

Lecture - the growth of Malay national feeling and esp. the contribution of the trad. aristocracy.

The estment of a Brit. protectorate over Malaya changed life in that country dramatically in some ways while in others it hardly affected it at all. Dramatic changes: sth. of a demographic revolution was taking place, due to Chinese and to a lesser extent Indian immigration. In the ~~1911~~ census of the pop. of the FMS taken in 1931, Malays were now only 34.7% of the pop. ( of course some of the Chinese prob. did not stay in Malaya, but a whole lot did ). Of the UMS, Johore had the same sort of pop. structure, and Kedah too had a lot of immigrants. Hand in hand w. this tremendous influx of immigrants went a tremendous ec. devt. - immigrants providing labour and skilld for the export economy, and the Brit. govt. seeing to the provision of roads, railways, telegraphs, P.Os harbours etc.

H'ever the life of the Malays in a way remained curiously unaffected. Before the British came, Malaya had been fairly sparsely populated by Malay villagers who were engaged in agriculture and/or fishing etc. They were not ( and still are not ) by any means near starvation ( much better off than e.g. the Javanese ) and were not terribly keen to provide the sort of wage labour the ~~wi~~ British needed to exploit the country's resources - and in many cases ( e.g. mining ) they didn't have the necessary experience. What happened when the British came was that they made a mutually profitable alliance w. the Malay ruling class - the British undertook to maintain the position and prestige ( if not the real power ) of the Malay rulers, and also not to cause too much disruption in the trad. Malay soc. by opening it up to mod. forces, and in return the Malay rulers let the British go ahead and build up a mod. export economy based on immigrant labour. ( i.e. between the 2 of them the poor Malay peasants were pretty well sold down the creek ). British took consid. care to maintain the fiction th~~at~~ the Malay Sultans were sovereign rulers and the Brit. Residents only advisers, but the fiction wore pretty thin, esp. in the FMS.

H'ever although the Malay rulers were pretty powerless vis-a-vis the British, within Malay soc. itself their position was actually strengthened ( backed by Brit. power, no longer subject to revolts and rival claimants effect of colonization - see Furnivall on the Jav. Regents ). Also it should be remembered that under the Pangkor ~~gr~~ Engagement wh. was the model for all the subsequent

agreements between the British and the Malay states, it was specifically laid down that the Resident could not give "advice" of matters relating to Malay religion and custom. The Malay ruling class therefore took over this field as their own particular preserve. Led to an increase in relig. pomp and ceremonies, and also to the creation of <sup>special</sup> administrative and judicial ~~establishments~~ <sup>bodies</sup> for the regulation of things Islamic. These bodies ~~were~~ came into existence in most states and were known as the Councils of Muslim Religion and Malay Custom. They were largely appointed by the Malay rulers.

Not only was the position of the Malay Sultans confirmed by the British, but also that of the Malay aristocracy as a whole. They were given positions on the state councils, and they generally had land and later on mining rights etc. wh. gave them an ec. advantage. Also, from the beg. of the 20th century, a lot of the younger members of the Malay aristocracy were trained for the civil service - in fact this type of education and training was largely reserved for them. Again, it can be said that although subordinate in respect to Europeans ( who held higher ranks in the civil service ) they maintained a superior position vis-a-vis Malays of lesser birth, and also, in this case, vis-a-vis the immigrant communities, because it was British policy to keep them out of the ~~xi~~ civil service ( thought it would become too touchy if non-Malays were seen telling Malays what to do, and so Malay officers, as they were called, were almost always used in the rural areas where the Malays lived ). Thus in both the FMS and the UMS the prestige and authority wh. the aristocracy had by virtue of birth was re-inforced by the admin. authority wh. they were given by the colonial govt. In the East coast states ( Kelantan, Trengganu ) things were slightly different because ~~there~~ the sort of devt. wh. was taking place on the west coast was pretty well absent, so that they remained more or less trad. societies.

Although the immigrants had initially been brought in because the Malay ~~p~~ villagers were unwilling or unable to supply the labour and skills needed to develop Malaya's export economy, the British soon devd. a policy of actually trying to keep them village farmers and more or less out of the modern world. There were various reasons for this: the Malay ruling class, w. whom the British were in a sense allied, were afraid of the disruptive effects wh. mod. life might produce on Malay soc. ( partly out of fear of losing their own position if mod. ideas caught

on, partly because they felt that their people just wouldn't be able to compete if they were thrown tog. w. the Chinese and the Indians ). Also, a lot of Brit. colonial administrators had rather sentimental views about the idyllic nature of Malay village life and wished to preserve it intact. Since Malaya had been fairly sparsely populated, it was possible for the Europeans and Chinese to start plantations without taking land from the Malays. The British took care to frame policies which would give the Malay peasant an individual title to his land, to keep the peasant in possession of the land he inherited, and to keep him cultivating crops esp. ( irrigated ) rice - they also had an interest in maintaining food production to support the pop. wh. was of course increasing rather rapidly w. all the immigration. They also created Malay Reservations, <sup>/ areas</sup> within which land cld. be sold only to other Malays.

As a result of these policies as well as of their initial position vis-a-vis the immigrants, the Malays didn't participate much in the developing export economy. About the only field they entered was rubber production - rubber was, with tin, one of the most important exprt products of Malaya ( introd. 1877; v. little actually grown before the beg. of the 20th century; boom years 1910-2, caused by rise in price of Brazilian rubber <sup>/ labour mostly Indian</sup> ). After 1910 quite a few Malay peasants took to rubber smallholding as a way of earning a cash income, and this devt. did lead to some degree of monetization in the Malay peasant economy. H'ever the middlemen ( ebgaged in preparation, marketing etc ) were still mostly non-Malay, and after some years the Brit. govt. introduced legislation wh. drastically limited any further rubber planting by Malays - they wanted to keep food production up, and also to reduce any possible competition to their own rubber plantations.

The Brit. Govt.'s provision of elementary education in Malay was another factor wh. tended to isolate the Malays from the other elements of <sup>Malayan soc.</sup> - nearly ~~all the pupils at these~~ <sup>all the pupils at these</sup> schools were Malay children. *Ref (O M N) p 137 in Winsted's 1917 report - says he did not want to circumvent the Malay educational and to see that the Malay peasant did not get ideas about his status then anyone else before or since*

In general then the Malays remained within their traditional village society - formed a v. small part of the city pop. - only about 10% in 1921 ( and these urban Malays were only about 4-5% of the total Malay pop. ) Therefore they tended to be isolated from the sort of devts. wh. were fostered by urban life elsewhere in SEA. Nationalism tends to be stimulated in an urban environment - people from all regions of e.g. Indonesia meet in cities like Djakarta, or in gatherings of students at the older Jav. towns

like Solo and Jogja. The rural nature of the Malay community goes some way towards explaining why there was no gr. devt. in Malay nationalism before the 1940s. What Malay feeling there was often centred on ~~isyl~~ loyalties such as religion or the state (i.e. Johore, Negri Sembilan etc.) rather than on the nation. However the Malays were becoming increasingly conscious of some sort of national identity, and 3 leadership groups played a part in this process. Each of these groups was assoc. w. a certain sort of educational background - in Malaya as in Indonesia ~~xxxxxxx~~ / having had the same education (Indoneisa: Dutch-language, Taman Siswa etc.) was a powerful factor in ironing out regional differences and making people feel they had sth. in common. IN Malaya, the first of the 3 groups ~~was~~ arose from the Islamic-educated religious reform movt.; the second was the largely Malay-educated radical intelligentsia; and the third was the English-educated bureaucracy, its upper ranks drawn largely from w'in the trad. Malay elite.

Relig. reform movt. - see Mr. Cox's tutorial.

Second elite group - the secular, Malay-educated intelligentsia ( plus a few young Malays who had been to Cairo but had been more affected there by anti-colonialist ideas than by the Islamic reform movt. ) Many members of this group were teachers and journalists who had received their education at the Sultan Idris Training College for vernacular ~~xxxxxxxx~~ school-teachers. = This group was considerably influenced by devts. in Indonesia. The ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ first headmaster of the Sultan Idris Training College was O.T. Dussek ( he was appointed when the college opened in 1922 and held the post until 1936 ) found that his teacher-trainees had a v. low standard of education ( products of village schools ) and decided to improve ~~their~~ this by concentrating on the study, use and devt. of Malay language, literature and history. In this he was consid. ~~xxxxxxx~~ wh. in helped by the activities of Balai Pustaka ~~after~~ the 1920s was publishing a lot of stuff in Indonesian - ranging from translations of Dutch vocational training manuals and books on infant care through translations of European fiction to original fiction by Indon. writers. Thus the Indonesians under Dutch guidance had already made a start on adapting the Malay language for technical and specialist works as well as for a mod. literature. Dussek was able to purchase B.P. ~~xxxxxxx~~ widely-read textbooks for use in the S.I.T.C. A lot of the early Indon. novels were ~~influential~~ in among this Malay-educated group - works like Marah Rusli's Sitti Nurbaja and

Abdul Muis' Salah Asuhan ~~at~~ - all B.P. ~~in~~ publications, plus the so-called " roman pitjisan " and the Malay-lang. periodicals published in Indonesia ( no fewer than 53 in 1920, despite the low rate of literacy ).

The fact that most of their reading material came from Indonesia, and that the Indonesians were obviously much farther ahead in the cultivation of Malay, meant that many of this group desired a closer association w. Indonesia - even spoke of the creation of a Greater Malaysia or Greater Indonesia. Since most of them were peasants by birth ( the idea of the S.I.T.C. was that they wld. go back to their village and give elementary education to the younger children there ) they tended to be influenced more by the left wing of the Indon. nat.'ist movement. They were critical not only of British colonialism but also of ~~the~~ both the trad. Malay elite and the new English-educated bourgeoisie - partly because this English education opened up opportunities for advancement wh. were denied to those who had only Malay education. H'ever ~~they~~ <sup>these Malay-educated radicals</sup> did not have a coherent pol. program, nor were they tightly ~~is~~ organised, although in 1938 they did form an embryo pol. organisation called the Kesatuan Melayu Muda, wh. the British kept an eye on. They need not have worried too much however - its radicalism was not shared by the majority of Malays. Before the war it failed utterly to gain anything like a mass or solidly peasant-based following. Reasons for this: the influences ( Indon. natism etc. ) wh. had moulded the thinking of these Malay-educated radicals had been felt by only a v. small group ( S.I.T.C. had about 120 new students per year in the 1920s ) and the great majority of Malays were sheltered in ( or fossilised by ) the cocoon of their ~~ix~~ village agrarian soc. - remained more attached to their trad. leaders, not interested in larger pan-Indonesian programs.

Third new leadership group - English-educated <sup>administrators</sup> ~~bursementis~~ and public servants, who were mostly drawn from the old Malay ruling class. During the 1930s there was quite fierce competition between Malays and Indians and Chinese for govt. clerical and technical posts. This was because the govt. had introd. policies to bring more Malays into the subordinate branches of the govt. service, and the Chinese and Indians really felt the pinch during the depression years when the total no. of govt. jobs available was drastically reduced, and when there was also a lot of

unemployment in mining and in plantation industries ( esp. rubber ). The leaders of both the Chinese and the Indian communities argued that non-Malay communities shld. be given the same rights as the Malays, , at least in proportion to their contrib. to the economy. Malay response: " If you get someone in to build a house, you don't ask him to live with you afterward." One of the big qns. / <sup>debated</sup> in Malaya was how far the immigrant communities ~~intended~~ there intended to settle permanently, and, even if they did settle permanently, how far ~~they were~~ <sup>their loyalties</sup> were involved w. Malaya as opposed to their " mother countries ". In this respect a quite common phenomenon was an immigrant family wh. had been settled in Malaya for several generations but still for instance sent home ( e.g. to India ) for wives for their sons, etc. In Malaya the most important, because most numerous, ( Fisher:

alien community was the Chinese. The Chinese communities throughout SEA were quite strongly influenced by devts. on the Chinese mainland - the growth of Chinese nat'ism. Sun Yat-sen, who visited SEA more than once, was largely financed by overseas Chinese capital, and the 1911 Revolution ( when Sun Yat-Sen became President ) led to the growth of study and reading groups w. pol. overtones ~~among~~ among the Chinese of SEA, as well as a growth in enthusiasm for mod. education in Chinese. When the mainland Chinese nationalists split into the Kuomintang and Chinese Communist Party in 1927, both movts. found supporters in SEA. In Malaya, the Kuomintang branch there was banned in 1930, and the same year saw the founding of the Malayan Communist party, wh. was ~~mainly~~ <sup>a quite largely</sup> Chinese organization., although it had some links w. comm-anti-imperialist and China-centric units movts. in Indonesia and Vietnam. This pol. activity of the Chinese, tog. w. their comparative ec. success and ability to organize themselves and provide mod. education for their children acted as irritants to the Malay élite groups, but also in a way as models.

From the late 1920s onward, the trad. Malay ruling class - both those who, like the rulers and their estments., were still part of the old pattern and those who had been absorbed into the new colonial bureaucracy - showed concern at the obviously disadvantaged position of the Malay in the mod. world. <sup>From / the</sup> In 1927 periodic gatherings of rulers ( durbars ) wh. had been going on since 1897 - British wanted them to be accompanied by " as much pomp and circumstance as possible " - began to

be held more regularly. At these gatherings various proposals were made to improve the sit. of the Malay - e.g. it was proposed to encourage Javanese immigration instead of Chinese, also to strengthen Malay rights to the land etc. Also in the Federal and State Councils the Malay members - all of high status in the trad. Malay soc. - pressed for more jobs for English-educated Malays and for more Malay reservations for the peasants. However they were hampered from pressing their case too far by their official positions, so in 1938 elements of this English-educated Malay elite began to form avowedly pol. Malay Associations on a state ( not nation-wide ) basis. These Malay Associations were generally rather conservative and loyal both to the Malay rulers and to the British - seen as a continuing protection against the pressure of the immigrant communities ( rather ironical since the British had actually brought them in ). These Malay Associations had much more success in attracting mass support than the Malay-educated radical group had, because the Malay Associations were strongly tied to the trad. aristocracy to wh. most Malays were still loyal. In 1939 and 1940 there were national conferences at wh. various attempts were made to construct a unified national association - failed because of state rivalries and an inability to see beyond the trad. Malay pol. structure. Further consideration of this qn. was supposed to be given at the next conference, planned for the next year but not held because of the impending Japanese invasion. Despite this somewhat parochial tendency however the growth of a genuine Malay nationalism after the war owed much both in ideology and in structure to the Malay Assoc. movt. and its leadership.

Japanese occupation. Tended to worsen communal divisions in Malaya. The Japanese on the whole left the Malays alone but treated the Chinese v. badly. Since the outbreak of war between China and Japan in 1937 the Malayan Chinese had contributed generously to the China relief fund, and the Japanese executed those they thought had contributed, along with <sup>/ Chinese</sup> journalists, schoolteachers and students, govt. servants, J.P.s etc who were considered likely to have pro-British sympathies. It was in fact the Chinese who organised the only active guerrilla resistance to the Japanese, i.e. the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, also known as the " Three Star " army because of its badge ( 1 star for each race, although it was in essence a Chinese movt. ) It was organised under the direction of the Malayan Communist Party. The Malayan branch of the KMT also had a guerrilla groups.

Some Indians joined the Indian National Army ( raised by S.C. Bose from Indian prisoners in Jap. hands ) but thousands of others were carried off to work, and die, on the Burma railway. Many Malays got positions under the Japanese to wh. they old. never have attained under the British. Those who collaborated w. the Japanese were harrassed by the MPAJA. The Japanese surrender led to a general settling of old scores, and when the British came back in September 1945 some of the people of Malaya looked forward to an early end to colonial rule, while others were fearful of just that - had experienced the ~~here~~ <sup>amount</sup> of violence and divisions that wld. come into play.

Malaya achieved independence in quite a diff. way from Indonesia - did not have to mount an armed fight against a colonial power wh. did not wish to let go. During the war years the British had actually started to work out a plan for a modern, unified ( and prob. - eventually - indep. ) Malay state. This plan was made public in January 1946, and ~~xxxxxx~~ provided for the creation of a unified Malayan state ( excluding Singapore, wh. was to remain a separate colony ). This involved the cession of all separate jurisdiction from the various Malay sultans to the British crown. Winstedt ( Malaya and its History p. 140 ) says that this was because Whitehall believed that a strong centralized govt. might have done more to halt the Japanese conquest than a patchwork federation had done. The other main provision of this British plan was that anyone who had been resident in Malaya for 10 out of the preceding 19 years ( put as 15, not counting the Japanese occupation ).

This Union plan was possibly the most controversial act of the British during their time in Malaya. Even now opinions are fairly sharply divided - seems to depend on where your sympathies lie. ( " everyone who works on Malaya thinks there's one race too many and you soon find out wh. one it is ". ) For two opinions read Purcell, Chinese in SEA pp. 318 - 329 and Winstedt, Malaya and its History pp. 140-147. Winstedt says that the Union was a wicked plan wh. the British ( or rather " Whitehall " - Winstedt himself was a Malayan administrator ) had devised because of a mistaken belief that the Malays had helped the Japanese ( perhaps they hadn't helped them, but they hadn't done much to hinder them either ). Says pressure was put on the highly civilized and able Malay Sultans to surrender their powers and that the Union wld. have allowed the Malays to be completely swamped by the " immigrant " communities, who ~~xxxxxx~~ wld. have been admitted

even to the admin. service, so that a Malay cld. be tried by a Chinese or Indian judge in his own country. Says already the immigrants conspired to keep the Malays out of trade and industry/ Purcell on the other hand says that the Union citizenship provisions were just and the British allowed themselves to be stampeded into abandoning them because of agitation started by some influential British ex-colonial administrators, etc., and allow the Malays alone to frame the country's constitution.

Rightly or wrongly, the ~~Malays~~ British did abandon the Union ~~plan~~. The Union had actually come into force on 1 April, but had generated a tremendous amount of opposition, so that it had to be abandoned after 18 months. Malay leaders, of whom the most important was Onn bin Ja'afar of Johore, brought into being within weeks a mass Malay movement, the United Malays National Organization ( UMNO ) to fight the Union scheme ( another irony ). By mid-1946 talks were being held btwn. the Brit. govt., the Malay Sultans, and the UMNO. As Purcell admits, the Chinese community did not make a strong stand on behalf of the liberal citizenship provisions of the Union plan, a fact wh. lent colour to the Malay claim that the Chinese were actually not interested in what was happening in Malaya. H'ever when ~~it became clear~~ <sup>it became clear</sup> ~~that a retreat from the Union provisions was likely, there~~ ~~was some opposition, mainly~~ <sup>that a retreat from the Union provisions was likely, there</sup> was some opposition, mainly from left-wing groups such as the multiracial and socialist Malayan Democratic Union ( MDU ) ~~and~~ wh. was joined by Chinese communists and some Malay supporters of the pan-Indonesia idea. However these groups were not able to exert much influence, and what emerged from the talks was a return to a more federal system of govt., based on the trad. state structure, greatly restricted citizenship, and the introd. of a non-elective legislative council w. an appointed majority ( wh. included the 9 Malay rulers ). The new Federation of Malaya was inaugurated on Feb. 1 1948 ( not April 1 )

H'ever this was not the end of the road. After the war, the MPAJA had disbanded itself and the Malayan Communist Party had turned to work in the trade unions - w. quite a bit of success, again mostly among the Chinese since most of the urban proletariat were Chinese. H'ever the British took stern measures to prevent industrial unrest and <sup>in general it was obvious that conservative trends had gained</sup> the ~~upper hand~~ <sup>upper hand</sup> in the pol. situation. Therefore the MCP turned in 1948 to armed revolt, and the resulting situation, known as the " Emergency " lasted for 12 years, though the most serious part was over by the mid '50s. ( for full account see Purcell ).

The aim of the MCP and its army ( the Malayan Races Lib. Army - though Purcell says it was 99% Chinese ) was to subvert the economy by ~~and~~ disrupting tin and rubber production, wh. were its mainstays, and to win mass support and overthrow the colonial govt. ~~It~~ <sup>-- Had some</sup> ~~initial~~ <sup>initial</sup> successes in assassinating European - and - rubber planters and tin miners capitalist Chinese ( the figures given by Purcell on p. 332 shew that <sup>by far</sup> the largest percentage of those killed by the terrorists in 1948 were Chinese-) sort of Chinese class war? ) H'ever by 1949 they were forced to retreat to the jungle, and carry on guerrilla war. How much support did they actually have? Purcell says that from first to last not more than 3-5,000 guerrillas were involved, and casualties on both sides numbered only 100s, not 1000s ( a tea-party compared to Vietnam ). Did not get support from the Malays because the Malays viewed the whole thing as a Chinese attempt to take over. Got some initial support from the Chinese - partly because they felt they had no stake in the Federation, partly out of fear ( terrorist tactics ) - especially from among the squatter communities, <sup>But the British started re-</sup> ~~settling~~ <sup>grouping</sup> these squatters into " New Villages " ( Briggs Plan ). Between 1950 and 1952 500,000 Chinese were re-settled - also 10,000 deported to China. This firm govt. action encouraged the Chinese community to resist terrorist pressure.

One result of the Emergency was that leading Chinese became concerned that the Chinese community had no respectable pol. organization to speak for it, corresponding to the Malay's UMNO. Therefore in Feb. 1949 a no. of well-to-do, western-educated Chinese, led by the millionaires Tan Cheng Lock and H.S. Lee, and encouraged by the British, formed a Malayan Chinese Association. Although it represented the Chinese community its stated first aim was ± " the promotion and maintenance of interracial harmony in Malaya " ( SSEA p. 368 )

The existence of these 2 strong and respectable organisations, plus the fact that the British realised that the best ~~answer~~ answer to the Communists ideological claims to be fighting a war of liberation was to take steps in the direction of independence, led to a general improvement in the pol. sit. A British-sponsore liaison committee brought about the first reconciliation btwn. the representatives of the 2 communities, and plans were drawn up whereby the Chinese got more liberal citizenship proposals in return for economic assistance to the Malays, who were recongnised to be economically disadvantaged.

In 1952, the first democratic elections took place, and the UMNO and the MCA formed a temporary pact which proved so successful that it led to a permanent alliance, and in August 1953 the National Alliance was formed. October 1954: the Malayan Indian Congress also joined, thus completing the Malayan communal spectrum.

1955 elections: electorate was still 80% Malay, because of the 600,000 Chinese eligible to vote (about half the adult pop. - SSEA p. 369, check) fewer than one quarter chose to register. Thus had the situation that many MCA members of the Legislative Council depended largely on Malay votes.

Thus the way was opened for independence. Before, the British had been reluctant because of the bad situation, but the multi-racial alliance now seemed to answer all their objections. Its leaders were moderate (often aristocratic) Malays and well-to-do Chinese and Indian businessmen, who seemed to offer political stability as well as a reasonable guarantee for British investments. During the long series of talks that followed on working out the shape of independence, there were still considerable differences of opinion on the crucial issues of citizenship, language, the special position of the Malays. Finally, the UMNO and the MCA, recognizing that neither community would be able to manage on its own, presented to the British a joint set of Alliance proposals embodying compromises by both parties.

The essential points of this compromise solution are as follows:

the Malay sultans would continue in each state, acting as constitutional monarchs on the advice of ministers chosen from the majority party in fully elected state legislative assemblies; every 5 years these sultans would appoint one of themselves as paramount ruler (Yang ~~di~~ diper-Tuan Agung) who would likewise act on the advice of ministers responsible to a fully elected national parliament; Islam would be the state religion, but the individual would have freedom of religion; citizenship for all born in Malaya in the future, and to increasingly large numbers of resident Chinese and Indians by naturalization; Malay to become the sole national language after 10 years, and until then Malay and English were to continue as joint national languages; and the special needs and position of the Malays to be recognized by reserving to them / certain proportion a number of places in the public services and giving them special scholarships and certain sorts of economic opportunity.

The British accepted this proposal and on August 31 1957 the independent Federation of Malaya came into being.