

PROBLEMS OF COMMUNALISM AND COMMUNISM:  
OVERSEAS CHINESE IN MALAYA

A Report from A. Doak Barnett

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Federation of Malaya  
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"Merdeka!" the Tungku cried, "Freedom!"

Several hundred Malay villagers shot their right arms upward and echoed him with a lusty shout: "Merdeka!"

This was a scene I saw repeated many times when, three weeks ago, I accompanied Tungku Abdul Rahman on a campaign tour through the Kampongs of Kedah and Perlis, two of the northernmost States of Malaya. Abdul Rahman is President of the United Malays National Organization and head of the Alliance, a party coalition of Malay, Chinese, and Indian political organizations which was then campaigning for the Federation of Malaya's first national election.

The election was held on July 27. More than a million voters, most of them Malays, went to polling places scattered over the 50,000 square miles of this rich, jungle-covered peninsula and cast their votes for 52 candidates for the Federation's Legislative Council. The result was one of the most spectacular landslides ever to take place in a free election. Abdul Rahman's Alliance won 51 of the 52 contested seats.

The July 27 election was a major step toward democratic self-rule in Malaya, the last important area in Southeast Asia to move toward independence. But the problems of nation-building that lie ahead are tremendous. These problems are now likely to come to the fore more rapidly than ever before in Malaya, as they have in Singapore during the four months since it held its first important elections.

Race relations pose some of the most fundamental problems in Malaya. The population of the Federation is made up of two major groups, the Malays and Chinese who are almost equal in

numbers, and a sizable minority, the Indians. There has been little intermixture between these groups, and the distribution of power between the Malays and Chinese in Malaya's plural society is unstable. If one excludes the British colonial rulers, who still control Malaya both politically and economically, local power is divided in an unrealistic fashion. The Chinese have achieved a dominant position economically, but the Malays, under the protective wing of the British, who have regarded them as the "indigenous" population and have discriminated in their favor politically, make up most of the legal citizenry of the Federation and monopolize political rights. Malaya's first national election was essentially a Malay election, from which most Chinese and Indians were barred.

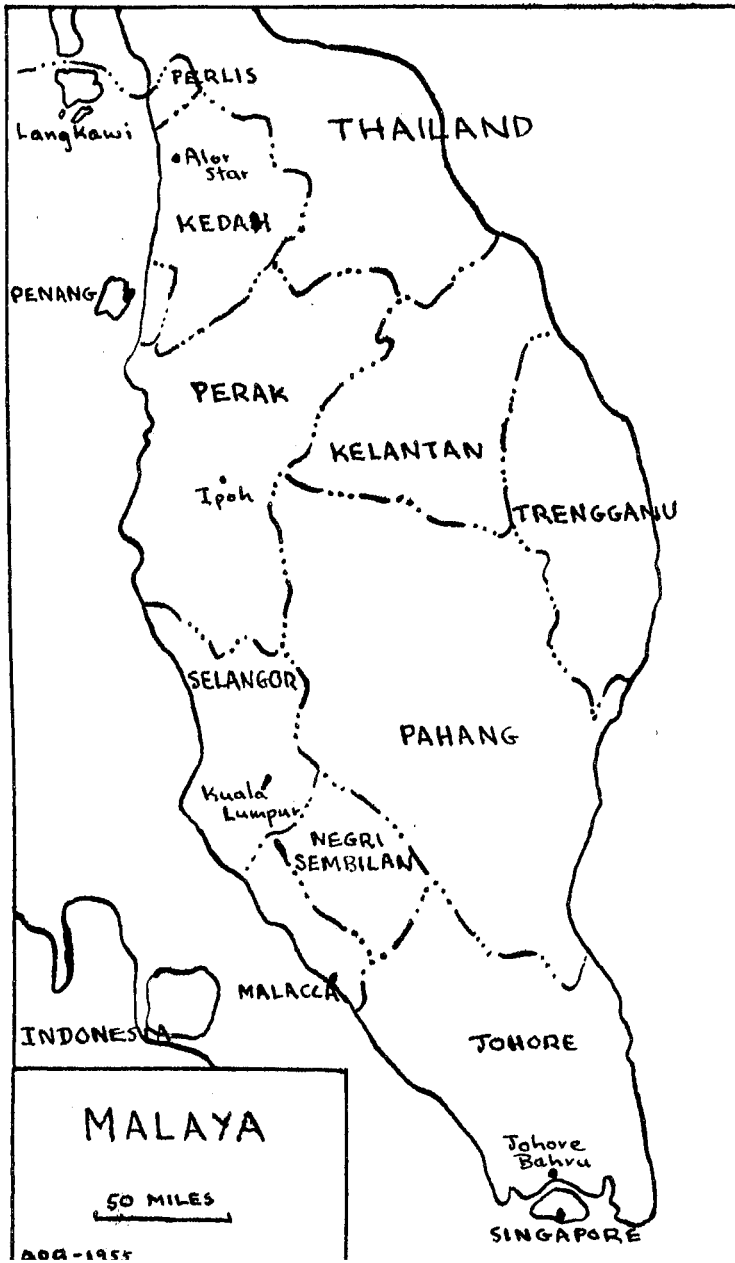
There are considerable possibilities of racial tension developing in this situation. As self-rule approaches, the Chinese are likely to become increasingly dissatisfied with their political disenfranchisement, and Malay resentment of Chinese economic domination may also become more acute.

If one merely views the immediate situation, the election victory of the Alliance is encouraging, because the Alliance represented and preached racial harmony. But many specific issues involved in Chinese-Malay relations were evaded in the election campaigning, and the real test of racial cooperation will come in the months ahead,

Another serious roadblock on the path toward democratic self-rule is the problem of Communism. For seven years Malaya has been fighting a war against Communist guerrillas in the jungle. These guerrillas have never numbered more than a few thousand, but their terrorist tactics have kept the entire Malayan peninsula in a state of "Emergency" which still continues. Over nine-tenths of the guerrillas are Chinese, and without the support, voluntary or forced, of Chinese living on the fringe of the jungle, they could not have survived. Now these Communists are attempting to end the war in such a way that they can leave the jungle and shift from military to political tactics. They realize that their attempt to "liberate" Malaya by force of arms has failed, but they have not given up their struggle or aims.

Among non-Communist political leaders in Malaya, the desire to end the war and the "Emergency" is widespread. This is not surprising, because the existing police restrictions on individual freedom and the financial drain of supporting a war are serious obstacles to the achievement of democratic self-rule. The problem, however, is how to end the fighting without giving the Communists an opportunity to carry out successful political subversion.

The international setting in which these problems are to be faced is one in which Communist China has risen to Great Power status in Asia and is exerting an increasing influence



throughout Southeast Asia.

To build a nation and achieve self-rule, Malaya must integrate the Chinese into its political life, establish a workable relationship between the Chinese and Malays, and control or absorb the Malayan Communist Party's Chinese guerrillas in the jungle. If Malaya can accomplish these ends without succumbing to Chinese domination, Communist control, and Peking's influence, it will be fortunate.

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### A PLURAL SOCIETY

Malaya is not really a nation in the modern sense. It is a peninsula on which three racial groups--two major groups and a minor one--coexist, each maintaining and preserving its own language, culture, and way of life. A minority from each of these groups has been strongly influenced by the British, adopting the English language and outlook as its own, but there has been relatively little intermixture between the majority of Malays, Chinese, and Indians.

At the beginning of this year, the population of the Federation of Malaya totaled 5,980,000. Of these, 2,940,000 (49 per cent) were "Malaysians," 2,250,000 (38 per cent) were Chinese, and 700,000 (12 per cent) were Indians, including Pakistanis. These statistics are somewhat misleading, however, if they are used, as they often are, to compare the numerical strength of the "indigenous" Malays and the Chinese. Because the figure for "Malaysians" includes recent Malay-speaking immigrants from Indonesia. Actually, the really "indigenous" people of Malaya consist of members of tribes such as the Sakai, which have been reduced to a few thousands, are treated as "aborigines," and are an insignificant part of the total population.

Malaya has been populated in recent centuries by migrations of Malay-speaking peoples from the south and by Chinese from the north. The Malays came first and were well established before the later Chinese migrations. Chinese settlements in places such as Mabacca date back several centuries, however, and the large flow of Hokkiens, Cantonese, and Hakkas in the 19th and early 20th century increased the number of Chinese in Malaya to the point where parity with the Malays was approached. (If the population of the entire Malayan peninsula, including both the Federation of Malaya and Singapore, is totaled, the Chinese now outnumber the Malays.)

The geographical distribution of Chinese and Malays is uneven, a fact which reinforces cultural and economic barriers to integration and intermixture. The Federation of Malaya consists

of 11 units, nine Malay States and two British Settlements. In four of these, Penang, Perak, Selangor, and Johore, the Chinese outnumber Malays. In three others, Negri Sembilan, Pahang, and Malacca, the Malays barely outnumber the Chinese. Only in Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, and Perlis do the Malays constitute a large majority. Generally speaking, one can divide Malaya into two racial zones: the north and east are mainly Malay, while the south and west are predominantly Chinese. The significance of this distribution is economic as well as cultural. The western areas where the Chinese concentrate are the ones where rubber-growing and tin-mining, the basis of Malaya's wealth, have developed, while by comparison the east coast region has remained economically undeveloped. The racial distribution of Chinese and Malays can also be described in terms of urbanization. Even though there are many Chinese engaged in agricultural pursuits in Malaya, the Chinese predominate in almost all of the important cities; in both of the Settlements and seven of the States (all except Kelantan and Trengganu in the east), over half of the urban population is Chinese.

About three-quarters of the two and a quarter million Chinese in Malaya are Hokkiens, Cantonese, and Hakkas, who account for approximately 29 per cent, 26 per cent, and 21 per cent, respectively, of the entire Chinese community. Teochius, Hainanese, and Kwongsai constitute smaller groups. Until relatively recently, men far outnumbered women among the Chinese in Malaya, as in most Overseas Chinese communities; although there were quite a few places where they had settled permanently, many of the Chinese in Malaya were transitory. From the 1930's onward, this began to change, however, as the sex ratio approached normal. The Chinese from then on became increasingly rooted in Malaya and stabilized as a group.

It is currently estimated that only 800,000, or 35 per cent, of the Chinese in Malaya were born in China, while roughly 65 per cent are Malaya-born. To a greater extent than in many places in Southeast Asia, the Chinese now in Malaya have settled down, and a large percentage of them regard Malaya as their permanent home,

At the same time, however, the Chinese have retained their basic social and cultural characteristics with very little modification. Apart from a few Chinese, such as the baba of Malacca, who centuries ago adopted certain Malay features of food, dress, and speech--even though they continued to be distinctively Chinese--most of the Chinese in Malaya show very little evidence of being culturally influenced by the Malays. The fact that the Malays are Muslims has been a barrier to intermarriage since the early days of Chinese migration, and in the recent period there has been almost no intermarriage. The Chinese, with some justification, regard Malay culture as being so inferior to their own that the idea of Malay assimilation of Chinese now strikes them as unthinkable, and even amusing.

On a personal level, however, relations between Chinese and Malays have generally been amicable. Even though social contacts between the two groups have in many places been limited because of their residential and occupational as well as cultural **segregation**, a live-and-let-live philosophy has prevailed more often than not,

Racial antagonism and open friction did develop, however, during and after World War II, and there **were** several serious instances of conflict, and even killing, right after the war. Now the possibility of race conflict may be greater than ever before,

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### ECONOMIC POWER

Malaya is one of the most valuable pieces of colonial real estate in the world. But, apart from the British, it is mainly the Chinese who have had the enterprise to utilize and develop its resources. The Malays have been pushed into the background economically,

In large-scale entrepreneur investment, concentrated in rubber, tin, and similar industries, European (mainly British) capital predominates. In 1938, for example, it was estimated that Europeans had over US\$450 million in such investments in Malaya, compared with about US\$200 million Chinese investment, and this ratio probably has not changed much.

In the economy as a whole, however, the Chinese are by far the most important group. Not only do they control the distributive network of the economy, as they do in so many Southeast Asian countries, but they also dominate most of **Malaya's** industries and occupations other than agriculture. They provide, in fact, not only the entrepreneurs but also the labor for most **non-agricultural** occupations in Malaya.

The census figures for 1947 (the latest year for which detailed information is available) show that of 643,000 Malay males listed in various occupations, 466,000 were in agriculture and 41,000 in fishing; 293,000 of these were rice farmers and 93,000 rubber tappers. In the 29 major occupational fields listed in the census, the only other ones in which Malays were numerically in the lead were three categories of transport workers, textile **workers** (a minor field for employment), and miscellaneous undefined workers, plus the important fields of public administration, defense, and the professions. The 580,000 gainfully employed Chinese males listed in the 1947 census provided the largest number of workers in almost every other occupation. The economic dominance of the Chinese and the subordination of the **Malays** were most strikingly evident, perhaps, in the figures for commercial

and financial occupations. Of 137,000 persons employed in commerce and finance in Malaya in 1947, 96,000 were Chinese, 23,000 were "Indians and Others," and only 18,000 were Malays.

The relative economic position of the Chinese and Malays is even more clearly indicated by available figures on ownership of registered businesses in Malaya. Under the Registration of Businesses Ordinance of 1947, over 44,000 businesses were registered. Of these, more than 36,000 were Chinese, and less than 800 were Malay. The Chinese had virtual control of every line of business except money-lending and hat manufacture, in which Indian ownership predominated. In no line of business did Malay ownership amount to as much as ten per cent of the total number of firms; in only two, fish-breeding and poultry-farming, and coffee-powder manufacture, did it even exceed five per cent.

It would be only a slight exaggeration to say that, apart from government service, in which they have been given preferential treatment by the British, and farming, in which large tracts of land have been set aside as "Malay reservations," the Malays have been outcompeted by the Chinese and the Indians in every field of economic endeavor.

The result is a peculiar class structure, following racial lines to a considerable degree. In oversimplified terms, the Malays dominate both ends of the social spectrum, as the rural population and farmers at the bottom and as the political elite at the top; the other classes, including most urban groups from employers to workers, are mainly Chinese and Indians.

The largest share of wealth and income within Malaya goes to the Chinese. It has been estimated, in fact, that the Chinese share of Malaya's national income is twice as large as that of the Malays, and the Chinese possess most of the productive wealth in the country (apart from that in the hands of European enterprise).

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## POLITICAL RIGHTS

British colonial policy in Malaya has traditionally favored the Malays as the "indigenous" people of the country, and has discriminated against the Chinese (and other non-Malay groups such as the Indians). One result of this policy has been the creation of an unusual situation in which a large percentage of the population is considered to be alien, denied voting rights, and virtually barred from government service.

The present citizenship laws in Malaya, which date from September 1952, are extremely complex. There is not only a Federation citizenship code, but there are also nationality laws in

each of the nine Malay States and different laws applicable in the two Settlements. Subjects of the Malay Rulers and British subjects in the Settlements are, however, **automatically citizens** of the Federation.

There are various ways of acquiring Federation citizenship--by registration or naturalization as a subject of a Malay Ruler or as a citizen of the Federation--and the rules vary. Without describing all the complex variations, the situation in general as it affects the Chinese in Malaya is as follows. Any Chinese born in Penang or Malacca is automatically a Federation citizen. A Chinese born in the Malay States, however, must prove that at least one parent was born in the Federation, and must have lived for **five** out of the last ten years continuously in the Federation in order to be able to register for Federation citizenship. To register as a subject of a Malay Ruler requires similar qualifications. To become naturalized either as a citizen of the Federation or as a subject of a Ruler, there are additional requirements: a Chinese must be able to speak English or Malay, and must **have lived** continuously in the Federation, or in the State involved, for ten out of the previous twelve years.

These qualifications are entirely different from those applying to the Malays; a Malay is **automatically** a citizen of the Federation if born in it. In short, **simple jus soli** applies to the Malays, whereas Chinese and others in **most of the** Federation must have one local-born parent or comply with fairly complicated naturalization requirements, including language and residence qualifications, which many cannot fulfill.

At the time these laws went into effect, it was estimated that 72 per cent of the total population of the Federation, including 98 per cent of the Malays, **about 50 per cent** of the Chinese, and some 30 per cent of the Indians, were eligible for citizenship. Of the 1.1 million Chinese included in this estimate, 600,000 were persons born in Penang and Malacca or registered as Federation citizens before September 1952, and the other 500,000 were additional Chinese in the Malay States who had one parent born in the Federation. By June 1953, more exact figures on Chinese citizens in the Federation placed the number at 1,157,000, or about one-half of the total Chinese population.

During all of last year, only 28,000 Chinese received Federation citizenship. **Very** few were able simply to register as citizens; strict requirements for documentation of birthplaces make it difficult even for many Chinese whose parents were born in the Federation to prove it, since birth certificates were not in vogue in their **parents'** day. Most of last **year's** new citizens were naturalized as subjects of a Malay Ruler.

Until recently, the Chinese in Malaya have not generally been disturbed about their alien status. Lack of citizenship has



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not involved serious economic disabilities; exclusion from government service has not bothered most Chinese who, in any case, prefer private enterprise to the civil service; and under colonial rule the people in Malaya, whether citizens or not, have had few political rights and privileges,

This situation is changing, however, and lack of citizenship has now become the major Chinese grievance in Malaya. The promise of self-rule has been followed by local elections, and more recently by a national election, and only citizens can vote or exercise other civic rights,

The political disadvantage to the Chinese of their citizenship situation became eminently clear when registration of voters for the first national election was carried out last October. The electoral roll for the entire Federation totaled 1,280,000 names. Of these, 1,078,000, or 84.2 per cent, were Malays, while only 143,000, or 11.2 per cent, were Chinese,

In short, when Malaya took its first major step toward self-rule last month, the legal basis for exercising political power bore almost no relation to the population ratio in the country. The Malays accounted for about 49 per cent of the population, 65 per cent of the citizenry, and 85 per cent of the electorate, while the Chinese accounted for 38 per cent of the population, 28 per cent of the citizenry, and 11 per cent of the electorate,

The predominance of Malays in government and military service has been equally great. Until 1952, the top-level Malayan Civil Service consisted of only British and Malays; Chinese were barred. Since 1952, in theory, non-Malays have been accepted on the basis of a ratio of four Malays to one non-Malay, but there is still only a handful of Chinese in the MCS. Less than ten per cent of the highest ranking 2,500 members of other civil service organizations in Malaya are Chinese. Among some 25,000 regular policemen in Malaya, there are only 23 Chinese gazetted police officers and 1,846 rank and file. In the small nucleus of local military forces in Malaya, consisting of about 7,000 men in eight battalions, there are no Chinese in the seven battalions of the Malay Regiment and only 298 Chinese in the newly-formed Federation Regiment,

The near monopoly of political rights and government jobs by the Malays in Malaya suddenly became more objectionable in Chinese eyes than it had ever been in the past when the Chinese realized that self-rule was in the offing and that self-rule under existing circumstances would merely mean rule by local Malays rather than by British colonials,

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CAMPAIGNING IN THE KAMPONGS



Abdul Rahman Landing at Langkawi



Abdul Bahman Speaking to Malay Villagers

## POLITICAL PARTIES AND ELECTIONS

Progress toward self-rule in the Federation of Malaya up to the present has been relatively slow, even when compared with Singapore. Although the agreement establishing the Federation in January 1948 expressed a desire for steps toward eventual self-government, very little was done about it in the next five years. Undoubtedly, a major explanation of this was the fact that the racial divisions in Malaya's plural society retarded the growth of a unified, strong, nationalist movement.

In 1953, however, the British High Commissioner in the Federation appointed a committee to study constitutional development. Its report, issued in early 1954, recommended that the Federation Legislative Council, which had been wholly appointive, be partly elected; it also recommended that only a minority of the seats be made elective.

This proposal satisfied some of the political groups then existing in Malaya, but the Alliance, composed of Malay, Chinese, and Indian communal organizations, objected. The Alliance decided to press for a Legislative Council with a majority of elective members, and it took action toward this end. An Alliance delegation, led by Abdul Rahman, President of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and T. H. Tan, Executive Secretary of the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA), went to London and lobbied in early 1954. Alliance members also boycotted the existing government councils and committees throughout Malaya. In the face of this pressure, the British made further concessions.

In April of last year, it was announced that a Legislative Council of 98 members would be established, with a majority of 52 to be elected in constituencies covering the entire country. The remaining 46 appointive seats would include three ex officio British government leaders, 11 representatives of States and Settlements, three appointed representatives of Ceylonese, Eurasians, and aborigines, 22 selected representatives of "scheduled interests" such as the Chambers of Commerce, Trade Union Council, and rubber and tin associations, and seven "nominated reserves," of whom five would go to the party with an elected majority.

This new Legislative Council would still be purely **advisory**, and subject to the High Commissioner's veto on all matters, but the election of a majority of its members would give it considerable power, since the British would hesitate to veto measures clearly supported by elected representatives with popular backing.

Preparation for Malaya's first national election got under way soon after the April announcement. In the fall, a register of eligible voters was drawn up, and political parties

began defining their platforms and selecting candidates. Altogether, 129 candidates entered their names on nomination day as contestants for the 52 seats. Apart from 18 independents, the candidates represented seven parties, four of which could be considered national rather than purely local political groups.

The two most important parties were the Alliance and Party Negara. The Alliance was a coalition of three communal political groups, which started independently and later merged to contest elections jointly. Most important of these groups was UMNO. Formed in 1946, UMNO began by organizing Malay resistance to the Malayan Union (which joined Malaya and Singapore in the immediate postwar period) on the grounds that it would threaten Malay political supremacy. In the following years, it steadily built up a strong grassroots political machine in the Malay Kampongs all over Malaya. More than any other political group, it took the initiative in pressing for self-rule, and it sought to identify its own organization with leadership toward independence in the eyes of the average Malay. During its first years of existence, UMNO was led by Dato Onn, one of the most colorful and volatile figures in Malayan politics, but in 1951 Tunjku Abdul Rahman succeeded him. Brother of the Sultan of Kedah, former civil servant and lawyer, English-educated Abdul Rahman worked hard to build up his political prestige as leader of the Malays.

The MCA's origins were quite different. It began, with British encouragement, as a Chinese welfare organization, with political undertones, which tried to mobilize Chinese support against the communist insurrection, act as an intermediary between the Chinese community and the government, and assist the half-million Chinese squatters who were resettled in "new villages" as part of the program to cut off the jungle guerrillas from civilian support. The leaders of the MCA were for the most part wealthy, conservative Chinese businessmen. The President, Sir Cheng-Lock Tan, was a member of one of the old Chinese families of Malacca. Colonel H. S. Lee, a powerful figure in the background, was a Hong Kong-born tin magnate in Malaya who headed innumerable Chinese organizations, including the Federation Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce, Chinese Mining Association, and Kwangtung Association. Ample funds for the MCA's welfare and other activities flowed into the organization's coffers from a lottery which the government allowed it to run among its members, (Later, when the MCA became more clearly political, the government stopped the lottery.)

The third member of the Alliance was the Malayan Indian Congress, the principal communal body representing the Indian minority in Malaya.

In a sense, the merger of these groups was a political accident. In 1952, local leaders of UMNO and MCA in Kuala Lumpur decided they would work together to contest the municipal election. They were so successful that they agreed to cooperate

in future elections. In time this link was cemented into a close political coalition which was later joined by the MIC,

Strangely, the Alliance, made up of **three** communal bodies, turned out to be the most noncommunal political force in the national election. The candidates which it put up in all **52** districts included **35** Malays, **15** Chinese, and two Indians. The allocation of **15** districts to Chinese candidates was a big concession to **MCA**, since registered Chinese voters made up only about a tenth of the electorate and formed a majority of voters in only two of the **52** districts. The Chinese candidates were selected **in**



The Alliance in Action

**Tungku** Abdul Rahman, President of the United Malays National Organisation (with umbrella) and **T. H. Tan**, Executive Secretary of the Malayan Chinese Association (wearing dark glasses) went on several electioneering trips together during the national election campaign. They concentrated on districts where Chinese candidates for the Alliance were running but where voters were mainly Malays. Here they are going by boat to Langkawi Island, off northern Malaya.

a number of districts which were almost wholly Malay, on the assumption that UMNO's Malay political machine could get them elected, Abdul Rahman himself, together with MCA's Executive Secretary T. H. Tan, concentrated on campaigning for these Chinese candidates. On one electioneering tour when I accompanied him, I heard Abdul Rahman address dozens of Malay village groups, and in every speech he preached racial cooperation. His basic theme was simple. He said Malaya could achieve independence only by proving that all races in Malaya can get along together; a vote for the racial coalition of the Alliance would win independence for Malaya.

The Alliance's main opposition in the election came from Party Negara, headed by UMNO's former leader Dato Onn. Party Negara was formed in early 1954 as a noncommunal organization, but ironically, as electioneering progressed, it became increasingly communal in its opposition to UMNO. Of its 30 candidates, 29 were Malays and only one Chinese. In veiled terms, Party Negara candidates began appealing to Malay racial sentiment, saying, in effect, vote Malay and watch out for the influence of the Chinese,

The other two national parties were much smaller than either the Alliance or Party Negara. The Pan-Malayan Islamic Party ran 11 Malay candidates and tried to appeal to voters on a religious basis. The Labor Party of Malaya ran two Chinese and two Indians on a noncommunal socialist platform, but it lacked any significant organizational backing.

On July 27, the predominantly Malay electorate went to the polls. The turnout was spectacular, being over 80 per cent of the electorate in many districts. (The smallest turnout was in districts where Chinese formed a significant portion of the electorate.) Malay women, dressed in their best clothes, voted in large numbers--remarkable in a Muslim country where the female of the species is generally expected to take a back seat. Altogether, the voting was well organized, orderly, and honest,

The result was astounding even to many of those who fully recognized the organized strength of UMNO and MCA. The Alliance won 51 of the 52 seats and received an almost unqualified mandate from the voters of the country to form a government attempt to carry out its campaign promises, and fight for "independence within four years." Tunjku Abdul Rahman became Chief Minister-elect of the first elected majority in Malaya's Legislative Council.

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#### THE ALLIANCE AND MALAYA'S POLITICAL FUTURE

The landslide results of the July election mean that the immediate questions about the political future of Malaya

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revolve around the Alliance, because for the moment it is the only important political party in the country.

What is the Alliance's political program, and how will it go about implementing it? Will the communal elements in the Alliance stick together, or will racial or other issues split them apart?

The first issue that is likely to arise is one of constitutional progress toward self-rule and independence. The Alliance has promised to try to achieve independence by peaceful constitutional change within four years, and it proposes to set up a special commission as soon as possible to work for a fully elective Legislative Council as a step toward that end. With full popular backing, and with the fast-moving developments in Singapore as a precedent, it is almost certain that Abdul Rahman will press for more rapid moves than the British are likely to desire. Some tension between the new Legislative Council and the British High Commissioner is likely, therefore, to develop before very long.

Within the Alliance, the impetus for faster moves toward independence comes mostly from UMNO and the Malays. The Malays, who hold political rights, are ahead of the largely disenfranchised Chinese in their political consciousness and nationalist feeling. Some Chinese, in fact, are rather cool toward the prospect of independence too soon, feeling that issues such as citizenship should be solved before further steps are taken toward independence. Also, large numbers of Chinese in Malaya are still comparatively apathetic toward politics, partly because they are excluded to such a great extent from the political process. It is possible, therefore, that MCA leaders may feel inclined in some matters to act as a brake on rapid moves toward independence. If UMNO fulfills the bargains made concerning problems affecting the Chinese, however, MCA leaders will probably go along with UMNO on almost everything else.

The question of what to do about ending the war against the Communist guerrillas is also likely to come to the fore in the near future. For seven years the war has dragged on, and although the Communists have been put on the defensive and a lull in the fighting has developed, there is no immediate prospect of the complete destruction of their military force. It has been a difficult war for both military personnel and civilians. The British army has devised innumerable new approaches to jungle warfare, involving such things as helicopter-transported patrols and parachute jumpers who descend onto the treetops; but the main military operations have depended on small, foot-slogging units combing the jungle for elusive, ever moving terrorists. The Communists' recruitment has almost kept pace with their casualties; it is currently estimated that there are 3,500 to 4,000 guerrillas in the jungle, even though the figure at the start of the "Emergency" in 1948 was not much above this. For the civilian population, the war has meant curfews, limitations on movement, and similar restrictions affecting ordinary life. The most effective moves

against the guerrillas have been strict control of food supplies to prevent the flow of food to the Communists, and resettlement in controlled, protected areas of almost half a million squatters, mostly Chinese, to cut them off from Communist intimidation and persuasion. These measures have been hard on the civilian population, and they have fallen considerably short of complete effectiveness. Estimates of Communist-controlled ~~Min Yuan~~ in the "new villages," towns, and elsewhere, still range from 100,000 to 200,000.

In short, although there are 28,000 Imperial troops, 7,000 Federation soldiers, 170,000 home guards, and close to 50,000 regular and special police committed against the Communists, the guerrillas still have 3,500 to 4,000 men operating from mobile jungle bases (headquarters are in Thailand across the border), receiving enough support from an estimated 100,000 or more covert civilian "supporters" (many of whom are intimidated rather than persuaded to give support) to maintain their organization intact,

There is no doubt that the Communists would now like to come out of the jungle and compete for power by political rather than military means. As early as 1951, they recognized the failure of their attempt at military "liberation" and began to re-emphasize infiltration and subversion. Two months ago, in June, they sent several letters to leading citizens in Malaya offering to negotiate an end to the war. There is also no doubt that non-Communist Malayan leaders hope to find some formula for ending the fighting. War weariness is widespread.

The Alliance proposal for dealing with this situation, as outlined in its platform, calls for offering an amnesty to the Communists. Alliance leaders before the election said that they believed such an amnesty, offering individual pardons but not legalizing Communist organizational activity, might well be accepted by many of the guerrillas. Those who accepted, they said, would be either deported to China or politically reindoctrinated and controlled. Some people, including at least a few top British military leaders, believe that such an amnesty might be workable. Soon after the election, however, unconfirmed reports began circulating that the Alliance might be willing to make a deal with the Communist organization as such. This would be an entirely different matter. It is a prospect that frightens many foreign observers in Malaya; these observers fear that, if the Communist Party were given an opportunity to come out into the open and to compete legally in politics, subversion could rapidly grow to alarming proportions.

So far, subversion in the Federation of Malaya is much less serious than it is in Singapore, to the south. But this does not mean that the possibilities of subversion are not present. In the Federation, the situation among Chinese students and laborers has many similarities to the Singapore situation, which the Communists and their radical left-wing supporters have exploited with so much success during the past four months. Although the Chinese



middle school students in Malaya have not yet come under effective control of Communist-led organization, many of them share the pro-Peking nationalism and the radicalism of Singapore's students, and a nucleus of Communist-Zed student organizations exists in many schools. There is an even more pronounced political vacuum among Chinese laborers in the Federation than there was in Singapore before last April. Chinese have been isolated from the Malayan Trade Union Council (65 per cent of its 120,000 members are Indian, and only 15 per cent Chinese), and have been largely unorganized since the collapse of the Communist-controlled Malayan labor movement in 1948. These Chinese workers will undoubtedly be a major target for organizational activity if the Communists or Communist fronts are allowed to operate more freely again. One reason that Communist infiltration of these groups has been somewhat less widespread in Malaya than in Singapore is that the powers of police suppression have been exercised more strongly in the Federation. But if the lid is lifted and efforts to control subversion are relaxed, the situation in Malaya could change fairly rapidly.

The MCA might have great difficulty in competing effectively for political support of the Chinese in Malaya if the Communists were allowed, openly or indirectly, to emerge from the jungles into the political arena. At present, it is true, the conservative MCA leaders, many of whom were once strongly pro-Kuomintang and almost all of whom are anti-Communist, can legitimately claim to speak for organized political opinion among the Chinese in Malaya. But the MCA was organized primarily on the basis of traditional, business-dominated Chinese organizations, and has yet to organize a strong mass base in modern political terms. In many cities that I visited, MCA leadership is practically identical with the leadership of the local Chinese Chamber of Commerce, and in few places did I see evidence of organizational strength reaching the mass of ordinary Chinese.

If the Communists, or a Communist-front party, were allowed to develop an organizational campaign among Chinese in Malaya, they might successfully move into fields which are to a considerable extent a vacuum at the present time. There is a definite danger that this may happen in the period of political change that lies ahead. Whether it does or not will depend in large degree upon the way in which the Alliance tries to implement its campaign promise to offer an amnesty to the Communists,

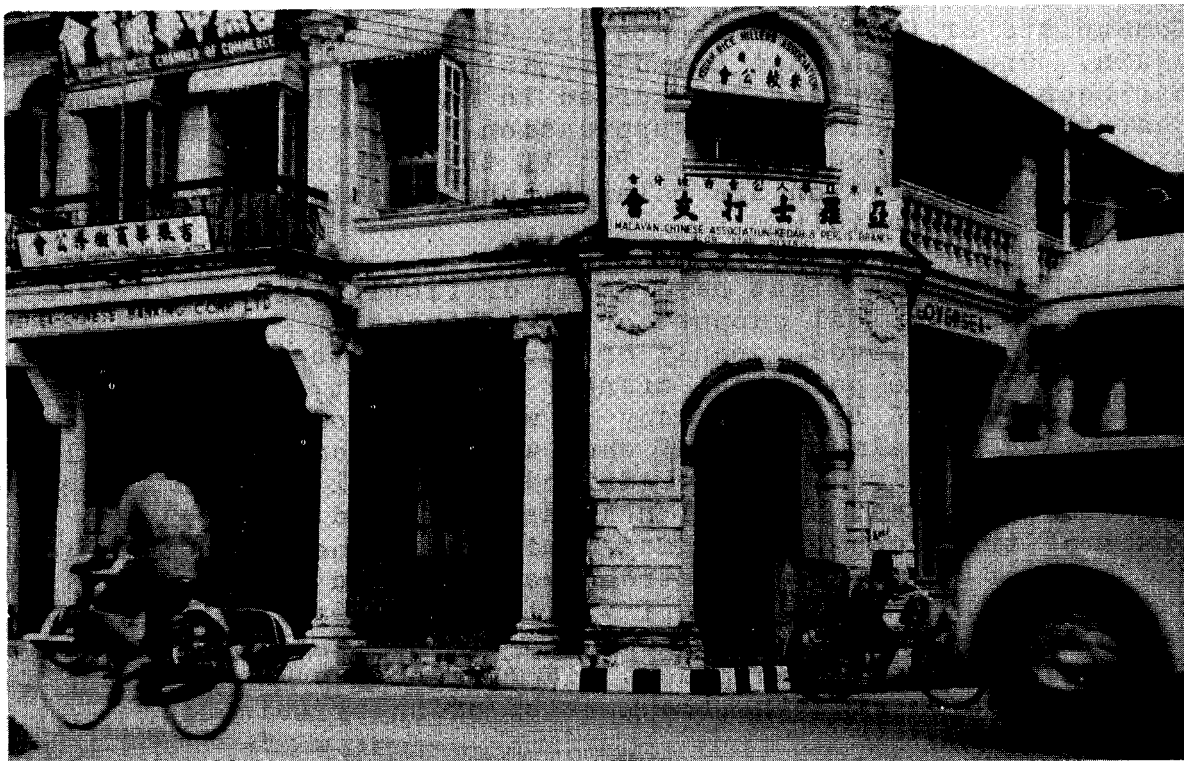
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#### THE FUTURE OF THE ALLIANCE AND CHINESE-MALAY RELATIONS

One of the biggest question marks about the political future of Malaya concerns the future of the Alliance itself,

Will the Alliance continue as a coalition, develop into a unified party, or split into communal fragments?

Some Alliance leaders say they plan to merge its present components into a single party. But in view of the complicated interracial problems it will face, there is some doubt as to whether it can even hold together in its present form. It will be remarkable if serious strains within the Alliance do not develop fairly soon.



### One Citadel of Chinese Influence and Power

The Malayan Chinese Association, the main legal Chinese political organisation in Malaya, is closely linked with traditional business-minded Chinese associations. This single unpretentious building in Alor Star, capital of Kedah, bears signboards showing it to be headquarters of not only the Kedah-Perlis Branch of the Malayan Chinese Association but also of the Kedah Chinese Chamber of Commerce, the local branch of the Overseas-Chinese Banking Corporation, the Kedah Chinese Rubber Dealers Association, and the Kedah Rice Millers Association.

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There are numerous issues centered around Malay-Chinese relations that demand some sort of attempted solution. Present cooperation between UMNO and MCA within the Alliance has been founded upon compromises on these issues. The citizenship question is the major one from the Chinese point of view. Although the Alliance platform is not entirely specific on this matter, it does state: "As a result of the Federation of Malaya Agreement in 1948, a problem of a large alien population has been created in the Federation....An Independent Malaya cannot tolerate this state of affairs....To meet this situation, it is essential that Independent Malaya must create unity and a common loyalty among her peoples, and this will not be achieved if half of her population were to remain aliens." The platform then says, however, that "the present special position of the Malays will be safeguarded and written in the Constitution, no matter what form of citizenship laws may be recommended." It promises that the special constitutional commission to be appointed will study the citizenship issue.

Despite this hedging in public statements, a private agreement has been made between UMNO and MCA leaders that the principle of jus soli should be applied to the Chinese in the same way as it applies to the Malays. Apparently, Abdul Rahman and other top UMNO leaders are sincere in making this important pledge to MCA's leaders. But it is possible that when the time to implement it arrives, they may either have second thoughts about it or have difficulty convincing their rank-and-file Malay supporters that they are not "selling out" to the Chinese.

Passage of new laws putting citizenship of Malays and Chinese on the same basis might well revolutionize the present foundation of politics in Malaya. In a sense, the Alliance of UMNO and MCA is a marriage of convenience between Malay votes and Chinese wealth, although among the top leaders there also appears to be a genuine desire, at least for the present, to further racial harmony. If the Chinese find that they possess both votes and wealth, the advantages of the Alliance to them might become less compelling. On the other hand, failure to change the citizenship laws could split MCA and UMNO and become a major cause of racial friction,

On the question of Chinese education, UMNO and MCA have both compromised. As in Singapore, the school system in Malaya is a divided one. There are really three major, separate, school systems in Malaya: a Malay system supported by the government, a Chinese system which is largely privately supported, and an English system (in which Chinese make up the largest number of pupils) which is partly government and partly private. As of September last year, in the Federation as a whole, there were 2,086 Malay schools with 350,000 pupils, 1,236 Chinese schools with 251,000 pupils, and 355 English schools with 158,000 pupils. The British and Malays have objected to the Chinese schools on the grounds that they give a foreign-oriented education, whereas the Chinese

have stubbornly defended their right to maintain schools of their own and have bitterly criticized the government for giving such small amounts of financial aid to Chinese education,

A major debate on what policy the government should follow toward education has been in progress in Malaya since 1951, when several reports on the subject were made. One report recommended the building up of a national primary school system, based on the English and Malay languages, and the eventual elimination of Chinese schools. Another recommended that Chinese schools be preserved but encouraged to produce trilingual graduates educated in a Malayanized curriculum. Recent policy has been a **compromise** between these conflicting proposals, but it has aimed at gradually introducing national school features into the Chinese schools and making them trilingual. Many Chinese have regarded this policy as merely a subtle attempt gradually to eliminate Chinese education, and they have wanted this policy to be repudiated.

On education, the Alliance in its platform states that it will "**encourage** rather than discourage the schools, language, or culture of any race living in the country," and will "accord equal treatment to all grant-in-aid schools." At the same time, however, it proposes "**to establish** a type of national school that will be acceptable to the people of Malaya," and "**to reorient** education to a Malayan outlook." The promise of equal treatment, furthermore, is qualified by the phrase "**within the limits of Federal finances,**"

Actually, the compromise which UMNO and MCA seem to have accepted is one in which UMNO agrees not to take steps to eliminate the Chinese schools, and in return MCA has tacitly recognized that Chinese schools will have to be satisfied with less financial aid than other schools. It is a **compromise** that merely **postpones** rather than solves the real issues. The contradictory demands for suppression of Chinese schools and for increased financial aid to Chinese schools may well be heard again, unless UMNO and MCA can work out a more detailed, mutually satisfactory program.

The Alliance platform contains other compromises between the Malays and the Chinese, but the majority of them are MCA concessions in return for the major UMNO concessions in promising the Chinese that they will be granted citizenship and that their schools will be tolerated. The platform states that the Alliance plans "**to adopt Malay as the national language,**" "**to uphold and safeguard the position of the (Malay) Rulers as constitutional heads of their States,**" "**to examine the immigration question with a view to safeguarding the position of the Malays and the citizens of the country,**" and "**to take active steps to put the Malays on a better footing in the economic field.**"

## A PERIOD OF CHANGE AND UNCERTAINTY

Yesterday (August 9) **Tunku Abdul Rahman** was sworn in as Chief Minister of Malaya, heading a **15-man** cabinet composed of six Malays, five Europeans, three Chinese, and one Indian,

Few elected cabinets have ever had so little constitutional power, so much electoral support, and so many difficult problems to face.

This Alliance Cabinet will work **toward** achieving self-government and independence by constitutional means, **but** at present all of its decisions are subject to veto by the British High Commissioner.

The overwhelming victory of the Alliance at the polls gives **it**, however, a strong basis for claiming to speak for the people.

As a coalition of racial groups with a program of inter-racial cooperation and compromise, **it represents** a reasonable approach to the basic communal problems that make nation-building peculiarly difficult in Malaya.

The problems **it** faces are tremendous. The most difficult of these concern the Chinese in Malaya. The Alliance's stated objectives are to end the war with the Chinese guerrillas in the jungle without allowing them to spread communism in Malaya, and to integrate the Chinese into the political life of the country without permitting them to dominate the Malays. These are admirable aims. **But** there will be immense difficulties in achieving them.

*A. Jack Baur*