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One Penny

## ((A) (1 3 A € G 1957) Special Malayan Independence Issue

## MALAYA IS SELF-GOVERNING He is Chief Minister ON AUGUST 31

 Students arrange celebrations here

Malayan students at Adelaide University are preparing to celebrate their country's independence on August 31.

On that day, Maiaya will become an independent nation within the British Commonwealth.

A special Merdeka Organi-ing Committee has been set up within the University to co-ordinate activities necessary arrangements.

At the end of the month

it is planned to hold a Mer-deka Ceremony at 10.30 a.m. in the Refectory for official guests.

The Proclamation of Inde-pendence will be read at the same time here as in Kuala Lumpur, the Malayan capi-

At night a special ball will be held for the Malayan students and their friends. Malayan students are ex-cited at the thought of their

country being free at the end of this month.

of this month.

Celebrations are being held in many parts of Australia, and overseas. In Wellington some newspapers may print special features on Malaya.

More than 45 nations will be represented at the More

be represented at the Mer-deka celebrations in Kuala Lumpur.

A new stadium has been erected, and most of the celebrations will be held there.
Full details of what independence means to Malaya, and its importance to the world, are given in this special edition of "On Dit."

## AUSSIES — THROUGH MALAYAN EYES...

A Malayan journalist has written a series of articles about Australia for the Malayan press.

The Malayan journalist, Mr. Ng Yook Yoon, made a 10,000-mile tour of Austra-lia recently with seven other Asian journalists, at the invitation of the External Affairs Department.

### KUALA LUMPUR **CELEBRATIONS**

Over 45 nations will be represented in the Merdeka celebrations in Kuala Lumby the Federation Govern-ment, together with the an-nouncement of the official programme.

Most of the ceremonies will take place in the newly constructed "Merdeka" Stadium, which will be opened by the Chief Minister on August 30. On August 31 over 20,000 people will witness the official Merdeka ceremony, during which the Proclamation of Independence will be read by the Chief Minister. At noon the Supreme Ruler will be sworn in.

On September 1 the Chief Minister will take the salute in a military parade in which about 2,600 members of the armed forces will march to the music of 12 military bands. On the same afternoon the Chief Minister will entertain 1,500 guests at a garden reception. On September 3 the Parliament will be opened. be opened.

He said that the Australians knew more about the Chief Minister of Singapore than the Chief Minister of Malaya. He described the Malaya. He described the Australians as a great nation of "do-it-yourselves." "Perhaps a thing that makes them such decent people is their being unable to be their idle."

Then he went on: "Some, of course, are inherently lazy, but those who have homes just can't afford to be idle. There is so much to be done, and they have got to do it themselves.

"Besides being the bread-winner, the head of an Aus-tralian family has to be the tralian family has to be the gardener, chauffeur, carpenter, and handyman. The wife has to be the cook, washerwoman, and shopper. The men cherish their little mercies—their tobacco, their beer, and their newspapers. They love to relax at some sports, entertainment, and occasionally have a small flutter at the races—horses, greyhounds, or 'spiders' (trotting)." greyhounds, (trotting)."

He remarked that his party were struck by the absence of a national press, and by the petty jealousies that existed between the States. He gave lavish praise to the gigantic Snowy Mountains Hydro - electric Project, and said: "The project has special interest for Malaya, because the 120 million dollar Cameron Highlands Hydro-electric Scheme in Malaya resembles this gigantic project." He remarked that his

## Rotary **Fellowships**

Rotary International Rotary International (the Association of Rotary Clubs of the world), under the Retary Foundation Scheme, offers, every second year, a number of Fellowships for Advanced Study, tenable in countries other than that of the applicants.

The object of the Fellow-The object of the Fellowships is to give students of potential leadership ability the opportunity of advanced study for one year in another country, and at the same time of acquiring a knowledge of its people, their culture, their outlook, and how they live, and thereby help to improve international relationships. lationships.

Candidates of either sex must be between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine years, and have qualified, or are about to qualify, for a Bachelor's degree.

Further particulars may be obtained from the office of the Rotary Club of Adelaide, Shell House, North Terrace, Adelaide.

Applications must be lodged not later than September 30, 1957.



Chief Minister of Malaya, Tengku Abdul Rahman.

# AN IMPORTANT

A General Meeting of the Union will be held to discuss the proposed new constitution of the Union at 1.20 in the Lady Symon Hall on Wednesday, August 7.

Over the last few years Union activities have been increasing in quite a remarkable fashion.

Not so long ago the Refec-Not so long ago the Refectory closed at five o'clock, there was no coffee service in the George Murray common room in the evenings, and the function of the Union Council was rather nebulous.

With the growth in student numbers, and an increasing desire for Union facilities, great changes have been made. The new Union buildings at present being erected are evidence of this growth. growth.

Last year the Union Council, in keeping with the times, realised that its little-used Constitution was due for a re-drafting. Much time has been spent by the Council and its Constitutional Subcommittee in doing this, and you are urged to attend the meeting.

you are urged to attend the meeting.

The President of the Union, Mr. David Evans, will also present a report on Union activities over the last few years, culminating in the present extensions. This

will be his final report be-fore he leaves for Oxford at

the end of August to take up the Rhodes Scholarship.

Mr. R. B. Lewis, President of the Sports Association, will be the new Union Pre-

### A Malayan Varsity?

The Malayan Minister of

The Malayan Minister of Education recently announced that the Federation was considering the establishment of its own University.

He said that, with the transference of the whole of the first year of the Arts Faculty of the University of Malaya from Singapore to Kuala Lumpur, the capital, in September, it was hoped to form a nucleus of, a University college as a fore-run-

to form a nucleus of a University college as a fore-runner to a full University.

This announcement was warmly welcomed by educationists all over Malaya, who felt that it was fitting that an independent Malaya should possess its own higher seat of learning.

# Im the thick of it by staff-writer SOME PROBLEMS

As far as I can recall, local political events first hit the headlines in Malaya round about the beginning of 1954, when the British administration was seriously considering the granting of a small measure of self-rule to Malaya.

Almost all at once, parties of all shades of political opinion sprang up like mushrooms. But political opinion mattered little to these immature politicians, who all convinced that the shortest way to a Council seat was to wash the dirty linen of their opponents in public. These sordid tales often made such fascinating reading that I began to realise there was more to politics than meets the eye.

In a school vacation during this interesting and formative period, the senior forms of certain schools were approached by the Government to take part in an election designed to gauge survey the political consciousness of the common people. My growing interest drove me to

The students were sent out in different groups to tin mines, rubber estates, new villages, and towns, to get people to answer the special questionnaire. I was first assigned to a rubber estate about two miles off the main road. Since my State, Perak, has always been one of the hottest (not in degrees Centigrade, but in the degree of terorrist activities), the Government provided us with armed escort, which proved rather unfortunate.

In the presence of the troops in jungle green they just shut up. But then, who could blame them? Under the Emergency Regulation they could be detained at any time. It was just too much to expect them, such company, to open their hearts and mouths to you, and give a candid answer to "Sir, what do you think of Communism?"

On our way out one of the students went up to his friend, who was sitting right in front, and propounded to him his theory that under an ambush the terrorists would shoot the driver first. Therefore he strongly advised his friend to remove himself from the danger zone. Unfortunately, the bus driver overhead this excellent piece of logical deduction. That he wholeheartedly concurred with the sentiments expressed was made evident by his subsequent record-breaking dash back to the main road.

#### Tin Mines

In the tin mines, where they were more adequately protected by the forces of law and order, the faces were more open and friendly, but these same faces would assume an utterly blank expression whenever a question about politics was put across. I am not quite sure if most of them understood the questions, but quite evasion that I strongly suspected the working of an intelligent and educated mind.

The classic example of this deliberate apathy occurred in Ipoh when I approached a Chinese merchant. He was reading a newspaper account of a world-shaking event (I think it was the fall of Dienbienpu), yet he denied flatly any knowledge of world af-

2-On Dit, August 2, 1957 of life.

The next momentous event elite, and the back for the was the town council elec- man-in-the-street. It was a tions. That was my very first experience with elections, and I thoroughly enjoyed every moment of it. In election rallies night after night candidates challenged and abused one another. Once or twice feelings were roused to such a dangerous pitch that stones were thrown all over the place. After attending a few of these rallies I got a feeling that most of the crowd came simply because they didn't want to miss out in case a fight

#### Elections

broke out.

On election day the rich and powerful Alliance Party, then the most radical and national party in Malaya, organised a wonderful car-lift to convey voters to and from polling stations. I have often wondered how much this had to do with their landslide victory. Evidently the British Government were not too pleased with that arrangement. Subsequently a motion passed in the Federal Legislative Assembly (then consisting entirely of Government-nominated members) limited the number of cars per candidate on polling day.

On election night the counting, of the votes took place in a school hall, which was divided into two portions—the front for the social

most exhibitanting experience to be one in a crowd of all races and from different walks of life, championing the same common cause, and cheering the same candidates. When the Alliance victory was announced, we shouted ourselves hoarse with cries of "Long live Alliance!" and "Merdeka" cries which formerly were mere political slogans, but that night assumed for me a national significance. So we went completely wild at three in the morning. I became so convinced that if the Malayan people could behave so enthusiastically and unitedly as that night. Merdeka would not find the Malayans want-

I also had very wonderful memories of the first Federal election and its most satisfactory results, which contributed not a little to our achieving independence Although I still very soon. have much doubt about the political maturity of the Malayan people, and their ability to govern themselves, I am fairly confident that, if every Malayan is to accept Merdeka as a fact, and keep his eyes open to its numerous obstacles and probelms, Malaya will reach full political and economic independence without any chaos and dis-

### A MESSAGE FROM THE SRC PRESIDENT

"A day, an hour of virtuous liberty, Is worth a whole eternity in bondage.

Today more than half the world's population, kindled by the flame of nationalism, is involved in a major social revolution. Probably the greatest single development of the twentieth century, this revolution has broken the hold of the West over the countries of Asia, and is now rapidly changing the political, economic, educational, social, and racial conditions within these lands.

The only possible parallels are the French and Russian revolutions, and even they are dwarfed in comparison with changes in Asia. Never before had so many millions of people taken part in such a rapid and radical social upheaval, and so Malaya, on August 31, 1957, will emerge as an independent nation free to take her place alongside the equal partners of the British Commonwealth. It is hoped Malaya will be accepted with equal status, the 82nd member of the United Nations.

which designed the Constitution for new Malaya, has had the arduous task of considering every aspect of the problems arising out of a plural society, and from them has evolved this unique Constitution, formed on American, Australian, and Indian federalism.

MERDEKA. I sincerely hope our nation will find this Constitution applicable to the Malayan way

An independent Malaya will mean harder work for every citizen in the country. Every man and woman must be prepared to sacrifice luxuries, pleasures, comforts, and time to contribue their share in moulding this new Malaya into a country with solidarity.

It is, then, fit and proper to appeal to the many Malayans studying abroad, and especially to those of you studying at the University of Adelaide. Malaya looks to us with hope and confidence that soon we shall return as professionals in our own fields of study, ready to serve this new community.

For a country which has nearly 50 per cent. of its youth under 21 years of age we have no choice except to bear the responsibility which, I fear, will be thrust upon

Finally, I am certain that, however small our contribution will be, it will be most welcome to the masses in Malaya. So let us cast this "TIDA-APATHY" attitude aside, and take a rational national approach to our new Malaya, as every conceivable problem, be it religious, social, political, or what have you, will be problems, affecting you and me directly, and the problems of our future

> SAM ABRAHAM, President, Students' Representative Council

## FEATURES

# FACING MALAYA

No one is so foolish or naive as to suppose that with the attainment of self-government all the problems that face Malaya will be automatically solved.

When the question of in-

dependence for Malaya was

Government. These were

not unsound reasons for de-

laying independence, but

they were soon considered unworthy in the heat of a

rising nationalism. And the

pace towards independence

Self-government for Ma-

laya is now a reality, and this

has suddenly underlined the

many problems facing the

agreed to grant independence

to Malaya the vote-catching

cry for local elections was

"Down with British Imperialism!" Now that British

Imperialism is a relic of the

think of other things to cap-

ture the imagination or emo-

Communism

Top on the list of respon-

sibilities is Communism.

Nine years ago the outlaw-

ed Communist Party of Ma-

laya took a gamble, and started a hit-and-run war

with the British Government

in Malaya. The country

was taken completely un-

awares, and the top-heavy

Government came very close

to total collapse. But events

of the Communists in insti-

gating an armed insurrection

for which the broad masses

had no sympathy or under-

standing, and through which

the poor peasants and estate

workers endured much suf-

lost the gamble, and since

tics, and are now infiltrat-

ing into trade unions and

schools. This is a far more

insidious and effective

method than physical vio-

It is much easier to pursue

the perpetrators of an am-

bush in the jungle than to

track down Communist influ-

ence in trade unions and

schools. How is one to draw

the line between extreme

leftist and Communist

views? Where does pink end

and red begin? Given time

and patience, the Communists

could work havoc with the

The present Alliance Go-

vernment (consisting of the

United Malays National Organisation, the Malayan In-

dian Congress, and the Ma-

layan Chinese Association)

is pledged to fight the Com-

munists to the bitter end

Government.

the past nine years have

the colossal blunder

The Communists

have changed tac-

tion of the masses.

politicians have to

Before Britain

was accelerated.

country.

shown

fering.

then they

people

#### By CHAI HON-CHAN

first brought up a few years ago, large sections of the Malayan public were not enstay permanently in power. thusiastic, and some were in-What if, at the next general deed fearful of the conseelections, one party favoring quences of an early withthe recognition of the Maladrawal of the British from yan Communist Party, as a Malaya. Not that such price for the ending of the were sycophantic emergency which at the molovers of British colonial ment is draining the country rule, but that they considerof much - needed money, ed that independence with no comes into power? experience in the intricacies Communists could use this to self-government would blackmail a Government that spell chaos for the entire that is not rabidly anti-Comcountry, especially when an munist, and thus get back to armed Communist insurrecthe arena of legitimate polition was waiting like a tiger tics. Such an event is not on the fringe of the jungle impossible. to pounce on a new-born local

#### Races

Malaya is made up of

three main races—the Malays, Indians, and Chinese. Though they have lived for years together in the country, there was no common education for all (except in a limited way in the English schools), no common outlook and loyalty, and therefore no integration to form a nation. Each lived practically in rigid, watertight compartments. As long as the British held the reins of government all were content, or appeared to be content. suspicions each may have had of the other were pushed into the background British colonial oil effectively calmed the ripplees that occasionally ruffled the placid Malayan lake.

But, to continue the metaphor, deep in this lake, like Loch Ness, sleeps a monster which could be invoked and brought to the surface by anyone unscrupulous enough to think that appealing to racialism was the way secure votes and ride to power. Any politician who plays on racial feelings to win power would be committing a crime against the country, for such a thing could have fatal consequences. Malaya's future depends entirely on the harmonious working together the three races. Politicians and statesmen will require great skill and deep insight to balance these three forces. If the equilibrium is upset, the repercussions could be disastrous for all.

#### Education

The most effective way of cultivating a common outlook and national integration is through education. tionalising education and imposing one language on the country will help considerably.

policy of laissez-faire in Alliance. This would be a matters of education, so that step in the right direction. policy of laissez-faire there were Malay, Indian (Tamil and Hindustani), and Chinese (Kuo-yu) schools to cater to the needs of the various communities. There were also English schools for the benefits that came from those who wished for an English education. The result of this was, naturally, British rule has left a legacy to separate the races, and to of the rule of law; a civil

But the Alliance will not differences in language and culture.

Under the new Constitution for Malaya, Malay and English will continue to be the official languages of the country for the next ten years, after which, subject to a review, Malay may become the sole official language.

In the future national schools there will be a progressive move to use Malay as the medium of instruction primary and secondary education, while University education will continue in English indefinitely.  $\operatorname{But}$ while Malay is taking precedence over the other guages, English, Tamil, Hindustani, and Kuo-vu will continue to be taught as subjects in schools.

This policy has aroused considerable opposition, particularly from Chinese schools. The view was taken that this was a deliberate scheme to suppress Chinese culture. The matter is a fairly serious one, and could be an issue over which racial harmony could be broken.

Above the racial problem is the urgent need to raise the standard of living of the people, particularly to improve the economic position of the Malays. The country badly needs better social services, hospitals, houses, employment, and free education

These are enormous tasks, which require a breadth of view and imagination, and which could make or break any Government in power. Finding the necessary money to finance these projects will be a fundamental job of the Government.

#### **Opposition**

If demoncratic Parliamentary government is to take root and grow in Malayan which at the moment is far from fertile, there being still widespread illiteracy general ignorance of what local government entails, the Government must have an opposition.

At the moment the Alliance Government has no effective opposition. This is not a healthy atmosphere for any democratic Government be in. There is always the danger of the Government in power developing unpleasant tendencies wards authoritarianism. Some of the larger political parties which were unsuccessful in the 1955 Federal elections are considering a The British Government formation of a united Socialhad always maintained a ist opposition front to the her history. It is also signi-

It has been fashionable to vilify British colonialism to win the plaudits of nationalists, and to assert one's maturity, and to play down

In Malaya, as in India, emphasise still more their service of high integrity and - and the scene is bright...

Malaya looks to the future

One of the most potent forces that has evolved since the end of World War II has been the growing desire on the part of dependent areas for self determination—the political, economic, and social control of their countries.

On August 31, 1957, Ma- proportions of Malay and laya will achieve her independence, and will take her place among the nations of

Malaya is a country of extremes. One the one hand, it has great richness, on the other, great poverty. Its countryside is among the most beautiful in the world, its slums among the worst. Some parts of the country, notably Kuala Lumpur and Penang, are large commercial cities; other parts. particularly on the north-east coast, are virtually unscathed by the commercial world and the serene little fishing villages have probably not changed much in hundreds

Travelling along Malaya's first-class highway through miles and miles of vivid green rice fields and rubber plantations, the trading world seems a very unimportant thing. But to Malaya it is life blood—its rubber plantations, large and small, provide an important proportion of the world's supply, and its other natural resources, notably tin, also contribute to the material supplies of the world. As a member of the sterling exchange area, largely composed of Commonwealth countries, Malaya has in the past few years been a great supplier of dollars, by as near an abun-

dant commodity. And so it is that Malaya stands on the threshold of her future existence, and it will be appropriate to mention some of the aspects of Malayan life and culture that will be important in the years to come.

The first thing a visitor to Malaya cannot help noticing is the mixture of races. On the Malayan Peninsula itself there are roughly equal

astonishing efficiency, maintained by a vast team of civil servants recruited from some of the best European universities; and an education system (begun by Christion missionaries) which has been able to send so many of Malaya's sons and daughters to universities abroad. and without which self-government today would be as remote as the moon.

The rapid Malayanisation of the various services—i.e., replacing expatriate European officers with local Malayans-in the past two or three years has given some Malayans valuable experience in running the complex machinery of a modern State before actual self-government. The fine tradition of public service above party politics will be something

which Malaya has to cherish. It is to the great credit of Britain that Malaya has come to the threshold of independence at this stage of ficant that, like India, Pakistan, Ceylon, and Ghana, Malaya has chosen to remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

It now remains for Malaya to justify her claims to selfgovernment, and to prove to the world that she can govern wisely, dispense justice with impartiality, and contribute to the stability of South-East Asia.

Chinese, each comprising about 45 per cent. of the population, with about 10 per cent. Indians and a smattering of other races. The present Government is a triple alliance between parties representing these three groups, and the possible future of their political relationship is discussed elsewhere in this issue. In view of the many problems which have to be faced in Malaya in the future, it is to be hoped that it will conitnue to have a stable Government.

One of the gravest social problems that has to be faced, and is being tackled with great vigor, is that of educating the population. In the past, educational opportunities have been limited, and illiteracy very high, and the task of providing educational facilities for Malaya's children, who up to the age of 21 comprise about half the country's population, is not an easy one.

New Schools The Government is building new schools, and teachers' colleges have been set up around the country. There is one very fine fully residenial teachers' college at Kota Bharu, with 300 students. Various Church bodies are also active in promoting education, and are contributing towards solving this problem by building simple functional school buildings.

The zeal for knowledge in Malaya today is very marked, and with the advent of the Colombo Plan, it is the goal of many students to come to Australia to further their studies at University

The University of Malaya, situated in Singapore, is not nearly large enough for the potential demand for University training, and in a country about to take over its own affairs there is a great need for well-trained men and women. Consequently there is a great need for more and larger Universities to train the doctors, scientists, engineers, social science workers, and administrators who will be in such great demand.

Fortunately, this problem would not appear to be so great in Malaya as compared with the other South-East Asian countries, e.g., Indonesia, for Malaya's population (approx. 8 million) very much less than Indonesia's (over 80 mililon), and economic development is at a much greater level of advancement in Malaya than in other Asian countries.

The problems of education are, however, only indicative of general social problems that confront so-called under-developed countries.

Except for the small proportion of relatively mainly Chinese and rich. pean traders and Malay royalty, modern conveniences are virtually unknown. Washing is done at community pumps, sanitation is poor, and there is overcrowding in houses. Although health services are being improved, disease is common, and the expectation of life is short.

By Western standards there is much that can be done, and although it will be a long job, the Government key, soccer, tennis, etc.

#### By DAVID W. EVANS, who has toured through Malaya.

social services and welfare. Since most of the people have little or no chance of saving anything, and contributing to the development of the country, it seems that in future the funds for such progress must come either from the rich who can afford it, and from overseas countries who want to help Malaya. At present the luxury spending of the rich limits their saving, and as taxes are relatively low, it would seem that, although others will continue to help Malaya with finance and technique, she may have to raise more funds locally for her development.

#### Population

The necessity to curtail population growth is also something which may become important. Even in Western countries a growth in available goods and supplies of 3 to 4-per cent. per annum is considered good progress, and in countries with far less capital relative to labor an improvement of 1 to 2 per cent. may be a maximum. Consequently, if population continues to grow at between 1 and 2 per cent. per annum, t will be difficult to raise living standards without resorting to drastic means.

Although by no means comprehensive, this may give an idea of some of the social and economic problems involved in Malaya's future development. It may perhaps seem a bit pessimistic-the road will be a long one-but think there is a great heart in the country, and if racial problems can be minimised, as they have been in the past, and terrorism in the

## **OUTSTANDING SPORTSMEN** IN GAMES

Many outstanding sportsmen from all over Asia will be participating in the Merdeka Games at the invitation of the Malayan Government.

The Merdeka Games will be staged along similar lines as the Olympic Games, and will take place in the new Merdeka Stadium in Kuala Lumpur. In the athletic field the

return of the giant Fijians, dominated Malayan sports during their recent military service in Malaya, will stimulate much interest in sporting circles. In hockey it is hoped that India and Pakistan, the Olympic will be represented by their Olympic teams. Invitations have been sent to world leading players of badminton to compete in an open tournament. In swimming, Singa-pore, Thailand, and Indonesia have been invited to send

As the essence of sport is youth, the Government is organising Pan-Malayan interschool tournaments in hoc-

is tackling the problems of jungles wiped out, Malaya can look forward to improv-ing the many good things which she now enjoys.

And Malaya does enjoy many good things. It is a country rich in culture—its music, dances, handicrafts, silverware, and so on are in evidence from Johore to Penang, from Kotu Bharu to Malacca. The beautifu woven materials in every conceivable color are a sight to behold. The natura beauty of the countryside and the wide range of perfumed and colorful flowers and shrubs make Malaya a

traveller's paradise. The main highways, putedly the best in South-East Asia, and, indeed, much better than average ways in Australia, make for very safe travelling. Trishaws, water buffalo carts, and the Malayan people use the roads as well, and hence

motoring is most interesting. I couldn't help feeling, as we weaved our way along the roads, passing small kampongs (villages) and larger towns, that even if Malayan development does take a long while, as it undoubtedly will it will not be such a terrible thing. Although the average small landowner is poor, as long as he has enough food to sustain life he seems happy enough.

#### Poverty

The large landowners are, of course, in a good position, as are the civil servants and the rich city traders. The main centres of poverty seem to be in the overcrowded areas of thet owns and cities, where there are many men with large families and little or no income. It is here that efforts for improvement will

be well spent. And so, in this year of 1957, Malaya will achieve self-government. Its history has been a long and interest ing one, comprising Asian cultures and religions, and development and exploitation by Western countries. These have done much to bring Malaya to her present position -much more in the way of education could well have been done, but at the mo-

ment that is not the point. What is important is that a new horizon of opportunities opens itself to the indigenous people. The future of their country lies in their own hands. Malaya has many able people to lead the country, and to represent it in international affairs.

We in the Adelaide University wish the sincerest of good luck to Malaya and its people. May we continue to cement the foundations of friendship in the future that have been so well laid in th past few years

The Merdeka Celebra tion Committee would like to express its grateful thanks to the S.R.C., the Editor of "On Dit," and the contributors, without whose help and co-operation this special issue would not have been possible.

On Dit. August 2, 1957-3

# POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS MALAYA ONCE UPON

### Specially written by K. VIJI

The Federation of Malaya, the largest British possession in Asia today, becomes independent within the British Commonwealth on August 31, 1957.

Progress towards this goal Progress towards this goal has steadily continued since the end of the last world war, despite the inevitable complications arising in a plural society, and the burden of the Communist terrorist insurventions. den of the Communist terrorist insurrection since 1948. A general background to the independence of the country is helpful in understanding the future of Malaya, which I feel is going to be vital to Australia and the other South-East Asian countries in many respects.

The population of Malaya is, roughly, 62 million, of whom 3 million are Malays, 23 million are Chinese, and 3 million are Indians and others. The Malays are the indigenous people, and are the modern counterpart of peoples that emerged from the interfusion of races and cultures that ranged from cultures that ranged from Central Asia to South-East Asia many centuries ago.

Asia many centuries ago.

The main influx of Chinese and Indians took place about the end of the last century, when they were brought by the British as indentured laborers, and also a large number came as traders.

The national economy is based on agriculture, with rubber as the chief source of the country's porsperity. Tin is second only to rubber in its contribution to the economy.

Till the beginning of World War II, when the Japanese occupied Malaya, the area was composed of three administrative units — the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States, and the Unfederated Malay States

The war, the Japanese oc-cupation, and the political up-surge of other Asian nations, together with educational ex-pansion before and after the

war, stimulated political awakening in Malaya. Before the war the differ-ent States and Settlements had a large measure of autonomy, and there was no effectual central Federal Government. In 1948 the Federation of Malaya came into state and Settlement was united under a strong central Government, though each retained its individual-

from its inception the Federation of Malaya has advanced towards a democratic self-government, despite the guerilla warfare of the Communists on the civilian population and the government machinery. The first Legislative Council, representing the various races and interests, had an unofficial majority, though it was not elected. In 1951 the "Member" system was introduced. ber" system was introduced. This was a significant advancement towards self-govancement towards self-government, and was the first step towards Ministerial responsibility. Various departments and subjects were assembled together, and placed severally under the control of individual Legislative Council members most be

Council members, most of 4-On Dit, August 2, 1957

whom were political and community leaders.

In 1952 the composition of the Executive Council was changed to include all those who were "Members" in the Legislative Council. In 1955 a new Constitution was introduced by which the great a new Constitution was introduced, by which the greater part of the responsibility of the government of the Federation of Malaya was transferred to elected representatives of the people. The new Federal Legislative new Federal Legislative Council was to have 98 mem-bers, of whom 52 were to be elected by the people, and the rest were to be State and Settlement representatives, and members nominated by the High Commissioner. For the purposes of the election, the purposes of the election, the three main communal political parties formed an Alliance. They are the United Malay National Organisation (U.M.N.O.), the Malayan Chinese Association (M.C.A.), and the Malayan Indian Congress (M.I.C.). The Alliance (U.M.N.O.-M.C.A.-M.I.C., won 51 out of the 52 seats contested at the first national general electhe 52 seats contested at the first national general elections, held in July, 1955. The High Commissioner (Sir Donald MacGillivray) announced the composition of the new Executive Council after the elections. It was the new Executive Council after the elections. It was composed of the High Commissioner, 10 elected members from the Legislative Council, together with three ex-officio members and two nominated members. All the ten elected members were assigned and tables and the control of the council and the counci signed portfolios and became Ministers. The leader of the party with the majority (U.M.N.O.) became the Chief Minister (Tengku Abdul Rahman). The Alliance which formed

the first elected Government with popular support, went further with constitutional advances. In January, 1956, a conference was called in London to discuss advancement towards self-govern-ment. This conference was ment. This conference was attended by representatives of the United Kingdom Government, their Highnesses the Malay rulers, and the Alliance Government in the Federation. At this conference it was agreed that necessary steps towards the second sary steps towards the se-curing of early establish-ment of a fully self-govern-ing and independent Federa-tion of Malaya within the Commonwealth on the basis of Parliamentary institutions of Parliamentary institutions were to be taken. The conference made recommendations on defence, internal security, financial and economic matters, public services, and future constitutional changes.

Diving the interim period

During the interim period between January, 1956, and August, 1957, the political leaders have busied them-selves with the implementation of the recommendations of the London conference.

During the latter part of 956 a Constitutional Committee was set up to propose a draft Constitution for in-dependent Malaya. Five of the best Commonwealth Con-stitutional experts stayed in Malaya for six months to

study local conditions and find facts on various subjects before drafting the Constitu-tion. They are Sir William McKell (Australia), Mr. Jus-McKell (Australia), Mr. Justice Hamid (Pakistan), Mr. Justice Malik (India), Sir Ivor Jennings (United Kingdom), and Lord Reid (United Kingdom). Lord Reid was the chairman, and it was called the Reid Commission. The Constitution is being re-cognised as being of a very of this year, with minor modifictations, both of "substance and form," it was adopted by the Government of the Federation of Malaya.

Thus the new Malaya will have it as their Constitution, and in the long run the success of the Constitution will depend on the rate and im-plementation of the various facets of the Constitution, facets of the Constitution, especially in regard to education, rural and industrial development, the public services, and the overall improvement of the standards of living of the Malayans.

# A TIME ...

Eight or nine years ago the words "Kuala Lumpur," "Penang," "Kota Bahru," and even "Singapore" were little more than names carrying a sinister overtone to Australian ears.

Malaya was a "foreign" "tropical" and vaguely alien country about which we knew, and wanted to know,

Malayan students have changed all that permanent-ly for an astonishing number of Australians. Originally of Australians. Originally we may have been surprised that these students could compete on even terms with Australians in all University courses. Now we accept it as one of the facts of our world that these boys and girls speak, think, play, and react to human situations in the same way as we do, and that most of them appear to have a zest and purpose in living which many of us seem to lack.

The fact that in a country so near to our own three distinct racial groups live in a relatively harmonious and homogeneous society has made a deep impression on us who have been trained to believe that racial isolationism, like honesty, is the best

policy.

Malayan students have had a lion's share in the great change coming over Australian public opinion about our immigration policy. This is only one of the many things which we owe to Malayar.

My six years in Adelaide have given me a kaleidoscopic memory picture of names pic memory picture of names and faces—Sreenivasan, Wilf Anthonisz and Josh Owen, Choo, K. H. Lim, Karim, and many others who have returned home (not to mention a host of equally important people still among us), who have possibly contributed more to the University life of their generation than any of their generation than any comparable number of out-standing Australian students.

We all rejoice with Malaya in achieving Merdeka. May all that is best in her multi-racial culture continue, to-gether with many new and great achievements made possible by her new political status. F. T. BORLAND.

## MALAYA HAS SOME FINE CULTURES

On the 31st, of this month, a new nation will be born.

This newcomer is the Federation of Malaya, the renowned land of tin and rubber, and long the "Gate to the East." To the seafaring Portuguese and Dutch of days bygone this strip of peninsula held the key to the monopoly of the spice trade. The British later were also aware of its rich natural reaware of its rich natural resources and its favorable position geographically. More recently, a decade or two ago, the Japanese, in strides of conquest, were only too of conquest, were only too eager to swallow her up as part of the "Great Asiatic Co-prosperity Sphere."

The term "Malayan cul-ture" may be slightly mis-leading, because as a nation Malaya does not yet possess Malaya does not yet possess a distinctive national cul-ture as we understand it in other ancient Asian or European countries. There-fore, in considering "Malay-an culture," one should be fair to bear in mind that Malaya is still very young.

#### BUILDINGS

architecture one still find many notable build-ings and churches in Malacca of Portuguese and Dutch designs. In this ancient seaport, the "Old Gate," the remnant of the former citadel remnant of the former citadel surrounding the town, and the bleak fortress on top of the hill, are still standing there to remind us of the past prowess of European naval power in this part of the world. These and other historical relics remain as the earmarks of the history of development of the land.

The early Chinese settlers have also bequeathed the

#### by CHONG CHOW PANG

land with many excellent houses and temples of Ching Dynasty. They have stood well the cruel tests of the tropical climate for a century

Fortunately, the intricate industry of silverware, and the production of the highly ornamental cloths woven in with gold threads, are still enjoying their proud and unique position in the field of local crafts.

#### VISUAL ARTS

In spheres of visual arts and other cultural activities, foreign influences have been very noticeable. The folk very noticeable. music of the co music of the country is of Indo-Malay form. This Indo-Malay form. This rather strange music may be heard in the village "Wayang Kulit" (the "shadow show"), or as the accompaniment of the display of "bersilat" (the Malay art of self-defence). The Hindu civilisation has also left its marks in the Malay customs and language.

language.
After the initial influx of After the initial influx of tin miners, the latter Chinese immigrants brought along their highly developed arts. Consequently, in Malaya one will be able to witness the Peking opera in its original form.

form. The Chinese painting, with its delicate brushwork, its ethereal beauty, and its exuberant expression, has established its prestige in the new land. The modern painters have increasingly introduced local subjects into their work—an encouraging sign indeed.

Sad to say, there has been very little noteworthy literary work since the days of Munshi Abdullah.

#### MUSIC

The influences of the West-The influences of the West-ern cultures are perhaps more and more strongly felt. Last year a "Festival of Culture" was held in the capital city of Kuala Lum-pur, where, for the first time in history, collective effort had been made to present a programme of dances and songs, and other artistic persongs, and other artistic performances, contributed by the various communities in Malaya. It was a great suc-cess. No doubt this is a memorable step in the right direction.

memorable step in the right direction.

Malaya has a people of cosmopolitan origin. The barriers of language and religion, one may think, will suffice to retard any process of integration of these different cultures into a national pattern. But the mere nature of its diversity may prove to be the inexhaustible sources from which a new characteristically Malayan type of culture may emerge, inheriting the fine points of East and West.

Therefore, to the youths

Therefore, to the youths of today and tomorrow are dedicated the important task of overcoming these not insurmountable obstacles in creating a new form from this immensely rich melting pot.

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