THE SARA SAGA

The author in a characteristic pose.

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By

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WITH A FOREWORD

By

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

MR. MALCOLM MACDONALD, P.C.

DEDICATED

to my grandson

RICHARD MANIC

In the hope that his perusal

Of these pages will help him to grow

to be what his GRANDPAPA wanted to be —

A KIND AND UNDERSTANDING PERSON.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

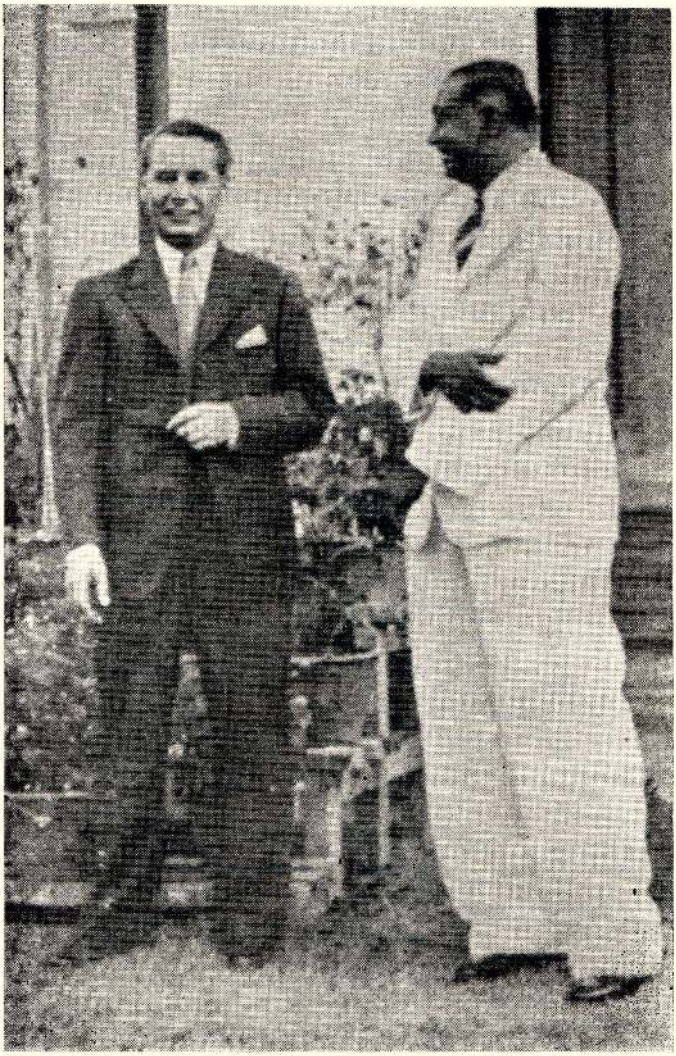
My thanks are due to Mr. Victor deSouza whose artistic conception has reduced the somewhat grandiose title of this book to its proper perspective. As I have mentioned in my preface it was a newspaperman who with the imagination of his kind, pepertrated the original hyperboli.

My story whatever its attractions or otherwise is far from the Heroic tale of the old Vikings. So he has pictured me athwart a humble sampan making the journey from Ceylon to Penang. Nor can my figure be compared to the glorious statures of the Norse Heroes of old. He has therefore pictured me garbed one half in diplomatic uniform and the other half in cricket gear, depicting two of my main activities retailed in the following pages.

I am also grateful to the various officers, both British and Indian, who have provided me with the inside story of the Japanese invasion of Malaya which is published for the first time in this book.

To Mr. Goh Teik Boo of the Straits Echo go my thanks for reading and correcting the early proofs and also for valuable hints regarding the accuracy of certain of the events.

My fullest thanks are rendered to Mr. Loo Shaik Sang, my former foreman of the Straits Echo Linotype Department, for printing this book at the Cathay Printers which he has now established. He has installed the most up-to-date equipment at his press, and he and his efficient staff are entirely responsible for the short time in which this book has been published.



The Rt. Hon'ble Malcolm MacDonald and the author at the former's first reception in 1946 at the Residency, Penang.

FOREWORD

This is a very pleasing book. Its first attraction is that it draws a candid, full length, real life pen picture of its very characterful author. A fine sportsman, able journalist, resourceful diplomat, merry drinker, jovial but also very serious-minded man, and a superlative friend, he stands out in these pages with all his human strengths and frailties as one who has contributed distinctly for the good — in both peace and war — to the well-being of the Malayan and neighbouring peoples.

Its second great merit is that it describes many of the important historic events which have occurred in his native land Ceylon, his adopted country Malaya, and some near-by parts of South East Asia throughout the last forty years, as seen through the eyes of an always shrewd observer of the drama. And quite often he played courageous personal and wise official or semi-official parts in it. He therefore writes with intimate knowledge — as well as a pleasant style — about many significant men and events. One of his revealing contributions to our knowledge is his account of conditions in Penang immediately preceding and then during the Japanese Occupation in the World War; but he also writes important accounts of the advances of Malaya and Singapore to Independence after the war, various developments including the famous Bandung Conference in Sukarno's Indonesia, first the birth and afterwards the partial splitting of the Federation of Malaysia, the fortunes of independent Ceylon, and other memorable developments. In the course of his survey he sketches vivid portraits of eminent statesmen like Dato Onn bin Jaafar, Tunku Abdul Rahman and many others. His saga is indeed a notable contribution to contemporary history.

I am very happy to write this Foreword to a book which I am sure will interest and delight countless readers.

July 1969

Malcolm MacDonald

PREFACE

For a long time my friends have been urging me to write a book on my experiences. My life has been replete with vicissitudes and many of the incidents when recounted at the club over a few drinks made good telling. They insisted that the tale of my varied experiences would not only make an interesting book but may also prove useful to its readers. Perhaps it is true that I have knocked about the world more than the average individual and come across many personages distinguished and otherwise which was inevitable to one who started life with intentions of reading for the church and, via a journalistic career, ended up in the diplomatic service. I was, however, reluctant to embark on the project. It is one thing to churn out the daily articles for a newspaper and another thing to sit down and compile a book for, perhaps, posterity. And, above all, it was difficult to believe that my life would prove interesting enough for others to bother to read about. Worst of all, I have never been a methodical, systematic character who kept a diary with pithy Pepysian comments or made copious records of daily incidents.

When I was on holiday in Ceylon in 1961, however, the newspaper on which I won my spurs as a journalist, the **Ceylon Observer**, approached me to contribute my reminiscences and, out of a sense of loyalty to my old paper, I consented with the **proviso** that I would dictate them solely from memory to a stenographer. So over a beer or two (or three!) I dictated every evening for about a week to Richard Pieris of the **Observer** who, as I learned later, had similarly taken down the original manuscript of **Emergency 1958**, in which Tazie Wuttachy told the gory tale of the communal bloodbath in Ceylon. And it was R. B. Wijesinghe of the paper who gave the arresting heading, **The Sara Saga**.

My effusions were received with surprising acclaim and it encouraged me to enlarge them into the form of a book. As I said earlier, these pages have been complied entirely from memory but, while there may be omissions, every incident recounted in the book actually occurred though I have endeavoured throughout to steer clear of the law of libel! In particular I wish to emphasise that the facts

mentioned in connection with the Japanese invasion of Malaya were obtained first hand by me from the British officers mentioned who will be able to confirm them if still extant. Some are being revealed for the first time.

M. Saravanamuttu.

Penang, 1970.

CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS

When Sir Andrew Caldecott arrived in Ceylon as Governor in 1938, he was received at the Colombo passenger jetty by my eldest brother, the then Mayor of Colombo. When he went to the Special Session of the State Council to be sworn in, Lady Caldecott was received by my brother's wife, who was the only woman member of that body. That day the English Test team, on their way to Australia, were playing a one-day match in Colombo. Sir Andrew went to the match. He was received by my brother, P. Sara, as President of the Cricket Association and when he went to the field to be introduced to the teams, he was met by my brother, S. Sara, the Captain of the Ceylon XI. Sir Andrew, who knew me well in Malaya, is said to have remarked: "Ceylon seems to be made up of Saravanamuttus and other people!" — a cryptic assessment of the contribution of my family to the public life of Ceylon at that time.

I am the fifth of a family of six brothers and two sisters and, if I may be allowed to say so, all of us brothers have done outstanding service to our country in our own spheres.

The seed for public service was sown in our minds and hearts in our very young days by my father, who had an extensive practice as a doctor in North Colombo and whose many acts of free service are still remembered by the older people in that part of the city.

In fact in 1930 (my father died in 1912) when three of my brothers were elected to the three seats in the Municipal Council for North Colombo, the **Ceylon Daily News** commented, "It is said that the public has a short memory but the public of North Colombo have shown that they still remember old Dr. Sara by electing three of his sons to the three seats in the Municipal Council in the district in which he practised."

My eldest brother, the late Sir Ratnajothi Saravanamuttu, after following in my father's footsteps as the leading medical practitioner in North Colombo, took an active interest

in politics and was the first elected Mayor of Colombo — a remarkable achievement for a Tamil in a predominantly Singhalese town. He was knighted for sticking to his post when the Japanese bombed Colombo on Easter Sunday, 1942, and re-organising the public services when the port area was evacuated in the panic that followed the bombing. He was a deep thinker, with probably the most liberal ideals of anyone in my experience. He is mentioned in Eric Linklater's **Roll of Honour** (1961). The author makes Gray Mackinnon, "the retired planter and tea-broker who had spent his working life, of some thirty seven years, in Ceylon," say, after mentioning such names as Goonetileke, Senanayake, Kotewala and Bandaranaike: "You remember what I told you last week about Saravanamuttu ? I knew him pretty well and he had a way of saying things that impressed me." In fact my brother so impressed Dr. Drummond Shields, a member of the Donoughmore Commission, that Ceylon was granted adult suffrage in 1928, being the first Asian country to earn that privilege.

My second brother, N. Saravanamuttu, was the one who really established the Saras at St. Thomas' College, Colombo. We were Jaffna Tamils and the school was then dominated by the up-country Singhalese aristocrats whose leader was A. H. E. Molamure, a cousin of the first Speaker of the Ceylon Parliament, Sir Francis Molamure. The famous fight between the Sara brothers and Arthur Molamure's clique is still recalled by many old Thomians. My three brothers, "N," "T. V.," and "P," stood and fought some 30 or 40 of Arthur Molamure's group for over half an hour without giving any quarter.

Anyway, the head of the school, Warden Stone, had to come down from his office to break up the fight. But that exhibition of pluck and courage established the Saras at St. Thomas' College and each of us brothers thereafter in turn ruled supreme as Head Boy.

In later life, N. Sara practised as a Proctor (Solicitor) and was noted as the champion of "lame dogs." During World War II he was Chief A.R.P. Warden for Colombo. During his last illness I once asked him, "Thuraianna, what do you think is the greatest blessing in life ?" After scolding

The author's family. Sitting (left to right): —sister Purchanasasothy, father Dr. V. Saravamuttu, MD, mother, sister Jegasothy and brother S.
Standing :—brothers N and P, the author and brother T.
Inset :—Sir Ratnajoti.

me for what he called my philosophical "madness," he answered: "When the time comes for one to go, to be able to go willingly." What depth of wisdom!

My third brother, "T.V.," joined the newly established Ceylon Excise Department in 1912, straight from school, and rose to be the head of the Department, Excise Commissioner, before he retired in 1951. It was he who conceived the idea of the Government establishing a distillery for producing Ceylon Arrack, a brandy type of liquor distilled from coconut toddy. He planned and put up the Government distillery at Seeduwa, fitted with the most up-to-date "continuous still" imported from Germany. His kindness to his staff was proverbial and there are many who still bless his name.

My fourth brother, P. Sara, was the star of the family in his school career, having won every form prize and several special prizes. Unfortunately he did not cap his school record by winning the Ceylon University Scholarship, but he passed into the Ceylon Civil Service and ended up as Rubber and Tea Controller during World War II. Literally thousands were helped by him in the formation of those wartime departments and his salary, increased by the allowance paid by the U.K. Government for his services as Rubber and Tea Commissioner for them, resulted in his having a monthly remuneration that was more than that of the Governor of Ceylon! He was President of the Ceylon Cricket Association for some 14 years and helped to put that body on a sound financial footing. The laying of the Colombo Oval ground and erecting its spacious pavilion and stands, to make it one of the finest cricket grounds in the East, comparable to the Bradbourne Stadium in Bombay, remains a lasting memorial to him.

In his final years he turned his attention to politics and after contesting two elections to the Ceylon Parliament unsuccessfully, broke down in health and died at the comparatively early age of 58. As was generally acknowledged, he was a man of unimpeachable integrity; perhaps that was why he was unfitted for the insincerities of politics.

My youngest brother, S. Sara, ended up as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Ceylon Light Infantry and saw service in World

War II. He was the most distinguished cricketer in the family — only just missing his Blue at Cambridge. At school he held the record, scoring 100 runs in 18 minutes, hitting 16 sixers. I believe this is a record to the present day. He later captained Ceylon at cricket for several years and at the time of his death was President of the Ceylon Cricket Association. It was his initiative which resulted in the visit of an official Ceylon cricket team to Malaya for the Malayan Independence Celebrations in 1957 but his sudden death the month previous prevented him from accompanying the team. Ceylon's victory by an innings in the match against All-Malays was a fitting tribute to his memory.

Our spirit of public service goes back to my grandfather, Vetharaniam, who founded the big market, or "chanthai," at Chunnakam in Jaffna. My grandfather was from one of the seven Velala families that first occupied Jaffna and was therefore one of the leaders of the community. He noticed that the peasants had no common place to bring their produce to market them and had therefore the laborious process of hawking their vegetables and fruit from door to door in their scattered and sparsely populated villages. So he conceived the idea of leasing a five-acre plot of vacant land from the Government and allowing the peasants to bring their produce and sell them at the central market. This has been carried on by my family to the present day and the present manager of the Chunnakam "chanthai" is Aiyakone, who has named his eldest son, Manicasothy, after me!

My first realisation of the high esteem my grandfather's name was held in Jaffna came in 1915 when we had gone to our ancestral home for the wedding of my sister and later my eldest brother — both to first cousins. The dates coincided with those of the festival of the Nallur Kandasamy Temple, probably the biggest Hindu celebration in Jaffna. We "Colombo folks" had no experience of the conservative pride of rural country folk and sought to drive our motor cars right up to the temple gates. As the crowd grew denser, we sensed their mounting resentment. So the males got out and stood on the foot-boards of the cars to defend our women folk against any untoward demonstration. Suddenly the whisper spread around, "These are Vetharaiam's grand-children," and the crowd, as if by magic, opened a way for

our cars to the temple gates. And this was some twenty years after my grandfather's death.

If I might be allowed to say so in passing, the true spirit of feudal leaders of those days was shown in their service to the people — a service that is revealed today in the guise of socialism.

I will be failing in my filial duty, as well as in a proper estimate of the factors that contributed to the success of our family, if I did not refer to the part played by my mother in bringing us up. The story was told of how my father carried her as a baby in arms before he left Jaffna as a young man of 20 years to study at the Medical College in Colombo and said that she was the girl he was coming back to marry. The marriage eventually came off when my father at the age of 34 years was working as a doctor in the Government Hospital at Gampola (near Kandy) and my mother was taken away from school at the age of 14 for the wedding. So when my father died at 60, she was only 40. At that time only my two elder brothers had completed their professional studies and so it fell to her lot to bring up the rest of us from adolescence and childhood to maturity. I can never forget the selfless love and sacrifice which was part of that service apart from her great courage and strong character which was a splendid example to us her younger children. She spent so much time on the coconut estate at Nattandiya to ensure there was enough income for our education that she became a chronic malarial subject and her final fatal illness was cerebral malaria. Truly she sacrified herself for her children and she could say as proudly as the mother of the Gracchi, "They are my jewels."

There is little to relate about my early days in school at St. Thomas College, Mutwal. I cannot claim any glorious achievements in studies or in sports, this being reserved for the last few years of my school days. In fact, I was always nearer the last than the first in class, except for one bright interlude when in one terminal examination in Standard Five I came first.

I was ragged by my elder brothers who insisted that I must have cribbed but now when I think of it, I believe that it was the early manifestation of my good memory which stood me in good stead during my later journalistic career.

From the Sixth Form and to the College Form, I was already admitted to the group of so-called "clever boys." Anyway, justification for this came with the results of the Cambridge Senior examination, which I took for the first time from the College Form in 1911.

My father had his last serious illness from October that year and eventually died in January 1912. Most of the time of his sons, after school hours, was spent in nursing him, with the result that in the eve of examination tests I scored very poor marks.

During the examination, however, I kept up late, with the help of black coffee, mugging my books. When the results came I scanned the Pass List. Not finding my name there, I looked in the Third Class Honours List and was going away dejected since my name was not there either when a friend of mine, Manickam Walton, who later retired from the Public Services as Registrar General, came running to me shouting, "Congratulations, congratulations." When I asked him "Why ?" he replied, "You've got First Class Honours." Another manifestion of my retentive memory.

The first and only Form prize I won at S.T.C. was the College Form Prize, beating my old rival, "Sinco" Swan, who ended up as a Judge of the Supreme Court. After this I won many prizes such as the Miller Mathematical Prize, the Obeyesekere Classical Prize, the Wijewardene Science Prize, the Pieris-Siriwardene Gold Medal for English and the Arndt Memorial Prize. I believe I have my name on the school panels eleven times, more than that of any of the more famous Ceylonese who studied at S.T.C.

In sports, too, my development came later in my school career. My brother, N. Sara, won his football colours and

S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike, Prime Minister of Celyon 1956-1959.

Sir Ratnajoti Saravanamuttu, the first elected Mayor of Colombo.

was followed by P. Sara, who went on to win his cricket colours also. Thereafter the way was paved for me and I too won both colours in due course and ended up as Football and Cricket Captain.

In those days the Captain was a law unto himself and there were many whispers of nepotism. But having been Captain myself, I can say with conviction that the Thomian Captains of old always chose their teams on merit. Anyway, I do not think it is necessary for me to apologise for the inclusion of my younger brother, S. Sara, in the team when he was only 13 as on his 13th birthday he made 51 in a school match.

Perhaps, it would not be out of place here to make a special mention of the late S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, also an old Thomian, who, despite his tragic end, must rank as one of the most distinguished sons of Ceylon of recent times. My father was his "family doctor" and "Sunny," as we knew him, had to go for a serious operation to England when he was barely nine, on the advice of my father.

So, because of his delicate health, he was not sent to school like the average boy but had an English private tutor at home. When he was 15 his father, Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike K.C.M.G., brought him to Warden Stone to put him in the S.T.C. boarding.

The Warden decided that the hurly-burly of the school boarding would be too much of a strain for the young boy who had been brought up in a sheltered home; he kept him for one term in his bungalow and then let him come into regular boarding later on. As I was the Head Boy of the School at that time, the Warden assigned to me the responsibility of seeing that young Bandaranaike was not unduly bullied by the other boys and so at the dining table in the hall I gave him a seat at my side. I remembered quite well how one day in the course of conversation Sunny declared: "I'm determined to show that I am the one Bandaranaike who has brains." This was a reference to the privileged positions

held by the family which enabled them to slip into high positions without the usual educational qualifications.

Anyway, Sunny showed his grit and determination by concentrating on his books and keeping pace with the other stars in his class, which included A. G. Ranasinghe, L. J. De S. Seneviratna, S. P. Wiackremasinghe, F. J. Foenander and E. E. C. Thuraiasingham, all of whom distinguished themselves in later life. He was one of that class that created a school record by winning eight First Class Honours in the Cambridge Senior Examination of 1914.

It was this same determination that carried Sunny through his brilliant career at Oxford University, where he obtained Second Class honours in the History Schools. And he was also elected Junior Treasurer of the Oxford Union Society, being considered one of the first speakers of his time in that famous body. Among his contemporaries was Anthony Eden, who was later to become the Prime Minister of Great Britain. All this was in preparation for his brilliant political career which brought him to the pinnacle position of Prime Minister of Ceylon but ended in martyrdom when he was assassinated in September 1959.

I do not think I am being unfair in saying that it was his political ambition that led to that tragedy. When he found that there was little or no chance of his becoming Prime Minister while remaining in the United Nationalist Party of D. S. Senanayake, he resigned from that party and formed his own Sri Lanka Freedom Party on the religo-communal slogan of "Singhalese-Buddhists." That carried him to the Premiership in 1956 but it was a Singhalese Buddhist priest who fired the fatal shot, instigated by another Singhalese Buddhist priest who was his chief supporter in the elections.

An editorial in the **Ceylon Observer** of September 25th, 1965 gives another aspect of Sunny's contribution to Ceylon's progress, an extract of which I think should be reproduced in all fairness:

"Tomorrow is Bandaranaike Day and the nation will pause to honour a leader whose name is inseparably bound with, and in fact symbolises what both supporters and political opponents today concede as a 'new era.'

"1956, the year which the late Mr. Bandaranaike wrote deeply into the history of Ceylon and branded on the consciousness of the people, made Ceylon a unique nation in the fraternity of the early independent nations.

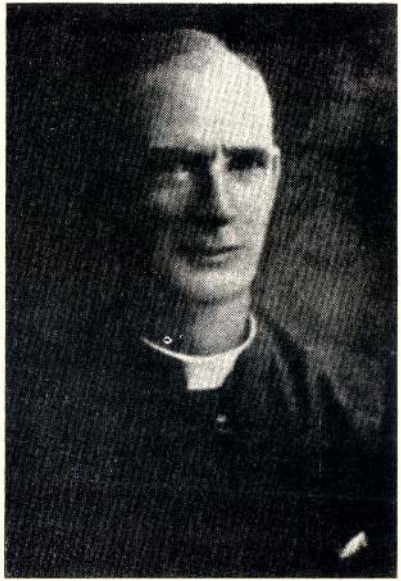
"It became the first modern nation in Asia to change the government of the day through peaceful democratic means. The significance was neither casual nor transitory."

My own school career culminated in my winning the Ceylon University Scholarship in Science in 1915 and by this time I had collected many prizes and sports honours. Perhaps my achievements in school can best be summed up in the following tribute paid to me in the Centenary Number of the St. Thomas College magazine published in 1951: "Could a prize be awarded to the best all round Thomian of this century it would go to Mr. M. Saravanamuttu, Commissioner for Ceylon in Malaya. When he won the English University Scholarship in 1915, he was Cricket Captain, Football Captain, Senior Prefect, Senior N. C. O. of the cadets, and Secretary of the Debating Society. In his last four years at College several scholarships and prizes, honours deep and broad were his."

The story of my school days would not be complete if I do not refer to the Reverend W. A. Stone, Warden of St. Thomas College for the first quarter of the 20th century.

There were other famous heads of our school, particulary Warden Miller, but I think it can be stated with little

The Rt. Hon'ble D. S. Senanayake, P.C., the first Prime Minister of Ceylon



Rev. W. A. Stone, Warden, St. Thomas's College, 1901 — 1925.

fear of contradiction that it was Warden Stone, who made a greater contribution to the history of Ceylon's independence by being concerned with the active school training of four of the first five Prime Ministers of the island, namely D. S. Senanayake, his son, Dudley, S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike and W. Dahanayake. It is no exaggeration to state that the early seeds of independence were sown in our schoolboy hearts by Warden Stone, or "Galla" as he was affectionately known — "Galla" being the Singhalese equivalent of "Stone." Though he was a martinet as far as school discipline was concerned, he was always quick to appreciate an independent spirit in one of us schoolboys and back it with his generous encouragement. I still remember what he once told me when I was one of the senior boys in the school.

"Do you know how to earn the respect of an Englishman, Manicam ?" he asked.

On my looking blank, he continued, "Kick him once and kick him hard !"

You can imagine my startled surprise at hearing this from one who was himself an Englishman, at a time when the white man's superiority complex of the colonial era was probably at its zenith.

As all of us Thomians of the Stone era will acknowledge, it was Warden Stone who inspired the spirit of independence which led us to work for the independence of our country and culminated in the hoisting of the flag of independent Ceylon by one of his pupils, D. S. Senanayake, on February 4th, 1948.

I hope I will be forgiven for recounting in detail a personal incident which illustrates Warden Stone's liberal character.

We were due to pull in the inter-school tug-of-war competition in which we had been defeated by St. Benedict's College in the previous year. So George de Saram (who later became the Deputy-Inspector-General of Police) and I got together the bigger boys and after rigorous training and several practice pulls chose an "eight" which we considered

was the best in the school. This was sent up to the Warden for what we thought was a routine confirmation. Instead he summarily cut out some names and substituted others.

When I went to see the Warden to protest against the changes he bawled me out of his office. Being young and hot-tempered I returned the list to the Sports Master and told him he could tell the Warden that I would not pull in the team that he had nominated.

That night after "Prep," the Warden tackled me and as I still persisted in refusing to pull, he said he would have no option but to send me home, i.e. expel me, as I would be defying him in front of the whole school. In our room that night my elder brother, P. Sara, advised me that it would be bad for the discipline of the school if I, as one of the bigger boys, defied the Warden and that it would be better if I told the Warden that I would pull in the team. Having done so, he said, I could then tell the Warden whatever I had to say. So next morning after chapel I went to the Warden and told him, "Sir, because I don't want to defy you in front of the school, I will pull in the tug-of-war team but just because you have come here from England to teach us, do not think you can treat us like dogs."

Instead of the outburst which I expected, Warden Stone made me sit down and had a long talk with me in which I explained the great pains we had gone to in choosing our tug-of-war team. He agreed to a further test and finally we chose a team satisfactory to everyone.

I have retailed this story in order to emphasize the manner in which Warden Stone nurtured and encouraged the independent spirit among his boys and it is a debt that not only old Thomians but Ceylon as a whole will find it difficult to repay in full measure.

Although the results of the scholarship examination (the London Intermediate) were known in December 1915, it was not till July, 1917 that I was able to proceed to England to continue my studies. World War 1 was at its height during this period so my mother was not willing to allow me to leave Ceylon.

I spent 1916 and 1917 playing cricket for the Tamil Union. I had started to do so from late 1914 and in December 1914 I went with the Tamil Union to Madras, heading the batting averages on that tour. But my greatest success was in April 1915, when I scored 127 not out for the Tamil Union against the Singhalese Sports Club, being the first Tamil to do so.

My youthful ambition was not quite satisfied because the late E. R. de Saram (Bonnie), then considered one of the best, if not the best, Ceylon bowlers of those days, did not play in that match but I had my satisfaction when in 1917 I again made 127 for the Tamils against the S.S.C. — this time with Bonnie bowling against me.

I cannot complete my cricket reminiscences of these early days without reference to Douglas de Saram, one of Ceylon's cricket heroes and undoubtedly one of her greatest sportsmen. I still remember the time when he captained the Ceylonese against the Europeans in 1912 and the Ceylonese were sent in for an innings. With true Thomian grit, Douglas came in to open the second innings and to what a feast of brilliant batting and bold hitting he treated the big crowd of spectators!

One sixer he hit off Greswell still remains in my memory. He ran half way down the pitch, took Greswell full toss and lifted the ball over the whip trees right into the Race Course, the stroke being the quintessence of courage, keen eye and sheer physical strength.

He not only saved his side from an innings defeats, but when the Europeans went in a second time to bat needing some 20 odd runs to win, he captured four wickets, before they could get the runs, by a piece of inspired bowling. A. L. Gibson, the Europeans' skipper, walked out into the field to congratulate Douglas as he came back into the pavilion, and there was a meeting of the two giants of Ceylon Cricket of those days. .

CHAPTER II

AT OXFORD

I left for my studies in England in July 1917, having gained entrance to St. John's College, Oxford, but my trip was a disastrous one in more ways than one. I travelled on the P. & O "Mooltan" and my ship was torpedoed in the Mediterranean a day out of Malta. In that week no less than 37 British ships were sunk by U boats. I managed to get off in a life boat and was picked up by one of the Japanese destroyers that were escorting our ships. Landed at Marseilles 36 hours later, I travelled by train across France, crossed the Channel from Boulogne to Folkestone and reached London at mid-night July 19th to be greeted by my brother, P. Sara, who was already in England. I was clothed only in my grey flannels and blue coat and had no luggage whatever.

That was not a happy beginning for my stay in England and it was followed by a series of mishaps, which made my trip anything but successful. In fact, before I left my mother told me that if my ship had sailed at the scheduled time I would not have returned alive, as the "death star" was ruling at the time! The delay of some 18 hours she said, saved my life but, she added, my trip would not be successful — a prediction that proved all too true. And, curiously enough it was the connecting ship from Malaya that caused the delay — a presage of my later happy connection with that country.

All this is not to say that I did not enjoy my days in England. I had a happy time and made many good friends, and the memory of those friendships still kindles a warm glow in my heart even to the present day. In fact I still say that a good Englishman is hard to beat.

Before I went up to Oxford in October that year, I got a fairly full introduction to English cricket through the Indian Gymkhana Club which had just been founded in August, soon after my arrival. The Indian Gymkhana played a match at Lords against a Service side led by one Captain Barber, a New South Wales cricketer, the week after my arrival in England.

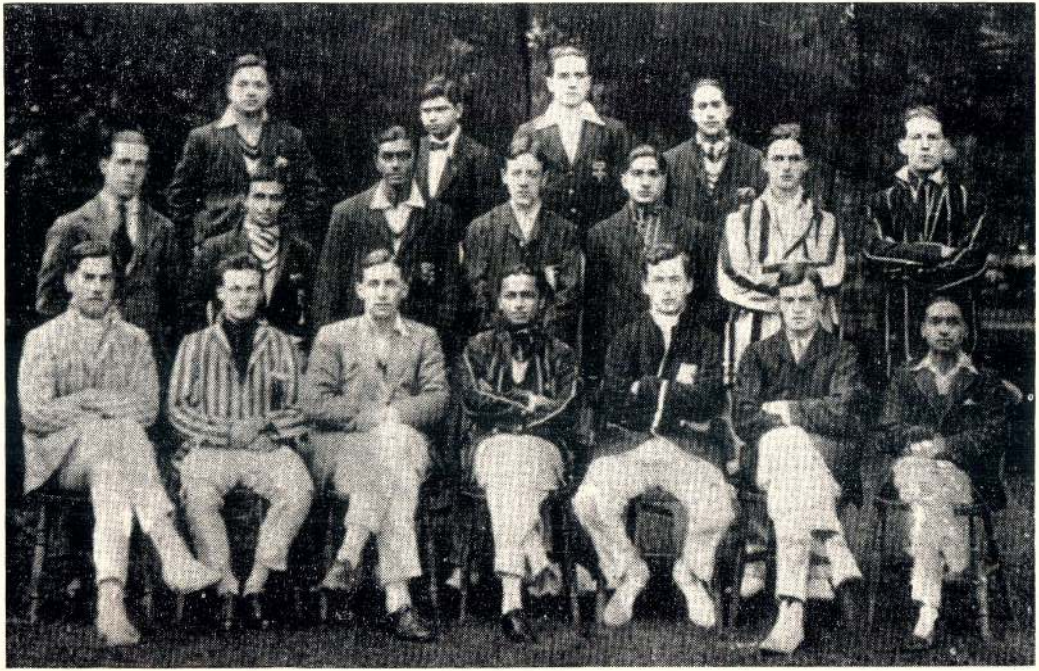
In the Indian Gymkhana side were Dr. C. H. Gunasekera, Dr. W. G. Karunaratne, A. C. Z. Wijeratne, J. L. (later Sir John) Kotelawala and my brother, P. Sara. The Indian team was captained by K. S. Pratabsinjhi, Duleepsinjhi's eldest brother, and also in the team was Hamasinjhi, another brother of Duleep who had kept wickets for Malvern that year.

Our early batsmen did not come off and it was left to Lionel Kotelawala to make the top score for the side. His mother was there to watch the match with, I am sure, a full measure of pride in her son's gallant feat.

The following week I turned out for the Gymkhana against a Combined Public Schools team at The Oval and made the top score of 59 against bowlers like G. H. Gibson, R. C. Robertson-Glasgow and G. O. Shelmerdine, all of whom shone in English cricket later on. I played in a few more matches for the Indian Gymkhana that summer, and the most outstanding personality in the side was M. P. Bajaha, the old Somerset County cricketer.

"Baj" had gone to England as A.D.C. to the then Maharajah of Cooch Behar; he had already played for the Parsees in the Bombay Quadrangular and, as soon as he was qualified, he turned out regularly for Somerset, being a contemporary of the famous Len Braund. He made several centuries for his county and was a very attractive and hard-hitting batsman. But it was his genial personality and happy smile that endeared him to all of us. His favourite among us was Lionel Kotelawala — a clear case of two of a kind getting together.

My first year at Oxford (1917/1918) was an uneventful one. It was during the last days of World War 1. Oxford was quite depleted of able-bodied men, and I was even pressed to make a four at tennis with Elmer Mack, of Wesley College, Colombo, and Wadham, who later passed into the I.C.S., and a South African named Johnson, who was at my college, St. John's, and who in 1919 won his tennis Blue.



"Bobby" Gaekwar's cricket team at Oxford in 1918. Bobby Gaekwar is seated in the centre and the author is third from the left in the middle row.

There was, of course, no regular varsity cricket and L. A. ("Bobby") Gaekwar, a nephew of the ruling Maharajah Gaekwar of Baroda, ran a scratch team drawn from those of us who were there who could play. Another cricket enthusiast of the time was old J. R. F. Turner, who was responsible for the scheme whereby varsity cricketers lent their services to coach school boys. I went twice to play at Radley, which was eight miles from Oxford, making a half century on each occasion. On one of these trips to Radley we created quite a sensation when, on a bet, I drove a four-in-hand coach carrying the team and camp followers from St. John's, up the Corn, down St. Aldate's and over Folly Bridge to Radley. It was a jolly party with the camp-followers quaffing big jugs of beer and other alcoholic refreshments to keep their spirits up and overcome their fears of my ability to successfully handle a four-in-hand.

November 1918 saw the end of World War I and Oxford began to fill up very fast. Many of the students who had gone to the front rapidly came back, and among those who came back to St. John's was Leslie Hore-Belisha, who later became Transport Minister and was responsible for the "Belisha Beacon" which marks pedestrian crossings. He occupied the famous Prince Rupert Rooms at my college.

It might be mentioned in passing that during the Cromwell Revolution, King Charles I for sometime had this Court at Oxford which, as always, was loyal to the royalist cause. The St. John's gardens, which are still famous as the most beautiful at Oxford, was a favourite resort of the ladies of the Court; we have not only the Prince Rupert Rooms but also a suite known as the King Charles Rooms.

To come back to Hore-Belisha, even at that time, he had political ambitions, and he put himself up as a candidate for President of the Union in December 1918 in the first election after World War I. The Indian Society of the varsity was and is known as the Oxford Majlis and Bobby Gaekwar was the President, and I the Treasurer. Hore-Belisha came to me as a fellow collegian and appealed to me to get him the Indian votes which at the time formed a good porportion of the total votes.

I took him to one of our Sunday meetings and introduced him to the Indians who gave him their bloc vote. He was duly elected President. I believe this was the first instance of such canvassing of votes at a Union election. In return for this, Hore-Belisha gave us an Indian debate at the Union. S. P. Mukerjee, who in the 1920's was President of the Hindu Maha Sabha in India, proposed "That India should be given Independence" and we won by one vote. This was in 1919!

By the way, I have seen some speculation regarding the origin of the hyphenated name Hore-Belisha. Some have said that it was really "Horeb" and "Elisha," emphasising Hore-Belisha's Jewish origin, and that he later changed it to the hyphenated form. Of course he WAS a Jew, but his father's name was Belisha, not Elisha. His father died when he was very young and his mother married Sir Ruthvea Hore of the Foreign Office, who adopted him. Hence the hyphenated Hore-Belisha.

In Michaelmas Term 1918, in preparation for the return to normalcy, a "Fours" competition was organised and at St. John's as one of the few able-bodied men up, I was pressed into taking part although I had, of course, never rowed in Ceylon. I was to stroke our boat but in an unfortunate accident following an Armistics celebration (!) I broke a small bone in my right hand. However, since I had taken a big part in the organisation of the "regatta," they insisted that I should cox the St. John's boat despite my 10 stone. The others were Jacot, two Serbs — Stevanovitch and Ijidovitch — and a New Foundlander called King. (Stevanovitch, who has settled in America as Stevens (!), went to St. John's in 1966 and saw my son, Manicam).

As a result of this I was elected Secretary of the College Boat Club and stroked the spare "four" for the Torpids in March, 1919. With the Summer Term, of course, I abandoned rowing for cricket.

The summer of 1919, saw cricket revived in full strength at the varsities. Owing to certain circumstances which were not entirely within my control and which I do not want to recall, my financial position at the beginning of the Summer Term of 1919 was somewhat precarious, with the result that I was not able even to pay my subscription to the University Cricket Club. Hence the first two trials passed

without my inclusion, to the surprise of many who considered me a certainty for the first trial. Then N. Munasinghe (later of the Ceylon Civil Service), who was at New College, came to my rescue and paid the sub and I was included in the third trial.

It, however, proved an unsuccessful effort. I bowled several good overs without taking a wicket and was bowled by a late-in-swinger after I had made only one run. Thus went all my hopes of gaining any varsity cricketing honours.

But in the inter-collegiate cricket matches I was consistently doing well. I remember that for St. John's against Oxford City, I came into prominence by capturing seven wickets for 12 runs on a wicket that suited me. Elmer Cotton, the Oxfordshire cricketer, was in the City side. We beat University College and Magdalene College in the earlier rounds, the latter having three Blues in their team.

In the semi-final we were up against Trinity College, whose team included D. J. Knight, already a batsman of Test standard. Knight and a South African by the name of Nicholson, who also won Test colours for his country later, used to open batting for Trinity and regularly scored a century each, helping Trinity to win their earlier matches by an innings.

It was considered that they would make short work of us but there was a big crowd to watch the match because of the attraction of D. J. Knight. After the failure of our earlier batsmen, who included a Blue, H. L. Ward (who later came out to the Forest Department in Madras), I managed to pull the side out with a knock of 40 odd. We kept the Trinity total within respectable porportions, my bowling figures being six for 56, and our batsman coming off in the second innings, set Trinity just 200 to make to win.

This was considered mere bagatelle for such a strong batting side, but with the very first ball I clean bowled D. J. Knight with a late swinger that came back from outside the leg and took his middle and off stump. Everyone was stunned, but more was to follow. In the second over I had Nicholson caught at mid-on; he was unable to follow the flight of the ball at all and cocked up a soft catch.

The Trinity side now definitely had their tails between their legs and at the end of the second day's play they were four wickets down for only 20 runs. The next day I had F. C. G. Nauman (another Blue) out early and we won quite easily.

This performance, to which J. L. C. Rodrigo, who was up at Balliol, referred in the Ceylon Press on the occasion of the death of D. J. Knight, made the latter send me a form for membership of the Oxford University Authentics Cricket Club with his name as proposer. Unfortunately due to my untimely departure from Oxford, which I will explain later, I did not pay the entrance fee and so my name does not appear in the official list of members. Knight was undoubtedly one of the best batsman in English cricket in those days. He used to open batting for Surrey with Jack Hobbs and many were the times when he reached his three figures ahead of his illustrious partner.

His father owned a timber yard in the Surrey Docks and it was thought that D. J. would have a distinguished future as an amateur in English cricket. But a disagreement with his father over his marriage forced him to take up a teaching appointment, preventing him from playing county cricket till August each year. Thus was one of the most promising batsman lost to representative cricket.

It is interesting to note that Edward Gent, later Governor of the Malayan Union, kept wickets for Trinity in that famous Trinity - St. John's match.

My stay at Oxford came to an end with the Summer term of 1919. Briefly what happened was that over-jubilant on my being elected a member of the Authentics, my friends and I celebrated lavishly but not too wisely one evening. Then two of us, again not too wisely, decided to go out for a stroll and were spotted by the Proctor staggering down the High. We were escorted back to College and next day reported to the College authorities.

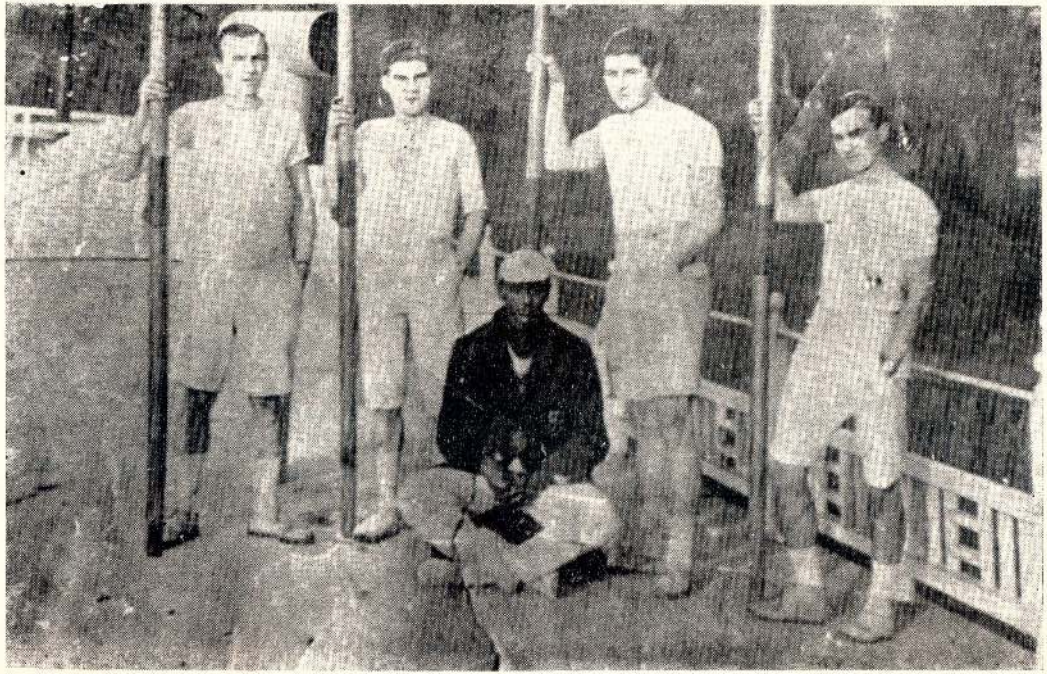
My friend was "rusticated" for a term. But I, since I was a colonial scholar, was reported to the Director of Colonial Scholars with a recommendation that I should be

"sent to a University nearer home." I received a letter signed by Winston Churchill, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, telling me that my passage had been booked on a certain ship back to Ceylon. Shame at this ending to what was considered a promising future made me decide not to take the offer to be sent back and I went into hiding in London.

While reminiscing about my Oxford days it may not be out of place if I recall some of my contemporaries and also some of the better known "Dons" of my time.

Besides Hore-Belisha, one of the best known men at my own college, St. John's, in those days was B. L. Jacot de Boinod. He came up in the Lent term of 1918 having been invalided out of the Royal Flying Corps. Jacot, as he was known to all his friends, came from a Huguenot family that had settled down at Perry Bar, Birmingham, after the notorious St. Bartholemew's night massacre of the Huguenots in France. He was a strapper of over 6 feet tall, weighing quite 14 stone. Even in his school days at the famous King Edward School, Birmingham, he was an athlete of distinction and won his schoolboy international Rugby cap. As a result of a crash while fighting in France in the Royal Flying Corps, his left leg was about an inch shorter than his right, which entitled him to a petrol allowance for a car to get about. But he soon showed that this minor disability handicapped him in no way in taking part in games. Of course to us youngsters at college he was a seasoned hero and was the centre of a small group among whom was my unworthy self. When sports were revived at Oxford after the war, Jacot soon made his mark and went on to win his Rugger Blue. In the 1919 Inter-Varsity match he scored three tries and he continued to play for the Harlequins. According to the press comments of that time, the only reason why he did not get his international cap for England was because his name sounded so French!

Jacot was also a member of a somewhat extraordinary club that was formed among us at the time called "The Three Musketeers," which like most nebulous Oxford clubs died with us. One of the seniors at Oxford during the War was T. W. Earp of Exeter. We established a connection with him through Christopher Wade of our own College — the 'W' in Earp's initials standing for Wade. Christy, Jacot and I were



St. John's College Four which competed in the Rewing Regatta at Oxford in December, 1919. B.L. Jacot de Boinod is standing second from the right and the author is seated in front.

very much together and through Christy we used to meet Tommy Earp occasionally. Once at a dinner get-together the conversation turned on dfferent wines and Earp quoted a dictum of Athos of "The Three Musketeers," who was complaining that the landlord had cheated them by packing an inferior wine instead of champagne in their picnic breakfast basket when the Musketeers went out to defend a bastion. Athos then declared that there were only three wines worth drinking — Champagne, Chambertin (a heavy burgundy) and Wine of Anjou, a light bubbly wine comparable to Champagne.

In the after dinner spirit in which we were, we immediately decided to form a club called "The Three Musketeers," the main purpose of which was to hold a monthly dinner at which one of these three wines would be drunk in rotation. Earp was the ideal Athos both in seniority and manner. Jacot was undoubtedly the hefty Porthos. At that time I had ambitions of reading for the Church so I became a ready-made Aramis, while Christy Wade, who had a knack of getting into scraps, was cast for the character of D'Artagnan. I recall this merely to illustrate the kind of cultural background which is a by-product of Oxford education.

Earp succeeded Hore-Belisha as President of the Oxford Union and after the Varsity became the art and music critic of the **Daily Telegraph** — the leading Conservative London daily newspaper. I was very unlucky not to have been able to meet him when I was in London in 1954 as, in reply to my letter, he said he was in hospital for an operation. He died shortly after that.

Jacot himself went on to take to journalism and was in charge of a Central European news agency with headquarters in Paris. At least this was what he wrote to me when I became Editor of the **Straits Echo** in 1931 and he heard my name mentioned in **The Times** (London) Office. I failed to contact him too when I was in London in 1954.

Another interesting personality in my time at St. John's was Raymond Postgate, who later married the daughter of "Honest George" Lansbury, one of the most respected early leaders of the Labour Party. Postgate was a conscientious

objector, who had gone to gaol rather than serve in the army. As a "conchy," Postgate was abjured by the "Blimps" of the college, especially a typical example by the name of Salt, whom we promptly aptly nicknamed "Pepper." The funny thing was that Postgate, though he refused to fight in the war, was a boxing champion! With characteristic socialist classlessness he used to come often to my rooms — it was taboo in Varsity etiquette in those days for a Senior to call on a Fresher — and have long talks with me about Gandhi, Nehru and other Indian leaders. Postgate took a First in Greats and went to Fleet Street. Later he wrote many popular novels and other books, the best known of which is the biography of his father-in-law. I was agreeably surprised to find an article by him in that amusing best-selling magazine, **Lilliput**, which I bought to beguile my time on my flight from Paris to Amsterdam on my round-the-world trip in 1954. And the subject was "Cocktail Recipes"!

The most outstanding man I was lucky to make friends with at Oxford through Tommy Earp, was Charles Jury of Magdalen College. Jug, as he was affectionately known, was an Australian who had come up from St. Peter's College, Adelaide, and was a contemporary of Dr. H. O. Holkins, the Cricket Blue, who later came out to Malaya as a pathologist and with whom I played in the Penang cricket team in the 1930's.

Jug is probably the finest example of a gentleman I have ever met. I have seen him literally walk round a train of ants so as not to disturb them and our joke against him was that he was too much of a gentleman to be an Australian! While at Oxford he had already made a name as a poet and when he got his First in English Schools, **The Times** had a fourth leader about him. He returned to Australia to become the Professor of English at Adelaide University.

Of the Ceylonese who were up during my time there were two whom I must not fail to mention — J. L. C. Rodrigo and P. Ramanathan. J. L. C. had won the Ceylon Arts Scholarship in the same year that I won the Science Scholarship and he really was a keen student of the classics. He was up at Balliol and was always full of the famous past traditions of that great college. As is well known, Balliol had had a vin-

tage period in the early part of the 20th century under its famous head, Dr. Jowett, and counted such brilliant scholars as the Asquith brothers. There is no doubt that Raymond Asquith, if his life had not been cut short in World War I, would have risen to even greater heights than his father, H.H., Prime Minister of England at that time.

Anyway Balliol men in my time were a "pain in the neck" to the rest of us at Oxford with their bragging and as a result their college gained the pseudonym "Bally Hole." J. L. C. was no exception to the Balliol bore but he was a kindly fellow and used to visit me very often. Taking me under his wing, he introduced me to his Balliol friends. It was through his connection that I became a member of the Stubbs Historical Society, named after the famous historian, Bishop Stubbs of Oxford, whose son, Reginald, later became Colonial Secretary and Governor of Ceylon. It is amusing to recall that the colours of the Stubbs Society were claret, cider and coffee — the only drinks that were permitted at its meetings!

J. L. C. in due course took his Honours Degree in classics, known as "Greats" or "Litterae Humaniores" (Human Letters). As was to be expected, he went on to be the Professor of Classics at the University of Ceylon, but his tutelage period included a short term as Editor of the **Ceylon Morning Leader.** He is now, like me, in retirement but continues to make contributions to the Ceylon press in some of which he has made flattering remarks about my cricket prowess of Oxford. Unlike me he has led a well ordered life and I hope — I am sure — he will live to see these lines in print.

P. Ramanathan was also an Arts Scholar from Ceylon and he really was a brilliant brain. He was up at Christ Church and had the distinction of winning an exhibition at the "House" which entitled him to wear a scholar's gown. He was of course younger than I. His elder brother, P. Coomarusamy, also a Ceylon Arts Scholarship winner, was at Corpus Christi College earlier. Ramanathan in due course passed into the Indian Civil Service but, whether it was due to the rigours of that service or whether it was just fate, he died early. I would like to recall two incidents that illustrate his nimble wit and his brain power.

Among the Ceylon students in England at that time was C. Sittampalam, who was also a Ceylon University scholar. He was at Cambridge and had all the eccentricities of a genius. He was popularly known as Velu, being an abbreviation of his first name Cathiravelu. Velu used to spend most of his vacations at Eastbourne and his regular haunt was at a guest house run by a mother and daughter by the name of Joliffe. I remember once when, in a company of Ceylonese, somebody inquired where Velu was, pat came the reply from Ramanathan, "He's gone to Eastbourne for a little jollification!" Incidentally Velu passed into the Ceylon Civil Service and later entered the first Ceylon Parliament in 1948 to become Minister of Post and Telecommunications. Velu and I were always the closest of friends.

The other incident which illustrates Ramanathan's brain power was this. Just before he was due to leave to take up his appointment in India, he came to me in London and asked me whether I could arrange a room for him close to my flat where he could immolate himself and concentrate on his law books for the Bar Final, asking me to provide him with merely his routine meals. I did this and at the end of two weeks he sat for the Bar Final and passed it. I am quite sure that this is a record.

The above are but a few of the many I met at Oxford among whom were L. A. (Bobby) Gaekwar, whose name, Lakshmanan Rao, I gave to my eldest son. There was also S. P. Mukerji to whom I have referred earlier; and a Horace N. Wilcox, an American Rhodes Scholar from Wyoming University who was up at St. John's. It shows what a small place the world is as I discovered later, when I was at Djakarta as the Ceylon Minister, that Horace N. was a relative of the mother-in-law of the then U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia, Hugh N. Cumming, Jr.

The senior tutor at St. John's College in those days was Sydney Ball, who was one of the authorities at Oxford on Political Science. I remember the big crowds that used to attend his lectures on this subject. Also at my college in that time was Dr. Hutton, Achdeacon of Nottingham Cathedral, who was the Reader in Indian History at the Varsity. It was said that he and Sydney Ball were keen rivals for

the post of President of St. John's. At the previous election they tied in the number of votes polled by each. As a result Dr. H. W. James, who was head of Rugby School and earned the nickname of Bodger because he was a stern martinet, was elected President. Dr. James' passion was church music and as I, due to my attending chapel daily at St. Thomas College, used to chant psalms lustily I came in for his favourable notice. "The Bodger" in his time had captained the Jesus College cricket team and once, after watching me bowl in a match at the Parks (Varsity grounds), he remarked that I bowled well as I kept my bowling arm well up! When I went to Oxford in 1966 to be present at the Convocation at which my son, Manicam, received his degree, I was very happy to see that a memorial tablet had been put up to Sydney Ball at the entrance to the lecture room where he discoursed on political science. He was a scholar whose kindliness was not tainted by his eruditon.

Archdeacon Hutton moved in "high society" and was a close friend of Fay Compton, the actress and sister of Compton Mackenzie, the author. We used to be quite excited when occasionally she came to his rooms for lunch. Also one Sunday afternoon I was taken by surprise to see coming down the stairs from Dr. Hutton's rooms no less a person than H. H. Asquith who, though then no longer Prime Minister, was still a notable public figure.

Another of the famous Dons at St. John's in my time was Dr. (later Sir) William Holdsworth, the author of **Laws of England,** which is still a standard textbook. "The Hogger," as he was nicknamed by the undergrads, was an imposing figure with a fierce handle-bar moustache which, it was said, hid a rosebud mouth! The story was current that he used to tell every student who went to him that every good lawyer was a "two bottle man"!

Probably the most colourful of our Dons was "the Bidder," or the Rev. W. Bidder, B.D., Vicar of St. Giles Church and Bursar of St. John's College. Later he got his D.D. and earned the designation of "Doctor," but in our time we used to dub him "Head Gardener," as his great hobby was to look after the famous St. John's College Gardens to which I have referred earlier. Of course his real title was Curator

At St. John's College Gardens in 1966 — the author and his son, Manicam.

of the Gardens but in his Crown Derby hat and whiskers he really looked a "head gardener." He was responsible for laying the Rock Garden which probably to this day is one of the finest in the world and appropriately a tablet has been erected to his memory on the rock wall of that garden.

To "the Bidder" the Gardens was a sacred place and we caught it when we once committed the sacrilege of taking a jug of beer and consuming it in a secluded corner one fine summer Sunday morning.

I cannot leave this subject of my stay at Oxford without referring to our St. John's College porter of that time, Brooks. He was a fine character. As he was fond of the college port, which was rationed at that time, our little group used to club together and present him with a bottle a week. In return for this he would invariably wait till we came out of the Hall after dinner and inquire if we wanted to borrow a quid from him to go to the pictures. I still can't forget his generous gesture in waiting for me when I was coming down to inquire how I was fixed for cash and offering to lend me a fiver. Unfortunately he died in a motor cycle accident soon after.

He was succeeded by the under-porter, Henry. Some 10 years after I had come down, my younger sister and her husband were stuck for accommodation when visiting Oxford. My brother-in-law, who had been at Cambridge before passing into the Indian Civil Service, had visited me at St. John's. So he went to the Lodge and asked for help. On hearing that his wife was my sister, Henry immediately went out and fixed them up in some college digs that were vacant at the time.

That was an instance of the well-known saying that they never forget you at Oxford and Cambridge. And I had another outstanding illustration of this when I went to Oxford in 1954. I had driven down from London with the then Ceylon High Commissioner, Sir Claude Corea, whose sons were up at "Univ" at the time. I told Sir Claude that while I was there I would like to drop in at Elmer Cotton's sports shop in the Turl, which was where all of us used to get our sports equipment. Elmer had also been a good friend

of mine; I had played with him in the cricket teams during the war years. He had also played for Oxford County both at cricket and football.

We stopped the car opposite the shop and I got out to walk across. Elmer told me later, when to my joy I found him still alive and hale and hearty at 74, that his son looked out and remarked, "There are two Indians who I suppose are going to the Taj Mahal." (This was a new Indian Restaurant that had recently been opened in Oxford.) But Elmer said he replied, "No. That is Sara and he is coming to see me."

He made both Sir Claude and me sign his autograph book, which was filled with the names of all the famous sportsmen who had been at Oxford in the first half of the twentieth century.

It is contacts such as these that set the hall mark of an Oxford education about which there is a tendency to sneer in these modern iconoclastic times.

CHAPTER III

LONDON INTERLUDE

I was also very lucky in that my stay in England coincided with that of D. B. (later Sir Baron) Jayatileke and E. W. Perera, who had been sent on a mission to England to press for political reforms in Ceylon. The movement for such reforms was a sequel to the Buddhist-Muslim riots in Ceylon in 1915. This trouble arose from a minor incident due to the passing of a Buddhist procession past the mosque at Gampola, a town on the banks of the Mahaweli Ganga near Kandy, during the Muslim Friday prayer time. The Muslim objected to the noisy music that accompanied the procession and disturbed their prayers. Trouble had been simmering on this issue for sometime and open rioting broke out when the two parties clashed on a day in June 1915. This was during a period at the height of the Buddhist revival movement in Ceylon and soon the rioting spread all over the island, the Singhalese Buddhists attacking the Muslims in all the important towns. The masses invoked the names of the Buddhist leaders such as the Senanayakes, D. B. Jayatileke, Dr. Hewavitarne, etc.

Now this was during World War I and martial law had to be proclaimed to quell the riots. The commander of the British troops in Ceylon at the time, one Brigadier Malcolm, was put in charge of the country. He was a bluff soldier with little or no regard for civilian rights. He took the view that creating disturbances at a time of war was an act of treason and, without any investigation, clapped most of the Singhalese leaders, whose names had been shouted by the mobs, in prison. It was a time of extreme tension and wild rumours were current. The colonial British Government took the side of the numerically weaker Muslims and Singhalese leaders were summarily imprisoned and one young Singhalese court martialled and shot after a perfunctory trial. When the trouble cleared up and things settled down, a terrific hue and cry was raised in the then Legislative Council, led by Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan, who was the only elected member of that body at the time. Though a Tamil, he championed the cause of the Singhalese leaders and the subsequent Commission of Inquiry revealed that the hopeless muddle was a result of the inadequate provision for the representation of the views of the local people.

Sir Ponnambalam Ramanathan made a trip to England to make personal representations to the Colonial Office but it was felt that more intensive lobbying of parliamentary leaders was necessary before any real progress could be made in the matter of political reforms for Ceylon. It was thus decided to send D. B. Jayatileke and E. W. Perera to do this lobbying. The former was the top Buddhist leader while the latter was a member of the Legislative Council in which he had already made a name as a champion of the people's rights.

It is worth mentioning here that not only were all the expenses of these two representatives met by F. R. Senanayake, a brother of Ceylon's first Prime Minister, D. S. Senanayake, but he also transferred a small coconut estate to D. B. Jayatileke as provision for his old age, as the latter pointed out that his frequent journeys to England would prevent him from building up a practice as a lawyer I happened to gain this knowledge from the close contacts I had with Jayatileke at that time and it was this inside information that made me pay tribute to F. R. Senanayake as the real "father" of Ceylon Independence in the **Sunday Observer,** of which I was Editor at the time when he died suddenly at Calcutta in December, 1925. His mammoth funeral and the statue erected to him had their genesis, I think, in that article.

D. B. Jayatileke, started life as a school teacher and late in life went up to Jesus College, Oxford, where he struck up a friendship with Sir David Rees, one of the Oxford M.P.'s at that time. He was, however, one of the simplest persons one could meet. I spent my X'mas vacation in 1917 with Mr. and Mrs. D. B. Jayatileke and Mrs. Alice Kotelawala at a little Devon seaside resort called Teignmouth, near Torquay. To a young student like me it was a singular privilege to be able to move so freely with one of Ceylon's greatest political leaders of the time but he behaved just like one of us and never had any idea of standing on his dignity. He had too much real dignity for that. I still remember the manner in which he played bridge which we taught him during this holiday. He would lead all his top honours without any idea of the finesse which we tried to impress on him was an essential tactic in the game and "Jayatileke bridge" became notorious in Ceylon later.

Anyway the efforts of Jayatileke and E. W. Perera resulted in the reformed Ceylon Legislative Council of 1922 in which for the first time there was an elected unofficial majority. This was followed by the Donoughmore Commission in 1928 which recommended a system of self-government for Ceylon based on the Committee system that was being tried out in the London County Council at that time. E. W. Perera, who opposed the adoption of the Donoughmore Constitution in 1930, was defeated at the subsequent elections and went more or less into the "political wilderness." This was a great loss as he was a keen debater and one who had made a major contribution to the political development of Ceylon.

With the operation of the Donoughmore Constitution, D. B. Jayatileke as Chairman of the Committee for Home Affairs became Ceylon's acknowledged political leader. He guided the affairs of the country for over 10 years till in his old age he went to New Delhi as Ceylon's first Commissioner there in 1942 as Sir Baron Jayatileke, he died a few years later.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute also to the two ladies of this group, Mrs. D. B. Jayatileke and Mrs. Alice Kotelawala. Although Mrs. Jayatileke was somewhat over-shadowed by her more famous husband, she had herself a right to be rated as a pioneer reformer in Ceylon. One of the well-known Batawantudawe family, she was a leading woman school teacher before she married and played a foremost part in the movement for emancipation of women in Ceylon. Later she submerged her public work in that of her husband's but I can never forget what an understanding and kindly person she was. I saw her a few weeks before her untimely death. She was alone on a sick bed suffering from influenza which later developed into pneumonia. Even then she did not complain that her husband had left her alone while he was touring the country campaigning for the acceptance of the Donoughmore recommendations.

Mrs. Alice Kotelawala was the mother of John Lionel (later Sir John) Kotelawala, whom I called Lionel. She was truly one of the great women of modern Ceylon and her story is only too well-known. She was left a young widow with three children when her husband died in tragic circums-

tances. But such was her courage and determination that she brought her children to assume leading positions in the island. Her eldest son, Lionel, was one of the best known Prime Ministers of Ceylon, his name being familiar in most of the capitals of Europe and Asia. Her second son, Justin, became a leading figure in commercial and industrial circles in Ceylon and was the founder of the Ceylon Insurance Company, the first Ceylon owned insurance venture. He was also responsible for the building of Ceylinco Building, one of the most outstanding structures in the City of Colombo today. The daughter, Freda, was married to Sydney Corea, son of the Hon'ble Mr. Victor Corea, and she is a foremost welfare worker in Ceylon. Dr. Gamini Corea, her son, is today Ceylon's foremost economist.

As Lionel was never tired of repeating, he owed his success in his public career to the careful upbringing by his mother and his devotion to her in later life was a beautiful feature. There are also hundreds of people in Ceylon today who can bear witness to the kindness and understanding and help they received from Mrs. Alice Kotelawala. I am not a religous bigot but I am great believer in the power of FAITH. The last time I saw Mrs. Kotelawala was when she came to Communion at St. Michael's Church in Colombo, assisted by one of her grandchildren, and the thought passed through my mind that it was her faith that helped her to bring her children up to the foremost positions. Like most of the Singhalese leaders they became Buddhists in the revival movement in the 1910's but she remained a Christian to the end.

Lionel and I were what may be called "buddies" and I paid my tribute to him in my contribution to the publication "Ten Years A Prime Minister." Not even his stoutest champions will claim that he was blessed with much brains but there was no doubt about his "horse sense." I came across an outstanding example of this in his remark to me one day; "I say, Manicam, you know the real reason for all this corruption in this country is because our people are not patrotic enough. If they love their country truly they would not indulge in corrupt practices that do more harm than anything else."

Lionel was a realist and a practical man and it was on these qualities that he rose to power. There are two lasting monuments to him in the country, the hydro-electric undertaking and the Ceylon University at Peradeniya. The former had been languishing from 1922 but when Sir John became Minister for Works in 1931, he bent his energies towards completing what was undoubtedly an urgent need for the development of the country and his drive achieved fulfillment in 1938 when the turbines at Norton Bridge began to roll. Sir Ivor Jennings, the architect and first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, paid a fitting tribute to Sir John in connection with the founding of the University at Peradeniya. It was the drive of Sir John that obtained the necessary steel work that went to the building of that structure and this at a time when the western world was fighting a World War.

I was with Lionel at Bandung when he threw the spanner in the works by referring to "the manifestation of new colonialism," namely the establishment of Communist satellites in Eastern Europe. I am referring to this in detail later in my account of the Bandung Conference but I would like to state here that it required outstanding courage to have come out with that statement in that gathering and Lionel had no lack of this quality.

My family finally contacted me and gave me a chance to try to obtain my London degree. Even this I failed, as by now I had completely forgotten my studying habits!

But in 1920 and 1921 I spent the summers in London playing cricket regularly for the Indian Gymkhana Club of which in 1921 I became the Cricket Secretary. By this time the Indian Gymkhana had become quite a popular club side in London and its suburbs and we usually figured in most of the club cricket weeks.

These cricket weeks are a great institution in club cricket in England. For one week in the year a club plays matches on every day of the week, and enthusiastic sportsmen collect scratch sides to fill up the vacant days when other club teams are not available as opponents. So it happens that if you play in any of the earlier matches of a week, you can get as many games as you like for the rest of the week.

K. S. Duleepsinjhi and his wife, Kumari Jayaraj. Duleep played for the Indian Gymkhana vs M.C.C. in 1921 when the author captained the Indian Gymkhana.

Sir John (Lionel) Kotewala, Prime Minister of Ceylon, 1952 — 1956, a "buddy" of the author in London from 1917 to 1920.

I have played at such well-known clubs as Richmond, Sutton, Hampstead, High Wycombs, Sheperds Bush, Honor Oak and North Middlesex. I was also invited to play for the club amateurs of Middlesex against the club amateurs of Surrey, both in 1920 and 1921. In the latter side was, curiously enough, the Middlesex County cricketer, H. L. Dales, who was also a member of the Richmond Cricket Club. Another was E. L. Roberts, who later as General Roberts came out as C-in-C of the reoccupation forces to Malaya in 1945.

In 1921, the Indian Gymkhana was given the honour of a three-day fixture against the M.C.C. Our captain for that year was the famous Indian batsman, Major Mistri, who had come with the Maharajah of Patiala as his A.D.C. Mistri was not prepared to play in this match as he said he was out of practice and so it fell to my lot to captain the Indian Gymkhana.

We had a very strong side. There was M. P. Rajana, H. S. Malik (Oxford Golf Blue and Cricket Authentic), S. S. Dongree (Bombay Quandrangular player), S. Ramaswamy (of Madras, who was later an Indian Test cricketer), my brother S. Sara (who played in the Freshman's match at Cambridge), L. C. Khoo (a Burmese who had captained Royal College, Colombo) and V. Sinnetamby (as wicket-keeper). Duleep Sinjhi, then a young boy of 16, had just won his school colours at Cheltenham, was staying with his guardian, C. B. Fry, and I wrote to the latter and persuaded him to bring young Duleep to play in this match.

We batted first and with the help of 150 by my brother and 70 each by H. S. Malik and S. S. Dongree, we ran up a total of over 400. It was indeed a creditable performance as the M. C. C. side included the famous South African cricketer, G. A. Faulkner, and two well-known Leicestershire professionals, W. E. Astill and J. H. King. We managed to get the M. C. C. out for just under 250 runs in the first innings, of which Faulkner contributed 76 not out.

The glamour of it induced me to make the M. C. C. follow on, much against the advice of Rajana, who said that we would not last the strain of a double spell in the field as most of us were used only to one day cricket. How right he proved in the end!

Things went well for us at the beginning of the M. C. C. second innings, but when seven wickets, I think, were down and we were within sight of victory, our fielders cracked up. Lt. Comdr. (later Admiral) Lionel Halsey rattled off a lusty half century, and in the final outcome we were left with 80 odd runs to make in about two hours in the fourth innings against a bowler of the calibre of G. A. Faulkner.

Wickets began to fall with depressing regularity but young Duleep stood up to all Faulkner's wiles and scored a pretty half century, with leg glides and late cuts, to save the match. When time was called we were a few runs short with two wickets in hand. And it was deemed a most sporting match, particularly as I forewent the tea interval, with a view of forcing a definite result.

Young Duleep thus early gave indications of his later greatness — he scored a century in his first Test Match at Lords — but he always used to say, even as late as October 1941 when we met at Penang, that it was I who gave him his first chance in big Cricket.

Perhaps my account of this match will not be complete without the story of how I managed to get Faulkner out. I used to toss a ball well up on the off which used to go away with my arm and dip at the last minute. Most batsman would come out for what they thought would be a lusty drive and be caught at extra cover, whom I used to place deep especially for the catch.

In the first innings I tried this for several overs at Faulkner but he just patted the ball. So I brought the fieldsmen in for the next over, thinking Faulkner did not have that stroke in his repertoire. Unfortunately, however, I unthinkingly bowled this ball and Faulkner's bat flashed to send the ball over the fieldsman's head and to drop where he should have been had I not moved him in, thus showing the cunning of the old campaigner.

Anyway as I said earlier Faulkner was 76 not out in the first innings. In the second innings too, he had passed 70 and was still not out. I was desperate and thought I must get his wicket "by hook or by crook" and it was actually by "crook" that I succeeded.

Faulkner at this time had quite a paunch. So I slung one as hard as I could at his "tummy" and ran down the pitch. He defended his paunch with his bat and I was able to scoop the ball up with one hand before it reached the ground. I had to apologise to him for the trick but, like the sportsman he was, he enjoyed the joke.

It was over drinks after the match that Lionel Halsey, who was then A.D.C. to Edward, Prince of Wales, gave us a hint of the sensational abdication of 1937. Halsey mentioned Edward's fascination for Mrs. Wallis, as she then was, and said that when he (Edward) came to the throne he would abdicate in order to marry the lady and retire to a ranch in Canada that he had just bought at that time. Events proved how correct that estimate was, though the ranch had been sold and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor have since spent exile mostly in France. A great man who would probably have been a greater king but he no doubt thinks his throne well worth losing for love.

It would be interesting to tell the story here of how the Indian Gymkhana Club got their present grounds at Osterley Park, just outside London, which is now one of the best metropolitan club grounds, covering an area of some 12 acres. In 1921, the Club had appointed a small sub-committee to negotiate for a ground, comprised of Lord Hawke (the famous old England captain who was our President), T. B. W. Ramsay (a barrister, who was the General Secretary) and myself, the Cricket Secretary.

We finally hit on the present ground at Osterley Park, on the great West Road, which was just being built, because of the possibilities, not only as a cricket ground but for the space it had for football and hockey pitches and also for tennis courts. The price was some £6,000; we had then collected £3,000 odd and so we paid the £2,000 deposit in March, confident that we would be able to collect the balance to complete the purchase in September.

But months went by and no money came in so that when September approached we had only just a little over £1,800 in the bank. Our little sub-committee was in a panic and in desperation we thought we would appeal to the

Maharajah of Patiala, who had come to England that year, for a loan to complete the purchase undertaking to return the money from collections later. The Maharajah had already contributed £1,000 to the ground fund.

So in fear and trembling, Lord Hawke, Ramsay and I went to see the Maharajah in his suite at the Savoy Hotel. Lord Hawke explained the position. The Maharajah listened patiently and then, to our amazement he said with a wave of his hand, "I will tell my bankers to transfer £4,000 to your account so that you can complete the purchase of the ground. You keep the £1,800 for laying it out and getting it ready for next season."

It was a princely gesture worthy of a true sportsman. I got Adcock, the groundsman of the Mill Hill Park C. C., on whose ground we used to play, to come over as our groundsman and he laid such a fine wicket that it is one of the best cricket pitches in and around London today.

A word about T. B. W. Ramsay, who passed away in January 1957 when my son, Lakshman, was working in his Chambers at 10, King's Beach Walk. Ramsay had a big Privy Council practice, getting many cases from India and the African Colonies. But he was always a true friend to Indian and Ceylonese students and I know many a case in which he signed as surety for students entering the Inns of Court, thus saving them from having to pay the deposit of £200.

He was once elected M.P. for the Scottish Isles as a Liberal. I had the pleasure of renewing my friendship with him when I went to London in 1954, and we went to the Osterley Park ground together. In 1952 when H. S. Malik was Indian Ambassador in Paris, and Duleep Sinjhi was Indian High Commissioner in Australia and I was Ceylon Commissioner in Malaya, he wrote and recalled that we all three had played in the Indian Gymkhana team against the M. C. C. in 1921.

CHAPTER IV

"THE OLD LADY OF BAILLIE STREET"

By the beginning of 1922 I had really got tired of England and its cold, so I returned to Ceylon in March 1922.

I had all but accepted an appointment to teach Science in the Manipay Hindu College, Jaffna, when my eldest brother met me and told me that it was silly of me to want to go and bury myself away from Colombo in that manner. He suggested that I should join the Law College and offered to pay my fees and give me an allowance.

So in August I joined the Law College and for some months inbibed the rudiments of the law from such able lecturers as M. K. Akbar and F. J. Soertsz.

In early 1923, however, a heaven-sent opportunity came my way. It was at the Tamil Union Club that the late Dr. John Rockwood told me that D. R. Wijewardene, then proprietor of the **Ceylon Daily News**, had bought up the Ceylon **Observer** and that he was looking for someone to take charge of the Sports section of the paper. He suggested that I should go and see him.

On the following Monday I went to the old **Daily News** office in Queen's Street under the Clock Tower to see Wijewardene, armed with a critical comment of the cricket matches of the previous weekend. Of course, I had to tell him that I had no experience of journalistic work but I had a fairly wide knowledge of all sports and had brought this contribution as a sample of the sort of work I could do.

He asked me to leave it with him so that he could show it to somebody who knew about cricket and told me to come back after three days. I learnt later that it was Douglas de Saram, the famous Ceylon cricketer, whom he had consulted and that he (Douglas) had been enthusiastic about the contribution. He had suggested the opportunity should not be missed to employ the writer. So when I saw D. R. Wijewardene three days later he said he was prepared to engage me on three months probation and offered me the princely monthly salary of Rs. 150!

I told him that I had thought of Rs. 200 as a minimum for my pocket money in those days. So we arrived at the compromise of Rs. 175 for the probationary period with the understanding that I should start at Rs. 200 a month at the end of the three months, if I proved satisfactory.

So I started work on the staff of the "Old Lady of Baillie Street," as the **Observer** was known in those days. The editor was the late Christie Drieberg, retired Director of Agriculture; the sub-editors were H. D. Jansz (later Editor), Herbert Hulugalle, Willet Soysa, and H. D. Jayasinghe, a colourful journalist of the old school. The Chief Reporter was B. R. Jurgen Ondatje, and I was put in charge of the sports section, my reporter being "Snowball' Gunesekera, another colourful character if ever there was one.

We were indeed a very happy family, and I believe I hold a record in having contributed a second leader on my first day in a newspaper office. It was a Monday and the result of the England-Wales rugger match had just come in. In those days, Wales had a famous pair of half backs, Davies and Kershaw, popularly known as the "Welsh twins." They had figured prominently in the Welsh victory.

So when Drieberg wanted to be assisted out with a short second leader, I dashed off one about the Welsh twins, not forgetting to mention that Davies went into a scrum and came out without a single one of his carefully plastered hair out of place — or so it was said.

Even with the transfusion of new blood given by D. R. Wijewardene, the "Old Lady" continued to languish. But soon a fresh vigour was given through the medium of the racing feature I introduced over the pen-name of "Riding Boy."

Part of my time during the years I was in London was spent by a group of us studying race form, and we occasionally put a small bet. There were bookmakers in England with whom you could bet on credit, and in the beginning those of us who indulged in it did it more to justify our study of the science of horse-breeding and race form rather than as a form of gambling.

I remember once I had a bet with C. Sittampalam (to whom I have referred earlier) that I would get a letter of mine on some racing subjects published in the **Turf Parliament** that was regularly run in the London **Evening News.** So I wrote such a letter discussing the pedigree of two or three of the main candidates for the Derby of that year which Humorist won, though in my letter I gave Lemonora by the Derby winner, Lemburg, my vote. Lemonora ran third.

Anyway, my letter was published because I think I brought in Dean Swift and his tale of Gulliver visiting the kingdom of horses and I won my £1 from Sittampalam, but I am relating this story to show that our interest in racing in England was not inspired by the gambling spirit but by a study of the science of breeding and race form.

So when I began the racing columns in the **Ceylon Observer** I started a new style of discussing the pedigrees when assessing racing form. This went down very well with the racing public. I remember even such a well-known turfite as Wilton Bartleet once complimenting the newspaper on Riding Boy's racing notes.

Very soon the **Observer** began to take the lead as a newspaper carrying sports news, the comments on cricket, football, tennis, etc., also attracting attention and proving popular.

Then came the **Sunday Observer.** This was started largely as an inspiration of Herbert Hulugalle, later Editor of the **Ceylon Daily News,** after the pattern of the London Sunday papers. In the work of the production of the first few issues he was very ably assisted by Willet Soysa. Of course, I had to play my part also, carrying the week-end sports results, with on-the-spot commentaries as an important feature of this Sunday paper.

At that time, the **Times of Ceylon** published what was known as the **Times of Ceylon Sunday Illustrated** in magazine form, and it was put out on the streets by Saturday with no pretence of being an up-to-date newspaper — that is, carrying the latest news of Saturday evening. It was rather amusing that after the first issue of the **Sunday Observer,** the

H. D. Jansz, Editor of the Ceylon Observer.

D. R. Wijewardene, the Founder of the Lake House Press in Ceylon.

Times of Ceylon came out with an editorial complaining that their contemporary was breaking the rule of the Sabbath day as a day of rest by publishing a Sunday newspaper. Of course, our retort was obvious. To get a Sunday paper out we worked on Saturday and did not break the rule of the Sabbath holiday!

In due course, the **Times of Ceylon** had to follow with a Sunday newspaper and today, these two Sunday newspapers in Ceylon have gone up by leaps and bounds in popularity, their circulations being much greater than those of the daily issues and running well into six figures.

In the course of time also, the **Daily News** shifted its office next door to that of the **Ceylon Observer** and the two papers became, in physical fact, closely connected.

Hubert Hulugalle has published a brilliant analysis of the development of the Association Newspapers of Ceylon Ltd. and the part played by D. R. Wijewardene in the political development of that island towards independence in his book, "D. R. Wijewardene, His Life and Times."

It is not necessary for me to add to that but I would like to pay a tribute to the selfless manner in which Hubert Hulugalle himself assisted D. R. Wijewardene in his great project, and to the determination and vision with which Wijewardene carried out his purpose.

The conception of the Rotary Press and the full battery of Lino-type machines, the block-making and stereo department and the whole organisation of Lake House was something beyond the dreams of the old newspaper people in Ceylon with their hand-set type and flat-bed printing machines.

Today there is in Ceylon, thanks to D. R. Wijewardene, a really up-to-date newspaper organisation producing three daily and three Sunday papers in English, Singhalese and Tamil and this lead has been followed by the **Times of Ceylon.**

Of my colleagues in those days I have already mentioned Hubert Hulugalle and Willet Soysa but my account would not be complete if I did not refer to H. D. Jansz. I knew he would not mind my mentioning the fact that there was a story that he failed the Cambridge Senior because he could not get through the compulsory arithmetic paper, but Jansz himself assured me that this was not true. He was quite good in arithmetic. But it was his fine literary style which produced some of the finest pieces of polished English in the Editorial columns of the **Ceylon Observer.**

"Hilaire," as we used to call him in those days, was full of fun and puckish humour, in spite of his serious devotion to duty and regular attendance at office. I remember how once we managed to inveigle him to the racecourse on Governor's Cup Day. It was when Orange William had come back after his many triumphs at Calcutta, to run again in Colombo. Wilton Bartleet had two runners, Mandarin and Aborogine. Hilaire, as a result of some unknown hunch, put his ten rupees on the latter. When this unconsidered outsider flashed past Orange William to win and pay, I think, Rs. 129 for ten rupees, Hilare's excitement knew no bounds. He kept repeating "Aborigeene, Aborigeene" (purposely mispronouncing the name) and we celebrated his win in proper fashion that evening. He even came back to the office that night and made me put in my description of the race that Aborogine made the mighty Orange William, winner of several King Emperor's and Viceroy's Cups, "look like a common hack"!

In his retirement "Hilaire" continued to delight and amuse the readers of the Ceylon Observer with verses from his piquant pen, as Jay Quill, but in his later years he has been confined to bed.

On the **Daily News** side, of course, there was the Chief Sub-Editor, or Assistant Editor as he came to be known in later years, Orion de Zilva. He has been described as a past-master in the art of writing apt headlines. But this skill was not just a matter of chance or luck. It was a result of wide reading and wonderful command of the language and an ability to condense a compelling thought into a few short words.

He was popularly known as "Maf," a reference to Mafeking of Boer War fame. It is said that when on the rare occasions on which he used to break out of his sober dignified manner he used to go as wild as those who celebrated the victory of Mafeking.

"Maf" is no longer with us but I am inclined to feel that he is still composing apt headlines to caption the accounts of the gay doings in the happy place where he is now resting.

And of course, there was dear old Frank Ondatje, famous cricketer and umpire. In his time Frank played cricket for the Nondescripts with such famous old timers as the de Sarams, the Weinmans, the Horans and the Ludovicis. In later life he took to sports reporting and commenting and was also one of our most distinguished and famous cricket umpires.

Many are the stories that could be retailed about Frank's doings. I cannot but recall with warm pleasure the times he and I stood together at the opposite ends during the big school cricket match between Royal and St. Thomas College without a break from 1923 to 1930.

Those were the days when the Medicos used to be full of fun and pranks, and their ragging was a feature of this annual event — the local Eton-Harrow match. But I am proud to say that during the time Frank and I acted as umpires our sense of humour never deserted us and many a nasty "incident" was often avoided by his good-natured smile and appeal to the good sense of the rowdy elements.

To Frank, more than to anybody else that I knew, the game was the thing and not the result, a grand sportsman if ever there was one.

My connection with the Lake House Press came to an end in 1928 when I thought I would start a sports newspaper on my own. I did launch on the venture and **Sporting Chronicle** was published as a bi-weekly issue for about a year. It had perforce, to be really a one man show and disaster overtook my venture when, caught in a heavy storm on the way back from the Galle races, I went down with a severe attack of pneumonia. However, I continued to publish the **Sporting Chronicle** for the one year for which I had collected subscriptions in advance.

In 1929, I joined the staff of the **Ceylon Independent,** then owned by Sir Marcus Fernando, a famous physician, who beat Lord Dawson of Penn in the exams at London University, and who later became a leading propriatary planter. The paper, edited by A. P. Van Reyk, was then struggling on its last legs, being kept alive largely by Sir Marcus for supporting his political views. Van Reyk himself was a brilliant writer and although poor equipment gave no chance for the **Independent** to rival the **Daily News** in the get-up and production of the paper, the pungent editorials from Van Reyk's pen made it very widely read.

It is interesting to note that Noel Gratiaen, later a famous Q.C. and Supreme Court Judge, enjoying a Privy Council practice in London at present, was also at that time on the staff of the **Independent** as a sub-editor, while he was attending lectures as a law student.

One incident during my connection with the **Independent** is worth recording. In order to raise ready revenue, the Governor (Sir Herbert Stanley) in Council over-night imposed a tax of 50 cents on every bag of rice inported. S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike had just entered politics at that time and was a member of the Colombo Municipal Council.

True to his progressive spirit he denounced Sir Herbert Stanley as a "traitor to Ceylon" for having imposed this tax on the poor man's plate of rice. Now, Sir Marcus Fernando was a member of the Executive Council which was in reality responsible for the tax, and so S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike's outburst caused a terrific flutter in the editorial sanctum of the **Ceylon Independent.**

Among those who used to come in to advise us on editorial policy in those days was the late Canon Dr. G. B. Ekanayake, one of Ceylon's most renowned divines, and I remember that his was one of the many brilliant minds that collaborated to produce the **Ceylon Independent** editorial next day. It was a terrible tirade against S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. In it he was called a "traitor to his birth and breeding, a traitor to his school, a traitor to his university, and a traitor to his religion," the last reference being to his having become a Buddhist though he came of a distinguished Singhalese Christian family, one of whom was a Canon of the Anglican Church. Anyway that editorial was a masterpiece

of journalistic vituperation which kept on the windy side of the law of libel.

There was also the Unionist Association of Ceylon the membership of which was confined to its officials and committee members. The President was Sir Solomon Dias Bandaranaike (father of S.W.R.D.); the Vice-Presidents Sir Marcus Fernando and Gate Mudaliyar A. E. Rajapakse; the Committee members, Donald Obeyesekere, A. Gnanaprakasam, J. E. A. Alies, Noel Gratiaen (to represent the Burghers) etc., with myself pressed in by Sir Marcus as Secretary.

It was decided that the Association should present a memorandum to the Governor supporting the introduction of the rice-tax, and Sir Solomon readily led the deputation feeling, perhaps, that he should atone for what he thought was his son's ill-mannered attack on the Governor.

The Unionist Association of Ceylon, however, did one good service to the country and that was in assisting the Delimitation Commission in the allotment of electorates for the State Council under the Donoughmore Constitution. I remember Sir Marcus receiving a request from the Commission to put up a memorandum from the Unionist Association and indicating that their main difficulties were how to delimit the Eastern Province into two electorates, and also how to divide the Mannar and Kurunegala districts in the same manner.

I worked out the delimitation of these electoral areas with Sir Marcus and it was the Unionist party memorandum which was responsible for the separate Muslim electorate in the southern half of the Eastern province centred on Kattankudy, a dominantly Muslim area. It was also Sir Marcus's generosity that gave an extra seat to the Northern Province because of its sparsely-populated areas, a generosity that belied the popular belief that he was anti-Tamil as a result of his defeat by Sir Ponambalam Ramanathan in the contest for the educated Ceylonese seat on the Ceylon Legislative Council in 1911.

I would like to pay a tribute to the great brain power and keen intellect of Sir Marcus. Among the many leaders of Ceylon that I have come in contact with I doubt if there was anyone who was as quick to see a point as Sir Marcus,

and his retirement from active politics after his disappointment over his defeat in that first election was undoubtedly a great loss to the country.

Early 1930 saw the great world-wide controversy on whether the Donoughmore Constitution should be accepted or not. **The Independent**, as Sir Marcus' paper, supported the acceptance of the new constitution which was being sponsored by the Government. A group of Legislative Council members led by E. W. Perera opposed it and they had the support of the **Daily News** of Lake House.

D. B. Jayatileke and D. S. Senanayake supported the Donoughmore Constitution and I was detailed to cover all Jayatileke's speeches. Curiously enough, I was told to give them full publicity in the columns of the **Ceylon Independent**. I say "curiously enough" because the Distionary Libel Case by Jayatileke against the **Ceylon Independent** was even then pending.

An amusing interlude in connection with the controversy was the public meeting convened at the Town Hall, Maradana, by a group of the younger set of Hultsdorf lawyers. The meeting was presided over by R. L. Perera and was held to oppose the introduction of the Donoughmore Constitution. I do not know who engineered it, but groups of hooligans were distributed in the hall and they gave none of the speakers, among whom were Aelian Pereira, G. G. Ponnambalam, O. B. de Silva and Valentine Pereira, a chance to be heard. They were booed by partisans of the other side who packed the hall and the meeting broke up in disorder. The next morning the **Independent** came out with the striking headline **"HULTSDORF B. TEAM BAWLED OUT"** and this sporting phrase "B. Team" came into common use in Ceylon journalism.

The Donoughmore Constitution was passed by the Ceylon Legislative Council by the narrow majority of two votes.

Of course, the salary paid me by the **Independent**, subsidised by what Sir Marcus gave me as Secretary of the Unionist Party, was far from enough for my needs. When an

advertisement appeared in the **Times of Ceylon** that a sub-editor with knowledge of sports was wanted for a Straits paper, "good prospects for good man," I immediately jumped at it and this led to my entry into Malayan journalism.

CHAPTER V

PROGRESS IN PENANG.

On 20th June, 1930, I arrived in Penang as the "sub-editor with a knowledge of sports" to start work on the newspaper known as the **Straits Echo.** It had been established in 1911 by a group of Penang Chinese to represent the Chinese point of view, the other newspaper in the Settlement being the **Pinang Gazette,** which had been first published in 1812 and continued to be European-owned. The latter was the oldest newspaper-extant East of the Suez, beating **The Ceylon Observer** by a few years. (The **Pinang Gazette** ceased publication on 1st January, 1968, but the Sunday edition, the **Sunday Gazette,** still continues to be published).

After Lake House and its completely modern set-up, the **Straits Echo** was somewhat primitive. There were four Lino-type machines, the rest of the paper being handset and, though a morning paper, it went to "bed" before midnight thus failing to carry late news. This made it largely a reprint of the **Pinang Gazette,** which was an evening paper. And it was printed on a flat-bed printing machine that turned out two pages at one printing!

What amused me most was that although a meeting of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council was held in Penang, a few days after my arrival, the editorial next morning was headed, "War Clouds Over Europe," with not even an editorial note on the proceedings of the Council. Scissors and paste played a large part in the production of the paper, and my invasion of the "stone room" to assist in the make-up of the pages caused no little stir.

The then editor of the paper was George Bilainkin, who later blossomed into the author of **Hello Penang,** and other books. He was supposed to have been the staff of **The Times** of London, though actually I believe he was only a correspondent. Due to a disagreement with the Chinese Managing Director, he was under notice to leave and he was

unwise enough to tell one of the other Directors, a European who was planning to buy over the paper, that he thought I was capable of running the whole paper myself. This, I believe, was largely because I helped him out with an editorial on Don Bradman's record score of 327 in the Test Match that year soon after my arrival. So Bilainkin was allowed to leave at the end of his notice but another European, Millington, was brought in as Editor.

Millington, however, did not last very long, and on June 3rd. 1931, he packed his bags and quit his job without even condescending to give notice. So I was pitch-forked into taking charge of the paper by the operation of that notorious phrase, "fortuitous circumstances." For the first few months, I must admit, I had to work very hard. I had only one sub-editor, who looked after the "inside pages" during the day. I used to go on duty at about 8.00 p.m. and worked continuously and single-handed till 3.00 a.m. which I made the dead-line for putting the paper to bed.

During this time I had to sub and give headlines to all the latest news, court cases, etc., brought in by the two reporters on the staff, sub and arrange the telegram page, do likewise for the sports page and produce an editorial for the next morning. It was tough going but being young, I did not mind the hard work and after four months of it I was confirmed as Editor and able to engage additional staff to relieve me of some of my duties.

My career as Editor of the **Straits Echo**, from 1931 to the Japanese invasion in December 1941, was really a fairy tale of a success story. I am ashamed to say that several myths grew around me in Penang in those days, due to the many scoops and features that used to crowd the columns of the paper. But quite frankly, most of these were largely a matter of good luck, and the "fortuitous circumstances" referred to before. I will be failing in my duty if I were not to admit my debt to the sound training I received in the hard school of journalism that was instituted in Ceylon by the late D. R. Wijewardene.

Sir Cecil Clementi

It was my good fortune that Sir Cecil Clementi, who had been Colonial Secretary of Ceylon, was Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner of the Malay States at that time. On one of his visits to Penang soon after I became Editor, I was invited to his garden party. On being introduced and learning that I was from Ceylon, he asked me whether I was any connection of P. Saravanamuttu, who was then in the Ceylon Civil Service. I told him he was my brother. Later when I was saying goodbye to him on leaving the party he said, "Give my regards to your brother when next you write to him."

East of the Suez all white people are snobs and when it was whispered that Sara's brother was a friend of the Governor, it immediately gave me caste in local circles. And Sir Cecil Clementi, as a result of this connection, often used to write me confidential notes to secure the editorial support of my paper for his policies.

I must explain that Sir Cecil was a much misunderstood man in Malaya. He was much too much an intellectual for the average "hail fellow, well met" and club back-slapping Malayans of those days. Malaya was indeed a prosperous and free and easy country even in the thirties. And money was easily earned and as easily spent in the club bars, where most of the policy makers used to foregather.

My biggest break came when Sir Cecil Clementi made his famous speech on the decentralisation of the Federated Malay States at the Rulers Conference at Sri Menanti in 1932. Sir Cecil thought that the division of Malaya into the Straits Settlements (Singapore, Malacca and Penang), the four Federated Malay States (Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang) and the five Unfederated Malay States (Perlis Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Johore), which were each separate, was unnecessary, and a somewhat ridiculous fragmentation of a small country like Malaya. I entirely supported this view and once wrote an editorial calling Malaya a "Comic Opera Country" comprised of several "Ruritanias."

Sir Cecil's idea was that there should be one Federation of the whole country.

The Unfederated States were opposed to such a grouping seeing what had happened in the four Federated States. In these States the administration was actually in the hands of the British Residents and the Sultans were mere figure heads. In the Unfederated States, there were only British Advisers and the power was still in the hands of the Sultans and their State Councils. The latter were not prepared to go into any grouping with the Federated States since they felt they would lose a great part of their state autonomy and so, Sir Cecil, in the Sri Menanti speech, suggested decentralising the then Federation, thereby giving more autonomy to the four States, Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang, and then inviting all the nine States to join in a common Federation of the whole of Malaya.

The British interests were strongly opposed to this as they felt that the rights of the planting and mining companies might be jeopardised if more power was given to the Malay Sultans and, as a consequence, the **Straits Times,** commenting on the Sri Menanti speech, headed its editorial "Putting the Clock Back."

Because of my close association with Sir Cecil, I pounced on a liberal translation of a quotation of St. Augustine he used, namely: "In essentials, unity; In non-essentials, liberty; in all things, goodwill," and made it the theme of my editorial in supporting him. I was told that he took a copy of my paper round to the various Government heads in Singapore the next day and told them, "Here's one man in Malaya who has brains."

Anyway, that was the making of me as a Malayan editor and the making of the **Straits Echo,** as Sir Cecil Clementi had a circular sent to all Government offices in Malaya that they should subscribe to the **Straits Echo.**

There was a heated controversy on the subject of decentralisation and Malayan interests in London also took up the matter with the result that Sir Samuel Wilson was sent out as a Royal Commission to inquire and report on the subject. It is interesting to note that Edward Gent, who came as Governor of the Malayan Union in 1946, was Sir Samuel Wilson's Secretary. As a result of the Wilson report,

Penang Cricket Group :—The teams in the Europeans vs the Rest match for the B. P. de Silva Cup in 1936. The author is in the centre, front row, with Dr. H. O. Hopkins on his left and P. N. Knight and H. B. Muriel on his right. Eu Cheow Teik, outstanding Chinese cricketer in Malaya in the 1930's is second from the left in the second row, on the centre of which is wicket-keeper Humphrey Brooke.

the establishment of a Federation was temporarily shelved, but the wisdom of Sir Cecil Clementi was vindicated by the setting up of the Federation of Malaya in 1948 which had already been conceived by him as long ago as 1932.

Another of the big breaks I had in Malaya was due to my cricket. Of course, when I went to Malaya in 1930 I was already past playing in top class cricket in Ceylon but the standard of Malayan cricket in those days (and perhaps even now) was not generally up to that of Ceylon cricket. And many of those who had played with me in English club cricket and at the Varsity were at that time prominent in Malayan cricket. There was Dr. H. O. Hopkins, who was a Blue at Oxford in my time and also played for Worcestershire. He was the captain of the Penang State team. There was also Malcolm Orr, who had played for St. Joseph's College, Colombo, in the years when I was playing for St. Thomas. So my entry into Malayan cricket was fairly easy.

And again good luck also played its part. In the first State match against Perak, I opened batting for Penang and scored 40. In Perak's second innings I was asked to send down a few overs till the wicket dried up for our fast bowler to be brought on. It was a muggy atmosphere which enabled me to exploit my swerve to the fullest effect, and in 40 minutes Perak were all out. I returned the amazing analysis of six wickets for nine runs — actually five wickets for four runs on that particular morning!

After that there was no stopping me. Among my various other feats in the State cricket in Malaya was a hat-trick against Selangor as well as several scores of 50 and over against the various States. The last occasion was in 1937 when I made 77 against Selangor. In the side was L. J. Thompson, who was a member of the High Wyecombe Cricket Club, which I mentioned in connection with my cricketing days in England. The High Wyecombe paper had a headline, "High Wyecombeities in Malayan Cricket," recalling how I used to be a regular participant in their cricket weeks in the old days.

There was one notable incident in connection with the Penang - Selangor matches at that time which merits recalling. It was in the 1932 match. Both sides were at full strength and the scoring was high. Selangor ran up some 300 in the first innings. We replied with about 280 and dismissed Selangor for 150, leaving us 170 to make in 3 hours — roughly a run a minute — in the fourth innings. Bostock-Hill, one of Malaya's best spin bowlers at that time, exploited the crumbling pitch to the fullest and 4 of our opening wickets were down for only 25 at the tea interval, most of our star batsmen, including Malcolm Orr, being out.

It was left to me to make 51 and pull the side out of a tight corner; one had not only to make the runs but make them against the clock! It was a most exciting finish. The scores were level with two Penang wickets in hand, when "last over" was called. Bostock-Hill was the bowler. Before he could deliver his first ball, the clock in the town clock-tower nearby struck six.

Bostock-Hill threw the ball down, refused to bowl, saying time was up, and walked off the field, declaring the match drawn. There was a lot of controversy over this incident, but apart from the question of poor sportsmanship, the rule is quite clear on this point. "If 'last over' is called, it shall be completed....."

Another incidentful match was the Penang- Selangor game of 1937, the last inter-state cricket match in which I played. Selangor, captained by Kit Foster, a nephew of the famous "H.K.," batted first and ran up a mammoth total of 330 runs. I had bowled right through the innings so had myself put low down in the batting order.

When I went in at the fall of the eighth wicket, we had only 128 runs on the board and needed another 53 to save the follow-on. Jock Hunter, then Malaya's fastest bowler, and Bertie Mayo had done all the damage. Young Lawrence Robless was the not out batsman and he and I were both lefthanders. This probably upset the bowlers. We steadily collected the runs and as we got near the 180 mark, I remember chivying Kit with "20 runs more," "Only 10 runs more," until we passed our target and then opened up.

Robless got 122, I scored 79 and we set up a record ninth wicket partnership of 179 which stands to this day in Malayan inter-state cricket. We were seeing the ball "like a football" — to use a popular cricket expression. Once I hooked a ball from Jock outside the off-stump to the square leg boundary and taunted him, "Call yourself a fast bowler ?" But it was all in good fun. That was the spirit in which we played cricket in those days. I was then 42 years old and decided to pack up.

But apart from the State and other serious cricket, my most enjoyable days on the cricket fields in Penang were spent with the Old Xaverians team. As my eldest son, Lakshman, had attended St. Xavier's Institution when he was young boy in Penang, I was entitled to be member of the Old Xaverians Association and what a fine and friendly group of cricketers they were. There were the old State players, the late Frank Reutens and Willy Williams, the latter's son, "Poppy," Tan Kim Lum, the late Lim Seng Kim, and the inimitable Chris Danker and last but no means least, Yeap Hock Hoe, who became a banker with extensive mining and commercial interests and was made a Dato by the Sultan of Pahang in 1966. "Poppy" Williams died at the early age of 50. His father is still going strong and approaching the 80s. I remembered we developed a "Sara - Hock Hoe trap," which became almost as famous as the classic "Foster - Smith trap" in English Test cricket in 1910. I used to bowl a ball that went away with my arm, swinging very late. Even if the ball hit the middle of a straight bat, the late swerve would take it to gully and there was Hock Hoe waiting to snap up the inevitable catch. Many were the wickets we bagged that way.

One Perak tour with the Old Xaverians is still fresh in my mind. We played matches at Parit Buntar, Taiping, Ipoh and Telok Anson. At the last named town, they had a strong side which included State players like A. S. Jansen, C. Foenander and Bahaudin but Willy Williams and I skittled them all out for a paltry total, both returning identical bowling figures — the same number of overs, the same number of maidens and each 5 wickets for 29 runs ! The best part of the tour, however, was not the cricket but the jolly spirit of camaraderie that prevailed. Football, badminton,

tennis and basketball may all produce games of tense concentration and tabloid excitement but there is no game like cricket for fostering the team spirit of friendly co-operation so necessary these days.

Anyway, Sir Cecil Clementi's backing and my ability not merely to play cricket but also to "put them away" in the pavilion after the match and in swapping cricket stories played a big part in establishing me in Malaya.

Of course there were other factors that contributed towards my success as Editor of the **Straits Echo.** My first break came in 1932 when the Japanese invaded China.

I should explain that from my early school days I grew up with a prejudice against the Japanese; my adolescence coincided with the resurgence of Ceylon nationalism, which in itself was part of what may be called the Renaissance of Asia in the first and second decades of this century. It was natural therefore that I should have been inspired with a strong and consuming feeling of Asian self-respect. The Japanese at this time had based their emergence as a world power on the abject manner in which they were able to imitate and adapt themselves to the material and industrial developments of the Europe of the 19th century. To my half-baked youthful enthusiasm the Japanese were cheap imitators of the West and, as such, a disgrace to Eastern or Asian culture. This is not to say that I did not rejoice with all other Asians over the fall of Port Arthur and the Japanese victory in the war with Russia, but the Japanese adoption of the frock coat and top hat for ceremonial occasions, however, was the final straw that broke any regard I had left for them.

It was therefore natural that I should write strong anti-Japanese editorials when Japan invaded China in 1932 after the so-called "Manchuria Incident." I had no idea of the repercussions this would have on the Chinese section of the readers of my paper, but I suddenly found the demand for the **Straits Echo** going up by leaps and bounds, particularly in Ipoh where the circulation doubled in one day. I naturally took advantage of this tide of popularity and very soon the circulation of the paper rose from the humble 700 odd it was when I took charge to over 2,000.

It may not be out of place to mention here that when the **Straits Echo** was founded in 1911, it was established by Lim Seng Hooi, Quah Beng Kee and others as the first newspaper in English to represent the views of the Chinese in Malaya and to fight for their cause. It is also well-known that it was the Malayan Chinese who gave the most support, both morally and financially, to the revolutionary movement of Sun Yet Sen, who spent some years in Malaya before he launched his campaign in China for the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty and the establishment of the Republic of China. My championship of the Chinese cause in the Sino-Japanese War was therefore another of those fortuitous strokes of luck with which my career in Malaya has been studded. Anyway the tide of popularity that swelled the circulation of the **Straits Echo** continued unabated throughout the 1930's and following the advice of the poet Shakespeare I took it at its flood to its climax in the fortunate position of our buying the **Pinang Gazette** and the **Times of Malaya** in 1939 and establishing the North Malayan Newspapers.

Another factor that contributed to my success as Editor of the **Straits Echo** was that I made it very much a "parish pump" paper. In those days there was little interest taken by the local people in what might be called world politics nor was there any marked cultural urge. I remember George Bilainkin, who was Editor at the time of my joining the staff in 1930, used to produce a weekly "Book Page" with reviews of the latest publications and I continued this weekly feature under the tutelage of Richard Sydney, a former Editor. But I soon found that except for a small handful of the European population the vast majority of my readers, particularly the Asians, were not greately interested in this feature. Malaya in those days was a cultural desert and I remember I described it at the Colombo Rotary Club during one of my early holidays in Ceylon as a land of "high living and low thinking." A daily "Readers Page" filled with letters on local topics from the readers proved much more popular and helped in a large measure to boost the circulation.

Similarly what was known as the "Telegram Page," in which all the overseas new agencies' telegrams carrying world news were printed, received scant perusal. So I concentrated on Page 3, which carried the local news, and

Page 10, which reported all the sports events. Any local social function, however insignificant, received full coverage and weddings and funerals were given due prominence with full lists of attendance. From modern standards this would appear a waste of valuable space but in those days this policy paid dividends. I made a point of printing verbatim reports of speeches made by local leaders and thereby collected oceans of goodwill for the paper.

Sports news is always interesting news in any part of the world and my reports of potty little football matches and hockey games, to say nothing of the activities of the mush-room badminton parties that were springing up in every nook and corner, were avidly read not only by the participants in those events but also by their many fans. Cricket of course was my pet hobby and so the reports of cricket matches were as full and dramatic as possible, while I also introduced a feature of taking a shorthand reporter and dictating minute to minute progress of the big rugger matches. My weekly "Sports Talk" over the Penang Radio also contributed to the popularity of the paper.

Not the least of the new features I introduced in the **Straits Echo** were my racing notes written under my old pen name of "Riding Boy." I have already referred to the popularity of this feature in the **Ceylon Observer** and it similarly caught on in Penang. As is well-known, a flutter on the races in Malaya is much more universal than in probably any other country, with the possible exception of Australia. My "long shot," or selection that was likely to pay a good dividend, immediately caught on, especially as when on that first day I started tipping after my arrival in Penang I tipped a "long shot" that paid a three figure dividend.

The paper also organised many sporting events in Penang. One was the first "Cycling Carnival." In this I was helped by Messrs. K. Lee San & Co., then the local agents of Dunlop tyres and Hopper bicycles, who got the support of all the cycle dealers. My association with Khoo Soo Jin, Managing Director of K. Lee San, which started with this and continued throughout my stay in Penang, culminated in

my joining him in 1949 in the campaign for establishing the Buddhist festival of Wesak as a public holiday.

Another popular event was a swimming race. The original intention was to have a "Cross Channel" race from George Town to Butterworth, a distance of about two miles, but I was advised by the local harbour pilots that the tides and currents would make the event hazardous. So we voted for a swim along the coast from opposite the old Shanghai Hotel to the then most popular seaside resort, the Springtide Hotel at Tanjong Bungah. Even then precautions had to be taken for a sampan or rowing boat to follow each swimmer. It was a most popular event and literally thousands swarmed the coast line to watch the progress of the race, which without a doubt enhanced the popularity of the **Straits Echo.**

Of course more than all this was the background of a sound editorial policy. My training as a Fabian at Oxford nurtured my socialistic ideals and it was but natural that my editorial policy should have been mainly that of one "for the people."

By the time I left Ceylon, it was already emerging from colonial tutelage while Malaya even then was very much under its sway. I should like to make clear in this connection that I am not a rabid anti-colonialist. Colonialism was a phase in world development and certainly no one can deny the advantages that the British rule brought to Asian territories, the greatest of them being the establishment of law and order (Pax Britannica). But with my background in Ceylon the privileges enjoyed by the white men in Malaya in the 1930's were amazing and abhorent, particularly the system of exclusive clubs. In addition the police force from the rank of Inspector upwards was staffed entirely by Britishers, whereas in Ceylon the Deputy Inspector General of Police was already a Ceylonese. I could multiply such instances a hundred fold but to cite just one instance, the meeting of the editors of the Malayan newspapers in 1934 could not be held in the Singapore Club because I, one of them, was a coloured person!

Anyway my championing of the cause of the local people, even though it led to the charge by the ruling class

that I was a Communist, brought dividends in the form of mounting circulation.

I have referred earlier to the boost that the circulation of the **Straits Echo** in Ipoh received as a result of my backing for the Chinese in the Sino-Japanese War. This gave me the idea of increasing the orbit of the paper and making it cover Ipoh and the States of Perak and Kedah as well as Penang. At that time Ipoh was served by the **Times of Malaya**, owned and edited by Jack Jennings, who originally was on the staff of the **Straits Times** of Singapore and had launched on this venture with the encouragement of the large tin mining population of the Kinta Valley. The **Times of Malaya**, like all the major newspapers in Malaya at that time, was an evening or afternoon paper. The **Straits Echo** was published as a morning paper. So I got my paper out early enough to be put on the morning mail train reaching Ipoh at 1 p.m. so that it could be distributed earlier than the **Times of Malaya**, which came out at about 3 or 4 p.m. Instead of going to press at midnight as previously, I altered the working hours so as to put the paper to bed at 3 or 4 a.m. In this manner I was able to get in a good bit of the late news from the afternoon papers in London. So the **Straits Echo** sold at 2 p.m. in Ipoh contained most if not all the news carried by the **Times of Malaya** published at 3 p.m. In addition I established an office and staff at Ipoh and had the day's news of that town telephoned late in the evening so that the **Echo** carried a full page of Perak news. The final improvement in this service to the Perak readers was when I printed an early Perak edition at about 11 p.m., sent it across to Butterworth by the last ferry and thence by car to Ipoh so that it was on the streets by 7 a.m.

All this was healthy competition and it must be said to the credit of Jack Jennings that he took it in good spirit and we remained the best of friends to the end.

A similar service was established for Kedah as well and the **Straits Echo** was distributed in the Kedah capital of Alor Star also at 7 a.m. Incidentally the coverage of news had to be increased to meet these changes and I remember F. H. Grummit, the proprietor of the **Straits Echo**, complaining that I had increased the correspondents' bill ten fold, from

$400 to $4,000 monthly. The expenditure was, however, more than amply repaid. As a result of this policy, by 1936 or 37 the **Straits Echo** had become THE NEWSPAPER of North Malaya.

At this time there was a newspaper war in Singapore between the **Straits Times** and the **Malaya Tribune.** The Managing Director of the latter, Charles Glover, was a most enterprising person and he indulged in what might be called journalistic acrobatics. In order to claim a Malaya-wide circulation for his paper and thereby woo the advertisers to give more support to his publication, he conceived the idea of establishing small offices at Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Penang, printing the inside pages with local news at each centre, sending the outside pages printed in Singapore to be incorporated as one publication. The result was most extraordinary as the news in the outside pages in this make-shift newspaper was about two days old, but somehow Glover managed to hoodwink the advertisers.

The **Straits Times** was worried about this and their directors decided to buy the **Times of Malaya** in Ipoh and the **Pinang Gazette** in Penang and quote an inclusive rate for advertisement in the three papers, thereby promising an all Malayan coverage to the advertisers. By this time the success of the **Straits Echo** had adversely affected the **Pinang Gazette** and the **Times of Malaya,** and the **Straits Times** was able to get them for the proverbial song. The competition therefore became much keener because the two local rivals had the backing of the powerful **Straits Times.** My paper was, however, solidly established by that time and in 1939, the **Straits Times** had to sell out as their brief venture into North Malaya had proved financially disastrous.

It may not be out of place if I mention two incidents in this local newspaper war. In those days such things as "audited sales" figures were unknown in Malaya and most advertising canvassers used to boost their figures to hypothetical numbers. Knowing that the **Straits Echo** had a larger circulation than the **Pinang Gazette** or the **Times of Malaya** at that time, I conceived the idea of publishing the certified circulation of the **Straits Echo** and claiming that "in the absence of other certified figures we have reason to believe

that our circulation is double that of any other English newspapers published in North Malaya." And our net sale figures at that time was only some 3,547! Anyway A. C. Simmons, then the Manager of the **Times of Malaya,** fell for the trap. He published a contradiction in his paper the next morning, claiming that the circulation of the **Times of Malaya** was 2,025. This was exactly what I wanted and it was easy for me after that to convince the advertisers that the **Straits Echo** was the better advertising medium.

The other incident also in connection with the **Straits Echo - Straits Times** "newspaper war," was shortly after this. The **Times of Malaya** was being published in Ipoh at the time it was taken over by the **Straits Times** and Simmons, as Manager, conceived the plan of transferring the printing to Penang. In addition to bearding the **Straits Echo** in its home town, it would also be an economy measure as both the **Pinang Gazette** and **Times of Malaya** could then be housed under one roof. So on Saturday, September 15th, 1937, an announcement appeared in the **Times of Malaya** that as from October 1st, the paper would be published in Penang as a morning paper and would be priced at five cents. The standard price for a newspaper in Malaya at the time was ten cents. So this was meant to be a triple blow to the **Straits Echo,** publishing in the same town at the same time at half the price. Simmons probably thought we could not afford to come down to five cents as even at the circulation figures at that time, it would mean a loss of $5,000 a month — much more than our monthly profit.

I took the wind out of his sails completely by coming out on Monday 17th at five cents, thus getting a two weeks start so that when the **Times of Malaya** came out in Penang on October 1st, it did not sell one extra copy for all the expense and trouble of transferring to Penang. Of course, the tactical error Simmons made was giving me two weeks notice of the intended change.

Bill Simmons as Managing Director of the **Straits Times** after the war has been a great success and built that paper up to its outstanding position as the "National Newspaper of

Malaya," but I am sure he does not mind my retailing these two minor incidents. He can now afford to laugh about them as we both do when we meet nowadays.

Once it was proved that the **Straits Echo** circulation, even though it was less then 4,000, was much more than those of the **Pinang Gazette** and the **Times of Malaya,** these latter newspapers did not afford any real competition to the **Straits Echo** so much so that at the end of one year the **Straits Times** decided to sell these two papers as being unprofitable undertakings. The staff were naturally concerned about their jobs and made efforts to interest some Chinese leaders to put up the capital to buy these papers. Among the latter was Lim Cheng Ean, an advocate and solicitor who, though no longer a member of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, still took an active interest in public affairs. But even he did not get any great support from the majority of the Chinese in North Malaya. I was told that when he approached the late Leong Sin Nam, the Ipoh leader, telling him that it was important that the Chinese should own a newspaper to fight their cause, Leong Sin Nam pointed out that there was already the **Straits Echo.** Lim Cheng Ean is said to have retorted that the **Straits Echo** at that time was owned by an Englishman, F. H. Grumitt, and edited by a Ceylonese, myself. "As long as we have Sara, our Chinese interests are well looked after," Leong Sin Nam is said to have replied.

I pointed out to Grumitt that it would be a good investment for the **Straits Echo** to buy the **Pinang Gazette** and the **Times of Malaya** and have a monopoly in North Malaya and I finally persuaded him to this point of view. He had only to phone up the Secretaries of the **Pinang Gazette Press,** Messrs. Evatt and Company, to have Seabridge of the **Straits Times** immediately on his doorstep. After some negotiations we bought over the two newspapers as a going concern for as little as $35,000 but not before I had put up a detailed blue-print for incorporating the **Times of Malaya** with **Straits Echo** and a new set-up for the **Pinang Gazette** to show a working profit.

Then followed two months of hard work — in fact probably the only time in my life that I really worked hard, as even F. H. Grumitt had to admit. The incorporation of

the **Times of Malaya** into the **Straits Echo** was no difficult task. It only meant changing the name of our Perak edition to **The Times of Malaya & Straits Echo** and heading the Penang edition **The Straits Echo & Times of Malaya.** The difficult job, however, was transferring the machinery — the Lino-types and the printing machines — from their habitat in Bishop Street to the Straits Echo building in Penang Road and at the same time continue uninterrupted publication. It was a terrific undertaking in which I had the loyal and efficient co-operation of my Manager, the late Tan Ghee Poh. It is no exaggeration to state that for about one month of this critical period I worked on an average of 22 hours a day, going to bed at 3 a.m. and returning to work at 5 a.m. The task was finally completed successfully and, wonder of wonders, the **Pinang Gazette** in its first month of operation under this new set-up showed a profit of over $1,000.

A great deal of the credit for this must go to my staff foremost among whom was Khor Cheang Kee, whom I made Editor of the **Pinang Gazette.** Cheang Kee is one who might with true justification be called a born journalist. He was unfortunate, or rather fortunate as it turned out, to come second in the Queen's Scholarship examination which he took from St. Xavier's and the school's Director, Reverend Brother Paul, sent him with a note to me telling me that it was the boy's ambition to become a journalist. I took him on as an apprentice sub-editor at the munificient remuneration of $50 a month with the promise that if he made good I would increase it to $75 in three months and $100 in six months Of course he was a success and in due course I put him up to the promised $75 but when the time came for the second increase, F. H. Grummit would not agree to it and sanctioned only a $10 increase. I tried to explain my difficult position to Cheang Kee but he was disgusted and with the hot-headedness of youth resigned. He went to work as an assistant in a rubber trading firm but came back in a couple of months to say that his heart was in journalism and that he wanted to return to the paper. I quitely slipped him in on the pay list at the promised $100 and all was well. The war came soon after that and in the reorganisation after the war and my decision to resign from the Echo after the death of F. H. Grummit, Cheang Kee was induced to accept the offer from the **Straits Times** to be their Penang Manager and today he is one of the outstanding journalists in Malaysia.

There were two others, whom I kept on from the **Pinang Gazette** who turned out outstanding successes, Lee Siew Yee and K. K. Lam.

Lee Siew Yee had had a brilliant career at the Penang Free School but he was buried in the **Pinang Gazette** doing the outside pages. He, however, earned the soubriquet of "the man with the umbrella" as he always carried his brolly in wet or fine weather. In the **Straits Echo** I soon put him in charge of the local news page and his news sense as well as his flair for giving arresting headlines soon made his talent evident. When after the liberation, I made use of the Domei News Agency's receiving station in Penang to pick up the Reuter news, I put him in charge. From there he took an offer from the **Straits Times** and today he is the Editor-in-Chief.

K. K. Lam used to be in charge of the **Sunday Gazette**, which under the old regime was languishing. With a little encouragement which I was able to give him as a result of my experience with the **Sunday Observer** in Ceylon, he soon showed his true colours as a first-class display man and the **Sunday Gazette** took on a new lease of life. Lam, too, is now on the staff of the **Straits Times.**

On the managerial side, too, I had two outstanding helpers in Tan Ghee Poh, the General Manager, and Yeoh Eng Seng, the Circulation Manager. Ghee Poh was a real tower of strength. His knowledge of the working of the Linotype machines and the printing machine was extraordinary, particularly because he had no technical background and it was all picked up from practical working. I really don't know what I would have done but for his loyal support and unflagging hard work during the period of the take-over of the **Pinang Gazette** and **Times of Malaya.**

Eng Seng was a great character who dabbled in all sorts of business. When I first arrived in Penang he was my mentor for my shopping — in fact he did all the buying for me. But his contacts and shrewd placings were largely responsible for the manner in which he controlled the sales boys and increased the distribution of the paper.

Both Ghee Poh and Eng Seng have gone over to the other side but their children are all doing well and can be proud of the memory of their fathers.

CHAPTER VI

PENANG PERSONALITIES

There were several outstanding personalities among the Chinese as well as other communities in Penang during my time. It is not possible to go through the list but when I arrived the Chinese member of the Legislative Council for Penang was Lim Cheng Ean, a graduate of Clare College, Cambridge and a barrister of Gray's Inn, London. He was one who always fought for the rights of the poor people and staged a memorable walk-out of the Legislative Council when Sir Cecil Clementi introduced a $2 increase in school fees from the fourth standard upwards. Latterly, Lim Cheng Ean did not hit it off with the vested Chinese interests in Penang and today he lives a retired life. However, he occasionally makes valuable contributions to the **Straits Echo** and **Sunday Gazette**, mainly in verse.

Perhaps the most outstanding Chinese in Penang in those days was Towkay Yeap Chor Ee, who came to Penang as a penniless orphan at the age of 18. He was in his fifties when I arrived in Penang, and he was already the richest man in the settlement. His wealth was acquired by hard work, thrift and a fair share of good luck.

He first started with a small shop in Prangin Road, which was stocked with goods on consignment supplied through the good office of the compradore of one of the leading British importing houses of Penang. Young Yeap Chor Ee kept the accounts scrupulously and settled with his patron without fail at the end of each month. In this manner, he built up a small capital. At that time Caledonia Estate in Province Wellesley was a sugar-cane plantation and produced crude sugar. Yeap Chor Ee purchased stocks of this crude sugar and sent them to the refineries of the famous Java Sugar King, Oei Tjiong Ham, at Sourabaya, and sold the refined sugar in Penang at a substantial profit.

The story is told that Oei, sensing that the young man in Penang was likely to become a rival to him, did not

submit the bills for the refining for an extended period. But Yeap Chor Ee, with that strict honesty which was an integral part of his make-up, deposited the cost of refining from the profits of his sales in the bank instead of, as in the accepted manner, reinvesting it to make more profit and thereby run the risk of losing it. Thus, the Sugar King suddenly presented a bill for some $2 million, expecting to find the young Penang businessman unable to pay and thereby take over his business. To his surprise, the full bill was promptly settled. Oei Tjiong Ham at once came to Penang to call on this remarkable young businessman and a friendship was established which culminated in two of his daughters marrying two of Yeap Chor Ee's sons. Another justification of the old adage "Honesty is the best policy"!

Then came the rubber boom of the 1910's in which Yeap Chor Ee speculated with outstanding success and was soon acknowledged as one of the leading businessmen in Penang. He acquired considerable property following the old Chinese belief that land was the safest investment and was justified when after his death some of his lands fetched over a thousand times what he had paid for them.

He showed his faith in the future of Penang by putting up the magnificent Ban Hin Lee Bank building during the days of the "Great Slump" in the early 1930's. Another notable action of his in those days was when the tin price hit the bottom. He continued to buy on the falling market and at one time held as much as 2,000 tons of tin in his godown. When the price of tin began to rise after hitting the bottom at £170, he sold in small parcels at a time. It is said that he cleared nearly $2 million on this transaction alone.

Till the time of his death Towkay Yeap Chor Ee could not speak English and I remember when, in recognition for his donation of $10,000 to the Silver Jubilee Fund, I tried to secure for him naturalisation papers as a British subject, I failed owing to his lack of knowledge of English. By that time he had established his own bank and was one of the largest property owners in Penang.

Towkay Yeap Chor Ee presenting his cheque for $100,000 to Malcolm MacDonald for the Malayan (now Singapore) University.

My first contact with him was in 1932, soon after the Japanese invaded China. Some of his jealous business rivals started a story that he was a Taiwanese (native of Taiwan or Formosa, which was then under Japanese rule) and there was a movement to boycott his business. As editor of the local paper I was invited to call on him and when I went to his bank he threw his Chinese passport at me. It showed that he was born in Fukien Province. Taiwan was part of Fukien Province before the Japanese took it over and this was made the basis for the false report.

I asked Towkay Yeap to give me his passport, made a block of the page giving his place of birth and printed the picture in the **Straits Echo** the next day without any further comment. Many Chinese thought that, in the accepted Chinese custom, I had received a handsome present for doing this but I did it merely as a piece of truthful reporting. I think it was this that won me his confidence and he used to consult me often after that whenever he was in doubt over a public matter.

Later I was able to persuade him to give a donation of $100,000, which he later increased to $250,000, for the Chinese section of the library of the University of Malaya in Singapore, now renamed the Singapore University, a proposal that was attractive to him as a non-English speaking Chinese.

The story behind this donation bears repeating. The Resident Commissioner of Penang, i.e. the Head of Administration, was Arthur Aston, an Oxford contemporary of mine and a typical old colonial type. When the appeal for donations to the proposed University in Singapore came out in 1948. Aston sent for Towkay Yeap and blandly suggested he should give a donation of a million dollars! (Incidentally, one of his sons, Dato Yeap Hock Hoe, later donated a million dollars to the Penang University College.) When Towkay Yeap made a counter offer of $10,000, Aston was very rude to him and told him he was not going to carry all his millions with him to his grave; all he would get was a stone over his head. Now to speak of his death to an old Chinese (Yeap Chor Ee was over 70 at the time) is considered very bad luck.

The old man sent for me and told me the story. I was very angry and offered to go and scold Aston. His reaction was typical of the old Malayan Chinese. He said, "Don't do that. He may get annoyed, but you can tell him gest donation for the University so far was $50,000 by Lee that I was very hurt." Then he went on to say that the big-Kong Chian, a Singapore millionaire, and he was willing to cap it with a donation of $75,000. On the spur of the moment I replied, "Towkay, 10,000, 50,000 and 75,000 are all five figures. Why not be the first to give a six-figure donation ?" The old man twigged it at once and readily consented. Remembering his lack of knowledge of English, I suggested that he should specify his donation be utilised for books for the Chinese section of the University Library and a plaque placed to perpetuate his name. This pleased him immensely. So I went over Aston's head and made the offer direct to Malcolm MacDonald, who was Chairman of the Donations Committee. The latter came down to Penang to accept the cheque personally from Towkay Yeap. And I made Aston sanction the grant of a private burial ground for Towkay Yeap and his family, which could be done only for outstanding public service. When he died in 1952, he was buried on this plot on a hill in his Green Lane Estate from where he could look down on the bank he established.

The leader of the Penang Chinese in those days right up to the outbreak of the war was Khoo Sian Ewe, who was the Chairman of the Chinese Town Hall. He was at that time Penang's biggest landlord, chairman of countless committees and trustee of numerous concerns, member of the Municipal Commission and, later, of the Legislative Council, as well as being the trusted consultant of the Government on all matters Chinese. A more worth and reliable person it would be difficult to find in any part of the world.

His chief lieutenants were Lim Keong Lay and Lim Eow Thoon. The former had earned the soubriquet of "Marco Polo" of Penang, having been the first Penang Chinese to do a round-the-world trip, and he was a most intelligent, widely read and well-informed individual. He also had a puckish sense of humour as I learnt to my cost. Soon after I became Editor, he sent in a letter signed "Pisang Berangut," the Malay euphemism for the male organ, which I with my very

limited knowledge of Malay published. The next day he sent in a reply singed "Apong Manis," similarly the Malay slang for the female organ. Again I fell for the trap. Keong Lay promptly sent a complaint to the Protector of Chinese that the **Straits Echo** was publishing indecent matter!

Eow Thoon was a born organiser of pageants and processions. I still remember the Double Tenth pageant that he organised in 1930, the year of my arrival. It was a three-mile affair and what a show it was! To me, a new arrival, it was absolutely breath-taking. And I also remember that in the Chinese procession on the occasion of the Coronation of King George VI, he produced a faultless replica of the State Coach and 16 white horses that British sovereigns use for the drive from Buckingham Palace to Westminister Abbey and back for that historic ceremony.

On the morning after my arrival in Penang, I was surprised to see a complete and accurate account of my career from my school days right up to my newspaper work in Ceylon. That was my introduction to the one and only "L.C.L.," who was a prolific contributor to the paper. He had an amazing fund of information so much so that it was not necessary for the **Echo** to have a "cemetery" file. As soon as any prominent person died, "L.C.L." would produce the obituary notice, complete, accurate and up-to-date. And he was an absolute authority on Ceylon, sometimes even correcting me. He could quote from the Ceylon Hansard as far back as the 90's and yet he had never set foot on Ceylon soil! What a devotion, and what sustained enthusiasm. I was never able to fathom the sources of his knowledge.

The initials "L.C.L." stood for Lim Cheng Law, a brother of Lim Cheng Ean. Another brother was Lim Cheng Teik, a millionaire in his own right and the owner of a rice mill and oil mill. Cheng Teik has been round the world several times but now leads a quiet life. At one time he was a Municipal Commissioner but he withdrew from public life and lives in retirement, leaving the management of his business to his eldest son.

Another brother was Lim Cheng Kung, who was the Managing Director of the Criterion Press and the **Straits Echo**

at the time I arrived in Penang. He was a B.Sc. (Econ.) of London. It was he with F. H. Grummit who separated the Straits Echo Press and Criterion Press. Later as Secretary of the Penang Buddhist Association, he ran a monthly lottery from the proceeds of which that body was able to build many houses on their land and thus become stable and well-endowed. Lim Cheng Kung was married to a daughter of the first Chinese Consul in Penang, Tye Kee Chuan, and his eldest daughter is married to C. C. Tan, who was a political leader of Singapore in the early days after the war.

The rise in the fortunes of the Lim family is as romantic as that of the Yeap family. Their progenitor was adopted by a Phuah and came to Penang as Phuah Hin Leong. In his early days, he plied a sampan for his living. One day a passenger, whom he ferried to a ship in the roads, did not come back to claim a trunk which had been left in the sampan while he went up to the ship to arrange his passage. So Phuah Hin Leong took the trunk home as his fare. When he opened the trunk, he found it full of currency notes. He established a rice mill on the site of the present Great World Amusement Park and never looked back. His sons reverted to the original Lim family name and their varied successes have been related earlier.

By a coincidence since writing the above, Lim Cheng Ean had his father's story published in verse by the **Straits Echo,** the revelant stanzas of which are reproduced herewith:

As Phuah Hing Leong my dad came out here,
To find if he could find more cheer,
A sampan he did row for hire
And never did he seem to tire.

An Englishman gave him a tip
Of something like an English pound,
For waiting to return a case
The Englishmen left in his haste.

The fighting caused by Sin Ghee Hin
Drove folks to sea to dodge the din :
Dad rowed to their boats and sold to them
Good drinking water without phelgm.

At length he had some capital
To buy and sell in shop or stall.

A. M. Goodman, Resident Councillor, Penang, 1934 — 1949.

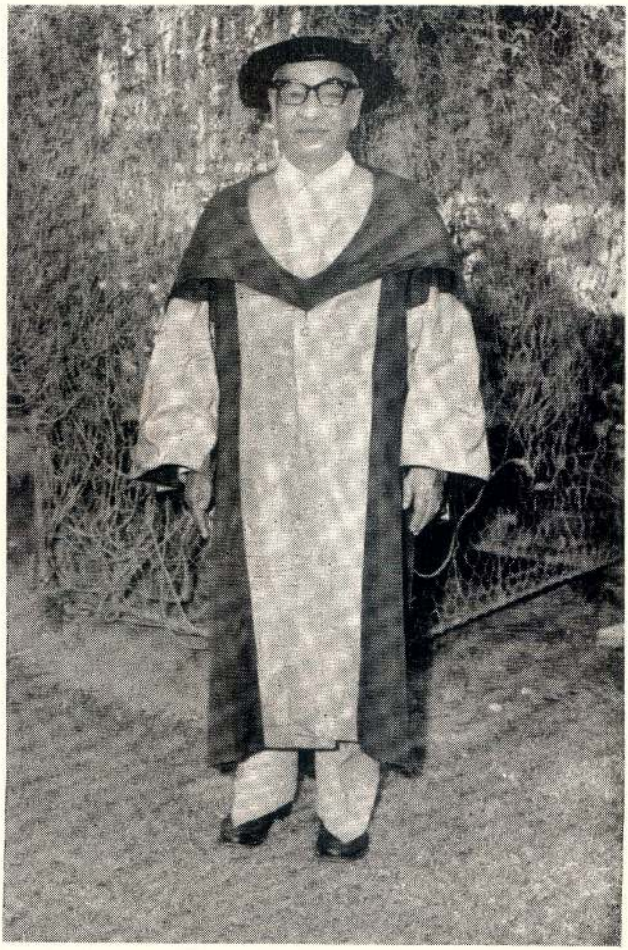
Khoo Sian Ewe

A sundry goods shop he did keep
Near Tanjong Tokong's fishing creek.

Two women pounding to husk rice
Dad saw with eyes full of surprise,
This prompted him to start a mill
To husk the paddy better still.

Heah Joo Seang was already a successful rubber merchant when I arrived in Penang and he made his mark being the pioneer in launching the Wembley Amusement Park and the Dance Hall with taxi-dancers for the first time in Malaya. He then entered politics as a Municipal Councillor. His forthright opinions and fearless airing of them brought him into disfavour with the powers that were, but he was irrepressible with the obstinacy of conviction. So the European banks called in his overdrafts and made his rubber business bankrupt. But with the Chinese phoenix-like quality he came up again, though he still remained a somewhat controversial public figure. In spite of the Chinese boycott of the Japanese after the latter invaded the mainland of China, Heah Joo Seang continued as the local agent of a Japanese shipping line, so when the Japanese occupied Penang he was made the Chairman of the Chinese Peace Preservation Committee. Here again his actions did not meet with the universal approval of the Penang Chinese and this disfavour culminated when he claimed all the rubber the Japanese left behind as his own and thereby became a millionaire overnight. The position was that he formed a "Kumiai," or company of Chinese merchants, to collect rubber and sell it to the Japanese. This was stored by the latter and when war ended the Japanese handed the rubber back to Heah Joo Seang, who appropriated it all for himself. The other partners felt he should have shared it with them. He was, however, a generous patron of sport and many charities, while he also built the Assembly Hall of his old school, St. Xavier's Institution, when it was rebuilt after the war.

And there were scores of others like old Lim Seng Hooi, the founder of the **Echo**; Khoo Soo Jin and his twin brother, Khoo Soo Ghee, of K. Lee San, who inveigled me into organising the first cycling carnival; Koh Sin Hock, a descendant of the Captain China of Francis Light's time, whose unobtrusive welfare work has not received the full recognition it merited; the Saw brothers, Choo Teng and Seng Kew, who



Sir Hussein Abdcolcader in his Capard Gown as L.L.D. of the University of Malaya.

never sought much publicity; Lee Toon Poon, who carried on the family racing traditions, etc. The stars of Dr. Ong Chong Keng and Dr. Lee Tiang Keng were just rising on the political horizon when the Japanese invaded Malaya, and of course there was my friend, Ong Huck Lim, who was making himself felt in the legal and racing spheres. It must be recorded that on the first night I had to report for duty at the Echo I did so after a dinner to Jimmy Huck Lim at the Penang Road Mess on the eve of his departure to Colombo to meet his bride and get married there. It was an introduction to the "lads of the village" and, I think, I hold a record for having started my first spell of duty by being carried to my sub-editorial chair.

It is not possible to do justice to all the bright lights of the Penang Chinese society in a necessarily brief survey like this so I must pass on to some of the others.

The official Indian leader of the time was H. H. Abdoolcader (later Sir Husein), the political brother-in-arms of Khoo Sian Ewe. He was the Indian member of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council for the record period of four terms and one year. There were those who criticised him for his all-out support for the Government, and, as political consciousness began to dawn in Malaya, many dubbed him a British stooge. But by his policy he was able to get many things for his community which another, who made criticism of the Government his policy, might not have been able to obtain. For instance Abdoolcader, though himself a Muslim, got the Deepavali holiday for the Hindus in 1929 and later, the Hindu New Year holiday. And there are many such similar achievements to his credit. I personally know that his intervention secured appointments for a Ceylonese and an Indian (both Penang boys) to the Straits Settlements Legal Service, both of whom rose to the top and ultimately became Judges of the Supreme Court of Singapore. The recognition for his services came when he was knighted in January 1948 — a honour well deserved for his support of the British. In 1963 he was conferred the Honorary Degree of L.L.D. by the University of Malaya for being the oldest practicising Lawyer in the country.

The leader of the opposition camp among the Indians was N. Raghavan, also a lawyer and son-in-law of Nambiar,

who was the Indian member of the Legislative Council for many years in the twenties till his death. Nambiar's son, Dr. N. K. Menon, was also well known in Penang, but on Raghavan's shoulders fell Nambiar's mantle. Raghavan and his group were staunch Indian Congress supporters and, though they had had the majority support of the local Indian community, they were viewed with askance by the colonial Government. Those were days when to whisper even of Independence was to be dubbed disloyal and a trouble maker. I remember during the big labour strike of estate labour in the 30's, Raghavan espoused the cause of the labourers and things became so hot that he went away on a holiday to India. It was said that an editorial in the **Straits Echo** led to his precipitate departure but all I said was that the labourers were asking too much when they demanded that the Congress flag, as it was known then, should be flown at the entrance of an estate.

During the Japanese occupation Raghavan was the All-Malayan Chairman of the Indian Independence League and later Finance Minister in Subhas Chandra Bose's Azad Hind Government. His reward came when he was posted to the diplomatic service of Independent India by Pandit Nehru.

Of the Eurasians, who were by no means a neglible sector of the Penang community, the acknowledged leader was Dr. J. Emile Smith who, soon after my arrival, was appointed to act for Dr. Noel Clarke on the Straits Settlements Legislative Council — a great honour in those days. But Emile Smith was a simple, good man, whose fund of smoke room stories made him a very congenial companion. His tragic end during the Japanese occupation (he was executed) is still recalled with great sorrow as a personal loss by his many friends and admirers.

The story of Emile Smith's arrest and execution is an outstanding example of the risks and horrors of the early days of the Japanese Occupation. A small group of Eurasians used to meet daily at Dr. Smith's residence in Logan Road, more for company and mutual comforting than anything else. In this group was one of Dr. Smith's brother-in-law, Bertie de Cruz. Bertie was on the staff of the Eastern Smelting Works in Penang and used to report for duty in those early days. One day he somewhat foolishly admonished his Sikh watchman with the words, "You wait till the British come

D. J. Emile Smith

Sir Kamil Ariff

back." The latter promptly reported to the Japanese that an Eurasian group was meeting daily at the Smith residence, plotting to assist the British to return. Hiroyasu, who was the Japanese Civil Military Administrator at the time, had the house surrounded and the group was arrested. Dr. E. W. de Cruz, a relation of Dr. Smith, who managed to jump out of a window and escape, retailed this story to me.

Emile Smith and his brother-in-law were locked up at the Magazine Police Station, which was demolished after the war. It was said the people in the vicinity used nightly to hear the screams of the prisoners as they were beaten up.

The later part of the story was told to me by my Sikh car cleaner after my release from prison. It seems that Hiroyasu one night turned up drunk, loaded the prisoners and a firing squad into a lorry and drove them off to the Chinese Cemetery at Mount Erskine. Here the prisoners were made to dig a trench. Then Hiroyasu started to cut off their heads one by one and had the bodies dumped into the trench. Emile Smith was one of those thus decapitated. After some time Hiroyasu's arms tired, so he told the Sikh firing squard to line up the rest and shoot them down and left. Among the prisoners was a Sikh, who tied his turban on his head before he lined up. His compatriots aimed at his turban, and he fell down, pretending to be dead. They then put his body on top and lightly covered it when the trench was filled up. After the party had left, this Sikh got up, found his way to Tanjong Tokong village, shaved off his beard and got across the channel. From there he went on to Batu Gajah and joined the I.N.A., which had formed a camp there. As far as I could make out at the time this was an authentic story.

Dr. E. W. de Cruz and other Penang Eurasians made representations to have Hiroyasu brought back to Penang to stand trial for his crime but it was learnt that he had been killed in the Sumatra campaign.

Of course there were many other Eurasian families — the Aerias, the De Cruzes, the Foleys, the Stewarts, the Phippses, the Roblesses, the Reutenses etc. — who held and still hold important positions in Penang and continue to make

a valuable contribution to the life of the Settlement, or State as it is now called.

Among the Malays, the first I came in contact with was Dr. (later Sir) Kamil Ariff, who became President of the Rotary Club in, I think, 1932. Ariff served his community well in those years and through the Japanese occupation and after the war, when he was a Federal Councillor. His knighthood again was a well deserved recognition and his death was an irreparable loss to his community.

He was the undisputed Borea King of Penang. The Borea is a typically Malay institution which was practised most enthusiastically in Penang. Various parties were formed on a territorial basis and dressed in fancy costumes they went round the town during the month of Muharam (the first month of the Muslim year), entertaining their listeners to various improvised Malay ditties. The Tukan Karang, or song leader, sang the verse and the party joined in the chorus, somewhat after the style of the calypso of the West Indies. At the end of the season the various parties met at a central venue and a competition was held and prizes given to the best parties — both for costumes and singing. Ariff used to organise these parties annually and they were an excellent example of the simple folk culture of the Malays. With his demise this annual festival has virtually died out in Penang.

His friend and boon companion — later relation — was C. M. Hashim — "Che Din" to everyone. Che Din took over the European auctioneering firm of Allan Denny's & Co. and ran it as a flourishing business, becoming the foremost firm of valuers and appraisers in the State. But it is not as a businessman that I remember him best. He was one of the most sociable of people and his hospitality was abounding. Many were the parties that were held at his Ayer Itam mansion and the cosmopolitan gatherings at them were a tribute to his popularity. I have one good story about Che Din. After the party on his being appointed a Justice of the Peace, we adjourned as usual to the Wembley Dance Hall. At the close at midnight I took him to the **Echo** office and showed him his picture being printed in the next morning's paper. It was a memorable thrill to him.

I have left mention of members of the European

community to the last by a process of inverted logic because they were the most important, being the leaders of the official and mercantile population. The Resident Councillor (later Resident Commissioner) was the head of the administration. The post of R.C. Penang was the most senior in the Straits Settlements Civil Service, next to that of Colonial Secretary, Singapore, and as a rule the incumbent of that office usually came to Penang for his final term before retirement. Not so A. M. Goodman, who was R.C. from 1934 to 1940. A "Chinese Cadet," he was head of Chinese Affairs before he came as R.C. to Penang, and his expert knowledge gave him a strong hand in dealing with the local Chinese community. But he was also an able administrator and it is to him we owe the magnificent Police Headquarters building in Penang Road, albeit it meant our losing the proposed road up Penang Hill.

Many were the clashes we had when I did not see eye to eye with him over policy, but we were always good friends and he was very human as evinced by his not infrequent forays to the Wembley Dance Hall. And he always understood the value of winning the co-operation of the Press. I remember him turning up in my editorial room in the **Echo** office on the eve of the outbreak of the World War II in September 1939, to tell me that war was inevitable. He waited to see me write my editorial, insisting on adding as the last sentence the somewhat blimpish sentiment — "England will fight and England will be right." He then made me accompany him on a tour of Wembley Amusement Park saying that it would be good for the public morale if we were seen about together and, of course, we had eventually to repair to the dance hall and suitably quench our anxiety!

An amusing incident concerning Goodman's predecessor as Resident Councillor bears repeating. For obvious reason names cannot be mentioned. This official was going on retirement when on the boat from Penang to Hongkong he met and fell in love with an attractive young missionary lady. He promptly withdrew his resignation from the Civil Service by cable, married the lady and returned to Penang as R.C. in Penang. The leader of the business community and the European member of the Legislative Council at the time was then a dapper Englishman who thought very well of himself. An

Tan Sir C.M. Hashim (left) and Puan Hashim with the author and F. G. Hammett, President of the Penang Municipal Council, at the British Malayan Association dinner in London in 1954.

affair between him and the pretty lady of the R.C. was a natural sequence in those colonial days. Unfortunately the Chinese amah (maid-servant) at the Residency spilt on her mistress and made her master wise to the "goings-on." So the R.C. arranged a bogus circuit trip and made a surprise return at night to catch the two delinquents "in flagrante dilecto." He is said to have assaulted his rival with his golf club and the latter fled the Residency in his underpants.

The joke of the whole affair was that the policeman on duty at the Residency gate, recognising the member of the Legislative Council, smartly sprang to attention and saluted the "Honourable" member, underpants and all!

It was not generally known what a lot of good District Judge B. F. Bridge did for Penang. He started by giving aid to unfortunates who came up before him from the court's Poor Box and then he established the Central Aid Fund, in which he was ably assisted by his Court Secretary, B. R. Sharma. It was this Central Aid Fund, which was the inspiration for the Silver Jubilee Fund. The monthly distribution from the latter were made at the District Court, with Sharma presiding over them with the consent and support of Bridge. He was the very soul of gentle kindness and Penang owes a great deal to his unobtrusive service. His wife was the daughter of a famous school headmaster, Shaw of Victoria Institution, Kuala Lumpur.

One of the outstanding European personalities at that time in Penang was the Municipal Engineer, M. J. Thorpe. He was a most efficient organiser and it is no exaggeration to say that he dominated the Municipal offices, all the other departmental heads following his lead in most matters. Not only did he maintain the roads in a perfect state of repair, but he also controlled the town cleansing services — an anomaly which was set right only after the war when they rightly were put under the Health Officer. It was Thorpe who initiated the traffic roundabouts and traffic lights in Penang and he was in charge of the Kadershah Square slum clearance scheme, which has given Penang the excellent layout of the area bounded by Penang Road and Transfer Road, between the *Odeon Cinema and the Cold Storage*. But above all his official work, Thorpe will always be remembered

for the founding of the Penang Wireless Society and the establishment of the amateur Penang wireless station, Z.H.J. It was through Z.H.J. that we were tried to contact the Japanese Headquarters in North Malaya and appeal to them to stop bombing Penang after it had been evacuated by the British. M. J. Thorpe will long be remembered in Penang.

Of course there were many other Europeans in the thirties in Penang who made their mark on the life of the Settlement though it may be said that such reputation was largely ephemeral. Among the lawyers there was E. W. Palgrave Simpson and J. de Buriatte of the firm of Presgrave & Matthews, C. D. D. Hogan of Hogan, Adams and Allan, and C. R. Samuel and Balfour Ross of Logan, Ross and Samuel. In the business community there were B. G. H. (Johnny) Johnson of Bousteads, G. D. A. Fletcher of Harrison Crossfields, W. H. Dove of Huttenbachs, "Pat" Russell of Sime Darby, Eric Newbold of Eastern Smelting, J. Chambers of the Chartered Bank, H. W. Muriel of the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank and Gerry Aste of the Mercantile Bank and a host of others.

Then there was the Rev. Keppel Garnier, the last of the Colonial Chaplains. He had been Vicar of St. George's Anglican Church for over 20 years when I arrived in 1930 and though the Church had been disestablished long since, he hung on to the designation "Colonial Chaplain." He last officiated in that capacity when he blessed the colours of the Penang Volunteer Battalion in 1935. He was a real old school type; I remembered his asking to be excused when I invited him to accompany me to see Lord Nuffield for a donation to the St. Nicholas Home for the Blind — no doubt young Morris had pumped his tyres for him in the old bicycle shop on the Cowley Road! but both Keppel and his wife, who was an artist and a poet in her own right, were most kindly persons and had helped countless needy persons in Penang. Keppel, however, was a go-ahead padre and my wife, just arrived from conservative Ceylon, was shocked to run into him at the Penang Races at the X'mas Meeting in 1930!

He was full of knowledge about Old Penang and it was largely his inspiration and research that enabled us to put up a Pageant of the Founding of Penang by Francis Light at the celebration of the Sesquicentenary (150th anniversary)

of that event in 1936.

Rev. Keppel Garnier was already a sick man and he died at the Masonic Hospital in London shortly after. One of my best efforts of journalistic writing was my report of his Memorial Service. I still recollect how the sounding of the Last Post brought to my mind the picture of the Vicar going round the pews saying goodbye to his old parishioners, then reluctantly climbing the golden ladder with lingering backward glances, and then entering the Golden Gates to the triumhant notes of the final blast. Requiescat in pace!

The most outstanding personality of the 30's in Penang was Rev. Mother S. S. Tarcissus of the Convent. I have never met anyone like her in my life whose one idea was to do good to others. She was a schoolmate of Mrs. Ruby Grummit, wife of the proprietor of the **Straits Echo**, and as a result I came into close touch with her. It was her effort that resulted in the new wing of the Light Street Convent, the establishment of the Pulau Tikus Branch and the Chinese Convent in Dato Kramat. What a grand party when the Governor came to Penang specially to present her with the insignia of the O.B.E. which had deservedly been conferred on her. And on her special instructions I was treated to a full bottle of champagne.

And she was a very human saint. There was a very clever (and pretty) Sister S. S. Francis Xavier, who was in charge of the publication of the Convent Magazine at the time. She was far from satisfied with the effort of the local printers and she sought my aid to reproduce the fancy headlines and unique displays she wanted for the publication. So we became good friends. So whenever she wanted any publicity for the Convent, it was S. S. Francis Xavier whom Rev. Mother Tarcissus sent round with the request. And of course, I complied. After her retirement from active work, Rev. Mother S. S. Tarcissus settled down in Malaya dividing her time between Kuala Lumpur and Penang. The last time I met her was on one of her trips from Kuala Lumpur to Penang by air. I happened to travel on the same plane. She was about 90 years old at the time and I carefully escorted her and handed her safely to her waiting staff in Penang. She passed away shortly after and I am sure she is now quite busy prepairing places for her many loved and loving pupils.

CHAPTER VII
WAR BREAKS OUT

After the establishment of the North Malayan Newspapers, I seemed well set in life with the prospect of being able to retire to Ceylon in 1950 with a comfortable nest-egg for my old age. But it was another case of "man proposes and God disposes."

In September 1939, World War II in Europe broke out and there was always the prospect of the war extending to the Far East, with Japan joining in on the Axis side.

It was thought that the Japanese attempt on Malaya would come via the sea and that Singapore would be made the first point of entry. Later, however, the strategy of a landing in the north, possibly in Siam (now known as Thailand) and an invasion of Malaya from that direction was anticipated. So a garrison was established in Penang and after 1939 preparations were hurried to establish a line of resistance at Jitra, about 20 miles from the Siamese border. These preparations were by no means complete when the Japanese did actually launch their attack on Malaya on December 8th., 1941. When General Wavell made an inspection of the preparations in Malaya in October 1941 he was so appalled at the position that he stated his disappointment in unprintable terms to Air Marshal Brooke Popham, the C-in-C Malaya, and his staff. In fact the top men in charge of the defence of Malaya at that time were mostly supernnuated officers whose age, if nothing else, rendered them lackadaisical. There was no drive left in them.

I naturally made friends with several of the Indian officers who were stationed in or near Penang. It was considered part of the duty of the civilians to entertain them. The most senior of them was Lieutenant Colonel Gilani, who commanded the First Battalion of the Bahawalpur Regiment, which was stationed at Sungei Patani. The Colonel held a Viceroy's Commission, was a handsome Punjabi and was incidentally a great favourite in Penang society.

Being posted at Sungei Patani, he became a friend of Tunku Abdul Rahman whom he used to meet at th club there.

Colonel Gilani surrendered and was a prisoner of war but later, as the senior officer, became a member of the Council of Joint Action, which was the ruling body of the various India Independence Leagues that had been established throughout Malaya by the Japanese.

I have seen it stated in what purports to be an official version under the title, "The Fall of Singapore," that after the surrender the Indian troops were addressed by "Subhas Chandra Bose" and the majority persuaded to join the newly formed "Indian National Army." Now Subhas Bose did not arrive in Malaya till 1943. It was his cousin, Rash Behari Bose, who had sought asylum in Japan after his attempt on the life of the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir Hugh Fraser, in 1924, who came to Malaya with the Japanese forces and formed the various Indian Independence Leagues from Bangkok to Singapore and established the I.N.A. So much for "official version"! Subhas Bose as "Netaji" formed the Azad Hind Government and Azah Hind Fauz. More of that later.

The majority of the Sandhurst-trained officiers of the India Army who held king's Commission preferred to go into the prisoners of war camp, among whom was my friend Major Ganshyam Singh of the Motor Transport and a nephew of the Maharajah of Bhawanagar. The I.N.A. was formed under the command of Captain Mohan Singh of the Punjabs and was disbanded when Mohan Singh (as "General") refused to obey the Japanese Command order to move into Burma at the beginning of 1943. So much for that.

Colonel Gilani and a small group of officers with him had a residence in York Road, Penang, and after my release from gaol at the end of 1942, I used to meet him frequently. After the War, in 1963, he came back to Malaya at the invitation of Tunku Abdul Rahman for the Malaysia Day celebrations. By this time, he had retired from the Army with the rank of Brigadier. Later he established the Gilani Jute and Textile Mills at the Mak Mandin Industrial Estate near Butterworth, which is functioning successfully to the present day. Our old friendship has been renewed and we are today boon companions.

Brigadier Gilani (right) presenting a cheque for $5,000 to the Head Girl of the St. Nicholas School for the Blind, Penang, with the author (left) looking on.

The following story illustrates Gilani's kindness and generosity. I have been connected with the St. Nicholas Home and School for the Blind, which is run by the Anglican Church in Penang. It had been transferred from Malacca when it was in danger of being closed down at a time when it housed only nine children. The generosity of the Penang Chinese insured its survival and I managed to secure a donation of $10,000 from the late Lord Nuffield when he passed through Penang in 1935. This enabled the Committee to secure a permanent home for the institution and with the growing national consciousness for welfare work after World War II, it has gone on from strength to strength. Though fundamentally a Christian project, its doors are open to all blind children, irrespective of class or creed.

With the steady increase in the number of children one was actually sent from Vietnam and there are many from Borneo — the Archdeacon of Penang conceived a plan for development of the building to provide for the next few decades. When the Architects' plans were completed it was estimated that the cost of the development would be in the region of $400,000 and I was pressed to be the Chairman of the Appeal Fund Committee. Knowing of the Malaysian Government's policy I giving "dollar for dollar" towards the cost of school buildings, I decided to approach the Province Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, for a Government donation of $200,000 on that basis.

So one morning I waited on the Tunku at the Federal House, Penang, during one of his visits to the island with some members of our Committee. The Tunku took his time returning from his morning round of golf and away those waiting for him was Brigadier Gilani. So I took the opportunity to canvass Gilani for a donation of $1,000 to our fund to which he readily agreed.

We had no difficulty in getting the Tunku's consent to the Governments donation but the happy climax occurred when Gilani came to present his cheque. It was the FIVE thousand dollars not ONE thousand. No wonder our appeal was a success and we reached our target of $400,000 within two years.

So strong was wishful thinking that most of us in Malaya late in 1941 could not bring ourselves to believe that the Japanese would dare to lunch an attack. And even in my editorial in the paper of December 8th, written on the previous evening, in summing up the situation, I ended up by saying that the Japanese would be committing national "hara kiri" if they made such an attack. Perhaps in the ultimate result this is what actually happened to the Japanese, but that did not prevent them from launching war in the East on that fateful December morning.

On Saturday, December 6th, we had news that a Japanese Task Force of transports, escorted by aircraft carriers and destroyers, was seen in the Gulf of Siam. At first we deluded ourselves that it was headed for Indo-China, which was already under Japanese Occupation, and when on Sunday the Task Force had rounded Point de Cambodge and was sailing in a north-westerly direction, we bolstered ourselves by assuming that it was for a show of force against Siam. When one looks back, one is amazed at the complacent wishful thinking of those in authority; in spite of the obvious threat, none of the Malayan towns was "blacked out" and Singapore was ablaze when the Japanese bombed Raffles Square at 4.45 a.m. on December 8th.

Another amusing note in the light of later events was a revelation which I obtained from the officers of the Jitra Line who were in the Penang Prison with me. It was that the U.S. top brass had warned the British that if they advanced on Siamese territory, unless and until the Japanese attacked Malaya, they, the Americans, would not support Britain in the war against Japan! As a result "Operation Matador" was shelved on orders from London. The simultaneous attack on Pearl Harbour made this warning ridiculous. It is not inconceivable that if the troops at the Jitra Line had been moved up to harass the Japanese landing at Singora, the delay to the Japanese sweep down Malaya might have made a vital difference to their whole campaign. As it was, the entire defence of Malaya was a humilating tale of blunders from start to finish.

I had put the paper to bed and gone home to rest in anticipation of a busy time ahead on Monday, December 8th,

when at 4.00 a.m. my telephone rang and my assistant, Teoh Thye Moh, excitedly told me that he had heard of the attack on Pearl Harbour on the BBC broadcast. I had hardly got dressed and was about to leave my flat when there was a telephone call from my Singapore Correspondent informing me of the bombing of Singapore at 4.45 that morning. He also gave me the text of the official communique about the landing of the Japanese at Kota Bharu, Kelantan, on the north-east coast of Malaya, at 2 a.m.

I knew that the fat was truly in the fire, and so I rushed to the office and summoned the Manager in order to get together some of my printing staff so as to put out a special edition. It was quite 7 a.m. before I could get the type set and ready for such a special handout but before we could start any printing the electric current was cut off. I rang up the City Electrical Engineer and was told nothing could be done. The cutting of the electricity was on orders from the military. From my office window I watched the people of Penang in innocence going about their normal routine.

At 8 a.m., however, there was the BBC news rebroadcast by the Penang Wireless Station. It gave all the news, including that of the landing of the Japanese at Kota Bharu and the bombing of Singapore.

Earlier, we could see from Penang a huge cloud of black smoke, rising from the direction of Sungei Patani. We learnt later that there had been a Japanese air raid on the Sungei Patani airfield, some 22 miles north of Penang. The British planes were surprised on the ground and machine-gunned, while the first bomb put the control tower out of action and the second landed right on the petrol dump. Thus any air defence of North Malaya was immediately immunised. This initial success of the Japanese made a vital difference to the Malayan campaign as Sungei Patani was the fighter base for Northern Malaya. Nor was it a matter of luck for the Nippon attackers were led by their ace pilot, Kato, who, after his death on a raid on Akyab aerodrome in Burma on May 22, 1942, was defied as a Japanese "Air God." This report of the raid on Sungei Patani Aerodrome was confirmed by Wing Commander Fowle, who after the liberation came as Food Controller to Penang.

The news of the land fighting was very confusing for the first few days. After conflicting communiques, it was evident that Kota Bharu and its airfield had been occupied by the Japanese. The main Japanese force, however, landed at Singora (now Songkhla) in South Siam, where the Siamese, after a few hours' token resistance, gave in and so we had to await the long foreseen invasion of Malaya via Siam. Major Andrews of the 1/8 Punjab told me when we were in the Penang Prison together that he went up to Ban Sadao on the Siamese side of the border on December 9th and laid an ambush with anti-tank guns for the Japs. They arrived that evening and five tanks were put out of action by his gunners. But the Japs just pushed them off the road and continued their onward roll. Outflanked, he was forced to withdraw through the jungle. By Wednesday it was clear that the enemy had come to grips with our troops at Jitra and we awaited the result with the confidence (how misplaced we learnt later) that we were fully prepared for this move.

Meanwhile, Penang had its full share of air raid alarms, but beyond attacks on the Mata Kuching aerodrome on the mainland (now the Royal Australian Air Force base) and the Bayan Lepas aerodrome on the island, no other bombs were dropped. It seemed as if the Japanese meant to wage a gentleman's war, attacking only military objectives by air.

On the afternoon of Wednesday, December 10th, the Penang public had a grandstand view of a dramatic dog-fight over Mata Kuching aerodrome, which was put out of effective action as a result of this raid. Twenty-six planes took part in this raid and not more than half a dozen of the R.A.F. fighters went up to tackle them. The air battle lasted for forty minutes and we saw some planes brought down and some pilots baling out, looking like so many white blossoms floating in the sky. As Reuter's correspondent in North Malaya, after careful investigation and interviewing one of the British pilots, who had baled out, at the Penang General Hospital, I reported that four British planes were brought down while all the enemy planes got away safely. However, the official communique interchanged the words "British" and "enemy" and this shook my confidence in official communiques after that.

With all the airfields in Kedah and Penang out of action, the enemy were free to turn their attention to the civilian population and this they did with their characteristic thoroughness starting on Thursday, December 11th. At first it was Chinatown in Penang that seemed to be the main objective, no doubt with the object of terrorising the Chinese population before occupation. The first bomb actually fell within 100 yards of my flat where my shorthand reporter and I were taking down the Singapore news broadcast. Soon, however, their operations extended until the business area of the town was subjected to severe bombings. As a result, in a couple of days all this area was evacuated and then followed a period of pandemonium in which looting and mob rule was the order. The police force simply dissolved the day after the first bombs were dropped while most of the other services similarly went out of action in a day or two. The Fire Chief of Penang reported a return of his old complaint of shell-shock (!) and with the Fire Brigade not operating, the town and harbour soon became a bonfire. The nightly rains, however, prevented the fire from spreading very much and the residential and out-lying districts, where the population had taken refuge, were not affected. Some 500 buildings were destroyed in George Town and 150 bodies were rotting on the streets.

The looting started in Penang on the Friday morning, first at the food and provision stalls in the main town Chowrasta market and then of all general goods. Everything was fair booty — cloth, jewellery, watches, provisions, hardware, liquor and cigarettes — and all this occurred while the British were in official occupation of Penang and the various British heads of department were still there, from the Resident Councillor and the Chief Police Officer downwards, who were hiding in their holes or homes in terror of the Japanese bombs. In fact some A.R.P. Wardens arrested some Policemen in uniform who were leading some looters. This breakdown of the public services did irreparable damage to the much vaunted British prestige as far as the people of Penang was concerned will take at least a generation to be restored.

Even most of my printing staff failed to turn up after the first bombing and the **Straits Echo** had to be hand printed on Friday and Saturday but on Sunday I rallied the staff and the Monday paper came out as usual in an effort to restore public morale.

In the meantime, the war was going all too badly for us. Thursday, December 11th that saw the start of the bombing of Penang, also brought the news of the sinking of H.M.S. "Prince of Wales" and "Repulse." The story of the sinking of the Repulse and the Prince of Wales was retailed to my Singapore representative, J.P. Chrysostom, by G. D. Gallagher of the London **Daily Express,** who had been on board the Repulse. Chrysostom repeated it to me when he came to Penang to live with me in 1943 to 1945 and I give it here as best I can from memory.

When Tom Phillips was ordered by the Supreme War Council at Singapore to go out to meet the Jap convoy sailing towards Siam and North Malaya, he protested that it would be suicide for those two capital ships to venture out without air cover. Admiral Geoffrey Layton replied that if he could get into range without being spotted, one salvo from the Prince of Wales could sink the whole convoy. But spotted he was as bad luck would have it and soon his crow's nest signalled that a formation of planes was heading for the two battleships. The fighters flew in umbrella formation at about 2,000 feet and all the ack-acks were fixed at this range. When they came over the ships, they parted in the middle to allow the dive-bombers and torpedo carriers to swoop down from above and plaster the two ships. On the very first attempt, a bomb fell through the funnel of the Repulse and blew up the ammunition magazine, setting fire to the battle-cruiser. There was no hope for her. The unsinkable Prince of Wales was listing to port and limping away to beach off Kuantan but a second salvo of torpedoes settled her fate. She rolled over and sank. The Japs then signalled "Our job is completed" and withdrew for the destroyers to pick up the survivors. When this had been completed, they flew back over the watery graves of two of Britain's proudest naval units and dropped two wreaths — a worthy tribute from a worthy foe. Thus ended one of the saddest and most tragic chapters of British naval history.

The communiques from Kedah made it clear that the Jitra battle had also been lost. On Sunday, a stand was made at Gurun, 20 miles north of Sungei Patani and about 40 miles from Penang, but by that evening it was known that this, too, had been broken and the outlook was gloomy. On Sunday and Monday night I saw troops being evacuated from Penang and, on Tuesday, December 16th. the entire male European civilian population departed, the European women and children having been evacuated the previous Friday.

One quite realises that reports of brutal treatment of European civilians by the Japanese, stories which filtered down from the north, caused their friends and colleagues in Penang to panic. Later it was learnt that these stories had been grossly exaggerated and were mostly without foundation. But the impression it created was that the Japanese were indulging in an intense hate campaign against the white population and not harming the local population to such an extent. Therefore, the evacuation of Penang by the European civilians was understandable.

But the manner in which it was done was reprehensible in the extreme. No attempt was made to inform the local residents so that they could carry on the essential services of the town. They evacuated Penang secretly by night and it led me to write in an article, headed "Penang's Nightmare" published on the first Sunday after the reoccupation, that "they ran away like thieves in the night."

Of course the individual Europeans were not to blame for this craven exit. They were merely obeying the orders given to them by their leaders. I remember when I went to the E & O Hotel on that evening (December 16th) to find F. H. Grummit to tell him about sending money to my wife in Ceylon, the Local Defence Volunteers were drawn up outside with George Watson of Islay Kerr & Co in command. When he saw me, he broke away from his men to tell me how sorry he was to go and that he had to obey orders. And later in the hotel lounge, Dr. Fisher, a senior physician at the Penang General Hospital, when he heard I was not going with them, declared he didn't see why he should leave if I was not leaving. As I said, it was the fault of those at the top and I understand in Singapore, after the Penang evacuees arrived there, "bissekered" became synonymous for "ratting" after the Penang civilian European leader.

The Municipal Engineer, an European, had told one of his Asian assistants to get in touch with me and tell me to arrange for some measures to maintain a semblance of order in the town till such time as the Japanese occupied it. So I handprinted a notice and circulated it the following morning. About 500 peopled turned up for this meeting, at which a committee consisting of three members from each of the four communities were elected to run the town. This committee insisted on my being Chairman.

I had recovered a letter from Leslie Forbes, the Resident Councillor, from the Head Boy at the Residency, to the Commander of the Japanese Forces informing him that Penang had been evacuated by the British and asking the Japanese to treat the people of Penang well! Assuming from this that the Japanese Headquarters in North Malaya had been officially informed of the evacuation, I exhorted those who were present at the meeting to go back to their homes but even while the Committee was holding it's first meeting, a wave of Japanese planes came over and bombed the town. To my sorrow, a Ceylonese friend of mine was a victim of that bombing. The Committee insisted that the Union Jack at the top of the flagstaff at Fort Cornwallis should be hauled down. I told the Committee that that should be the task of the Japanese when they occupied the island but the Committee lo a man insisted that if constituted a danger and that it was the cause of the continued bombing. They assumed that it was my duty as Chairman of the Committee to do it but when I called for volunteers to accompany me, not one came forward! So I got one of my staff, a sub-editor by the name of R. S. Gopal, to keep me company as I drove through the bombed area to the Fort. It was an eerie experience with dead bodies strewn about on the streets and buildings blazing on all sides. When we got to Fort, we found that the Union Jack had been sewn on to the rope of the flagstaff and could not be hauled down. So poor Gopal had to climb the rope ladder to the top and cut the flag free from the rope. We thus had the unique experience of having hauled down the Union Jack while we were still British subjects!

The next three days, December 17th, 18th and 19th, were three of the busiest and most hectic days of my life.

As Chairman of this Committee, which we named the Penang Service Committee, I had the job of making decisions and issuing orders to restore order to a town and island that had been abandoned by the British authorities in a state of chaos. We set up our headquarters at No. 10 Scott Road, the residence of the Municipal Engineer, and the Committee met there twice a day. We had the advantage of being able to call on the Penang Volunteers, who had been left behind with arms, and pressed them into service to act as Volunteer Police. The Eurasian Volunteer Company, under Capt. Willweber, made its headquarters at the Francis Light School in Perak Road while the Chinese Company had moved to Ayer Itam, where most of the Chinese community had evacuated, and were under the control of Lim Cheng Ean and Lim Koon Teck, the Penang Magistrate.

The primary job of the Volunteer Police was to stop the looting and their orders were to cordon off the harbour and main shopping areas and keep all unauthorised persons from entering it. Of course it was not possible to keep people away from Penang Road and the Chinatown shopping centres of Campbell and Kimberley Streets, as they were also residential areas, the proprietors and families occupying the upper stories of what are known as "shop houses," but the Volunteer Police were empowered to stop anybody moving goods, question them and confiscate such goods if ownership could not be satisfactorily proved. All such confiscated goods were stored at the Francis Light School Hall and soon there were large collections of motley goods from bags of rice and cases of milk to bales of cloth and packets of cosmetics. Soon the system was established that goods could be moved only on a permit signed by me as Chairman of the Penang Service Committee. The petrol pumps were all immobilised and petrol issued only to vehicles doing essential work.

A daily hand printed bulletin was issued giving all this information and other news to the public. I organised this by transferring a few cases of handset type to the basement of the house I was occupying in Cantonment Road and also the big proofing machine and, with the help of loyal members of my staff, issuing this daily bulletin. Within a couple of days we managed to restore a semblance of order and eliminate looting almost completely.

An objective account of how this colossal task was tackled was given by E. A. Staines, a former Controller of Posts, Penang, who stayed behind and was, therefore an impartial observer. In the issue of the **Straits Echo** of March 2nd, 1948, Staines wrote :-

> "On the front page of your Special Supplement issued today in which is published General Percival's despatch on the 'Fall of Malaya' occurs this paragraph — 'On December 14th the Municipal Commissioners of George Town presented a memorandum to the Fortress Commander stating that the civil administration had broken down and pointing out the danger of outbreaks of cholera and typhoid owing to the fouling of the water catchment area and the breakdown of the sanitary and conservancy services.'
>
> "There was no outbreak of cholera of typhoid following the withdrawal from Penang and I seek the favour of a portion of your space that those citizens of Penang, who have survived the occupation may know why and to whom the credit it due. The morning after the withdrawal, a meeting of residents was held in a Penang school and a committee was appointed to deal with the situation under the chairmanship of Mr. M. Saravanamuttu. This committee, of which I was a spectator but not a member, sat in sessions in a house in Scott Road and members of the committee were detailed for various duties; I cannot now remember all the names and details but the care of the water supply was maintained in quantity and in quality and so disaster from that source was avoided.
>
> "Many of your readers will recall the terrible state of this town with all services gone and people mostly in despair. There was, fortunately, no despair in Mr. Saravanamuttu, who was the driving force in the committee, and to him is due, though his assistants are not to be excluded, the credit for the organisation of the volunteers who saved the rice, cleared away the dead and saw to the disposal of the bodies,

safeguarded and issued petrol, formed guards to preserve order and attended to the innumerable demands and necessities of a city in distress. There was no failure of nerve here; for three consecutive days with exceedingly little sleep, Mr. Saravanamuttu sat in his chair issuing instructions, advising and urging with unflagging energy until the Japanese arrived and the committee was disolved.

"I am confident that everybody who sat through those hours in Mr. Fletcher's abandoned house will agree that Penang owes an enduring debt of gratitude for the feat of administrative power and courage displayed and I write this letter because, so far as I know, no adequate recognition, or any recognition, has been made of Mr. Saravanamuttu's services which were beyond all price in an hour of great need and should be better known."

All movement was controlled, and all orders were issued over my name as Chairman of this Committee. That was how the story sped down by word of mouth to Singapore that I was Governor of Penang!

By the time the news got to Singapore, the Japanese were already in Penang and so an overkeen news correspondent cabled London that I was Governor of Penang under the Japanese. In actual fact, at the time the question was asked in Parliament, I had already been locked up by the Japanese in the Penang prison. The following is a report of the proceedings in Parliament as cabled to Singapore by Reuter's news agency:

"The Conservative member, Captain L. R. Gammans, asked the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. G. H. Hall, if he was in a position to make a statement regarding the activities of Mr. M. Saravanamuttu, a British subject, appointed as the Japanese High Commissioner for Penang and in particular, as to whether Sara had accepted this appointment voluntarily or under duress.

"Mr. Hall: The Secretary has seen reports in the Press to the affect that the person named in question had been nominated by the Japanese to the post mentioned but he is not in a position either to confirm or deny the statement.

"Captain Gammans: Is it proposed to make a declaration that any British subject willingly cooperating with the Japanese in any territories overrun by them will be charged with treason when war is over ?

"Mr. Hall: I will call the attention of the Secretary of State to that observation."

When Gammans came to Penang in 1946, I pointed out that his question had been based on misinformation and that I had been wrongly labelled as a Japanese collaborator. I also told him that the report of proceedings in Parliament had received world-wide publicity and the only way he could make adequate reparation was by making a statement in Parliament correcting the mistake. In the presence of Malcolm MacDonald, Gammans said he would do so the very next time Malaya was mentioned in Parliament but he never kept his word. The worst of it is that Gammans was a co-operative officer in Malaya in the thirties and quite a friend of mine. But like most of the Europeans in Malaya in the thirties, he believed I was anti-British because my editorial policy advocated eventual independence for Malaya.

The bombing of Penang continued even after its evacuation by the British. As I have related, on the instructions of Committee, I hauled down the Union Jack from the flagstaff but this had no effect. So, on the 19th, three days after the British evacuation, having got the Penang Wireless Station working with the use of the hospital auxilary electric plant, I broadcast an appeal to the Japanese Headquarters in North Malaya. I still have a copy of this appeal which was as follows:

"This is Penang calling. Penang calling the Japanese Headquarters in North Malaya.

"Penang has been evacuated by the British. There are no more troops or any defences whatsoever in Penang.

"Please refrain from bombing Penang."

This appeal was also broadcast in Japanese by one of the Japanese who had been held as prisoners of war in Penang and had been released after the British evacuations. The broadcast appeal was repeated at half-hour intervals interspersed with music from Z.H.J., the broadcasting station of the Penang Wireless Society.

That evening at about 4.00 p.m. two companies of Japanese troops arrived in Penang. As Chairman of the Committee I received the commander and appealed to him to see that his troops did not molest the local population, as a result of which he confined them to their billets that night thus saving the Penang population from the horrors of the early days of the military occupation. The next day a Japanese Civil Administrator, Hiroyasu, to whom I have referred in the account of the death of the Penang Eurasian leader, Dr. J. Emile Smith, came to take charge of Penang.

He asked our Committee to continue, but straightaway set about forming separate committees on his own, one for each of the four communities i.e. Malays, Chinese, Indian and Eurasians — the Ceylonese being grouped with the Indians. These committees started functioning on December 23rd, 1941 and the Penang Service Committee was disbanded.

With regard to the contact with the Japanese Headquarters, I learnt later that a young Penang Eurasian by the name of Ivan Allan (later a race horse trainer and since dead), who was then working as an apprentice jockey in the stable of trainer George Macgill, went to Sungei Patani on the 18th with a Japanese named Izumi, who had a barber saloon in Argyll Road. They were said to have conveyed the news that the British had evacuated Penang. So it would appear that the reputation I earned as the "Saviour of Penang" by broad-

casting to the Japanese to stop bombing Penang was another of those exaggerated tributes that contributed to making me a legend in Penang.

On the eve of the establishment of the new committees, while I was arguing with the Civil Administrator for the issue of rice to the Penang population, a Japanese officer came to see me and introduced himself as Capt. Inabi, an Information Officer. He started off by saying he knew all about me, which I agreed was quite natural as he was their Information Officer! He then told me that he wanted me to continue to run the newspaper.

I replied that I would get the staff together to do so but he would have to put somebody else in charge.

"But it is your name we want," he said.

I told him that I was not prepared to lend my name to a newspaper published under their regime and that this was not because I loved the British. Just as they knew all about me, I as a humble journalist also knew that this war would come and had fixed the date for the invasion as November 25th. This was actually based on a Chinese 100-year calender which predicted dry weather in North Malaya for three months from that date. So I had thought carefully about the whole matter and this decision was not taken on the spur of the moment. (Actually when I was saying goodbye to my wife and children after a visit to Ceylon in July that year, I told them of this estimate of mine. I also told them that I had heard I was "No. 1" on the Japanese "black list," so that if they reached Penang, they, my family, would have to get along without me.)

My wife and children were in Ceylon, I told Captain Inabi, and so were my brothers and sisters; all my brothers held responsible positions under the British. So if I worked for them (the Japanese) it would embarass my family. If he did not like my stand, I said I would be quite happy if he took me out on the lawn and shot me.

Capt. Inabi patted me on the shoulder and said, "No, no, you get along. When we want you, we will send for you."

In his book, "Singapore, The Japanese Version," Colonel Masanobu Tsuji, who was in the staff team that planned the Malaya campaign and was Director of Operations on General Yamashita's staff, said that the decision to launch the attacks on Pearl Harbour, Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia was taken in September 1941. This does not tally with my personal experience. I went to Ceylon in June 1941 to see my family before the Pacific War that everyone anticipated broke out. I had booked my passage to return on a Japanese ship that was on the Japan - Singapore - Colombo - Bombay run. It was scheduled to call at Colombo on July 1st. At the last moment, the Colombo call was cancelled and the ship sailed direct to Singapore to evacuate the Japanese from Malaya. It was obvious therefore that the attack on Malaya had been planned long before September. No doubt the detailed plans had not been formulated till the latter date but the Japanese thrust into South-East Asia was already conceived when their troops occupied Indo-China in 1940.

A most sensational revelation was made to me during the Japanese occupation of Penang by Mr. Sakakibara, who had worked previously on the New York Times, and who was in charge of the Penang newspapers published by the Japanese. He showed me the official Japanese version of the famous Atlantic Charter meeting between Mr. Winston Churchill and President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In it, Churchill was alleged to have told Roosevelt that the British were by no means prepared to defend Malaya in the event of a Japanese attack. Roosevelt told Churchill not to worry — that the United States would continue the negotiations with Admiral Nomura and Mr. Kurusu till at least March 1942 in order to give him time to complete the defences in North Malaya. This, it was alleged, was revealed to the Japanese by the confidential stenographer at the conference, a Frenchman, who they claimed was in their pay.

Confirmation for this alleged report comes from Churchill's own admission in Parliament that he withdrew the RAF from Malaya to the Middle East (vide P. 101) and from the Japanese sneak attack on Pearl Harbour. It is an historical fact that when Kurusu and Nomura turned up to continue negotiations with Cordell Hull the following morning, they got the dressing down of their lives.

CHAPTER VIII

IN JAPANESE PRISON

The call from the Japanese Headquarters came on Christmas Day forenoon, just as I was sitting down to a Christmas lunch at the house of Dr. H. R. S. Muthu, the Penang Port Health Officer, I was summoned by the Japanese Commander. I did not see him but from the Methodist Girls' School offices, where he was established, I was taken to the prison and locked up with a group of some 70 British officers and other ranks who had come to Penang after its evacuation and who had surrendered when the Japanese came.

This group, which consisted of several officers headed by Major Andrews of the First Eighth Punjabs, and three other British officers with some 62 British other ranks and over 100 Indian other ranks, landed in Penang two days after the British had evacuated the island. They had been left behind the lines in the rapid Japanese advance and Major Andrews took charge of them and marched them to the Kedah coast township of Kuala Muda, opposite Penang Island. Here they commandeered some boats and rowed across the Penang Channel, hoping to reinforce the Penang Garrison. Major Andrews and a couple of officers came ahead in a sailing boat and went to the General Hospital from where they were directed to our Committee Headquarters.

I explained the position to Major Andrews and pointed out that if his group attempted to defend Penang — an impossible task — it would lead to unnecessary bloodshed and the massacre of the civilian population. I said I was prepared to house and feed his party, if they would dump their arms in the sea and surrender if and when the Japanese occupied Penang. Major Andrews saw the sense of this suggestion. I housed the troops in the huge Penang Residency with the condition that they should keep indoors during daylight for if they were spotted by the Japanese planes the bombing might be intensified. I engaged cooks, brought provisions and fed the whole party at my personal expense for three days.

After a day's good meals, three of the officers recovered their courage and came to me and said they were not prepared to surrender. I told them I was not telling them to surrender but that if they were not prepared to do so they should leave the island as otherwise they would endanger the civilian population. They said they would gladly leave Penang if I would show them a way to do so.

Now I had a plan to evacuate Penang after the British had left. I meant to travel in a tongkang, or large Chinese cargo carrying boat, along the coast and, landing when I was ahead of the advancing Japanese Army, make my way to Singapore and thence to Ceylon. I actually had such a boat waiting for me at the mouth of the Sungei Pinang River but the insistence of the people of Penang that I should be the Chairman of Penang Service Committee forced me to abandon the plan. I told the British officers of this, asked them to collect food and water and said I would take them to this boat after dark to help them to get away. These officers tried their best to persuade me to accompany them; they assured me that Singapore, which we thought was an impregnable fortress, would stand up against the Japanese attack and actually, when their boat finally put away, they tried to pull me aboard. Harold Speldewinde, who was then my personal bodyguard and who was till 1969 the manager of the Ulu Bernam Estate in Perak, was witness to this.

When I went to Ceylon in October 1945, my eldest brother, Sir Ratnajoti, who was Mayor of Colombo in the war years, said that there was a Brigadier Playfair on the Staff of Admiral Layton, C-in-C Ceylon, who told him he was one of the officers whom I helped to escape from Penang. They had landed at Port Swettenham ahead of the Japanese and had got to Singapore but their story was not published as it was thought it would get me into trouble with the Japanese. I thought Playfair would have tried to contact me after the war but he did not. If he sees these lines I hope he will testify to the veracity of my story.

A probable explanation for my summary incarceration was that as Editor of the North Malayan Newspaper I was the chief disseminator of British, i.e. to them anti-Japanese,

propaganda in this area. As I have recounted I had also strongly espoused the cause of China and vehemently criticised Japanese aggression in that connection. This was borne out by the fact that I was treated as a political prisoner and the Japanese authorities in Penang, in reply to a petition asking for my release, signed by the heads of all the local communities, stated that they had no jurisdiction in my case. All this is conjecture, however, for I never once was told why I had been arrested nor was I asked if I would co-operate with the Japanese regime except for the short interview with Captain Inabi.

On the next morning, i.e. Boxing Day, I was locked up in solitary confinement in one of the 8 foot by 8 foot cells used for prisoners condemned to death. You can imagine the state of my mind when this was done. As it happens in such cases, the first thought that came to my mind was a conversation I had had with Rev. Colin King, one of my closest friends in Penang, in which we agreed that the worst punishment for an educated man was to be locked up alone with no facilities for reading and writing. He would go mad, we said. By the exercise of sheer will power, however, I managed to pull myself together to survive that terrible ordeal.

One thing I did to occupy my mind, since I had no facilities for reading or writing, was to stretch my sock, the sole of which was fortunately black, over the sole of my shoe and try to form words and letters with the aid of white-wash scraped from my prison wall. It used to take time, at least an hour, to form one letter and it certainly kept my mind fully occupied. I pass this tip on for the benefit of anyone who may be placed in a similar situation! I also used to walk a mile a day within the confines of my cell. Diagonally across my cell was the square root of 128, or approximately 11 feet. That meant I had to walk 480 times up and down along the diagonal to total 5,280 feet.

The conditions in the prison were far from satisfactory. I was given a small pail of water for drinking and ablutions, while a bucket was placed in one corner of the cell for my sanitary needs. I was not allowed to step out on my cell and when, after a week, the bucket was full and the stench unbearable, I managed to get permission from the Japanese

guard, by making signs, to go out and empty it. The local prison warders were too fightened to speak to the Japanese guard about it! And it was another week before I was able to empty the bucket again. The food, which consisted of a tin plate of rice and just boiled vegetables (invariably a sort of cheap green leaf known as kangkong), was served twice a day — in the morning about 11 a.m. and in the evening about 5 p.m. This and the pail of water was all that was given and sometimes, if the Japanese guard was in a bad mood, the water was not renewed and one had to go thirsty for 24 hours. I was not allowed out of my cell for baths or other ablutions for one whole month

Sometime in January 1942, Balfour Ross, a lawyer, and E. V. C. Thomas, the Penang manager of the accountants firm of Evatt & Co., were brought into the jail and lodged in the same part of the building as myself. They were two Europeans who had been left behind in Penang as they had evacuated to Thomson's house at the 12th mile on the coast and did not know of the mass exodus of Europeans. Now Balfour Ross had a very rotund figure and the Japanese guard used to joke in signs about it. Balfour took advantage of these friendly overtures to persuade the guard to let him have a bath and this privilege (!) was extended to the other prisoners including myself. In fact after the initial period, when the abject fear of the Japanese guards had passed, the prison conditions were much improved. We were allowed to empty our buckets daily and baths were also allowed daily. The doctor paid us a visit twice a week and his hospital assistant came round every day. This was a great relief and as both of them were very well known to me, I was able to gather news of what was happening in Penang. Through their help I also got a cup of milk and a cup of Bovril (later Marmite) daily. Some of the British soldiers collapsed on the diet of rice and vegetables — one them actually could not walk after a week. So the doctor ordered milk and Bovril for the British soldiers. The three officers were transferred to my portion of the jail as a Japanese officer on inspection ruled that officers and other ranks could not be herded together even in prison. So when the hospital attendant came to supply the milk and Bovril ration to these officers he, on his own initiative, doled some out to me also and this became a daily routine.

There was one incident in connection with one of the three officers locked up in my part of the jail which should be mentioned. The officer concerned was Lt. Gould of the Gurkhas, who had been a planter in Ceylon and had volunteered for war service from the Ceylon Planters Rifle Corps. One evening he was taken out by Captain Inabi and when he returned he told us he had been forced to broadcast from the Penang Broadcasting Station, which was brought back into service by the Penang Service Committee and continued to be operated by the Japanese. Gould said he was taken to the station and given a manuscript, the text of which he was asked to put on the air. On reading it he found it was a false statement making out that the British prisoners of war were housed in bungalows and being given very good treatment and calling on the British authorities in other parts of Malaya to give similar good treatment to Japanese prisoners of war. On Gould refusing, he was beaten up till he fainted. When he still refused to broadcast after he recovered, he was put to the torture of having needles stuck under his nails. Unable to stand the torture he agreed but at the end of each paragraph he added, "Tell it to the Marines!" and ended up by adding, "Don't forget the Marines!" The Japanese were very pleased thinking he was emphasising that the message should be conveyed to the Navy as well and he was treated to tea and cakes before being brought back to the jail!

Several stories were circulated about the jokes played on the Japanese, taking advantage of the ignorance of English. A classic example was that of an Eurasian driving a car being hailed by a sentry who questioned him threateningly, "English — ka?" (Are you English?). The young man, thinking he was being asked the make of his car, answered "Wolseley car," and the sentry, not wishing to reveal his ignorance, waved him on, saying, "Okay, okay"!

The Japanese sergeant, I think, in charge of the prison was a highly temperamental character so typical of the Japanese army types in Penang during the occupation. I used to sleep with my face against the iron bars of my cell owing to the stench from my bucket. One night I suddenly woke up to find him flashing a light in my face and armed with a bayonet As I jumped up and drew away from the

door, he shouted drunkenly, "You write Japanese no good, I kill you." I protested that I never wrote against the Japanese soldier as such, that as a matter of fact I, with all others, admired the Japanese soldier as a splendid fighter. No doubt he had been prompted by the psychopathic prison guards. After some time he withdrew. I made my bed away from the door, fearing that he might come back again, while I was sleeping. On second thoughts, however, I went back to my usual position by the grilled door, realising that I had Someone greater than the Japanese or the British or my friends on Whose protection I could rely.

On January 31st, this sergeant came in high spirits and distributed buns and jam to the British officers and me, saying that the next day he would be leaving for Singapore. This was a grim reminder of the devastating sweep of the Japanese forces down the peninsula but it was a surprise to hear that Singapore itself had fallen so easily. But the next day we learnt that this was not the case and that the Japanese had only reached Johore Bahru, opposite Singapore. A fortnight later, the cheers and rejoicing of the Japanese guards conveyed to us in the cells the sad news of the fall of Singapore itself on February 15th 1942. Thus ended a chapter of a century and a half of British rule in Malaya.

After my release, I pieced together the story of the lightning Japanese advance through Malaya; it was largely a tale of British retreat. After Gurun, the next stand was made at the Perak River around Kuala Kangsar. The Japanese force that landed at Pattani, in South Siam, advanced down Grik to join the main force, advancing through Kedah and Province Wellesley to Kuala Kangsar in an attempt to prevent the blowing up of the strategic Iskandar Bridge there. They failed in this but crossed the river both at Kuala Kangsar and Blangah by boats and, with their Engineering Division repairing the blown up section of the bridge in two days, maintained their steady advance. No sustained stand was made by the British forces after this until the Slim River area. Here reinforcements had arrived from the south and a really pitched battle raged for over a week. I saw evidence of this in the many monuments erected on the roadside to the Japanese who had fallen in the battle.

Kuala Lumpur, now the Federal capital, had been evacuated without a shot being fired in its defence. What actually transpired was that a small Japanese force had sailed down the coast from Lumut in Perak to Port Swettenham and Morib, from where they advanced on Rawang, south of Kuala Lumpur, which they easily seized, and this caused the British in Kuala Lumpur to panic as they feared they were cut off in their rear and they immediately evacuated the town.

In fact a lot of the hasty British retreats was due to such reports of Japanese landings in the rear to which credence was given as a result of the British loss of command of the sea, both east and west of the peninsula. Also the Japanese appeared in complete control in the air. Winston Churchill himself took the blame for the situation, admitting that he had withdrawn the major part of the Royal Air Force in Malaya just before the Japanese attack to stem Rommel's thrust in Libya to the Suez Canal. Also a week before the Japanese invasion, while playing about with my radio one morning. I picked up a broadcast from Singapore by Cecil Brown of the Columbia Broadcasting Corporation. He said that as nothing seemed likely to happen in Malaya, he was going over the Middle East to see some real fighting!

After Slim River, apart from a big skirmish in the Batu Pahat and Muar area, the only other major battle was fought at Kluang in Johore before the Japanese reached Johore Bahru, gateway to Singapore, on January 31st, 1942, after advancing a distance of over 500 miles against an enemy that was twice their number.

The crossing of the Johore Straits and the victory in the bitter battle at Bukit Timah were no less outstanding triumphs. I was told that when General Wavell visited Singapore in January, he instructed General Percival not to surrender, saying that he would send a large contingent of reinforcements from India. Actually, the "Queen Mary" did arrive in Singapore with a complement of 7,000 Indian troops on January 22nd, and another troopship arrived two days later with 3,000 Australian troops. The decision to surrender was, however, taken by Percival owing to the critical water situation. Singapore gets its water from Gunong Pulai, 20 miles from Johore Bahru, and the reserviors

on the island are only storage reservoirs. Of course, the Japanese cut off the huge pipeline and the water in the Singapore reservoirs were not sufficient for the population of over a million, including refugees from the mainland. I was also told by two senior Indian Army medical officers, Colonels Loganathan and Alagappan, that the Army medical command had to report to Percival that it was impossible to care for the wounded that crowded the hospitals without an adequate water supply. It was an impossible situation and should not be forgotten in any criticism of General Percival's decision to surrender Singapore.

The British officers and other ranks were moved from the Penang jail at the end of February 1942 and we learnt they were taken to Taiping jail and from thence to Singapore, which had surrendered on February 15th. Then some six or seven British civilians who had been locked up in another part of the jail were moved to the Prison Hospital, in which the British military prisoners had been lodged, and E. V. C. Thomson and Balfour Ross were also moved there. This deprived me of my daily contact with them during the morning "bucket parade" and daily baths. Balfour was a cheerful person and his jokes and witty comments on our unique plight helped in so small measure to keep up our spirits. I remember his remark, as we crossed each other in the morning, that if nothing else we could get jobs in the town cleansing department. But he lost heart completely when he heard of the fall of Singapore. He refused to take any food and got so weak that he was sent to the General Hospital where he died. He was from one of the oldest British families in Penang, being descended from the Scott who was the business partner of Francis Light, the founder of Penang.

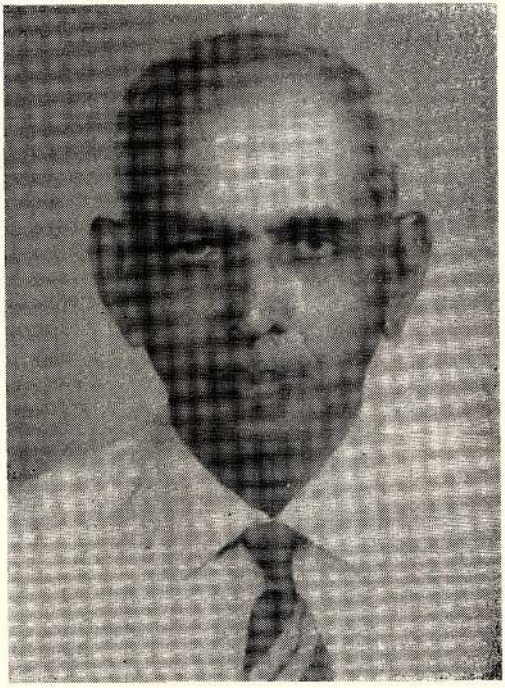
With the departure of Thomson and Balfour from my part of the jail, I was well and truly in "solitary confinement," except for the few words I was able to exchange with the British prisoners in the room which I passed on my daily morning "bucket parade." The Japanese guard had by now been removed and I was escorted by the local prison wanders who allowed me some latitude if no Japanese were about. As a result I was able to get books to read which the British prisoners sneaked to me as I passed them. The BOR's had brought all the books from the Residency library and these

were now available. In my nine months of confinement I certainly broadened my mind by the vast amount of reading I did. Leslie Forbes, the last Resident Councillor of Penang, was an Oxford man and he had a splendid library. One of the best books I read was a collection of Essays by Matthew Benson, the Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, a member of the famous Benson family which included an Archbishop of Canterbury, F. E. Benson, the novelist, and F. R. Benson, the Shakespearean actor. Matthew Benson's philosophical dissertations were a great solace to me in my desperate solitary imprisonment.

After dark, reading was not possible as the British had blown up the power station, so I used to pass the time till I fell asleep by singing the hymns I had learnt at Sunday school in my young days and by my daily attendance at chapel in my school days. Later I managed to get copies of the Prayer Book, Hymn Book and New Testament and part of my daily routine was to go through the services of Morning and Evening Prayers with the Psalms for each day. This not only occupied my time but also gave me great satisfaction, especially imbibing the robust sentiments of the Psalmist. In many ways the nine months incarceration by the Japanese made a better man of me.

I had to sleep on the bare cement floor with my shoes as my pillow. After two months I developed beri-beri, but fortunately the prison doctor was able to give me a few injections of Vitamin B and help me recover, a treatment he could not give to prisoners who later developed this complaint as the Japanese collared all the Vitamin B ampules in the hospital for their soldiers, most of whom had developed beri-beri, too, as a result of eating the highly polished rice favoured in Malaya without half-cooked vegetables.

I wish here to pay tribute to the prison doctor, Dr. R. Letchmanasamy, to whom I really owe my life. Not only did he take special care of me and send in Vitamin B pills through his attendant when I had my attack of beri-beri but it was his persistence that secured my removal to the Hospital when I was strickened with arthritis. His first application for the move was refused by the Kempetai (Military Police), who were in control of the prison. For one week I laid on



Dr. R. Letchmanasamy

my back suffering from arthritis in both my shoulders, taking only a glass of water in the morning and afternoon when the hospital attendant visited me. Most of the time I was howling with the pain from arthritis which, as those who have suffered it from know, is most excruciating. When I was first told that the request for me to be sent to hospital was refused, I made up my mind that I just had to die, but after a week, the instinct of self-preservation asserted itself and I asked Dr. Letchmanasamy if he could try again to get me to the hospital. The doctor was a timid man by nature and to repeat to the Japanese a request that had been refused was supposed to court disaster. Perhaps it was pity for my terrible plight tinged with his regard for me that induced Dr. Letchmanasamy to take the risk and he sent another request to the Kempetai which the Sikh "Captain" of the jail guard offered to take personally. Again the Kempetai refused and on being told that I would die if I was not sent to the hospital, they were supposed to have replied, "Let him die." The Sikh "Captain" then appealed to Ando, who had been in Penang as a curio dealer and was then the Chief Police Officer and Inspector General of Prisons in Penang. On being told of the reaction of the Kempetai, Ando remarked, "Tidak biak, tidak biak" (Not good, not good), and made the order on the doctor's application, "As Inspector-General of Prisons I have no objection." He also sent a police car that afternoon to convey me to the hospital.

It was the courage of Letchmanasamy and the intervention of the Sikh 'Captain" of the guard and Ando's sympathy that saved my life. If I had not been taken to the hospital and given proper attention and treatment I would certainly have died of starvation if nothing else.

On the very night I arrived at the hospital, Yeap Hock Hoe, son of Towkay Yeap Chor Ee mentioned earlier, bribed the guards and visited me along with some of my friends. They brought sandwiches and cakes, which were very welcome after the monotonous prison diet of rice and boiled vegetables. It was very generous of Hock Hoe to have taken the risk he did and this and his many other generous actions to my benefit have put me in his eternal debt. While I was in the hospital many of my friends helped me with special food, my most loyal helper being one of my reporters, C. K. Retnam.

It is said that he had first call on all the sheep's liver that was brought to the market and I was fed on a daily diet of liver to restore my strength and vitality. I also had a visit from my Singapore correspondent, J. P. Chrysostom, who brought me the good news that F. H. Grummit had sent off a substantial remittance from Singapore to my wife, thus relieving me of my anxiety on this score. The loyalty, friendship and help of my friends during this period is one of the happiest memories I cherish to this day, especially as this help was rendered at considerable personal risk. If they had been caught by the Japanese they would have paid for it dearly — even perhaps with their lives. As a result of all this help, I made a good recovery and returned to my prison cell well fortified to face another period of solitary confinement in about the middle of August.

It was the same prison routine again. Early morning "bucket parade," washing of my mouth and face in the cell as best as I could, saying the service of Matins, then some reading before the morning meal, the walking within the cell, the much anticipated visit of the hospital attendant with medicine and the milk and Marmite, reading in the afternoon, the evening meal, walking exercise, Evensong, and finally singing myself to sleep. Towards the middle of September, the doctor dropped me a hint that renewed efforts were being made for my release. It seemed that a new chief from Tokyo had arrived for the Hikari Kikan, as the liaison body between the Indians and the Japanese was now known, and that he, Koyama by name, was a member of the Japanese Diet and the Chief Whip of the Tojo Government which was then in power.

Anyway Koyama was supposed to have gone to the Japanese Governor of Penang to ask whether he had any objection to my release. The latter is said to have told Koyama that he knew nothing against me, but that my detention was under the orders of Tokyo direct.

So Koyama, I was informed, signalled Tokyo to get permission for my release and on September 26th, 1942, he came and took me out of the prison, exactly nine months and one day after my incarceration.

There actually was some excitement on the eve of my release. Having got the permission from Tokyo, Koyama, I was told, went to the Kempei Tai to arrange to take me out of the jail. They blandly told him that there was no person by my name on their list of persons imprisoned. The position was that I was taken in before the Kempei Tai organisation came into operation in Penang and since they had no jurisdiction over me I was not on their list. But when Koyama conveyed the denial of my presence in the jail, my friends thought that at the last minute I had been "liquidated." So the doctor came on a special visit late in the evening to make sure I was still there, and then Koyama obtained the written order for my release from the Kempei - Taicho (chief of the M.P.'s).

My exit from jail was impressive in the extreme. As Koyama was a person of high rank, the jail guard had formed up at the gate and presented arms, while the Japanese Military Police officers, also drawn up in line, bowed low as I walked out past them with Koyama. The latter opened his car door and said, "Get in Mr. Saravanamuttu," and this, I was told, was a signal honour from a Japanese in those days. Koyama took me to his house, let me have a shave and hot bath and gave me a scented handkerchief to put in my pocket. When I did so, I found my pockets stuffed full of currency notes.

I thought it was time to find out my position, so I asked Koyama, "You are doing all this good to me. In fact you have saved my life. Please tell me what it is you want me to do in return for all this."

He replied that he wanted me to do nothing; that when he came to Penang he found that it was wrong that I should have been locked up in prison, and so he got me released. He said he knew I had had a good career under the British and that if I saw for myself that the Japanese were good people and was willing to work for them, I could have an equally successful career under them.

That was that but about a week or so later I was taken to meet the Admiral of the Southern Regions, Admiral Ozawa, who told me that they (the Japanese) were going to

Ceylon in December. He said he was going to take me on his flagship and that when they got to Ceylon they would put me in charge of the country.

I protested and said that I was a nobody in Ceylon, that there were very many more important people there, and cited as an instance that my eldest brother, later Sir Ratnajoti, was at that time the Mayor of Colombo.

The Admiral replied, "We take you, we put you, we support you." And since I did not relish the prospect of another term of solitary confinement I remained silent.

It was this story that gave rise to the report that the Japanese wanted to make me King of Ceylon. Of course they did not mean to do anything of the sort; what they really wanted was to make me their stooge — another Quisling.

The planned invasion of Ceylon in December 1942 did not come off because the Japanese fleet, as also the U.S. fleet, had been badly crippled in the Coral Sea Battle in August that year. Admiral Ozawa did not probably know this in detail at the time he spoke to me, the Japanese having claimed a victory in that decisive naval encounter off Australia.

It was only after my release that I was able to get full details of what Malaya was undergoing under the Japanese occupation. It was a tale of tyranny, fear, merciless oppression accompanied by several executions. I had already had an indication of this by the sight of the hundreds that had been brought into the Penang jail soon after the Kempei Tai (Military Police) came into operation in March/April 1942. When I went out for my morning "bucket parade," I used to see groups of local people being questioned by Kempei Tai officers through their interpreters; most of them who were taken in at first were the teachers and students of the Chung Ling High School, which was the foremost Chinese school in Penang. The Japanese suspected this institution of being a "Communist cell." But there also were several others, again mostly teachers, who were taken in for questioning. The reason for this was simple. No English schools were allowed to function and the teachers were rendered jobless and, thereby embittered against the new regime, they refused to co-operate with the Japanese.

I was told that public executions had been a feature of the early days of the occupation. Some of these were carried out in the square within the Police Headquarters in Penang Road while a great many were carried out on the Esplanade at Butterworth. The officer in charge of the Police Garrison at Butterworth, Tadashi Suzuki, who was also in charge of all the police in Province Wellesley, gained quite a reputation for cutting heads off and earned the Tamil soubriquet of "Thalaivetty," i.e. headcutter. His interpreter was a Ceylon Moor by the name of Raphay, whose father had run a jeweller's business at Kobe in Japan before the war, and so was one of the few local people who was proficient in the Japanese language. In December 1941 he was on the staff of the well-known firm of building contractors, Gammon Malaya, at their office in Butterworth. He naturally was pressed into service when the Japanese took control. He told me that according to Suzuki, anyone who had his head cut off by his sword would go straight to heaven as his sword had been given to him by Tenno Heika, the Japanese Emperor — "The Son of Heaven." With long hair reaching his shoulders and a bristling moustache, Suzuki was a terror in Penang throughout the Japanese occupation and later when he became chief of the Penang Fire Brigade, he once fed the Municipal Engineer with cement dust for having failed to execute a job satisfactorily.

The classic story was told of how at one of the New Year celebrations, Suzuki chased the Japanese State Secretary in Penang round and round the table with his drawn sword. New Year was the most important Japanese festival and of course all the high officials who attended the Governor's luncheon used to be drunk towards the end of the party. But why Suzuki got away with most of his antics was because his uncle, Count Suzuki, was the Grand Chamberlain of the Imperial Household at Tokyo. He was certainly the most picturesque Japanese personality in Penang during the occupation. He went down in the Awa Maru, which was sunk by an American submarine early in 1945 and had only one survivor. The ship was carrying many top ranking military officers and administrators back to Japan to prepare for the defence of Japan.

As the Civil Administration began to be gradually established things became more normal but the most amusing

part of the Japanese occupation of Malaya was how the Chinese finally got control of the administration. All official documents had to be chopped with the seal of the Japanese officer carved on a square piece of ivory or plastic attached to a small holder. This seal was supposed to be in the personal keeping of the officer. Now the Japanese officers on overseas duty, like their counterparts of all other nationalities, had a failing for the opposite sex, so the Chinese used to introduce a pretty young girl as the private secretary to each important official. Thereafter it was a natural sequence for this private secretary to have control of the seal and it was a simple matter for a Chinese businessman to get any contract or official document duly chopped!

Such were the hardships and difficulties that the people of Malaya used to have to endure during the Japanese occupation but it must be admitted that there was the usual sprinkling of good officials. Penang was particularly fortunate in this matter as it was the Japanese Naval Headquarters in Malaya and Japanese naval officers, mostly trained in Britain, conformed to the best tradition of the Senior Service.

CHAPTER IX

UNDER JAPANESE RULE

Meanwhile the four communal committees, called Peace Preservation Committees, worked in co-operation with the Japanese military authorities and for the first two months they were the liaison bodies between the people and their new rulers. Accordingly provision stores, under the aegis of each communal committee, were set up to obtain supplies of rice etc. for distribution and these stores were, it must be admitted, very helpful to the people at the start. Of course there were the usual stories of the committee chairmen and their close followers indulging in graft, but though these rumours were not altogether without foundation most of them had to be discounted. The transition in Penang was affected quite smoothly and very soon the people went about their business as usual.

At the start the Japanese authorities first took control of all the cars and the petrol, allowing only the doctors and the committee members the use of their vehicles. Those working in the essential services were paid only in kind. They received their rations of rice, sugar, salt, etc.

The one institution in Penang that functioned without a break was the Penang General Hospital, due to the fortitude and public spirit of Dr. E. B. Evans, the Chief Medical Officer, who refused to evacuate with the other British public servants. Instead, Dr. Evans took possession of the Treasury keys from the Penang State Treasurer and drew out enough cash and more to pay the Medical Department staff their salaries for December 1941. I believe he was also able to pay them half-month's salary for January 1942.

When the Penang Service Committee was formed he handed me the Treasury keys and for three days I was a "millionaire," but I handed over the Treasury keys to the Japanese when they took charge of Penang, with all the cash intact!

Due to the public spiritedness and high sense of duty of Dr. Evans, the medical services in Penang functioned without a break during those critical days and the British Government, on strong representations from the public of Penang, awarded him the O.B.E. after the war.

When the Japanese arrived, I reported the case of Dr. Evans to their first commander and he said if the people of Penang so desired it, Dr. Evans could continue to work for them. When I reported this to Dr. Evans, his reply was that as a senior British public servant it would not be right for him to work under Japanese rule but the Japanese authorities treated him with generosity and respect and allowed him to live in the Hospital as an internee, and not confined in the jail like other British civilians who had been left behind in Penang. However, at the beginning of 1943 all the British civilian internees, including Dr. Evans, were transferred to Singapore where all the other Malayan internees were first housed at Changi Prison, and later at the Internment Camp at Sime Road.

An amusing story explains why the British civilians were interned at first in the Changi jail. It seems the Japanese conqueror of Singapore, General Yamashita, asked Sir Shenton Thomas, the Governor of Singapore, why the Japanese civilians were put in the jail instead of in an internment camp. Sir Shenton Thomas is said to have answered that the Changi jail was one of the coolest places in Singapore and so they were housed there. "If that is so," Yamashita is reported to have replied, "then all of you had also better go to the cool Changi jail" — and all the British civilians were marched there and spent the first year of their internment in the prison.

As a matter of fact the British authorities were caught unprepared when the war broke out and the jails were convenient places for locking up the Japanese, but one suspects that an underlying reason was the colonial mentality that considered anything was good enough for non-whites.

After my release, the Japanese, or rather Koyama, offered to provide me with employment. I told them that I would be able to manage on my own in Penang, and early

in 1943 I formed a company with purely Ceylonese capital, established a distillery and produced Ceylon Arrack, the first bottle coming out on the Ceylonese New Year's Day in April 1943. Ceylon Arrack is the national alcoholic drink in Ceylon, being distilled from coconut toddy. In this I started with an initial advantage in that the late S. K. S. Pillai was the toddy contractor for Penang. I must not also fail to mention that Yeap Hock Hoe on the day after my release came and gave me a cheque book, saying that there was $5,000 in the bank for me to do business with.

The great merit of our Ceylon Arrack was that is was free from lead, which poisoned those who indulged in other local liquors at that time due to the fact that most local distilleries, which sprang up like mushrooms during this period, used ordinary lead pipes for their stills. With my limited knowledge of chemistry I used pure "tin" for the pipes of my still and thereby avoided having any lead content in the liquor produced. When there was still some lead present due to the joints being of lead, I melted down some silver coins to make the joints. As a result of our drink being free from lead, the Japanese authorities put up notices in all the bars and restaurants advising their soldiers and sailors to drink only Ceylon Arrack.

As the prices of liquor continued to rise due to shortage of raw materials during the Japanese occupation of Malaya, our distillery continued to make money and we paid as much as 150 per cent dividend a month. This money helped our shareholders to provide themselves with essential food at the prevailing inflated prices. In fact it was the establishment of the distillery that enabled me to live through the occupation years, not merely in reasonable comfort but in the manner I had always been used to.

It was only after the fall of Singapore that the Japanese authorities started seriously organising the Public Services and this Japanese Military Administration was called Gunsaikan-bu. The various government departments were brought into operation with Japanese officers at the head and the old Malayan staff called back to work. The time-honoured nepotism which has been a feature of Asian set-up through the ages gained a big sway and the relations and friends of the "chief clerks" were squeezed into jobs, but generally normal conditions were restored.

There was one class as a whole, however, which suffered greatly and this was the school-master class, as English was no longer currency. Of sycophants and fortune hunters there was no lack in Penang. The only market was the "black market" and buying and selling became the standard occupation. Those with capital were able to amass fortunes on their turnover and Penang produced the usual quota of the new rich. That is not to say that we did not suffer the rigours of the Japanese occupation, and living conditions were far from satisfactory. To cite one instance all motor transport was confined to the Japanese and those who held high office under them. Most of us had to get about on bicycles, and as time went on we had to use the hard rubber tyres, pneumatic tyres and tubes being completely out of supply. Clothes of course, were always a difficulty and most of us went about in patched trousers and shirts.

From the middle of March, 1942, the Japanese Military Police or "Kempei Tai," an organisation similar to the German Gestapo, began to function and there ensued a reign of terror which continued throughout the occupation. At first they concentrated on the so-called Communists, who were in reality Chinese who supported the Chungking regime. Literally thousands of them were thrown into jail and tortured. Many of them died there including not a few innocent victims. At one time the Kempei Tai concentrated their attention on the Eurasian community who, they maintained, were pro-British in their sympathies. Numbers of them were arrested and tortured and many died in the jail. But the attention of the Military Police was not confined to any one class or community and the threat to report one to the "M.P.'s" (as they were known) would strike terror into the hearts of the hardiest. The staff and pupils of the Chung Ling High School in Penang was another group that were the special target of the Kempei Tai.

Of course, the black-market thrived and you could get anything at a price, even genuine Scotch whisky, which in 1945 went up to as much as 1,500 Japanese dollars a bottle. So did medicines and almost every thrifty householder always kept a small stock of such essentials as Aspro and "M and B" pills in the house. But above all this, there was a constant fear of arrest and imprisonment and torture by the Japanese Military Police. Several books of varying merit have been published depicting the plight of Malaya

under Japanese occupation and I do not propose to bore the reader with a repetition of what is best forgotten. But one had to be very careful about what one said for any stray unguarded remark — either critical of the Japanese or in support of the Allies — if conveyed to the Kempei Tai meant immediate arrest and torture. In fact hardly a day passed without some report of this happening to one or other of our friends or aquaintances. It was a case of living from day to day, not knowing what would happen the next day, and there is no doubt that this tension has had a terrible effect on that generation in Malaya who were at the impressionable age during the years of the Japanese occupation.

To all appearance, however, Penang went its way as usual and but for Japanese in uniform, one could have hardly believed that there was a war on or that we had been in the thick of it. The amusement places and dance halls were all open and flourishing; the Penang Turf Club had been re-organised and monthly race meetings were being held; parties and dinners as of old were rampant and the "tida-apa" or "never-mind" spirit held sway as of old. Prices generally were lower in Penang than elsewhere in Malaya and visitors were loud in praise of the comparative happy conditions on the island.

On "big occasions," like the anniversary of the declaration of the War of Greater East Asia (Dai Toa Senso) or the fall of Singapore, elaborate celebrations were held and the public were ordered to gather at the Broadcasting Station grounds (the old Victoria Green) and bow to Tenno-Heika (the Japanese Emperor) and be harrangued by the Japanese Governor, while community leaders made speeches expressing the loyalty and gratitude of the local people for the benevolent Nippon rule!

One must admit that this benevolence was not altogether absent. Arrangements were made for importing rice and other foodstuffs from Burma and Siam; the Jikeidan or Voluntary Police system was introduced, administration was efficiently carried out and communications rapidly re-established throughout the country.

But throughout there was an under-current of fear that

bred discontent and it can truly be said that even those who welcomed the Japanese most enthusiastically on their arrival, by the end of 1942 were longingly awaiting the day of their release from Nippon bondage. For it was nothing short of bondage. Despite the high promises of Tokyo statesmen regarding the freeing of Asia from the white man's bondage, the rulers they sent out to Malaya subjected the people to a worse form of bondage than ever existed under British administration. It was a rule of force and fear as even the leaders of the Indian Independence League were to learn when their views or policy disagreed with those of the Iwakuru Kikan. Even "General" Mohan Singh of the "Indian National Army" was locked up for refusing to allow an Indian force to go to the Burma front.

Worse than all, corruption was rife and graft rampant, even Japanese in high office not being immune to the lure of Mammon while morality was conspicious by its absence. Women, as in Japan, were relegated to a very inferior position and Malaya, that was never noted for its strict moral standards, became looser than ever. State lotteries were a monthly feature and "gambling farms" as of old were officially established throughout the land. It is no exaggeration to say that three and half years of Japanese rule put Malaya back, as far as the character of the people was concerned, at least half a century.

I was fortunate in having made a friend of a Japanese whose rank I never knew. He was obviously of very high rank though he was never in uniform. He was attached to the "Hikari Kikan," which took the place of the "Iwakuru Kikan" as the liaison body between the Indians and the Japanese Military Administration and all the officers of which were members of the Imperial General Staff. When he first came to Penang in the middle of 1943 he saw me and said he had received instructions that if he could not get anything done in Penang he was to ask me and I would be able to get it done for him.

At that time I thought this was only an excuse for keeping a close watch on me and my movements and we used to meet comparatively frequently probably at least once a month. His name was Hiyashi.

In course of time he became a good patron of our Ceylon Arrack and once, after a good session, he put his hand out to me and said, "Sara-San, you and I brothers." I replied. "Yes, Hiyashi-San, you and I are brothers whatever happens in this war."

He understood that the implication of my qualification meant that in my opinion I did not think Japan would win the war but he did not withdraw his offer and we shook hands on it. It was a promise he kept in all sincerity all the time he was in Penang.

There was once a case in which a Ceylonese artist had been arrested on suspicion of having made the design for counterfeit Japanese notes which were being circulated. After every effort had failed to get him released I appealed to Hiyashi. He spoke to the Kempei Taicho (the M.P. Chief) and on my giving him the assurance that the man was not guilty, he secured his release. That is one of the many instances of assistance for Ceylonese in difficulty that I was able to obtain from him. In another instance, I similarly secured the release of the brother-in-law of one of my closest friends who had been arrested on suspicion of having listened to Allied War news on the radio.

The culminating gesture of his friendship came on the eve of the surrender of the Japanese in August 1945. For some time he had not been to see me and when I met him one day in August, I asked him, "Brother, why is it you have not been to see me for such a long time ?" He replied, "You know how things are, and it is not good for you and for me to be seen together at this time."

He knew, like some of the other Japanese did, that somehow or other I used to get the real news and that, therefore, I knew that the surrender was imminent. He felt that if he had been seen with me those days I would have been in great disfavour with the local people as a close friend of a Japanese. Of course, I knew that I was no collaborator and my regard for him was a result of close personal friendship. So I told him, "Nonsense brother, I do not think anyone in Penang will turn against me. Come on Sunday to lunch."

On Sunday I was ready with a good lunch which I had prepared at considerable cost due to the highly inflated prices of foodstuffs, but Hiyashi never turned up. He still felt he could not embarass me. I was told he left for Japan via Siam before the actual surrender was announced. He later became, I understand, the Governor of Fukuoka Perfecture. He certainly is one of the finest gentlemen I have met in my life — a true Samurai.

Earlier in July 1945 I was concerned in a development as a result of which I could have been rearrested and probably lost my life. It was like this. Members of the Telecommunication Department had been sent to Siam to work on the "Death Railway" project and they had met some of the Malayan British prisoners of war working there. One of them who was from Bukit Mertajam, Retnam by name, returned on leave at the beginning of 1945 and he came to see me to tell me he had met Colonel de Buriatte of the Penang Volunteers, who was a Penang lawyer, and Curry of the Penang Branch of the Hongkong Bank. They had both made enquiries about me and sent me their regards. I thought no more about it till one day in July this same Retnam came to me to say that he was returning to Siam and that if I wished to send clothes or provisions, which they would appreciate, to my friends working on the "Death Railway" he was prepared to take them. I told him that even I was wearing patched clothes, but if he came the following week I would be able to give a couple of bottles of Ceylon Arrack which I was sure my friends would enjoy.

The following Sunday at the races, an old Ceylonese friend of mine, Underwood, whose son was working as an interpreter with the Kempei Tai, came up to me and, pretending he was talking about the races, told me how this boy Retnam had been pulled in for not returning to his post in Siam; under torture he had told the Kempei Tai of the message he brought me from my British friends on the "Death Railway." They had asked him to bring something from me to take to my friends to prove his story. Thus warned, I put Retnam off with an excuse when he came to collect the two bottles of Ceylon Arrack and the Kempei Tai beat him within an inch of his life for telling them what they thought was a falsehood about me. I learnt of this when immediately after the

liberation I received a frantic message from Retnam from the Bukit Mertajam Hospital that he had an important confession to make to me. I sent word back to him not to worry as I knew all about it and that I knew he had given me away under torture.

I am quite sure that it was the knowledge of my friendship with Hiyashi that prevented the Kempei Tai from pulling me in under suspicion as they would have done in another case, and I am also grateful to Underwood and his son for having given me that timely warning. The son is now a doctor in Kuala Kangsar and the personal physician to the Sultan of Perak, who has conferred on him the title of Dato.

It was only after September 1943 that Air Raid Precautions were re-adopted seriously, but though the siren was occasionally sounded from time to time, no planes visited Penang till November 5th 1944, when two B-29's came over Penang and remained overhead for a couple of hours. That day, as we learnt later, the Naval Base at Singapore was bombed but no bombs were dropped on Penang. The B-29's continued to pass over Penang on their way south and Penang received its share of "eggs" only on January 11th and February 1st, 1945, when the new factories built on the old Esplanade were blasted. Another hit was on the old St. Xavier's Institution building, which was being used as the Japanese Navy Headquarters. One "near miss" hit the Government offices but fortunately the raid was so early in the morning that hardly anyone was at work. Similar other "near misses" caused some civilian casualties but in the main only military objectives were made the targets. From this time onwards Penang had frequent alarms but although Singapore and Kuala Lumpur were bombed and we frequently saw the B-29's flying majestically over the island, we did not experience any more bombings.

Meanwhile all the Government and business offices as well as the military and naval establishment were shifted to the residential areas and the business area deserted. The E & O Hotel had been renamed Penang Hotel and was used exclusively by Nippon officials but they now moved into the Nurses' Quarters next to the General Hospital. This will give an idea of the thorough manner in which the Japanese

"evacuation" was carried out.

It was in this state of nervous tension that we heard of the collapse of Germany and of peace in Europe in May 1945. The Burma campaign by the British and Indian troops reached a climax about the same time with the fall of Rangoon, while in the Pacific the much-derided "island hopping" strategy of the Americans had resulted in the reconquest of the Philippines and the occupation in sequence of Saipan and Iwojima en route to Nippon proper. The battle for Okinawa was long and drawn-out and those of us who expected a quick finis to the Pacific War with the collapse of Germany were disappointed when July also ended without any signs of Japanese weakening. Of course the news we were treated to was severelly "vetted" in the best totalitarian style and the fall of the Tojo and Koiso Cabinets were made to seem merely evidences of the strengthening of the Japanese war effort.

Wireless sets had long been "fixed" on the Penang wave-length but there were not a few who had private short wave sets from which reports of the true state of affairs had trickled through. Despite this persistent drive of the Military Police against this offence of "listening in," through which many throughout Malaya lost their liberty or lives, "B.B.C. News" was always current and I, as a true journalist, always had a true measure of "real news."

From August 1st, things began to move rapidly. The daily bombing of Nippon by hundreds of B-29's and the imminent threat of an Allied invasion of Malaya had made us sit up and take notice all through July. The Potsdam Declaration on August 1st made it clear that a climax was soon to be reached. This happened when Russia invaded Manchukuo on August 9th but this was preceded by the first use of the atom bomb against Hiroshima on August 6. By August 11th, it seemed fairly certain that the rumours that Japan was suing for peace were correct and, despite the fact that some of us in the knew were aware of it a few days earlier, it was not till August 21st that the public of Penang were officially informed of the surrender.

In this connection a curious incident in which I was

concerned is worth repeating. Those of us who knew of the dropping of the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki were on pins and needles awaiting the news of the surrender by the Japanese. We knew the hitch was over the Japanese wanting to keep their Emperor with his status as the head of the nation unaltered. Then on the night of Saturday, August 11th, after liberal doses of Ceylon Arrack, I suddenly proclaimed to a small gathering of friends, "The Japanese can keep their Emperor. It is peace."

When I went to Ceylon in October and went through the back numbers of the papers which my wife had preserved for me, I found that the banner headline on Page One of the issue of the **Times of Ceylon** Sunday edition of August 12th read, "The Japanese Can Keep Their Emperor"! I am inclined to think that when the Sub-editor was writing the headlines, he transmitted a telepathic message which I picked up and proclaimed to my friends. Stranger things than that have happened.

Rumours were rampant in the country during this period and there was much speculation as to what form this surrender would take. There was a report of an Allied Task Force sailing towards Malaya, the original intention of which was to invade and liberate Malaya from the Japanese. There was another report that the commander of the Southern Regions, Count Terauchi, was not prepared to surrender. Then we heard that the Japanese Emperor had sent a personal representative from the Imperial Palace to convey the order of surrender to Terauchi and no Japanese could fail to obey such an order. But Subhas Chandra Bose, who realised that all his boats would be burnt if the Japanese surrendered, wanted to make a personal protest to the Emperor so the Japanese escorted him and his personal staff in two special planes on his mission. They stopped at Taipei in Taiwan en route and when taking off again Bose's plane crashed. Bose himself was badly burned and died in hospital at Taipei.

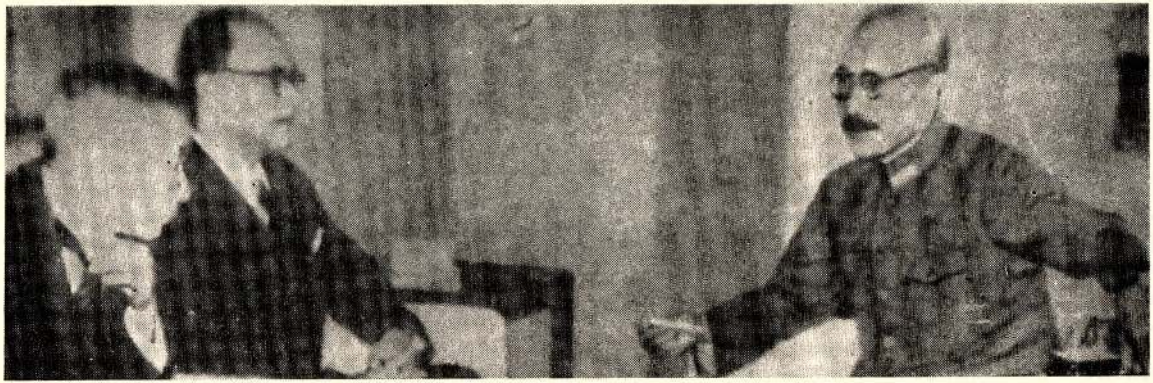
Of course the Japanese did not release this news and this added to the confusion of rumours that were circulating at the time. That Subhas Bose actually died at Taipei there is no doubt, in spite of the many reports that he was alive

that were current later. P. N. Sapru, son of Sir Taj Bahadur Sapru, told me later when he came to Penang to defend the so-called Indian war criminals, that when they were all walking to the court at Delhi for the trial of the Indian National Army officers, Colonel Habbibur Khan, who had accompanied Subhas Bose as his A.D.C. on the ill-fated journey, said that he personally saw the Indian leader in a critical condition at the hospital in Taipei and that it was to him that Subhas gave his wrist watch to be handed to his nephew, Sarat Bose, at Calcutta. Habbibur Khan was travelling on another plane.

There has been speculation to the present day whether the plane crash that caused Subhas Bose's death was really an accident or due to sabotage. I am inclined to the latter view. The surrender was the order of the Japanese Emperor, who to his subjects was God. So Subhas Bose's attempts to protest against that order was to them an act of sacrilege. Although they pretended that they were willing to take him to Tokyo, they probably planned the crash and the Japanese officers, who died with Bose, made the sacrifice willingly, believing that their souls would go straight to heaven for their noble deed. Subhas Chandra Bose was a man of strong character and superlative courage. His undertaking the hazardous journey by submarine from Germany to Malaya when all the seas were under Allied control, is convincing evidence of that courage. But he had a one track mind and his consuming desire was to drive the British out of India and everything else was secondary to that. Hence his jumping bail and escaping to Germany, where he knew Hitler would sooner or later commence the war against Britain and he would be able to pursue his aim from there.

When Japan overran Malaya, that brought him nearer India and gave him an opportunity to put into practice his plan of driving the British out by force — a consummation about which he had bet with Gandhi when he (Bose) was President of the Indian Congress for a short time. So when he arrived in Penang he reorganised the Indian Independence League and soon established the Azad Hind Fauj (Free Indian Army). He had a commanding personality and all the Indians in South-East Asia flocked to his standard and gave him unstinted loyalty. The leaders of the Indian Independence

THE I.N.A. — 5TH JULY 1943. MUNICIPAL PADANG, SINGAPORE



SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE MEETS GENERAL TOJO — 1943 With acknowledgement to Mr. Joginder Singh Jessy.

League, with the one notable exception of K. P. K. Menon, were scared and subservient to the Japanese. Bose stood up to the Japanese, would take no orders from them and made the Azad Hind Government a truly free organisation.

Of course, the Japanese gave him every support as it suited their plan, which was to invade India, and a platoon of the Azad Hind Fauj was with the Japanese forces that advanced right up to the walls of Imphal in March 1945. Subhas Bose had assured the Japanese that once he set foot on Indian soil, all Assam and Bengal would rally to a man to his support. This went wrong for a simple reason. When the Japanese advanced into Manipur, they circulated their "banana notes" in rupee currency and on these notes was printed the legend, "The Japanese Military Government promises to pay....." The British had only to secure these notes and circulate handbills on which facsimiles of them were produced with the comment, "This is the independence that Subhas Chandra Bose is bringing you." When Manipur was relieved by Mountbatten through airlifts, poor Subhas had to retreat with his "Fauj" back through Burma but such was his courage and loyalty that he refused to accept the motor transport the Japanese sent to him until similar transport was provided for the women volunteers of his "Rani of Jhansi Regiment."

But his judgement was clouded by his consuming hate of the British. On May 1st, 1945, he gave a public talk in Penang in which he said he knew the Germans personally and that they could never be defeated. At that date this was nonsense as we who were listening to the Allied radio broadcasts knew (and I am sure Bose himself knew) that the fall of Germany was imminent at that time.

I had a personal incident with Subhas Chandra Bose which bears repeating. He had obviously read the false report of my having been appointed the High Commissioner in Penang by the Japanese and I was told when he first arrived in Malaya he made enquiries about me, thinking no doubt that I would be one of his strongest supporters. But when all the others flocked to pay homage to him on his first official visit to Penang I made no attempt to contact him personally; I was firmly convinced even in 1944 that the Japanese would lose the war. Evidently Bose was annoyed at this lack of

response from me as well as from the Muslims in Penang, who were far from enthusiastic supporters of the Indian Independence League. So he came on a second visit to Penang and in a public speech attacked the "black sheep" who were not giving their fullest support for the Indian Independence movement. I was seated in the front row and during most of his speech he turned himself directly toward me.

Then in January 1945, he came to Penang and had the Muslim leader, Abdul Wahab, arrested and locked up by the Japanese. I think he wanted to have me also locked up because his Information Minister, Aiyer, sent for me and told me that since I was the one trained journalist in Malaya my services were badly needed to take charge of the Forward Broadcasting Station of the Azad Hind Government in Burma. I told Aiyer, whom I had known pre-war as Reuter's correspondent in Bangkok, that I need two or three days to make up my mind. I went to Aiyer in a couple of days later and told him that a large number of people were receiving help from me from my Ceylon Arrack business and if I suddenly went away all these people would be left stranded resulting in considerable suffering. I added that I was in the process of turning my business into a company and that when this was completed and arrangement made for the allowances to be paid to all these dependents, I would be free to go to Burma. I said this would be about March — I was only playing for time. When we gathered for a final meeting, Aiyer went up to Bose and told him something, obviously my reply. Bose nodded his head and went on to announce the arrest of Abdul Wahab. By March the Japanese and the Azad Hind Army were in full retreat before the advance of Mountbatten's Burma Army and the need for me to go to the Azad Hind Broadcasting Station in Burma didn't therefore arise!

That Bose had a generous feeling for his supporters was, however, shown in his final order as head of the Azad Hind Movement. He gave the orders that the various Indian Independence League headquarters throughout the country were to be converted into "Indian Welfare Centres" and all the funds invested in food and provisions for the relief of destitute Indians during the period of changeover. Raghavan,

who had returned to Penang from Singapore, had 900,000 Japanese dollars of Azad Hind Government funds transferred to Penang and invested the money in foodstuffs. But when the Penang Service Committee asked for supplies for the food kitchens set up after the liberation, we were told that the godown in which the foodstuffs were stored had been looted.

Before the surrender was announced the Japanese Police Chief of Penang summoned all the liquor dealers, including me, and instructed us not to sell any liquor to Japanese servicemen. This was a necessary precaution as there was no knowing to what lengths the Japanese soldiers would have gone if they became drunk during that tense period. In actual fact the Japanese Army and Navy personnel behaved with exemplary discipline and there were no incidents whatever in the interim period between the announcement of the surrender and the landing of the British troops.

CHAPTER X

THE LIBERATION

With the official announcement of the surrender, plans were being made for receiving the British forces when they arrived to liberate Malaya from the Japanese occupation. No one knew where and how the reoccupation would be staged. On the radio — everyone was listening to the B.B.C. news by now — there was the announcement that a Task Force was sailing towards Malaya but now that the Japanese had surrendered we assumed — rightly as it turned out — that the first landing would be made at Penang. Then on the 1st of September, 1945, we heard that the H.M.S. Nelson, with Admiral Walker on board, had dropped anchor in the North Channel just off Muka Head. The formalities took a couple of days and it was on the morning of Monday, September 3rd that two British destroyers tied up at Swettenham Pier, the "Old Jack" was hoisted on the flagstaff there and British troops landed in Penang.

We, the old Penang Service Committee, had reformed ourselves and we were ready with the Town Band to welcome the British troops. In fact, as they emerged from the harbour area our band played the First Company of the Marines into the town, marching at their head, to the E & O Hotel.

The first day was spent in the formalities of handing over. It was not possible for me to publish my paper on the day of the liberation as I had promised to do. I had continued publication till the actual day of evacuation, but my first issue after the reoccupation came out on Tuesday, September 4th.

Again luck was on my side. The Senior Civil Affairs Officer of the British Military Administration who came in charge of Penang was J. A. Harvey, a former Collector of Land Revenue in Penang who was very well-known to me. So it was plain sailing for me and I received every assistance from him in return for which I assisted the new set-up as much as I could.

In fact when our Committee went in a body to pay a personal call on Colonel Harvey, to give him his correct rank under the British Military Administration, he came out and greeted me saying he remembered me quite well but was very hazy about people like Khoo Sian Ewe and Hussein Abdoolcader, who were the respective pre-war leaders of the Chinese and Indian communities in Penang. Harvey made a habit of consulting me on most matters and not only gave me a personal loan of $3,000 to enable me to pay the staff of the **Straits Echo** half month's salary to help them to carry on but allowed me to occupy the old Echo building so that I could resume publication of the paper from there on my birthday, September 21st.

The Military Administration immediately devalued the Japanese currency to zero, and so a large portion of the population, particularly the poorer sections, were left without any means of purchasing their daily needs. We got the Penang Service Committee to function again and, with donations of rice and foodstuffs from the various merchants, we established five food kitchens in Penang and provided one meal a day for an average of 10,000 people for one month.

It was indeed an outstanding public service and, with Colonel Harvey's connivance in putting the telescope to the blind eye, I was able to collect donations of rice, red beans and salt fish from the alleged collabarators to keep the food kitchens at full supply during this period. In fact large surpluses of jagong (Indian corn) and ragi (millet) were sold to the racehorse owners to feed their nags when the food kitchens closed down. This service was staffed by a host of voluntary workers, the chief of whom was Koh Sin Hock, the honorary secretary — a public spirited citizen if ever there was one.

Another service we did was to point out to the Military Administration that unless money was circulated the recovery of the economy of the island would be very slow. So, on our suggestion, small sums of money up to a maximum of five dollars a family were distributed to really needy cases, utilising the Rimpohan, or "Good Neighbour" organisation established by the Japanese. In this manner some $35,000 was put in circulation in Penang and this contributed to restore to Penang the happy atmosphere for which it had always been noted.

Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, Far East greeting the author at the Bayan Lepas aerodrome on his arrival for an inspections visit to Penang in 1945. In the centre is the chief Reporter of the Straits Echo, Chia Poteik.

I returned to my full time job as Editor of the **Straits Echo**, shortage of newsprint making it difficult to publish the **Pinang Gazette**. We had to print a tabloid paper of four pages, each about 12" x 8" in size, but with all the advertisements of the British Military Administration we were more than able to make ends meet. Also the people were hungry for real news; the paper used to be snatched up as soon as it was on the streets.

I remember my first issue. I had written the leader for it when in gaol with the headline "Non Nobis" — following the Psalmist and giving the credit for the victory and liberation to where it was really due. I had resolved when in prison to make this the theme of my first publication after the war was over and I was fortunate to have been able to carry out my resolution. I was told that copies of this issue were sold at a premium to those who managed to get hold of one. I reproduce the editorial here for what it is worth.

> "One thousand three hundred and fifty-four days — that was the exact duration of the hideous nightmare of Japanese rule that Penang had to endure. The relief and joy of the people of this island was amply manifested in the spontaneity and magnitude of the demonstration with which the British and Allied forces that landed shortly after midday yesterday were greeted. Nothing could crush that enthusiasm of the Penang public, and although barricades were put to the approaches to the waterfront, thousands managed to slip through the cordon of sentries placed by the Japanese. But once the British Marines had landed scant respect was shown to the Japanese sentries and crowds surged forward to welcome and cheer the lorry loads of troops that passed through on their way to their billets. It is, therefore, somewhat redundant for us to state that the people of Penang, to a man, woman and child, down to the newest born babe, are glad and happy that the Japanese have been turned out and that British rule has returned, as we knew it eventually would, to this pretty little island of ours. We do so only because it is proper that the fact should be placed on record.

"This publication of our old newspaper can be taken as in indication that the old order is being restored and we take this opportunity to appeal to the public of Penang to assist in every way the restoration of that order. Some there are among us who have suffered more than the rest; some have even lost loved ones not only as a result of war but through unjust oppression. We share their sorrow and extend our sympathy to them. But we beg that no personal rancour or petty revenge be allowed to mar the peace that has come to Penang, Malaya and the world. It is a stupendous thing and should overshadow all else.

"In the midst of our rejoicing we also must be pardoned if we strike a sober note. The Allies have won this war. We would have found it hard to believe in a Benign Providence if that had not been the final result. So let us not forget that through all the trials and hardships it was the hand of that same Benign Providence that guided events and brought them to this happy consummation. We were one of the thousands who underwent incarceration during the Japanese occupation but we were fortunate in having been able to occupy our time in reading, reflection and meditation, deriving much comfort from the virile sentiments expressed by the Psalmist. On this occasion we would, therefore, refer our readers to Psalm 115 and urge them to sing with the Psalmist with heart and voice; 'Non Nobis.' "

I was again fortunate to have been present at the Penang airport at Bayan Lepas when Lord Mountbatten first set foot on Malayan soil. It was again one of my lucky breaks. T.V. Templeton of Mount Pleasure was in charge of the catering at the Residency where the British Military Administration VIPs were billetted. He rushed to me one morning with the news that he had been asked to prepare a top dinner for 25 for some VIPs who were coming that day. Instinctively my journalist mind added two and two to five and concluded that the VIPs were Mountbatten and his staff. I pressed a friend's car into service, bluffed my way past the

sentry at the entrance to the aerodrome, and was on the tarmac when the York aircraft with Mountbatten and his staff landed. The Supremo was accompained by General Slim and Air Marshal Sir Keith Parker.

I had taken my reporter and photographer with me. So I sent my reporter, Chia Poteik, up to Mountbatten to tell him he represented the local newspaper and would he allow us to take a photograph. He asked my reporter, "Is your Editor here ?" and on my being pointed out, he came up to me and greeted me with, "How long did they lock you up ?" "Nine months, Sir," I replied, "That is all past and let's forget about it," he commented.

I was amazed at what I thought was his wonderful intelligence service that even knew about poor humble me but Harvey told me afterwards it was he who had told the Supremo all about me !

With characteristic courtesy, Mountbatten insisted being photographed with Slim and Keith Parker but anyway the **Straits Echo** came out the next morning with a scoop picture !

After the liberation my luck again held as Sir Edward Gent was appointed Governor of the Malayan Union. I had known him well at Oxford. Even the Military Commander of the occupying forces, General E. L. Roberts, was a brother of the Dickoya (Ceylon) planter, H. S. Pelham Roberts, and I had played cricket against "E. L." at Darawella once when he was there on a holiday and also in English club cricket.

One of the first things I did after the liberation was to steal a ride on an R.A.F. plane from Penang to Colombo, to see my wife and children, with whom I had no contact for the four years of the Japanese occupation of Malaya. How did it happen ? I had become friendly with the Commander of the Butterworth Aerodrome, one Wing Commander Rose, and told him of my plight and how anxious I was to see my family as soon as possible. So he put me on a B-24 that was making a routine flight from Butterworth to Trincomalee.

It was a bomber with no provisions for seating and I had to lie on a blanket on the floor. There were also no facilities for meals and all I had on the five-hour flight was bread and tinned fruit. But I arrived safely at Trincomalee at about 3 p.m. on October 20th, 1945, the first Ceylonese to have made a direct journey by air from Malaya to Ceylon. From there I went by car to Colombo, arriving at the house my wife and children were staying at 7 a.m., to surprise my daughter who was then just opening the doors.

The news of my arrival in Colombo created quite a sensation, as the **Daily News** had already carried my story of the evacuation and the takeover of Penang by the Japanese, under the heading "Penang's Nightmare." I had sent a copy of the paper in which I had published the article through the doctor of the destroyer that first touched at Penang. And on the morning after my arrival I was surprised to see D. S. Senanayake and O. E. Goonetilleke arrive at the small house that my wife and children were then occupying in Greenlands Road in Havelock Town, Colombo. They were anxious to know about conditions in Malaya and how the Ceylonese in Malaya had fared and were agreeably surprised when I told them that we had not done too badly and that there was really little need for great concern.

They both told me of the impending independence for Ceylon which had been negotiated just then and outlined the terms of the agreement. When Stephen Senanayake asked what I thought of it, I immediately told him that the only issue on which there could be criticism was the granting of the bases to the British.

"But Manicam," he countered, "there is no fixed period for the lease of these bases. We can ask them to leave at any time." This clearly showed what was in his mind and gave the lie to all the talk of a secret treaty with the British. We now know that when Bandaranaike wanted them back, these bases were readily given up by the British. The British kept to the original agreement and handed them back to Ceylon without any fuss. D. S. arranged for me to see the Governor, Sir Henry Monk-Mason Moore, and there was a small sensation when the Governor's car came to my little house to take me to "Queen's House."

When I was in Ceylon I was interviewed by the Reuter correspondent and he asked for my views about the so-called collaborators. I told him that there was really no such thing as collaborators. The Japanese were the **de facto** rulers of Malaya and it was the duty of all the people to carry out their orders. Only those who took advantage of the positions under the Japanese to harass or ill-treat the local population were liable to arrest. The Field Security people in Penang were excited about this and sent a signal to Colombo that I was a Communist and should be sent back under arrest! When I asked the Governor, Sir Henry Monk-Mason Moore about it, he told me not to worry — they had sent the signal to the wrong place.

Wing Commander Rose had given me priority of "B Plus" for my passage for the return journey, and I had actually weighed out and was ready to board the sea plane at Koggala on October 30th when the flight was cancelled owing to bad weather. Then came the transfer of Mountbatten's Headquarters from Peradeniya to Singapore and I was held up for mearly two months. Eventually I returned to Penang by sea plane on December 22nd, 1945.

As soon as I got back I was faced with a threat of a strike of my newspaper staff. As I learnt in Ceylon from the news cabled out from Malaya, the cost of living had sky-rocketed in Malaya in the two months following the reoccupation and some essentials had gone up in price as much as 200 and 300 per cent. So I had already decided to revise the salaries to provide the staff with a living wage. During my enforced absence in Ceylon, F. H. Grummit had returned to Penang and, like the hard businessman that he was, refused them when the staff approached him for increases to meet the inflated cost of living. So the staff had signed a notice that they would go on strike on January 1st unless substantial increases of their pay was sanctioned before that date.

I was very amused to see that their names had been signed round a circle so as to prevent my finding out who were the ring leaders of the movement as I would have if they signed in the normal way. They feared my temper and thought I would give them my usual terrific blowing up!

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and the author, both garlanded, at a reception during Nehru's visit to Penang in 1946.

Anyway I told Grummit to go back to Singapore and that I would deal with the situation. I called a meeting of the staff and told them they were fools to think they could hoodwink me by signing round a circle, but added that I had been worried when I learnt in Ceylon of the colossal rise in prices and had worked out a scheme for increases. I would not, however, I said, negotiate with the threat of a strike over my head; if they would withdraw their notice, then I would submit my scheme for consideration and approval with ammendments mutually agreed to. They of course withdrew the notice.

My scheme surpassed their wildest dreams. I made the minimum monthly salary $50 (there were office boys who were getting as low as $16 and $17), all salaries below $100 were given 100% increases, between $100 and $150 — sixty per cent increase, between $150 to $200 forty per cent increase and above $200 twenty per cent increase. Grummit complained that I had been infected by the Japanese "banana mentality" when I told him of the terms of settlement, but the staff worked so enthusiastically that we continued to make the same profit as before in spite of the big increase in the salary bill. When Grummit suggested that I had increased my own salary too, I told him he was talking nonsense. The thought never entered my head as I continued to draw my pre-war monthly salary of $900, which was considered sky-high by the standards of those days.

The story of Malaya under the British Military Administration was not a very happy one. The civil administrators all held military ranks and the palpable mistakes they made led to them being dubbed "Banana Colonels" and "Banana Majors" etc., a reference to the worthless currency circulated by the Japanese which were referred to as "banana notes" from a banana tree that was in the design of those notes. The climax came when the Chinese in Singapore celebrated February 15th, the date of the surrender of Singapore by the British, as a day of rejoicing, instigated no doubt by some Communists who had infiltrated their ranks. The incensed British national servicement broke up Chinese association buildings indiscriminately and tore down pictures of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, who was one of the Allied leaders. I was sent pictures of these acts of vandalism

and I remember I wrote an editorial reflecting the "sense of frustration" under which the whole country was labouring. One of the "Banana Colonels" at Ipoh took strong exception to this and told my representative in Ipoh that he wanted me to publish an editorial written by him in reply! He had to be reminded politely that only the Editor wrote editorials but that if he sent in a letter it would be published. The officers of the British Military Administration were like Mary of the rhyme; when they were good they were "very very good" but when they were bad "they were horrid." Some of the latter were guilty of open graft and corrupt practices so much so that in another editorial I was constrained to write: "One of the psuedonyms of the B.M.A. has become Black Market Association." Anyway that editorial resulted in a "Banana Colonel" at Butterworth being charged and given a jail sentence of twelve months. Certainly the British Military Administration in Malaya was not a credit to the "British" part of it.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, accompanied by his daughter, Indira, came to Malaya in 1946. He was met by Mountbatten personally and drove together with the Supremo in a jeep through the streets of Singapore. The stranded thousands of the Indian National Army or Azad Hind Fauj, who had been left without a leader after Bose's death and were treated as disloyal outcasts by the British and general public, rallied to greet him in the belief that he would champion their cause; after all it was for the independence of India that they had joined the movement. But Nehru at that time had not made up his mind about them; it was only on the eve of the trial of the Azad Hind Fauj officers at New Delhi later that he decided in their favour. So he did not give these dejected men much encouragement and their disappointed comment was that Panditji after having cocktails with Mountbatten had himself become a "Sahib."

For his visit to Penang I was elected Chairman of the All Communities Reception Committee and it was a terrible task to fit in all the requests for his presence into the crowded programme that was drawn up. I had arranged for him to drop in at the headquarters of the Town Committee of the Malayan Communist Party, then an acknowledged open group, after the dinner given by the Chinese community

but Nehru had cancelled that engagement on the ground that his programme was too heavy. An M.C.P. delegation, however, turned up at the dinner and insisted that the Indian leader should at least drive to the entrance of the headquarters where they would just greet him and garland him. It would take only a few minutes, they said. When I approached him, Panditji flared up at me in his usual manner and protested, "You are inhuman, Mr. Saravanamuttu." But he was finally persuaded to accede to the requests of the M.C.P. delegation. After the dinner I let him go on ahead and when I arrived at the M.C.P. headquarters about 10 minutes after him, I found he had gone into the reception hall where he was seated begarlanded, all smiles and listening to a long string of songs and other items that had been arranged to welcome him. He spent the best part of 1½ hours there instead of the "few minutes" and kept an important group who had come from Singapore and Kuala Lumpur to meet him waiting. This was a typical example of Nehru's mercurial temperament.

The Indian leaders from all over Malaya, including R. Jummabhoy, K. P. K. Menon and R. Ramani, had come to ask Nehru to make a ruling about those who had taken a prominent part in the Azad Hind movement of Subhas Chandra Bose. They particularly wanted him to ask Raghavan, the "Finance Minister," to account for the thousands and tens of thousands of gold ornaments that were showered on Bose by the Indian public. Raghavan's explanation that he did not know what had happened to them; he only knew that Bose had taken two trunk loads of them with him on his final fatal trip to Tokyo. There was a lot of heated haggling but Nehru's final ruling was that it was the cause and not the individual that was important.

Civil administration was resumed in Malaya in April, 1946, with the arrival of Sir Edward Gent as the Governor of the Malayan Union with Singapore remaining as a separate Colony. There was, however, solid Malay opposition to this set-up, which was the outcome of the notorious MacMichael Treaties, which the various Sultans later repudiated, claiming that their signature had been obtained under duress.

The Sultans of Kedah and Perak had succeeded to their titles during the Japanese occupation and their formal

recognition by the British was pending. The old Sultan of Johore, on the other hand, declared that in his joy over the return of the British he had signed anything they put before without even bothering to read it! In the case of the Sultan of Selangor, his reinstatement (he had been deposed by the Japanese and superseded by his elder brother) depended on British favour.

Dato Onn bin Ja'affar led a country-wide boycott by the Malays of all the Councils set up under the Malaya Union. It was an impossible situation and Malcolm MacDonald arrived in Penang on May 24th, 1946, with the rank of Governor-General, to negotiate with the Malays. The outcome was the Federation of Malaya Agreement which came into force on Feb. 1st. 1948. It was an agreement between the British Sovereign and the Sultans of the Malay States which brought into force a set-up for Malaya and which is now perpetuated with ammendments as the Federation of Malaysia Constitution. This agreement was largely the result of the driving force of Dato Onn, on one side fighting for rights of the indigenous Malays, and the tact and skill in negotiation of Malcolm MacDonald, representing the British Government.

The non-Malay population, of course, protested that their point of view had not been consulted in drawing up this agreement. A body known as the Communities Liaison Committee under the chairmanship of Clough (now Dato Sir) Thuraisingham was appointed to put forward the views of the non-Malay communities, MacDonald attending all their meetings as an observer. In this manner a constitution acceptable to most was eventually reached.

Sir Edward Gent had been the wicket-keeper for Trinity in that famous Trinity-St. John's inter-collegiate match at Oxford to which I have referred earlier. So he and I were no strangers. But it was Malcolm MacDonald who played a major part in winning back the confidence of the people of Malaya to British rule. The son of the first Labour Prime Minister of England, Ramsay MacDonald, and President of the Oxford Union in his time, Malcolm MacDonald is undoubtedly an outstanding personality.

In his time as Dominion Secretary he had settled the English - Irish deadlock in the 30's; as Colonial Secretary he all but settled the Palestine problem, while as British High Commissioner to Canada in the war years he played an important part in negotiating the agreement whereby the R.A.F. personnel were trained in Canada during the days of the Battle of Britain. It was this great negotiating ability that undoubtedly made the British Labour Government at the time to send him to settle the Malayan problem and the present satisfactory conditions that prevail in that country are largely due to his skill in negotiation, the background to which was his transparent sincerity.

I remember I once asked him how it was that he failed to settle the Palestine problem. He replied that that was a case not of "right against wrong" but "right against right." It will be remembered that the Balfour Declaration promised the Jews a Home in Palestine while T. E. Lawrence promised the Arabs sovereignty over the territories they had occupied for nearly 2,000 years. The first promise was the reward to the Jewish leader, Dr. Chiam Wiezman, for his services as a scientist to the Allied cause in World War I. The British Government offered him the highest honours but he refused them all and said all he wanted was a Home for his people, the Jews. This resulted in the partition of Palestine and the birth of a new nation, Israel, but the issue of the displaced Palestinians has not yet been solved and the Arab - Israeli issue still remains at a deadlock. No wonder Malcolm MacDonald found the Palestine problem beyond solution.

The following personal anecdote will illustrate Mac-Donald's absolute fairness of mind. Soon after his arrival in Penang I was invited to lunch with him at the Residency, and I found it was a tete-a-tete affair. He told me that he understood I had a close knowledge of Malayan conditions and that he would be obliged if I would give him a frank summary of the position, not holding anything back. I did this to the best of my ability. Then I told him, "Mr. MacDonald, I have been quite frank with you and I hope you will be equally frank with me."

"Of course, of course," he replied.

"You remember the Alantic Charter which Churchill and Roosevelt put out in 1941. You remember Atlee got up in Parliament and said that the principle of self-determination applied to everyone even the backward African people," I continued. "But Churchill, when he came back, said this did not apply to India."

"Too bad, too bad," commented MacDonald, falling into my trap.

"And what the hell did you do about it ?" I asked him. "You were a member of the Cabinet at the time."

MacDonald was quite taken aback as he never expected such a frontal attack.

"Of course I'm all kinds of a fool," I continued. "I wrote an editorial in my paper at that time saying that if there was a God, Mr. Churchill would not be Prime Minister when England won the war."

"Mr. Churchill was not Prime Minister of England when England won the war in the East ! There is a God," I added.

One would have thought that he would have been sore with me for having thus pinned him down. But I was told that when somebody asked him a few days later what he thought of me, he was said to have remarked, "Sara is a good man."

One or two other minor matters in the immediate post-war period in Penang are worth mentioning. The first refers to Major Bowe, who was in charge of the Indian Section of Field Security. He had, of course, contacted Sir Hussein Aboolcader on first arriving in Penang and the latter put him on to me. I discovered that his Senior Officer in the Indian Army was Major Hammatsinjhi, the brother of Duleep, and to whom I have referred earlier. As Hammat and I had been good friends it made a common bond between Bowe and myself. I also discovered that Bowe was a Southern Irishman and I asked him what the hell he was doing in the British Army ?

Bowe arrested Raghavan and Dr. Menon, the Penang

Indian leaders, and housed them in the Penang jail. Mrs. Raghavan appealed to me for assistance. I saw Bowe and pointed out to him that now we were under "civilised" and not "Japanese" control and that Raghavan and Menon were entitled to treatment as "political prisoners." He readily agreed and the Indian leaders were allowed to receive normal food from home and receive weekly visits from their families. How different from the treatment I received from the Japanese! After an enquiry the two were released.

Others who were on the list were interrogated, asked to appear before the magistrate and publicly absolved but many like Lim Koon Teck, rightly considered this in itself an insult.

Bowe told me I was also on the list as "puppet Governor of Penang" but that he had already reported on me. I told him if I was called up to be absolved, I would blast the British Intelligence Service in my paper, so I was spared that doubtful honour.

The other matter concerns the lawyer who came from Tokyo to defend the Japanese war criminals. He came to see me and said he was asked by his Government to see me. His instructions were that I was "the one man in Malaya" who would speak the truth! It was a very high compliment indeed and wiped out any feeling I had against the Japanese for locking me up when they came to Penang. I gave some information about the last Kempei Taicho of Penang, Captain Terata, and his death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. He was sent back when all war prisoners were eventually released and is now living happily in his homeland.

Although my paper continued to flourish, the death of the proprietor, Frank Grummit, who was also my close friend, somewhat clipped my feathers. I was not able to plough in the profits to make improvements to the paper since his brother, Corrie, who took over directorship, felt that his job was to collect as much money as possible for the minors.

So I was induced to consider seriously the invitation

given to me by D. S. Senanayake, that I should return to Ceylon and make my services available to my own country. I made a trip to Ceylon in February 1947 to find out what prospects I had of serving in the Overseas Service when Ceylon became an independent country. As a result, I resigned my job as Managing Editor of the North Malayan Newspapers at the end of 1947 but it was not till January 1950 that I was appointed as the first Ceylon Commissioner in Singapore and Malaya.

I cannot close this chapter without paying tribute to the late Francis Harrison Grummit, the proprietor of the **Straits Echo** during the 16 years I worked on that newspaper. I have no hesitation in stating that, but for his unfailing understanding and an unbounding patience with my many failings. I would also have been one of those who fell by the wayside owing to the taint of irresponsibility that often got me into many a scrape in my young days, whatever other claims I had for success. To an astute business brain, Grummit, added an unfailing kindness of heart that was not generally known to the people of Penang whose estimate of him was merely that he was a hard businessman.

He came up in life the hard way, as he always told me. No silver spoon for him. A board school product, he passed first in his year in the Chartered Accountants examination and joined the City firm of accountants of McAuliffe, Davis and Hope. Fortunate to marry the only daughter of the head of the firm, Sir Henry McAuliffe, he became the senior partner of the firm in Malaya. Although he had a fixed hallucination at the time of his tragic death that he was ruined man, his estate in Malaya was proved at many millions.

But it is to his many acts of kindness and charity, not generally known and for which I got the undeserved credit, as well as his unstinted support for the many public movements initiated and carried out by the **Straits Echo** that I wish to refer here. Whenever a member of the staff applied for a loan to meet the funeral expenses of a member of the family, Grummit used to tell me to give the money as a gift. A loan, he said, would only push an already impoverished person into further difficulties. I remember when T. J. Williams, an old member of the staff, died leaving a widow

and young family unprovided as is usual with newspaper men, it was on Grummit's suggestion that a pension was paid to the widow till the eldest son was able to finish school and secure a job. And even after that he sanctioned a small pension for the widow

All the many public events that the **Straits Echo** sponsored in the thirties, such as the first Bicycle Carnival and the Swimming Race, had his fullest approval as also the progressive policy advocated in the editorial column of the paper.

The culmination came when he readily agreed to my suggestion to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of the Accession of King George V with a Fund to establish a Home for destitute old people in Penang who used to beg in the streets. He joined Towkay Yeap Chor Ee in heading the subscription with a donation of $10,000 and allowed me to use the staff and resources of the paper to organise the collection of the Fund and made it a success. And it was under his chairmanship that the Silver Jubilee Home at Sungei Dua was established; it continues to function to the present day.

His final act of generosity in one that I can never forget. My wife and two children were in Ceylon during the Japanese occupation of Penang, cut off completely from me. Grummit not only sent them the initial remittance of $3,000 requested by me but throughout the war years paid an annual allowance to my wife. At that time he did not know if he would ever see me alive again. And when, after the war, I gave him the full account of all the money he had sent my wife, he denied all knowledge of it and did not debit it to my account in the books of the **Straits Echo**. Kindness of heart is truly a gem without any price.

I was happy to see that his eldest son, Henry, who was sent to Brasenose College, Oxford, on my advice, returned to Penang to carry on the family name. However, he retired at the end of 1968.

CHAPTER XI

AS CEYLON COMMISSIONER

The setting up of my office in Singapore as Ceylon Commissioner was not a difficult task for me but I had to wait till the end of January till I received the green light from Ceylon to present my Letter of Credence. But those three weeks were not spent idly. Malcolm MacDonald, who had by this time been appointed the United Kingdom Commissioner-General in South-East Asia, was living at the Sultan of Johore's palace at Bukit Serene and he invited me to a dinner in January 1950 to meet Dr. Philip Jessup who, as roving Ambassador for U.S. President Truman, was touring Asia. This invitation was typical of Malcolm as I had not yet assumed my official duties but it gave me a wonderful entree into high circles in Singapore. At the dinner were the members of the Excutive Council in Singapore as well as Dato Onn, the Malay leader of the Federation of Malaya, and all the Services Chiefs.

After dinner, Malcolm invited everyone to take part in frank and free discussions. "Don't mind treading on anybody's corns," he said. "You can certainly tread on my corns!" Jessup led off with what was to my mind a terrible statement. "The U.S. Government," he declared, "support British rule in Malaya; we do not think it an example of imperialism or colonialism, which terms are somewhat loosely used by the press in these days," and then went on to outline the broad lines of American policy.

I waited for Dato Onn or C. C. Tan, then Singapore's political leader, to start the discussion but for a few minutes there was complete silence. I was bristling at Jessup's derogatory reference to the press; though I had become a diplomat, once a journalist is always a journalist. So I rushed in where angels feared and said, "I now represent Ceylon in Malaya so I cannot speak for this country despite my twenty years residence here, but I would like to tell Dr. Jessup what British rule meant for Ceylon, which today is fortunately independent. The accepted British policy has been to develop the colonial territories to produce primary crops which were taken to the metropolitan country,

processed there and then brought back and marketed in the Colonies. This was done with the coconuts, rubber and tea which Ceylon produces. Even the famous Ceylon tea was taken to London and blended in Mincing Lane and sold back to Ceylon. If that is not colonialism, if that is not imperialism, I don't know the meaning of those words. I am quite sure a similar situation prevails in Malaya today."

You could have heard a pin drop. Dato Onn then chipped in, "I entirely agree with what Sara has said," and poor Philip Jessup did not open his lips for the rest of the evening.

But the best thing was the reaction of Admiral Sir Patrick Byrnd, the Naval C-in-C of the China Station, who came up to me at the end of the party and said, "Thank you Mr. Saravanamuttu for explaining the position so nicely. I never understood it till today."

One of the key problems of the Government of Ceylon and the Ceylonese in Malaya was the position with regard to citizenship that had arisen as a result of the declaration of the independence of Ceylon on February 4th, 1948. Hitherto, there had been no problems, as both Ceylon and the Straits Settlements were British Colonies and the Malay States were British protected areas. Travel between the territories had been free, no passports being necessary. Now travel documents were essential.

The new Ceylon Citizenship Act had also been brought into force from November 1949. According to this, anyone who acquired any other citizenship voluntarily or by the operation of law ceased to be a citizen of Ceylon. According to the Federation of Malaya Agreement, which came into force on February 1st, 1948, anyone of British parents who was born in any one of the Malay States and resided there at the age of 18 became a citizen of the Federation of Malaya by operation of law.

Furthermore, all those of Ceylonese parentage who were born in British protected territory, i.e. in any of the Malay States, were by operation of law citizens of the United Kingdom and the Colonies. And all those born in the Straits Settlements, i.e. Penang, Singapore and Malacca, were

similarly citizens of the United Kingdom and the Colonies. This meant that all children born to Ceylonese parents in Malaya were will-nilly deprived of their Ceylon citizenship. Furthermore, conditions of service in Malaya gradually became such that preference in promotion went to Malayan citizens and later only the children of Malayan citizens were admitted to Malayan schools.

Therefore, Ceylonese who were employed in Malaya and would not have been able easily to get employment if they returned to Ceylon, were forced to adopt Malayan citizenship. These problems were forcibly presented to me when as Ceylon Commissioner I toured Malaya to meet Ceylonese in all parts of the country. I, therefore, made representations to my Government and the Ceylon Citizenship Act was amended in 1951 to meet these two points namely :

(a) Those entitled to citizenship of Ceylon by descent if they acquired citizenship of any other country by operation of law could, when they reached the age of 21, resume their status of Citizen of Ceylon by descent by renouncing such foreign citizenship.

(b) Those who were entitled to citizenship of Ceylon by descent and who acquired the citizenship of any other country while abroad shall, if they returned to Ceylon to be ordinarily resident in the country, be entitled to resume their citizenship of Ceylon by descent on renouncing whatever other citizenship they had acquired.

With regard to the first of these amendments, it was easy to persuade the Legal Draughtsman that the section stipulating "no dual citizenship" was a reversal of the inherent right of an "infant" to decide only when he came of age, i.e. when he reaches 21 years of age. He had recently had a grandson born in London. When I asked him the citizenship status of the child, he replied, "Of course Ceylonese. His birth was registered in the Ceylon High Commission in London." I pointed out that by reason of his birth in London, the child was entitled to be a "citizen of U.K. and the Colonies." Registration at the Ceylon High Commission meant only staking a claim for Ceylonese citizenship. When the child came of age, he had the right to choose which citizenship he would adopt and nobody had the right,

not even a parent, to deprive an infant of his rights. The Legal Draughtsman saw his mistake and readily agreed to the amendment.

It was the late D. S. Senanayake's proverbial kindliness that won the other amendment. I told him, "Stephen, for reason of earning his livelihood, a Ceylonese would be forced to become a citizen of the country of his adoption. But in his old age, he might get a nostalgic desire to bury his bones in the country of his birth. Would you deny him that privilege?" The old man promptly replied, "Of course not." So then I put forward a rough draft of the amendment which he passed on to the Legal Draughtsman with the instruction to knock it into shape and include in the Citizenship Act.

These amendments completely removed the grievances of Ceylonese in Malaya at the time, although it must be said now that the vast majority of Ceylonese in Malaya today have voluntarily acquired Malayan citizenship and completely identified themselves with the country of their adoption.

While I was residing in Singapore as Ceylon Commissioner, a competition was started by a Singapore newspaper to vote for the most popular person in Malaya. Of course it was just a newspaper stunt to boost circulation as voting was by coupons published in the paper, the **Singapore Standard.** I soon found that votes were sent in for me as well as for people like Malcolm MacDonald and even Sir Gerald Templer, the Malayan High Commissioner at the time.

As my Government had no objection, I did not withdraw my name from the competition as MacDonald and Sir Gerald Templer did.

Votes began to snowball for me. I have more than a suspicion that many of my friends to some extent engineered the voting campaign, and in the outcome as many as 450,000 odd votes were polled for me.

The prize was a free trip round the world, and I took advantage of this in 1954.

My itinerary for the world tour was as follows:— Singapore to Australia (two weeks), to Hongkong (three

days), to Japan (one week), to Honolulu (6 days), to San Francisco and Los Angeles (one week), to Washington (one week), to New York (one week), to Montreal (one day), to London (two weeks), to Dublin (two days), to Paris (three days), to Amsterdam (five days), to Copenhagen (one week), to Oslo (three days), to Stockholm (three days), to Frankfurt (three days), to Zurich (one week), to Rome (one week), to Cairo (two days), to Karachi (three days), to New Delhi (one week), to Colombo (two weeks), and back to Singapore. It was a whirlwind tour certainly as it had to be completed within the 18 weeks' leave which was all I was entitled to. It was really a case of having to start packing my bag again when I had hardly finished unpacking. I cannot do better in describing the first part of my trip than to reproduce the account Andrew Roth, then London correspondent of the **Singapore Standard,** sent to that paper after interviewing me in the lobby of the Bedford Hotel in London :

"That's Sara, that was.

"Manicam Saravanamuttu, the most popular personality in Malaya — as demonstrated by the Singapore Standard popularity contest — has just whizzed through England on his whirlwind round-the-world trip, the just reward for being a warm, friendly and effective human being during his quarter century in Malaya. Even in the two hours I spent with him on two occasions during his five-day visit to London the friendliness and preception and lack of 'side' which have made him so well-liked in Malaya were quite obvious.

"'I find very little change, despite the bombs,' said the Ceylon Commissioner for Malaya, back in London for the first time in 32 years. 'I have been visiting my old haunts, and I can still find my way.'

"He waved at the hotel in whose lobby we were sitting, and insisted that it was no different from when he had left it a third of a century ago. 'The same hotel — no adjoining baths, no showers.' The contrast for him was vivid because he had just come from the U.S. and Honolulu where he had stayed at some of the newest hotels, with a 'fridge' and television in every room.

"Sara obviously had been a leading light in whatever country he had made his headquarters. After a day visiting Oxford, where he was at St. John's College, he returned to the site of another achievement, the Indian Gymkhana Club, some 12 miles out of the Great West Road at Osterley Park, near Brentford. He helped established this and he recalled that at the last moment, when they were $4,000 short of their target sum, the late Maharajah of Patiala contributed the whole sum. 'Adcock, the groundsman whom I installed there, is still there, an old man,' Sara mused.

"He was full of plans for the next stages of his journey. He was going to Dublin, Paris, Amsterdam, West Germany, the Scandinavian countries, Switzerland, Italy, Egypt, Pakistan, India, Ceylon — where he will probably be named Ambassador to Indonesia as well as Commissioner to Malaya — and then back to Malaya about the end of July.

"Although the speed of Sara's round-the-world trip invites some comparison with some of the faster American travellers, Sara has obviously grasped very much more in his once-over-lightly than an average tripper. He clearly made the trip with a rich background of experience, a quick native intelligence, the trained eye of an experienced newsman and the help of so many well-placed friends, including, of course, the Ceylonese diplomatic corps.

"His first stop was in Australia, 'Our students, all of them, are very happy there,' he insisted. There is no colour bar there except the economic colour bar which bars Asians from going to Australia in numbers to work. Special efforts are made by the university authorities to make our students happy. Also the people with whom Malayan students are staying try to make them one of the family.

'Recently the Australian authorities have told the students that they must apply for permits if they want to work during vacation. But those that generally went to work only during their spare time

from studies are treated generously.' The regulation is designed to prevent people from escaping the 'economic colour bar' by entering Australia nominally as students and then entering into economic competition. Apparently one Chinese Malayan who entered Australia as a student is now running three restaurants in Sydney.

"From Australia, Sara flew to Hongkong, where he paid a visit to Mr. Aw Boon Haw during his one day there.

"He flew then to Tokyo, capital of the country whose soldiers once kept him in solitary confinement for nine months. 'What impressed me most was, first, the industry of the people.' In a little tin shed he found one firm turning out a thousand toy motor cars a day. 'This quality is bound to ensure the resurgence of Japan.' He was also struck by the marked family affection. He noticed this in many places, particularly during his train journey from Tokyo to Kyoto. 'To those of us who saw the Japanese only as soldiers, this is a revelation. One feels that people who have such feelings will emerge as decent members of the world community.'

"It is perhaps indicative of the charms of the Hawaiian islands that Sara, long time pillar of Penang, allowed himself to be quoted in Honolulu to the effect that should he retire he would like to retire in Honolulu. He found the Hawaiian Islands beautiful and the people happy and contented. 'One Honolulu friend explained one reason for the general good temper: the temperature there is equable, always round 70.' Since we are talking in London, where the temperature had changed 25 degrees in one day, I could enthusiastically endorse this sentiment.

"I imagine that many Malayans will be surprised as I was,' said Sara, 'to learn that 40% of the residents of Hawaii are of Japanese origin.' He was equally surprised to find that the most beautiful structure

was the Mormon Temple. He thought it as beautiful as the Taj Mahal in India, which is very high praise indeed.

"He found San Francisco the most attractive city in the United States, a judgement which he shares with many Americans. He found it vastly amusing, however, to find San Franciscans — who share the American taste for superlatives — describing their Chinatown, with its 40,000 Chinese, as the largest Chinese colony outside China. 'Apparently they had never heard of Singapore's 800,000 Chinese,' laughed Sara.

"Hollywood was a big disappointment because Marilyn Monroe would not interrupt her honeymoon with Joe Di Maggio to pose for a photo with him, to fulfill a wager with friends in Malaya. Instead he had his picture taken in her dressing room on the 20th Century-Fox lot.

"Sara breezed through the 'Windy City' of Chicago because his week-end in San Francisco had set him back a couple of days and went on to Washington, which he found a 'Queen of Cities' with its broad avenues and greenery. He saw many old friends from the U.S. Consulate-General in Singapore and the Consulate in Kuala Lumpur, Charles Baldwin, Frank Goodyear, Dick Puhl and others. He saw Hari O. Jensen, former South African Trade Commissioner at Singapore. All carry happy memories of Singapore and sent their greeting to their many friends there.

"He came away from Washington convinced of the sincerity of the American people, convinced of their desire to do good.

"He had a whirlwind three days in New York, including one night on Broadway which ended at 4 a.m., just two hours before he had to catch a plane for Buffalo in order to squeeze in a view of Niagara Falls 'which have to be seen to be believed.' I had admitted shame-facedly that although I am a born and bred New Yorker and have even been in Buffalo, I never did get up to the famed Falls.

"Sara found Broadway to be tremendous but not as enjoyable for a night out as an evening in Singapore. He found that he had always to worry to avoid being 'done' in the highly commercialized night clubs always on the alert to squeeze an extra few bucks from the unwary out-of-towner.

"His arrival in London was well timed because the frustrating things about travelling quickly is not seeing many of your friends. But scarcely more than a day after his arrival here, he was able to attend the annual dinner and dance of the Association of British Malaya, held as usual at the Grand Hall of the Connaught Rooms, off Kingsway.

"Sara sat at a table with H.H. Tunku Abu Bakar of Johore, H.H. Ungku Ara, Mr. H. P. Bryson, the Secretary of the Association, Dr. and Mrs. Eveson, Mr. D. Farquharson, Brigadier C. E. Morrison, Mr. F. H. Pierrepont and Miss Anne Pierrepont and Miss Ailin Quek and Inche Taib bin Andak."

Perhaps I should say something more about my visit to America. In the first place when I applied for my visa in Singapore, the Consulate staff was apologetic but I had to give a print of not merely my thumb but the fingers of both hands as if I was a criminal — and this in spite of fact that I held a diplomatic passport. I also had to sign a declaration that I was not a Communist and would not indulge in pro-Communist activities. As one who was used to the red tape of officialdom I submitted to these insulting regulations and felt sorry for my friends in the Singapore U.S. Consulate, who were desperately embarrassed for having to enforce them. Perhaps it was to atone for this cavalier treatment that an official of the State Department was there to receive me when I landed at San Francisco.

En route at the Honolulu airport I was involved in an amusing incident. When I enplaned at Tokyo, a little boy of about 15 or 18 months came aboard escorted by the air hovering about but very careful not to make any contact with hostess. An old Japanese, obviously the grandfather, was the child till the plane took off, after which he took complete charge of his grandson. The little fellow was a very lively

person and soon made friends with me, even sharing my bottle of Vicks cough drops, the taste of which children do not usually relish. When we got off at Honolulu, I got through the immigration formalities quickly because of my diplomatic status and when I came out into the customs foyer I found the little nipper wandering about alone crying most vociferously. Evidently his grandfather was going through a searching grilling by the immigration authorities and he found himself alone in a crowd of strangers. As soon as he spied me, he rushed to me and grabbed my knee and hung there as to a rock of safety. This evoked the witty quip from the customs officer who was chalking my baggage, "Quick work, sir!" The old Japanese was profuse in his thanks when he eventually emerged and I hoped in my heart that the charming little fellow would have a happy reunion with his father on the mainland.

The other incident in which I was involved was at Washington and had far-reaching repercussions. Charles (Chuck) Baldwin had been U.S. Consul-General at Singapore and he was a large-hearted liberal-minded individual. We became close friends, a friendship which was renewed when he returned as U.S. Ambassador to Malaya and continues to the present day when he is on the staff of the University of Virginia at Charleston. Now Chuck's brother-in-law at the time had a big interest in the **Washington Post** (he eventually became the sole proprietor) and when I went to tea one afternoon with Mrs. Baldwin and Chuck, I found a reporter of the Post who had come to interview me. And Chuck said, "Now Sara, I would like you to say exactly what you think with no inhibitions!"

This made me bold enough to comment that Americans were not really grown up and were still like little children. Their biggest failing was wanting to achieve everything in their lifetime. I said I wished they would take a leaf from the Asian way of life; for Asians "eternity" was a reality not a dim chimera. An Asian, I said, was quite content to start a good movement and contribute his small share towards it, confident and satisfied that it would be carried on till the final goal was reached. This drew the question from the interviewer, "Are all Asians like that?" to which I replied, "Yes, all those who have not been contaminated by the material aims of the West!"

It was the other part of my interview with the **Washington Post** that raised a hornet's nest round my head; It concerned the Chinese in Malaya. The reporter asked me, "What do you think of the Chinese in Malaya? Are they loyal ?"

As I had promised "Chuck" Baldwin to be frank in my answers, I replied, "As far as the Malayan-born Chinese are concerned, I have no doubt of their loyalty. But I am not so sure of the China-born." I added, "However, the blame for this is largely at the door of the Malayan Education Department. The textbooks used in the Chinese schools in Malaya are all still imported from Hongkong and their background is Chinese not Malayan."

This was cabled out to Malaya and the Singapore Chinese Press (the Singapore Chinese at that time were largely China-born) really went off the deep-end about my comment that I was not so sure of the loyalty of the China-born Chinese in Malaya. I was called all sorts of names, such as "most unpopular man in Malaya." The truth is never very palatable but I still stand by that opinion which was a correct estimate of the Chinese in Malaya at that time. But what annoyed me most was that Towkay Tan Lark Sye, the well-known Singapore millionaire and founder of the Nanyang University, was reported to have said at a meeting, "Sara should be shot !"

So when I returned to Singapore, I bought a quarter page space in the **Straits Times** and printed in the middle in small letters.

If You Can
M. Saravanamuttu

This created quite a flutter in Singapore circles and the Police even afforded me protection as I was then living alone in a out-of-the-way locality in Opera Estate, Siglap. But I laughed it off as my advertisement was only meant as an intimation to Lark Sye that I knew of his foolish outburst. This created quite a sensation and a Reuter correspondent, as a result of bar gossip, sent a cable out that my life had been threatened. Tan Lark Sye made ample amends soon after. He gave a mammoth dinner for some 2,000 people in con-

nection with the meeting in Singapore of the World Assembly of Youth. When I arrived, he greeted me by putting his arms around me and saying, "Uncle Sara, ada baik ?" (Uncle Sara, are you well?). Chinese courtesy is hard to beat!

My two weeks in England were very happy ones. For one thing I met my eldest son, Lakshman, after six years; he was at the Inner Temple and completed his Bar Final in December of that year. I visited many of my old haunts, including the "Old Chinese" restaurant in Piccadily Circus, next to the old Monico. I had already written about my visit to Oxford and Andrew Roth has mentioned about my re-union with T. B. W. Ramsay and my visit to the Indian Gymkhana ground at Osterley Park. But I must not pass over my stay in London without making special mention of Tunku Abu Bakar, the second son of the late Sultan Ibrahim of Johore, the most famous of the rulers of that state. Sultan Ibrahim even to his last days (he died when he was 84) was a fine outstanding figure and many were the stories of how he used ot take on bar-rooms full of thugs and clear them out single-handed in his young days. In fact the old Singapore Government had to make an order restricting his stay in the island to not more than 12 hours on any one visit. "Boo," as Tunku Abu Bakar was affectionately known to his friends, was a replica of his father in every way except that in build he was somewhat smaller. Owing to a disagreement with his father regarding his mother's property, he fell out with the old man in his later years. After World War II he was for sometime head of the Veterinary Services of the Federation of Malaya. Our rendezvous in London had been fixed in Singapore some months earlier at the Adelphi Hotel where after a session we exchanged ties. I still treasure his tie as a happy momento of a dear friendship. When I was leaving London, "Boo" turned up at the air terminal and he kept plugging me with "minute-guns" while we were waiting for the bus to take off. When I asked him the meaning of it he said, "Sara I am afraid this is the last time I will see you" — a premonition that was fulfilled when he passed away within a year. A real gentleman if ever there was one.

My visit to Dublin was made with the intention of staying at the famous hostelry, Jury's, and standing in the Quad at T.C.D., both of which ambitions I achieved. The

next morning when I was walking down the main thoroughfare, Connolly Street, I noticed a replica of the Nelson Monument at Trafalgar Square at the end of the street, I racked my brains but could not recall any connection that Nelson had with Ireland; even Lady Hamilton was Scottish. So I stopped navvy on the pavement and asked him why Nelson's Statue had been put up there. His reply was typically Irish, "That's what the bloody English did to us!" (This monument was blown up in 1969).

Also while I was in Dublin I visited the famous Guiness Brewery. In Singapore I had met a Jesuit Father, Kevin O' Dwyer, through my friend, Patrick Byrne, a T.C.D. graduate, and Father O'Dwyer gave me an introduction to his brother who was the manager of the brewery. It was an experience going through the works and viewing from a gallery running round the top the huge vats in which the malt liquor was fermenting. Then I was made to sample the 40-odd varieties of stout that the brewery turned out — some of them most potent — and as a result I all but missed my plane to Paris!

CHAPTER XII

THE MIDNIGHT SUN

There was nothing new in Paris to an old hand like me but my stay in Amsterdam was more eventful. Feith, a director of Heineken's, was my host and in addition to my trip through the canals, he gave me a taste of the first herrings caught in the North Sea. It was an initial introduction to raw fish. The very first pair is presented to the Queen of Holland. Amsterdam with its many art galleries and museums is a place of great interest to the visitor but I did not get a chance to visit the offices of the diamond merchants for which it is famous. I had a Rijstafel dinner at an Indonesian restaurant however, and the waiter was a Boyanese from Singapore! I also visited the Ville D'Este night-club, which had two bands, and altogether had a most enjoyable time. The funny part of it is that at the D'Orly airport in Paris I picked up a copy of **Lilliput** in which there was a story of a Frenchman, tired of the hectic cycle of Paris life, who went on to Amsterdam for a rest. And the Dutch city turned out to be more exciting and more exhausting than the French capital! This was exactly my experience.

From Amsterdam I went on to the Scandinavian countries — a visit to which I was looking forward as I was anxious to see the working of their welfare services about which one had heard so much. I must say at the very outset that I was not disappointed. The territories are a convenient size for running their welfare services efficiently but what is most note-worthy was that the services in the three countries are reciprocal. Any Norwegian who falls ill, say in Sweden, can get the same health service he is entitled to in his own country. It would be wonderful if such a system could be brought into operation in the Commonwealth.

Denmark had a special attraction for me for when my father did his hospital work at Newcastle, when studying for his M.D. at Durham, one of his best friends was a Dr. Damslett of Denmark, as I found out when I was attending to his correspondence while he was sick. I discovered that a large number of Danes go to Newcastle for jobs and, ever since the days of Queen Alexandra, the connection and

traffic between Denmark and England had been very close. English is most widely spoken in Copenhagen. The Danes are also a most independent and likeable people. One incident illustrates their healthy self-respect. I stayed at the Hafnia Hotel (I wonder if the "Hafnia" brand of Danish tinned foods is named after the hotel or vice versa). After some drinks in the bar before dinner, in settling my bill I added a tip for the barman in the accepted Singapore style. He very politely told me that it was not necessary; the tip was included in my bill. One wishes that this continental system of adding a percentage of the bill will become universal. It is easier for the patrons and ensures better service.

On my arrival at Oslo I was met by Steve Lindberg of the Scandinavian Airways. Steve had only a month previously won a popularity contest in his company which gave him a trip East as far as Bangkok and he had been advised by the Singapore Office of the SAS about my having won the Malayan popularity contest. He certainly proved an excellent guide and real friend to me in Oslo and, among other services, he arranged a free trip for me on one of their planes to Prome in the Artic Circle to see the "midnight sun." I had read of it as a young boy in Marie Correlli's novel "Thora," one part of which was headed "The Land of the Midnight Sun," and it was a real thrill to actually see it. It was exactly on Midsummer Day (June 24th) that I viewed it. It was at Prome and we were taken to an inn on top of a hill from which on the stroke of midnight I saw the sun, a red ball 30 degrees above the horizon. One could gaze and gaze on it for ever and still not get over the surprise of the phenonon. After a hot supper at the inn, we drove back to the airport and again it was a surprise to see the other tourists take snapshots of the snow-covered mountains in bright daylight at 2 a.m. The whole trip was one continuous thrill.

Stockholm was something of an anti-climax after Copenhagen and Oslo. For one thing the Swedes are more reserved than their fellow Scandinavians — more like the English — and Stockholm itself is very much a replica of London, with its rows of solid offices fronting the streets, its Anglican churches and small parks or "gardens" in the middle of squares of dwelling houses. There is a definite

air of prosperity in the city and one was able to understand the bitterness felt by the Norwegians against the Swedes. Sweden contrived to stay neutral in the war while Norway, as we all know, was overrun by the Nazis and paid for her loyalty to the Allies by the hundreds of their underground forces who suffered the supreme penalty. Furthermore the Swedes enjoyed a boom of prosperity as a result of keeping out of the war and the Swedish kronen stands high in exchange value compared to its Norwegian counterpart. But Sweden is in no way behind her Scandinavian sister countries in her democratic institutions and one day I was agreeably surprised to see the tall figure of old King Gustav mixing freely on foot in the streets with his subjects without any of the pomp and protocol of royalty.

From Stockholm I went on to Frankfurt and the one feature that was outstanding was that the Germans had left the bombed position of the town untouched without any attempt at restoring the ruins and had built a new town on the adjoining area. They told me the bombed area was meant to be a constant reminder of the folly of Hitler. It was the same in the case of Cologne next door and the skeleton of its famous cathedral rose to the sky as a lasting protest against the ruthlessness of the Allied bombing. I made a trip from Frankfurt along the famous Autobahn to Bonn, capital of West Germany. As I stood on the banks of the Rhine, which at Bonn is almost a mile in width, and watched the water flow serenely by, I was able to appreciate the Germany of Goethe, Wagner and Adler and understand that Bismark, the Hohenzollerns and Hitler were not typical of a country of poets musicians and philosophers.

In a pub in Bonn I got into conversation with a worker and asked him what were his hours of work. His answer was typical, "From the time the sun rises till it sets." There was none of the set short hours of the trade unions of the "free" countries. It is this aptitude for hard work which, as I noted earlier was apparent also in Japan, has been responsible for the remarkable economic resurgence of these two countries. They lost the war but even in 1954 they were already showing signs of winning the peace — a promise that has been amply fulfilled since. Today Germany and Japan are in the forefront of the countries giving financial

and technical aid to the developing countries of Asia and Africa.

Zurich was my next stop after Frankfurt and this proved a most interesting place. There is no such thing as colour distinction in Switzerland and I found myself welcomed and accepted on every side. On the steamer trip on the lake all the other passengers joined freely in conversation with me and I became particularly interested in a young man who had broken away from his family and was running a "dry cleaning" business which was fast promising to be prosperous. I asked him about the palatial buildings on the shores of the lake. He said they all belonged to banks or insurance companies which were the institutions making big money. On reflection I realised how true this was. In all the big cities of the world the most imposing buildings are those of the banks and insurance companies. They utilise the deposits of clients or premiums of policy holders to make judicious investments and amass substantial profits, a small proportion of which they return to their clients and policy holders in the form of interest and bonuses. They are in the happy position of always being in command of liquid cash whenever an opportunity for a profitable investment comes along. Of course there are many spurious banks and insurance companies but a good bank or insurance company shares are the soundest investments today.

I did the usual tours of Zurich but one exhibit that impressed me was a swimming pool in the hills in which the huge waves of the ocean were simulated. One can understand people living so far from the sea being thrilled in waters that resembled ocean waters but I was amused to see the large number of American tourists, who no doubt, were quite used to the sea, enjoying the fun of the pretence ocean. Perhaps they appreciated enjoying the fun without running any of the risks. Certainly middle-aged spinsters were a majority of the patrons of this pool! Of course I had a dose of a yodelling troupe in a hillside inn and that is a form of entertainment of which one can never get tired. Unfortunately my funds were running low and I was not able to pay a visit to the famous town of Geneva. I would certainly have been thrilled to stand in the halls of the Peace Palace there.

At Rome, which was my next place of call, I was met by Elmo Seneviratne, who was Charge d'Affaires of the Ceylon Embassy and awaiting the arrival of my old friend, Herbert Hulugalla, who had just been appointed Ceylon Ambassador to Italy. Elmo himself is married to the daughter of another old friend, Vicky Abeyasandera to Galle. I was very happy to meet Vicky's daughter with Elmo Seneviratne in Rome. Accompanied by the Secretary interpreter of the Embassy I was able to do all the sights of Rome, including even a visit to the Vatican City. Incidentally English was not so widely spoken in Italy as in other European countries — in fact it was the only place I could not get by with it and had to fall back on my meagre knowledge of French which is of the Stratford-atta-Bow variety. And I must confess I could not summon enough courage to indulge in the Italian custom of pinching the behind as an appreciation of feminine attractiveness!

Herbert Hulugalla landed at Naples while I was there and so we all motored down to meet his ship. It was the first time since I left Ceylon that I met his wife, Lily. She was the grand-daughter of one of Ceylon's most famous millionaires and philanthropists, Chas de Soysa, but was a different caste to Herbert, who was the son of a Dissawe, a Kandyan Chieftain. So we had to employ a ruse to foster their romance. Herbert promoted a bus company to convert an old Hupmobile car, which belonged to Lily's brother-in-law, Leo Pieris, into a bus. I was the technical adviser, being motoring editor of the paper, and Lily was the Vice-President. Naturally weekly meetings of the bus company were necessary and in due course Herbert led Lily to the altar, but in all fairness, it must be stated that the bus operated between Mount Lavinia and Colombo Fort for about a year though no other dividends were declared! So the re-union in Naples was a happy one replete with many pleasant reminiscences. The marriage was a most successful one and their children have all distinguished themselves both in studies and sport.

I spent a day in Naples doing a trip on the famous funicular railway, on which the Penang Hill railway is modelled, to view the crater on Vesuvius and also visiting the ruins of Pompeii. Althogether my week in Italy was a most pleasant one, not the least part of which was the motor drive from Rome to Naples through miles of olive groves.

I spent only about 36 hours in Cairo, which in July was at its hottest worst. It was impossible to venture out during the day so I stayed in the airconditioned hotel room, but it was restful relaxing in the evening on the verendah of the Semiramis Hotel with the Nile flowing swiftly past barely 25 yards away, while dinner on the roof garden was equally a treat. But Cairo lived up to its reputation of bakshish and flies at the airport breakfast next morning.

By the time I got to Karachi from Cairo I felt that I was nearly home. The Ceylon High Commissioner there, T.B. Jayah, was an old Thomian and a classmate of my brother, "P," and I also knew him later when he was Principal of the Zatira College, the leading Muslim school in Ceylon. I took a close interest in the cricket of that institution and used to help in the coaching of the promising boys. So I was quite at home in Jayah's residence. I also met in Karachi, Akthar Ali Khan, a brother of Brigadier Safdar Ali Khan, who was married to Cecile Scott, the daughter of Cecil Scott, the Penang Municipal Bandmaster. The Scotts and I were the closest of friends and their children used to consider me as a sort of foster father. Safdar's family was closely related to that of Liquat Ali Khan, the former Prime Minister of Pakistan, and had a family cement factory at Waah, near Rawalpindi, so Akthar did the honours in Karachi in the grand manner. Among other things he took me to the Gymkhana Club where I had a bottle of Pakistani brewed bear and very good it was. Karachi itself was built almost literally overnight by the jubilant Pakistanis when Mohamed Jinnah brought off the partition from India. It is an arid city, dusty and with hardly a blade of grass to be seen. The leading hotel, Paradise Beach Hotel, is apparently named on the principle of "lucas a non lucendi," for what beach there is can hardly be likened to Paradise. The shifting of the capital to Rawalpindi by President Ayub Khan was hailed by everyone, not the least enthusiastic of whom were the Diplomatic Corps, as a very welcome move.

From Karachi I went on to New Delhi, where I was the guest of the Ceylon High Commissioner to India, C. Coomaraswamy. He was more than a friend, his eldest son, Raju, being married to a second cousin of mine. Raju was also an Oxford Authentic and today he is on the staff of U.N.

Headquarters at Lake Success. Being July, it was the hottest period of the hot season there but the diplomats had not yet moved to Simla and were sweltering in a temperature of 110 degrees F. in the shade. Coomarasamy took me to all the diplomatic parties and I had to sweat them out in my black dinner suit which was all I had taken with me on my trip. However, I really enjoyed myself in the Indian capital, renewing links with old friends and making new ones. One of the best parties I had was at the Delhi Gymkhana Club given by young Yogasunderam, the Ceylon H.C. Information Officer, at which I met the press. As at all press parties the drinks flowed freely and I was in my element.

My next stop was Bombay, which was then a "dry" city. Bernard Tillekeratne, the Ceylon Trade Commissioner, told me that when he went to the Controller of Alcoholics (!) to obtain a ration of two bottles of whisky for me he discovered that the official was a contemporary of mine at Oxford. The latter said, "Two bottles will not do for old Sara. Take a case!" Reputations certainly die hard and I kept mine by making inroads into that case (with my friends) during the two days I was in Bombay. I met Frank Moraes, who had retired from the Editorship of the **Times of Ceylon** to return to the **Times of India**. Poor Frank was in the "blues" as his wife had just left him but my liberal ration of whisky helped to cheer him up. Frank later took charge of the influential **Indian Daily Express** but he had to suffer further personal disappointments. His brilliant son announced publicly that he preferred to make England not India his permanent home.

In Bombay I also met Sir Hussein Abdoolcader's beautiful daughter, Fatimah, who is married to her cousin, Dr. Abbas Nakooda, one of the most successful physicians practising in Bombay. With them was their daughter, Purveez, who was then a chit of ten and I presented her with my souvenir copy of the picture of the "Midnight Sun". When she came to Penang on a visit to her grandparents in Penang in 1965 she was "a young lady of 21" who had already taken a degree in Social Science at Bombay University. How time flies and how quickly one gets old. Purveez went to England for further studies and met and married an Indian there. Fatimah who I knew as a teenager is now a grand mother!

From Bombay I flew to Colombo by Air India. On the

flight I enjoyed the little booklet of witty "instructions to passengers" which is a feature of that airline and was overwhelmed by the over-lavish feeding which is also an A.I.I. feature. It was all I could do to stagger out of the plane at Colombo airport!

At Colombo, my youngest brother was at the airport to meet me with my wife and daughter. There I received my appointment as Ceylon Minister in Indonesia in addition to my post as Ceylon Commissioner in Singapore and Malaya. The details were arranged with the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs, Gunasera de Zoysa. My headquarters were to be at Djakarta but I was to spend not less than 10 days every month in Singapore and Malaya with offices headed by Assistant Commissioners at Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. It was an exhausting job entailing more than 2,000 miles travelling a month and it wore me out to the verge of collapse before I retired in 1957 — giving the lie to the popular conception that a diplomat's job is a soft one entailing attending daily parties and writing confidential reports only once a week. I do not deny that my imminent breakdown was as much due to my way of living and constantly hitting the high spots but believe me the diplomat's lot is anything but a sinecure.

I spent a month's holiday in Ceylon — a very happy one renewing old friendships — before returning to my duties at Singapore. One of my happiest re-union was with Henry Peiris, who was a very close Malayan friend. Henry's career was also a chequered one like mine but he ended it right side up. His real name was Perera but after a quarrel with his brother-in-law, Cooray of Kalutura and a leading arrack renter of Ceylon, he jumped onto a boat and landed in Penang. He had studied at the Christian Brother's School at St. Benedict's College in Colombo and so he naturally turned to the same mission for assistance in Malaya. Fortunately for him one of his old teachers was the Director of St. George's Institution at Taiping so he was taken on the staff at that school. Henry had passed the Cambridge Senior from St. Benedict's and that was quite a high qualification in those days. He told me he produced Shakespeare's King Henry V and collected appreciable sums for the school building fund from performances not merely at Taiping but

also at Penang and Ipoh. When one recalls the typical Singhalese villager enunciation of English favoured by Henry, one wonders how he got away as a Shakespearian actor but then in the early twenties Malaya was a back-water from Western standards.

A pedagogic career, however, was not suited to Henry's restless spirit, so he soon gave up teaching at St. George's Institution and went to work as a clerk on Lunas Estate in Kedah under C. M. Mackay, an enthusiastic cricketer and great sportsman. Also on the staff was Christie Rodrigo, who I have mentioned played in the Penang State cricket team. In fact it was his cricket that got Christie his job at Lunas and it was he who got Henry his job. When I came to Penang in 1930, Christie was on the Municipal staff with Malcolm Orr, while Henry was spending the interim period between jobs with his family in a seaside bungalow at Batu Ferringhi. Jobs were very hard to get in those slump days but Henry eventually went on an estate in Selangor in the Harrison's group. When rubber was at its lowest at three hapence a pound, Henry held the Malayan record of producing it at a penny a pound. From then onwards there was no holding back Henry and when the war broke out he was the Manager of Batang Benar Estate at Nilai, Negri Sembilan — the only Asian Manager of an European-owned estate in Malaya at that time.

During the Japanese occupation Henry played a notable part. In the first instance, he soused in oil and buried all the estate factory machinery after the British evacuated and before the Japanese arrived. Of course some informers gave him away but in spite of every torture, in the course of which he lost all his teeth, he stood firm and did not give away the location of the buried machinery. (After the liberation it was recovered undamaged but all the reward Henry was awarded by the company was a new set fo teeth and a new radio, besides a holiday to Ceylon!) He later pretended to co-operate whole-heartedly with the Japanese and helped them to set up a factory at Seremban for producing petrol from rubber — the reverse of the process for producing synthetic rubber from petrol. Henry had passed the Cambridge Senior in Chemistry and this "little knowledge" combined with his native intelligence made him an outstanding

scientific inventor during the occupation. Another of his scientific triumphs was the manufacture of soap, when no caustic soda was available for coagulating the fat in coconut oil. Henry manufactured caustic soda by a very simple process. He passed an electric current through a solution of common salt (NaCl); the chlorine gas escaped from the anode and the sodium (Na) combusted in the water and remained behind as a solution of caustic soda (NaOH). He even scentified the soap he made with sandalwood and entered the product in his daughter Ivy's name at an exhibition held by the Japanese to win first prize! Of course it was only a "cottage industry" operated in the garage of his house and anyone visiting him at his residence in those days used to complain of the poisonous fumes of chlorine that pervaded the place. The "petrol from rubber" factory of which Henry was Manager was really a great joke. Periodically he used to set fire to it and fight with apparent heroism to put out the blaze. The factory was razed to the ground and Henry received fresh capital to set up another factory besides receiving high commendations from his Jap bosses. He put on this act twice but did not dare to perpetrate it a third time.

All this made a good newspaper story and the Lake House (Colombo) representative who came to Malaya with the "Liberation forces" cabled it to the **Ceylon Observer** and also sent a picture of Henry's daughter, Ivy, which was duly published. So when I arrived in Colombo in October, 1945, his brother and sister came to see me and I put them in contact with Henry. There was a happy reunion when he went on holiday to Ceylon in 1946. On his return from leave his company sent him to Tangkak Estate, on the border of Negri Sembilan and Malacca. This area became a hot-bed of terrorist activities during the 1948/60 Malayan emergency. Once when he was carrying the payroll back to the estate Henry was attacked by the Communist terrorists, so in 1951 he retired from service and returned to Ceylon where he took charge of one of the family estate, "Pathiragala," at Pothuera. He died there in 1965 and his son-in-law is now in charge. Henry was a genuine diamond albeit a rough one. God rest his soul.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BANDUNG STORY

I returned to Singapore in August to spend a couple of months there before taking up my duties in Djakarta and it was a hectic round of farewell parties. My wife came up from Colombo to join me at Singapore and we left on October 7th by K.L.M. for Djakarta. As bad luck would have it, the plane was delayed three hours and it was a case of "Yam-sengs" (bottoms up) with the host of friends who were at the airport to see me off. I was, therefore, very tired when I got off at Djakarta to be received officially by the Chief Protocol Officer of the Indonesian Government and the Indian and Pakistani Ambassadors. When I was offered a drink I forgot that Indonesia was a Muslim country and called for a "whisky soda," thus creating a precedent as the Chief Protocol Officer told me later!

At first the break from Malaya was difficult to bear and I remember telling my wife on the first night that I felt like chucking up my new job and returning to Malaya. But I soon got into the swing of it and the three years I spent in Indonesia were a most interesting period and my experience helped to develop me into a mature diplomat. My reputation had preceded me and President Sukarno greeted me, when I waited on him to present my credentials, as "the most popular man in Malaya"! There was a small Ceylonese community in Djakarta, mostly Ceylon Burghers. One of them, Milhuisen, had built up a colossal business with connections all over the world. The offices of his business were next door to the famous Hotel Des Indes and it was reputed that Milhuisen, by providing foreign exchange to the Indonesian Ministers when they went abroad, had worked himself into a very influential position. He had been brought out to Indonesia by one Rebeira, who was the pioneer Ceylonese in Djakarta, and had married the old man's daughter in the accepted manner. Milhuisen, in turn, employed many Ceylonese in his firm and most of the Ceylonese society in Indonesia revolved round him. Later, when the Nationalist Party, of which Sukarno himself was a founder member, fell out of power Mulhuisen found his position insecure and transferred some of his interests to Ceylon and is now conducting his business from Colombo.

President Sukano (centre) with author (right) and Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo, Indonesia Prime Minister, after the author's presentation of credentials as Ceylon Minister to Indonesia in 1954.

In Bandung another Ceylonese, Natal Cramer, had established a very successful private school for teaching English. Natal had been a school-mate and neighbour of mine in Ceylon and we took up our threads of friendship again. He and his family became my closest associates during my three years stay in Indonesia. He died in 1964 and his family has migrated to Holland.

At Sourabaya, the capital of East Java, another old Ceylonese friend of mine, Vincent Perera, was well established and married to an Indonesian lady from Ambon who had considerable influence with the top officials. Vincent had played cricket for Perak in 1931 against Penang and was also a pioneer in the cinema industry in Malaya. He and another Ceylonese, Aruja Virasinghe, held the sole rights for Western Electric in Malaya those days and it was from them that the Shaw Brothers brought these rights when they made their entry into the cinema business in Malaya in 1928. Vincent never failed to bemoan his bad business insight in having made that deal. Anyway, whenever I went to Sourabaya, Vincent and his wife always threw a big party to entertain me and many were the good times I had there.

Indonesia itself was going through a most interesting and important period of its emergence as a world power at this time. The Dutch, after the abortive "police action" that followed the Lindanjati Agreement, had finally handed power over to Sukarno and his aides and Westerling, too, had been got rid of. Indonesia was seriously tackling the problem of consolidating her independence. Sjahrir, after his meteoric rise of fame, was living in retirement as a result of a disagreement with Sukarno and Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo was Prime Minister. The first elections were held in December 1954 and it was a close fight. The PNI (Indonesia Nationalist Party) secured a slim majority over the Masjumi (Muslim) Party. Then Dr. Ali sent out invitations to the Colombo Powers (India, Ceylon, Pakistan, Burma and Indonesia) to meet to discuss the holding of the now famous Bandung Conference, at which 29 newly independent Asian and African Nations met to enunciate the new political doctrine of "Peaceful Co-existence" and establish one of the most powerful blocs in world politics.

That was in April 1955, but the preliminary meeting at Bogor, which planned the Bandung get-together, was held in December 1954. Nehru, U Nu, Mohamed Ali and Sir John Kotelawala, the Prime Ministers of India, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon respectively, sat round an oval table in a room in the picturesque Bogor Palace along with Dr. Ali and laid down the principles on which the Bandung Conference was to be called and issued the invitations. I remember Tunku Abdul Rahman, in his attempt to form a closer-knit group of South-East Asian nations, remarking to me in Bangkok in 1958 that the Bandung set-up was hypocritical; that it was impossible for 29 Asian and African powers with such varying outlooks and interests to agree on a common policy. I explained to him that the basic principle of the Bandung Conference, as enunciated by Pandit Jawarjarlal Nehru at Bogor, was that the conference should go ahead with all matters on which there was common agreement and drop subjects on which there was marked disagreement. Such was the birth of "Peaceful Co-existence" which was really the brain-child of Nehru himself though he generously, at the closing banquet at Bogor, awarded that honour to Sir John Kotelawala for having established the Colombo Powers.

Nehru dominated at Bogor. When there was sharp controversy over the admission of Israel, which Ceylon pressed and which was apposed by the two Muslim members, Pakistan and Indonesia, Nehru's dictum was that it was not worthwhile to admit one country if, as a result, it would keep out all the Arab countries — a ruling that was accepted by Sir John.

The colossal task of organising the Bandung Conference was entrusted to a General Secretariat on which the diplomatic representatives of the four Colombo Powers were the members, with Dr. Roeslan Abdulgani of Indonesia as Secretary-General Various sub-committees were appointed by this General Secretariat to look after the various sub-divisions, such as accommodation, transport, programme, entertainment and press. As I said it was a colossal task and this General Secretariat was an United Nations General Secretariat in miniature. Most of the technical staff was supplied by India, which was the most advanced of the five sponsoring powers at that time, but the greatest bulk of workers came

from Indonesia itself which, as the host country, also bore the bulk of the expenditure. I am writing from memory but I am not far wrong when I state the Indonesian Government spent some 12 million rupiahs on the conference while the total contribution of the other sponsoring powers amounted to only 5 million. The members of the General Secretariat were B. N. Tyabji (Indian), U. Mya Sein (Burma), myself (Ceylon) and Kaliduzzman (Pakistan), in addition to Roeslan Abdulgani (Indonesia). To Roeslan fell the main task of planning the work of the Secretariat, getting the Agenda and Working Papers for the meeting prepared and generally supervising the whole show. Of course he was assisted by a large staff on which not only Indonesians but members of the embassies of four other sponsoring countries served. We had special expert officers seconded from their home countries for this extra work, but it is no exaggeration to state that the Bandung Conference would never have been the success it was but for the outstanding organising ability of Roeslan Abdulgani. He later became Foreign Minister and the Vice-Chairman of Sukarno's National Council but he ended in eclipse as Information Minister. He is today Indonesian representative at the United Nations. In pure ability Roeslan stands on a par, I am sure, with any public servant in the world.

I had myself alloted to the Budget Sub-Committee as my Prime Minister, Sir John Kotelawala, had instructed me to see that the total expenditure by Ceylon did not exceed 25,000 rupees (100,000 rupiahs). That was only a pious hope because in the outcome the contribution of each of the sponsoring countries came to $1\frac{1}{4}$ million rupiahs, that is 375,000 rupees. In addition to this shared expenditure of $6\frac{1}{4}$ million rupiahs, the Indonesian Government, as I have mentioned earlier, spent 12 million rupiahs on permanent improvements to the hotels, roads and the Conference Hall. In the end nearly 300 delegates and 600 pressmen from all over the world, apart from a host of visitors, attended the conference and it will be easy to understand how this high expenditure was incurred. (At the official rate of exchange the total expenditure was equal to U.S. $1,000,000).

As one of the organisers it is not for me to say that the conference was a stupendous success but that was the general view not merely of the delegates but also of the

At Bandung Conference in 1955 (from right) Chou En-lai, Sir John Kotelawala and Gunesena de Zoysa, Permanent Secretary, Ceylon Ministry of External Affairs.

members of the world press who attended. The high water mark of the conference was the first appearance at such a gathering of the Prime Minister of Communist China, Chou En-lai, and if you add to that such world figures as Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Nasser of Egypt, General Romulo of the Phillipines, Prime Wan Waithiyakon of Thailand and Professor Malik of Lebanon, one can appreciate that the gathering was a galaxy of brains and talent.

The conference had a outstanding send-off by the remarkable opening address of President Sukarno.

There was wide speculation as to how he would acquit himself speaking for the first time in English in public, and there was a hush in the audience of 10,000 people when he began his speech in slow measured tones. But like the true orator he was he steadily worked himself up, his tones rising in emphasis as he went on and reached the climax with the final sentence, "We are One people, living in One world and serving One God." It was the considered opinion of the 500 odd world journalists present that Sukarno was the finest orator in the world at that time.

An early diversion was caused when Sir John Kotelawala referred to the Communist domination of Eastern Europe as a new form of Imperialism. I remember the sensation that was caused when Nehru came up to Sir John and asked, "Why did you not consult me before making your speech: I am also one of the sponsors," and Sir John retorted, "When have you consulted me when you make your speeches ?"

But another incident which is not generally known is worth repeating. I had suggested to Sir John that since the Formosan problem was the critical issue at that time, it would be a good thing if Chou En-lai on one side and Prince Waithyakon (Thailand) and General Romulo (Philippines) on the other could be got together for a frank talk under the aegis of the five sponsoring powers. Sir John thought this a good idea and consulted his colleagues who also agreed but on one excuse or another Nehru, prompted undoubtedly by his adviser, Krishna Menon, kept postponing this meeting. On the Thursday Sir John gave an interview to the world press in which he put forward what he called "my solution for Formosa." Chou En-lai could very well have taken the stand: "Why discuss anything when Sir John has

broadcast his solution ?"

On coming back to the conference room after the party to the press, I accused Sir John of showing too much deference to Nehru over fixing the proposed meeting. I had had the proper inspiration !

He looked at me and said, "You are a clever chap, aren't you. There's Nehru, go and ask him." So I went over to Nehru and asked him, "Panditji, what about that meeting ?" I immediately received a tremendous lecture from Nehru on the wrong methods of diplomacy adopted by Sir John in giving public interviews to the press. When Nehru stopped to take a breath, I chipped in, "But Mr. Nehru, you do not expect me to say anything against my own Prime Minister ?"

It was well-known that Nehru demanded not 100 per cent but 110 per cent loyalty from his staff. So he caught my point and broke into a smile. I knew I had won. So, after he agreed that the proposed meeting was a good thing I got him to fix lunch time on Saturday for the meeting. I went across and got the consent of Mohammed Ali (Pakistan) and Prince Waithiyakon (Thailand) and General Romulo (Philippines) to this date and also confirmed it with Premier U Nu of Burma. Sir John's comment, when I informed him of the arrangement, was that I had overpowered Nehru with my whisky fumes !

The meeting not only took place but the result was Chou En-lai's announcement of the willingness of China to reopen the discussion of the Formosan problem with America over a conference table. The immediate tension was eased, and this was the one practical achievement at Bandung.

The drafting of the final communique of the conference took nearly two days. Sir John insisted that his reference to "new forms of colonialism" or "Red imperialism" be included in the communique and, of course, Chou En-lai objected. It looked as if the deadlock could not be broken till Prince Wan Waithiyakon of Thailand, who was the raporteur of the Political Committee, found a compromise formula acceptable to all: "colonialism in all its manifestations." The final communique was issued at 8 p.m. on

Saturday April 22nd, 1955, setting forth the TEN (not five) Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, which is one of the world's historical documents, probably on a par with the Magna Carta and the United Nations Charter as a declaration of human rights.

The Bandung Conference which started on the high note of President Sukarno's opening address thus ended on the equally high note of the final communique.

When it came to drafting the final report of the Joint Secretariat, we were again threatened with a dealock. One hates to have to say it but in any early post-war gathering of Asian people, the Indian representatives always adopted a superior agressive attitude. And my friend, Tyabji, being an ex-Oxford, ex-I.C.S. man, was a perfect example of this double "heaven-born" failing. To save time, as he said, he brought a draft of the final report to the meeting which started off first by recounting the major part played by India in the organisation of the retails of the conference and relegated Indonesia to third position. As I said earlier, India supplied the majority of the expert staff, but Indonesia, apart from being the host country (technically the five Colombo Powers were the hosts), supplied most of the workers and footed a bill of more than twice the total contributions of all the other four host countries. And, of course, Pakistan objected most strongly to India claiming all the honours. Tyabji, however, refused to allow one word altered in his recital of India's part and Roeslan was in a quandary as he would not have survived a day if he had assented to the lowly position assigned to Indonesia. He appealed to me to work out a compromise. It really was not very difficult as Tyabji was a highly intelligent person and he readily accepted my suggestion that Indonesia be placed first and the rest in order of geographical size i.e. 2. India, 3. Pakistan, 4. Burma and 5. Ceylon. I had no fear of my Prime Minister quarrelling with me on this score and the Pakistan Ambassador, Khalid Uzzman, raised no objections when it was explained that the grading was purely on geographical size and not in order of importance.

One last word before I dismiss the Bandung meeting. At the start it was Nehru and Chou En-lai who received the higgest ovations from the crowds that gathered outside the Gedung Merdeka (the Conference Hall) but as the conference proceeded, the cheers for Abdel Nasser kept on increasing in

volume till in the end he became the idol of the crowds. It is difficult to explain this reaction especially as Nasser hardly opened his mouth at the conference. I thought that it was perhaps because Egypt was a leading Muslim country. But when one looks back in the light of subsequent events, one is inclined to think that it was a prevision of his great success over the handling of the Suez Canal issue.

The two years I spent in Indonesia after the Bandung Conference were equally eventful covering as they did the Lubis Revolt against President Sukarno, the overthrow of Dr. Ali Sastroamidjojo's Nationalist Government and the settling up of a Masjumi (Muslim) Cabinet under Buharuddin with the world famous economist, Dr. Sumito, as Finance Minister, the resignation of Dr. Mohammed Hatta as Vice President, the burning of the British Information Services building in connection with the demonstrations over the abortive British armed action against Nasser's take-over of the Suez Canal and finally the installation of Sukarno's "Gotong-Royong" Cabinet.

The Lubis Revolt should take first place, not in chronological order but in order of importance. It was sparked over the appointment of the Services Chief of Staff. The most senior Colonel was Simbolong, who was stationed at Medan in Sumatra. Apart from Simbolong there were several other "Colonels" (that was in those days the highest rank in the Indonesian Army) who were entitled to promotion as Chief of Staff, among whom was Lubis, who was acting in that post in the interim. But Sukarrno for some reason was not prepared to appoint any of them and brought back a former retired Chief of Staff, Colonel Bambeng Sujong, to fill the post. The active Colonels, led by Lubis, refused to attend the installation ceremony and for a time there was a deadlock. It was Lubis in the former "revolt" in 1951, when Natsution as Chief of Staff turned the Army guns on the President's Palace, who had stood by Sukarno and the latter used to call Lubis his "son." "Now even my son has turned against me," was Sukarno's bitter comment then. Anyway after several conferences and consultations, Natsution who was living in retirement was sent for and he finally agreed to return to Chief of Staff of the Services and took an oath never to turn against the President in future. But as

a face-saving compromise, Bambeng Sujong was allowed to hold office for three months before Natsution took over. All the others agreed except Lubis, who left his post and went into hiding.

The crack Suliwang Division of the Army, just outside Djakarta, backed Lubis and some months later, after Natsution had taken charge, Lubis was once reported to be marching on the capital to take it by surprise. But the news leaked out and Natsution was ready for the attack and so Lubis' spies rushed out and stopped him, when he was only 12 miles from Djakarta. My good friend the Iraqi Minister himself, a Sandhurst trained General who lived next door to Natsution in Jalan Theresa, told me that he saw machine-guns posted behind the croton bushes in Natsution's garden. That was the end of Colonel Lubis and he eventually retired to his home island of Sumatra to join the ill-fated Sumatra Rebellion of 1956, led by Sjaruffuddin and Sumitro. Colonel Lubis was a brother of the well-known Indonesian Editor, Mochtar Lubis, who was for several years under arrest for his outspoken criticism of Sukarno, until the Army Generals defeated the October 1965 coup attempt.

Colonel Lubis' refusal to accept the appointment of Colonel Bambeng Sujong as the Army Chief of Staff led in turn to what was known as the "Colonels Revolt." Indonesia was divided in several military districts with a Colonel in charge of each, and most of them also did not agree with the Bambeng Sujong appointment. As I said earlier the most senior of them was Simbolon, who was in charge of North Sumatra, with headquarters at Medan. He was a very efficient officer and liked by everybody but his disqualification was that he was a Christian. But I must say that of all the military officers I met during my stay in Indonesia, he was the one who impressed me most. When the Central Government at Djakarta did not provide him with the necessary funds to feed and clothe his soldiers, he took the law into his own hands and secured revenue by exporting the vast quantities of rubber produced by North Sumatra direct to Malaya. It was said that he collected some 80 million rupiahs in this manner and he utilised this money not only for his soldiers but also in improving the roads and other public utilities of the province. When finally he was driven into

exile by one of Natsution's nominees, he left files accounting for all but some four million of this sum.

Natsution more by persuasion than by force quelled the "Colonels Revolt" but the smouldering resentment against the Djakarta regime finally broke out in the "Sumatra Rebellion" headed by Sjaruffuddin and Sumitro. This was also finally quelled by Natsution but there was a majority in the country which held the view that if Dr. Hatta had thrown in his lot with the rebels, their movement would have succeded and Sumatra would have broken away from Java. Hatta was, however, too much of an Indonesian patriot to be a party to any move that would split up his country. He was joint leader with President Sukarno of the Indonesian movement to win independence from the Dutch. He was from Padang in West Sumatra and when the Republic of Indonesia was proclaimed in 1945, he was appointed Vice-President.

According to the constitution all decrees had to be signed by both the President and Vice-President and thus was set up a "Duum-virate" to govern the country. It was thought that the more sedate and scholarly Hatta would act as a check on the ebullient Sukarno but the latter's personality, however, asserted itself more and more strongly as time went on and finally Hatta resigned. "I do not want to be a mere rubber stamp," he himself told me at the time. He decided to devote himself to research and the publishing of books. There is no doubt that to the present day Hatta counts a large following in the country but his patriotism as much as his scholarly gentlemanliness did not permit him to put himself up as a rival to Sukarno.

After the collapse of the Buharuddin Cabinet, the office of Prime Minister fell on the shoulders of Dr. Djuanda. He was an unassuming individual whose main interest was economics and was eminently adapted to play second fiddle to Sukarno's flamboyant leadership. The President set up his "Gotong Royong" Cabinet and then finally his National Council in 1961 with himself as head but all the time Djuanda was the nominal Prime Minister till his death in 1963.

I wish to make one final reference to Indonesia, namely to the meteoric rise of Dr. Subandrio who was finally

tried and condemned to death for his part in the October 1965 coup attempt. After having been Ambassador to Russia and the United Kingdom, Subandrio returned to Djakarta towards the end of 1956 and was appointed Secretary-General to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Roeslan Abdulgani was then the Foreign Minister. When Roeslan relinquished office as a result of the allegation that he used his diplomatic immunity to carry foreign exchange to a member of the Indonesian Embassy at Washington, Subandrio automatically succeeded him. I found both him and Mrs. Subandrio (a medical doctor) a very cultured and charming couple, and very progressive socialists in their views. It was well-known that when at Moscow they had both learned to speak Russian fluently — a very useful diplomatic accomplishment. My relations with them were most cordial and when, on my leaving Indonesia on the expiry of my term of office in August 1957, I was not able to accept the usual farewell party by the Foreign Minister as I was in mourning for my brother. Dr. Subandrio presented me with a beautiful "Jogja" silver coffee service.

When I left Indonesia in 1957 there was no hint even then that Subandrio was a Communist. To me he was essentially a progressive socialist and an Indonesian patriot who would stand no nonsense from Western imperialists and I am very sceptical of the Western propaganda that he was a secret member of the Communist Party when in Moscow. Certainly as the President veered more and more to the left and discarded his old advisers like Roeslan Abdulgani and Ali Sastroamidjo, Subandrio gained more and more power but that I think was nothing more than a young man seizing opportunity with both hands. Anyway when I left Indonesia in 1957, neither Sukarno nor the country as a whole appeared to be very little more than pink in the colour of their politics. The later rise of Aidid into power and the change from pink to red were the result, in my opinion, of the Army pressures that pushed them in that direction.

CHAPTER XIV

MALAYAN INDEPENDENCE

During all the years I was in Djakarta I made regular monthly trips to Malaya as I held the appointment of Ceylon Minister to Indonesia and Ceylon Commissioner in Malaya concurrently. I had to keep close touch with events in Malaya and 1954 to 1957 was a time of rapid changes and portentous happenings in Malaya. They actually started earlier when the late Sir Henry Gurney initiated a move for responsible government in which local leaders, Malay, Chinese and Indian, as "Members," played an important part. He did this by appointing them in charge of various portfolios, keeping the offices of Chief Secretary, Finance Secretary and Attorney-General in the hands of expatriate officers.

Thus Dato Onn was appointed "Member for Home Affairs" and was the senior member of this local "Cabinet." Dato Thuraisingham was "Member for Education," Dr. Lee Tiang Keng "Member for Health (Medical Services)," and Dr. (later Tun) Ismail as "Member for Agriculture" This was to be a preparation for full independence with local leaders in time to be in charge of the government of the country. The tragic assissination of Sir Henry Gurney by the Communist terrorists on his way to a holiday at Fraser's Hill did not act as a setback to this move, though Sir Gerald Templer, who succeeded him, concentrated his attention on the fight against the terrorists leaving the civilian administration to his able Deputy, Sir Donald McGillivary.

But apart from the official moves, local leaders also took an active part in preparing for independence. Dato Onn took a first step in proposing to the Malays to change the "Malay" in United Malay Nationalist Organisation (U.M.N.O.) to "Malayan." Unfortunately, with the exception of Penang, all the other state branches of UMNO turned down this proposal. They felt that they were being sold to the Chinese and other communities whereas Dato Onn's idea was to establish national unity to strengthen the demand for independence. Onn was an impulsive individual and perhaps he was trying to move too fast for his followers. Anyway in a fit of temper or pique or both he resigned from UMNO and launched his "Independence of Malaya Party" (IMP) at a

public meeting at the Chinese Town Hall at Kuala Lumpur, presided over by Dato Tan Cheng Lock, the national President of the Malayan Chinese Association.

This left UMNO without a President and Dato (as he was then) Abdul Razak approached Tunku Abdul Rahman of Kedah, who was holding office as a Deputy Public Prosecutor in Kuala Lumpur. Razak had been Secretary to Rahman's President of the Malay Students Association in England after the war and was well acquainted with his public spirited and progressive views. It was indeed a happy choice. The Malays are intrinsically a feudal people and the mantle of royalty, which covered the Tunku, made him automatically a **persona grata** with all ranks of his people. Rahman himself was imbued with ultra-liberal ideals and a bursting love of independence which combined with his personal charm and ready acceptance of all people as equal made him the perfect leader at this critical period of Malaya's history. He readily accepted this call of destiny and the rest of his career has been one success story.

The following article entitled "The Making of a Prime Minister" that I contributed to a symposium on the occasion of his 60th birthday gives a fair summing up of his personality :

> "I first came to know of Tunku Abdul Rahman from my younger brother, S. Saravanamuttu, who was with him at the same college at Cambridge, St. Catherine's. This was in the early 1920's. I had already come down from Oxford and was in London playing cricket for the Indian Gymkhana.
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> "When my brother came to London for the summer vacation in 1921, he told me about his friend, a Malayan Prince who, he said, was a very fine fellow and with whom he used to go to dances. I believe Rahman had a two seater car and the pair of them used to play truant and run up to Bedford for the dances there.
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> "My first meeting with Tunku Abdul Rahman was when he returned from England in 1931 and it took

place at the Wembley Dance Hall in Penang. It was the custom in those days fory Government officers in South Kedah to take advantage of the weekly Thursday half-day and Friday holiday to come up to Penang and the nights were usually spent at the Wembley Dance Hall, which was the only night-club in those days. The proprietor, Heah Joo Seang, kept an open table and most of us used to gather at it. As a result of these trysts, my acquaintance with Rahman ripened into a warm friendship, assisted no doubt by his earlier contact with my younger brother. We had many interesting talks and I soon learned that the young Tunku was imbued with a very vibrant independent spirit. In fact the independent character of the Kedah Royal House was already well known in those days.

"It was said that the underlying reason for the first abdication of the late Sultan Abdul Hamid, Rahman's father, was not the alleged mental illness but really because he was riled by the constant British requests for concessions. So he appointed his next brother, Tunku Mahmud, Regent and then his eldest son, Tunku Ibrahim, was made Regent when the Sultan became really ill. Tunku Ibrahim himself was no less independent. I remember Sir Cecil Clementi telling me of the difficulty he had in meeting Tunku Ibrahim. When he went to Alor Star, he would be told that the Regent had gone to Penang, and when he followed him there he found he had gone off to Singapore. Kedah was not prepared to come into the Federated Malay States as they saw that the Sultans of the Federated Malay States were mere figureheads and the real rulers were the British Residents.

"It was this that led to Sir Cecil Clementi's now famous Decentralisation speech at the meeting of the Rulers' Council at Sri Menanti in 1932 at which he advocated more local autonomy for the Federated Malay States so that they could all come into a Federation of the whole of Malaya — a consummation which was not achieved till 1948.

"There is no doubt that Tunku Abdul Rahman inherited this independent spirit from his father whose youngest son he was though Tunku denies that he was the favourite because he was considered too wild in those days. He used to write letters to the **Straits Echo** under the pseudonym of 'Tunku Putra' and his present assumption of 'Putra' in his name was due to his being known by that pet name when he was a boy.

"My first direct impact with this independent spirit was in connection with his nephew, the late Tunku Ozair, a son of Tunku Ibrahim. Tunku Ibrahim's sons were all high-spirited young men and their father's independence was in them enhanced by the rebellious spirit of modern youth. This involved them in frequent clashes with the Europeans in Kedah, some of whom were unable to shed the "Tuan Besar" complex. As a result the Kedah Europeans resented the pranks of the Ibrahim boys, who, they felt, were unnecessarily throwing their weight about.

"The climax came when Tunku Ozair was involved in a fight with some Indians, culminating in the shooting of one of them in a coffee-shop brawl. The C.P.O. and others made much of the case and, in the outcome, Ozair was sentenced to a term of imprisonment. Rahman was very upset as Ozair was one of his favourite nephews, and he rushed down to Penang to seek my advice. He then went to Singapore and saw Sir Roland Bradell, the lawyer, but in the appeal which followed, the sentence was confirmed. Rahman then saw the Regent of Kedah and the gaol sentence was amended to one of banishment, and Ozair left for Denmark, his wife's home country. Tunku Muhmud, who had succeeded Tunku Ibrahim as Regent, was a mild personage with little of the fighting spirit of his elder brother and it was left to the youngest of the old Sultan's sons to show that spirit on behalf of his nephew.

"This, to my mind, was an outstanding early sign of the make-up that blossomed as the Prime Minister

of Independent Malaya. The then Mentri Besar of Kedah once told Rahman that he was knocking his head against a brick wall. Promptly came back the reply. "I will break it down (meaning the brick wall) with my head."

"The Japanese invasion of Malaya followed soon after and poor Ozair had a difficult time in Denmark cut off from the source of funds in Malaya, but that invasion gave a further opportunity to Tunku Abdul Rahman to display this same independent spirit as well as a true appreciation of royalty's responsibility that makes him the ideal Prime Minister. I refer to his now famous 'kidnapping' of his father, the late Sultan Abdul Hamid Halim Shah of Kedah.

"Even now one shudders when one remembers the speed with which the invader overran the country. In less than a week Kedah had fallen; Penang was evacuated in eight days and three days later, the Japanese had occupied the island. In that night-marish period, a British official thought — rightly from his point of view — that if the Sultans were evacuated the Japanese would rule during their occupation only **de facto.** If, however, the rulers were left behind and were made under duress to consent to the Japanese regime, there might have arisen legal complications later on. So the order was given to evacuate all the Sultans, starting from Perlis and Kedah. The motorcade was to start from Alor Star with the old Sultan, his household, and the Raja Muda, Tunku Badlishad, in train. Tunku Abdul Rahman at the time was District Officer at Kulim in south-east Kedah. I have read a version that he intercepted the motorcade at the junction of the branch road to Kulim and persuaded his father to leave the procession and go with him to his house at Kulim. It seems unlikely, however, that the others would have stood by and allowed him to upset their plans in this manner. According to Tunku, this is how it happened :

"The previous night when he was on duty at the Kulim A.R.P. Headquarters, he received a message from his brother-in-law, Syed Omar Shahabuddin, who was later Mentri Besar of Kedah, that the British were going to evacuate the Sultan at dawn. That same night, he made up his mind to prevent them taking his father away at all costs, so he armed himself and together with his friend, Syed Abu Bakar Al-Idrus, waited for the Sultan at Kepala Batas junction. The first car with the police escort passed by and two minutes later came the yellow Rolls-Royce of the Sultan. He stopped it, jumped into the car and forced the driver at revolver point to take the turn to Kulim.

"It was only when they reached Penang that those following the Sultan realised that they had arrived without the Ruler. After some investigation, they found that Rahman had his father with him in Kulim. The Regent, Tunku Badlishah, phoned Rahman up and asked him to bring the Sultan to Penang immediately or else he would order his arrest. Rahman replied that he could come and take the Sultan if he liked but it would be only over his dead body. He was prepared to fight it out. It was later that day that the Japanese bombed Penang and in the evening, Badlishah himself came to seek the protection of his brother, Abdul Rahman, in Kulim.

"It transpired that that morning when the Sultan reached Gurun, the office-in-charge of the convoy arranged for the cars to travel at two-minute interval to avoid the dust and that is how the others lost sight of the Sultan because Rahman's bold action took place within these two minutes. But if this arrangement for two-minute intervals had not been made, there would be no knowing what would have happened to Rahman. He would probably not be alive today to lead the country, because according to him, he would have shot it out. Viewed in the light of calm reason, it will be agreed that Tunku Abdul Rahman's concept that his father's duty as the ruler of his people was to remain with them in

time of trouble was the correct one, but his ability to make that split-second decision at the time of crisis, when all the others had acquiesed in the evacuation, carried the stamp of the true leader — who was later to become the first Prime Minister of Malaya.

"Of course the Japanese could not make enough fuss of Tunku at first for having kept his father behind but he soon found them out for what they were — the military clique who took their country into war. It was not long before he got into trouble with them for refusing to mobilise a labour force to plant cotton at Padang Serai and was demoted in service. When I went to see him at his house by the river in 1944 I found a very disillusioned person, longing for the end of the purgatory that we were all going through. He was in the right frame of mind to receive his nephews with open arms when they were dropped behind the lines in 1945 and to assist their guerilla activities in every possible way. Fortunately the atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasake led to the surrender of the Japanese without the necessity of a battle for the reconquest of Malaya and the liberation in September 1945 saw the Tunku a very happy man again.

"Then came the notorious McMichael Treaties. In my enthusiasm for an United Malaya I supported them and wrote an editorial saying that it was nonsense to treat the old treaties with the Sultans as sacrosant. I received a curt note from my old friend, "Sara, don't you dare set foot in Kedah. Your life will be in danger." It came as a shock to me but it also brought me to my senses; it made me realise the Malay point of view and prepared me to support Dato Onn when he stomped the country to rouse the Malays to revolt against the Malayan Union.

"It also showed Tunku Abdul Rahman as a Malay of Malays. In the pre-war days, he was noted for the free manner in which he mixed with all races —

Tunku Abdul Rahman (centre) proposing a toast to Ceylon at a reception in Kuala Lumpur in 1955. On the left is Sir Donald McGillivray, British High Commissioner to Malaya and on the extreme right is the author.

a trait that he carries to the present time. In fact, there were some who said he had more Chinese friends than Malays, but his friendship for individuals from other races was not inspired by sloppy sentimentality. It was the true comradeship that is born 'When two strong men stand face to face' — to complete the oft-misquoted quotation from Kipling. And Rahman made ample **amende honourable** for that threatening note to me at a party I gave him when he first became Chief Minister. He publicly stated, 'I'm doing today what Sara advocated years ago and about which I fought with him those days.' A magnanimous gesture from a generous personality.

"The Tunku, however, soon became an unhappy and frustrated person in post-war Kedah. His father had died during the Japanese occupation and Badlishah was Sultan. It was an open secret that the two brothers did not see eye to eye. There is no need now to go into their differences as they made it up over their father's grave when Rahman was Chief Minister. But here again Tunku Abdul Rahman showed the stuff of which he is made. When he felt there was no room for him in his home state, he went back to London to complete his examinations and be called to the Bar some 25 years after he enrolled as a student at the Inner Temple. He then returned to Malaya to take up a job as Deputy Public Prosecutor at Kuala Lumpur.

"Destiny, however, was knocking at his door. When Dato Onn, becoming impatient that the Malays would not keep pace with him and change the name United Malay Nationalist Organisation to United MALAYAN Nationalist Organisation, resigned from that body, the Malays naturally turned to Tunku as their leader. Tunku, who was merely kicking his heels in his petty legal job, accepted the invitation to be President of UMNO and the evolution of the Alliance Party under his leadership is recent history.

"Rahman and I have always remained good friends. When he introduces me to his new political and diplomatic friends, he says, "This is Sara, the old scoundrel from Penang," and he immediately turns it into a compliment by adding, "I was the biggest scoundrel in Penang those days."

"Yes, the playboy Rahman of those Cambridge dancing days and hectic Penang nights of Wembley has today become the beloved leader of Malaya and a statesman of world stature."

Dato Onn tried the strength of his new Independence of Malaya Party at the Kuala Lumpur Town Council elections in December 1953. It came as a surprise to everyone when Colonel H. S. Lee, the Chairman of the Selangor branch of the Malayan Chinese Association, put up MCA candidates in opposition to the IMP nominations. I remember remarking to Dato Tan Cheng Lock that this looked odd as he (Dato Tan), the National Chairman of the MCA, had given his blessing to the IMP by presiding at the inaugural meeting of the new party. The trouble was that Dato Onn, a Johore man, was not quite **au fait** with Kuala Lumpur politics nor was his chief adviser, Dato Thuraisingham. H. S. Lee was the pre-war leader of the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur; he was a member of the Federal Executive Council and was made a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire by the King in 1940. So he probably felt piqued when he was passed over and Khoo Teik Ee and Yong Shook Lin were invited to speak for the Chinese at the IMP inaugural meeting. I must add that this is merely my personal opinion and I think that was why he put up MCA candidates in opposition to the IMP nominees.

The UMNO also contested two seats at the K.L. Town Council elections and the Malay leaders approached Colonel Lee and persuaded him to finance their two candidates in return for reciprocal support and this is how the Alliance Party came to be established in opposition to the IMP. This combination, particularly H. S. Lee's influence with Kuala Lumpur Chinese, proved too strong for Dato Onn's new party and the Alliance swept the board at the elections, winning all but one of the seats. This was a fatal blow

to the IMP which, as a result, died at birth. And nothing succeeds like success. Dato Tan Cheng Lock issued a statement that each state branch of the MCA was free to decide whether to join the new Alliance Party and Tunku Abdul Rahman, as National President of the UMNO, also accepted the move. The leaders of the Malayan Indian Congress also climbed on the band-wagon and the Alliance Party was firmly established. I remember making a personal appeal to Tunku Abdul Rahman on behalf of a non-communal organisation like the Independence of Malaya Party. Rahman readily agreed that its non-communal ideals coincided with his views but that the name "I.M.P." stank!

Anyway the Alliance was established as a nation-wide organisation and at the first Malayan General Election in 1955, it swept the polls, winning all but one seat. Tunku Abdul Rahman became the first Chief Minister of Malaya. As one of his oldest friends I invited him to a party at Kuala Lumpur which he very kindly accepted and the party was attended by Sir Donald McGillivary, who had succeeded Sir Gerald Templer as High Commissioner, and the leaders of the official and unofficial communities. Poor Dato Onn, in his bitter disappointment swung to the other extreme and formed the Party Negara, a purely Malay body, and it was not till the second general election after independence that he was returned to the Federal Parliament in a Trengganu constituency. He died in 1963, a broken hearted man, but it can never be forgotten that it was he who negotiated the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1948 with the British Government and thereby truly earned the right to the title of "Bapa Malaya."

With such an outstanding majority it was a simple matter for Rahman to negotiate with the British Government for the independence of Malaya but it was in these negotiations that he showed his true qualities of statesmanship. He was no rabid anti-imperialist like most leaders of the "new emerging nations." He showed a true spirit of "give and take" and that "sweet reasonableness" which was always one of his outstanding characteristics but on a matter of principle he showed a surprising obstinacy.

Dato Onn bin Jafaar, the Founder of the Federation of Malaya.

Regarding the Defence Treaty with Britain under which the latter undertook the defence of Malaya for ten years, the Tunku explained that Malaya needed to devote all her finances and energies to economic and industrial development and extension of her social welfare institutions — a policy that received blessing from all quarters, including Indonesia's President Sukarno himself.

The independence of Malaya was declared on August 31st, 1957 at the Merdeka Stadium in Kuala Lumpur — a newly erected arena which was completed in three months to be ready for the occasion and seated 50,000 spectators. It was a most colourful and impressive ceremony. The Duke of Gloucester came out to represent the Queen and hand over the Royal Charter, while representatives of 40 nations, including the Prime Minister of Ceylon, S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike, were present at the ceremony at which Tunku Abdul Rahman read the Proclamation of Independence. This was followed the next day by the installation of the first Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King), Tuanku Abdul Rahman of Negri Sembilan, who had been elected earlier by his brother Sultans, and a Royal Banquet. The climax to the celebrations was a gorgeous fireworks display at the Lake Gardens which was watched by several tens of thousands of Malayans who had gathered at Kuala Lumpur for the great occasion. The Federation was certainly launched with all due pomp and acclaim.

On the day after the banquet, Mrs. Bandaranaike, the wife of the Ceylon Prime Minister, received a cable informing her of the serious illness of her father, Dissawe Barnes Ratwatte, and requesting her immediate return to Ceylon. It required a lot of wire-pulling to secure a special air flight to take Mr. and Mrs Bandaranaike back to Ceylon. Through the assistance of the Private Secretary of Sir David Watherstan, who was acting as High Commissioner after the departure of Sir Donald McGillivary that evening, I got them seats on a Comet that was leaving on a testing flight from Kuala Lumpur to Ceylon but about 11 p.m. I was informed that it was against service regulations to carry a V.I.P. like the Prime Minister of Ceylon on a testing flight. I then remembered that the **Straits Times** used to be flown from Singapore to

Kuala Lumour about 2 a.m. by a Malayan Airways plane that used to return empty. Through the co-operation of the Director of Civil Aviation and the Kuala Lumpur manager of Malayan Airways, I secured seats for Mr. and Mrs. Bandaranaike on that return flight and they reached Singapore at 5 a.m. There the Governor of Singapore, Sir Robert Black, fixed up seats for them on a routine R.A.F. flight to Ceylon the same morning and they reached Colombo without any mishap. I recount this incident to illustrate the extreme courtesy of the old colonial officers and the willing assistance they were ready to give in any critical situation.

The next morning the duty fell to me to represent the Prime Minister of Ceylon in conveying my country's congratulations to His Majesty the Yang di-Pertuan Agong of Malaya and Tunku Abdul Rahman and exchanging gifts. In this duty I was accompanied by Gunasena de Zoysa, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of External Affairs of Ceylon. One incident is worth recalling. After the formalities were over, Rahman asked the others to excuse us as he wished to have a few words in private with me. When they had withdrawn he took me by surprise saying, "Now that we are independent tell me what you think I should do ?"

Actually I always was dissatisfied with the half-hearted amnesty that had been offered by the British to the terrorists, so I promptly told Tunku; "Offer the terrorists a full amnesty. Don't say like the British that those who surrendered but had committed murder would have to stand trial. Offer them all a full pardon, and tell those who still wish to remain Communists that you will send them to whatever country they wished to go."

I told Rahman that such a move will result in the surrender of most, if not all, the terrorists. Rahman agreed with me and he made the announcement the next day and in a few months the Emergency which had started in 1948, began to show definite signs of breaking down. Surrenders began to mount in increasing numbers and by 1960 the Emergency was declared over.

The country continued to progress and prosper on the liberal policy initiated by Tunku Abdul Rahman together with

stable conditions prevailing which attracted foreign capital on a large scale to assist in the industrialisation of the country. A large industrial estate sprang up in the new suburb of Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya, which soon showed signs of rivalling the Bukit Timah and Jurong industrial sites of Singapore. Tin and rubber continued to be the principal exports of the country.

Politically, too, the various communities lived in harmony and goodwill, everyone having the fullest confidence in the fairminded leadership of the Tunku. The establishment of Malay as the official language in 1957 was then still too far away to cause immediate concern and everyone accepted the introduction of Malay as a compulsory subject in all schools, while English remained the medium of instruction. The preference for Malays in jobs, for which the Tunku asked forebearance till the Malays caught up with the other races, was largely in principle. There were yet not enough qualified Malays to seriously affect the qualified Chinese and Indian candidates.

The first trouble arose over the 1959 elections, the first to be held after independence. Dr. Lim Chong Eu, a rising young politician in Penang, had succeeded Dato Tan Cheng Lock as National President of the MCA, and when it came to the allocation of the seats among the Alliance candidates, he asked that 35 (one-third of the 105 seats in Parliament) be allotted to the Chinese. His purpose was obvious. He wished to ensure that the Malays would not be able to command a two-third majority to alter the constitution to the disadvantage of the Chinese. Tunku Abdul Rahman raised strong objection to this communal attitude. Although the Alliance was communal in basis, he was trying to run it as a non-communal national party and any allocation of seats on a communal basis would undermine that ideal.

That the Tunku was genuine in his stand I am able to testify. When the Commission for drafting the Constitution of Malaya was appointed, in addition to Sir Ivor Jennings, an expert on constitution law expert who had helped to draw up the Ceylon Constitution, and the Chief Justice of Australia, representatives from India and Pakistan were also appointed.

As Ceylon Commissioner I went to Tunku and suggested that a representative from Ceylon should also be appointed as we Ceylonese were also a sizeable minority whose problems had to be considered in drawing up the constitution of the new nation. Rahman's reply shows the genuiness of his non-communal stand. "If you are coming to me to make a plea on communal lines, Sara, I am not prepared to listen to you," he declared. "But if Ceylon can suggest a candidate with the necessary qualifications, I am prepared to consider appointing him." I was well and truly ticked off and Tunku did not hesitate to do so to even an old friend like me. Ceylon had a suitable candidate in L. M. de Silva, who was on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, but he could not spare the time to serve on the Malayan Constitutional Commission.

Dr. Lim Chong Eu's stand created quite a stir in Malayan political circles. He produced a letter from Dato Tan Cheng Lock supporting his stand but the latter's son, (now Tun) Tan Siew Sin, brought his father out of his sick bed to deny that letter. Perhaps in recognition of his loyalty, Tunku Abdul Rahman made Tan Siew Sin Finance Minister when Colonel Sir Henry Lee retired. The Tunku solved the matter with a compromise, allotting 32 seats to the Chinese and 3 seats to the Indians, thereby preventing the Malays from having more than two-third votes.

In the outcome, however, Dr. Lim Chong Eu's fears were justified for in 1962 the Constitution was ammended making it more difficult for non-Malays to acquire citizenship. The qualification of 8 years residence out of 12 years was amended to 10 years out of 12 years and the Malay language test was made more searching. Dr. Lim resigned from the Chairmanship of the MCA and formed a new party known as the United Democratic Party. Chong Eu was too intelligent and educated a young man to drop out of Malayan politics. In the 1964 elections he won a seat to the Federal Parliament on his new ticket of United Democratic Party.

In the 1959 elections the Alliance still carried an over-whelming majority though the Socialist Front and the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party were able to secure a few seats. This same position was maintained in the 1964 elections.

Since writing the above the General Election of May 1969 have taken place and the Alliance have paid the price for their basic communal set up against which I warned Tunku Abdul Rahman in 1954. The Alliance have lost their two-thirds majority but have still secured a majority. This was largely due to the failure of the Chinese (the M.C.A. partner of the Alliance) to cast their votes as the rank and file had lost their confidence in their leaders. In Penang the Gerakan (People's) Party formed by Dr. Lim Chong Eu (United Democratic Party) and the right wing of the Labour Party swept the board and gained control of the Government. They also won a sizeable number of seats in the Central legislature. In Kedah, the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party carried out a personal libellous villification campaign against the Tunku himself and gained a number of seats. This party maintaned its hold on Kelantan. In Perak, only the failure of the opposition parties ot come to an agreement enabled the Alliance to form a government. In Selangor the Alliance had to depend on the sole Independent elected to form a government. Negri Sembilan and Malacca had diminished Alliance majorities but Johore and Pahang remained solidly for the Alliance.

The tension, however, was high throughout the country and riots accompanied by looting arson and murder erupted in Kuala Lumpur on May 13 and spread in a minor degree to other parts of the country. A State of Emergency was proclaimed, Parliamentary Government was suspended, and a National Operations Council with full Executive powers with the Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, at the head was appointed. The appointment of a National Goodwill Council with branches in all States and Districts has lulled the communal tenson to a large extent but even as I write, one year after the disturbances, the State of Emergency has not yet been lifted.

CHAPTER XV

SINGAPORE'S TROUBLES

A new difficulty arose in 1961 when the Singapore Prime Minister, Lee Kuan Yew, fearing that there was a danger of his party being driven out of power by the left wing breakaway section, the Barisan Socialists, approached the Tunku to merge Singapore with Malaya. In a series of broadcasts he revealed that at the time the PAP (People's Action Party) came into power he had been approached by an agent of the Communist Party to toe the Communist line. There is no doubt that Mr. Lee Kuan Yew was hoisted to the Premiership seat by the support of the extreme left sections in Singapore but, when after he assumed office he adopted a more middle-of-the-way policy, this section broke away from him and formed the Barisan Socialist Party.

He now came to the Tunku with the suggestion that, unless Singapore was merged with Malaya, the Government of that island would be controlled by the Communists. This placed Tunku Abdul Rahman in a quandary. On the one hand he would be in the position of having a Communist controlled Signapore (another Cuba) on his doorstep and on the other hand the admission of Singapore into the Malayan Federation would upset the population balance. In the Federation without Singapore the Malays formed 51 per cent of the population, whereas if Singapore came in the non-Malays would form the majority. It was indeed a very difficult position for the Malayan Prime Minister and he conceived a plan for bringing the Borneo territories into the Federation and naming the new combination Federation of Malaysia. Rahman quite honestly claims that Malaysia was his brain-child. The British, however, had been toying with this plan of a Greater Malaya or United States of Malaya from as early as 1950. So when he approached White Hall he received ready and enthusiastic support for his scheme and the negotiations for the establishment of Malaysia went on a space.

A Royal Commission headed by Lord Cobbold visited the Borneo territories and took evidence from various public organisations as to whether they wished to join the new

Federation of Malaysia. As the delegations that gave evidence came almost entirely from the educated articulate sections of the population the concensus of opinion was almost unanimously in favour of joining the new Federation. But there was one party, namely the Sarawak United People's Party, largely composed of Chinese, which was not altogether in support of the move. It was suspected, with some justification, that Communist elements had infiltrated into this group. Nevertheless the Cobbold Commission reported to the British Government that the Borneo territories were, by and large, in favour of entering into a Federation with Malaya and Singapore.

The Sultan of Brunei was also in favour of joining at the beginning but later on a difficulty arose with regard to his position in the table of precedence among the Sultans. Probably in view of the wealth of his state he felt that he should be given a higher position than that accorded by the accepted rule, that is according to the date of accession. There was also some difficulty with regard to his state's revenue. Under the old system all the oil revenues were the personal property of the Sultan himself and Tunku Abdul Rahman suggested that this revenue should accrue to the state, that is to the people, and the Sultan allotted an allowance, in this case a very substantial one, as was done in the case of various Indian states. This issue might have been solved by allowing the present Sultan to retain his oil revenues during his life time and accumulate a large Privy Purse to provide for his descendants but on the issue of precedence there was a deadlock. Tunku Abdul Rahman, however, was not prepared to vary the procedure already adopted in Malays. It was a matter for the Council of Rulers, he said, and the latter body were quite firm on the matter. In the outcome the Sultan of Brunei decided to stay outside the proposed Federation and continue as a protected state under the British.

The negotiations with Singapore were also somewhat affected by a snap general election in March 1963 in which Lee Kuan Yew and his party were returned with an overwhelming majority. It must be admitted that the Singapore Prime Minister showed outstanding political acumen in the manner in which he manoeuvered this election. For one

thing the surprise announcement of the election date took the opposition Barisan Socialist off their guard; then by restoring the pay-cuts imposed in 1957 on the salaries of public servants and paying all arrears of pay cuts he secured the block vote of the public servants. His success at the election made a considerable difference to the stand taken by Lee Kuan Yew in the matter of the merger with Malaya. In 1961 he was practically begging Tunku Abdul Rahman to include Singapore in the Federation because he was afraid he would have be ousted by the Barisan Socialist and Singapore taken over by the Communists, who in turn would have taken their revenge on Lee Kuan Yew himself for the disclosures he made in his broadcasts in 1961. But after March 1963 he was in a very secure position for the next five years commanding a large majority in the Singapore Assembly.

So now he started to take up a tough attitude in the negotiations with Malaya. For one thing there was the question of the contribution Singapore would make to the finances of the Central Government. Singapore itself was a very prosperous unit with large surplus reserves but a good proportion of its wealth came from the trade it carried on with the hinterland, particularly as the main port of the southern half of the peninsula. The Central Government wanted an outright gift of $150 million (Malayan) from Singapore as a price for being included in the Federation of Malaysia, quite apart from 40 per cent share of its annual revenues but Lee Kuan Yew now stood firm against such a large gift. At one time it looked as if the merger proposals would fall through on this issue but finally a compromise was reached whereby Singapore made a gift of $50 million and promised a loan of $150 million as and when required for the development of the Borneo territories. There was also the question of a Common Market as between Singapore and Malaya. Singapore had been rapidly industrialising and, with Hongkong collaring other markets in South-East Asia as a result of her cheaper costs of production, Singapore had to turn largely to Malaya for marketing her products. To a large extent this meant the loss of Singapore's free port status. Here again a solution was worked out whereby Singapore planned to establish a free port on one of the small adjoining islands if she herself entered into a Common Market with Malaya, which in turn was fast developing new industries.

A side issue arose over the free port status of the island of Penang. There were no major industries on Penang Island and if Penang entered the Malayan Common Market and thereby lost her free port status, whatever commodities produced in Penang would not have been able to compete with the mainland products because of the extra cost of transport across the channel. Singapore had no such difficulty as it already had its causeway connecting it by road with Johore. The people of Penang were almost unanimous in demanding that their island retained its free port status and be developed as a tourist attraction, confining industrial developments to the Mak Mandin industrial estate on the mainland. Some heat was generated over the dispute particularly as the Finance Minister of the Central Malayan Government, Tan Siew Sin, showed an inclination to force Penang into the proposed Common Market. It was said that as a Malacca resident he resented the loss of free port status of Malacca when that state entered the Federation while Penang retained it. Finally the Tunku stepped in with the broad-minded compromise that the people of Penang could retain their free port status as long as they wanted to and enter the Common Market only when they felt it was in their interests to do so.

All these issues were satisfactorily resolved and the Federation of Malaysia was proclaimed on September 16th, 1963. The opposition parties in Malaya, while supporting the establishment of Malaysia in principle, were of the view that more time should have been devoted to study all the implications of the move and work out the details, a warning that was justified by subsequent events.

The proclamation of Malaysia was the signal for a strong denunciation by President Sukarno of Indonesia that it was a neo-colonialist institution and he initiated a policy of "confrontation" of the new Federation. The reason given for his opposition by President Sukarno was the extension of the Defence Treaty between Great Britain and Malaya to cover Malaysia. President Sukarno had raised no objection to the Defence Treaty with Britain by the Federation of Malaya. Hence his present stand seemed inconsistent; but as his Foreign Minister, Dr. Subandrio, explained the extension of the Treaty to Malaysia meant that British troops would be

on the borders of Indonesian territory, and, according to him, it was quite possible for them to create an "incident" as an excuse for the invasion of Indonesia. One rather suspects, however, that the basic reason for President Sukarno's opposition to Malaysia was bitter frustration. He had anticipated that the one-fifth part of Borneo, which comprised the British controlled territories, would by the effluxion of time join up with Kalimantan, the Indonesian controlled part of the island. It would have been quite in order for him to have launched a campaign for liberating Sabah and Sarawak from a western imperialistic power like Britain. When Malaya stepped into take control of these territories the ground was cut off from under his feet; it was not possible to accuse a fellow Asian neighbour of colonialist aspirations. Hence his slogan of "neo-colonialism" and the charge that the formation of Malaysia was a British plot to retain their interests in the region. He intensified his confrontation to send armed "volunteers" to attack Sabah and Sarawak and even extended this "invasion" campaign to the mainland of Malaya. All this had little more than "nuisance value" but the confrontation campaign certainly affected the entreport trade of Singapore and Penang and caused unemployment to the harbour front workers.

The failure of the attempted Communist coup in Indonesia on October 1st, 1965, however, completely changed the whole situation. The assumption of power by army officers and the moderate civilian political leaders and the deposition of Sukarno himself, led to the end of the Indonesian confrontation of Malaysia and within a year diplomatic relations and trade between the two countries were resumed. This denouement is a far step forward in the development of South-East Asia and satisfactory solution of the Vietnam imbroglio is the only problem that stands in the way of the deep economic potiential of this area being fully developed to the advantage not only of the countries comprising it but also of the world at large.

A sad side issue of the failure of the October Coup in Indonesia is the untimely fate that overtook Dr. Subandrio who, at the time I left that country in October 1957, was already making himself felt in Indonesian leadership as attempt, tarred him as a Communist and he was sentenced

to death by a military tribunal. This has now reportedly been commuted to life imprisonment by President Suharto. Dr. Subandrio's meteoric rise and equally sudden fall brings to mind the tragic lines on which Marlowe's "Dr. Fanstus" ends :-

"Cut is the branch that might have grown full straight
"And burned is Apollo's laurel bough
"That sometime grew within this worthy man."

In spite of the merger the relations between Singapore and Malaya continued to be somewhat estranged. The reason for this was obvious, for Singapore was a predominantly Chinese-populated area, over 80 per cent of its inhabitants being Chinese, whereas in Malaya the Malays formed the majority. As a result there was an atmosphere of suspicion which broke out into open trouble and riots. There was a major outbreak in 1964 which had its centre in the predominatly Malay populated part of Singapore city, known as Geylang Serai. The Malays here are largely Boyanese who had comparatively recently migrated from Indonesia and it was assumed that the trouble was instigated by subversive Indonesian elements.

In the 1964 Malayan general election, the PAP as a party entered the arena. Tunku Abdul Rahman complained later that in the merger agreement there was a tacit understanding that the PAP would not enter Malayan elections as a party but as I said earlier the success in the Singapore election in 1963 had the effect of making Lee Kuan Yew adopt a tough attitude and he thought that by entering the fray in the 1964 Malayan election he would be able to win the dissatisfied elements among the MCA away from the Alliance and thereby get a foothold in the Malayan political arena. He certainly carried on a very vigorous election campaign holding public rallies in all the principal towns but he had a big shock when the results of the polling were announced and he found that the PAP had secured only one seat in the whole of the Federation. The confidence that everyone, even non-Malays, had in the fair mindedness of Tunku Abdul Rahman was too deep-seated to be upset by the shock tactics of Lee Kuan Yew.

When the Federal Parliament met after the elections, the Singapore Government representatives were not accepted into the Government group. This was inevitable in view of

the fact that the PAP had opposed the Alliance at the polls. It seemed anomalous for the Singapore Prime Minister to be seated with the Opposition but there was precedence for this as the Kelantan State Government was controlled by the PMIP and so the Mentri Besar (Chief Minister) of Kelantan was similarly seated on the Opposition benches. This, however, did not suit a dynamic personality like that of Lee Kuan Yew and tended to widen the rift between Singapore and the Central Governments.

His forthright criticism of the Alliance Government policies evoked violent and sometimes even unparliamentary replies from the Alliance back-benchers and this also led to virulent exchanges between Singapore Ministers and Malay leaders like the Secretary-General of UMNO and the Minister of Information. There were also frequent verbal battles between the Federation Finance Minister, Tan Siew Sin, who was also the Malayan President of the MCA, and Lee Kuan Yew. Things went from bad to worse and the position was not made any better by a tour of Commonwealth and foreign countries by the Singapore Prime Minister in 1964. The ostensible reason was to sell Singapore to the world but it also had the effect of projecting the personal image of Lee Kuan Yew on the world screen.

A side issue which precipitated matters was the utilisation by the Singapore Government of Alex Josey, a free lance journalist. Josey had been brought to Malaya by Sir Henry Gurney as an Information Officer in which capacity he had served in Palestine. He was a "left of the centre" socialist and even during that period he did not find favour with the more conservative sections of the Malayan public, so that when Malaya became independent he was one of the expatriates whose services were discontinued. Josey then set up as a free lance journalist in Singapore and contributed articles to leading British and American magazines like **The Times** and **The Economist.**

When Lee Kuan Yew went on his world trip, Josey accompanied him as his publicity agent. The latter was always forthright in his views and his socialist outlook was irked by the "preference for Malays" policy in Malaya. He stood for equality for all Malaysians. His writings gave offence to the

Malays and it was suspected that he supplied the background for some articles in the English papers critical of the Malayan Government and particularly of Tunku Abdul Rahman. As a result of all this, the Malaysian Home Minister, Tun (Dr.) Ismail bin Dato Abdul Rahman, served notice on Josey withdrawing his visa and requesting him to leave Malaysia as a "persona no grata." This created repercussions in the world as an act hostile to the freedom of the Press, but the stand of the Malaysian Government was that Josey's writings tended to disturb the racial harmony, which was of paramount importance in a multi-racial community like that of Malaysia, and created racial strife. So he had to leave.

Relations between Singapore and Malaya continued to deteriorate and were in no way improved by the critical pronouncements of the Singapore Prime Minister as well as the somewhat irresponsible statements in reply by some of the Malay back-benchers. In fact in one instance there was a demand for the detention of Lee Kuan Yew. It must be mentioned in fairness that neither Tunku Abdul Rahman nor any of his responsible Ministers indulged in such wild talk. They emphasised that Lee Kuan Yew was entitled to his views and Dato (Dr.) Ismail, Minister for Security, made it quite clear that, though he would not hesitate to order the detention of Lee Kuan Yew if he went too far, there was nothing he had said or done so far to justify such an extreme step. Lack of political experience was largely responsible for the over-sensitive reaction of the Malays and certainly the situation was rapidly getting out of hand.

Negotiations were initiated between the Central Government and the Singapore Government to evolve a solution of this impasse. Tunku Abdul Rahman was away at the Commonwealth Prime Minister's Conference in London in 1965 and the Deputy Prime Minister, Tun Abdul Razak, represented the Central Government in these talks while Singapore was represented by its Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Toh Chin Chye. When Tunku Abdul Rahman returned from London he told the press at Singapore airport that he would be willing to talk to Lee Kuan Yew but after his arrival in Kuala Lumpur and a meeting with Tun Razak there came the shock announcement on August 8th, 1965 of the seccession of Singapore from the Federation of Malaysia.

In the official releases as well as in the statements by the leaders of both sides it was made quite clear that the move for this break came from the Central Government in Kuala Lumpur, who thought that the continuation of the uneasy partnership was likely to result in serious communal troubles. Lee Kuan Yew revealed in his broadcast that the decision to break was not at all to his liking. He was so overcome by emotion that he had to cut short his broadcast at one stage and resume about an hour later. He gave the impression that he had gone too far and that the Central Government had called his bluff.

The implications of this break were manifold, the most important being the future of the military bases in Singapore and the position of Singapore in the Malaysian Common Market. In the case of the former, the official agreement made provisions for Malaysia to use the bases in Singapore for its defence, that is to permit the British to stay on, but in another of his sensational pronouncements, Lee Kuan Yew suggested that if the British pulled out and the Central Government sought U.S. aid, he would offer the Singapore bases to Moscow.

Lee Kuan Yew also made a sensational revelation of an attempt by an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of America to buy information from a Singapore police officer regarding the latest developments in the Malaysian-Indonesian relations. According to the Singapore Prime Minister, this agent was arrested by his Government and he (Lee Kuan Yew) was offered $30,000 (U.S.) to the PAP funds by the American Government to hush the matter up.

At first Washington denied this but when Lee Kuan Yew made public a letter from U.S. Secretary of State Dean Rusk, the incident had to be admitted though it was made clear by Washington that the final stand by President John F. Kennedy was for an open offer of official aid. According to Lee Kuan Yew, in view of the delicate state of negotiations for merger with Malaya at the time, he decided to release the American agent without pursuing the matter any further. One still wonders what was the purpose of this sensational revelation other than Kuan Yew's notorious penchant for sensationalism, though there is a suspicion that the Singapore Prime Minister was trying to make it clear that his new

independent country was not likely to join the Western bloc and was more sympathetic to what were called the Newly Emerging Nations of Asia and Africa.

The question of the Common Market was a much more important one. Economically Singapore needed the Malayan hinterland very much more than the latter needed Singapore. The Common Market, as envisaged by the architects of Malaysia when Singapore joined the Federation, was an essential requisite to the economic survival of the two territories which, after all, is an essential pre-requisite to political survival. Largely due to the competition of Hongkong, where wages and cost of production were much lower consequent on the large influx of refugees from mainland China, Singapore's trade with the rest of South-East Asia had dwindled considerably and the mainland of Malayan had become its most important trading partner. The new factor of Indonesian confrontation had further diminished its external trade so that by 1964 Singapore's trade with Indonesia, which averaged between 14 and 15 per cent of the total in 1962, had dropped to nil.

Singapore's trade with Malaya on the contrary kept at a steady 22 per cent from 1960 to 1962. In 1964 it increased to 27.5 per cent. In fact even in the days before World War II, Singapore as the principal port of Malaya owed its prosperity largely to the exports of tin and rubber which passed through its wharves from the mainland and the import commodities which again passed through Singapore to the hinterland. With the increased industrial developments of the island, Malaya also became the most important market for the goods manufactured by Singapore. This dependence on the mainland of Malaya became vital to Singapore. The 27.5 per cent of its trade which was the share of the Federation of Malaya was by far the largest single proportion of its total trade.

At the same time it has to be admitted that the mainland also depended to a large extent on its trade with Singapore. Export facilities at Penang and Port Swettenham were hardly adequate to meet the large export requirements of the tin and rubber produced on the mainland as well as the imports of all the essential and other commodities that were needed throughout the peninsula. Furthermore Malaya

itself had embarked on an extensive programme of industrialisation. Already the industrialist estate at Petaling Jaya, a suburb of Kuala Lumpur, had gone into production on a large scale; the Tasek industrial estate near Ipoh was rapidly developing while the iron and sugar plants at Prai and the Mak Mandin industrial estate at Butterworth in Province Wellesley were also already coming into production and all these would have to find markets beyond the peninsula for their products. The buying **per capita** potential of Singapore was much greater than that of Malaya.

It would thus be seen that a "dog-in-the-manger" policy by either territory could lead to mutual economic disaster in place of the prosperity that a Common Market could engender. In the agreement for the separation of Singapore from the rest of Malaysia, it was laid down that economic co-operation was to be an important feature of the new set-up but unfortunately irresponsible statements by self-appointed leaders provided pin-pricks that threatened to subvert this aim. The Chambers of Commerce of both Singapore and Malaya, however, issued statements calling for the continuation of the Common Market policy between the two territories and there can be no doubt that in the course of time common sense will prevail and this desirable object achieved.

Of course brick-bats continued to be hurled from both sides and an unfortunate incident was sparked off by the Singapore Prime Minister when in a speech he characterised the leaders of the non-Malay sections of the Alliance Party as "political eunuchs." This naturally roused considerable resentment and the Malaysian Government sent a formal protest note to Singapore. The matter was resolved by both Governments coming to an agreement not to make derogatory statements about each other, but this was a further indication of the uneasy state of the relations between the two Governments.

Meanwhile there seemed to be a danger that the Borneo territories might follow the example of Singapore and secede from the Malaysian Federation. The events that led to the seccession of Singapore were not only dramatic but expeditious in the extreme. The decision of the Central

Government was reached within 48 hours of the return of Tunku Abdul Rahman from Europe and there was no time for formal consultations with the various governments of the States of the Federation. It must be admitted, that while the Federation of Malaya was comprised of the nine Malay states and Penang and Malacca, the Federation of Malaysia was composed of four partners, namely Malaya, Singapore, Sarawak and Sabah. The last two felt slighted that they had not been consulted before the decision to ask Singapore to withdraw from the Federation of Malaysia was arrived at; apparently the first information they had was the summons to the special session of the Federation Parliament to consider the draft agreement between Singapore and the Federation. There was some resentment at what they thought was cavalier treatment but the Chief Minister of Sarawak voted for the Bill and stood by it.

When there were indications that feelings were running high in the Borneo territories, Tunku Abdul Rahman himself paid a special visit to Sarawak and Sabah to explain the position to the leaders of those states. An unfortunate development was that Dato Donald Stephens, one-time Chief Minister of Sabah and later Federal Minister for the Borneo territories in the Malaysian Cabinet, resigned the latter post and returned to his home state to re-enter politics and headed a movement for reconsideration of the whole position subsequent to the seccession of Singapore.

Dato Donald Stephens had agreed to the separation and had raised no voice in protest against it. He went even further by giving a personal interview and a talk on T.V. on August 12th, 1965, in which he supported the move, so his supposed opposition to this was truly beyond the comprehension of his colleagues, the members of the Malaysian Cabinet. One can only assume that his judgment had been influenced by outsiders who had promised to make him the Prime Minister of Sabah. Tunku Abdul Rahman on his return from his visit to the Borneo territories substantiated this and asked that certain officers of the British High Commission be warned or else face expulsion. The British officers probably thought that whereas the establishment of the Federation of Malaysia was ostensibly for giving independence to the Borneo states i.e., to the previously Colonial territories

of Sarawak and Sabah, they had now exchanged British colonialism for Malay or Malayan colonialism.

One could hardly expect them to understand the difference. In the case of British rule it meant rule by a completely foreign race in which there always was the side issue of the racial superiority of the rulers. Malayans and Borneans are ethnically of the same race and, between the Malays of Malaya and the people of Sarawak and Sabah, no question of racial superiority arises. The position is simply that in Sarawak and Sabah there are not sufficient trained personnel to run the administration and so officers are sent from Malaya to help these territories till such time that the people themselves could take the entire administration into their own hands. This is more in the nature of "big brother co-operation" and a quite different situation to that of rule by a foreign race with its insidious under-current of race superiority.

Some foreign correspondents, commenting on Tunku's reaction to the position that arose in the Borneo territories following the succession of Singapore, remarked that his use of the expressions "treason" and "force" were not in tune with his customary "sweet reasonableness." To one who had known Tunku Abdul Rahman intimately for several decades it was not a question of losing temper; it was an action taken after long deliberation which he was able to do when confined in hospital in London. It was a decision taken after several exchanges of views with his Deputy, Tun Abdul Razak, in order to save Malaysia from political upheaval. And he had plenty of provocation.

In the first instance it was his idea to include the Borneo territories in the Federation of Malaysia and thereby hasten their independence. There was no compulsion on his part and they chose of their own free will to enter such a Federation. Singapore's inclusion was different. In that instance he acceded to the strong pleas of Lee Kuan Yew. For the Borneo territories to suddenly want to withdraw and thereby break up Malaysia was in his view, I am inclined to think, a stab in the back. This was more so in the case of Donald Stephens. It would be remembered that there had been a revolt against Stephens continuing as Chief Minister by a

certain section of the Sabah people and the Tunku settled this matter by appointing Stephens as Federal Minister for the Borneo territories thus saving Stephens' face. For the latter to have turned against the Tunku would have tried the patience of a Job, leave alone Tunku Abdul Rahman. The situation was finally resolved by the decision of Dato Stephens to resign from the presidentship of his party and withdraw from politics.

When tempers cooled down and all parties made a saner estimate of the position, peace was restored and Malaysia as a Federation of Malaya, Sabah and Sarawak continued unbroken. But a further storm arose over the actions of Dato Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the Chief Minister of Sarawak in 1966. The headquarters of the Alliance Party in Kuala Lumpur, of which the Sarawak National Alliance Party was a member, decided that Dato Ningkan was no longer a **persona grata** and called on him to resign. He refused to do so and was dismissed from the office of Chief Minister by the Governor of Sarawak and Penghulu Tawi Sli appointed. A series of legal actions was fought by Dato Ningkan contesting the legality of his dismissal and the method of summoning the Sarawak Assembly. At the elections in 1967 the Borneo voters opted for Malaysia in spite of vigorous campaigning by the opposition Sarawak United Peoples Party, but all these disruptive developments gave support to the original claim of the Malayan opposition parties that Malaysia in the first instance was established in too much of a hurry.

CHAPTER XVI

CEYLON'S FULL CYCLE

Ceylon, meanwhile, had gone through a full cycle of change. In spite of the success of the Bandung Conference in 1955, Sir John Kotelawala and his United Nationalist Party suffered an unparalleled landslide defeat in the general election of 1956. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party fought this election on the platform of "Singhala Only" as the national language and he was supported by the Buddhist hierarchy and the Bikkhus, or noviate monks, were the stoutest canvassers for this policy. These latter were composed of the Singhalese-educated section of the population who had taken robes largely for a bowl of rice as they were unable to secure employment as long as English remained the language of administration. To them the adoption of Singhalese as the official language was a "consummation devoutly to be wished."

Philiph Gunawardene, one of the earliest of Ceylon's leftist leaders, broke away from the Lanka Sama Samaj Party, which stood for "Parity for Tamil" on this issue, and formed a new party called the "Mahajana Eksath Party' (People's Party or M.E.P.) which supported the "Singhala Only" policy and entered into an election pact with Bandaranaike's group. In the outcome the S.L.F.P. was returned as the largest single party and with the M.E.P. formed a coalition Government. The mighty U.N.P., which held an absolute majority in the previous Parliament, was able to retain only six seats. All the Ministers, with the exception of one (M.D. Banda), were defeated — even Sir John Kotelawala — in spite of espousing the "Singhala Only" policy at the last minute, thus throwing over the former liberal "reasonable use of Tamil" policy. The largest opposition party was the Tamil Federal Party, while the L.S.S.P. won 10 seats and the Communist Party three.

But disaster overtook the S.L.F.P.-M.E.P. coalition from the very beginning in the way of drought and then floods, which seriously affected the rice crops, the staple food of the country, the nation of which was being supplied at a subsidised price. The rice subsidy cost the country some

Rs 300 millions. The political situation was also a matter of constant concern to Bandaranaike. Not only was the majority of the coalition a very slim one but Bandaranaike himself was personally a liberal and the "Singhala Only" policy was largely a matter of political expendiency. So he entered into negotiations with the leader of the Federal Party, S. J. V. Chelvanayagam, to clarify the position of the Tamils and ensure the reasonable use of Tamil. The Bandaranaike - Chelvanayagam Pact was the outcome of these talks and this made the S.L.F.P. - M.E.P. government more secure by winning for them the votes of the F.P. The rank and file of the S.L.F.P. were not, however, happy with this compromise and in 1958, Singhalese - Tamil riots broke out which resulted in a massacre of the Tamils in the Singhalese districts throughout the country — a vertitable bloodbath. There were retributive riots in the Tamil districts.

It was the blackest period of Ceylon's history, the chaotic conditions which were rampant being much worse than during the 1915 Buddhist - Muslim religious riots. Literally hundreds of Tamils were killed and it was only after a state of emergency and martial law had been declared that the riots were brought under control. It took several weeks before the country returned to normal. The story of these dark days is told in "Emergency '58," a book published by Tarzie Wittachy, the Editor of the **Ceylon Observer** at the time. Fortunately for me I had resigned from the Ceylon Overseas Service in October 1957 as otherwise my position as a Tamil in the service of the Bandaranaike Government would have been untenable. I had taken up a business appointment in Bangkok, where I stayed from October 1957 to December 1961 and it was the tragic events of 1958 which induced me to decide to make Penang my permanent home.

Ceylon appeared to have sunk to its lowest level during this period but worse was to follow in 1959 when Bandaranaike himself was assassinated by a Singhalese Buddhist priest in September 1959.

After an inter-regnum during which Dr. W. Dahanayake acted as Prime Minister, new elections were held in March 1960. At this appeal to the voters, the old United Nationalist Party, led by a re-vitalised Dudley Senanayake made a bold bid to stage a come-back while the leftist groups — the

Lanka Sama Samaj Party led by Dr. N. M. Perera, the Bolshevist-Leninist Party of Dr. Colvin R. de Silva and the Communist Party of Dr. S. A. Wicknemasinghe and Peter Kueneman — joined up in a no contest pact, hoping once and for all to seize power. The Sri Lanka Freedom Party also rallied under the widow of the murdered Prime Minister and Mrs. Bandaranaike herself led a vigorous election campaign. On the eve of the election rumours and counter rumours floated on all sides and it was a bold man who would have tried to forecast the result. The Ceylon elector was confused by the manifestoes of the various parties and when the final results of the polls were known they were inclusive. The U.N.P. staged a rally and were returned as the largest single party, the S.L.F.P. ran second, the Federal Party captured 18 of the Tamil seats; the leftists had an eye-opener, making little or no gains whatever showing that the Ceylon peasant could not be won to Marxist principles. Dudley Senanayake formed a government and vigorous manoeuvres were carried on behind the scenes to bring about a coalition between the U.N.P. and the F.P. which would have given a working majority. But all efforts failed as the F.P. leader, S. J. V. Chelranayagam, was adamant in his demands for the use of Tamil in the North and East, as against the use of Singhalese as the only official language, and the establishment of District Councils in the Tamil District giving them automony.

Dudley Senanayake's Government was defeated at the opening session of the new Parliament and the country had to face a new election after the brief interval of four months. At the July 1960 elections the leftists, realising that they had no chance of winning on their own, joined the S.L.F.P. in a "no contest" pact to keep the U.N.P. out. The tactics succeeded and the S.L.F.P. was returned with an absolute majority and they promptly forgot all the promises made to the Tamil Federal Party to induce them to vote for the "no confidence" motion that toppled the U.N.P. earlier and also to their leftist friends and formed a cabinet on their own.

Mrs. Bandaranaike herself, whose campaigning was a major factor in the success of the S.L.F.P., now assumed the Premiership with a seat in the Senate and there followed a period which landed the country in economic bankruptcy.

As a desperate measure, Mrs. Bandaranaike brought the leftists into the Government in 1963 and Ceylon deserted its traditional ties with her Western allies and leaned heavily towards the Communist bloc. A neo-totalitarian policy was followed by Mrs. Bandaranaike's coalition Government and the final straw was a Bill to nationalise the Press which had always highly critical of the leftist alignment. As a result, C. P. de Silva, the leader of the House in Mrs. Bandaranaike's Government, crossed the floor with a block of 16 S.L.F.P. supporters at the end of 1964 and the S.L.F.P. Government was defeated. There is more than a suspicion that the Western powers were behind this sensational development in which C. E. L. Wickremasinghe, the head of the Lake House Press played, a prominent part.

The new election that followed was again inconclusive as the U.N.P. could not secure an absolute majority though it was again the largest single party. The Federal Party again held the deciding balance of votes and again vigorous maneouvres were set in motion. Mrs. Bandaranaike made desperate efforts to hang on to power but the Governor-General, Gopallawa, although a brother-in-law of Mrs. Bandaranaike, showed remarkable impartiality in finally summoning Dudley Senanayake to form the new Government, when he was convinced that the latter it was who really had the Federal Party support. This party had been stabbed in the back twice by the S.L.F.P. and so it would no longer respond to the blandishment of Mrs. Bandaranaike and her minions. So at last the U.N.P. came back to power in 1965 after it was steamrolled out in 1956 by Bandaranaike and Ceylon completed a full cycle of political evolution from the rightist Government of D. S. Senanayake in 1948, through the Socialist set-up in 1956 and the final alignment by Mrs. Bandaranaike with the Communist bloc in 1964 back to rightist, albeit socialist, Government of Dudley Senanayake, the old man's son. It was a triumph for the working of the democratic parliamentary system and to that extent makes one proud of being a Ceylonese. In this connection just tribute should be paid to J. R. Jayawardene, who was the one stalwart who loyally kept the U.N.P. going through the dark days from 1956 to 1960 when the party seemed to have been banished into the political wilderness. As Minister of State and Parliamentary Secretary of the Prime Minister he

was Dudley Senanayake's right hand man. It is he who largely guided the Government safely through the political storms it faces in Parliament. He may not have the sort of popular personality that goes down with the masses but his sound sense and ripe experience made him a tower of strength to his party and his Prime Minister.

The Western powers did not stint their aid to Dudley Senanayake's Government and the depleted treasury coffers were replenished by liberal aid to enable it to tide over its early days but within two years the country was faced with an economic crisis due to a renewed shortage of foreign exchange. Of course to a large extent this had been due to the sharp drop in the prices of Ceylon's main products, tea and coconuts — particularly tea. But it would appear that Ceylon's leaders could not eschew the pastime of playing politics and get down to the more serious business of building economic stability. One would have thought the experience of nearly two decades would have taught them that political independence is a hollow luxury without the solid background of economic stability — a warning that I published in a newspaper article in the early days of independence in 1948.

Dudley Senanayake initiated a vigorous programme of food production and made a valiant effort to tackle the Herculean task of cleaning the pockets of corruption and clearing the ruts of inefficiency in the public service. The alternative is another disastrous cycle before Ceylon can finally achieve the goal of an economically sound and stable nation. His Government has survived a full term of five years but at a general election on May 25th, 1970 was defeated. A United Leftist Front of the S.L.F.P., the L.S.S.P. and the C. P. (Moscow) led by Mrs. Bandaranaike won 115 of the 140 seats while the U.N.P. retained only 9. So Ceylon is back to the leftist fold.

CHAPTER XVII

THREE SCORE YEARS AND TEN

Three score years and ten — the full span of a man's life according to the Psalmist. I celebrated my 70th birthday on the 22nd of September, 1965. My birthday was actually on the 21st but the celebration was postponed a day to suit the convenience of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tunku Abdul Rahman, who had to be present at the installation of the new Yang di-Pertuan Agong (or King) of Malaysia on September 21st.

As I mentioned earlier, I was in Bangkok until December 1961 when I returned to Penang, on the invitation of Yeap Hock Hoe, as an adviser to him in managing the affairs of the estate of his father, Towkay Yeap Chor Ee, and the private bank, the Ban Hin Lee Bank Ltd. established by the late towkay. Hock Hoe himself had become a prominent tin magnate, owing large interests in some of the biggest tin mining companies in Malaysia and acting as a director of many of them. Among others he is Managing Director of Austral Malay Tin Ltd. and Austral Amalgamated Tin Ltd. He is also Director in some twenty other companies, including the Straits Echo Press (1951) Ltd. of which he is the major shareholder. In 1964 he floated the Island and Peninsular Development Ltd. to sponsor a housing scheme for middle class homes. This was to meet the mounting wave of home-owing consciousness of wage earners and this company has built up housing estates in Penang, Province Wellesley, Kedah and Perak, enabling several hundred wage earners to own their own houses. After a period of teething troubles the I. & P. is now on a sound footing and paid its first dividend in 1968. Association with Yeap Hock Hoe, who is 1965 was made a Dato — the highest civilian rank in a Malay State — by the Sultan of Pahang, brought me right back into the thick of Malaysian political, business and social circles and so I thought it would not be out of place to celebrate what may be an outstanding anniversary in an average person's life.

My three sons — the eldest, Lakshmanan Rao (aged 40), a barrister, Manicam (aged 21), in his final year at Oxford, and Jayaratnam (aged 19), in his final year at St.

Xavier's Institution in Penang — were all with me on this occasion so they acted as hosts at a dinner to which they invited most of my old friends. At first we thought we would limit the party to about 200 or 300 guests but as the invitation list was being made out more and more names had to be added till finally some 400 odd cards were sent out. As a matter of fact I thought these invitation cards would serve more as a reminder of the old days but the response surprised even me and in the end nearly 600 guests, friends and their wives, attended the dinner. The estimated cost seemed frightening at the start but soon as the presents flowed in I realised that the cost to me personally would be nominal. So many of my friends, knowing of my failing, sent bottles of whisky and brandy and boxes of cigars so much so that I had quite a number of bottles left over after the dinner. Some of my Ceylonese friends got together and presented me with purses which paid for the cost of the food and the only bill I had to foot was that for the soft drinks. It was almost like a judgment for my hard-drinking habits to have had to pay for the non-alcholic liquid refreshment!

The dinner was held at the Golf Pavilion of the Penang Turf Club and provision was made for Chinese as well as Muslim food. The arrangements by the caterers and the Golf Club staff, headed by Chan Seang Teik, were so excellent that everything went off without a hitch. Everyone was happy and what was more important everyone, representative of all sections of the Malaysian community, was friendly. Many had come from as distant places as Singapore, Johore, Malacca and Kuala Lumpur, and, as one friend remarked, it was like a chapter out of Malaysian history. During my entire stay in Malaya I had moved freely among all the people and been friendly with them all. This gathering of all races and creeds mixing so freely and in such a friendly manner seemed to me a reflection of my own way of living. S. Rajaratnam, Singapore's Minister for Foreign Affairs, in regretting his inability to be present, owing to having to attend the U.N. General Assembly, wrote, "Sara is not a mere personality; he is a way of life," I felt that it was perhaps an underservedly high tribute. But the party itself seemed to bear out his words.

70th birthday dinner group (seated from left) :—Mrs. Yeap Chor Ee, Tunku Abdul Rahman and the author. Standing behind is Dato Yeap Hock Hoe.

Tunku Abdul Rahman was in great form. He spoke spontaneously from his heart. After referring in humorous vein to the old days when he said I was "among other things" a good Editor and fine sportsman and an incorrigible wine taster, "who as an Editor wrote best when the wine was flowing in his veins," he ended up, "Seriously speaking there is no doubt that Sara has always given his best to both the country of his origin and the country of his adoption and to all his friends and everybody with whom he was connected."

Mrs. Dorothy Nixon, who had been scorer for Malayan cricket teams for over 40 years, paid tribute to my love for the King of Games and ended with the quotation, "Old cricketeers like old buildings grow more beautiful as they get more dilapidated." Although 70 years old, I don't think I was dilapidated enough to make any claims to beauty. Sir Hussein Abdoolcader, Dato Sir Clough Thuraisingham and Ong Huck Lim — all old friends of over 35 years standing — on behalf of the Indian, Ceylonese and Chinese communities, paid the compliments that are usual on such occasions but the tribute that moved me most deeply was that paid by Khor Cheang Kee, the President of the North Malayan Journalists' Union, one of "my boys" who started his journalistic career under my tutelage. It may not be out of place to reproduce what he said in full, which was as follows:

> "When I asked Sara yesterday to put me down as the last speaker for tonight, he laughed, and said, 'Just like the Press to want to have the last word on me.' I am afraid I don't quite agree. For there can be no last word on such an important, King-sized subject like Sara. Not if the Press can help it; not as long as there are grateful journalists to remember what he has done for them and for their morale.
>
> "Now I must confess I am not of the stuff of which heroes are made. I must confess that in the early days of the Japanese bombing of Penang, whenever the drone of the enemy planes could be heard over head, my face must have turned green, yellow and various shades of the finest technicolour. But then, I had the great good fortune to serve in those critical days, under an editor who, in the truest

traditions of journalism, lived and acted, like his pen, without fear and favour. Such was Sara's steadying influence on his staff that those who worked with him, and for him, under the constant threat of bombs, themselves soon forgot their own fear. To be true, whenever the air raid siren wailed we dived under the nearest printing machine. But Sara himself never sought shelter. He bestrode the world, his world, like a Colossus. He was always supremely cool, confident, unruffled. Why when one bomb hit the Penang Road Police Headquarters just a few hundred yards from the **Straits Echo** building, Sara assured us that as long as he was in the office with us, no bomb would dare to land on it.

"And believe it or not, we believed him.

"Often when he went out and returned with two huge pots of rice and curry, we not only made a meal of it, was even made a picnic of war.

"Then the British left Penang and Sara, as you have doubtless heard, saved the island from further bombing by taking down the Union Jack and declaring Penang an open town. Later, the small jockey-sized sub-editor who climbed the Fort Cornwallis flagstaff to remove the Union Jack, confessed he was so scared he would surely have fallen but for the thought that Sara, who was waiting below, would have sent him up again. That was Sara, the wartime leader; what of Sara the journalist ?

"I remember about two or three weeks after I had joined the **Straits Echo** straight from school, around 1935, the then News Editor suddenly left and Sara, the supreme optimist, asked me to take over. When I protested I had no experience, he told me not to worry and promised he would be at the office at eight the following morning to show me the ropes.

"The next day I was at my desk long before eight, but there was no sign of Sara. As the hours ticked by and the machines clamoured for copy, the

foreman — who evidently knew his Sara better than I did — offered to show me how to make up a page. I accepted gratefully, followed him to the compositors' room and there had my first lesson in how to write a headline to fit a column. Later that day Sara duly turned up. He took one look at my reproachful face, then said, 'Ah, I see you have managed by yourself. Believe me, that's the best way to learn.'

"And it was. Sara did not believe in spoonfeeding his staff. He preferred to let them stand or fall by their own efforts. He had confidence in most of them and he gave them confidence. Although I was only 18 or 19 when I first joined the **Straits Echo**, he gave me more or less a free hand on the paper, especially with the letters to the Editor which I happily tackled, even to the extent of often giving free, and carefree advice to lovesick girls. All in all, it was the best all-round training any budding journalist could have had. There is no doubt that Sara during his editorship produced more journalists than any single editor in Penang, or elsewhere in Malaya.

"As I look round tonight, I see several of his proteges who have made their mark in Malayan journalism. I should like to refer particularly to a colleague, Mr. Lee Siew Yee, another "old boy' of the **Straits Echo** and at present the Editor of the **Straits Times** and Deputy Editor-in-Chief of the Straits Times group of newspapers. He has made a special trip from Kuala Lumpur to do honour to his old Chief tonight.

"This, then, is a special night— one might even say a reunion — for many newspapermen who have gathered to rejoice with the doyen of Malayan journalists on his attainment of three score years and ten. One face I rather miss is a happy-go-lucky reporter, now long departed from this life, whom I once sent out to cover a birthday party; he returned so late and so tired, that he just rushed through his

report. You can, therefore, imagine my surprise when, in going through his little masterpiece, I found he had ended it by recording that the M.C. proposed a vote of thanks to the host, who was carried out unanimously.

"In this spirit of cordial unanimity, may I, ladies and gentlemen, offer Sara the heartiest congratulations and warmest good wishes from the Journalists' Union of North Malaya. We only hope that if, unhappily, another war should break out in this country — which heaven and the Tunku forbid — we may still have Sara with us to lead and inspire the citizens of Penang."

In replying I said that I would dispense all formality and address them as "Rahman and friends." I went on to say that the Tunku had described me as a incorrigible wine-taster and skirt chaser in the old days and that I was not ashamed of having been the kind of man I was if I could count so many friends of all communities in my old age. However, I advised my sons to try to be "not like Papa but instead the kind of man Papa wanted to be." After thanking all those present I went on to refer to the Tunku who had made Malaysia a coglomeration of people to get together and live as friends — "He has done this out of the sheer goodness of his heart."

That, I added, was the stamp of a truly great man — a man who wants to do good to his fellowmen. And that, I said, was the advice I would like to give on that occasion, namely, try to do good and try always to make others happy. I then asked the gathering to rise and join me in drinking a toast to the Prime Minister and this was heartily pledged. The gathering joined in singing enthusiastically "for he's a jolly good fellow."

On this note ended a very happy celebration in which I completed the full span of three score years and ten. But to quote the Psalmist in full: "The days of our age are three score years and ten and though men be so strong that they go to four score years, yet is their strength but labour and sorrow as soon as it passeth away and we are gone."

As I write I do not know whether I would reach the four score years predicted by the Psalmist but I hope that my remaining years will not be merely "labour and sorrow." My life has been a full one with its full quota of vicissitudes; but looking back on it there has been more happiness than labour and sorrow. The greatest happiness of all is the affection and friendship not only of my near and dear ones but of the many hundreds and thousands of people of all races and from all strata of life who have given me the privilege of calling them my friends.

It was most appropriate that my 70th birthday celebration should have ended with a dinner given to me by the Ceylon Sports Club of Singapore at their pavilion at the end of September. The Ceylon Sports Club today is a non-communal body and its membership is open to all Malaysians — Ceylonese, Indians, Chinese, Malay and Eurasians. The name is a relic of the colonial days when the members of each community joined together to compete with each other at various games and the Ceylon Sports Club, which was originally started as the Lanka Union, has a long and proud record at cricket and hockey. After World War II, it was felt that the club should have a permanent club house or pavilion and when, as Ceylon Commissioner in Malaya and Singapore from 1950 to 1957 I was stationed in Singapore, I took a lively interest in the project and helped to some extent in collecting subscriptions from Ceylonese all over Malaya to put up a building. The foundation stone was laid by Ceylon's first Prime Minister, D. S. Senanayake, in 1950 and the opening ceremony performed by Malcolm MacDonald in 1956. The members of the club felt that they should also have a part in my 70th birthday celebrations and invited me to a dinner on September 30th, 1965, at which covers were laid for over 200. It was indeed another most enjoyable party where again I met many old friends. A. Visvalingam, the then President, paid the usual compliments, adding that the pavilion itself would not have been possible but for my energy and drive. Of course this was not strictly accurate, as I pointed out in my replay, as many others, including the former President, Dr.

C. Subrahmanyan, and the Honorary Secretary of the Building Fund, M. Gunaratnam, had as much to do with the success of the venture as myself. Perhaps the secret of my success in winning the cooperation of others, I said, could be summed up by the old saying: "If you love everybody, everybody will love you." I cannot do better than end my story with these words.

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