws, but, in the absence of such laws, determines nationality by the place of birth.

Nationality in the Settlements of Penang and Malacca is prescribed by Imperial Act of Parliament, namely the British Nationality Act 1948.

But in none of the Malay States is there any written law, so that the place of birth would apply by international law and in 1932 the Supreme Court of the Federated Malay States applied that law in the case of Ho Chik Kuan, a Chinese born in Negri Sembilan, who was declared by the Court to have been a natural-born subject of that State but an alien in Selangor.

The Committee considers that each Council of State should enact uniform legislation prescribing nationality in that State, but that the place of birth cannot be applied in its entirety by reason of international complications which might follow.

It recommends accordingly that the proposed legislation should come into force upon a prescribed day to be called "the appointed day" and that it should define the subjects of the Ruler of each State as follows:-

- (1) any person who belongs to an aboriginal tribe resident in the State and Malay born in the State, or born outside the State of a parent who was, at the time of birth of such person, a subject of the Ruler of the State;
- (2) any person of Asian or Eurasian parentage who before, on or after the appointed day was born in the State and one of whose parents was born in the State;
- (3) any person of Asian or Eurasian parentage who before, on or after the appointed day was born in the State, provided that such person takes the prescribed Oath of Allegiance and is registered as having so taken it;
- (4) the parent of a person who is a subject of a Ruler of the State under paragraph (2), but who was not born in the State, provided that such parent takes the prescribed Oath of Allegiance and is registered as having so taken it;
- (5) any minor child born of a father who was, at the time of such child, a subject of the Ruler of the State.

There should be provision in the legislation for loss of nationality in the case of grave offence against the State.

Naturalization: A Federal Enactment should be passed enabling naturalization as subject of the Ruler of a Malay State. It should require the applicant:

- (1) to have had a continuous residence in the State for ten years excluding such periods of absence as are not inconsistent with essential continuity of residence;
- (2) to be good character;
- (3) to be able to make himself understood in the Malay or English language;
- (4) to make a Declaration of Permanent Settlement in a prescribed form, and
- (5) to take the prescribed Oath of Allegiance and the prescribed Oath of Loyalty to the Federation.

Federal Citizens: Turning to Federal Citizenship, it must be remembered that the special rights and position of the Malays in their homeland are required by the Federation of Malaya Agreement to be recognized and maintained. Any proposals for Federal Citizenship must, therefore, be based upon this vital principle.

After prolonged and very careful consideration the Committee recommends that Part XII of the Federation of Malaya Agreement should be replaced by Federal Enactment which should provide that from and after an appointed day the following persons should be Federal Citizens:-

- (1) any subject, including a naturalized subject, of the Ruler of a Malay State provided that such subject is permanently resident in any part of the Federation;
- (2) any citizen of the United Kingdom and the Colonies, as defined in the British Nationality Act, 1948, who was born in any part of the Federation and is permanently resident in any part of the Federation;
- (3) any person who has acquired Federal Citizenship by application under the present Part XII of the Federation of Malaya Agreement.

The expression "permanently resident" should be defined as at present in Clause 124 (3) (c) and (d) of the Federation of Malaya Agreement.

Provisions should also be made in the legislation to enable Federal Citizenship to be obtained upon application in the case of a citizen of the United Kingdom and the Colonies who was not born in any part of the Federation but who

- (1) has had a continuous residence in the Federation for ten years excluding such periods of absence as are not inconsistent with essential continuity of residence;
- (2) is of good character and possessed of means of livelihood;
- (3) is able to make himself understood in the Malay or English language;
- (4) makes a Declaration of Permanent Settlement in the prescribed form; and
- (5) takes the prescribed Oath of Loyalty to the Federation.

Loyalty to the Federation: It should be enacted that every Federal Citizen shall owe loyalty to the Federation in addition to the allegiance which he owes to His Majesty or to one of Their Highnesses or otherwise.

58 67

The enactment should establish that all Federal Citizens shall not only enjoy the rights but also assume the responsibilities towards the Federation which are normally expected of the nationals of an independent state.

Federal Citizenship should in effect accord as nearly as possible to nationality.

The Symbol of the unity of the Federation should be the Federal flag.

Any Federal Citizen who is proved to have been disloyal to the Federation or to have broken any Oath of Allegiance or Oath of Loyalty should forfeit his Federal Citizenship.

For those who are not Federal Citizens the right to reside in the Federation should be governed by Permit of Residence renewal, but revocal at any time in the case of proved unfitness. Such a system of restricted rights of residence is a familiar feature in most countries to-day.

We have used the expression "Federal Citizen" because it is now a familiar one, but we suggest that this expression should be changed to "Citizen of Malaya".

All the above proposals should be timed to come into operation simultaneously with the closing of applications under the present law for Federal Citizenship.

(i) if he was born before the appointed day, whose father was born in either of the Settlements and had at the time of such person's birth, completed a continuous period of fifteen years residence in the Federation;

(ii) if he was born on or after the appointed day whose father was born in either of the Settlements and was at the time of such person's birth a Federal citizen under the provisions of this agreement at any time in force before the prescribed date or a citizen of the Federation of Malaya;

(e) any citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, wherever born, whose father was, at the time of such person's birth, a Federal citizen, or a citizen of the Federation of Malaya, or a holder of a Certificate of Citizenship or a

Straits Times 19.4.50

any time in force, or a citizen of the Federation of Malaya by registration under Clause 126 of this agreement;

(g) any other person who, immediately before the prescribed date, was by operation of law or otherwise a Federal citizen under the provisions of this agreement at any time in force before the prescribed date;

(g) any person who was a holder of a Certificate of Naturalization as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies has been granted

APPENDIX IV

FEDERATION OF MALAYA AGREEMENT (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE 1952

PART XII

CITIZENSHIP OF THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA

124....

125 On and after the prescribed date, the following persons shall be citizens of the Federation of Malaya by operation of law:

(a) any subject of His Highness the Ruler of any State;

(b) any citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies born before on or after the prescribed date in either of the Settlements;

(c) any citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies born in the Federation before, on or after the prescribed date, one of whose parent's was born in the Federation;

(d) any person who is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, wherever born, and -

(i) if he was born before the appointed day, whose father was born in either of the Settlements and had at the time of such person's birth, completed a continuous period of fifteen years residence in the Federation; and

(ii) if he was born on or after the appointed day whose father was born in either of the Settlements and was, at the time of such person's birth a Federal citizen under the provisions of this Agreement at any time in force before the prescribed date or a citizen of the Federation of Malaya;

(e) any citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, wherever born, whose father was, at the time of such person's birth, a Federal Citizen, or a citizen of the Federation of Malaya, by grant of a Certificate of Citizenship or a certificate of Naturalization under the provisions of this Agreement at any time in force, or a citizen of the Federation of Malaya by registration under Clause 126 of this Agreement;

(f) any other person who, immediately before the prescribed date, was by operation of law or otherwise a Federal citizen under the provisions of this Agreement at any time in force before the prescribed date;

(g) any person to whom a Certificate of Naturalization as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies has been granted

under the British Nationality Act, 1948, and who has -

- (i) within the preceding twelve years resided in the Settlements for periods amounting in the aggregate to not less than ten years;
- (ii) resided in the Settlements throughout the two years immediately preceding the date of his application for naturalisation as a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies; and
- (iii) taken within a Settlements the Oath prescribed by Section 10 of the said Act.

CITIZEN BY REGISTRATION

126 Subjects as hereinafter provided, a person of full capacity, born in the Federation who -

- (a) is not a citizen of the Federation of Malaya; and
- (b) is a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies, shall on making application therefor to the High Commissioner in the prescribed manner, be entitled, on taking the Oath set out in Form VIII in the First Schedule to this Agreement, to be registered as a citizen of the Federation of Malaya:

Provided that a person who has absented himself from the Federation for a continuous period of five years within the ten years immediately preceding his application shall not be entitled to be registered under this section unless he is certified by the High Commissioner to have maintained substantial connection with the Federation during that period...

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