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A STUDY

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INDIA AND MALAYA

A STUDY

BY
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Barrister-at-Law
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PREFACE

THIS is one of a series of volumes entitled *INDIA AND HER NEIGHBOURS* which the Research Board of the Council has planned with the aim of presenting to the reader a concise account of the political, economic and cultural relations between India and each of her neighbouring countries—Ceylon, Malaya, Burma, Nepal, Tibet and Pakistan—as they have developed in the recent past. The importance of developing close and friendly relations between nations is commonplace and does not need reiteration; the proper understanding of such relations by the bulk of educated people is equally important in order that these relations can be placed on a healthy and stable basis. This series is an attempt to provide, in a handy compass, the relevant information based on a study of documents and presented in historical perspective.

No rigid uniformity is attempted in the treatment of the various neighbouring countries. Care has been taken, however, to include some account of the essential geographical features, the racial composition of the people, their historical background, economic resources and trade relations, the cultural influences and political questions including the problems raised by the presence of immigrants of Indian origin in the various countries.

The authors have had in every case a first-hand knowledge of the countries with which they deal, based, in most cases, on a long stay in the respective countries and active participation in their social and cultural life. The Council is grateful to the authors who have accepted our invitation to contribute to the

series and thus help towards a better and wider understanding of the problems which they have touched upon.

A. APPADORAI
Secretary-General

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Acknowledgement is due to the Government of the Federation of Malaya for their kind help in supplying the Map of the Malay Peninsula in colour which is included in this book.

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CHAPTER I

LAND OF BEAUTY

IN the south-east corner of the continent of Asia, between 6° and 1° North of the Equator and 100° and 105° East of Greenwich lies a Peninsula of perennial vegetation surrounded by seas, except for the narrow isthmus of Kra which connects it to the Asian mainland. Modern Malaya, as we know it, consists of about 50,880 sq. miles of this Peninsula and some small but vitally important islands like Singapore and Penang along its coasts. Malaya's northern neighbour is Siam with which she is connected by both road and rail. The far-flung islands of the East Indian Archipelago including the newly-born United States of Indonesia lie to the west and south and south-east. The Malayan Peninsula is bounded on the west by the Straits of Malacca; and the east coast is washed by the turbulent waters of the China Sea. Burma and Indo-China are not far, but the distance from Madras to Singapore at the southern tip of the Peninsula is 1,591 miles. Hongkong is nearer by about 150, the distance being only 1,440 miles.

Malayan climate is naturally equatorial, but seldom does temperature rise above 90°F . Humid atmosphere and plentiful rainfall account for the ever-green appearance of the country. The climate

has, without doubt, a depressing effect on some, and long and continued residence slowly saps the stamina of even hardy immigrants. But the country looks enchanting and beautiful. It abounds in sandy beaches, flat thick jungle, hilly tracts and primeval forests. Murmuring streams and meandering rivers, muddy estuaries and mangrove swamps are characteristic features of the Malayan landscape. The fauna and flora are of course tropical. Parts of Malaya are the shikari's paradise. Wild game, big and small, is rife ; and birds and fish are abundant.

Malaya gets both the north-east and south-west monsoons, the north-east to a greater extent than the south-west. The rainfall at many points is over 100 inches ; yet, the monsoons do not appear to hit Malaya as hard as they do, say, the west coast of peninsular India. Malaya looks a land of evergreens, of perpetual sunshine and intermittent rains. Unless one is careful, the climate and the appearance of plenty may generate a lotus-eating tendency. Though the climate, generally speaking, is not unhealthy, the country is the happy hunting ground of the anopheles mosquito. The humidity is enervating and is bound to have a slowing action on life and growth. It is curious to observe that in Malayan forests which abound in soft wood, hard timber is scarce. An experiment to grow teak does not appear to have met with success, though in the

neighbouring state of Siam it flourishes. The progeny of imported cattle gets stunted in two or three generations and in spite of abundant pastures the yield of milk gradually diminishes. If the climate and the environment have such effect on the fauna and flora, it is not illogical to presume the same slow deterioration on human physique too.

Yet, it has been described as a comfortable place to live in. As Mgr. C. N. Enriquez says in his *Malaya—An Account of its People, Flora and Fauna*, ‘.....with modern sanitation health may be kept; though by Europeans a certain slackness is felt and after an illness it is difficult to recuperate without going up to the neighbouring hills. But taking the East as a whole it is a fact that the nearer you live to the Equator the less heat and discomfort there is.’ According to Enriquez, ‘in this radiant land there are no flies, no dust, no crows, no income-tax¹ and.....as cynics maintain, no Government of India.² There are no dust storms, no hot weathers and the landscape displays a fresh and luxuriant greenery. The mornings are always brilliant with dew on the grass, deep shadows in the trees and radiant sunshine in which the new day sparkles. Storms and heavy showers follow at noon or in the afternoon according to locality and in some places sudden and startling claps of thunder

1 Income Tax was introduced in Malaya in 1948.

2 The reference of course is to the British Government of India, and not to the present Government.

are a marked feature.' Indeed is Malaya a land of beauty.

The mountains of Malaya follow the line of the Peninsula. Structurally, the Malay Peninsula has a backbone of central mountains mainly of granite, with subsidiary ranges running towards the coasts. The Peninsula is not more than 200 miles across at its middle. Limestone hills and palaeozoic clay are seen scattered about in parts of the country. Owing to their solubility the picturesque and precipitous limestone formations are gradually losing their heights. Slow erosion has succeeded in opening a number of caves on their cliffed faces. In these caves and in the thin alluvial drifts from the granite mountains in the plains lie large deposits of rich tin for which spots like Kinta Valley have been justly famous. There are no volcanoes in Malaya as in Java or Sumatra, though many districts can boast of hot springs. Gunong Tahan (7,184 ft.) is the highest peak in the country. Unlike the Indian mountains or even the Sumatran hilltops, Malayan hills have little level ground that can be converted into hill stations. Cameron Highlands (4,750 ft.) is the best known. The other hill stations like Maxwell Hill or Fraser's Hill and even the less ambitious Penang Hill are built on hill slopes and not on level ground. While Indonesia is studded with hill stations, Malaya which stands in need of them just as much as any other tropical country

can boast of only a very few.

Rivers abound. Short and swift, they continuously denude mountain slopes and plains of their rich alluvial soil. Most of them are no more than streams dashing through rocky beds and perpetual forests for the nearby plains and then to the sea. The longest rivers are the Pahang and the Perak with quite a number of less known tributaries. From time immemorial, the inhabitants occupied river banks and estuaries, and until the construction of modern roads and railways, river mouths and valleys were the main centres of civilized existence. For centuries the people found rivers to be useful agencies for the supply of food, for transport and communication, for sport, and even for sanitation. Generally speaking, there is no town of importance in Malaya which cannot boast of a sea-front or a river bank.

The fauna and flora of Malaya are of the Indo-Malayan type—a type which with certain local variations applies to India and Pakistan, Ceylon and Burma, Siam and Indo-China and those islands of the Malayan Archipelago lying on the Asian side of the Wallace Line. Of course the dense, tropical forests, characteristic of Malaya, have developed special kinds of foliage and plant life as a result of peculiarly local conditions of heat, humidity and rainfall. Malayan forest trees are deciduous and

tall, with no branches for several feet; shrubs and ferns, bamboo and cane form the undergrowth. Forests are full of parasitical plants and saprophytes, subsisting on dead and decayed matter, not rare in the steamy tracts of the tropical jungle. Land bereft of its top soil or cleaned for any purpose whatsoever gets covered with a coarse grass locally known as 'lalang' which has been the characteristic pest of the Malayan countryside, the despair of the agriculturist and the planter. It is thought that many a civilization has been submerged and swallowed up by lalang and similar undergrowth. The country shows a tendency to return to such jungle existence at the slightest slackening of human vigilance.

Malaya has a variety of bird-life, though birds are not so numerous as in India. The seas and the rivers are well stocked with different varieties of fish, part of the staple food of the Malay. Sharks are not rare in the Straits of Malacca and shell fish, prawns, crabs and jelly fish are abundant near the coasts. Poisonous sea snakes have also been noticed off and on, not far from the shore. Malayan jungles are full of insects which have attracted special study and research in modern times. Almost every species of snake found in India is well-known in Malaya also. Crocodiles are numerous and lizards and amphibians are quite common. Centipedes and scorpions, biting flies and hornets, moths and butter-

flies are rampant all over the Peninsula. The forests hold the elephant and the rhinoceros, the tiger and the panther, bears, tapirs, deer, mountain goats, apes and monkeys, and smaller animals like squirrels and wild cats. And one need not penetrate far into the depths of a Malayan forest to come across in a clearing or by the side of a salt lick the dreaded herds of that fiercest of all animals, the Malayan Saledang.

Of mineral wealth, the mainstay of Malaya has been its world-renowned tin. The country is extraordinarily rich in tin deposits. Lead of an inferior variety and iron have been discovered in recent times. Gold also occurs in small quantities. Unlike in Indo-China few other minerals like zinc and tungsten, chromium and antimony are seen on the Malayan Peninsula; but with all its wild and mountainous terrain, its mangrove wastes haunted by water-snakes and crocodiles, its impenetrable forests, its steaming hot and malaria infested jungles, and its shallow and non-navigable rivers, it is still not an unattractive country at all. The soil is fertile, waters are good and virgin tracts are awaiting development. Forests have to be exploited. Many an unexplored region is to be surveyed and prospected, and large areas and valuable lands are yet to be cleared and planted either with necessary food crops or valuable para-rubber.

Though geographically the country looks compact, politically it had not been for long a unified whole. It consisted of three British colonial settlements and nine States under Rajas or Sultans. Until recently the 'Settlements' of Penang, Malacca and Singapore were territories directly under the Governor of the Straits Settlements and the British Colonial Office. The States of Perak, Pahang, Selangor and Negri Sembilan constituted themselves into a Federation (Federated Malay States) for certain over-all purposes, preserving the individualities of their respective Sultans and their governments. The other five States, Johore, Kelantan, Kedah, Perlis and Trengganu were, until recently, unfederated States. Since the second World War, however, all the territories other than the Crown Colony of Singapore—an island at the southernmost point of the Asian mainland and connected with it by the famous Johore Causeway—have been formed into a Federation governed from Kuala Lumpur. Singapore was politically separated from the rest of Malaya and placed under a Governor, while the Malayan Federation comprising all the States and the remaining two Settlements is under a British High Commissioner.

Singapore is about 26 miles in length and 14 miles in width. Christmas Island and the islands of the Cocos or Keeling groups which lie roughly

600 miles south-west of Java are also governed from Singapore.³ It has the most important port in South-east Asia, with extensive wharfage accommodation where vessels can load and unload cargo in the inner and outer harbour. Singapore docks are specially equipped for repairs, and also for ship-building on a small scale. The port of Singapore is on the southern side of the island and is the seat of the Government. It has almost equal access to Indian waters through the Straits of Malacca on the west, as to the Chinese via the South China Sea on the east.

Penang is an island with an area of about 400 sq. miles, situated at almost the northern extremity of the Straits of Malacca and separated from the mainland by about 2 miles of sea. George Town is the capital of Penang and is the nearest port of call from India. In importance, Penang is second only to Singapore, though Kuala Lumpur, the capital of the Federation, has since the second World War stolen much of the prominence of this comparatively older city. But there exist few more enchanting spots than the Penang island.

Kuala Lumpur is also the capital of Selangor which lies on the west coast of the Peninsula, almost midway between Singapore and Penang. It has an area of over 3,000 sq. miles and is a rich and well-

³ Cocos or Keeling islands have been agreed to be transferred to Australia, (June 1951).

developed Sultanate of Malaya. The Sultan of Selangor resides not at Kuala Lumpur but at the important mofussil town of Klang, nearly four miles away from Port Swettenham at the mouth of the Klang river.

The territory nearest to Singapore is the State of Johore, extending across the Peninsula, with an area of 7,330 sq. miles. The Sultan of Johore enjoyed, until recently, more autonomy than most of his neighbours. Though Johore Bahru, the capital, is a well laid out modern town, a considerable part of the country is still jungle-ridden. On the whole, however, Johore has been well developed because of its nearness to Singapore and produces rubber and palm oil, cocoanuts, pineapples, etc. which are exported abroad. Johore is bounded by Malacca on the north-west, by Pahang on the north and in between, by the State of Negri Sembilan.

The Settlement of Malacca with an area of about 640 sq. miles is now part of the Malayan Federation. Its capital, Malacca, is situated on the coast and though the town has suffered virtual eclipse by the rise and growth of others it is still historically an interesting spot. The Settlement is today mainly agricultural and the port is less frequented than Port Swettenham.

Negri Sembilan which lies between Malacca and Johore in the south and Selangor in the north, is one of the small Malay States (area

2,600 sq. miles), the State of Perlis being the smallest. Negri Sembilan is almost at the terminal of the central mountain ranges of Malaya. Its capital, Seramban, is a healthy and comfortable spot, and the seaside resort of Port Dickson is regarded as the Brighton of the Malayan coast.

The State of Pahang which is situated on the eastern side of the Peninsula comprises an area of about 13,800 sq. miles. It has not been well developed. It has a coastline of 130 miles on the South China Sea but practically no good ports. Pahang has some of the highest mountain peaks and longest rivers in Malaya. The seat of the Government is Kuala Lipis, though the Sultan resides at the coastal town of Pekan. Pahang is suspected of having rich deposits of gold though so far its mineral resources have not been well surveyed.

Another State which lies to the east coast of the Peninsula is Trengganu, bounded by Pahang and Kelantan. Having an area of over 5,000 sq. miles, Trengganu has been poorly developed and thinly populated. Means of communication other than river transport are rare, so much so that people have congregated to live along the sea-coast and river banks. The capital is Kuala Trengganu though almost every important river-mouth like Besut, Dungun and Kemaman has its little town bearing the same name as that of the river. The ports of Kuala Trengganu and Kemaman like those

on the Pahang coast are of use only under certain weather conditions and during certain parts of the year.

To the north of Trengganu lies the State of Kelantan bounded on the north by the China Sea and on the south by the State of Pahang and on the west by South Siam and the State of Perak. Its area is nearly 5,700 sq. miles, and Kota Bharu, its capital, Kuala Kri and Pasir Puteh, its mofussil towns, are the more important centres of activity in the State. Being comparatively further away from the modernistic tendencies and life of the west coast, Kelantan, Trengganu, and to a lesser degree Pahang have been able to preserve a purer form of Malay life and culture than those found in the other States. Paddy cultivation, cottage industries and 'Kampong' life undefiled by sophistications of modern mechanical existence have been conserved in these far-away regions, and any study of the habits and customs of the Malayan people cannot be complete without researches into the life, literature and culture of the peoples of these regions. Kelantan earned prominence as the strategic spot where the invading Japanese effected their first landing in Malaya in 1941. The retreat from Kota Bharu to Singapore is remembered as a painful chapter in British military history. Kelantan is a fertile food-growing tract; and extensive rice fields, cocoanut and fruit trees sustain a compara-

tively large population. The main types of fruit trees found elsewhere in the Peninsula—the *durian*, the *mangosteen*, *rambutan* and *chikoo*—are grown here in abundance. Only the southern part of the State is exploited by foreign rubber interests. Kelantan is more easily accessible from Kedah, early Indian navigators. Recent excavations in the Perlis and Siam than from other parts of the Peninsula.

The State of Kedah is the region best known to vicinity of the Kedah Peak (3,978 ft.) have unearthed an old Indian settlement, suggesting hoary and intimate associations with India. The purple-coloured Peak must have been a famous land-mark well known to Indian mariners and traders who crossed the Bay of Bengal in those days. Kedah, including the islands known as Pulau Langkawi, has an area of 3,700 sq. miles. Rubber and rice are important products. Alor Star, the capital, is a flourishing little town. Sungei Patani and Baling are other towns of some importance.

The State of Perlis, the northernmost point of Malaya, with an area of 310 sq. miles, is again a rice-growing area. The Ruler prefers to style himself 'Raja' while other Malayan rulers are inclined to the title of Sultan. Kangar is the capital of the State though the Raja resides in another nearby town, Arau.

The remaining State, Perak, is at present

economically the best developed of them all. It comprises an area of nearly 8,000 sq. miles and is surrounded by the Settlement of Penang and the States of Kedah, Kelantan, Pahang and Selangor. The ruler, who is known both as Raja and Sultan, resides at Kuala Kangsar, while the capital is Ipoh situated amidst the tin fields of Kinta. Other important towns in the State are Taiping which was once its capital, Sitiawan, Lumut on the coast, and Tanjong Malim on the Perak-Selangor border. The State has an excellent system of roads and the Perak river, the second longest in Malaya, and its tributaries can be used by small ships. While the Federated Malay States railway passes through the centre of the State, small harbours like Telok Anson, Pangkor (Lumut), Port Weld, etc. afford anchorage to coastal craft and shipping.

CHAPTER II

MEETING GROUND OF MANY PEOPLES

EVEN a cursory glance at the map of Asia will convince one that the Malay Peninsula is by its very situation bound to exercise considerable importance in that part of the world. Millenniums ago, in the Age of Migrations out of the 'anthills' of Asia or Africa, Man came and moved along this Bridge and across it, to the islands of the Pacific and beyond. It has been the meeting ground of Asian trade routes, and of peoples. The narrow isthmus of Kra, as we noted earlier, connects the Peninsula with the hinterland of Asia. The accessibility of the country from many islands, big and small, scattered about between the Pacific and the Indian oceans has added to its importance.

The earliest inhabitants of these regions might have belonged to the same Negrito race, traces of whose descendants might still be seen in the Andamans, or amongst the Aetas of the Philippine Islands. Though few in number and fast diminishing, they may still be noticed in parts of Perak and Kelantan. Socially undeveloped and ethnologically displaying a primitive type, the Negrito uses even today his bow and arrow. He is a simple, free and easy individual with no thought for the morrow. None knows exactly when he reached these regions

or where he came from. The number of Negritos in the Malay Peninsula is small indeed. Many have disappeared, absorbed by hardier races. The remnant proclaims its high antiquity by its innocence and simplicity. They are a truthful people though economically poor; their needs are few; their religion is nature worship.

The date of the arrival in Malaya of the Sakai—known also as the Senoi—aboriginals in the mountain regions is by no means definite. Unlike their predecessors, the woolly-haired Negritos, the Sakais are lighter in colour and have longer skulls and wavy hair. While the Negritos have no tribal life or areas, the Sakais are organized under their own Chiefs. Again, unlike the Negrito aboriginal, the Sakai uses the famous blow-pipe and a tiny dart dipped in poison. The Sakais are spirit-worshippers. They live in the forests, in houses built on wooden piles like the houses of the Malays. Their habits are pastoral and nomadic. They cultivate rice and bananas, sometimes even tobacco and sugar-cane, but they keep on moving from place to place, and jungle to jungle, as they feel the fertility of any particular clearing is getting exhausted. The Sakais are perhaps the best and most picturesque of the aborigines of Malaya. They number about 20,000 and speak a language of their own. It is said they resemble a type still extant in China, Indo-China, and some islands of the Malayan Archipelago.

The Sakai likes to call himself 'Orang Bukit', the man of the mountains, which he really is.

A third type of aborigines is observed in the southern part and along the coast. They are mostly brown-skinned like the Malays and have straighter hair than the Sakais. Just as the Sakai likes to be known as Orang Bukit, these coast and island dwellers are keen on calling themselves 'Orang Laut'—the men of the sea. Today they are known as the Jakuns of Johore coast, though there are Jakuns in the interior also. Unlike the Malay, the Jakun is not a good agriculturist. He traps or hunts animals and birds but his main means of subsistence is fishing. The prototype of the Jakun is seen in many an island of the south-eastern Archipelago.

The population of Malaya is composite and heterogeneous. Due to immigration of more prolific peoples, the Malays themselves have come to be a minority in their own land, numbering a little over 2.5 millions in a population of nearly 6 millions. According to the 1947 figures, in the Federation of Malaya they were 43.77 per cent as against 38 per cent Chinese and 11 per cent Indians; and in the Colony of Singapore they numbered 12.2 per cent as against 77.6 per cent Chinese.

The origin of the Malay is obscure. Arguing from the type of neolithic adze which has been found both in Malaya as well as in Chota Nagpur

and of the megalithic culture traced in Malaya and amongst the Mundas and the Nagas, scholars have deduced that many waves of immigration and civilization had swept through Malaya and Malaysia in the dim, distant past. While the Jakuns are described as proto-Malays, the Malays of today may be considered as dueterro-Malays. The proto-Malays might have been at one time a vigorous and adventurous people. They belonged to the Malay-Polynesian group which once had spread through the islands from Madagascar to the Pacific. In the early periods of the Christian era, Hindu Sumatrans colonized Madagascar and a knowledge of the modern 'Malagasy' considerably helped to decipher and explain an inscription of Sri Vijaya of about the seventh century A.D., found at Banka. If, as is commonly supposed, the proto-Malays were the people who brought the neolithic civilization from the Yunnan regions into South-east Asia, their arrival in Malaya must be dated more than 2,000 years before Christ. There is evidence to show that they used chisel-like tools to carve stones, and worked in bronze. Most of the proto-Malays, however, were pushed inland with the arrival of the dueterro-Malays. This wave, if it also came from Yunnan or from Indo-China and adjacent areas, must have been influenced by the Indian civilization, as is evidenced by tools and weapons of iron. Even during the early centuries of the Christian era,

in the times of the Hans, bronze and not iron was in common use in China for tools and weapons. If, therefore, iron tools had been introduced by deuterro-Malays into Malaya, as we know from the slab graves found in Perak, they must have had their knowledge from India and not from China.

The deuterro-Malays too were a vigorous people. They pushed the proto-Malays inland, spread themselves out and occupied most of the Malayan Archipelago. They must have been good navigators, to find their way even to the Indian coasts in their outrigger boats. Whether the Malays that occupied their present homeland came from the north, or from India, or from elsewhere is still a moot point. It may be that the forefathers of the Malays, as we know them today were not all descendants of the proto-Malays or of later arrivals from the north. Though tradition and the linguistic evidence do not tally, yet it may fairly be assumed that there were also waves of immigration and colonization from the west, from Sumatra and elsewhere—successive migrations of people who crossed the waters and settled at convenient spots on the Malayan coast-line. Through the ages, waves of immigrants, and thousands of travellers, merchants and colonizers had gone to this land. Intermingling produced a new type in Malaya as in Sumatra and Java. Richmond Wheeler remarks in his *Modern Malaya* :

‘Arabs of pure and mixed stock, Indians especially from Malabar and Arabo-Indians (Sayids) from Hydrumaut have all come over, usually as traders, and married with the Malays. The Malay population of Penang is almost completely infected [?] with Indian blood and Penang Malays spread over the peninsula much more than most Malays.....’

Before the arrival of European traders in Malaya, there were continual waves of settlers from Indonesian islands. At the time the Portuguese and the Dutch arrived on the scene there was already at Malacca an influential community of Indians also. European contacts with Malaya were mostly *via* India and in their wake came Indians to help in navigation and trade, and later, in administration. History repeated itself under the British rule also. With the arrival of the British, Indian and Chinese immigration increased rapidly. Sugar plantations, tin mines and rubber estates required a steady supply of cheap labour; and owing to natural causes and artificial stimulus, workers from the East and the West steadily poured in. Traders also followed and the Peninsula thus became so crowded with outsiders that the non-Malay section of the population came to exceed the Malays. According to the 1947 figures the population of Malaya including Singapore was as follows :

TABLE I
(Figures in Thousands)

Malays including other Malayan					
immigrants	..	..	..	..	2554.9
Chinese	..	..	..	..	2691.2
Indians	..	..	..	..	606.3
Others	..	..	..	..	82.3

'Others' include Eurasians, Arabs and Annamese, Siamese and Ceylonese, and even Turks and Tibetans.

The Chinese form an influential community in Malaya today. They have materially contributed to the building up of modern Malaya. The connexion between Malaya and China is very old and has continued through the centuries. But by the time the Europeans appeared on the scene, the Chinese connexion with Malaya had already dwindled into almost nothing and what was left of it was wiped out by the monopolistic commerce of the Portuguese, the Dutch and to some extent, the early English. But Sir Stamford Raffles increased their immigration, and encouraged them to settle down permanently. Malaya became a miniature China having Hokiens and Cantonese, Hylams, Teochews and Khehs amongst them. Chinese colonization, unlike the Indian, was on practical and sound lines since women accompanied their menfolk into Malaya. With characteristic diligence and

business acumen the Chinese have won for themselves a front rank in the life of the Peninsula. A large percentage of them today is Malaya-born and has naturally adopted Malayan domicile or citizenship.

Some of the Indians are no doubt settled there, but most of them return to India periodically. The more recent tendency, however, has been to remain permanently in Malaya. About 25 per cent of them appear to have been Malaya-born. By their mother-tongue, the breakdown of Indians is :

TABLE II

Tamil	..	..	..	82.5 per cent
Malayalam		..	..	5.5 „
Telugu	..	..	..	5.0 „
Punjabi	..	..	..	5.0 „
Other Indian Languages..				2.0 „

Many have acquired Malayan domicile though in the requisites for citizenship many anomalies exist, especially in the territories of the Federation. Workers and their dependants number about 75 per cent while the rest is made up of merchants and their assistants, professional men and Government servants.

Here as in other colonies Europeans have vital interests and large stakes in the country, but are mainly birds of passage. Rarely have they any settlers amongst them.

In recent years Malaya has been in the grips of a miniature 'war' between guerillas operating mainly from shifting bases in the jungles and the forces of authority. The conflict has been variously described as 'revolt' or 'rebellion', banditry or terrorism, 'fight against imperialism' and so on and those who carry on the fight are dubbed by one side as 'nationalists', 'revolutionaries' and 'fighters for freedom' and by the other as bandits and terrorists, Communists or anarchists. It is a great pity that if it is a nationalist upsurge those non-violent methods which were tried and found effective elsewhere are not being resorted to in this country also. It may be because the country is not ripe for such methods or there is not the necessary leadership. Non-violent agitation needs strong moral calibre and highly developed political consciousness. The unfortunate failure of post-war Malaya has been that in the name of national freedom outbursts of violence have become quite common in the Peninsula and Death has claimed many hundreds of victims not only among the combatants on both sides but also among innocent civilians. 'Hit and run' tactics adopted by the guerillas have spread an atmosphere of uncertainty among both the native element in the country as much as amongst the foreign. Emergency regulations, bombings, punitive measures against non-co-operating villages or uprooting *en bloc* of Chinese 'squatters' suspected of revolutionary influences or affiliations

have so far offered no effective solution in such matters. One of the emergency measures adopted was a demand made on non-Malay youths from 17 to 28 years of age for military or semi-military service, if not in the quelling of this 'rebellion', at least for the defence of 'law and order'. It is true that in a free country such a demand would be immediately understood. But in Malaya its results were entirely different. It even threatened for a while to cause an exodus from the country of some otherwise useful elements in the population—a development not altogether unexpected. Responsibilities should invariably be in proportion to rights; law and order to be defended and upheld should be those made by the people themselves. Sacrifices will then be spontaneous. Faltering steps and piecemeal reforms may not confer on the people the necessary freedom that they aspire to—a freedom which, once gained, the people of the country will be eager to defend even at the cost of their lives.

CHAPTER III

INDIA'S EARLY CONNEXIONS

THE world knows when Caesar invaded Gaul or William the Conqueror came to England; when Vasco da Gama landed at Calicut or Drake voyaged round the globe; we know when Columbus discovered the New World; but India's discovery of Malaya still remains hidden in the mists of antiquity. There is hardly any doubt that the Indo-Malayan connexion is as old as the ages. The earliest references make it a thing of the past, as a matter of common knowledge. Ancient Hindu books speak of the region as a known part of the world. The name 'Malaya' itself is one of the oldest Indian names. Though the Malaya that we know now might have had no connexion at all with the 'Malaya Hill' where Manu, the Puranic Father of Mankind, was said to have performed his *Yagnya* (Penance), where God appeared and warned him of the impending *pralaya* (floods), yet India and Malaya, or say India and Malaysia, seem to have known each other almost from the infancy of civilization. The expression 'Tana Melayu' (Malay Land) might be of later origin, but the fact that the people who inhabited the land described themselves as Malayu, and their land as 'Tana Melayu' is in itself significant.

As we have seen, there have been various theories about the original home of the Malays. It is not improbable that the Dravidians of India who were pushed east and south by the Aryans, also went eastwards to the peninsular and insular territories of South-east Asia. Malaya might have been, even then, not unknown to them because, soon after, we come across references to it in Indian religious lore.

It is an admitted fact that for many centuries the Hindus did not reduce their knowledge to writing. The Vedas were originally handed down from father to son by rote, and only after several centuries were they committed to writing. The Puranas were no doubt later productions, but again, it is not unlikely that they recorded traditions of much older times. The *Matsyapurana*, which deals with the first of the ten incarnations of Vishnu, displays acquaintance with Malaysia. The 'Indra cult' seen in the Rig Veda went out of vogue in India itself, but it persisted for a long time in Malaya and the neighbouring countries. It is curious that with the possible exception of Shiva (whose worship antedates the Vedas), the deity most honoured in ancient Malaysia was Indra. Many an old hill (Meru) was once dedicated to him, and many an old township and hamlet bore his sacred name.

Sugriva, in the *Ramayana*, appears to know about the Malayan regions. To the search parties

he sends out east, for tracing the whereabouts of abducted Sita, his directions included: 'Do ye carefully search those places which are accessible, by crags and bounds—and Yava Dvipa adorned by seven several Kingdoms and the Swarna Dvipa and Rupayaka—thronged by gold miners. And going beyond the Yava Dvipa [one comes upon] the mountains called Sisira.....' (*Kishkindha Kanda, Section XL*). Swarna Dvipa has been identified as Malaya and Yava Dvipa as Java. The Vedas contain references to ships, sea voyages and foreign trade, to 'greedy merchants' who sent out ships to distant lands, who went everywhere in pursuit of gain—and frequented every part of the sea. The Buddhist *Jatakas* referred in far greater details to adventures across the seas. They make mention of Malaya—Swarna Bhumi, the land of gold—to which repaired Samkha and Janaka in search of wealth. A large number of *Jatakas* draw their material from maritime adventures, and a study of their texts opens a window into that period of glory when mariners, merchants and missionaries from India carried their culture to the Malay Archipelago, the Malay Peninsula and Indo-China. Nehru in his *Discovery of India* says: 'The *Jatakas* are full of references to merchants' voyages.... According to the *Jatakas*, ships travelled from Benares, Patna, Champa (Bhagalpur) and other places to the sea and thence

to southern ports and Ceylon and Malaya.....
These ships must have been fairly large as it is said in the *Jatakas* that hundreds of merchants and emigrants embarked on a ship.' Buddhist *Jatakas* are regarded as recording even pre-Buddhist folklore of India. They described popular traditions that existed in India centuries before the Christian era. The *Periplus of the Erythraean Sea* also describes Indian ships as huge vessels capable of voyages to Golden Chersonese (Malaya).

The later arrival of Indians in Malaya and surrounding countries could not have been in the form of an invasion or conquest. Occasionally, ships taking advantage of the monsoon winds might have visited those shores 'bringing magic amulets from Malabar', bangles and beads, and taking back in return rare herbs and medicines, ivory, minerals and other products of the Malayan forests. Some Chinese accounts describe Indian ships carrying their wares to China as early as the seventh century B.C. Among countries with which ancient India carried on trade, Kautilya's *Arthashastra* makes mention of Swarnabhumi noted for its perfumes, China for its silks and Arabia for its horses. Indian trade with Malaysia and China in beads, cornelian and other semi-precious stones dated centuries before the Christian era. No one knows with certainty its origins or commencement. It is, however, known that for 2000 years at least, trade

went on between South India and Kedah with short interruptions. According to a Chinese account of the sixth century A.D. the first Malayan State Langkasuka which with its capital in Kedah controlled one of India's main land routes across the Isthmus of Kra, from the Indian to the Chinese waters, was already by then four hundred years old. It is surprising to learn that the age-old Indian trade with Malaya in semi-precious stones and cornelian flourished for many centuries and came to an end only with the Portuguese conquest of Malacca. It seems that such trade had commenced even before Hindus actually came to settle down on Malayan shores.

As far as is known therefore the earliest Indo-Malayan relations were the outcome of a spirit of trade and adventure. That spirit preceded religious propaganda and missionary activity. There were many Indian settlements in South-east Asia which later developed into kingdoms. Sir Richard Winstedt says :

‘There is no evidence that the arrival of Hindus in the Malay world was sudden or violent or overwhelming. A ship or so came with the monsoon to exchange beads and magic amulets for gold, tin, ivory, camphor and those rare medicines, rhinoceros horns and bezoars, the latter, stone-like agglomerates of salts found in cocoanut, jack fruit and bamboo, snake, pig, monkey and dragon universally

esteemed as antidotes against plague and poison. Here and there a passenger practised magic, that proved potent in love or war or disease. Another won regard as a warrior. Some married local brides. Priests came and taught a new ritual in Sanskrit, awe-inspiring, as Arabic was to be later, because unintelligible to the multitude. For daily speech the newcomers, evidently because they were sparse, adopted the languages of Malaysia and introduced very few words of their own colloquial Prakrit. In time a few married into leading Indonesian families and brought Hindu ideas of kingship, just as more than a thousand years later Muslim Tamils married into the families of the Sultans and Bendaharas of Malacca. The coming of the Hindu appears to have been very similar to the later arrivals of the Muslim from India and the Hadramaut, the Brahmin and Kshatriya taking the place to be usurped by the Sayid. Buddhist priests also came, among them Gunavarman, a Kashmiri prince who in the fifth century A.D. visited Java and made many converts to Hinayana Buddhism before, in 431, he died at Nanking.'

In comparatively recent times, the connexions were developed by the Kalingas and the Pallavas. There is a tradition that thousands of Kalinga families migrated to Java in the second century A.D. Perhaps it is this great exodus abroad that the people of Orissa still celebrate in the month of

Kartika by setting afloat on their rivers small boats symbolically laden with cereals. However, Kalingas were to make their mark in South-east Asia only at a later period; and it was the Pallavas who made the first impress on Malaysia. Indeed, some of the earliest traders with Malaya were from the Pallava kingdoms of the South. They used the traditional sea and land route, east, with which India had already been familiar. To quote Sylvain Levi: 'The movement which carried Indian civilization towards different parts of the globe about the beginning of the Christian era was far from inaugurating any new route; the routes had by then already become familiar. The Indian classic *Manimekhalai* connects India and Swarnadvipa. Kanchi, the capital of the Pallavas, sent sailors to the South Sea regions. The Pallavas took with them into Malaya their alphabet, and used Sanskrit for inscriptions. One such inscription believed to have been of the fourth century A.D. on a slate slab discovered on the Malayan mainland, near Bukit Mertajam, is in Sanskrit and in the oldest Pallava alphabet. The contents of this inscription are of great interest for more reasons than one. Indeed, they show that India had, by then, already started her mission as a preceptor along with her interests as trader. It said: "The laws which arise from a Cause, Tathagatha told about that, and what is their suppression has thus

been told by the great Sramana. Karma accumulates through lack of knowledge. Karma is the cause of rebirth. Through knowledge it comes about that no action is effected, and through absence of action (one) is not born (again).” Perhaps an earlier Indian inscription on a stone excavated also in Province Wellesley is equally interesting. It is almost identical with that on the slate slab found in Bukit Mertajam, not far away. It added that it was the gift to a Buddhist temple from “Buddha Gupta, the great Sailor”.’ (Perhaps the reference was to the Buddhist temple in which excavators found a coffee-pot-like container. Inside the container was a model of a fowl made of thin silver wire—a piece of genuine artistic skill.)

It is believed that it was the Pallavas who founded near the Dindings, on the west coast of Perak State, the settlement known as Ganga Nagara, which, according to tradition, was destroyed later by the Cholas in the eleventh century A.D. At the foot of the Kedah Peak an idol of Durga was also unearthed, and on the top were found the ancient ruins of a granite and brick structure. It is well-known that in the fifth or sixth century, one of the Kedah princes lived in India in exile, married an Indian princess and their son Bagadatta sent a Buddhist envoy to China. The inscriptions in Sanskrit discovered in Province Wellesley and Kedah date from the fourth century A.D. Pallavas were

known to have built various Shiva temples in Malaya as in other territories that they colonized or visited. As some Buddhist bronzes of the Gupta style, dating from the fifth century, were also found in the district of Kinta in Perak, it seems that there were other Indian influences at work even during that period. A coronation ring inscribed Vishnu Varman and belonging to the sixth century A.D. has been discovered in Kuala Selinsing in Perak. It is not improbable that Malaya at this time formed part of Founan, the Hinduized empire that stretched from Indo-China to the Malay Peninsula. By the seventh century when Founan fell, Buddhism must have already taken deep roots in the region, either displacing or intermingling with orthodox Hinduism. When Fa Hien touched Indonesia about A.D. 430, Hindu influence was still predominant. Both Greek and Arab accounts record regular maritime traffic between India and the East at least from the first century A.D. and Malaya being on the direct route, was in closer contact with India. Wave after wave of Indian traders and colonists had reached the shores of Burma and Indo-China, Malaya and Indonesia. When the Chinese pilgrim I'tsing started on his tour in A.D. 671, he seems to have known that ships plied frequently between Malaya and India.

Soon after the Pallavas, new influences from (Pala) Bengal and Magadha also reached Malaya and Indonesia, bringing the Devanagari script and

Mahayana Buddhism. By the seventh century A.D. there comes into bold relief in Malaysia the great Indian Empire of Sri Vijaya. It is thought that by about the fifth century, that empire had its beginnings in Java where Buddhist monuments of a later day, Borubudur, proclaim to this day the greatness of Sri Vijaya. It reached its eminence in the seventh century under its great Sailendra rulers. For well over five hundred years—from the fifth to the tenth century A.D.—this kingdom flourished. Then for a hundred years with varying fortunes it had to defend its sovereignty against Chola challengers from South India. Nevertheless, with occasional breaks, Sri Vijaya maintained its rule till at last in the fourteenth century it fell before a powerful kingdom, Majapahit. It is not improbable, according to some, that the Sailendra Empire, regarded as a Sumatran Empire, had its beginnings in Malaya. When it appeared in the seventh century in Sumatra, it did so in full glory. It sent a punitive expedition to Java to quell a rebellion there. It already held sway over the regions of South-east Asia including Malaya and controlled the Straits of Malacca. It despatched its envoys to China, and had trade relations with the Celestial Empire. The Palembang capital must have been founded by A.D. 683. From then onwards the Empire expanded until it became a great maritime power. For about 600 years or more it held its

dominant position, and there is evidence to show that the might of its fleet, the prowess of its soldiers and sailors, and the fabulous wealth of its 'Maharajas' contributed not a little to its fame and glory. It traded with India and China, policed the Malayan waters and received shipping tributes. For hundreds of years Sri Vijaya was a centre of Buddhist learning, and was visited by learned men from both India and China. The study of Sanskrit and Buddhist literatures was encouraged, and the renown of Buddhist temples erected by Sri Vijaya rulers attracted Buddhist monks from far and near.

Relations between Sri Vijaya and India were not uniformly friendly. An Indian copper plate inscription records that in A.D. 1006 Rajendra Chola I granted a charter to an Indian village to maintain a temple founded at Negapatam by a Sri Vijaya king. But soon relations must have deteriorated, for we see more than once the Chola Kingdom, with which Sri Vijaya had intimate commercial connexions, putting its maritime power to test by leading naval expeditions to the Malayan coasts. A Tanjore inscription of 1030 commemorates the victory of Rajendra Chola I over Kedaram (Kedah) and other parts of North Malaya and also over Sri Vijaya. Clashes with the Cholas continued, and according to 'Malay Annals' it was a Raja 'Cholan' or 'Suran', a Tamil king, who destroyed Ganga Nagara and occupied Tumasik (old Singapore). In

1068 another Chola King, Veera Rajendra, conquered Kedaram again but restored it to its ruler 'who worshipped his conqueror's ankletted feet'. Sri Vijaya however successfully survived such conquests and continued until the fourteenth century. Arab accounts confirm that in the twelfth century Sri Vijaya was still controlling the Sunda Straits from Palembang and the Straits of Malacca from Acheh and Kedah. In the fourteenth century, however, Majapahit, the last Hindu Kingdom of Java, broke up the Empire of Sri Vijaya and brought under its rule the colonies and dependencies of its Sumatran neighbour. Malaya thus came under the sway of the Javanese Hindus. All this time, however, the Sailendra Empire (which included Malaya) carried on its trade with India and even Arabia on the west and China on the east.

There is little doubt that Sri Vijaya kings were originally colonists from India and had intimate relations with this country. Dr Quartrich Wales, the well-known orientalist, speaks of Sailendra as the great conqueror whose achievements could only be compared with those of the greatest amongst Western soldiers, whose fame had spread from Persia to China, who in a decade or two built up a vast maritime empire which endured for five centuries, and who made it possible for 'the marvellous flowering of Indian art and culture in Java and Cambodia'. Apart from close

cultural relations with India, a fair amount of evidence has come to light concerning Sri Vijaya's commercial relations with the Chola, Pandya and Kerala Kingdoms in particular. Many of its inscriptions used the Grantha characters. The Tokopa inscriptions discovered in the Isthmus of Kra indicate that the commercial syndicates of Manigramam 'Chettys' who had their business centres on the Malabar coast traded with this part of the world. It was a period of great cultural activity. Indian customs, languages and religious observances penetrated the Peninsula. Social and political systems then well known in India appear to have been introduced into the territories of Sri Vijaya.

The causes of Sri Vijaya's decline are not yet definitely known. Even after its defeats at the hands of the Cholas it continued to retain its strength and was able to revitalize itself to such an extent that one of its kings, Chandrabhanu, sent invading expeditions to Ceylon in 1236 and 1256. During the latter invasion he is said to have secured the assistance of the Cholas, the Pandyas and others. But in this evanescent world nothing lasts for ever. Empires have their rise and inevitable fall. Sri Vijaya too disappeared, yielding place to new powers and kingdoms. Perhaps Thai invasions from the north of the Malay Peninsula and the rising tide of Majapahit may have contributed towards the

break up of this once mighty empire. For nearly a thousand years it held aloft the torch of Indian civilization in South-east Asia; and curiously enough, from the time of its disappearance to almost the other day, Malaya was to know no real peace !

CHAPTER IV

MALACCA DOWN THE AGES

AMONG the Malayan colonies of Sri Vijaya was Tumasik (known also as Sinhapura or Singapore), founded about A.D. 1280. Though even in the thirteenth century the Javanese Empire of Majapahit had begun to claim parts of Malaya as its own, it was only between 1338 and 1365 that it conquered the Malay Peninsula. Tumasik, just like Palembang, fell a prey to Javanese onslaughts. And when Tumasik fell, Malacca rose.

In about 1403 Parameswara, who had married a Palembang princess, fled from Tumasik to the North, and with the help of sea-gipsies, founded Malacca. He wished to escape the wrath of the Siamese whom he was alleged to have wronged. He had also visions of securing Indian trade unhampered by piratical depredations to which other parts of the country and the coast were then subject. Kedah, the only centre of Indian trade, had been taken over by the King of Acheh (Pasai) and subjected to Islamic proselytization. Parameswara (like some of his successors later on) visited China and was cordially received by the Emperor who extended to him his protection.

One of the descendants of Parameswara married a Pasai princess and embraced Islam,

assuming the title of Iskandar Shah. For a time thereafter successive rulers wavered between Hinduism and Islam, pretending to be Hindu or Muslim according to the exigencies of the situation. It is curious to observe that even after adopting Islam they claimed to be the descendants of Shiva!

With India, Malacca had even closer ties. Parameswara's successor assumed the Sailendra title of 'Maharaja' and introduced a constitution based on Hindu pattern, familiar to students of Sri Vijaya and seen also in Founan, Java and Pegu. Just as Indra's court was deemed to have 32 gods and himself, the Malacca constitution provided for the ruler, 4 great and 8 lesser chiefs, and 16 smaller and 32 inferior ones. This concept was later copied by some other Malay States. Though the nature of Indian influence in Malaya had undergone a change since the time of Sri Vijaya, yet Indians still enjoyed an important and honoured position. The rise of Malacca was in direct proportion to her trade, and in that trade India—Bengal, South India and Gujerat—played a prominent role. The enormous influence which Indians were able to build up in Malacca could be gauged from the fact that by the fifties of the fifteenth century, Tamil merchants could engineer a revolution, cause the death of an infant ruler, and place his step-brother (son of a Tamilian mother) on the throne. Muzaffer Shah, as he was known later, discarded the title of 'Maharaja' and

assumed that of 'Sultan'. From then on, until the arrival of the Portuguese, South Indian Muslim influence tended to dominate Malacca, her court and her trade. Muzaffer Shah and his successors were personally interested in the flourishing Indo-Malayan trade and became in consequence powerful enough to extend their territory to other portions of the Peninsula, over some of which, following Sri Vijaya tradition, Malacca placed its own Governors, with the designation of *Mandulikas*. Malaccan polity and society were very much influenced by India. Almost to its last days, the Malacca Sultanate showed no signs of decay, and but for Portuguese incursions would have continued in prosperity for a very long time. Even in the days of its last ruler, Mahmud, described as 'a weak, clever, half-caste libertine', when court intrigues were rife, Malacca did not appear to shed its glory.

Malacca followed Sri Vijaya traditions and tried to improve upon them. Her port administration was on lines followed in India. The Malacca port officers were known as *Shahbandars*, and it was said that there were four of them,—one for the Gujerati trade and another for 'Klings', Bengalis, Peguans and Pasais; a third for the Chinese, and a fourth for vessels from the Malayan Archipelago. Never before or since did Malacca enjoy such fame and prosperity.

In less than a century the village that Parame-

swara had founded developed into a metropolitan sea-port of such eminence that the very name Malacca became almost interchangeable with Malaya. Indians of this period were not only great merchants, but good navigators and settlers. Many an important court official of the time also was Indian. They freely inter-married with the Malayan nobility. We gather from d'Albuquerque that even when the last Sultan, Mahmud, lost his capital to the Portuguese and fled to Pahang, it was one Nasim Mudaliar, an Indian merchant, 'one of his uncles', whom he sent to Peking as an envoy to solicit imperial assistance against Portugal.

The importance of Indian residents at Malacca must have been considerable. 'In the northern part [of the city of Malacca] live merchants known as Quelins [Klings—a name applied to South Indians]; in this part the town is much larger than at any other..... There are at Malacca, many foreign merchants who, I said before, live among themselves; they are moors and pagans. The pagans come principally from Paleacate [Pulicat]; they are installed permanently; they are very rich; they are the greatest merchants of the world at this period. They evaluate their wealth only by bahar of gold; there are some possessing 60 quintals [quintal=100 kg.] of gold. They do not consider as rich the merchant who in a single day does not buy 3 or 4 ships charged with merchandises of great

value and make them reload [the ships] and pay them their proper amounts. Thus, this port is the most important and has the richest merchandise known to the whole world. They [the ships] buy pepper, cloth from Cambaya, from Bengal and from Paleacate; grains, saffron, yellow coral, red lead, mercury, opium, the drugs of Cambaya called *cacho* and *pucho* and other articles of merchandise which come there by the Red Sea. [There come *paraos* laden with] pepper from Malabar. There come likewise merchants from the whole of India from Coromandel, from Bengal, from Tenassarim, from Pegu with provisions and rich merchandise. They carry likewise to Malacca the cloves of Molucus, the camphor of Borneo, the mace and the black nutmeg of Banda, the white and red sandal of Timor.¹

What a wide vista is opened up in the above passage! Even today 'Keling' or 'Kling' is an expression used in vulgar Malay parlance to describe Indians hailing from the south of India, just as 'B'ngalee' is the term so applied to all Indians from the north, though Indians of today want to be known simply as Indians and resent any other description, e.g. 'Kling', an expression which traces their ancient connexions to the people of Kalinga. 'They are the greatest merchants of the world at this period,' says the writer, and Malacca had the reputa-

¹ Castanheda (1528-38) Bk II, Ch ii on the City of Malacca (cited by Ferrand in *Journal Asiatique* 11:12 (1918) pp. 148-9).

tion of being the most flourishing port of the age.

Duarte Barbosa speaking of the Indian merchants of Malacca writes: 'Many Moorish merchants reside in it and also Gentiles, particularly Chetis, who are natives of Cholmendel [Coromandel] and they are all very rich and have many large ships, which they call jungos [junks]. They deal in all sorts of goods in different parts, and many other Moorish and Gentile merchants flock thither from other countries to trade; some in ships of 2 masts from China and other places and they bring thither much silk in skeins, many porcelain vases, damasks, brocades, satins of many colours; they deal in musk, rhubarb, coloured silks, much iron, saltpetre, fine silver, many pearls and seed pearl, chests, painted fans, and other toys, pepper, wormwood, Cambay stuffs, scarlet cloths, saffron coral polished and rough, many stuffs of Paleacate [Pulicat], of coloured cotton, other whites from Bengal, vermilion, quicksilver, opium and other merchandise, and drugs from Cambay; amongst which there is a drug which we [Portuguese] do not possess which they call putcho, another called cacho and another called magican which are gallnuts, and which they bring from Levant to Cambay, by way of Mekkah and they are worth a great deal in China and Java.'²

India thus traded not only with Malaya but

² Cited by Ferrand, *op. cit.*, 11:11 (1918) pp. 407-8.

was in virtual command of all the carrying trade from the Mediterranean to the China Sea which passed through the port of Malacca. In the Middle Ages the trade between Gujerat and Malacca had increased by leaps and bounds. Ibn Majid writing in 1489-90 speaks of 'the well-armed ships coming from Campa which one met on the way from Kalikut [Calicut] to Malaka [Malacca]', as being the only ships on this route that could withstand the monsoon winds effectively. According to the 'Commentaries', in February 1511, the great d'Albuquerque was in Ceylon. On his way from Cochin to Malacca with his flotilla of 18 ships 'they descried a ship. Albuquerque gave orders to come alongside of it and they took it. They rejoiced much [to find] that it was a ship [armed] with Guzaratis, and they concluded from it they were on the right path for they [Guzaratis] know this route much better than all other nations because of the great commerce they have with these [Eastern] countries.'³

Under the inspiration of Indians, Malacca helped in spreading the Arabian religion. It failed, however, to alter the essentially Hindu outlook of the newly converted. The *Ramayana* continued to enjoy its pristine popularity and old Indian folklore mingled happily with Arabian tales, Hindu esoteric practices with Islamic mysticism. The standard of intellec-

3 Cited by Ferrand, *op. cit.*, 11 : 11 (1918) pp. 407-8.

tual attainments in old Malacca was by no means low, and intimate contacts with India and Arabia stimulated them just as much as trade.

In the period that followed the Malacca Sultanate, direct Indian contacts were severely restricted, first by the Portuguese and then by the Dutch. It was from India that Alphonso d'Albuquerque, the Portuguese Governor of Goa, went and captured Malacca. Sultan Mahmud with the loyal assistance of his subjects and of his Indian supporters resisted the invader, but as in the case of India, Malacca too could not escape the militant approaches of commercial imperialism from the West—of the conqueror passing off as trader. In the process, the Portuguese and the Dutch succeeded in depriving Malacca of her freedom and her flourishing trade. Though some trade continued to drag on in a haphazard way, it was mainly through monopolistic channels controlled by the conquerors. Indeed, the main connexion between India and Malaya since the advent of the Europeans was through common experiences: India and Malaya suffered from similar sorrows and received perhaps benefits of the same friendships.

The Portuguese took Malacca with 800 Portuguese and 300 Indian soldiers 'recruited from Malabar'. From 1513 to 1641 Malacca was under Portuguese India. It became a centre of Portuguese

trade and tyranny in the East. In fact there was little of normal trade; and much of tyranny. The Portuguese forced merchant ships who approached the Straits of Malacca to sell their wares at dictated prices. In 1544, Goa decreed that all Indian merchandise to Malacca should pay a toll of 6 per cent and ships that touched Malacca on their way to China from India were forced to sell to the Portuguese factory at Malacca a quarter of their cargo at 20 per cent discount. Corrupt Portuguese 'Captains' extracted tolls and duties and fanciful presents from passing merchants. Little wonder therefore that Indian merchants soon gave a wide berth both to the Portuguese and to Malacca and began to contribute towards the prosperity of Acheh (Acheen) in Sumatra.

Acheh came to be the rendezvous of Indian traders from Calicut and Ceylon, Bengal and Pegu, who thus escaped Portuguese avarice. Indian sailors from Malabar and Gujerat manned many a ship of the Achinese Navy. When in 1539, Sultan Ala-uddin Raiyat Shah took Deli (a feudatory of Malacca) by force he did so with the help of Indians. Nevertheless, Portugal's piratical interception of Indian vessels, her religious persecution, her butchery of captured victims, created panic and acted as a severe set-back to Indian trade even with Acheh and other parts of Malaysia. Trade became a Portuguese monopoly. But not for long; corrup-

tion and cruelty crushed Malacca's old trade and its importance soon dwindled almost into nothing. The triangular contests for pelf and power, among Acheh, Portugal and Johore gave place to similar struggles among the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English in Malayan waters. With the ultimate conquest of Malacca by the Dutch, the Portuguese faded away from the picture; and the Dutch hegemony paved the way for the English.

During the days of the Portuguese, just as in early days of the British, Malacca was politically a part of Portuguese India. Its administration was controlled by the Viceroy of Goa. Though the 'Captains' were appointed by the King of Portugal, the Commander-in-Chief of the Portuguese forces at Malacca and the Guvidor (Chief Justice) were appointees of the Viceroy at Goa. Appeals from Malacca lay to the High College of Justice at Goa, and both the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief were indictable for misconduct, at Goa. Portuguese ships traded with Malaya mainly in Indian textiles. Nagapatnam and San Thome received gold, tin, pepper, sandalwood and Chinese goods through Portuguese ships, giving in return foodstuffs, cloth and leather. Bengal too carried on some trade through Portuguese channels. In spite of this Barretto de Resende, describing Malaccan trade in 1638, says: 'But now it is almost entirely extinct, for never or rarely do any natives come to Malacca

to seek anything.' Portuguese Malacca was a sink of corruption and iniquity; so much so that St. Francis, before he left Malacca, shook its dust off his feet and ordered the Jesuits to leave a place so wicked. According to him, it was a place infested by the corrupt, the dissolute, and the indisciplined. The system of government was cruel and heartless; and religious bigotry forced non-Christian foreigners to keep far away from the channels of Portuguese trade.

After nearly 130 years Malacca was already tottering when Portugal itself came under Spain. The Dutch now arrive on the scene. Recognizing no papal bulls or 'allocations', the Dutch went out in quest of trade, and soon extended their influence to the East and to the West. In 1641 the Dutch, by then well established at Batavia, took Malacca, and captured Ceylon in 1654 from the Portuguese. They were free from the arrogance, ruthlessness and proselytizing zeal which had made the Portuguese unpopular. But by and large they continued to follow in the footsteps of their predecessors, and the restrictions imposed by the Portuguese on Indian trade with the East Indies continued to be enforced. No ships were allowed into Malayan waters unless they obtained, on payment, a permit from Dutch Malacca; and often no such permits were granted to Indian ships bound for Aceh or Perak. The

Dutch maintained that they were the rightful legatees of the Portuguese who forced the sale of tin and sandalwood to themselves at dictated prices. Indians, the English and others tried to run what was virtually a Dutch blockade of the Malayan coast in order to cut into the self-arrogated Dutch monopoly of Malayan tin and other products. Clandestine traffic thus grew up; and States like Kedah secretly evaded Dutch pressure and traded with Bengal and Coromandel in tin, elephants, gold and cloth. English merchants from India took an active part in such trade ever since the days of the Portuguese.

It was in December 1600 that the English East India Company received its Charter. Almost from its inception, it was interested in East Indian trade. Queen Elizabeth wrote to her 'brothers Lords of the pepper trade', the rulers of Acheh and Bantong (whose names were left blank to be filled in later after ascertaining what they were). In that trade, the English company played for about a century second fiddle to the more powerful Dutch; and though Cromwell defeated them in Europe, in South-east Asia the English had time and again to retire from an unequal contest with their competitors. It is said that in 1623 they even decided 'to abandon Malayan spices for the calicoes of India'. English merchants from India, however, could not resist the temptation, and at considerable risk, developed

sporadic trade through Indian channels. The cargo was Indian; the ships that carried them were English, and Indian agents like 'Hans Mea' and 'Mohamet Sayid' were engaged by the British to take Indian goods stealthily to Malaya in return for tin and pepper. The profits of such transactions went to individual English servants of the Company. It seems occasionally men like Sir Edward Winter of Masulipatam fraudulently made use of ships belonging to Indian enterprises—in this case to the Nawab of Golconda—and made huge profits. Dutch officials also took an appreciable slice of the Malayan trade in cloth and tin, gold and elephants, to enrich themselves. Indeed, such corruption and dishonesty ruined Malacca under the Dutch. Malacca's sun set. It became a village inhabited by a few Portuguese, Dutch burghers, a few hundred Chinese and Indians, and but 588 Malays!

The English East India Company operating from India had officially opened factories in Malaya and in the East Indies, manning them with sepoy and assistants from India. But the fortunes of the Company in Malaya varied from time to time. They depended partly on successes and failures in Europe, partly on the enthusiasm of the Directors at home or their agents in India. It was in 1771, however, that Capt. Francis Light, an English naval officer who had become a private trader attached to Messrs Jourdain Sullivan & De Souza of Madras, visited

Malaya and wrote back to his firm that in return for assistance against Selangor the ruler of Kedah had agreed to give him the concession of a sea port and to share the monopoly of Kedah trade with the English. Capt. Light pointed out that by accepting the Raja's proposals they could oust the Dutch, the French, the Danes and the 'Tamils' from such trade. It is said that Warren Hastings who was then concentrating his attention on transforming a trading company into a ruling power, did not pay much attention to the trade or politics of Malaya. Light called on him at Calcutta in 1780; but nothing material seems to have transpired till 1785 because, for one thing, wars between the Company and the French and also with Hyder Ali of Mysore had rendered the Bay of Bengal unsafe. The Company had to give all its attention to Indian events. But soon the British found that it was not an unattractive proposition to have in Malaya, as near to India as possible, a port of call for Indiamen engaged in China trade—a port at which even an English squadron could be stationed, or vessels revictualled. In 1785 Francis Light obtained from the Raja of Kedah the island of Penang in return for a yearly payment. He had also to pledge the Company's assistance to the Raja in case of attack from outside. More than trade, the need for having a base on the Indian side of Malaya influenced the British to ratify Light's arrangements and to appoint him Superin-

tendent of Penang. Unconsciously perhaps, the importance of holding key positions in the Indian Ocean was beginning to be realized. As to the terms arranged by Light with the Raja, the Company was non-committal and evasive, and later back-slided from them. However, when the Raja attempted to retake the island on the ground of failure of performance of the contract by the English, Light with his Indian soldiers defeated his erstwhile ally, forcing him to agree to a dictated treaty. The 'honourable' Company further extended its tentacles in 1800 by the acquisition of the territory opposite Penang island called subsequently Province Wellesley.

Sir Stamford Raffles, the Knight who secured Singapore for the British in 1819, originally belonged to the India House in London. In 1813 he had called on Lord Hastings, then Governor-General of India, at Calcutta and got his permission to look for a British station in the Riau Archipelago or in Johore. With the backing of Lord Hastings he finally obtained Singapore from the Sultan of Johore. Raffles was convinced of the efficacy of free trade as a policy in Malaya, and soon after the founding of Singapore, trade from India and China began to grow. In 1824 the Treaty of London allotted to Britain the Malay Peninsula, and to Holland the islands to the south.

From 1786, when Light landed at Penang with

his Indian soldiers, the Settlement began to be a part of India. In 1805, from a Residency subject to the Governor of Bengal, Penang, together with Province Wellesley, was elevated to a Presidency under a Lt.-Governor responsible to the Governor-General of India. Covenanted civil servants and Indian assistants came from India. In 1826 Penang together with Singapore and Malacca (which came by then into British hands) unitedly became a Presidency of India. Four years later, their status was again made that of a Residency under the Governor-in-Council of Bengal. In 1832 the capital was transferred from Penang to Singapore, and after nearly 20 years, the Straits Settlements once more became an Indian Presidency directly under the Governor-General. The India Office took over in 1858, and the territories were treated as a Colony and were transferred over to the British Colonial Office later in 1867. There was even an attempt, in 1855, to introduce the Indian rupee as the currency of the Straits Settlements!

The political and commercial connexions that British possessions in Malaya had with India as a part of this country brought the Indians once more to Malayan shores. The doors that had been closed in the days of the Portuguese and the Dutch were once again opened. Indian shipping was by now dead. But Indian traders through British shipping could get interested in Malaya. The free trade and

free port policy pursued by Raffles and others encouraged such trade. As sepoys and even as civil employees of the Company, Indians began to be seen in Malaya. Modern Indian emigration to the Malaya Peninsula started in the wake of the British. There were remnants of old Indian settlers and traders in the States of Perak even before such emigration. We see in the eighteenth century, for example, a Sultan of Perak conferring a title on a South Indian who had his wife in Perak and who was engaged in the elephant trade.

In 1821 when Siam attacked Kedah to take Sultan Ahmed Tajuddin Halim Shah to task for his failure to pay the customary tribute to Bangkok, the fort was garrisoned and defended by Bengali and Chulia (meaning, North and South Indian) sepoys. During Sultan Hussain's stay in Singapore (after it had been ceded to the British in 1824) an Indian was his steward and manager. After he shifted his residence to Malacca, the Indian, it is reported, was created a nobleman and given the Sultan's daughter in marriage. In 1835, when Hussain died, it was an Indian who even conducted the funeral service. It is said that Sultan Hussain's heir Sultan Ali authorized an Indian in 1862 to sell the town of Muar as his agent. Another Indian was appointed by him as his attorney to collect revenues.

During the days of the Company and until about 1873 the Settlements were used as convict stations

to which were sent Indians sentenced to transportation for life or for long terms of imprisonment. In Singapore prison alone in 1857 there were 2,139 of such convicts. Many of the convicted persons settled down permanently in Penang, Singapore and Malacca.

CHAPTER V

FROM PERAK TO PEARL HARBOUR

ONCE the British had established themselves at Penang and Province Wellesley, at Malacca and Singapore, their penetration inland was a foregone conclusion. That indeed was the pattern and the technique of colonial expansion, set, if not by British diplomacy and foresight, then surely by a kind Providence. Yet in Malaya the penetration appeared unconscious and involuntary. The British administrators of the Settlements did not seem to have clear ideas about their future plans. Sir Stamford Raffles had foreseen the need for friendship, goodwill and understanding with the Malayan rulers. No steps were taken, however, in this direction and the Rajas continued to enjoy their traditional powers, though occasionally disturbed by Siamese invasions from the north. Nor were they clever enough to foresee that once the British were established at Penang, Singapore and Malacca, the days of their own rule in the interior were numbered. The Government of India had adopted a policy of non-penetration in Malaya except to the extent dictated by necessity, and the Home Government then had endorsed that policy. But as in other parts of the world during the building up of the British Empire, commercial interests were working

behind the scenes silently but inexorably. In 1872, the British Chamber of Commerce of Singapore petitioned the Colonial Office that British subjects who attempted to trade with the interior were not encouraged, nor were their interests protected. They did not appear to succeed immediately in convincing H. M. G. that it was necessary for the development of legitimate trade to have some sort of control over the territories of Malayan Rajas.

But the businessmen persisted, and tried several methods of interfering with the internal administration of some of the States. Parties to domestic quarrels within the States found financiers and supporters from outside, as for example in Perak, where British traders seemed to take sides with the Chinese miners of the place to create disaffection and to fabricate instances of interference with Britain's trade interests.

It did not seem quite providential then that in 1873 the policy of non-interference with the local Rajas of Malaya suffered a change, as was evident from a letter which Lord Kimberley, then Secretary of State for the Colonies, wrote to Sir Andrew Clark. The new Governor was asked to study the situation and make special recommendations for steps to be taken by the Colonial Government to promote 'peace and order' and to secure protection to trade and commerce. A helpful Providence caused a dispute to appear in the succession to the

Perak throne and the British promptly intervened. Raja Abdulla of Perak was manoeuvred into requesting the British to send him an officer 'to teach him how to rule the country'—though the State had had a fairly efficient administration till then. Next year, under the Pangkor Agreement, a British Resident was posted in Perak whose advice on all matters other than religious or of local custom became obligatory on the Raja. The collection and control of revenues were also to be regulated by the Resident. The British officer brought in to teach the Raja his own business did his job so well that in 1876, poor Abdulla lost his kingdom and found himself an exile before he had quite understood that that was exactly the implication of the Pangkor Treaty. Nothing was done in all this which could go against the letter of the British professions that they would not interfere in the domestic affairs of the local rulers except at their own request.

Other parts of Malaya presented almost the same picture as that of Perak. In 1874 the Governor of the Straits Settlements issued a proclamation 'to the Malay Rajas, Elders and People to make known to them the good wishes of the Great Queen of England'. He dealt with disturbances in several States and insisted on the observance and fulfilment of pledges. The die was thus cast. The proclamation projected on the political screen the shadows of coming events. Diplomacy was thrown to the

winds. The rulers of Malaya were to be treated no longer as independent sovereigns, or even as allies, but as subjects actual or potential. The choice of a 'proclamation' as the agency for communication in place of normal representation gave definite indication of the change. In 1874, following the Perak example, Selangor was brought under British rule. In 1876 the State of Sri Menanti (Negri Sembilan) had to accept British protection. Pahang followed soon after. In 1892, Pahang's bid for liberty was soon put down, again with the help of Indian soldiers. The epic tale of Ram Singh who, bleeding from thirty wounds, escaped the 'enemy' to warn his British employers is narrated in almost every account of the Pahang 'Rebellion'. Trengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis were brought into the fold soon after. Thus all the kingdoms of Malaya except Patani in the north came under British sway. Malaya crumbled like a house of cards.

With the commencement of British administration in Malaya her economy underwent a rapid transformation. In 1874, the Malay Peninsula was said to be 'swathed in its primeval covering' except for a few towns and hamlets. Roads soon replaced waterways. In the interior, jungles were cleared and cultivation proceeded apace, though the emphasis in later years was to be on commercial products like rubber, oil palm, coconuts and pine-

apples. English planters opened up the country with Indian labour. British capital could be put to good use because of the availability of cheap labour from India. A period of peaceful progress and capitalistic development set in. Sugarcane plantations, first started in Province Wellesley, were extended to other regions by the beginning of the twentieth century. By arrangement with the Government of India, labour on an indenture system was brought into the Peninsula. Chinese immigration was encouraged for working and developing the tin mines of the Kinta Valley. Small but neatly laid out villages came into being alongside the roads that were built. Railways followed. In the construction work of roads and railways, India's sons shouldered most of the burden. The conditions of labour on the sugar plantations were deplorable. The indenture system worked with ruthlessness in Malaya as elsewhere. Men and women were considered mere chattels. Punishments were inhuman; and though 'crimping' labour from one plantation to another was not uncommon, no worker could escape from one and find employment in another.

The growth of the population brought in its train changes in its composition. The Chinese rapidly increased in numbers and became the more prominent section of the Malayan population. Indians also increased though not with the same

rapidity. The Malays became a minority in their own country. Politically and ethnologically Malaya became a composite whole. The cosmopolitan character of her population was to be her strength as well as her weakness.

The entire administration was run on the Indian pattern, though it was not so top-heavy. The civil servants went through the same I.C.S. examination and some of them were sent as cadets to India or China for practical experience. Malayan administration was a paternal autocracy exercised by a civil service. Even in 1927 Sir Hugh Clifford, the then Governor, declared that 'owing to the peculiar circumstances of the Federated Malay States the system of administration must in its essence be autocratical.' He was of the view that any form of democratic or popular government was unsuited to the people. Nonetheless an artificial atmosphere of contentment prevailed because of the rapid increase of wealth in the country. Sugar-cane gave place to rubber, and this commodity and tin constituted the mainstay of Malaya's export. It became one of the richest possessions of Britain and one of the most easily governed. The entrepot trade of Singapore and Penang expanded enormously. The Peninsula was connected with Bangkok by rail. Chinese junks and the Straits Steamship Company handled most of the coastal trade,

though in Harbour Board labour and in plying sampans and prows, Indians had a fair share. Trade flourished with Britain, India and neighbouring countries. The standard of living of the people rose in comparison with that in many other Asian countries.

The indenture system by which Indian labour was brought into the plantations was abolished by about 1911. In its place was adopted a 'Kangani' system of recruitment from India. Almost all the rubber plantations were worked by Indians under European management. Indians of many classes and occupations found their way to Malaya—as clerks, survey officers, teachers, railway workers, tailors, doctors, and lawyers. This movement of Indians into Malaya was for some years encouraged by the British. Later, the birth of a national movement in India gave rise to fears in certain circles in Malaya that politically conscious Indians might inspire the same feeling amongst the local peoples. Indians other than labourers became unwelcome. However, unlike in some other countries there was no racial bar against any people from outside coming into Malaya.

After the first World War, the administration underwent many changes. Representative institutions made their first appearance. A Federal Council for the Federated Malay States and a Legislative Council for the Colony of the Straits Settlements

took in 'representatives' of the people nominated and appointed by the Government. The influx of Indians and Chinese naturally brought in the spirit of freedom and political rights. The revolutionary trends apparent in India and China had their echoes in Malaya also. Indians brought with them the new spirit of the political struggle that was then being organized.

Similarly students, teachers and shop assistants who came from China infused into their countrymen some of the free ideals of the new Republic. Non-official spokesmen of the people in the Councils slowly tried to make themselves heard. The Government, however, was strongly entrenched and was in no mood to listen to popular demands. Chinese immigrants rose to positions of wealth and influence, so much so that for a time Malaya almost bid fair to be the nineteenth Province of the Chinese Republic. The Chinese Protectorate—a special department created for 'looking after' the interests of the Chinese—kept a watchful and vigilant eye on the activities of the members of the community. According to one account, 20,097 of them had been repatriated back to China prior to the time of the second World War. Indians were looked upon with suspicion, but being British subjects, they were not affected by the Banishment Laws, although they were economically kept down. Their protests and representations went unheeded.

Though Sir Samuel Wilson, then permanent Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, declared that non-Malays who had made Malaya their home were entitled to an assurance that their interests would not be allowed to suffer in the future development of the country, nothing appears to have been done towards that end until much later. In the period prior to Pearl Harbour, Malaya remained a political back-water. True, Malayan life flowed through even channels. Periodic booms and slumps no doubt disturbed its economic stability; but Malaya was comparatively rich and was not affected by the grosser forms of poverty found elsewhere. Nevertheless there was to be very soon, under the surface at least, a growing political restiveness.

The declaration of the second World War in 1939 had little or no visible effects on Malaya, but as time passed restlessness increased. Indian regiments were sent for the defence of Malaya. Rubber production became a war industry and Indian labour was thus engaged in a vital sphere of Malaya's war effort. Yet only 'starvation' wages were being paid to them. Indian workers in many places showed signs of dissatisfaction, and finally struck for their rights. Emergency powers were brought into effect to stifle their legitimate demands.

Then came suddenly the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. Needless to say, Malaya was shaken to her foundations. People were stunned when they

heard that the Japanese had struck at Pearl Harbour. Later when the British Navy suffered a heavy loss in Malayan waters, and in Northern Malaya, they realized that they were very near the field of battle. Landing of Japanese troops was the last surprise. Along with the British, thousands of Indians left Singapore and sailed for India. Many more remained however in the country of their adoption and stood by Malaya through thick and thin. Soon the Malaysians were to see the impregnable naval base of Singapore completely put out of commission. The commencement of hostilities between Britain and Japan was a rude shock and the rapid advance of the Japanese armies was even a ruder one. They landed in Kelantan and swept their way to Singapore. Indians and Australians fought many a battle against them shoulder to shoulder with a few British regiments. But within two months the whole Peninsula was at the mercy of the Japanese. The people of the land—Malays, Chinese and Indians—had to suffer hardships and privations of war for a long time before the tide turned.

The Japanese conquerors had their administrative H.Q. at Singapore and ruled ruthlessly during their occupation. Unlike the British, their mailed fist had no velvet glove. Theirs was a military administration and they lost no opportunity to impress upon the population that they were there as

conquerors. And yet the Indians, thanks to Mahatma Gandhi and his teachings, kept up their spirit; and their virility was discernible in one of the strongest movements for independence that they launched from Malayan shores in support of the fight for freedom raging in their motherland.

CHAPTER VI

UNDER JAPANESE RULE

It was in the second week of December 1941 that the Japanese forces landed in Kelantan; and by the middle of February 1942, the military conquest of Malaya was complete. No Malayan had ever expected such a move. People argued to themselves that Japan would not enter the war as she would gain more by keeping out of it. Even if she wanted territorial expansion, Malaya thought that it would be at the expense of the French in Indo-China or the Dutch in Indonesia rather than the British in Malaya or Burma. Despite the unhealthy haste with which India was brought into the war in September 1939, and in spite of the fact that the Indian National Congress had issued on 14 September 1939 a statement protesting against the Viceroy's declaration, without consulting the Indian Legislature, of India as a belligerent, Indians both individually and collectively were on the side of the Democracies in their war against Nazism. Of course, they felt that Britain should concede the Indian demand for clarification that her war objectives included 'elimination of British imperialism and the treatment of India as a free nation whose policy will be guided in accordance with the wishes of her people'. That, however, was no reason to withhold support in

Malaya to Britain's war efforts and the Indian community extended its fullest co-operation to the authorities.

Just before the Japanese invasion, however, British policy in Malaya appeared to be inconsiderate. Instead of appreciating the stand taken by the Indian community, the authorities consciously or unconsciously seemed to persevere in alienating its sympathies. Indian demands for a just and fair treatment fell on deaf ears even though the Indian Army was defending Malaya. Soon the situation grew worse. Firing on Indian workers at Klang who had struck work for an increase in wages, framing baseless accusations against the Central Indian Association of Malaya, the imposition of precensorship on the Association's journals, expulsion of Indian labour leaders from strike areas—all these acts of indiscretion and thoughtlessness tended to create a feeling of suppressed anger among Indians.

The Japanese came with the reputation they had earned for themselves by their Chinese adventure. Indians, whose sympathies were with China, had little love for the Japanese militarists. **Quite soon**, however, the people of Malaya were **forced** to offer co-operation to the newcomers. **What** could not be cured had to be endured. The plight of Indians was pathetic. They had been caught unawares. All communications between India and Malaya were cut off. From February 1942 till September 1945

no ship plied between the two countries. Indian leaders had for a time to take control of the situation. Their original objectives were two-fold: first, honourable self-preservation of the community and second, brotherly co-operation with sister communities like the Malays, the Chinese and others; and with these objectives they organized themselves in various parts of the Peninsula.

The days of Japanese military domination of Malaya were characterized by unnecessary harshness and avoidable ruthlessness. May be that all military governments during wars are like that. Military administrations are by their very nature unpopular. The earlier professions of mutual co-operation as equal partners in a 'Co-prosperity sphere' which the Japanese believed was their role to inaugurate, soon gave place to blatant Nipponization and domination. Emperor worship and ideas of Japanese superiority were imposed on the people. Those who came as liberators behaved as conquerors and colonial exploiters.

Indians soon found that Japan would be prepared to grant them certain facilities provided they were ready to fight for India's freedom. Perhaps, it paid Japan to do so; but Indians thought it wise to take advantage of the situation. They could hold together a scattered community, sustain its morale and while doing its mite to further the cause of India's freedom, work out many a needed social

reform to soften the heavy blows which war and conquest had dealt them. Without much of collaboration from their side they might take collaboration from the Japanese in Indian endeavours to better their position and the position of their motherland. Both sides moved with caution. The Indians looked around warily and with circumspection. Yet they organized. Organization, even merely for organization's sake, was a healthy move. An organized community could not be easily exploited or demoralized. Indians celebrated at Penang for the first time, on 26 January 1942, the Indian Independence Day. Sister communities too participated and the authorities showed no displeasure.

Both at Penang and later at Singapore, the Japanese gave the impression that Japan would not dislike the emergence of Indian freedom as a sequel to the war, and even seemed anxious to encourage any movement to that end. To the Indian regiments that surrendered at Singapore too, they explained their standpoint. Indian soldiers who did not voluntarily admit British overlordship were no more to be deemed prisoners of war, and Indian civilians who had been British subjects were not to be considered ex-enemy nationals. Any movement for Indian independence organized by Indians was to be treated as a movement by a friendly people. Freedom was in the air, freedom not only

to work for India's independence, but freedom to a certain extent from the trammels of Japanese military rule and its hardships. If the Japanese authorities were merely trying to make use of Indians as pawns on their propaganda chessboard, the Indians were careful and mature enough to try and make use of the situation for the furtherance of Indian freedom. However, it is admitted that whatever might be the 'high policy' at Tokyo, there were among the Japanese rank and file in Malaya at the time many soldiers and civilians, who really felt for the independence of India, the home of Buddhism, as the Crusaders of old felt for the liberation of Christian Holy Places from the Saracens. Many of them perhaps sincerely believed that it was the pre-ordained destiny of Japan to help India win her freedom and thereby earn for Japan not only the grateful affection of the Indian people, but such everlasting 'merit' as only a Buddhist nation could understand and appreciate.

Malayan Indians formed an Indian Independence League with branches in many places in Malaya. They formed an Indian National Army. The Indian National Flag flew from buildings where Indians lived. While other communities had willy-nilly to subject themselves to the whims of petty local tyrants or the vagaries of crude and immature military administrators, the Indian community, through

their Leagues, could maintain at least some semblance of a free and independent existence. Reports of the 'Quit India' Resolution and of the arrest of Indian leaders brought new zeal and impetus to the Indian movement. The call for volunteers and workers had a spontaneous response. Indians in Malaya, politically conscious even before the war, now received further political training, and thousands joined the Indian National Army.

To the Japanese Army leaders, however, it was becoming clear that Indians could not be politically exploited. The resolutions passed by the Indian Conference at Bangkok to which Malaya had sent the biggest delegation, breathed suspicion. This suspicion was further strengthened by reports of Japanese high-handedness in administration. The objective of the Independence movement was clearly specified at Bangkok as 'complete independence of India free from *any* foreign control, domination or interference of whatever nature'. Another resolution declared that 'in view of the fact that the Indian National Congress is the only political organization which can claim to represent the real interests of the people of India, and as such be acknowledged the only body representing India, this Conference is of the opinion that the programme and plan of action of this movement must be so guided, controlled and directed as to bring them into line with the aims and intentions of the Indian National

Congress'. The resolution creating the Indian National Army declared that 'the formation, command, control and organization of the I. N. Army be in the hands of Indians themselves' and that the I. N. Army should be accorded the status of a free National Army of Independent India on a footing of equality. Moreover, it was also resolved, lest any one should try to exploit the I.N.A. for his own ends, that the I.N.A. could be made use of only 'for the purpose of securing and safeguarding Indian National Independence'. Various other safeguards were also devised to keep the Independence movement free from exploitation for purposes of war.

The Japanese authorities soon began to feel that they had gone too far. The Indians had under their very nose created what was *de facto* a State within a State. Though there was as yet no territory under the control of the Indian Independence League, there were people who owed fullest allegiance to the League in the name of India; there was an Army; there was the Flag and there were leaders who did not bow their heads to any foreign Power. The Indian Independence movement would not be a puppet show. It was, however, difficult to retrace steps. Result : grave differences between the leaders of the Indian Independence movement and the Japanese authorities. The Japanese tried to challenge the authority of the League by sponsoring an Indian Youth movement from Singapore. This movement

failed, and Japanese propagandists were cold-shouldered wherever they went. Again, the Japanese liaison organizations brought pressure on the I.N.A., but they found they could not easily penetrate the stone-wall of Indian patriotism. They were really non-plussed.

It was at that critical moment, in April 1943, that the great Indian leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, arrived in Singapore. His appearance on the scene raised the movement to a high level. If the local Japanese leaders had entertained hopes of securing propaganda value out of the Indian Independence movement without actively furthering its objectives, they were disappointed. The Indians throughout the East rose as one man in response to the call of their leader. In Malaya alone about 20,000 men were trained. Many of them proved to be excellent soldiers, thereby demolishing once and for all the old concept of 'martial and non-martial classes'—a distinction which interested parties in pre-war India were never too tired to emphasize and maintain.

High spirited Indian women were organized into a regiment named after the famous Rani Lakshmi-bai of Jhansi. Several millions of dollars poured in as collections and contributions. A provisional government of Azad Hind (Free India) was proclaimed from Singapore. Ministers were appointed and put in charge of different portfolios. Soon the

provisional government was also to acquire territory of its own. The islands of Andamans and Nicobars, being parts of India, which came under Japanese rule, were transferred to the provisional government. Every inch of Indian ground acquired prior to the inauguration of the provisional government was to be transferred to it. League branches in Malaya had risen to 70 with over 2,00,000 members. The war had brought in acute distress in various places. To alleviate such distress large relief centres were opened by the Government of Azad Hind. The number of Indian schools increased. Hindustani was being popularized. While other peoples of Malaya suffered from illegal arrests and show of military strength at the hands of the Japanese, the Indian community, thanks to the protection afforded by their provisional government, escaped much of such misery. Later, when the seat of the Government was transferred from Singapore to Rangoon it could not prevent the compulsory recruitment by the Japanese Army of thousands of Indians who were forced to work on the construction of what subsequently came to be known as the 'Death Railway' line, which was built to connect South Siam with Burma.

The Indian community was soon streamlined for action. Every Indian glowed with burning patriotism and yearned to sacrifice himself at the altar of Indian freedom. How Indians from Malaya and

Burma, Thailand and Sumatra, rallied round India's flag of freedom and marched forward to help in the liberation of the motherland is now common knowledge. The epic struggle of those men who, under the leadership of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, pledged themselves to free their country can never be forgotten. It is doubtful whether the Japanese had ever had any idea of invading India. On the other hand the I.N.A. under Subhas Chandra Bose was definitely committed to marching on to India, with Japanese assistance if possible and without it if necessary. Though fighters for Indian freedom gained some initial successes, Netaji Bose was forced to retreat and give up the fight. Yet there is hardly any doubt that the magnificent efforts put up by this indomitable leader and his selfless followers brought India's freedom miles nearer. The battle was lost no doubt ; but not the campaign.

From December 1941 to September 1945 Malaya was close to India only in spirit—contact between the two countries during those eventful years of war was by radio. India was a base of Allied operations against Malaya while Singapore was the centre from which the Japanese directed their attacks on British possessions in the East. In September 1945 many Indian units under Lord Louis Mountbatten landed in Malaya. Communications were re-opened. Indian officers and other ranks again helped the British in re-establishing

themselves. The arrival of Indian leaders in Malaya, culminating in the memorable visit of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1946 instilled fresh confidence into the minds of the people. Pandit Nehru drew up plans and founded the necessary machinery for the immediate rehabilitation of Indians in Malaya. Indo-Malayan relations were once again resumed, and with the inauguration of Indian Independence, loyalties and friendly ties were once again established. Later, the decision of the Indian Republic to remain within the Commonwealth made the coming together of Malaya and New India all the smoother.

CHAPTER VII

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

LET us now have a look at the administration of modern Malaya.

On the eve of the second World War, British Malaya consisted of (a) the Crown Colony of Penang, Singapore and Malacca known as the Straits Settlements, (b) the Federated Malay States—Selangor, Perak, Pahang and Negri Sembilan, and (c) the Unfederated Malay States which comprised the States of Johore, Trengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis.

The Straits Settlements were administered by a Governor aided by an Executive Council. There was also a Legislative Council for the Colony which consisted of eleven ex-officio members, two nominated officials and 13 non-official members—two elected by British commercial interests and eleven nominated by the Governor from various sections of the community. The Governor of the Colony presided at its meetings. The system of government was similar to that obtaining in non-self-governing Colonies of the British Empire.

The Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865 is, of course, applicable to the Malayan Colony also. For all Crown Colonies the British Parliament is the ultimate authority in legislative, executive and

military matters. There was a Supreme Court for the Colony of the Straits Settlements, of which the judges were appointed by the King and the final court of appeal was the Privy Council. While the Settlement of Singapore was directly under the Colonial Secretary who was the civil officer next in precedence to the Governor, Penang and Malacca were under Resident Councillors under whom functioned 'District Officers'. There was no right to vote and the democratic machinery of ballots and elections was entirely unknown. The three principal towns of Singapore, Penang and Malacca enjoyed 'local self-government' of a kind, in that they were administered by municipalities. But the members of the municipal commissions were appointed by the Governor and the Chairman of a municipality was invariably an official of the Malayan Civil Service. Other towns and rural areas were administered by rural boards which functioned under the direction and orders of the respective district officers. The ultimate administrative control of the whole territory remained the responsibility of the Governor. That was the system of government in the Colony introduced by the Royal Charter of 1867, after these Settlements broke away from the Government of India. The Government of the Colony could be correctly described as a benevolent bureaucracy or as a paternal autocracy.

The administration was carried on efficiently by the Civil Service. In the beginning all British subjects were eligible to become members of the Service, but subsequently other considerations crept in and it became a preserve of the Britishers only. Later on, a Straits Settlements Civil Service was inaugurated, into which trickled from year to year a few Asians. This innovation came about as a result of protests against the perpetuation of such differentiation in the Colony.

The Governor of the Straits Settlements was also ex-officio High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States. In theory the States of the Federation were ruled by their respective Sultans assisted by State Councils, but in practice the Sultans were controlled and directed by the High Commissioner acting through the Federal Secretary and the respective Residents appointed to the States. The Sultans presided over their State Councils, of which the British Residents were also members. State legislation was passed by the State Councils, all members of which were nominees of the rulers. The Federation had a legislative body, the Federal Council, presided over by the High Commissioner, which made laws on common matters applicable to all the constituent States. Matters which concerned the Islamic religion or Malay customs were, however, within the exclusive prerogatives of the Sultans. Under the Treaty of 1895 constituting the

Federation, the component units had agreed to follow the advice of the High Commissioner in all matters of administration other than religion. The Federal Council consisted of the High Commissioner as President, the four Residents, the Federal Secretary, the Legal Adviser of the Federation, the Adviser on Medical Services, the Controller of Labour, the Financial Secretary, Advisers on Agriculture and Education, the General Manager of the F. M. S. Railways, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, the Comptroller of Customs, one official and 12 non-officials, all nominated by the High Commissioner and the Rajas. The Federal Council was supposed to pass laws as enacted 'by the Rulers of the Federated Malay States by and with the advice and consent of the Federal Council'.

The administration of the States was carried on partly by the Malayan Civil Service and partly by locally recruited personnel of higher and subordinate cadres. The Federation was divided into 25 districts, each under an officer. Each district had many boards: a Sanitary Board, a Licensing Board and a few Advisory Boards. The function of the Sanitary Board was mainly municipal. It was in charge of collection of local taxes, sanitation, town-planning, lighting, etc. Though the British officers of the service were interchangeable between the Colony and the States, the Malay officers were kept within the Federation only.

The States outside the Federation were in theory ruled and administered by their respective Sultans, though in effect by the Governor of the Straits Settlements, who was the High Commissioner for all un-Federated Malay States. Here the British Advisers took the place of Residents of the Federated States and their advice could in no way be discarded. Broadly speaking the distinction between federated and unfederated Malay States was mainly theoretical, just as any effective difference between the Colony and the F.M.S. was mainly juridical. The enactments of the Malay States, it is true, were not subject to H. M. G.'s veto but no enactments could be passed if not approved previously by the King's Representative. The British Parliament could legislate for the Colony, but not for a Malay State where in theory all legislation was done locally. In the Colony the royal prerogative of mercy was in the Governor; in a Malay State, in the Ruler-in-Council. This also made no difference in practice. In the Colony, land was held from the Crown; in a State, from the Sultan. As Sir Richard Winstedt says, Downing Street 'directs' the administration of the Colony but 'advises' the Governments of the various Malay States.

The unfederated States, however, had many different laws, enacted by their respective rulers with the assistance of their Advisory Councils. Johore had even all the paraphernalia of a

constitutional monarchy. Each of the unfederated States had its own Civil Service. Some of the States frequently sought the assistance of the Malay Civil Service in their administration. Johore, perhaps more than the other States, had an up-to-date form of government. While other unfederated Malay States admitted members of the legal profession to appear before their courts only in rare cases, Johore had welcomed properly qualified legal practitioners from outside. In Johore alone of the unfederated Malay State, a citizen had the right to have legal aid in a court of law. Non-official members of the State Councils in unfederated Malay States, other than Johore, could be nominated by the rulers only, with the approval of the High Commissioner. The unfederated States also had the same sanitary boards, health boards, water boards, etc. on the pattern seen in the States of the Federation. The State language of the unfederated States remained Malay though in the States of the Federation English had taken its place.

That was roughly the constitutional picture at the time of the British surrender in Malaya. Japanese administration from 1942 to 1945 did not attempt to upset it as far as possible. During the Japanese regime most of the rulers lost even the limited powers they had had. The British Military Administration (BMA) which took over from the Japanese in 1945, re-established the old machinery.

In the meantime, pursuant to the declarations that had previously been made by Mr Oliver Stanley and by Captain Hall on behalf of the British Government in the House of Commons, Sir Harold MacMichael negotiated with the Malayan rulers for the creation of a Malayan Union. On 31 March 1946, the British Military Administration made room for a civil administration under which a Governor-General was appointed for the whole of Malaya. His function was only co-ordinative and directive. The nine Malay States together with the two Settlements of Penang and Malacca were constituted into a Malayan Union under a Governor, Singapore being separately administered as a Crown Colony under another Governor. Under the revised constitutional proposals which followed a year later, as a result of opposition from the Malays and from the Sultans to the MacMichael Treaties, the Union became a Federation under a High Commissioner at Kuala Lumpur appointed by the King. Singapore continued as a Crown Colony under a Governor. A Commissioner-General for South-east Asia regions was also appointed. According to later constitutional arrangements, the Governor-General's post was abolished and Mr Malcolm Macdonald, the first (and perhaps the last) Governor-General, succeeded Lord Killern as Commissioner-General with headquarters at Singapore. A Federal Executive Council and a Legislative Council were formed,

along with State or Settlement Councils for the various component States. The non-official element in both the Councils was increased. A new Legislative Council came into being in the Colony of Singapore, electoral rolls were prepared and, for the first time, 'elections' were held. Only British subjects and Commonwealth citizens were qualified to vote. In the new Council there are to be four ex-officio, five nominated official, four nominated, and nine elected non-official members. Still further reforms were introduced later in the Federation, and in 1951, a type of Executive Council with Councillors (some being local non-officials) in charge of different portfolios has been introduced. Though the constitutional set-up and the form have thus been changed, administration is still being carried on by the Civil Service as in the days before the second World War.

Justice is administered by a Colonial Supreme Court at Singapore and a Federal Supreme Court at Kuala Lumpur. Subordinate to these courts are district courts having civil and criminal jurisdiction and police or magistrates' courts. Within the Malayan Federation there are also religious courts presided over by Muslim Kathees. The Supreme Courts are courts of record. Judges of the Colony and the Federation are interchangeable. The judicial system is modern and up to date throughout Malaya. Procedure is simple and 'law's delays' are

almost unknown. Legal practitioners, enrolled as advocates and solicitors, are allowed in all the States of the Federation. Throughout Malaya only those qualified in Britain or recognized by the Inns of Court or the Law Society of England are allowed to practise, just as in the case of the medical profession only those who possess the qualifications approved as registrable by the British Medical Council are allowed to practise.

Criminal Law is based on the Indian Penal Code and the Indian Criminal Procedure Code. The Indian Evidence Act has also been adopted by legislation on the same lines. In Penang, Singapore and Malacca, a Civil Law Ordinance introduced English Mercantile Law. The Colonial judicial system was taken as a model by the Federation, though it was much more affected by Indian enactments and legislation. The higher judiciary both in the Colony and the Federation continues to be British. The legal profession, which at one time was mainly British, now includes a large number of Indian, Chinese, Malay and other practitioners. Though in the Colonial Judicial Service there are no Asians, many junior magistrates and a few senior district judges are recruited from among them.

The Malayan Federation and the Colony of Singapore have well organized and efficient administrative departments. The higher appointments in all these departments have mostly been the close

preserve of British personnel but some others are manned by Asians; and Indians have contributed in varying degrees to the success of many of these departments. In what were until recently the unfederated Malay States, a number of the heads of departments still continue to be Malay subjects of the respective Sultans.

The Police administration is efficient in the Colony and in the Federation. The machinery is of the same pattern as in other British territories. A special branch deals with political crimes. Criminal investigation, traffic regulation, film censorship, licensing of arms, weights and measures, and suppression of such illegal activities as gambling, counterfeiting, etc.—all belong to the Police department. There is an active detective branch and an 'efficient' system of informers. A criminal registry (fingerprint bureau) is also maintained. The director of criminal intelligence has also been the passport officer and registrar of aliens in the Federation. Registration of motor vehicles is no longer in the hands of the Police as it has been transferred to municipal authorities. Until recently all police officers of the rank of inspectors and above were British, but a few years before the second World War 'Asiatic Inspectors' were recruited subordinate in rank to European Inspectors! There have always been quite a few Asian police officers in the Malay States. Indians had the first distinc-

tion in the Colony of having two special officers, as Assistant Superintendents. On the eve of the second World War, the strength of the Police forces in Malaya was 250 British officers, 120 subordinate Asian officers and some 10,000 other ranks. Sikhs are a strong and much appreciated section of the Malayan Police. There was an Inspector-General of Prisons for the Colony as well as the Federation.

Public Works is yet another department where India's contribution is quite marked. Thanks to the P.W.D., Malaya enjoys some of the best roadways in the world. A main trunk road 600 miles in length stretches from Singapore to Alor Star and the Siamese frontier. The P.W.D. absorbs a number of Indian workers and junior officers. Railways, harbours, drainage and irrigation are outside the P.W.D.'s activities though Government buildings, non-municipal water supplies, etc. are within its scope. Railways in Malaya are owned and managed by the State. Harbours are run mainly by Boards of Management. Drainage and irrigation are looked after by a separate department. Malaya has nearly 1,000 miles of railway track of metre gauge, with over 200 railway stations. An appreciable number of railwaymen comes from Ceylon. There are, of course, Indians, Malays and Chinese among the employees.

The postal, telegraph and telephone systems of Malaya are well organized. Though each State has

been having its own separate 'stamps', the Malayan Postal Union includes in its jurisdiction British Malaya as a whole. Internal air mail facilities are also available. Postal order arrangements for sending out remittances and cash-on-delivery service (the 'V.P.' system in India) are available with most countries in the world. Transfer of Savings Bank funds is possible between Malaya and India. Surface and air mail services linking with other countries are being run on efficient and modern lines. International telegraph communications are operated through Penang and Singapore, and submarine cables have been laid to neighbouring countries including India. A trunk telephone network connects the various towns and outposts of Malaya and wireless telephone communications are available with many countries.

Being on an ocean highway, shipping has always been a vital feature of Malayan life. Under the British administration it has become almost the life-blood of Malaya. It has received considerable attention at the hands of the Government. Many a coastal town has been developed, and one could see the small but numerous vessels belonging to the Straits Steamship Company's fleet and 'antiquarian' Chinese junks plying almost daily between ports carrying cargo. The ports at Singapore and Penang are under the control of Harbour Boards, while the port of Malacca is administered by the Marine

department. Every State of the Federation has a sea frontage and affords all possible harbour facilities. There are regular sailings between India and the Malayan ports. The better known services are run by the British Steam Navigation Company and recently by the Scindia Steamship Navigation Company.

Fisheries are an important department of the Government. Modern methods are being introduced in running them. The active Forest department has reserved 20 per cent of the total area of Malaya as reserve forests. Many areas are still unexplored though some of them, as game sanctuaries, are outside the Forest department's jurisdiction. Conservation and exploitation are being transferred to a Central authority. The department of Agriculture has great importance in a country which has a number of agricultural products for export. The Malays are mainly small paddy planters and farmers. Over 3½ million acres (of a total of six) of arable land have been opened up for the plantation of rubber. Europeans, Americans, Chinese and Indians own large and small rubber plantations. Nearly 800,000 acres are paddy lands, and of the export crops cocoanut with 600,000 acres is second only to rubber. The Veterinary department is keeping a strict control on animal imports and breeding. Each Settlement and State and the important municipalities have their own veterinary

surgeons and hospitals. Many of them had been recruited from India. Co-ordination is secured through a Director and Veterinary Adviser at Kuala Lumpur. In a country where the majority of population lives on mutton, beef, pork, fish and poultry, this department's activities are bound to be of a vital and versatile character. Well-run *abattoirs* exist throughout the country. Mutton is imported mainly from Australia. Goats and cattle originally imported from India and Siam are mainly reared by Indians though the Malays depend for their agricultural pursuits on local breeds of hardy buffaloes. Pig-rearing is practically a Chinese monopoly.

The Malayan Department of Mines is extremely important because of Malaya's perennial wealth of tin. Coal and iron are also mined, and other minerals, to a smaller extent, receive the department's attention.

Malaya's water supply schemes are excellent. Most towns and many important villages are supplied with electricity. Both the Colony and the Federation have an organized co-operative department controlling an increasing number of societies. There is ample scope for co-operative activity but progress has not been proportionate to the efforts of the department.

No activity of the Malayan administration has been so important as their work in the field of medi-

cal relief and prevention of diseases. Malaya has excellent medical services. Travelling dispensaries have been introduced; V.D. is being controlled; leper settlements have been opened; and mental hospitals record a high percentage of recovery. Quarantine stations are well run. Conservancy, control of contagious diseases, and above all anti-malarial work, are being done on an extensive scale by the Health authorities. There are settlements for the infirm and the decrepit, women's and children's clinics and infant welfare centres. The indefatigable energies of medical men have converted what would otherwise have been a disease-infested spot into a healthy territory. Indian and Ceylonese doctors have earned for themselves a deservedly honoured position in this field of service to humanity.

With the Labour department Indians are the most connected, as its main function has been to look after the interests of labour, largely migrated from India. That it had sometimes worked in the interests of the employers to the detriment of those of the workers cannot be denied. Most of those who, in pre-war years, controlled this department had previously worked as labour officers in the Malayan Government's recruiting depots at Avadi and Negapatam. The heads of the department, the Controller, Deputy Controllers and Assistant Controllers, have always been British, though a few Indians had been appointed as extra Assistant Control-

lers of Labour and inspectors of the Immigration Fund. While the Labour department looked mainly after Indian labour, the Secretariat for Chinese Affairs with its Protectorate for Chinese, looked after Chinese labour. Officers of the Chinese Protectorate were appointed as Assistant or Deputy Controllers of Labour also. In recent years the work of Labour administration among Indians and Chinese has been co-ordinated. Effort is also being made to direct Trade Unionism into more acceptable channels.

The Education department records a steady but slow progress. The first English school in Malaya was opened in 1816 at Penang, a University was founded more than a hundred years later in 1949. In the meantime the Education department had been busy with the extension of education of a fairly high standard. The Director of Education, Straits Settlements, was also the Adviser on educational matters to the Federated Malay States. From the Education department of the Colony or the Federated Malay States, the unfederated States often borrowed the services of educational officers. Every State and each Settlement have well-run schools. Primary education in the Malay language is free and compulsory for the Malays. The Chinese have a large number of schools, and as a combined result of popular demand and provision in the Labour Code, the opening of Indian schools became necessary. At Singapore, an Arts College named

after Sir Stamford Raffles was started and a College of Medicine in the name of King Edward VII. Both turned out to be high class institutions which could later on be developed as nuclei of a Malayan University. Training colleges for teachers, trade and technical schools, farm schools and agricultural institutes and commercial sections attached to schools have been conducted at important places. In the educational life again, Indians played no small role. From the early days of British educational activity in South-east Asia, Indian teachers have given of their best for educational advancement and public instruction. The intelligentsia of Malaya to this day remember with gratitude the beloved names of many Indian teachers.

British administration in Malaya was once described by shrewd observers as Planters' Raj. This, however, was only partly true. As in many of their Colonies, in Malaya too the British did not confine themselves to mere exploitation. They tried to further the moral and material well-being of the people. Any attempt at political emancipation, any self-governing aspiration or tendency was no doubt frowned upon. Though the evolution of a Malayan nation out of the heterogeneous population of the Peninsula was, admittedly, farthest from the mind of the British administration, one cannot but give credit to the British Government for the economic development of

the country, and for the introduction of British standards of education, justice, social welfare, trade and comfortable life. Malaya developed fast under British rule. Unexpectedly she advanced towards a Unity in spite of her diversity. As a result of impacts with the outside world which British administration brought about, the urge for modernization and progress penetrated into Kampongs and hamlets. The standard of living went up, and with the increase of wealth, thanks to economic development, Malaysians began to feel that they too had a place in the comity of nations. The professed objective of British colonialism is trusteeship for the present and self-government for the future. There were attempts in the past to divide the people, and in the name of decentralization to go back on the unification of Malaya. The second World War, however, has taught those in authority in Britain many a lesson. Soon after the return of the British, many fondly imagined that they could by the reintroduction of a benevolent and paternal administration, put back the hands of the clock to where they were in 1941; but British statesmen, as a result of the events that followed, were convinced that the position taken by Mr Oliver Stanley in 1943—that 'the main concern of the British Government regarding the political future of Malaya will be the development of its capacity of self-government within the Empire'—was

the only correct policy to follow. A united and free Malaya will have to be conscious of responsibilities. A desire for orderly government will mobilize forces to withstand and overcome unlawful activities. Capitalists may be looking forward to the re-establishment of peaceful conditions in Malaya in order to make good their losses, but those in political authority are too shrewd to disregard the warning that they have had, viz. that any undue delay in the introduction of democratic government (and transfer of power to the people) would strengthen the hands of those elements whose activities would be detrimental to the happiness, well-being and peaceful progress of Malaya. The country is now being increasingly prepared for the attainment of full self-government, though progress, for various reasons, has been rather slow.

CHAPTER VIII

MODERN INDIAN EMIGRATION— STRENGTHENING OF ECONOMY

CENTURIES ago, among men in quest of adventure, among those who sought trade or to carry abroad the lighted torch of Hindu and Buddhist culture, many must have used the same sea-routes from India to Malaya as we know them today. Where now the sea voyage from Madras or Calcutta to Penang, the first port of call, is a matter of some uneventful five days or less, it must have taken several weeks or even months in the past because of the uncertainties of winds and weather. India improved her ships and navigation in the centuries that followed, but even in Fa Hien's days her vessels were praiseworthy achievements of ship-building. The voyages East from India were so frequent that the mysteries of the Celestial Empire and the glories of the South Seas were equally familiar to the Indian seamen of those days. It is that spirit of healthy restlessness, more than wages, wealth, or profits that has drawn the Indian of our era to seek his fortunes with equal ease or varying hardships, in Malaya or Mauritius, South Africa or South America, in Fiji, in the islands of the East or the West Indies.

In recent times, in the wake of the British colo-

nial rule and economic exploitation of Malaya many an adventurous Indian youth has left India's shores for employment and livelihood in that Peninsula. To the employers of labour who needed Indian workers in the development of Malaya, it was not difficult to induce the Indian to emigrate. For in setting sail from India to Malaya, he was consciously—or perhaps sub-consciously—repeating what his spirited forefathers from Coromandel, Kalinga and Kerala had done for nobler purposes in a more glorious Age. Even malignant malaria appears to hold no terrors for him. Poverty or starvation cannot account for, or explain away, the story of modern Indian emigration. Other peoples too have starved and suffered in various lands. The ease with which Indian workers have been persuaded to go out to other countries can be understood only if we take into consideration the historical background, the traditions that lie buried in India's ancient past, the undeniable fact that to the Indian, and more so to the peninsular Indian, to the descendants of India's sea dogs and merchant adventurers, the call comes—the call of the sea, the call of adventure, the thrills and uncertainties of Life, and even of Death, in unknown lands.

It was that spirit more than poverty or persuasion that made him fall an easy prey to labour recruiting agents from Malayan rubber plantations. Particularly from the last quarter of the last

century, India's men and women have thus left Madras and Negapatam for Penang, Port Swettenham and Singapore. The exodus was speeded up with the opening up of Malaya for rubber. Hardships of embarkation, congestion on ships and difficulties of travel had not deterred them. To most, the voyage was a miserable adventure—yet, an adventure. At dawn on the fourth or fifth day, through morning mists which are common in Malaya, those on board the ships from Madras perceive the enchanting coastline of Asia's South-eastern Peninsula. It may be, that among the hills what they see in the distance is Kedah Peak—the point beside which, centuries ago, their forefathers landed and even colonized. The remains of these colonies, with structures dating back to the same period as that of the monoliths of Mahabalipuram, have been discovered near the Peak. Or it may be, that the ship has already approached Penang. Then, through the ocean mists, out of the calm, turquoise blue of the Straits of Malacca, rises the Island of Penang, the bride of the Sea! A bright equatorial sun emerging from behind the hills of Bukit Mertajam on the mainland slowly lifts the veil and floods the landscape with indescribable beauty. The atmosphere of hilarious enthusiasm that prevails on board a ship carrying Indian immigrants on the day of her arrival in Malaya has to be seen and felt, to be believed. Hardly does the adventurous newcomer

or his clinging wife realize that that inexplicable something—that subtle pleasure that stirs in the breast—is not due to any sense of deliverance from the ill effects of a rough voyage or the indescribable inconveniences of a crowded ship. He thinks perhaps that he has not come to a new land but to one with which he has been indissolubly connected from very early ages. He belongs to the place. His whole being responds; the land is hallowed by traditions; and he experiences a thrill. He lands. Little does he suspect that from that day onwards he is to be known as ‘Ramaswamy’ (for thus is an Indian known on a rubber estate to his European employers) in a land full ‘Ramaswamys’. He is medically examined; is taken, perhaps, to a quarantine camp for a few days; is frisked away, and is swallowed up by inhospitable jungles or remorseless rubber plantations; is put to feed the grinding mills of modern economic exploitation. He either dies in the saddle—or rather on the hoofs, or emerges alive; either makes good, or returns home years later broken and decrepit, to lay his bones by the side of his forefathers. The story is sad and simple, grim and true; the story of those thousands of men and women who, leaving their kith and kin, used to cross the Bay of Bengal until very recently as mere hewers of wood and drawers of water. Siren-like Malaya beckoned; she solicited; History compelled; and India’s adventurous hearts

found it difficult to resist.

Yet others still arrive in Malaya for trade, for practising the learned professions, for serving the Peninsula in its administration, and its people in different walks of life and in diverse manner. They meet with an enchantingly beautiful country and a hospitable people. In recent times the educated, politically minded or economically independent Indian has not been very welcome to some of the foreign interests that control Malayan economic life. But that, however, must be a passing phase. The recognition of India's role in Malayan economy will ultimately prevail. In June 1951 Mr Malcolm Macdonald, Commissioner-General in South-east Asia, speaking at Singapore, dwelt on the great part played by Indians in Malaya, in the building up of the Malayan nation. He said : 'In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries it had been more in the economic field; and this country owed much to the enterprise of Indian merchants, Indian labourers and others.' Mr Macdonald also paid a tribute to India's past 'contributions to the development of South-east Asian countries which constituted one of the most remarkable chapters in the history of mankind.' Malaya cannot yet be developed to her fullest capacity without co-operation from India and Indonesia, as the Peninsula is still thinly populated. The people of Malaya have known it and, left to themselves, have always welcomed Indian participation.

The Indian has never been a stranger here. In some form or other he has always been a part and parcel of Malayan life. We saw that even while Capt. Light was negotiating with the Raja of Kedah for the first British foothold, Indians were already there. He wrote to his principals indicating that Penang in British hands would mean the end of the trade then conducted by the Dutch, the Danes, the French and the 'Tamils'. We also saw that Francis Light could not exclude the Indian altogether, as the very basis of the concession he obtained was military assistance by the Company, which in those days meant the Indian Sepoy. Light wrote on another occasion: 'If Sepoys and a few Europeans were sent with leave to assist the Raja against Selangor, not a slab of tin, a grain of pepper, betel nut or damar would be exported to any but the British.' With the British and before them, the Indian established himself unobtrusively on the land; not as an exploiter, but as a friend, a well-wisher, a trader, a teacher and sometimes as a settler. He had always mixed with the people of the land and lived with them, in joy and in sorrow, in troubles and tribulations.

Indian contribution to Malaya dates from ancient times to the present day; it forms an unbroken and undefiled stream. In modern times, the part played by Indian workers has been conspicuous in Malaya's economic life.

More than 50 per cent of employees on the

rubber plantations were Indians. Rubber was first known in Europe through Spain, which country came to know of it in 1536 from South American 'Indians'. In 1770, Priestley pointed out its use as an eraser to wipe off writings in pencil. It was the Marquis of Salisbury, Secretary of State for India, who initiated the move for rubber cultivation in the East. In 1873, an expedition was sent to Brazil, where rubber was growing wild. The Wickham expedition that went next brought 70,000 seedlings from Brazil, some of which were germinated at the Kew Gardens, London and then sent first to Ceylon; from Ceylon a few plants were shipped to Malaya. In 1905, Malaya's total production of rubber did not exceed 200 tons, but within 30 years her export had grown to 681,638 metric tons annually. In 1946, the production was 404,000 and by 1950 it rose to 705,000 metric tons. For this great achievement British capital and Indian labour were mainly responsible. Many Indians now own rubber plantations.

The development of Malaya could not proceed before the jungles had been cleared and a good system of communications into the interior had been organized. In the early years of this century, such communications were mainly by boats, sampans and prows, up and down the river streams or coastal ports. Roads and railways were constructed by Indian labour. Thou-

sands of them had been taken over to work in the malaria-ridden hinterland, so that Malaya could be opened up for world trade. The same story was repeated at a later day in the construction of the famous Singapore Docks and Naval Base and the many aerodromes scattered over the Peninsula. Inaccessible lands of the interior had initially to be surveyed, wilds to be cleared and levelled, roads laid out, metalled and asphalted—and all this was made possible by the untiring effort of India's workers. Under British directions and Indian supervision, about 9,000 miles of excellent roads were built. Indians were found to be specially skilled in road work and concrete construction. During the Japanese occupation, the roads were neglected.

Up till 1911 Indian workers were taken to Malaya on a system of indenture. In 1907, however, an Indian Immigration Committee was formed to regulate and control Indian immigration and a system known as Kangany recruitment was encouraged. With the passage of the Indian Emigration Act of 1922, a system of non-recruited but assisted emigration was tried under the control of the Government of India. In 1938 the Indian Government placed a ban on the emigration of unskilled labour to Malaya on the ground that unfair wages were paid to Indian workers. There has not been any great movement of labour from India to Malaya

since then. During the Japanese occupation a large number of Indian workers died in Malaya and on the construction of the Burma-Siam Railway.

Fair minded administrators and planters have not been hesitant in admitting the great debt that Malaya owes to Indian labour. In the early years of this century, Klang and Port Swettenham, for example, were veritable death traps. Only after the great discoveries of Sir Ronald Ross and their practical application in Malaya by men like Sir Malcolm Watson could malaria be controlled and its ravages lessened. There were even times when ships refused to call at Port Swettenham, because of its malignant malaria. Yet, the Indian worked, and braved the foul disease. The Klang district today is one of the most important centres of Indian labour and is also one of the best developed areas for rubber. Many inaccessible parts of Malaya, in the interior of Pahang and Trengganu, tell the same tale.

The services rendered by other Indians also were important. Fonseca, Hafiz Gulam Sarwar and de Mello were Indian members of the Malayan Civil Service (M.C.S.) before restrictions were imposed. Again, P. K. Nambyar, a distinguished lawyer, who had gone to Malaya in 1904 rendered yeoman service. As Indian representative in the Legislative Council, and as a member of the Indian Immigration Committee, Nambyar's work took in its

purview the welfare and prosperity of Malaya as a whole. The legal career of Rudra, another barrister, was short but spectacular. Pellonji's *Digest of Malayan Law Cases* was the first legal publication of its type in Malaya, and is still the standard book of reference. The memory of Sirish Chandra Goho of Singapore, consummate in advocacy, a trenchant fighter, is still fresh in peoples' minds. India has given several able advocates to Malaya, many of whom are still practising.

Malaya's medical service too has had on its rolls distinguished Indian doctors who have vied successfully with their European colleagues. In that long, arduous and uphill task to make Malaya healthy, in the campaign for control of malaria, the contribution of Indian doctors and their staff has been significant. Well-known names of those who played their part and departed come surging to memory. Even today throughout the Peninsula, there are many Indian doctors of repute. Many important towns in Malaya can boast of at least one busy Indian medical practitioner of whom the residents are proud.

Other services also tell similar tales. Till recently all Assistant Veterinary Surgeons were recruited from India or were trained there. Teaching, like medicine, was at one time practically a monopoly of educated Indians and Ceylonese. A large number of Indian teachers has served the country.

Even today they are a class by themselves, and along with their British, Chinese and Malay colleagues, they occupy a warm and grateful corner in the hearts of the people. Another learned profession which has constantly drawn upon India and Ceylon is journalism. The almost legendary figure of Hasan of Taiping who lived and died in the 'twenties of this century hailed from Hyderabad. His *Perak Pioneer* was indeed a pioneer in many respects. Many others came after him from India and served various journals with skill and satisfaction. An outstanding figure in Tamil journalism was Narsimha Iyengar who started the *Tamil Nesan* of Selangor.

The departments of Survey and Public Works have also been well served by experienced Indians. Until recently some unit or other of the Indian Army had been stationed in Malaya. The Malayan Police Force had a number of contingents with Indian officers and other ranks. Businessmen from Kathiawar, Bombay, Sind and South India have for long occupied positions of honour in the commercial life of Malaya. In retail trade Indians have been second only to the Chinese; and many places, far into the interior, have been opened up for trade by Indians along with the Chinese. Indian commercial houses of standing are too many to mention. Curiously enough, perhaps as a relic of history, a number of side lines connected with shipping are

still in the hands of Indians. In many ports, loading and unloading are done by Indian labour companies. Quite a number of boats (sampan) are plied by Indians and there are many Indian shipchandlers and stevedores. Even 'money changers' have been, generally speaking, Indians.

As pioneers in popular banking, the network of Chettiars spread all over Malaya contributed not a little to the rapid growth of Malayan economy. There are few Asian businesses or organizations, be they Indian, Chinese, or Malay, who had not at some time or other drawn on the resources of those Nattukottai Chettiars. Often they took risks which ordinary bankers would have fought shy of. Many Indian banking houses have in recent years been opened in Malaya and have earned for themselves good reputation.

Indeed, India has reason to be proud of her past as well as her present contribution.

CHAPTER IX

INDIAN INFLUENCES ON MALAYAN CULTURE

FROM the early times the lamp of Indian Culture burnt bright and shed its light and splendour far and wide. There were intervals, no doubt, in comparatively modern times when the light became dim, but at no time did the lamp completely fail. Ancient India gave, and gave abundantly and generously, to the West as also to the East. Her religion and philosophy, her researches in astronomy and mathematics, chemistry and allied sciences, her achievements in trade and in navigation, her cultural accomplishments in diverse fields—all reached Europe either directly, or indirectly through other lands and peoples. The countries of Asia were even closer to her. Most countries of the Indian Ocean, if not all of them, had been quite familiar with Indian culture, which influenced them considerably. The Light had spread to thousands of miles and illumined a whole continent. Many of these lands seem to have, unconsciously perhaps, clung with tenacity and tenderness to India's contributions to their past. There was no imposition of thought, culture, or interests.

Emigration and the establishment of small settlements at convenient centres on the trade routes helped the outflow of Indian cultural influ-

ences to countries in the East. There was no doubt a fusion with local inhabitants, of Indian ideas and institutions, customs and practices. The immigrant culture peacefully penetrated, evolving different modes of life to suit the local peoples. Indian institutions were dynamic, but they were highly flexible and accommodating also. A distinguished Englishman, resident in Singapore for many years and an authority on early Indo-Malayan relations, Dato Sir Roland Braddell, says: 'For more than 1000 years before Christ, thoughts, beliefs, customs and language have been carried back and forth through the world; and Malaysia presents to the enquirer a marvellous cats' cradle of them which is slowly being unravelled . . . The earliest records of India are contemporaneous with the Bible, and giving thereafter a continuous picture, they show that for 30 centuries India was one of the foremost maritime countries of the Old World, with colonies in Burma, Indo-China and Malaysia. She was the first historic coloniser of the Malay Peninsula, and her leading seamen of ancient times were the Tamils of Southern India.' Quoting another distinguished historian—'The more one studies the subject the more one realises the immense debt which Malaya owes to India for folk tales, as well as for language, religion, customs, literature, and general culture'—Sir Roland adds: 'And as it is with Malaya, so it is

with all the rest of Asia'.¹

Pandit Nehru cites Rene Grousset : 'In the high plateau of Eastern Iran, in the oases of Serindia, in the arid wastes of Tibet, Mongolia and Manchuria, in the ancient civilised lands of China and Japan, in the lands of the primitive Mons and Khmers and other tribes in Indo-China, in the countries of Malayo-Polynesians, in Indonesia and Malaya, India left the indelible impress of her high culture not only upon religion, but also upon art and literature, in a word, all the higher things of spirit.'²

Malaya was specially close to India. It constituted the bridge across which Indian culture passed into the Pacific. To this bridge came in later years Islam. But this new faith too came to Malaya more from India than from Arabia. True to her tradition India taught while she traded. The slow conversion of Malaya and Indonesia was effected by merchants and missionaries from Western and Southern India. It is fallacious to suppose that the old Hindu settlers and colonists brought their civilization to a barbarous land or a benighted people. The people of Malaya and Indonesia had a civilization of their own. They display even today their centuries-old genius for absorption and adaptation, and they must have profited considerably from the influx of Indian thought, customs and influences. A. R. Cowan in

1 Braddel : *Lights of Singapore*.

2 Nehru : *Discovery of India*, Calcutta, 1948, p. 166.

his *A Guide to World History* says: 'Round the monsoon civilisations before 1000 B.C. there may have been many little marginal civilisations in Indo-China and Malaysia. The Malays indeed were the Phoenicians of the East, and apparently made even longer hauls than the Semitic mariners, their oceanic elbow-room giving them greater scope than the coasts of the Mediterranean and Red Seas.' They spread out even as far as Madagascar and influenced the Malagazi tongue. The presence of Sanskrit words in the language that they introduced, however, showed that it was an 'Indian-influenced-Malay' that penetrated into far off island of the Indian Ocean.

Malaya is midway between China and India, and had intimate commercial connexions with China. And yet as Dr Winstedt says: 'Down the ages that [Chinese] influence has been negligible.' He attributes this weakness to the difference between Chinese and Indian methods and characteristics. 'For, while Indian penetration was peaceful and ingratiating, China, where she attempted to penetrate, conquered and annexed, appointed governors and compelled her subjects to adopt the Chinese way of life. Rarely did she seek intimacy on other terms . . . It was not China but India that so influenced the spiritual as well as material life of the Malays that till the nineteenth century they owed nearly everything to her; alphabets, religion, a

political system, law, astrology and medieval medicine, literature, sculpture in stone, metal work and the weaving of silk.' No doubt comparisons are sometimes odious. Yet, the interaction of Indian and Chinese influences in the countries of South-east Asia would lend itself to an interesting study and research. Centuries of separation, impacts of other cultures and even generations of foreign rule have not succeeded in erasing the indelible impress left by early Indian associations on the culture, thought and traditions of countries like Malaya or Indonesia, Laos or Cambodia. Even vibrant Chinese influences of modern times could not eradicate the Indian veneer in Malayan life. The early architects built on foundations which have stood the test of time.

To all these countries of South-east Asia, religion came from India—whether Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam. From the beginning of the fourteenth century Islam seems to have made its appearance. Events in India have always influenced Malaya and Indonesia and still continue to do so. The new affiliations brought them assistance from rich Muslim traders from India and Arabia and helped them in consolidating themselves. But Malaya never again succeeded in regaining her old glory. Under the Sultans of Malacca she kept for a time her commercial importance, and large Indian-built ships continued to ply between India and Malaysia. Nicolo Conti writing in the early fifteenth century

said: "The natives of India build some ships larger than ours capable of containing 2000 butts and with five sails and as many masts. The lower part is constructed with triple planks in order to withstand the force of the tempests to which they are much exposed. But some ships are so built in compartments that should one part be shattered the other portion remaining entire may accomplish the voyage."³

Ideas of royalty crept into Malaya and the Malay learnt to combine a respect for the divine right of kings with sturdy independence and to accept a compromise between absolute monarchy and rule by elders. The Minangkambau tribal system which came to Malaya from Sumatra with its matriarchal democracy, and the peculiar constitutional position of the 'Yam-tuan' of Negri Sembilan date back to the early Hindu period. Old Malacca had, in theory, a system of government by the Divine King, advised by a Cabinet of Ministers, a Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief, a Minister for Police and Customs, a Court Chamberlain, a Treasurer, an Admiral and so on. It was more or less the same form of polity as described in *Arthashastra*. During the days of Sri Vijaya ascendancy, though customs duties were levied and tolls were collected, the sea routes were kept open and there was no interference of any kind with maritime trade. It was open to all nationals, while leading countries of

3 Hakliyyut Society's Publications II : *India in the 15th Century*.

Europe when they arrived on the scene strove for monopolistic control and domination of such trade. Francis Light and Stamford Raffles, however, revived the old Hindu tradition of free trade and free ports, without probably knowing it.

Malay literature was modelled on the lines of Indian literatures, ancient and modern. During the Malacca Sultanate, old Javanese romances with Indian backgrounds became popular. The *Ramayana* was translated from Tamil into Malay and later on, the *Sanskrit Tales of a Parrot* and the Muslim romances of Amir Hamzah and Mohamud Hanifi were also introduced, mainly through Indian and sometimes through Arabian channels. Indian romances from the Deccan and innumerable works of Islamic theology found their way from India to Malaya. In 1650 Kedah reduced her port laws into writing and published a Code based on similar Indian regulations.

The names and titles of old rulers were Sanskritic even until Parameswara founded Malacca. Many such Sanskritic terms have survived to the present day and many of the Court dignitaries still hold Sanskritic designations. It is said that 'it took only a Brahminical rite to admit Malaysian chiefs to the Kshatriya caste, and to that caste belonged Indian and Hinduised rulers tutored by Brahmin priests in the necessary ritual.' It is true that today the vestiges of such practices among the ruling prin-

ces are not very visible, but even now in the State of Perak no one outside the Royal House other than a court functionary named Sri Naradhiraja may touch or handle the Royal Regalia. Naradhiraja has to proclaim in the ears of any new ruler the name of the God who is to be his special protector through life. Naradhiraja's family, though now Muslim, may not still eat beef, and boasts descent from Nandi, the sacred bull of Shiva. The consort of the Sultan of Perak is even now styled Raja Parameswari and their son, Raja Lakshmana. At the enthronement of the ruler of Negri Sembilan, the name of the chosen prince is still proclaimed by a court herald in what is considered to be a Brahminical posture. The installation ceremony of many a Malay Prince has retained many elements familiar to those acquainted with Hindu rituals. This is all the more so in Perak where the 'lightning' seal with handle made of 'thunder' wood, reminiscent of the thunderbolt of Indra, is thrust into the head-dress of the ruler; and on his shoulder is the sword of the heaven-born Ganges, inlaid with figures of Shiva and Mahadevi which, according to tradition, was used by a fourteenth century ruler of Minangkambau who professed Tantric doctrines that connected the worship of Shiva with the religion of Buddha. At the Perak installation Sri Naradhiraja reads an address in correct Sanskrit and in Negri Sembilan the five angels of the sky are still invoked prior to enthronement.

Hindu Tantric practices still continue in some form or other, tolerated and even blessed by Islam.

Quite a number of old and some modern townships of Malaya too have Sanskrit names. The Malay language today abounds in Sanskrit, Tamil and Hindustani words. Metaphysical or philosophic expressions like *karma* and *jnana*, *maya* and *deva* are in common-place usage in the Malayan countryside. While the ruler may still be styled in Malaya as Raja and Sultan, his Minister in many States is called the *Mantri*. Expressions like *guru*, *sakti*, *bhumi* and even adjectives like *maha*, meaning great or large, have passed into the Malayan language and have become common. Malayan literature is replete with Indian mythology and has extensively borrowed from India's huge stock of popular legends. *Jatakas*, *Hitopadesha*, *Panchatantra* and *Kathasarit-sagara* have given currency to many a well-known Indian fable. The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* respectively inspired *Hikayat Pandava* and *Hikayat Sirirama*. Hindu books, unlike in Indonesia, are now not so popular in Islamic Malaya. The Malay shadow-play has, however, kept alive the traditions of the Hindu epics, about which Dr Winstedt says: 'So popular has it been that the frowns of pious Muslims could not stay its performance and it is only now that it is dying a lingering death, Smar vanquished by Harold Lloyd and Sita by Greta Garbo.' Many folk romances still retain the Indian motif. Until

the Malayan tongue 'borrowed from Sanskrit words for price, property, religion, fasting, time, glad, agony; the language was destitute of terms to express feelings and ethical, religious and other abstract ideas.'

Malaya is full of sayings and proverbs current in South India. Popular superstitions prevalent in the Peninsula are similar to those in India. Indian dances, ceremonial and folklore are still extant after these many centuries. Malayan medical science shows all the signs of having been derived from Indian sources. Many common popular remedies are the same as found in many scattered villages of India. Malaya was not able to imbibe as many of the fine Hindu and Buddhist works of art as Java, Sumatra or Indo-China was able to do. According to Dr Winstedt, 'What art they may have had, Time and Islam and the Portuguese destroyed, leaving many patterns of fabrics copied from Indian models and some metal works more chaste than most Indian pieces.'

In the age that followed the old Hindu period in Malayan literature one could perceive desperate efforts being made to preserve the old works by the introduction of superficial variations here and there to satisfy the demands of the newly introduced religion. *Chandra Kirana* became *Chandra Nur Lela*. *Maharaja Bikrama Indra Dewa* receives the half Islamic name of *Shri Sultan Jayapati Sifat Aluddin*

Shah. The angel in the story becomes 'Malik' Indra. Thus, *Hikayat Marakarma* and quite a few other works indicate the methods employed to preserve the past without offending the present. Many of the books even underwent transformation in their titles. *Hikayat Marakarma* became *Hikayat Si-Miskin*. *Hikayat Serengga Bayu* came to be known as *Hikayat Ahmed Muhammad*, and *Bikramaditya Jaya* is now *Hikayat Shai-Mardan*.

Some of the most prolific Malay authors were either Indian or half Indian like Munshi Abdullah, Shaik Nurudina'r Ranini or the author of that excellent Malay book, *Sejarah Malayu*. Munshi Abdullah of the nineteenth century may be styled the Father of modern Malay literature. He was an Indo-Arab, though he always dressed like a South Indian. Sayid Mahmud Bin Sayid Abdul Kadir (1865-1913), author of some of the earliest Malay text books on physiology, hygiene, agriculture, geography and general knowledge was also an Indian. His output was almost encyclopaedic. Munshi Shaikh Muhammad Ali's translation of Nihal Chand's *Gul Bakawali* alias *Wijayamala* is now a Malay classic. There are three different variations of the *Panchatantra* in the Malay language. Malay poetry also breathes of its continuous connexion with India. The popular Malay quatrain (*pantun*) is considered by some as having been 'begotten by the jingling riddle of Indonesia, perhaps on the Indian Sloka.' Malay litera-

ture generally speaks of the *pantun* and the 'Seloka' in the same contexts.

Indian influences in modern Malay literature are not very marked. The recent tendency has naturally been to enrich the language by absorption of European, particularly English works. Arabic literature still continues to play a prominent part. Modern India, however, influences Malayan life in non-literary spheres. British administration has followed a familiar pattern : as in India, the Civil Service is the 'steel frame' with its district officers and magistracy. The States, like the Indian States, had their Residents or Political Officers sometimes termed Advisers. The first written code of laws (in Malay), namely the Kedah Code published in 1650, was of Indian inspiration. Modern Malayan legislation also has adapted many an Indian enactment. The Indian Penal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure, the Limitation Act, the Evidence Act and even the Indian Contract Act have been made applicable sometimes to the whole of Malaya and sometimes to the Malay States. Indian legal judgments and judicial pronouncements, though not binding on Malayan courts, continue to be cited and are considered with respect.

All these factors have contributed to bring closer together the two peoples and therefore the two Peninsular countries whose coastlines are washed by the waves of the Indian Ocean.

CHAPTER X

INDIA AND POST-WAR MALAYA

WE have traced so far the Indo-Malayan relations from historical times till today. The countries are drawn together by tradition and by sentiment. Economically, they are inter-dependent because of trade, because of Indian investments, as also because of the presence in Malaya of an appreciably large number of Indians. India is interested to see Malaya a strong and united nation, happy and prosperous, marching steadily and confidently towards full self-government. The fortunes of the countries round the Indian Ocean have been so interconnected that misfortunes in any one of them are bound to have reverberations in the rest.

Malaya was not, generally speaking, a very happy place for Indians, a large majority of whom were estate workers. A detailed examination of their problems will not be out of place. In the years preceding the second World War, mass migration of labour from India to Malaya was stimulated and encouraged. It naturally brought in its train many complicated problems requiring for their solution close co-operation and sympathetic understanding between the Indian and Malayan Governments. For one reason or the other that mutual co-operation was not adequately achieved, with the result that the

migrating population suffered considerably. Pictures of a land with a high standard of living, pleasant surroundings and comparatively higher wages attracted many Indians. For many years there was no one to look after the interests of the immigrants who had to toil hard in unhealthy conditions. The rubber industry, for example, wanting cheap labour, endeavoured to hide the real picture of Indian suffering behind a curtain of one-sided publicity. It was after the formation of Indian Associations that some protests were lodged regarding the condition of Indians toiling on the rubber plantations. These Associations later formed themselves into a central body styled the Central Indian Association of Malaya which, during the years before the second World War, was able to render good service to the community. Without its vigorous advocacy and strong representations the condition of Indian labour would have remained deplorable.

Labour emigration from India to Malaya went on unchecked till 1938 when the Indian Government imposed a ban which is still in force on assisted movement of unskilled workers from India to Malaya. Inadequate wages and hard living conditions were their main grievances. Their plight became known to the Indian public and Government only very late in the day. According to booms and slumps in the price of rubber Indian workers were carried backwards and forwards between Malaya

and India. Care was taken to keep the supply cheap and plentiful. Even when the price of rubber soared high and international quotas and releases reached their peaks, Indian wages remained poor. When prices went down, however, wages were reduced immediately. In days of low prices and adversity, the Indian was counselled patience until better times, but high prices and prosperity brought him no reward. Then he was told that such prosperity was but a passing phase.

Under Section 7 of the Indian Emigration Act of 1922, 'the Governor-General-in-Council may for the purposes of safeguarding the interests of emigrants in any place outside British India appoint Agents to be in such places and may define their powers and duties.' By arrangement with the Malayan Government an Agent of the Government of India in Malaya was appointed in 1923. Ever since, the Indian Agency has remained a potent influence on Indian life, a very important institution for safeguarding the rights and interests of Indian Labour in the Peninsula. The Agent's powers were regulated by Statute. Section 56 of the Act said: 'The Agents appointed in any place under Section 7 of the Act shall be generally responsible for the welfare of emigrants in that place and for carrying out the purposes of the Act in relation to such emigrants. They shall so far as may be possible, protect and advise all classes of Indian emigrants within their charge and

bring any requirements of such emigrants to the notice of the proper authorities in India or in the country in which they were appointed;....' The Agent's duties were wide enough to enable him to extend his assistance to all Indians. The various incumbents of this office fully realized their responsibilities, and tribute is due to them for the sterling services that they rendered during their tenures of office. Since the second World War, the Government of India have had in addition to the Agent at Kuala Lumpur, a diplomatic officer at Singapore styled Representative.

It is true that the Representative, being the Head of the Mission of another Government, does not, and cannot, generally meddle with the internal affairs of Malaya. He no doubt makes representations on behalf of his nationals. But by and large the interests of thousands of Indian workers in Malaya and of those who have made Malaya their home are in the hands of the Malayan Governments. There is no doubt that the second World War has changed old ideologies. George Hall, speaking on behalf of the British Government in the House of Commons in October 1945, said : 'No one must rely upon past privilege or regard Malaya as a source of material wealth only.' The chief grievance of Indians was that they were treated as a foreign element in the country with few rights, while others were accorded privileges denied to

Indians. Individual officials and employers of Indian labour nowadays show greater goodwill and sympathy, so that closer and more friendly relations are being developed. Indian spokesmen have always demanded that a broad outlook and sympathetic policy should be brought to bear upon questions of immigrants, that the Indians in the Peninsula should not be treated as a foreign element, and that their past record and present position entitle them to a fair and just consideration in the development of new Malaya. The ideal condition is that Indians should develop as part and parcel of the population. Recent moves by the sister communities for a united action in co-operation with the Government are full of promise. The policy of the Government of India seems to be to encourage Indians who have been domiciled in the countries of their adoption to develop permanent interests in such countries and not to remain there as mere birds of passage. The Malayan Governments have made provision for the acquisition of local citizenship.

As G. S. Rawlings says: 'The Malay Peninsula under British direction has become a conglomeration, and a very happy one at that, of many peoples. No single group of them, Malay, Chinese, Indian or other can lay just claim to the sole right of ruling or administering it by virtue of an inalienable birth-right, excluding the others as intruders or late-comers just as it would be absurd to make such a

claim in the USA, perhaps the only other country with so happy a combination of so large a variety of peoples . . . The task before the Governments and peoples of Malaya is : How to weld the diverse components now inhabiting the land into one unified whole, regarding Malaya as their home and the source of their livelihood, and having a common loyalty and allegiance to Malaya within the wider bounds of the British Commonwealth of Nations.'

Since the second World War, great changes have been taking place in Malaya. There, as elsewhere in the Commonwealth, the British Government are pledged to a policy of introducing progressive self-government. Far-reaching reforms are being introduced. While 'guerillas', who carry on their violent 'war' from the jungles, might be under the sincere belief that they are fighting for 'liberation from foreign rule', many progressive leaders and patriots feel the necessity for a stage by stage approach to Malaya's political development, though even they allege that the reforms at present granted fall short of the development which Malaya has already reached.

Malaya is passing through critical times. The internal position is unfortunately none too happy. As in many other countries, in Malaya too, the culmination of the second World War brought no peace. Certain forces that were let loose for 'partisan' activities and resistance against the Japanese

during the occupation were found to be out of control after the cessation of hostilities. Unlawful elements, priding themselves as anti-Japanese, had a free hand for a considerable time even after the Japanese surrender. Since June 1948 'revolutionaries' have taken to the jungles and have been carrying on an undeclared war against the Government with the latter retaliating violently. The aims and objectives of the guerillas are not clear; but the spectre of Violence stalks the land. Many innocent people have already lost their lives. According to published figures, during the three years from June 1948 to June 1951 the guerillas killed about 300 British and Gurkha troops and wounded about 400. The Police casualties were about 700 dead and 800 wounded. Nearly 1500 civilians too lost their lives. The blood-bath still goes on unabated though it is claimed that the situation is now under control. Government figures estimate the 'enemy' losses to be 2000 killed, 900 wounded, 1800 captured and 500 surrendered. When is it all going to end? India naturally is interested in peaceful and orderly progress as much as in the disappearance of colonialism, in her neighbouring countries.

Though the once peaceful Malaya is thus passing through days of anxiety and tribulation, the economy of Malaya still records sustained prosperity. True, this feature is to a certain extent the result of high prices ruling in the world market for

essential commodities like rubber and tin. World trade with Malaya is maintained at a high level and India's share in it has not been negligible. Indeed, India's stakes in Malaya's trade have never been unimportant. In recent years, Indian trade with Malaya has assumed agreeably large proportions. For jute goods and cotton textiles, Malaya looks to India and in spite of her difficulties, India has striven her utmost to contribute of her best towards satisfying Malaya's needs. Malayan rubber is one of the best known dollar earning assets for Britain; but India is interested in the smelted tin which Malaya exports. She also wants cocoanut oil and copra, areca-nuts and spices. Malaya grows little tea, coffee, or tobacco, all of which India can supply to the extent of Malayan requirements. Agricultural implements, small machines of different types, sports goods and various other articles of the consumer and non-consumer variety are in demand in Malaya and India today qualifies herself to be the best supplier of Malayan needs. Both countries being in the Commonwealth, there are certain facilities for mutual trade.

Indian investment in the Peninsula are considerable. The working capital of Chettiar firms alone is estimated at Rs. 25 crores. Exact figures are not available of the trading capital of other Indian firms but it is the third largest, the first two being European and Chinese.

Thousands of acres of large rubber estates and several smaller estates belong to Indian owners.

The Malayan panorama is of absorbing interest to India. We have seen how the pattern of Indian history was seen reflected in that of Malaya. The religion of the Aryans, the rise and growth of Buddhism, the later advent of Islam, the rivalry among the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French—all had repercussions on South-east Asia. British Malaya was but a bye-product of British India. The fall of Singapore in 1942 converted India into a base of operations for the retaking of Malaya by the Allies. The freedom, stability and prosperity of India will continue to affect Malaya and other countries of the Indian Ocean. Conversely, the progress and well-being of these countries are matters of primary significance to peace and prosperity in India. Great days are ahead; and co-operation between the two countries is essential for their mutual progress. It will also affect many other countries of the Indian Ocean.

CHAPTER XI

POSTSCRIPT

TIME does not stand still; and Malaya too moves on. Some time has elapsed since the fore-going chapters were written. A Postscript, therefore, will not be out of place.

An official publication recently issued by the Public Relations Office of Singapore gives *inter alia* the following information :

“The Malaysans, the people of Malaya, are chiefly of the Malay, Chinese and Indian races. The estimated population on 31 December 1950 was 6,326,552 including 24,119 Europeans. The Malays who are the indigenous race, predominate in the rural areas and small villages where they are chiefly engaged in fishing, in the cultivation of rice, rubber and food crops. In the Malay States, particularly, they provide the large number of Government officers. The Chinese are in the main a business community and their versatility and keen business acumen have contributed towards Malaya’s pre-war prosperity and post-war rehabilitation. Eminently successful as traders, shopkeepers and industrialists, the Chinese also own a considerable number of mines and rubber estates. The Chinese labourers in the tin mines and rubber estates and the Chinese rubber growers are an essential part of Malayan economy.

A large proportion of the Indian population are labourers employed on rubber estates, but in the towns many enterprising Indian merchants have trading and commercial establishments. All races and nationalities take part in the public life of Malaya.....'

Though the above passage may be regarded as defective in that it could be more generous on the role of Indians in the country, yet it gives a not inaccurate picture of the racial and occupational composition of Malaya's present population. The wording too is significant. For example, 'Malayans'—and not 'Malays'—are mentioned as the people of Malaya. It is thus acknowledged that a new Malayan nation is in the making; and the components of this nation are referred to only as racial groups and units, and not, as hitherto, as distinct nationals. There is in Malaya today a silent recognition of the importance of the problem with which the country is faced, viz. the need for a quick evolution of a Malayan State and of a Malayan nation owing primary allegiance and loyalty to the country. Set amongst countries with strong nationalistic upsurges, Malaya cannot remain static. Her democratic development has to be accelerated if she were not to be regarded as a political anachronism. Sentimental affinity to the countries of origin may be retained, but it has necessarily to be subordinated to patriotic attachment to the new country

that is coming into being. The process is active; but whether it is receiving the encouragement to the extent necessary is a matter that has to be constantly examined and watched by administrators and popular leaders alike, if the foundation for a strong nationhood is to be well and truly laid. Signs are not wanting that democratic institutions will soon come into existence in Malaya; and the creation of a united Malayan nationalism is engaging the attention of far-sighted leaders in the three racial components. It is pleasing to note that, unlike in some other places, communal electorates have not been viewed with much favour. Such electorates will not be in the ultimate interests of either the present rulers or the ruled. The future stability of the country will naturally depend upon the success with which it will be able to establish a real unity in its diversity—a unity based as much on sentiments as on certain hard facts of life, like equality of rights, responsibilities and opportunities, and on racial, and even individual, fraternity. Modern political evolution into nationhood does not depend on uniformity in language, culture, customs or manners, but on a unity in basic political concepts, in economic interests, and in the love of the country entertained by its citizens.

New legislation affecting political rights and citizenship has been passed in the Federation. As a result, Indian nationals domiciled in Malaya, along

with members of other non-indigenous races, have been put to the choice and may have to elect between retaining their citizenship of origin and acquiring the Malayan citizenship. Placed in the predicament of having to give up his status as an Indian national, an Indian in Malaya today is put to the necessity of taking vital decisions as regards himself and his progeny. Indians are in a minority, and with the sad experience that their compatriots have had of some other countries of the Commonwealth, it is but natural that they entertain genuine fears for their future. Doubts assail them as to whether they will be taken sincerely 'into the bosom of the family' or whether they will be regarded, even after many years of useful service, as unwanted elements; whether as a minority they will be treated with special kindness and consideration or they will be at the mercy of any unsympathetic majority. Both the Malay and the Chinese communities have been trying to allay such doubts and fears and it is hoped that even on being conferred power and responsibility, these two sections will pursue a policy of fairness and equity towards Indians. A State strengthens itself by fairness to its minorities. Frustration engenders discontent. Fair dealing produces confidence and inspires genuine loyalty.

India wishes well of her neighbours. At a time when Malaya needed Indian assistance to open up

and develop the country, the people of India responded well. Many of the immigrants found a home among the indigenous people. The policy of the new Republic of India is to encourage Indian settlers and their descendants to feel and act as the nationals of the country of their adoption. India is interested in them and will no doubt be pleased to see justice done to them; and Indians, wherever they may be, will never encourage Sudetenism among themselves.

The citizenship legislation in the Federation has caused dissatisfaction among non-Malay sections of the community. As far as Indians are concerned, even Dato Onn bin Jaafer, Member in Charge of Home Affairs, himself a most prominent leader of the Malay community, recently referred to the Citizenship Code and said, that 'he realized the Code's limitations particularly with regard to Indians (these include difficulties of residence and language qualifications for those not born in the Federation for two generations) but they could be thrashed out in course of time with accord between communities.'¹ According to Dato Onn, the legislation has conferred automatic citizenship only on about 160,000 Indians. Others, even though domiciled, have to acquire it if they can. All the Malays in the Federation and a million Chinese have, on the other hand, become citizens under operation of the law. In the same interview Dato Onn also paid a glowing tribute to

1 Interview to P. T. I.—Reuter.

the Indians of Malaya for their 'magnificent' behaviour in a period of political and economic emergency. 'They have proved beyond doubt,' he declared, 'that they have a definite place in the future of Malaya.' It is gratifying to note that the High Commissioner of the Federation, General Sir Gerald Templer, also on more than one occasion has given expression to similar feelings of appreciation in his references to India or Indians.

Malaya is passing through difficult times. Opinion both in Britain and elsewhere shows decided signs of recognizing the fact that despite her troubles in the last few years a purely military solution cannot be effective for the security and stability of Malaya. It has ultimately to be a political solution, for which the country has immediately to be prepared. Today, in Malaya and in Singapore we have only forms of democratic institutions, without the substance. The Councils of both the Federation and the Colony have soon to be vested with real power. The Malayan nation that is being born will shortly have to shoulder new responsibilities. War-time conditions quicken the growth of nationalism. Malaya is in the throes of a struggle between conflicting forces. The lot of the people who are wedged in between them is indeed deplorable. It is hoped that soon the country will settle down to peaceful conditions and that the ideology of democratic evolution on

the one hand, and nonviolent revolution on the other will prevail, ushering in an era of stability and progress. Then the new Malayan nation will come into its own.

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