

MALAYAN PROBLEMS



BY TAN CHENG LOCK

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TO THOSE MEMBERS OF THE VARIED
RACES TO WHOM MALAYA IS THEIR
HOME AND THE OBJECT OF THEIR
UNDIVIDED LOYALTY AND WHO HAVE
FAITH IN AND ARE LOOKING FOR-
WARD TO A NEW MALAYA IN WHICH
ALL CAN LIVE IN PEACE HARMONY
AND HAPPINESS THIS BOOK IS
DEDICATED BY THE AUTHOR.

"My policy is to create conditions in which different races can co-operate and which will reflect themselves in the happiness and freedom of people."—Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary, Broadcast on the achievements of the UNO, December 23rd. 1946.



"Nothing is to be gained by cold-shouldering of the non-Malay races; there is everything to be lost by it. The most important political task in Malaya is to create a real and valid sense of loyalty to Malaya among all races."—John Eber, Secretary, Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action, Straits Times, August 8th. 1946.



"A Malay Renaissance, by raising the economic status of over two million Malays, will not fail to react upon, and be of immense benefit to, the country as a whole."
—The Editor.

FOREWORD.

Mr. Tan Cheng Lock C.B.E. needs no introduction except perhaps to the younger generations who arrived at the age of discretion after the re-occupation.

Starting public life from his home town of Malacca more than thirty years ago in 1912, he was nominated as a member of and served with distinction and ability on the Straits Settlements Legislative Council from 1923 to 1934 and on the Straits Settlements Executive Council from 1933 to 1935. He was awarded the Commandership of the Order of British Empire in 1933. Although a Government nominee his voice was the voice of the people.

This is a critical juncture in the history of Malaya when the country is at the parting of the ways. The Malayan Union—a structure initiated by the Labour Government for the gradual political advancement of the country—may be shortly replaced by the Malayan Federation plan sponsored by the Malay privileged classes and reactionary interests. Unless drastic changes are introduced into the latter plan, the effect will be to perpetuate the era of political tutelage from which Malays and non-Malays alike have outgrown. The domiciled races will labour under a keen sense of injustice and frustration which augurs ill for their future co-operation in the development of Malaya.

Mr. Tan Cheng Lock's moderation, his sense of justice and fairplay and his sane and well-balanced outlook are in pleasing contrast to the mass of propaganda which is rousing the suspicion, jealousy and fear of the Malay for members of other friendly races. Although of necessity approaching problems from a Chinese standpoint, he has never been a mere advocate of narrow sectional interests. His criticisms and views are constructive and directed towards the general welfare of Malaya as a whole. It

is his sincere conviction that the interests of the various communities are co-related and that the Malay, the Indian, the British, the Eurasian and the Chinese can live and work together in peace, concord and amity.

This volume covers the author's activities as a public man during three periods. I. During the war when, as Chairman of the Oversea-Chinese Association in India, he submitted the Memoranda on Malaya at the suggestion of a Colonial Office Official of the late Conservative Government. II. Before the war, his Memorandum to Sir Samuel Wilson and his views on education as Council member which are still of current interest. III. After the war, his support of the Malayan Union culminating in his recent election as Chairman of the Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action. The occupation period—the period of incubation of the Malayan Union—advisedly comes first. It is felt the book will be useful to those who have hitherto neither the time nor the inclination to study Malayan Affairs, but who would now like to have a true perspective of the Malayan background.

The Editor takes this opportunity of recording his appreciation of and thanks to Mr. Tan Kok Tiong for his valuable advice and general help including the reading of the proofs, to Tannso for the use of their office, telephone and other facilities and Mr. Loh Ah Fong of G. H. Kiat & Co., Ltd., who in spite of the amount of work he has to cope with as a printer, has managed to place the book before the reading public within a short period of his taking over the manuscripts. Acknowledgement is also due to Dr. Wu Lien-teh for his kind introduction and to Mr. John Eber for his illuminating account of the P.M.C.J.A., its aims and principles.

C. Q. LEE.

No. 357, ONAN ROAD,
SINGAPORE, 10th. April, 1947.

INTRODUCTION.

Persons interested in the contemporary politics of Malaya will be grateful to Mr. C. Q. Lee for putting into book form the principal speeches and writings of Mr. Tan Cheng Lock, C.B.E., who has been the indefatigable champion of the hitherto-silent majority of the mixed population inhabiting this important corner of the British Commonwealth.

Owing to the unaccountable secrecy with which the negotiations between representatives of the Malayan Union Government and the nine Sultans ('the sacred twelve') were conducted at Kuala Lumpur, the shock inflicted upon the general public was all the greater because of the unexpected severity with which non-Malay communities will be treated if the proposals as at present embodied in the Blue Book on Constitutional Proposals for Malaya are carried out.

It is indeed fortunate for all concerned that at this critical period a leader of the distinction and experience of Mr. Tan Cheng Lock has been found ready and willing to come forth and demand justice and fairplay for some 3¾ million Chinese and Indians, who, more than any one else, have contributed to the prosperity and wealth of this great land called Malaya.

The impartial Malay reader will incidentally find the Chinese standpoint—which to a great extent is also the standpoint of the other domiciled races—does not necessarily conflict with Malay interests. The book should further deepen the feeling of sympathy and understanding between Malay and non-Malay races, which drew the Malay Nationalist Party and other public bodies in Malaya together in defence of a common cause, and also be conducive to their better co-operation for the advancement and progress of their common land.

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LL.D. (Hongkong), Master of Public Health
(Johns Hopkins), etc.
President of the International
Plague Conference, Mukden, Manchuria (1911).

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PART I. — DURING THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION.

I.

THE OVERSEA-CHINESE ASSOCIATION, INDIA. PRESIDENT'S SPEECH AT INAUGURAL MEETING, BOMBAY, 24th SEPTEMBER, 1943.

Before proceeding with the business of the meeting I wish, on behalf of the Sponsors of the proposed Oversea-Chinese Association, to extend to you all a cordial welcome and to thank you for your presence at this meeting convened for the purpose of making a decision on the question of the formation of the Association. Some of you have come from a great distance to attend this meeting at the cost of much inconvenience and considerable expense to yourselves. •

As laid down in the formal Appeal made by the Sponsors for support for the project to establish the Association, its principal objects, among others, are to protect and further the important interests of ourselves as Oversea-Chinese and to consider the many problems of post-war settlement affecting the Oversea-Chinese in the Eastern Asia Territories now in enemy occupation.

In order to carry out these and the other objects as outlined in the Sponsors' Appeal and to prepare for the time when many important questions about our future will have to be settled one way or the other, it is perfectly obvious that this is the appropriate time to organise ourselves into a body.

Apart from the many difficult problems of reconstruction that will inevitably face us in the post-war period, we shall necessarily have to concern ourselves seriously and actively with the vital question of our political, economic and social future.

It is a truism that emancipation from oppressive conditions, whether in the political, economic or social sphere, can only be

won by the concerted action and organised endeavour on the part of the people concerned. Success in this respect cannot be conferred upon them but must of necessity be achieved by their own united efforts. There is no other way. Heaven helps those who help themselves and in union lies strength.

So let us be up and doing to band ourselves into a strong and solid body, actuated and cemented by a strong public spirit, so that we may be enabled to work together in endeavouring to achieve the worthy objectives we have set before ourselves.

Dr. Sun Yat-Sen has likened the Chinese people to a sheet of loose sand, because we as a people have had too much personal liberty without any unity, and he has prescribed as a remedy for our weakness that we must break down individual liberty and become pressed together into an unyielding body like the firm rock which is formed by the addition of cement to sand.

Under the twentieth century conditions and in these days of dynamic modern civilisation, the truth is brought home to us with ever increasing force that it is not enough for us to be capable of looking only after our selfish individual interests, important as that is, and that it is imperatively necessary for our own survival and self-preservation that everyone of us must perforce exert himself with zeal to do his proper share of caring for and safeguarding our collective interest as well, to perform which function effectively we must unite ourselves and work together in close and hearty co-operation and with team spirit.

A strong public spirit and sense of the need for individual sacrifice to protect and promote our public weal are the cement to bind ourselves into a firm body to make it possible for us to collaborate for our mutual benefit and for our collective salvation and security, without which we, as separate individuals, however capable, will be bound to be lost to wander in the wilderness of a dark future!

In view especially of the momentous days ahead of us, when out of the throes and travail of the present cataclysmic global convulsion there may be born a new and better world order, in which we as a community would naturally like to find a fitting and worthy place and be among its beneficiaries, we must pool our strength and resources and stand united in striving to improve and secure our future.

Before concluding I wish to direct your attention to the fact that one of the objects of the Association as specified in the Sponsors' Appeal is to study means of assisting the efforts of the United Nations in regaining the Japanese-occupied territories in Eastern Asia and of co-operating in the war efforts of China. This fact the Association when formed must take the necessary steps to bring to the notice of the competent British authorities with a view to the bringing about of the closest co-operation between them and the Association, which should help to secure for the Association the recognition and goodwill of the British Government and incidentally to dispel whatever misgivings that may have arisen in certain quarters in Bombay and also give a clear indication regarding the future policy and activities of the Association.

You may, therefore, permit me earnestly to appeal to everyone of you personally to do your best to make the Association, which I hope it is your wish to launch into existence to-day, a real success and a powerful and efficient body capable of making a substantial contribution towards the solution of the problems that confront us now and in the future.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE
ASSOCIATION TO THE SECRETARY
OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES, LONDON.

TAN CHENG LOCK, C.B.E.,
16, MILLERS ROAD, BANGALORE,

1st November, 1943.

THE RT. HON. COLONEL OLIVER STANLEY,
HIS MAJESTY'S SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES,
COLONIAL OFFICE,
LONDON, S.W.I.,
ENGLAND.

Sir,

I have the honour to bring to your notice the existence of the Oversea-Chinese Association, which was formed at a meeting of prominent Chinese held at Bombay on the 24th September, 1943, over which I presided and to acquaint you with its aims.

As its President and on behalf of its Committee I wish to offer to place its services and those of its members at the disposal of His Majesty's Government.

Its principal objects are :—

- (a) To deal with the problems of Chinese evacuees.
- (b) To consider problems relating to war damage and losses sustained by the Chinese in the Japanese-occupied eastern territories and all other post-occupational and post-war problems affecting the Chinese therein.

- (c) To study means of assisting the efforts of the United Nations in regaining these occupied territories and of co-operating in the war efforts of China.

Though the scope of the Association includes other territories besides Malaya and appears to relate to Chinese affairs particularly, in practice the Association will have to consider post-war problems affecting Malaya as a whole. So far most of our members are Chinese from Malaya, and practically all Malayan Chinese of any importance now living in India have joined the Association.

Our members from Malaya include (a) those born in Malaya who have spent all their lives in the country and (b) those who have spent most of their lives there. They are people who have a big stake and important and extensive interests in Malaya, and who have acquired intimate and valuable knowledge and experience of the country, which may be useful towards helping the solution of the many post-war problems affecting its future.

When questions should arise concerning our return to Malaya and all other matters relating to its post-occupational and post-war problems are considered, our Committee express the hope that this Association may be given the opportunity of putting its views before His Majesty's Government.

The question relating to reparation for war damage and losses sustained in Malaya vitally affects our members and the Chinese community of Malaya, and in this regard my Committee trust the Chinese community will be given adequate representation and be fully consulted in all matters pertaining to the settlement of this question and the solution of the problems arising out of it. Until the reoccupation of Malaya my Committee express the hope that His Majesty's Government will regard this Association as representing the Chinese community of Malaya in this and other respects.

Members of the Association, especially when its membership has been increased to the full extent possible, may, with their intimate knowledge of the territories concerned and their inhabitants and their connections therewith, be in a position to assist the efforts of the United Nations in regaining Malaya and the other Japanese-occupied territories.

With regard to the problems of Chinese evacuees, my Committee would be grateful if His Majesty's Government could favourably consider the question of allocating a suitable proportion of the Far Eastern Relief Fund, subscribed in London under the patronage of the Lord Mayor, to be distributed by this Association as relief to the needy Chinese evacuees of British nationality in India, of whose conditions and circumstances we should have a better knowledge than any other body and with whom we are in direct and constant contact.

It is also obvious that if this Association is entrusted with that responsibility, it will considerably help to make it a success and thus enable it to achieve its objects. My Committee hope that His Majesty's Government will give this matter their sympathetic consideration.

In this connection it may be recalled that the Chinese community of Malaya during the 1914-1918 World War and in this war made a hearty and very generous response on every occasion when they were called upon to subscribe to all sorts of War Funds and War Loans to help the war effort. Moreover, they have invariably subscribed liberally to any fund for the relief of distress in any part of the world when appealed to do so.

In view of the enormous material and other interests the Chinese possess in Malaya, my Committee would like to ask His Majesty's Government on their behalf for representation on any committees that are being formed for its reconstruction and reoccupation.

My Committee wish to co-operate in every way with all those concerned with the task of restoring normal conditions, economic, domestic and otherwise, in Malaya on its reoccupation, and we trust that His Majesty's Government will see their way to recognise this Association as representing the Chinese community of Malaya. This Association has also as its members Chinese from Burma, China and the other territories.

On our return to Malaya those of our members who are Malaysians will constitute themselves into a Malayan Chinese Association devoted to the interests of the country.

I may explain that the membership of the Association has been made to embrace *all* overseas Chinese in order to increase its utility, especially in the direction of assisting the efforts of the United Nations to recover the Japanese-occupied territories.

In order to assist in the registration of particulars of war damage and loss sustained in Malaya and the other Eastern Territories, so that records may be compiled now relating to possible claims, data are being collected by this Association from its members. I would be obliged to know whether such data with reference to Malaya and other British territories after collection may be forwarded to the Colonial Office for inclusion in the registers, which may be kept there for the purpose of recording such particulars.

I enclose herewith a list of the officers and Committee members of this Association for your information.

Herewith I also forward for your consideration a Memorandum which I have written on the future of Malaya, which may be of some little use to His Majesty's Government in dealing with the question of the future of the country.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your most obedient servant,
TAN CHENG LOCK.

**LETTER FROM THE COLONIAL OFFICE, LONDON,
TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE ASSOCIATION.**

55104/1/8/43

COLONIAL OFFICE,
DOWNING STREET, S.W.1.

16th February, 1944.

Sir,

I am directed by Colonel Oliver Stanley to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st November, 1943, reporting the formation of the Oversea-Chinese Association at Bombay on the 24th September last and to request you to inform the Committee of the Association that he has read with interest the principal objects of the Association set out in your letter.

2. The Secretary of State notes with appreciation the offer to place the services of the Association and its members at the disposal of His Majesty's Government on matters concerned with the liberation and rehabilitation of Malaya, and I am to assure you that it is the hope and intention of the authorities concerned to avail themselves of the assistance of those persons from all communities in Malaya, who are ready and gratified to co-operate in the task of rehabilitating the country. Opportunities have already been offered to such persons to put their names on record for the purpose, and in the meantime the Secretary of State will always be ready to receive any suggestions which the Association may wish to make on any aspect of the question.

3. The Secretary of State also notes the request in your letter that the Chinese community of Malaya should be represented on any committees formed for the reconstruction and reoccupation of Malaya. I am to state the members of the Association can rest assured that the Secretary of State fully appreciates the extent of the Chinese community's interests in Malaya and the

consideration to which those interests are entitled. It is his hope that at a later stage it may be possible to establish some closer liaison between Malayan residents now living overseas and those responsible for the formulation of future policy, but, in the meantime, he trusts that the suggestions in the immediately preceding paragraph of this letter will provide members of the Association with an opportunity of bringing their views to the attention of His Majesty's Government.

4. As regards the suggestion that the Association might be allocated a suitable proportion of the Far Eastern Relief Fund for distribution among needy Chinese evacuees of British Nationality, I am to explain that His Majesty's Government is in no way responsible for the administration of the Fund, but that the Secretary of State is arranging for the request in your letter to be brought to the attention of the Committee of the Fund.

5. I am to confirm that if, the data of claims for war damage in Malaya collected by the Association and its members are forwarded to this Department, they will be included in the record maintained for that purpose. Claims in respect of war damage in Burma should however be forwarded to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma, Simla, who is maintaining a similar register.

6. Finally, I am to refer to the memorandum which you had yourself written on the future of Malaya, and to inform you that this has been read with *very great interest*, and that the views expressed therein will be of great assistance to all concerned in the consideration of future policy.

I am,
Sir,
Your obedient servant,
W. B. L. MONSON.