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**HISTORY OF
THE SECOND WORLD WAR
UNITED KINGDOM MILITARY SERIES**
Edited by J. R. M. BUTLER

The authors of the Military Histories have been given full access to official documents. They and the editor are alone responsible for the statements made and the views expressed.

U S S R



BRITISH MILITARY
ADMINISTRATION
IN THE FAR EAST

1943-46

BY

F. S. V. DONNISON, C.B.E.

LONDON: 1956

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

THE PRESENT VOLUME is the first to appear of a series on the military administration of occupied territories, forming part of the United Kingdom Military History of the Second World War. The history has been planned in accordance with a Government directive 'to provide a broad survey of events from an inter-Service point of view'. Besides volumes on the several campaigns and series of operations and on the central direction of the war, it seemed that a few might be required to treat of certain topics of special interest which would not otherwise be covered. Among such topics there was a strong case for including the particular sphere of military activity and responsibility known as Civil Affairs or Military Government. By International Law, a commander occupying enemy territory assumes certain rights and duties; but even if it were not so he would need, in his own interests, to provide for the control of the civil population and the exploitation of the country's resources. This need has always been recognised, but it has never before presented a problem on the scale of the last war or involved so large an expansion of organization, and it has attracted little attention from military historians. It is accordingly proposed to produce four volumes on Military Government, one dealing with the central organization in London—in fact in the War Office—and three with administration in the field, in the Far East, in Italy and in North-West Europe respectively. A volume on *British Military Administration in Africa, 1941-1947*, by Lord Rennell of Rodd, has already been published by H.M.S.O. but does not form part of the present series.

Within this field Mr. Donnison's subject has a peculiar character, in that the territories occupied by the invading forces had all before the war formed part of the dominions of allied Powers which expected to reassert their authority and civil government after victory had been won. The book is a military not a political history, but the author has had to show how re-establishment of Allied authority was complicated by the impulse given to nationalist aspirations during the period of enemy control. It was further complicated by the fact that military administration had in some cases to be exercised by a British commander over the former colonies of allied Powers.

As has been explained in the prefaces to former volumes of this history, the practice has been adopted of not giving in the text detailed references to sources not open to public inspection; they are printed however in a confidential edition.

Mr. Donnison has the advantage of long first-hand acquaintance with one of the countries of which his history treats, and he himself played a part in military administration. He was a member of the Indian Civil Service in Burma from 1922 till the outbreak of war and he afterwards acted as a Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer. Later he served as Chief Secretary to the Government of Burma.

J.R.M.B.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

IN THIS VOLUME of the official histories I deal with a very limited aspect of the British war effort in the Far East during the Second World War. It is an aspect that unfortunately lacks the excitement of battle. Particularly is this true of Parts I to IV which deal with military government at the administrative level. Here military government, at all times forced to operate on a basis of austerity, tends to lose itself in the technicalities of transport, tonnages, and the like. It is, however, a new and, until recently, a largely unexplored subject, thrown up by the unprecedented scale and intensity of modern war, and so perhaps gains some interest. Certain it is that the health, lives, and happiness of millions may depend upon its rapid introduction and successful working behind advancing forces. For many of those who took part it was an altogether memorable experience. Some were returning to their homes after the years of exile, others to the country of their adoption or of their work. There were heart-warming re-unions with friends and colleagues, of whatever race, who had endured the Japanese occupation. Above all it meant a start with mending the inevitable breakages of war, and with the return of confidence in place of fear. The bringing of order out of chaos was at once the task and the reward of the men in the Civil Affairs services.

Part V deals with military government at the political level and stands less in need of recommendation to the general reader. The fire of battle had swept ahead, it is true, but in its passage had melted down the social and political framework. As the Military Governments assumed responsibility there was still time perhaps to mould the elements a little before they hardened into a fresh phase of history. A turning point had been reached in the development of Colonialism.

If Military Government lacked the glamour of battle it had nevertheless to be undertaken in the atmosphere of war. Often pre-occupied with administrative technicalities, I have had little time to try to recreate this, and I must ask the reader to picture something of the background, as he reads of the early work of Civil Affairs officers. There was the inevitable greyness of war, whether of mud or of dust, of smoke or of death. There was the ever present smell of explosives, of burning, and of decay. Against this physical background there was a queer distortion of the emotional fabric of life by forces that tended both to lower and to raise tension. There was a protective numbing of the feelings as men disregarded the stultifications of the present and held themselves in suspended animation against the return of peace.

There was also a stretching of the emotions as friends were sometimes found again and sometimes not, as reports of brutalities filtered in, as prisoners were liberated, as the flavour of life was sharpened by political uncertainty and the occasional condiment of fear. It was in such an atmosphere that early decisions had to be taken, which it is now easy to dissect in peace and at leisure.

I had hoped to avoid altogether the employment of initials and abbreviations. But these sometimes appear in documents from which quotation has been made, and some Civil Affairs appellations are so cumbersome that their frequent repetition is even more irritating than their abbreviation. I have yielded therefore, when I felt it better, and made what I hope will seem a not excessive use of initials. In choosing when to do so, I have made no attempt at consistency, but I have always sought to explain initials in the text before succumbing to them. Some readers, however, may require to consult parts only of the book, without reading the whole, and for their convenience a glossary follows this preface.

I have included reference to all material that is accessible to the public, but most of my sources are in unpublished documents and I have not given references to these. They consist for the most part of the files and war diaries of the headquarters both of South East Asia Command and of Allied Land Forces, South East Asia, and of the official records of the Cabinet Office, War Office, Colonial Office, Burma Office and Foreign Office. It follows that where a passage is based on both published and unpublished material the reference given may not indicate the whole of the evidence used.

I have profited by the comments and criticisms of persons holding official positions, but in no case have I altered my text against my own better judgment. Apart from alterations to improve the accuracy of the text, the only changes I have made are such as will obviate the giving of offence or the causing of harm to the public interest. Any resultant modification of my text is such as not, in my opinion, to affect the essentials of the picture I have tried to convey; its acceptance is obviously a condition of the writing of contemporary history under official auspices. In any case, although this history is in that sense 'official' it lays no claim to infallibility. I only hope that it may lead to further consideration of the matters with which it is concerned.

I would like to record my thanks to the editor of the Military Histories, Professor J. R. M. Butler, for encouragement and sympathetic guidance in what has been for me an entirely novel task; to many departments, but particularly to the War Office, the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office for assistance readily given; and to the official historians in the U.S.A. and in Australia. Many others have helped with information, suggestions, or comments on drafts, whom it would be invidious to mention by name: as they recognize their

AUTHOR'S PREFACE

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contributions I trust they will accept my thanks. While acknowledging my indebtedness, I wish to underline the rubric that appears on a previous page: for what I have done with the information so generously placed at my disposal, I alone am responsible.

F.S.V.D.

GLOSSARY OF INITIALS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ALFSEA	Allied Land Forces, South East Asia.
AMACAB	Allied Military Administration, Civil Affairs Branch.
AFO	Anti-Fascist Organisation.
AFPFL	Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League.
AIF	Australian Imperial Forces.
BBCAU	British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit.
BMA	British Military Administration.
BDA	Burma Defence Army.
BIA	Burma Independence Army.
BNA	Burma National Army.
CCAO	Chief Civil Affairs Officer.
CCAO(B)	Chief Civil Affairs Officer (Burma).
CCO	Chief Commanding Officer.
COS	Chiefs of Staff.
CA	Civil Affairs.
CAO	Civil Affairs Officer.
CAS	Civil Affairs Service.
CAS(B)	Civil Affairs Service (Burma)
CAS(M)	Civil Affairs Service (Malaya).
CASO	Civil Affairs Staff Officer.
CAU	Civil Affairs Unit.
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief.
CCS	Combined Chiefs of Staff.
CCAC	Combined Civil Affairs Committee.
CFA	Controller of Finance and Accounts.
DCCAO	Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer.
GHQ	General Headquarters.
GOC	General Officer Commanding.
HQ	Headquarters.
HMG	His Majesty's Government.
LHQ	Land Headquarters.
L of C	Line of Communication.
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army.
MPAJU	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union.
MPU	Malayan Planning Unit.

xviii *GLOSSARY OF INITIALS AND ABBREVIATIONS*

MA	Military Administration.
NICA	Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Organisation.
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer.
NCAC	Northern Combat Area Command.
PBF	Patriotic Burmese Forces.
PVO	People's Volunteer Organisation.
PAO	Principal Administrative Officer.
RAPWI	Organization for the Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees.
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force.
SCAO	Senior Civil Affairs Officer.
SCAO(P)	Senior Civil Affairs Officer (Police).
SRD	Services Reconnaissance Department.
SEAC	South East Asia Command.
SWPA	South West Pacific Area.
SOE	Special Operations Executive.
SO 1	Staff Officer, First Grade.
SAC	Supreme Allied Commander.
SACSEA	Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia.
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agreement.
YWP	Young Working Party.

PART I

Introduction

CHAPTER I

JAPANESE INVASION 1941-42

SHORTLY AFTER midnight of the 7th-8th December 1941 Japanese forces landed at Kota Bahru on the north-east coast of Malaya. An hour and a half later Japanese aircraft were over the Hawaiian Islands dropping their bombs on the American fleet in Pearl Harbour. Air raids upon the Philippines and Hong Kong followed a few hours later. The people of south-east Asia were not to escape the death and destruction that had already been the lot of Europe for two long years.

When, in the course of time, the Allied forces fought their way back through dark jungle and across tropical seas, the re-establishment of order and the revival of economic life in the territories re-occupied were entrusted, in the first place, to military administrations which prepared the way for the return of the civil authorities cast down by the Japanese invasion. These were in fact genuine, if temporary, governments with functions in no way confined to 'administration' in the military sense. It is the purpose of this book to give an account of these temporary supersessions of the civil power by the British military authorities in south-east Asia. More particularly, the three chapters of Part I will treat of the first tentative supersessions of civil authority during the period of retreat, of the improvised government which circumstances forced the military authorities to set up in Arakan, and then of the decision to accept the principle, already adopted in the West, that administration during the first stages of occupation or reoccupation must be military, not civil.

The military and political background to the Japanese attack, the events leading up to it, and the military preparations on either side, will be recounted in another volume of this series where they more properly belong. In order, however, to provide a framework for the three chapters of Part I, a bare outline of the military operations must be attempted from the outbreak of war with Japan to May 1942, when the season of heavy rain in Burma closed the first phase of the war.

Earlier, in August 1940, Japanese troops had entered southern Indo-China. In July 1941 the French ceded the right of entry to the rest of the country also. On 7th - 8th December the Japanese entered the war with three blows intended to neutralize the American fleet at Pearl Harbour, the American Air Force in the Philippines, and the British forces in Singapore, and so to clear the way for their main

offensive southwards¹. The first blow was delivered by sea and air, the second initially only from the air. The third began with landings on the north-east coast of Malaya. At the same time Japanese troops entered Bangkok without opposition. An ultimatum was served upon the French administration in Indo-China requiring that there should be no opposition to Japanese forces in the war which they had begun. It was not long before the Philippines also felt the full weight of the Japanese attack. Then, on 16th December, there were landings in Borneo. A few days later Japanese forces crossed from Siam into Burma. Before the end of January resistance had ceased in British Borneo, some troops having withdrawn into Dutch Borneo. In Malaya the Japanese, having landed in the north-east, crossed the peninsula and worked their way down the west coast by a succession of outflanking operations until they were able to land on the unprotected north and north-west shores of Singapore Island itself. On the 15th February Singapore fell. Less than a month later all resistance ceased in the Netherlands East Indies and the Japanese had landed on New Guinea. Early in May the end came in the Philippines and by the 20th of that month all British-Indian troops in Burma had been forced to withdraw across the frontier into India. By the end of May the Japanese had broken right through the great Malayan barrier and were looking out over the Bay of Bengal, the Indian Ocean and the Timor Sea. All that was left of the barrier was the broken edges to right and left of them, in the hills to the north-west of Burma and in the south-east of New Guinea.

It is not always easy to remember the scale of this six-months achievement. If we add together the territories of Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy, their total area is about half the land area occupied by Japan in the course of these operations. If we add to this block the territories of Spain and Portugal, of Yugoslavia, Greece, Rumania and Bulgaria; of Belgium, Holland and Denmark; and of Switzerland, Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland, we shall still be a little short of the total area of the Japanese conquests. In the matter of population, the Netherlands East Indies were the equivalent of Germany; French Indo-China of Spain; Burma of Rumania; the Philippines of Belgium and Holland; Siam of Yugoslavia; and Malaya of Bulgaria. The south-western arc of the Japanese front from the hills between India and Burma, along the Malayan barrier to the east coast of New Guinea was very roughly comparable to the arc of the coast line from the northernmost extremity of Norway, down the western coast of Europe, past the Straits of Gibraltar, and down the west coast of Africa to the neighbourhood of Dakar. Tokyo was as far from this south-western arc as a headquarters in the Caucasus

¹ 'British' on this occasion includes Australian, Indian, Malayan, and United Kingdom forces. Elsewhere in this volume it is generally to be understood as including troops of both the British and the Indian Army, the latter greatly predominating. 'British - Indian', which is also used, carries the same meaning.

would have been from the western coasts of Europe and Africa. The eastern arc of the advance from the Kurile Islands in the north, through the Pacific Ocean, round the Gilbert Islands, to New Guinea, was as long again, and enclosed an area of the Pacific roughly equal to the whole of the Atlantic north of the equator.

The governments of the territories occupied by the Japanese suffered various fates. In Siam the regime continued unchanged although entirely dominated by the Japanese authorities. In Indo-China the situation was similar until 9th March 1945 when the Japanese seized the formal remnants of power from the French. Many members of the administration were interned; none escaped out of the country. In the Philippines the government escaped to America, where a provisional government continued in existence through the war. In the Netherlands East Indies a portion of the Dutch administration escaped to Australia where it established an emigré government in Brisbane. The greater part of the administration was interned by the Japanese and spent the whole war in prison camps. In Hong Kong and British Borneo the whole of the European element in the administration was interned and in Malaya internment was almost as complete. In Burma the Governor, his Burmese Premier and Finance Minister, and practically all the Europeans serving in the administration escaped to India as the Japanese advanced across Burma. The authority of the Government of North Borneo was vested in the British North Borneo Company's Court of Directors at their headquarters office in London, while an emigré Government of Sarawak was first set up by the Rajah in Australia but was later transferred to London.

* * *

As the protecting forces were repeatedly compelled to give ground to the advancing Japanese a time was bound to come, sooner or later, when civil administration deteriorated and finally collapsed. Local populations were required to keep out of the way, or dispersed in fear and went into hiding, and with the approach of battle, communications became more difficult. Many functions of administration were put into abeyance. Non-essential staff were allowed to disperse and take their families to safer places. Others also began to feel that their first duty was towards their dependents. Eventually administration ceased entirely. Sometimes this might happen prematurely; in most cases key staff managed to keep in action such essential services as were required in aid of military operations, until the military commander ordered, or agreed to, their dispersal or withdrawal. Sometimes they continued at work even after the withdrawal of troops. But behind a retreating army it is inevitable that ultimately demoralization should set in;

inevitable also that military commanders should be nervous of the onset of such demoralization.¹

In such circumstances there is a tendency for these commanders to feel that the only hope of checking disintegration lies in assuming to themselves, by proclamation of martial law or otherwise, the responsibility for civil administration. In these early and disastrous days improvised or partial supersessions of civil by military authority sometimes occurred which were the first steps towards the later considered and planned supersession of civil by military government with which this book is primarily concerned. In Part I some study will be made of the earlier, somewhat hesitant, supersessions: the full assumption and exercise of responsibility for civil administration by the military authorities will be dealt with in the later parts of the book.

* * *

No form of martial law was established either in Hong Kong or in British Borneo when the Japanese invaded these territories in 1941. In Malaya we shall find a proclamation of martial law which in fact turns out not to have been a supersession of civil authority at all: in Burma we shall find a complete supersession in certain areas although in the proclamations this was never described as 'martial law': later in 1942 in Arakan we shall find a full military administration without the proclamation of martial law at all.

In July 1941 Mr. Duff Cooper (later Lord Norwich), hitherto Minister of Information, was appointed Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and sent to Singapore to make recommendations for the better co-ordination of the activities of the British authorities responsible for military, administrative, and political matters in the Far East. On 29th October 1941 Mr. Duff Cooper made a report in which he found that improvement in co-ordination and some delegation of authority from the United Kingdom were indeed desirable, and recommended the appointment of a British Commissioner-General for the Far East. Immediately after the outbreak of war with Japan, Mr. Duff Cooper was appointed Resident Cabinet Minister at Singapore for Far Eastern Affairs, on the lines of his own recommendations and on the precedent of the appointment of Captain Oliver Lyttelton as Minister of State in Cairo for the Middle East. As Resident Minister Mr. Duff Cooper presided over a Far Eastern War Council, set up on 10th December, consisting of the Governor of the Straits Settlements, the Commander-in-Chief, Far East, the Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Fleet, the General Officer Commanding, Malaya, the Air Officer Commanding, Far East, a representative of Australia, and later the Director of Propaganda for the Far East.²

¹ For a more detailed account of the process of evacuation, cf. Chapter II.

² Lt. Gen. A. E. Percival, Despatch 8 Dec. 41 to 15 Feb. 42 para. 135, Supplement to London Gazette of 20 Feb. 48.

On 18th December Mr. Duff Cooper urged upon the Council the desirability of a proclamation of martial law to ensure prompt action against potential looters, rioters, and other such offenders. The Governor, Sir Shenton Thomas, raised no objection but felt that there had in fact been no disturbances of the peace and that the existing law, as strengthened for war purposes, conferred sufficient powers for dealing with any emergency caused by such disturbances. The General Officer Commanding, Lieutenant-General A. E. Percival, disliked the proposal, fearing to find his officers cumbered with civil administrative problems. The suggestion was dropped. A week later, however, Mr. Duff Cooper again pressed his proposal but now in a somewhat different form. Martial law, he suggested, might be introduced in two stages; in the first stage it would merely supplement, not supersede, the civil authority; only in the second stage, if civil courts ceased to function, would there be supersession. General Percival now felt it easier to agree to the introduction of the so-called first stage of martial law, although he remained unconvinced of the advantages of the proposal.¹ Preparations were made accordingly and on 29th December the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements passed a Martial Law (Consequential Provisions) Ordinance. This suspended the provisions of *Habeas Corpus* in relation to proceedings taken under martial law, saved the exercise of civil and criminal jurisdiction by established courts notwithstanding any declaration of martial law (except only in regard to offences reserved for martial law courts), and prohibited the entertainment of applications for a writ of *mandamus*, for prohibition, or for *certiorari*, in respect of martial law courts. The purpose of the Ordinance was to enable martial law and the jurisdiction of the ordinary courts to exist side by side. On the following day, 30th December, the way having been prepared by the issue of the Ordinance, a Proclamation of Martial Law was published.² This was issued by the Governor, not by the Military Commander, and established Martial Law throughout the Settlement of Singapore in augmentation of civil authority; the Military Commander was empowered thereby to act under the proclamation. On the same day, in virtue of this delegation of power by the Governor, General Percival issued Martial Law Regulations which *inter alia* provided for the appointment of 'Administrators of Martial Law' and the trial of specified offences by the Administrators or by military courts. The Commander of the Singapore fortress was in fact appointed Administrator of Martial Law for Singapore and it appears that a military court was constituted, to be presided over, not by any of the professional magistrates, but by a Singapore barrister, commissioned for the purpose. It is believed that the court tried one case—which resulted in an acquittal.

¹ Lt. Gen. A. E. Percival, 'The War in Malaya', London, 1949, pp.180-1.

² Supplement 165 to Straits Settlements Government Gazette, 30th Dec. 1941.

It is clear that in this first stage of the introduction of martial law there was no *supersession* of the civil authority or usurpation of the powers of the civil government by the military authority. The machinery of civil government continued to function with as much vigour as the circumstances allowed, safeguarded by the Martial Law (Consequential Provisions) Ordinance and by the limited nature of the authority conferred upon the military authorities. Although the resultant legal state was referred to as 'martial law' it is doubtful whether this description was strictly justified, as authority flowed not from military necessity but from the act of the civil government. The military commander had not stepped in and taken over the whole of the assets of the civil government: the Governor had merely given him a blank cheque to be spent on the prosecution of the war—a cheque moreover which was endorsed not to exceed a certain somewhat limited amount. The second stage of 'martial law' which would have involved the real supersession of the civil authority was never introduced. Neither the civil nor the military authorities wanted it and the Resident Minister, who was recalled to England on the appointment of General Sir Archibald Wavell as Supreme Commander of the ABDA (American-British-Dutch-Australian) Command early in January 1942, was no longer there to press the need for it.

A tentative move was made towards the supersession of civil authority in Singapore in another respect. On the suggestion of the Resident Minister, the War Council decided that Brigadier I. Simson, Chief Engineer, Malaya Command, should be appointed with plenary powers in civil defence matters, under the War Council. It is recorded in the despatch of the General Officer Commanding that 'full powers' in civil defence matters in Singapore Island and Johore were conferred upon this officer 'subject only to reference to the War Council through the Minister' and that his appointment 'took away the responsibility of the Governor and the Defence Secretary in these matters'. This may have been in the minds of the Minister and the War Council, but, in the absence of any real declaration of martial law, responsibility for civil defence still lay constitutionally upon the Governor, who discharged this at headquarters through the Defence Secretary and on the ground through a Commissioner for Civil Defence. The appointment of Brigadier Simson as Director-General of Civil Defence, which was in fact made by the Governor and applied to Singapore only, not to Johore, could not and did not relieve the Governor and Defence Secretary of their responsibility in this respect. While the Director-General assumed full control, under the Governor, of all civil defence organisations within Singapore Island, the Civil Defence Commissioner remained responsible for the discharge of his functions outside Singapore, in areas where this was still possible.

* * *

In Burma the Defence Department of the Government had undertaken some study, on the outbreak of war with Germany, of the problems involved in the administration of areas in or near to which operations might be conducted. The matter was dropped, however, in the face of the great difficulties that were likely to arise in obtaining agreement between the civil and military authorities. It was in any case felt by the Government that the emergency powers conferred upon itself and its officers by the Defence of Burma Act, 1940, and by the rules thereunder, should be sufficient for any situation likely to arise.

On 21st February 1942, the day after the evacuation of Rangoon by all but those who were employed on essential work, the town was, at the request of the General Officer Commanding, placed under the control of a Military Commandant. It is not clear what was involved in this appointment, but it is certain that this officer was unable to do much, if anything, towards controlling a situation that was in fact fast slipping out of control. Looting and incendiarism soon broke out all over the largely deserted town. The prisons had been opened and convicts released. The Rangoon Town Police had been withdrawn up-country except for 200 volunteers whose duty it was to protect the remaining civilians.

Rangoon was abandoned on 7th March and the British forces broke out northwards through the encircling Japanese, to stand, together with the Chinese forces to the west of them, on a line running east and west through Prome and Toungoo. On 5th April 1942 General the Hon'ble Sir H. R. L. G. Alexander, by now the General Officer Commanding, with the full and ready agreement of the Governor, Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, proclaimed his assumption of civil jurisdiction in those parts of Burma in which operations were in progress. There was no general supersession of the constitution, for this, as General Alexander was quick to appreciate, would have invited charges of bad faith in regard to the British policy of conferring a real measure of self-government upon Burma and would have been the shortest way to forfeiting the co-operation of the Governor's Ministers and the goodwill of the politically-minded. Furthermore, this partial supersession was made by the introduction, not of 'martial law', but of what were described as 'Special Security Regulations' which, the Government considered, would be less likely to create public alarm among the Burmese.

In contrast with Singapore where, although the expression 'martial law' was used no actual supersession of civil authority took place, the proclamation in Burma was issued by the Military Commander, not the Governor, and General Alexander assumed to himself full civil jurisdiction within specified areas of operations on the grounds that this was 'essential for military requirements'. In doing so he clearly

superseded the civil authority in the areas covered by his proclamation; and the Special Security Regulations, in contrast to the 'Martial Law Regulations' in Malaya, were a true form of martial law. As General Alexander's forces fell back, two more proclamations were issued bringing further territory under his jurisdiction. Under these proclamations 'Administration Areas' were established with military officers or Administrators, and provision was made for the trial of offenders against the Special Security Regulations by Summary or Ordinary Military Courts, whose procedure was to be modelled on that of Summary Courts Martial and Summary General Courts Martial. It does not appear, however, that any of these Military Courts operated except in Mandalay where they tried a few persons. A certain number of summary executions were carried out elsewhere of persons considered by the military authorities to have been caught *in flagrante delicto*. No trials were held in these cases and the sentences could be justified only by urgent military necessity.

It is certain that application of this disguised form of martial law to Burma exercised no more influence upon the course of events than did the declaration of martial law in Singapore. So long as the police remained at work and criminal courts of the civil government continued to dispose of cases, it was easier and better for them to deal with offenders, for which purpose war time regulations had given them ample powers. By the time these ceased to operate it was too late for the military authorities to build up machinery to replace them: they had neither the men nor the time, and they were fully occupied with more important operational considerations. The mere appointment of military administrators without any supporting organisation probably did little beyond giving some release to the feelings of the military authorities that they were not receiving from the civil government the support to which they were entitled, and that steps must somehow be taken to put this right. It would in fact appear that there was only very partial justification for the criticisms of the civil government in this connection, but to consider this question would take us beyond the scope of the present volume. We shall see again in the events of 1942 in Arakan, which will be related in the next chapter, the results of the belief that the mere appointment of a 'Military Administrator' could work a miracle and enforce administration without the provision of any backing or of any trained staff.

* * *

By June 1942 the British and Chinese forces had been almost completely driven out of Burma into India and China. The Japanese advance halted some way short of the Indian border, owing to the break of the rains and to transport difficulties behind them—they

had in any case achieved their immediate objective of expelling the Allied forces from Burma. Along this strip unoccupied by the Japanese (which came to be known as the 'Frontier Fringe' and will so be referred to in this account) circumstances led to the development of two separate administrations, a civil administration in the centre and north-east, a military administration in the south-west. In the centre and the north-east it did not seem likely that the retreat of the Allied troops would be followed by any further advance of the Japanese forces. Civil administration accordingly continued in modified form and varying degrees after the Allied forces had withdrawn. Some account of the work of this frontier fringe administration, civil though it was, is necessary both because the organisation was later taken over by the military administration and in order to show what were the special problems of the area. It will in any case serve as a description of what the administration, whether civil, as at first, or military, as later, had to undertake in this remote area in war conditions.

The Governor of Burma flew to India from Myitkyina in the far north of Burma on 4th May 1942, under orders from the Prime Minister. On arrival in overcrowded India accommodation could be found for him only in Simla where he gathered round him, 1000 miles from the frontier of Burma, the nucleus of a headquarters and re-established a civil government of Burma. The frontier fringe was all that was left of his territory. In this, immediately to the north of Arakan, lay the Chin Hills District, free of Japanese occupation. Full normal Civil administration under a Deputy Commissioner, with normal, or even strengthened, staff was carried on, but one very great difference and handicap resulted from war conditions. Whereas previously the communications and the economic links of the area had lain to the eastward, down the hills into the plains of Burma, now these had to be severed, if extensive leakage of information into Burma was to be prevented, and be replaced by communications to the west through the hills into India, if British administration was to survive at all. The Chin Hills had always depended for a large part of their food supply upon Burma, importing some 1000 tons of rice and 100 tons of salt annually. Two new supply routes were therefore developed by the Government of Burma into the Chin Hills from India. The first was from Silchar, a railhead in Assam, through Aijal and Champai to Falam. Supplies along this route had to be carried first in 'country' boats and then on pack mules or by porters. It was clear, however, that the capacity of this route could not possibly put into the Chin Hills the minimum tonnage of food supplies required to avoid starvation. Supplementary supplies were dropped from aircraft but could not make up the deficit. A second route was therefore developed from the port and railway terminus of Chittagong through Lungleh into the Chin Hills. Here again supplies had to be

moved first by boat and then by porter, and the length of carry by porter on this route was such that little more could be taken in than had to be consumed by the porters on the outward and homeward journey. Supplies to be sent in by these two routes had to be brought to Silchar or Chittagong by rail, competing for 'lift' with the already heavy and steadily growing military demands upon the railways. Great though the moral effect of the arrival of these supplies might be, all that came from India, by land or air, would not have prevented starvation in the Chin Hills. This was avoided only by organized raids into Japanese occupied territory. At last, towards the end of 1943, a third route of greater capacity became available when the Imphal—Tiddim road was completed and, subject to control of the road by British forces, supplies could be pushed in by motor transport from Imphal and the railhead at Dimapur (Manipur Road Station). The difficulty still remained, however, of obtaining acceptance of this additional commitment on the railway to Dimapur and thereafter upon the already desperately over loaded military road communications from Dimapur to Imphal.

Immediately to the north of the Chin Hills District, the frontier fringe took in about half of the pre-war Upper Chindwin District which had been mainly under a simple form of 'direct' administration. This area was remote and exceedingly scantily populated and hardly amounted even to one of the six townships into which the pre-war district had been divided. The headquarters town of Mawlaik was in the hands of the Japanese. A very rudimentary form of administration was now carried on in this remote backwater, the officers of which were concerned mainly with the distribution of essential relief supplies, with patrolling and the collection of intelligence, with liaison between military patrols and the scattered inhabitants, and with the recruitment of porters, guides and other labour required by these patrols. There was in fact little that these officers could do beyond remaining as a pledge that the British administration had not given up its interest in the area. Very similar conditions existed in the next strip of the fringe, a remote and narrow part of the old Naga Hills District. Supplies for both these Districts required to be brought by rail to Dimapur, by motor transport to Imphal and thence by any means available, often by mules or porters. In these two Districts, and in the Hukawng Valley, which will be referred to next, the administrative officers lived under canvas or in improvised quarters generally constructed of bamboo and thatch; it was a rough and somewhat precarious existence.

Still further to the north lay the area of the Hukawng Valley, a remote and unhealthy part of the Myitkyina District. Here there were two special features. At first the local officers found their attention directed almost entirely to the rescue of the many evacuees who had

set out to walk from Myitkyina to India through the dread valley and had been overtaken by sickness, exhaustion, or the break of the rains. Some continued to struggle through during the whole of the monsoon season in 1942, and considerable numbers came out when the rains began to ease. The second special feature was the work begun on the 'Ledo Road' and the arrival in this connection, towards the end of 1942, of Chinese and Americans. This will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.¹ Communication with this area was by rail to Ledo and thence by porters over the hills, along the line of the Ledo Road.

The last sector of the fringe, to the north-east, consisted, roughly, of the Putao Subdivision of the Myitkyina District with its headquarters at Fort Hertz, populated mainly by Kachins administered 'indirectly' through their tribal chieftains. In general the work of the officers in this area was the same as elsewhere in the frontier fringe but again there were special features. In the first place there was, for practical purposes, no land communication between India and Fort Hertz, or any other part of the area: all supply and all communications, in or out, were entirely dependent upon air transport. The competing needs for the use of the few aircraft available in India at this time meant that all activities of the administration had to be, or should have been, even more restricted, if possible, than in other parts of the fringe. The second special feature of this area was its close proximity to the China border. The difficulties resulting from this will be more fully described later.²

Along the whole length of the fringe, after all regular forces had retreated from Burma into India, irregular units were raised under British Officers, to serve as a defensive screen and to gain information about the enemy. In Arakan, and again further north in the Upper Chindwin and Naga Hills Districts, the screen was provided by a body known as 'V Force', originally raised in Assam by the military authorities and supported by the Assam Rifles. In the Chin Hills, between the two V Force areas to south and north, the screen was formed by the Chin Levies, originally raised by civil officers of the Government of Burma, and supported by a battalion of the Burma Frontier Force which was a kind of frontier constabulary, between a regular military force and a civil police force. In the Hukawng Valley, Chinese forces under American control in due course assumed responsibility, with more Chinese troops in support in the area of the Ledo railhead. In the Fort Hertz area the task was taken up by the Kachin Levies raised, like the Chin Levies, by officers of the Government of Burma. Support could be brought to them only by air from India, if, at first, it was possible to do anything for them at all. Then

¹ cf. Chapter V.

² cf. Chapter V.

in September 1942, four months after the removal of regular military forces from Fort Hertz, a small regular force was reintroduced by air, in order to support the levies and to protect the landing ground that had been constructed there. The bulk of the regular forces lay back across the border of India, near Cox's Bazaar in Chittagong, and in the Imphal plain in the Indian State of Manipur. A great deal of the work of the civil officers along the whole length of the frontier fringe, but more particularly in the Chin Hills and Fort Hertz areas, had to do with the organisation and support of the levies, even when these were placed under military control.

Deputy Commissioners, civil officers appointed by, and under the control of, the Government of Burma, and performing their normal civil administrative duties, conducted the administration in the Chin Hills, the Upper Chindwin, and the Naga Hills Districts. A Deputy Commissioner was in charge at Fort Hertz, and a Sub-divisional Officer in the Hukawng Valley, nominally subordinate to the Deputy Commissioner but for practical purposes independent. The entire frontier fringe was placed under the charge of a Commissioner with headquarters in Assam. To this officer the Government of Burma delegated much authority, but remained ultimately responsible itself for the administration of the area. The whole stretch of country so far described was very sparsely inhabited, the population administered being probably little more than 300,000 throughout the length of the fringe.

In all these territories administered by the Government of Burma the ever recurring problem was how to move the barest minimum of supplies from India, through or over the hills, across the grain of the country, to areas normally accessible only from Burma, and accessible only with difficulty even from that side. We have seen the nature of the communications along which these supplies had to travel and the difficulties to be surmounted in bringing them in. The improvisation of an organization in India and along the fringe to procure and despatch supplies will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.¹

Arakan, the south-western end of the fringe, has not yet been mentioned. Here, while the civil administration continued in existence further to the north and east, a different set of circumstances led to the establishment of a military administration. Here the British civil administration had been withdrawn entirely in the course of events that will be recounted in the next chapter. A no-man's land was left between the Japanese and the British forces which it became militarily necessary to re-enter and administer. A civil servant of the Government of Burma, sent by that Government at the request of the military authorities for the purpose, was commissioned and appointed Military

¹ Chapter XIII.

Administrator of Arakan. There was no proclamation of martial law, but here was a genuine and full military administration, the first in the Far East. This gallant improvisation, the fore-runner of the more considered and elaborate organisations with which this book is mainly concerned, deserves a detailed account and a chapter to itself.

Map 2

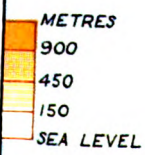


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CHAPTER II

ARAKAN

GEOGRAPHICALLY, Arakan is no part of Burma, differing in this respect from the rest of the frontier fringe already referred to, where the difficulty was that these areas were unalterably a part of Burma. Burma proper, the Burma of the Burmese, consists of the valleys of the Irrawaddy, Chindwin and Sittang rivers which form a plain surrounded on west, north and east by mountain systems, rising in most parts to 4,000 ft and in the north-west to 10,000 ft. and more. In this inverted horse-shoe of mountains dwell the hill-peoples of Burma whose countries, as we have seen in the last chapter, are geographically a part of the Irrawaddy drainage and economically largely dependent upon Burma proper. Arakan lies outside the surrounding mountain ranges, and is economically and geographically a part of India rather than of Burma. It consists of a coastal plain some 150 miles in length from north to south, and up to forty miles in breadth, greatly cut up into islands, and near-islands, by tidal muddy rivers and arms of the sea, and backed on the east by ranges of jungle-covered mountains rising sometimes to 6,000 ft and more. Southwards the coastal plain gradually narrows as the mountain ranges come closer to the sea, but there is after that another 150 miles of inaccessible coastline consisting of low densely-forested hills running south to Cape Negrais. To the north the coastal plain is divided from the plains of Chittagong and India by mountainous country, consisting mostly of ranges running between, and parallel to, the coast and the main range further inland but held together in parts by a water-shed 1,500 to 3,000 ft high, running roughly at right angles to the main corrugations and forming the boundary between Arakan and India.

Before the war, communication between Burma proper and Arakan was entirely by sea but when the Japanese invaded Burma and the thousands of Indian refugees who were unable to escape by the sea route began to stream towards India by land, use was made of a barely motorable road that had long existed from opposite Prome on the Irrawaddy, over the Taungup Pass in the mountains dividing Burma from Arakan, to the southern end of the coastal plain of Arakan; and during the war this route was developed by the Japanese into their main line of communication from Burma into Arakan. The only other routes linking Burma to Arakan were little known jungle footpaths, used to great effect by the Japanese and, much later,

in 1945, by British troops. Communication between Arakan and India was mostly by sea, though land routes existed for those prepared to walk through country that was rough, if not so difficult as that separating Arakan from Burma. The population of Arakan in 1941 was slightly over a million, of whom some 600,000 were Arakanese and some 200,000 Chittagonian Indians, the rest being accounted for by various hill peoples and by minor communities in the plains. In the main coastal plain the proportion of Arakanese to Chittagonians was more equal, approximately 300,000 to 200,000, with the proportion of Chittagonians increasing towards the north as Chittagong was approached. The population brought under administration in the course of the events to be recounted in this chapter probably never exceeded 200,000; for much of the time it was a great deal less. The Arakanese are a people of mixed Indian and Burmese descent, Buddhists by religion and speaking what is in fact a dialect of Burmese. The racial intermixture was no recent occurrence and the Arakanese consider themselves, and are generally considered by others, to be a race apart, not Indo-Burmese half-castes. The Chittagonian population had immigrated from Chittagong, some families many generations back, others recently. There was in addition, in peacetime, a seasonal and temporary immigration of agricultural labourers for the harvest. The Chittagonians were Muslim by religion and spoke the language of Chittagong. Before the war these two major communities lived side by side in tolerably good relations although communal ill feeling was never far below the surface.

* * *

British administration was withdrawn from Arakan in April – May 1942. It is important for a proper understanding of events, not only in Arakan but elsewhere in Burma, both at the time of withdrawal and at the return of British administration, to realize what this involved in a typical district or division of the country. The basic unit of administration in Burma had been, as in India, the civil district. The representative of the Government and the head of the administration in a district was the deputy commissioner. Under his direct control would be some twenty magistrates, a superintendent of police in charge of a police force that might number from three to five hundred, and various other departmental officers with their subordinate staffs, most of them concerned with the collection of the revenue. Under the deputy commissioner's more general supervision would be other departmental officers, responsible in technical matters to the heads of their respective departments in Rangoon. These would normally include the medical, public works, forest, agricultural, veterinary, education, and other less important departments. In addition there would be in most

districts a judge, independent of the deputy commissioner, and responsible both for civil justice and for the trial of important criminal cases. In all, there might be some fifty or more Government employees of officer status and four or five times that number of clerical and subordinate staff, apart from the police. Most of this staff would be at the headquarters town of the district, the rest distributed over the half dozen or so townships into which a district would be divided. In addition there would be several elected local bodies and some five hundred headmen in charge of village tracts. Of all this staff, in the immediate pre-war period, perhaps one to three, or at the very most half a dozen, would be European; there were districts with no Europeans at all. The rest were Burmese, with a sprinkling of Indians and Anglo-Indians or Anglo-Burmese. Senior staff was recruited on an all-Burma basis; subordinate staff was recruited locally. The few Europeans would generally hold the senior posts, but this was not invariably the case; there were at the time of evacuation more Burmese deputy commissioners than European and it was not unusual to find European officers serving in districts with Burmese deputy commissioners in charge. Civil districts were grouped into divisions in the charge of a commissioner, four to eight districts forming a division. Arakan constituted a division and included the four districts of Akyab, Kyaukpyu, Sandoway, and the Arakan Hill Tracts (under a somewhat simpler form of administration than the rest of the division).

When the Japanese advanced into Burma, administration was continued as long as possible but there was inevitably a slowing up of the tempo and a shedding of the less essential activities. However, every effort was made to preserve law and order and to provide information and any other assistance required by military forces operating in the district, until such time as it was deemed that the civil administration could no longer be of use to the army. There were, of course, desertions but generally speaking there was no breakdown of administration before the time for evacuation. When this time came the British officers, most Anglo-Indian or Anglo-Burmese officers, and a few Indian officers, would leave the district and, if not required for employment elsewhere in Burma, would make their way to India as best they could. With only one or two exceptions Burmese officers and all subordinates remained in the country, disappearing into nearby villages at the approach of fighting and re-emerging after this had passed on, generally to resume their normal functions under control of the occupying power. In Arakan this meant that the commissioner of the division, one or two senior police officers, one or two judges, and a very small proportion of the subordinate staff departed. Three out of four deputy commissioners remained and nearly all the subordinate administrative and police staff, numbering several hundreds in all. In spite of the use of the expression 'evacuation',

therefore, virtually the whole of the administrative machine remained on the ground. It was only the heads, and not all of these, that were removed.

* * *

The actual sequence of events in Arakan was as follows. The Sandoway District, the southern-most district of the Arakan Division was evacuated on 25th March under orders of Mr. R. P. Abigail the Commissioner of Arakan, stationed in Akyab. In the days that followed, it was not known whether the Japanese had begun to enter Arakan on land from Bassein in the south. None had reached anywhere into the neighbourhood of Akyab itself. However, owing to the fall of Singapore and the losses sustained by the Allied naval forces, command of the Bay of Bengal had passed to the Japanese and they could occupy Akyab at any time they chose from the sea. Civil administration in Akyab town and on Akyab Island had already virtually ceased. On 30th March the Commissioner and some of his staff left by sea when a convoy of three ships was sailing for India. Such an opportunity might not recur. The alternative was to make the journey overland, utilising launches where possible along the creeks and the coast. There were difficulties and dangers on this route, but scarcely to be compared with those which many persons evacuating from northern Burma into Assam had to encounter.

On 5th April the Deputy Commissioner of Kyaukpyu, south of Akyab, evacuated his district and went by sea to Chittagong. U Kyaw Khine, the Deputy Commissioner of the Akyab District, himself an Arakanese, decided to remain in his district, though he planned to move his headquarters to Buthidaung, whither he had sent his family when the town of Akyab became too dangerous; he resolved to do what he could to carry on the administration as long as possible. He probably intended ultimately to go out to Chittagong.

First, however, he went in the opposite direction on a reconnaissance with the Navy to Kyaukpyu Island whence the Deputy Commissioner of Kyaukpyu had already withdrawn. After doing what was possible to preserve order there he moved his headquarters to Buthidaung, taking with him the Government funds in the Akyab treasury, already swollen by transfer of deposits from other sub-treasuries exposed to enemy attack or to looting. It was by this time quite impossible to carry on any administration in Akyab town as the place was entirely deserted by the public and by government officials. For a month he made a determined and gallant attempt to continue government and to avert the outbreak of violence between the two suspicious and hostile communities of the district. Early in May their relations grew worse. The Deputy Commissioner set off in person to try to impose

his will upon a group of armed Muslims who were causing or threatening trouble at a small village south of Buthidaung. Approaching the Muslim headquarters by launch he was murdered by snipers from the bank. This was the end of administration in the Akyab District. Later in June the Burma Independence Army¹ which had entered Arakan with the Japanese invaders, reached Buthidaung and looted the Treasury, removing Rs 23,000,000 for distribution to the poor; it may be surmised that these already were, or now quickly became, their supporters.

At about the same time, on 3rd May, the British-Indian armed forces finally evacuated the town and island of Akyab: the Japanese entered two or three days later, but did not at this time push their forces up to occupy the northern part of the district.

All authority had by now finally collapsed. Communal strife and plundering of refugees had already broken out further to the south: these now spread all over Arakan, Arakanese Buddhists massacring Chittagonians and Chittagonian Muslims massacring Arakanese each in the areas in which they predominated. This communal warfare led to a shaking out of the two main communities, the Chittagonians fleeing northwards where they predominated and where they were nearer to India, the Arakanese moving southwards nearer to their compatriots. The segregation was never absolute, but a Muslim sphere of influence and an Arakanese sphere of influence soon emerged, so complete that in the Muslim sphere all Buddhist pagodas and monasteries were razed to the ground, and the Burmese and Arakanese languages dropped out of use, so that when in due course administration was revived notices and proclamations had to be made in Urdu instead of in Burmese.

* * *

There were by now (May – June) no British-Indian troops across the border in Arakan, but accounts of the plunder, massacre, and anarchy were brought into India by Chittagonian refugees. In July, a Muslim member of the Chittagong administration, the Sub-divisional Officer from Cox's Bazaar, entered the northern part of Arakan, visited Maungdaw and Buthidaung, and sent back reports of the terrible conditions to the Government of Bengal. As we have seen in the previous chapter, the military authorities were seeking at this time to throw out a protective screen along the whole of the frontier, and for this purpose to establish an irregular force in north Arakan to collect intelligence and to absorb the first pressure of any Japanese advance in the area. It was proposed to recruit this force from local Muslims who were ready to give their somewhat doubtful loyalty to the

¹ For a more detailed account of the Burma Independence Army, cf. Chapter XIX.

British as being the only allies in sight who might aid them to protect themselves against the Arakanese Buddhists. It was found, however, that the 'locals', although they had combined with fanatical zeal to exterminate Arakanese Buddhists or to expel them from the areas of Muslim majority, had thereafter fallen out among themselves, in the absence of any governmental control. The military officers charged with setting up this irregular force hesitated to arm the Muslims for fear that the weapons would merely be used in their internecine quarrels; they considered that the re-establishment of an administration that could maintain a certain degree of internal order was a necessary pre-requisite to the organising of any irregular or guerilla forces. The military authorities accordingly addressed the Burma Government with a request for the loan of the services of one of their officers. Mr. D. C. P. Phelps, a member of the Indian Civil Service who had served in Burma and acted as 'Corps Liaison Officer' at the headquarters of the Burma Corps, formed in the later stages of the retreat of 1942, was made available early in August and was immediately commissioned into the Indian Army as a Lieutenant-Colonel and appointed Military Administrator.

This officer arrived in Chittagong late in August, walked down the coast of the Bay of Bengal and reached the Naf River, the boundary of Burma, on 30th August. He crossed the river to Maungdaw on 1st September and set up his headquarters some way in advance of any British forces. Among other advantages, this site was conveniently near to the seat of the Central Peace Committee, which will be referred to shortly. A few days later he was joined, first, by a civilian intelligence officer sent by, and under the control of, the Government of Burma, not the military authorities, and then by several officers of V Force.¹ The latter began to recruit Muslims on 9th September 1942 on the assumption that the Military Administrator would be sufficiently successful in establishing control to enable this to be done effectively. Lieutenant-Colonel A. A. Donald arrived in Maungdaw on 13th September and took over command of V Force on 15th September. The officers of this force were not concerned with civil administration but from the nature of their task found it advantageous to work in the closest collaboration with the Military Administrator and his staff, for both parties depended upon maintaining intimate contact with the people of the area. The Military Administrator was allowed for a time to retain the assistance of the Sub-divisional Officer from Cox's Bazaar. Initially he had no other staff at all but later he was given liberal assistance, by the Government of Burma. In October the Japanese, in face of the southward advance of 14th Indian Division towards Akyab, decided to occupy both Maungdaw and Buthidaung to give depth to the defence of the island. As a result, advance patrols

¹ cf. p. 13.

of 123rd Indian Infantry Brigade clashed on 23rd October with strong Japanese forces at Buthidaung and were driven back to the main body of the Brigade at Bawli Bazaar. The Japanese occupied Maungdaw. The Military Administrator and others with him had to move precipitately, getting out of Maungdaw by sampan across the Naf River into Indian territory only a few hours before the Japanese arrived. They set up a new headquarters at Bawli Bazaar, twenty miles north of Maungdaw and just back in Arakan. By the end of December, however, the advance of 14th Indian Division, an advance which was to reach Donbaik and no farther, had developed sufficiently for the Military Administrator to return to Maungdaw, with reinforcements in the shape of several officers who had now been sent to him by the Government of Burma. The Military Administrator appointed two of these as Deputy Military Administrators. Another was a Medical Officer. That some of these officers had already been commissioned was an accidental circumstance; none but the Military Administrator himself was commissioned for the purposes of his task in Arakan. About 20th April, when the British-Indian troops were falling back once again, it was decided that the headquarters of the Military Administration must again move back to Bawli Bazaar. Soon after this, with the advent of the rainy season, most of the officers of the administration were sent out for a rest, there being little left for them to do. The Military Administrator himself stayed on in Arakan although tired and very far from well.

* * *

What in fact were the day to day functions of the Military Administrator during this period and how did he discharge them? His first task was to re-establish some respect for law and order. He found that during the interregnum the Chittagonian community had set up various 'Peace Committees', which sought to preserve the peace and to protect those who fell within their spheres. There was a 'Central Peace Committee' at Maungdaw headed by a local schoolmaster, a man of considerable character, which included a number of local notables. Other Peace Committees had been established in various parts of the area, a somewhat notorious one having been set up at Lambaguna not far from Maungdaw, which was known as the Majlis-i-shura. These self-appointed Committees had ill-defined spheres of influence which resulted in occasional friction. They tried, with varying degrees of success, to maintain some shadow of the former British administration. The Central Committee set up an improvised police force, established a court for the trial of offences, and set about financing its activities by letting out to Chittagonian cultivators land which had been abandoned by Arakanese, who had been driven south

to join their compatriots by persecution or fear of attacks. The *Majlis-i-shura* had established a local dictatorship; public floggings and confiscations were a normal feature of its rule; many firearms had been seized and a formidable armoury built up. Loot had been amassed, which included some 400 to 500 head of cattle previously belonging to Arakanese Buddhists. There was a baronial flavour about the state kept by the head of this committee. A good deal later, evidence accumulated of contacts with the enemy, a form of re-insurance, and he had to be deported to India; but for the time he was a person of importance.

The Military Administrator set about making contact with the Peace Committees and eventually succeeded, largely through offers of financial assistance contingent upon co-operation, in persuading all of the Committees that he could reach, to accept his authority. He was then able to begin systematizing the administration. The spheres of influence of the Committees were given official recognition by the creation of co-terminous sub-townships or circles, and, so far as possible, respectability was conferred upon the heads of the Committees by fitting them into the official hierarchy as Township officers or Assistant Township officers in charge. A police force was recruited, police stations were opened and Military Administration courts set up. Gradually the Military Administrator was able to make his authority effective. By the middle of September recruiting for V Force was in full swing and it was not long before a very effective screen against the infiltration of enemy agents had been established.

Besides re-establishing order in Arakan the other main function of the Military Administrator was to make his administration conform to the requirements of the army and to aid it in waging war against the enemy. This mainly involved supplying, or organising the civil population to supply, local produce and labour, and controlling, moving or restraining, the civilian population in such manner as to facilitate, and not to impede, operations and the movement and security of troops and supplies. The local products supplied ranged from fish hooks and caulking pitch to coffins and telegraph poles. The control of the population involved such tasks as the removal of the inhabitants of villages required for airfields or other purposes, the prevention of movement or clearing of areas for security reasons, and the examination and reception of refugees. Of these tasks an American observer on a visit to Arakan in January 1943 wrote: '... I was somewhat surprised to see daily streams of natives hustling up and down the beach between the British and Japanese lines crossing no man's land section of the beach without encountering any opposition whatever. I have a very vivid recollection of a look of pained surprise on the face of an extremely able and experienced Burma police officer when the Brigadier hesitated, because of humanitarian

reasons, to clear the area of all natives and thus stop any possible chance of their carrying intelligence to the Japanese. Previous to this, these natives had passed freely within 150 to 200 yards of a number of gun positions, particularly those along the beach. The Burma police officer was a tough, rough and ready type of fighter who knew exactly what kind of people he was dealing with and he always carried his tommy gun cocked ready for action. He finally persuaded the Brigadier to let him clear the area of all natives.'

For the reception of refugees villages were built; for their movement, and the movement of troops, paths and roads were opened through jungle. A major refugee problem was handled in April – May 1943. When the British forces had advanced down the Mayu peninsula earlier in the season, there followed in their wake large numbers of Chittagonians who had previously fled from Arakan to India and were now hoping to return to what remained of their land and villages. When the British withdrawal began these became refugees for the second time and arrangements were made by the Administration for their return once more to India. Camps were improvised at Keinchakata near Maungdaw, at Bawli Bazaar, and near Taungbro (or Tumbro) through which these refugees were passed back to the Indian border where they were handed over to the Indian refugee organisation and by them moved further into Chittagong. The numbers handled were probably in excess, possibly greatly in excess, of 30,000.

A civil intelligence service was built up, with agents, who of course were Chittagonians, operating behind the Japanese, which provided valuable, if somewhat undigested, reports, and was the ultimate source of much of the information collected by other intelligence organisations.

Attention was also paid to public health, as many of the population as possible being vaccinated and a strong outbreak of small-pox being brought under control. There was even a veterinary department functioning. This public health work was probably the most successful of the activities of the Administration, over and above the essential task of preserving at least a semblance of law and order. A Public Health Officer, a Chinese, from Singapore, who had reached Arakan by devious ways to serve in the Military Administration, even achieved the distinction of identifying in the Maungdaw mud-flats a variety of salt-water mosquito not previously encountered there.

A simplified and effective, if somewhat rough and ready, administration of criminal justice was established by the issue of orders that came to be known locally, in graceful allusion to their author, as the 'Code Phelipe'. In the absence of any formal decision to establish martial law, whether by proclamation or otherwise, legal justification for this code must be looked for in the requirements of military

necessity. A special Act of Indemnity was later passed by the Government of Burma, in advance of the general legislation enacted on the conclusion of military government, to protect Lieutenant-Colonel Phelips and the members of his administration from the consequences of their actions—which included executions made necessary by the disturbed times.

We have seen in the previous chapter, when considering the rest of the frontier fringe, what was to prove one of the great problems of the Military Administration throughout Burma proper, the problem of bringing into the country sufficient food and other essential commodities to enable the people to live and work. In Arakan this was never a serious difficulty. Communication with India was always easy and, as soon as any shortage of rice or clothing or other essentials began to show itself in north Arakan, there were many enterprising traders ready to bring these in from Chittagong in order to take advantage of the high prices that could be obtained. The matter went further than this: as soon as it was realized by such traders that the Japanese were not bringing in supplies from Burma proper into the southern and central parts of Arakan which had been occupied by them, persons were found anxious to smuggle goods past the opposing forces into the occupied area of Arakan. At no time was this a very difficult thing to do for the contending forces were never thick on the ground and the hills and jungle afforded excellent cover for this and other movement. There is no doubt that a leading part in this smuggling trade was carried on by V Force itself; in fact it was often only through this trade that it was possible for members of the force to buy information.

Special mention should perhaps be made of the area known as the Arakan Hill Tracts, inland from the main area of operation of the Military Administration and consisting of the hills and valleys forming the drainage of the Kaladan and Lemro rivers which flow southwards to the sea in the neighbourhood of Akyab. The area is inhabited by hill people and had always been under a somewhat simpler form of government with headquarters at Paletwa. When civil administration broke down elsewhere in Arakan with the withdrawal of the British, Dr. Kyaw Zan, the medical officer stationed at Paletwa, an Arakanese, was able to continue the administration in this remote headquarters. When a detachment of troops (the Tripura Rifles) began to work their way south through the hills at the beginning of the 'open season', about December 1942, Dr. Kyaw Zan organised assistance in the form of guides and porters and did all that he could to facilitate the advance of the forces. In due course he was joined by an administrative officer sent to Paletwa by the Government of Burma, to take over the administration and come under the general, if somewhat remote, control of the Military Administrator. This officer reported most

favourably on the loyalty and willing help given by the inhabitants of the area. When the tide of the British advance began to ebb and the forces fell back once again upon India, this administrative officer had to be recalled; and with him Dr. Kyaw Zan had also to be withdrawn, for his vigorous and unflinching support of the British cause had so compromised him in the eyes of the Japanese that he would have been made to suffer for his work, probably with his life.

No attempt was made by the Military Administration to collect any revenue, but the 'Peace Committee' organisations were encouraged to continue measures already taken by them to make their activities self-supporting. Land which had previously been owned by Arakanese Buddhists had been let by them to Muslim cultivators, on payment of rent. Much of this rent had been paid in kind so that the Administration had accumulated stocks of paddy¹ which it was able to use to feed refugees.

The cash requirements of the Military Administrator were met by an arrangement under which the Government of Burma, on request by the military authorities on behalf of the Administrator, from time to time placed a lump sum to the credit of this officer in the Government Treasury at Chittagong. The Administrator then arranged for the cash required by him to be moved forward under military escort and placed in the vault of the sub-treasury at Maungdaw.

A remarkable measure of loyalty was evoked by the Military Administrator from his normally unreliable Muslim subjects in Arakan. It was, fundamentally, the outcome of the anti-Arakanese feelings bequeathed by the communal disturbances during the period of anarchy which followed the withdrawal of the British Administration in the middle of 1942.

* * *

The whole of the superior staff for the Military Administration, and part of the clerical staff, were made available by the Government of Burma and, with very few exceptions, such as that of the Medical Officer who was a member of the quasi-military Indian Medical service, consisted of civilians. Other staff was locally recruited by the Military Administrator as best he could. Their pay was borne by the Government of Burma, not the military authorities. The Military Administrator himself, owing to the anomaly of his position, drew no pay for months, subsisting upon advances drawn from military sources in virtue of his uniform. Rations were issued by the military authorities to the staff of the Administration, but with the greatest reluctance, as few besides the Military Administrator himself were in uniform, and the standing of the Administration was exceedingly obscure. Equipment and occasional amenities were provided, not from army

¹ Unhusked rice.

resources but by the Government of Burma Supply organisation in Calcutta, mentioned in the previous chapter and to be more fully described later.¹ No motor or other transport was made available for the Administration—with the exception of one old Ford saloon car which was handed over to the Military Administrator on the order of the General Officer Commanding 14th Indian Division.

The most curious case of all was that of the civilian intelligence officer sent by the Government of Burma into Arakan. This officer, Mr. C. B. Orr of the Burma Police, was sent in the same way as police intelligence officers were sent to other parts of the frontier fringe, as part of the scheme of administration proposed by the Government of Burma for that area which will be discussed in the next chapter. Elsewhere such officers were expected to carry on or re-establish at least a rudimentary police administration. In Arakan this could not be done merely by sending a Burma Police officer as the army had already assumed responsibility and set up an Administration—the Civil Government having left the area unprovided with any for the four months that had elapsed since the evacuation of 30th March. Later, a second police officer was sent and this time placed at the disposal of the Military Administrator by the Government of Burma to take charge of the re-establishment of police administration. The civil intelligence officer's relations with the Military Administrator and other military authorities were meanwhile completely undefined: his main task was to furnish to the Government of Burma information regarding developments in Arakan; and it was well known that this was to include information regarding the activities of the military forces. For the Military Administrator was forbidden, as we shall see, from communicating with the Government of Burma.

* * *

This brings us to consideration of the extremely anomalous position resulting from the unresolved conflict between the civil and military authorities in Arakan.

When, early in August 1942, Lieutenant-Colonel Phelps was first appointed Military Administrator, a telegram was sent on 8th August from the Commander-in-Chief, India, to the War Office, part of which ran 'Phelips Burma Government official commissioned and despatched to 14 Div. to assist re-organisation Civil Administration Buthidaung area under military control.' This military control was complete, for Mr. Phelps, after being commissioned as a Lieutenant-Colonel, was instructed that he was to have no communication with the Burma Government—even demi-official correspondence was forbidden to him. There was to be no possibility of divided authority and no doubt that he was the army's man.

¹ cf. Chapter XIII.

But, although Lieutenant-Colonel Phelps was denied access to the Government of Burma, the military authorities failed entirely to take up the responsibility which they would not allow to that Government. There was no declaration of martial law or proclamation of military administration to terminate the legal responsibility for the administration of Burma which had been laid upon the Governor by Act of Parliament. Constitutionally, therefore, the ordinary law of Burma still ran, and nobody but the Governor of Burma had authority to administer the unoccupied strip of Arakan; and as the military authorities would allow the Governor no communication with the Military Administrator it is more than doubtful whether that officer had any vestige of legal authority to carry on an administration within Burma. It appears that some time after he went to Arakan the Government of Burma sought to give cover to his actions by notifying his appointment as Deputy Commissioner of Akyab. But on the most favourable construction this would have given no cover to those of his activities which most needed this, his judicial administration.

Again, having appointed the Military Administrator, the military authorities took no steps to provide him with staff: the Government of Burma fortunately, in due course, sent him assistants; for local staff he did what he could on arrival in Arakan. No transport or equipment was provided for him. Rations were provided for his staff but reluctantly and as a favour. Clothing and amenities he was left to raise from the Government of Burma organization in Calcutta. Office equipment was purchased by him in the open market in Calcutta as best he could. Cash was demanded for him by the military authorities but on Government of Burma account. We see once more the belief, apparent in Singapore and in Burma during the campaign of 1941 - 42, that the mere appointment of a 'military administrator' would work a miracle, and the failure to realize that men and tools were required for civil administration as for any other trade.

The responsibility which the military authorities would not allow to the Governor of Burma but would not take up themselves was shouldered by the Military Administrator. The question whether he had any legal authority to administer the ordinary law of Burma was early rendered academic by his decision to jettison this and to draw up and administer his own penal code. A revision of the instructions governing village administration was also undertaken. With little help from civil or military, by his own personality, resourcefulness, and courage, he succeeded in establishing an administration which was probably the best that could have been built up in the anarchic circumstances of the times.

The Government of Burma meanwhile continued in the belief that the Military Administrator was or ought to be their agent—which is hardly surprising when he was in fact substantively one of their officers,

when there had been no declaration of martial law, and when they were throughout left to provide the Military Administrator with his essential needs, and to foot the bill. Early in November representatives of the Government of Burma visited Chittagong and Calcutta and were in conference with the General Officer Commanding 14th Indian Division, and Lieutenant-General N. M. S. Irwin, commanding Eastern Army, with the object of elucidating the obscurity in Arakan and of making arrangements for future administration. Discussions (which will be recorded in the next chapter) were by now already proceeding in Delhi on the question whether this administration should be civil or military; no decisions had been reached but it was becoming clear that it would probably be military. In the absence of any decision, however, the representatives of the Government of Burma felt that they must work on the assumption that it would be for their Government to organise an administration in recovered territory in the event of the advance then under preparation proving successful. While recognising the claim of the military authorities to Lieutenant-Colonel Phelps's services arising from the fact that he had been commissioned into the Indian Army they clearly felt that they had a reversionary claim to his services, to take charge in a civilian capacity of the administration which they planned to set up. They raised no objection to Lieutenant-Colonel Phelps and other administrative officers retaining their military rank while operations were still in progress, but felt that other civil officers should remain civilians even if required to take their orders from the commissioned officers; when operations ceased however all should become civilians. Considerable preparations were set in train for a civil administration by the various departments which would be concerned such as the Police, Medical, Public Works, Forests, Judicial, and Agricultural Departments, and the Port of Akyab. These plans were brought to nothing by the decision shortly to be taken in favour of military administration.

The whole of this curious episode in Arakan is of interest as showing how the need for a military administration, which had never been anticipated or prepared for, forced itself upon the military authorities for practical reasons; how slowly these authorities perceived the implications of the need; and how illogically machinery was improvised to meet it.

The discussions regarding the question at issue in this anomalous situation, and the decisions ultimately taken, will be considered at length in the next chapter.

* * *

It requires to be recorded that, in spite of the almost intolerable position in which these officers were placed, relations between them

and the military authorities on the spot were not uncordial, at least to begin with, though so much could hardly be said of the relations between the military authorities and the even more unhappily situated civilian intelligence officer operating on behalf of the Government of Burma. It was perhaps inevitable that ultimately the lack of co-operation at the higher levels should be reflected to some extent in relations on the ground.

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It will serve to round off this account of Lieutenant-Colonel Phelps's improvised military administration of Arakan if we anticipate the results of the discussions which will be more fully dealt with in the next chapter. The formal end of the Military Administrator's rule came in February 1943 when a prolonged conference was held at Maungdaw on the 13th - 17th of that month between the Military Administrator, Major-General C. F. B. Pearce, who had been appointed Chief Civil Affairs Officer for Burma, and under whose control the Military Administrator was now to come, and the Inspector-General of Police, still at that time under the control of the Burma Government but soon to become a part of the Chief Civil Affairs Officer's Staff. The new arrangements for a more formal military administration, which will be examined shortly¹, were explained and discussed and a large number of current problems were considered. The Military Administrator found himself in opposition to the procedure proposed for establishing a measure of financial control over his activities, to the proposal that some part at least of the Land Revenue ought to be collected during 1943 - 44, and to the plans for introducing a military administration currency. His reasons for objecting to this last proposal arose out of local conditions; he explained that Indian currency then used by the administration was much sought after in preference to any form of Burma currency, and that he did not wish confidence in this to be undermined or that the advantage conferred by control of the popular currency should be thrown away; furthermore the absence of a supply problem in Arakan was due to the continuance of private trade with India, and he was averse to the hampering of this trade by the imposition of any exchange difficulties at all. He was opposed to the collection of Land Revenue on the ground that generosity should be shown to the inhabitants of an area that had been exposed to the evils of enemy invasion and internal chaos as a result of Britain's failure to give it adequate protection, and on the ground also that the absence of staff and records would make collection technically difficult or impossible. As for the financial control proposed he felt that this would

¹ cf. Chapter IV.

deprive the administration of the flexibility demanded by the very abnormal conditions in which it was required to operate.

Other subjects discussed included proposals regarding purchase and export of paddy and rice, the need for the import of consumer goods (*longyis*,¹ cotton cloth, cotton yarn, tea, sugar, soap, mustard oil, matches, cigarettes and *bidis*,² in that order of priority), the conditions of service of employees of the military administration, the chronic shortage of transport, the Military Administrator's Criminal Justice Order, the posting of an engineer from the Burma Public Works Department, with experience of Arakan, to aid the Military Engineer Services, and various other matters.

* * *

It is well to try to recapture a little of the atmosphere and feelings of these difficult times. It was impossible for the officers of the Military Administration to avoid the realization that they were nobody's responsibility. But this exhilarated rather than daunted them. It meant freedom from the tyranny of paper and precedent, from the need to refer to remote and often uncomprehending authority before taking decisions, from the criticism of press and politicians. At the same time there came to them a greater emancipation of the spirit, a release from trivialities, born of the sickness and weariness that were their frequent companions and of the collapse of the society they had known. Most of them were far past wishing to become anybody's responsibility. With freedom went pride, pride in their knowledge of the people and the country and of their job, pride in their tested toughness and resource, pride above all in doing without assistance from others a supremely difficult task in which they alone could hope to succeed. It is small wonder perhaps that there was also impatience, impatience both of the civil authorities lost in the clouds, the physical clouds of Simla and the mental clouds of reconstruction, and of the military, later so skilful and courageous but at this stage still untrained, blundering and apparently unwilling to learn. But there was yet another ingredient. The whole mixture was seasoned with 'laughter's gusty squalls', laughter without which the difficulties and frustrations could hardly have been borne, laughter which showed perhaps how near the breaking point had sometimes come. To the Military Administrator and his staff this was the heyday of military administration. Soon the dead hand of official control, particularly of financial control, was to fall on their shoulders. Military administration might receive official recognition, might receive reinforcements, equipment, even transport; it would never give them again the satisfaction and pride of these early days.

¹ Cotton skirts worn by either sex.

² A type of Indian cigarette or small cheroot.

CHAPTER III

MILITARY GOVERNMENT

THE EXTRAORDINARY situation which had developed in the frontier fringe by August-September 1942, with a civil government at one end and a military government at the other, demanded further action. Clearly the time had come to think out the question whether the initial administration of re-occupied territories, more particularly of re-occupied British territories, should be a civil or military responsibility. It was not only a matter of the frontier fringe and then of the rest of Burma; there would in due course be the other territories also, for which the Colonial Office would be responsible. The Government of Burma had no doubts as to what the answer should be, and even while Lieutenant-Colonel Phelps, newly commissioned at General Headquarters in Delhi, made his way to XV Corps headquarters in Calcutta, to 14th Division headquarters in Comilla, to Brigade headquarters in Chittagong and finally along the sandy shore of the Bay of Bengal to Maungdaw, proposals were already on their way to the Secretary of State for Burma. No governments had survived from the other occupied British territories to make their submissions, but in due course the Colonial Office was drawn into the discussions in London.

* * *

The constitutional background to the Governor of Burma's proposals and to the administrative position was contained in an Act of the British Parliament, the Government of Burma Act, 1935. This made provision for the appointment of a Governor to exercise executive authority in Burma on behalf of His Majesty; as to most subjects, in accordance with the advice of a Council of Ministers who were required to be or to become elected members of the Legislature; as to the remainder, on the advice of official Counsellors and under the ultimate control of the Secretary of State. Except in regard to defence, monetary policy, and external affairs, Burma enjoyed a very high degree of self-government. The Act set up a legislature of two chambers and provided for the continuance of the existing High Court and of the administration of the laws of Burma. Provision was also made under which the Governor might temporarily dispense with his Council of Ministers or assume to himself the powers of any authority

in Burma, if at any time he were satisfied that a situation had arisen in which the government of Burma could no longer be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Act. This Act, with all other law in force in Burma at the time of the Japanese occupation, still ran in the unoccupied frontier fringe. Although driven underground elsewhere in Burma by the occupation, it was the accepted view at international law that it would revive as the Japanese domination was rolled back. The civil administration, the courts, and other institutions recognised by the law before evacuation, would be resurrected, a little tarnished, perhaps, but essentially none the worse, it might be hoped, for their temporary interment.

The Government, therefore, had early begun work on plans for continuing and, where necessary, reviving civil administration in the frontier fringe, always realising that military necessities must be paramount. By 19th August, 1942, a scheme had been formulated for the maintenance of an administration in the unoccupied areas of Burma and of an intelligence service to operate through those areas into Japanese occupied territory. It was hoped in this way to retain the loyalty of the hill people living in the mountainous border country of Burma, to ensure an adequate supply of government servants with knowledge of this remote country if these were required for future military operations, and, lastly, to induce the inhabitants of the adjacent plains of Burma not to accept too readily and completely the domination of the Japanese. The proposals involved the continuance or re-establishment of administration on pre-war lines; but it was contemplated that the members of the administration would be more numerous and that there should be a high degree of decentralization and much delegation of authority to a Commissioner whom it was proposed to appoint to supervise the administration of the frontier fringe on behalf of the Governor. The whole administration would have to be based on India, with lines of communication to India, not Burma. It was clear that it would not be possible to maintain such an administration in war conditions without adequate military support; for the greater the activity or success of the administration the more likely would it be to attract the attention of the Japanese. The intelligence service proposed was to be operated by what would in fact be a 'shadow' police administration for the areas first to be re-occupied as a result of future military operations. Subject to the general control of civil policy by the Government, it was proposed that the civil administrative officers should work under the direction of the military authorities, the Commissioner under the Commander of the Corps operating on the frontier, other officers under Divisional or Brigade Commanders. The point was particularly made, however, that military officers of lower rank should not normally exercise control over civil officers. It was felt that at that stage of events it was not possible to

define with any greater precision the relations between the civil and the military officers but it was not expected that any difficulty would arise in practice. These proposals were sent to the Secretary of State for Burma. General Sir Archibald Wavell, the Commander-in-Chief, India, who was responsible at this time for the conduct of operations in Burma, was consulted and communicated to the War Office his approval in principle. Experience of military administration in Africa had familiarized him with two conceptions underlying these proposals, one, that the administration should owe a dual responsibility to the civil and to the military authorities, the other, that the 'civil' chain of command must, at some level, be divorced from the military.

But eighteen months earlier in London, on 20th February, 1941, it had been decided by the War Cabinet in regard to the Middle East that the responsibility for the administration of all occupied enemy territory should be placed upon the War Office.¹ This decision applied in the first place to occupied enemy territory only, not to any British territories that might in due course be re-occupied after enemy occupation. A new branch in the War Office, M.O.11, was created to discharge this responsibility and in March 1941, a standing inter-departmental committee on the administration of occupied enemy territories was set up, to ensure co-ordination between the various departments concerned. Just at this time however the development of operations in Africa threw up, in connection with British Somaliland, the further question of the arrangements to be made for the administration of re-occupied territory when it was British. The decision in regard to this territory also was that a military administration should be established and should continue, for some time at least, on the lines as far as possible of the administrations to be set up for occupied enemy territory. In June 1942 a second interdepartmental committee was formed under War Office chairmanship to deal with questions of armistice terms and administration of occupied enemy territories that would arise in Europe. By the end of 1942 military administrations had, in fact, already been set up in Eritrea, Italian Somaliland, Cyrenaica (although here the administration had had to be withdrawn again) Ethiopia and British Somaliland. The conception of military government based upon military necessity, was by now not unfamiliar in London, and it was against this background that the proposals of the Burma Government were received by the Secretary of State for Burma.

The War Office immediately questioned whether the dual control contemplated by the proposals could work satisfactorily and suggested that the ultimate control of administration in Burma when operations for the re-occupation of Burma began must be in the hands of one authority only and that this authority must be military. General

¹ Rennell of Rodd *British Military Administration in Africa, 1941-47*, H.M.S.O. 1948, p.23.

Wavell replied that he considered the Governor's proposals satisfactory only in the circumstances then existing, that is, while the areas to be administered were in fact operational areas in which there could be no doubt of the over-riding importance, of military control. He considered that a totally different situation would arise if large parts of Burma were to be re-occupied and left in the rear of operations. These areas would still be required as a military base for further campaigns and it would be essential for the success of these that military considerations should remain paramount. This would not be clearly secured under the Governor's proposals and there would be danger that the civil government, influenced more by considerations of rehabilitation and politics, would come into conflict with the military commander who would for some time at least have to retain responsibility for internal security and the restoration of order. The military authorities could accept rehabilitation responsibilities only to the extent that these would contribute to the success of the military object.

This view was vigorously contested by the Governor on the grounds that it would be a grave political error to create a military dictatorship in Burma on the very lines of the Japanese administration, and that this would inevitably alienate public opinion both inside and outside Burma. He suggested that the military authorities appeared to have forgotten that Burma was a part of the British Empire, not a hostile country. When the Secretary of State showed that he was thinking, doubtless with African precedents in mind, in terms of an administration with a 'military governor' under military direction, at least for the period during which re-occupation was in progress, the Governor re-affirmed his political objections to the course proposed and said that he greatly feared that if the military authorities were to be given a free hand in dealing with civilian affairs, the reaction of the Burmese might be so unfavourable that the general war effort in Burma would be severely handicapped. He added that the Burmese were known to prefer civilians to soldiers. He did not deny the supremacy of military requirements until such time as the Japanese were defeated but he was confident that continuance of civil administration need not conflict with this, provided that he was allowed a period of 'direct rule', that is a period of rule during which he would, in virtue of the emergency provisions of the Constitution already referred to, be freed from the obligation to act upon the advice of any Cabinet of Ministers. Under the Government of Burma Act prolongation of such an emergency arrangement was permissible with the approval of Parliament. He went on to sketch out a scheme for a civil administration which should in the early stages of operations be under very extensive military control but should thereafter be released progressively from such control in proportion as territory was left further in rear of operations.

After discussion between the War Office and the Burma Office it was decided that military administration must be established until conditions permitted the return of a civil government and that it must be for the military authorities to decide when conditions did permit of this return. The fundamental reason for this decision was the need to avoid any possible ambiguity as to the chain of responsibility for civil administration, lest this should interfere with the re-conquest of Burma. There was also the practical consideration that officers dealing with civil administration should be in uniform to give them the requisite authority over soldiers in their districts and to facilitate contacts between the administration and the various army services. Undoubtedly, also, the precedent of British Somaliland carried weight. And if the fact that the constitution of Burma provided for a high degree of self-government made of this an inexact precedent, it can hardly have operated otherwise than to heighten the concern of the military authorities to prevent all doubt as to the responsibility for administration. Finally, it appears that another unexpressed reason was the conviction in military circles, that no civilian administration could be trusted not to yield to sentimental or political considerations in their treatment of the peoples of re-occupied territories. It was to prove one of the ironies of the situation that in Burma, Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies it was, in the event, the 'civilian' element in the military administrations that pressed for a policy of firmness to protect the moderates from the extremists while the Supreme Allied Commander preferred to stake the future upon educating these political extremists, to responsibility and co-operation with the old colonial powers.

The decision to establish a military administration was communicated to the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief, and at a meeting of these two in Delhi, in November 1942, it was agreed to give effect to the decision on the following lines. So long as Burma remained either the scene of active operations or the base from which active operations were taking place, the Force Commander in Burma must be vested with the full powers of civil administration. The decision when any part or parts of Burma could be transferred to a civil government must be one primarily for the military commander, whose decision could be overruled only by the Commander-in-Chief, India, or the home government. It was agreed in principle, however, that this transfer should take place as soon as possible. It was also agreed that, in order to assist the Force Commander in carrying out his duties as far as civil administration was concerned, the Government of Burma should second to his staff an officer, who later came to be known as the Chief Civil Affairs Officer (C.C.A.O.), and other officers to work under him. The Governor adhered to his view that civil affairs officers should not be commissioned; adding that it was shared by all

his advisers, having regard to the attitude of the Burmese towards military persons. It is doubtful whether this view was valid if the 'soldiers' responsible for administration were really to be civilians with knowledge and experience of the Burmese. But underlying it was the mutual distrust and recrimination of civil and military that grew out of the disastrous campaign of 1941-42.

* * *

The next discussion concerned the manner in which the military administrations should obtain their authority. Strictly this should perhaps be considered in the next chapter, in which will be recounted the setting up of the Civil Affairs Service (C.A.S.) for Burma and the organization of its headquarters. In fact, however, it was a prolongation of the earlier negotiations between the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief, and may conveniently be dealt with here. Furthermore the decisions reached were applicable in due course to the other territories, as well as to Burma.

There were three ways in which the military administrations might obtain their authority, the first two proceeding through the existing constitutional machinery or legislation, but modified in detail as found necessary, the third breaking through constitutional restraints and appealing to more fundamental considerations of military necessity.

The first course was advocated by the Government and consisted in the delegation by the Governor of his authority, or so much as was necessary, and by whatever means were considered suitable, to the military commander. This was urged on the ground that it was politically desirable to emphasise the temporary nature of the military administration to be set up, especially to the Burmese. It was claimed that this course had been adopted during the retreat out of Burma during 1942. In fact it does not appear that this was so. General Alexander then assumed civil jurisdiction of his own motion, not by delegation from the Governor – though this was certainly done with the full consent of the Government. The method of delegation by the Governor was not acceptable to the Commander-in-Chief, and was rejected in London by the War Office and Burma Office in consultation, on the grounds, first, that the Governor could not, under the relevant section of the Government of Burma Act, delegate his authority except to officers subordinate to himself, into which category the Force Commander would not fall, second, that although the home government itself could probably effect the necessary delegation, commanders would in fact require powers wider than any that could be statutorily delegated to them, and, third and most important, that any idea of delegation would introduce risk of doubt or divided

authority, particularly in regard to the all important matter of deciding when the time had come for the restoration of civil administration and the areas in which this was possible. The Secretary of State for Burma was disinclined to admit the argument that delegation was politically and psychologically preferable, or any argument drawn from the course followed in 1942; what might, he felt, be appropriate during a military retreat that was gradually eating away the area under civil administration, would not necessarily be appropriate in the circumstances of an advance bringing territory from enemy occupation into British control.

The second possible course, still using normal constitutional and legislative machinery, would have been to appoint the military commander as Governor and to confer upon him all the statutory powers of civil government. This was the course followed in British Somaliland where the Order-in-Council establishing the constitution of this territory was amended to permit of such an appointment in the absence of the civil Governor. In the case of Burma this would have required an Act of Parliament. As it had been decided not to terminate the appointment of the Governor of Burma, and as he was, under the orders of the United Kingdom government, vigorously planning reconstruction measures in Simla, this course was in fact not available. It would in any case have been insufficient as the military commander was likely to require wider powers than could be conferred upon him by appointment as Governor under the constitution.

The third course was to break through the legislative and constitutional restrictions and to appeal to military necessity and the laws of war as recognised by international lawyers. The first and most important principle governing the laws of war is that of military necessity, under which a belligerent is justified in applying any amount and any kind of force which is necessary for the realisation of the purpose of war, namely, the overpowering of his opponent¹. Rights under this principle extend indisputably to the taking of such measures of government as may be necessary to protect military forces and their lines of communication from the danger of disorder behind the battle. In addition under English common law the Crown has the right in time of invasion to assume extraordinary powers to repel force by force, and to take such exceptional measures as may be necessary for the purpose of restoring peace and order.² By invoking military necessity it might be possible under these two principles to set aside the constitutional authority in Burma and to set up a military government for so long as the military necessity persisted. This course was objected to by the Government of Burma on the grounds

¹ Lauterpacht, *International Law*, London, 1940, p.179.
Manual of Military Law, H.M.S.O. 1929, p.271.

² *Manual of Military Law*, H.M.S.O. 1929, p.4.

that it would involve serious legal difficulties. It contended further, with considerable legal justification, that the military authorities had no power to suspend or suppress the laws of the country, or the administration of justice by the civil courts, by mere proclamation of military necessity and of their decision to do so; such suspension or suppression could result only from the fact of the existence of a state of war which actually made it impossible for the courts to administer these laws and so created the military necessity; lastly it was for these very courts and no other authority, certainly not for the military authorities themselves, to decide whether such a state of war had in fact arisen. It is more than doubtful whether military necessity can be invoked as justification for a continuance of military government in areas from which the battle has long since passed; still less can this be done after the enemy has surrendered.¹ The Government then went on to suggest, however, with little or no justification, that not even the Act of Indemnity which the military authorities contemplated might be able to save the officers of the military administration from being tried and convicted for their actions. It was not then suggested that there might, and in the circumstances there could scarcely, be any danger of the competent legislature denying to the military authorities the protection of an Act of Indemnity.

The War Office and the Burma Office, however, took the view that, whatever the legal position might be, the assumption of powers by proclamation in virtue of military necessity was likely to be the only satisfactory course to ensure the full and unfettered authority which the military commander must have in view of the fact that it had been decided that he would be required to carry the whole responsibility both for military operations and for the initial civil administration of territories regained. It was decided to proceed by proclamation based on military necessity and to save the situation later by the passing of an Indemnity Act.

* * *

The discussion now shifted for a while to the terms of the proclamation. The first draft prepared in the War Office in December 1942 provided for the assumption of authority by act of the military commander, for the recognition of existing law and courts so far as this was compatible with military needs, and for the establishment of military courts to try offences under martial law regulations which it was proposed to issue. The draft was based on precedents drawn from the administration of occupied enemy territories and was therefore inappropriate in detail to the circumstances of re-occupied

¹ Gledhill, *Some Aspects of the operation of International and Military Law in Burma, 1941-45*, *Modern Law Review*, Vol. XII, No. 2 (April 1949), pp. 191-204.

British territory. The Government of Burma suggested an alternative form which, it was considered, would at the same time circumvent the legal difficulties already pointed out. It proposed making the proclamation of martial law dependent upon the consent of the Governor and so giving this proclamation and the military administration a constitutional basis. This, however, struck at the basis upon which the whole of the proposals for military administration were built, for, if the proclamation, expressly or by implication, emanated from the Governor, then the paramount authority of the military commander would be undermined, and division of control might creep in. There lurked in this the danger, for example, of controversy regarding the date of the termination of military administration. Discussions continued on the draft and further difficulties stood revealed. In the course of examination of certain legislation which it was proposed that the Governor should enact before the proclamation of martial law, it was realized that, if the existing laws and courts were to be continued in force and special military courts were also to be established alongside these to administer martial law regulations, the danger would arise of establishing two sets of jurisdiction, and the danger also that the ordinary courts might find themselves able to call in question the authority of the military courts. To avoid these dangers it was decided to suspend altogether the ordinary courts and their jurisdiction and to set up in their place a complete new system of military courts which (though in fact they would probably consist of the same judges and be housed in the same buildings and would in every way correspond to the ordinary courts) would be subordinate and would owe allegiance exclusively to the military commander, not the Governor. By April agreement had been reached on the terms of a proclamation, and on 15th June 1943, a joint paper was prepared for the War Cabinet by the Secretary of State for War and the Secretary of State for Burma setting out the main lines of the developments recorded above and the agreement which had been reached between the Burma Office, the War Office, the Governor of Burma and the Commander-in-Chief, India. And so the matter remained for the rest of 1943 as it was agreed that the time was not yet ripe for the actual issue of any proclamation.

* * *

It had been decided in London in November 1942, as we have seen, that military administrations would be set up in re-occupied territories in the Far East, and at the subsequent meeting of the Governor of Burma and the Commander-in-Chief in Delhi in the same month attention was turned at once to fashioning an agency through which military administration could be carried on. In London it had been contemplated that a staff officer to take immediate charge of the

administration of Burma should be placed under the direct control of the Force Commander in Burma but that other officers of the administration should be under the control of this staff officer and would not be required 'automatically' to obey orders of subordinate military commanders if they believed these to be wrong. The expression 'automatically' was presumably here intended to mean 'without right of appeal to the Staff Officer referred to above.' The important conception here suggested of a Civil Affairs chain of command parallel to the normal military chain of command, a conception which underlay the first proposals of the Government of Burma,¹ had a chequered future, as we shall see. At the meeting of the Governor and the Commander-in-Chief in Delhi it was agreed that this Staff Officer should be appointed by the Commander-in-Chief and be responsible to him, not to the Government of Burma: he would receive his instructions from and through the commander in Burma and he might communicate with the Governor of Burma only through his military commanders, except that on questions of civilian reconstruction or finance affecting the Government of Burma and not affecting the military responsibilities of the Force Commander he might communicate direct with that Government, provided that he kept the Force Commander informed. There was the germ here of another conception, that of dual responsibility, which later grew strongly although it never reached its full development in Burma: it was in Malaya that the principle found its mature expression.

A new branch of the staff was created, of which the Staff Officer for Civil Affairs was to become the head. Its functions were both to advise on the discharge of responsibilities attaching to the Commander-in-Chief and his subordinate commanders for military government, and to carry on the military administration in the field. The new organization was thus technically both a Staff and a Service, and in the early stages was referred to indiscriminately as the Civil Affairs Staff or the Civil Affairs Service; ultimately usage settled down to Civil Affairs Service (C.A.S.). It was first proposed to designate the Staff Officer at the head of this service Chief Civil Staff Officer, but in the event he was appointed Chief Civil Affairs Officer (C.C.A.O.). In the middle of 1945 his designation was changed to that of Director of Civil Affairs.² It will avoid confusion if he is spoken of in this book as Chief Civil Affairs Officer, particularly as he is so referred to in all proclamations. He was both a Staff Officer of the Commander-in-Chief and the head of the Civil Affairs Service in the field. Civil Affairs Staff Officers attached to subordinate

¹ cf. pp. 34-35.

² This change of designation was confined to Burma, where Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officers (D.C.C.A.O.'s) also became Deputy Directors of Civil Affairs. No change was made in the designations of Senior Civil Affairs Officers (S.C.A.O.'s) and Civil Affairs Officers (C.A.O.'s).

commanders bore responsibilities towards their respective commanders similar in kind to those of the C.C.A.O. towards the Commander-in-Chief. In addition Civil Affairs Officers (C.A.O.'s) were to be made available to carry on administration in the field.

The creation of Civil Affairs Services for the several territories to be re-occupied i.e. the Civil Affairs Service (Burma) or C.A.S.(B), the Civil Affairs Service (Malaya) or C.A.S.(M), and the services for Borneo and Hong Kong, will be recounted in later chapters treating of military government in those territories. It will be convenient in the present chapter to anticipate the development of events on the ground and to give a brief account of the growth of the general principles that came to govern the functions and organisation of these services.

In March, 1943, it was laid down by the Commander-in-Chief (India) that the functions of the C.C.A.O. were to advise the Commander-in-Chief 'on all matters concerning the regulation of the civil population and the control and development of the economic life of re-occupied territories, having regard to the primary aim of facilitating military operations.' He was also required to advise 'on the co-ordination of immediate military needs with long term civil policy and plans.' It is to be noted in regard to this last function that in this directive no provision was explicitly made for him to have any direct communication, formal or informal, with the Government of Burma, which had to remain responsible for preparation of these long term civil plans. It is clear, however, that in fact the necessity for informal contact with the Government of Burma had been, somewhat reluctantly, recognised by GHQ (India). On the other side, the Government of Burma gave recognition to the need by appointing the C.C.A.O. a Joint Secretary to the Government of Burma so as to facilitate informal communication with the government.

The functions of Civil Affairs Officers attached as staff officers to subordinate formations were at the same time more particularly laid down as being

' . . . to induce in the inhabitants of the area a favourable disposition towards the forces and to enlist their ready co-operation in such a way as to,

- (a) ensure that the civil population aids and does not interfere with military operations,
- (b) facilitate the provision of Labour, Supplies and service to further military operations,
- (c) assist in the provision of the formation Commanders' requirements for intelligence, guides, etc.

In addition they should,

- (d) help other staff branches in their relationship with the inhabitants,
- (e) take such measures of military government as the commander may require.'

These officers who, from their attachment to military formations, came to be referred to as 'formation' Civil Affairs Officers, were under the immediate command of their Formation Commanders, although as members of a service they received technical direction from the C.C.A.O., the head of their service, and were required to comply with policy instructions of the Commander-in-Chief communicated to them by the C.C.A.O.

On the establishment of military administrative Sub-areas, Areas, and Districts in the rear of operational areas, Civil Affairs Officers were to be provided to carry on static territorial administration. These officers came to be known as 'territorial' Civil Affairs Officers. Their functions had a greater flavour of civil administration and were at this time laid down as being

'... as in the case of the formation C.A.O's ... to get the people to co-operate. Subject to the directions of the C.C.A.O. to whom he is responsible and from whom he receives his instructions the duties of the territorial C.A.O. are:

- (a) to advise the military commander in his area on all matters concerning relations with the Civil population,
- (b) to initiate and direct the Civil administration throughout his territory,
- (c) to take executive command of all military and civilian personnel directly employed by the administration,
- (d) to give effect in his area to political administrative and financial policy issued by the C.C.A.O.,
- (e) to co-ordinate the work of the administrative executive with the requirements of the operational and L of C units in his area,
- (f) to conduct all negotiations and control relations with civilian firms and individuals trading with, or working for the forces.'

It was contemplated that these territorial officers should be withdrawn from the normal military chain of command and, except in case of urgent military necessity, be placed under the direct command of the C.C.A.O., although the latter might exercise his authority through intermediate Deputy C.C.A.O's. This was in accordance with the view put forward by the War Office in the early stages of the discussions regarding the establishment of military administration, that such officers would not be required 'automatically' to obey orders of subordinate military commanders. It was further contemplated that, when a substantial advance should take place, formations would be kept sufficiently supplied with Civil Affairs Officers to enable them to 'peel off' such officers, as operations moved forward, so that these could become territorial officers responsible for re-establishing administration in re-occupied areas in rear of operations.

In practice it was found that an intermediate or 'semi-territorial' stage usually became necessary because a static administration, more elaborate than anything that could be undertaken by the mobile formation officers, needed to be set up, and in fact was set up, very much closer to the operational areas than had been contemplated, and well in advance of the establishment of military Areas or Sub-areas into which the real territorial officer required to be fitted. The 'semi-territorial C.A.O.' pushed ahead therefore with the establishment of military administration and performed the duties of a territorial C.A.O. as far as possible though he remained in the formation chain of command and was therefore under the appropriate Formation Commander until such time as the Area (or Sub-area) organisation was established. There was no question of any 'shaking out' of the civil affairs chain of command from the normal formation chain at this stage.

When the Allied South-East Asia Command was established and assumed responsibility for the military administration of Burma, the duties and functions of the Civil Affairs Service were set out in a directive on Civil Affairs in Burma from the Chiefs of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander. Para 4 of this directive ran :

'In order to enable you (or the Military Commander designated by you for the purpose) to carry on the military administration referred to in paragraph 1, a Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Burma (C.C.A.O.(B)) with a nucleus staff has already been appointed and a complete organisation has been planned and will be ready to join him when required. This organisation under the C.C.A.O.(B) comprises a military staff of Civil Affairs Officers, Burma, (C.A.O.(B)), with the necessary subordinate staff. These C.A.O.'s are drawn from the officials of the Government of Burma now in India and other Europeans who know the language, the country, and the people. Their duty will be to advise local Commanders on their attitude and approach to the civil population with a view to securing their co-operation and they will administer under your authority areas recovered from the enemy. The C.C.A.O.(B) will administer the civil population in his own name on behalf of the Military Commander, by delegation from the Military Commander and subject to his general directions. He will also advise on the co-ordination of military measures in regard to Civil Affairs with long term plans for reconstruction.'

In regard to this last function, para 5 of the directive ran :

'At your discretion you may authorise the C.C.A.O.(B) while keeping you or the Military Commander designated by you informed to communicate directly with the Government of Burma on questions which do not affect your responsibilities as the officer answerable for the military administration of Burma.'

The functions of the Civil Affairs Service were again re-stated by Headquarters 11th Army Group shortly before this became Headquarters Allied Land Forces South-East Asia (ALFSEA), and the chain of responsibility was more clearly defined. In one respect only was there any fundamental change at the time and it is not clear whether this was intended or even understood. It was now prescribed that, when a Civil Affairs officer was detached from a local military headquarters to undertake territorial functions, he should operate directly under the Deputy C.C.A.O. (or D.C.C.A.O.) having territorial responsibility. As this Deputy C.C.A.O. was either himself attached to a Formation or a Line of Communication Command or was subordinate to a senior Deputy C.C.A.O. who was so attached, this meant the disappearance of the direct control of territorial officers through exclusively Civil Affairs channels by the C.C.A.O. on behalf of the Force Commander which had been prescribed in the Directive of 2nd March 1943. Under this latest re-statement the Civil Affairs chain of responsibility and command was not to be completely shaken out from the normal military chain until below the point at which a Deputy C.C.A.O. was under the command of a Formation or Line of Communication Commander.

Nevertheless, a few months later, when plans were prepared for Areas and Sub-areas within the military Line of Communication organization for Burma, this decision was reversed. The instructions issued by the Supreme Allied Commander, 'that while closest contact should be maintained between S.C.A.O's¹ and Sub-area Commanders and between the D.C.C.A.O. and the Area Commander, the Civil Affairs organisation and the Area organisation should work *in parallel*'², revived the idea of a separate Civil Affairs chain of command from the C.C.A.O. down. Yet in the event these instructions were ignored and no shaking out was to be allowed.

It does not appear that parallelism of the kind contemplated, but never in fact adopted, need undermine the principle of unity of command, or that it is unknown to, or is incapable of assimilation by, the ordinary military system. It was successfully employed in Africa and later in Malaya. Without it the administration, subject to control by every local commander, was unlikely to achieve unity of policy, or to have the authority to assert itself when necessary. A not dissimilar duality of control is recognized in Field Service Regulations where in Chapter 2 Section 12, sub-section 4, it is laid down that if '... a formation of the field army be detailed by the C-in-C to operate within the L-of-C area the respective responsibilities of the formation Commander and of the Commander of the L-of-C area will be defined by G.H.Q.' and in sub-section 11 that 'except in urgent and unforeseen

¹ Senior Civil Affairs Officers.

² Author's italics.

circumstances, a superior Commander of a formation passing through, or temporarily located in, a L-of-C area, sub-area, garrison, or post, may not interpose his authority in matters of local administration. Should it be necessary for him to do so the action taken must be reported at once to the headquarters of the area Commander concerned.' In both these cases separate chains of command would appear to be recognized.

The theoretical picture was, then, that in normal, or perhaps it would be better to say, in ideal, circumstances Civil Affairs planning should begin at least as soon as operational planning began for the occupation or re-occupation of a territory, and therefore well before any assumption of responsibility for day to day administration. It should proceed by the aggregation of departmental needs for the whole territory, but be susceptible of execution by territorial instalments in accordance with the operations planned. When operations were imminent the Civil Affairs planning unit should move forward to become the nucleus of the Civil Affairs staff of the forces detached to carry out the operation. Additional Civil Affairs staff officers should be attached to the Formations concerned to act as Civil Affairs advisers to their staffs. As long as an area remained the scene of active operations these officers were to operate directly under the orders of their local military commanders. When operations moved forward, normally when the area was formally declared to have become a part of the Line of Communication area, such officers were to be detached from their local military headquarters and to take up the territorial administration of the area under the immediate control of the C.C.A.O., to whom the Force Commander should delegate authority to carry on the military administration subject to his general directions. The last stage would be reached when the Commander-in-Chief decided that the time had come when ordinary civil administration by a civil government could be restored.

In Burma and Borneo particularly many departures were to occur from this theoretical ideal.

* * *

The question whether, and to what extent, it would be necessary to give military commissions to officers of the Civil Affairs Services became a contentious issue, the delay in settling which seriously held up the preparation of plans for the creation of these Services. It is, therefore, necessary to give a fuller account of the views advanced and decisions reached. As soon as it became clear that a military administration would be set up for Burma, the Governor urged, as we have seen, that Civil Affairs officers should not be commissioned, on the grounds that their influence over the Burmese would be greater if

they were civilians than if they were soldiers, and that their real usefulness even to the army might be weakened if they had automatically to obey the orders of local military commanders, however much they disagreed with those orders. On 29th November 1942 the Commander-in-Chief took the view that all officers in general administrative appointments should be commissioned but that there was no need to commission officers of the technical services. On 21st December the War Office went much further than the recommendation of the Commander-in-Chief and replied that all officers of the Civil Affairs Service must be commissioned as they would form an integral part of the force to which they were attached and must be clearly made subject to its discipline. While this decision flowed, naturally enough perhaps, from the basic reason for the establishment of a military administration, namely that there should be no room for doubt regarding the paramountcy of military needs, it appears that the War Office, thinking mainly in terms of the administration of occupied enemy territories in Africa and Europe, had at this time an imperfect conception of the numbers that it would on this view be necessary to commission for the administration of re-occupied British territories. In these the task of the Civil Affairs Services would not be, as in occupied enemy territories in Europe and Africa, to control and assist an indigenous administration. It would involve the rebuilding and staffing of the actual administrative organisation to undertake the direct administration of the territories concerned, some of which, furthermore, enjoyed far more developed forms of government than the territories brought under military government in Africa. In accordance with the War Office decision the instructions issued in March, 1943, laid down the general principle, without exception, that members of the Civil Affairs Service 'are commissioned into the Army and conform with the normal rules of discipline.' The control by Civil Affairs officers of civilian personnel directly employed by the administration was provided for, but it was apparently not contemplated that such employment should be on a large scale.

In the summer or autumn of 1943 the War Office was faced with the probability of a complete reversal of this policy by the War Cabinet. If Civil Affairs officers were to be commissioned it was inevitable that the senior officers should be given high military rank to ensure that the Civil Affairs organization should dovetail into the ordinary military organization at a level appropriate to the importance of the functions of the new service and that Civil Affairs officers, right through the scale, should carry enough weight for their duties. The Prime Minister, Mr. Churchill, however, vigorously held the view that high military rank should not be cheapened by being granted to officers who were not in command of fighting troops: he thought it contrary to the interests of the Army to have 'hordes of

sham Major-Generals preening themselves in all directions': and all commissioning of Civil Affairs officers was stopped, pending a decision. Matters remained in this state for months, gravely hampering Civil Affairs planning, but early in 1944 Civil Affairs officers in Arakan became involved in operations and suffered casualties. This brought a vigorous protest from 11th Army Group, supported by South-East Asia Command, against prolongation of the intolerable situation in which officers, who did not know whether they were, or would be, soldiers or civilians, were exposed to operational risks; a quick decision was demanded. And in the spring of 1944 the policy of commissioning was reaffirmed and recruitment was resumed. In fact, as this incident demonstrated, the Civil Affairs Services were no further removed, in some respects much less removed, from operations and active fighting than were many other technical services of the army.

It is noticeable however that, whether because the War Office had by this time begun to realize the magnitude of the task to which they had at first committed themselves, or whether in deference to the views of the Prime Minister, far more extensive employment of civilians was now contemplated, the principle adopted as far as possible being that the C.C.A.O. and all Civil Affairs officers employed with military Formations or in operational areas should be commissioned in order to give to them standing in their work, and to their dependents compensation in the event of their suffering casualties, while other officers employed in non-operational areas, and subordinate staff, whether in operational or non-operational areas, should be civilians.

Unfortunately commissioning was carried to far greater lengths than was required by this principle and Civil Affairs planning staffs were compelled to spend a quite disproportionate amount of their time on drawing up conditions of service for the temporary conversion of civilians into soldiers.

* * *

We can now turn our attention to what is to be the main subject of this book, the formal supersessions in the Far East of civil by British military authority and the building up of the various military governments through which this was effected. The British sphere of operations in the Far East being the South-East Asia Command (SEAC)¹, this will mean, broadly speaking, the history of military administration in the British territories within SEAC, including British Borneo which, although originally under American and later under Australian command, was afterwards transferred to SEAC. It will include also the British military administration in Hong Kong although this never

¹ Technically an Allied Command but for most purposes British.

became a part of SEAC. Of the foreign territories within the command, Siam was at no time placed under military government and will therefore receive no mention. In Indo-China and Indonesia there was an assumption of responsibility by the British military authorities which, though it fell short of full military government, was nevertheless so real and extensive, especially in the case of Indonesia, that it does not seem possible to omit some account.

Military government was carried on at two levels, the administrative and the political. The former was in the main that of the CCAO's who with their staffs were responsible for administrative planning and execution. The latter, throughout SEAC, was that of the Supreme Allied Commander (SAC) himself to whom all political decisions were reserved. Parts II, III and IV will deal with Burma, Malaya, Borneo and Hong Kong at the administrative level, and with general topics which it is more convenient to treat functionally than geographically. Part V will deal with the political level. In this there will be no reference to Borneo and Hong Kong as consideration of the political problems of these territories fell outside the military period of responsibility. Chapters will be included, however, on Indo-China and Indonesia, although these are not treated at the administrative level. This omission arises from the fact that such administration as took place was undertaken by the French and the Dutch (slightly disguised as Allied Civil Affairs officers), not by a British military administration. But of the assumption of responsibility by the British in these territories, at a political level, there was no doubt.

PART II

Burma

CHAPTER IV

CIVIL AFFAIRS SERVICE (BURMA)

IN THE COURSE of this chapter it is proposed to deal with the creation of the Civil Affairs Service (Burma), or C.A.S.(B), and with the setting up and composition of the headquarters of the Military Administration for Burma and its integration with the rest of the military organization. It is also proposed to give some account of the planning and of the current work undertaken by the Administration until the beginning of the big advances that will form the subject of the following chapters. The period to be covered will accordingly be from 15th February 1943 to the end, approximately, of 1944.

The C.A.S.(B), the instrument through which military administration was to be carried out in Burma, was formally created on 15th February, 1943, by the Commander-in-Chief, India, and the headquarters of the Administration was constituted on the same date. Mr. C. F. B. Pearce, a member of the Burma branch of the Indian Civil Service, was appointed Chief Civil Affairs Officer, or C.C.A.O., with rank of Major-General. As we have seen, the terms of a proclamation assuming the powers of government and formally setting up a Military Administration had been under discussion for some time. It was considered in February however that any formal assumption of the administration of Burma would be inappropriate until a larger area had been re-occupied or until operations gave promise of exceeding their hitherto extremely limited scale. Issue of the proclamation was accordingly deferred. There was consequently, at first, no formal basis for military administration. The Governor of Burma and the Commander-in-Chief agreed to maintain the constitutional position which had already been reached, unofficially and in practice. Under this, while the *de jure* authority for administration of the uninvaded fringe of Burma remained, and must remain, with the Governor of Burma, the administration was controlled *de facto* by the Commander-in-Chief.

There was another reason for deferring the formal establishment of military administration. Burma had but recently been separated from India in response to strong public opinion on the matter. It was politically undesirable to appear in any way to undo this separation by placing the administration of the country under the Commander-in-Chief, India, who was himself under the control of the Indian

Government, even if this measure was to be only temporary and to be justified on grounds of military necessity.

When the headquarters was set up on 15th February, 1943, the C.C.A.O. had one staff officer only, and exceedingly inadequate clerical assistance. During the next fortnight two other staff officers became available. Of these three staff officers, one was a substantive member of the general administrative service in Burma, another was a substantive member of the government forestry service, and the third was an employee of one of the European commercial firms which had operated in Burma. This headquarters had, on the one hand, progressively to take over responsibility for the military administration already flourishing in Arakan and for the administration hitherto maintained by the Government of Burma in the rest of the frontier fringe; and, on the other, to begin planning for its own future existence, and for the administration of the whole of Burma when general re-occupation took place. Field staffs of the Government of Burma began to be absorbed into the Civil Affairs Service. At headquarters, until the C.A.S. could build up corresponding departments, it had largely to depend, for such minimum technical control of these field staffs as was necessary, upon the appropriate Departments of the Government of Burma.

The immediate and most important task, however, was to establish its own position as an integral part of G.H.Q. (India). This was not an easy matter for an organization none of whose members had any military background or experience other than that gained twenty-five years earlier by service in the field as junior officers. It was unfortunate that no regular officer, preferably with experience of administration (in the military, not the civil, sense), could be posted to the C.A.S.(B) at this time. The need for this was much later realized and such an officer was posted, but it was precisely during the early days that his presence would have been most valuable. When two years later the administration of Borneo was planned, the Australian Command responsible realized this need and insisted upon the inclusion of Administrative and General Staff Officers in the headquarters of the Administration. A War Office decision in 1943 that Civil Affairs staff officers of requisite rank should wear red cap-bands and gorgets, instead of the white originally laid down, was intended to emphasize that these were indeed military and not political officers, and to facilitate their assimilation to the rest of the staff. What was done in G.H.Q. (India) to aid the C.A.S.(B) in its early difficulties was to create a new section, M.O. 7, in the Directorate of Military Operations whose whole duty it was to assist and guide the new Service and to provide liaison with G.H.Q. The effect of this well meant measure was, however, not to draw the C.A.S.(B) into the family circle, but to channel its contacts with the circle more and more strictly through

M.O.7. Consequently the C.A.S.(B) did not learn to stand on its own feet and came more and more to rely upon the liaison afforded by M.O.7. It was thus, in fact, pushed out of, rather than drawn into, the circle. As an example it may be mentioned that the C.C.A.O., although nominally a staff officer to the Commander-in-Chief and holding the rank of Major-General, was never brought into the daily conferences of the Commander-in-Chief and had considerable difficulty in obtaining the information regarding future operations without which it was impossible for him to make his own plans. General Wavell, with his experience of military administration in the Middle East and Africa, can hardly have intended such a state of affairs, but there was clearly little general understanding among his staff of the intended functions, and status, of the new Civil Affairs Branch. The facts that the officers of the C.A.S.(B) were all substantively civilians, that there was a largely unintelligible working arrangement with the Government of Burma dividing responsibility for the administration of Burma, and that the very name of the new Branch suggested something more civilian than military, resulted in a vague but easy assumption that members of the C.A.S. were not really soldiers or really a part of G.H.Q. at all.

* * *

The field establishment to be taken over in Arakan, and from the Government of Burma along the frontier fringe, consisted of sixty-eight officers distributed as follows:

	<i>General Adminis- tration</i>	<i>Judicial Depart- ment</i>	<i>Forest Depart- ment</i>	<i>Police Depart- ment</i>	<i>Public Works Depart- ment</i>	<i>Medical Depart- ment</i>	<i>Total</i>
Frontier Division	2						2
Arakan	8	1	2	7	3	1	22
Chin Hills District	13			3	4	2	22
Upper Chinwin District	7			2			9
Naga Hills District	4					2	6
Myitkyina District	6				1		7
<i>Total</i>	40	1	2	12	8	5	68

Most of these officers were civilians. The process was begun of incorporating them into the C.A.S. by granting them military commissions with ranks varying from Second-Lieutenant to Brigadier. The difficulty of the process was heightened by the vacillations of policy already mentioned.¹ The Commissioner of the Frontier Division became a

¹ cf. pp. 47-49.

Deputy C.C.A.O. responsible, under the C.C.A.O., for the administration of the whole of the frontier fringe except Arakan. Officers in charge of administrative Districts were designated Senior Civil Affairs Officers (S.C.A.O.), the rest were Civil Affairs Officers (C.A.O.). There was in addition clerical and subordinate civilian staff, much of which was recruited locally. And below this level was the indigenous local administrative system of the village headman, chosen from and living among the inhabitants of his own village.

Too much should not be made of the uneven distribution in the foregoing statement. In the Chin Hills District normal peace-time administration had continued without interruption. Arakan was the only District in which military operations had been carried on to any considerable extent. These factors accounted for the greater strength of the administration in these two Districts. In the other areas officers could do little more than show the flag.

In the course of 1943 this field organization of the Government of Burma, now placed under the control of the C.C.A.O., was gradually brought more into line with the theoretical conception of the C.A.S.¹ By the end of the year D.C.C.A.O.'s had been appointed to the headquarters of Fourteenth Army, IV Corps and XV Corps; 'Formation' Civil Affairs Officers had been posted to divisions and to any brigades that were operating independently, and six 'semi-territorial' S.C.A.O.'s were functioning in the Chin Hills, the Upper Chindwin, the Naga Hills, the Hukawng Valley, Fort Hertz and North Arakan. There were as yet no purely 'territorial' officers.

* * *

As a result of the Washington conference in May, 1943, and the Quebec conference in August of the same year, South-East Asia Command (SEAC) came into existence in October, 1943. Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten was appointed Supreme Allied Commander, directly responsible to the British Chiefs of Staff, and on 15th November, 1943, took over control, with certain reservations, of the three Service Commanders-in-Chief in the area of his Command. These were the Commander-in-Chief Eastern Fleet, the Commander-in-Chief 11th Army Group (which, together with Fourteenth Army, was formed at this time to take over control of operations previously directed by G.H.Q., India, and Eastern Army) and the Air Commander-in-Chief South East Asia.²

The Civil Affairs organization at the headquarters of the new

¹ cf. pp. 41-47.

² Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 3. Auchinleck, Despatch, 21 June to 15 November 1943, Second Supplement to London Gazette of 27 April, 1948.

Command was conditioned by the policy of the War Office and of the Supreme Allied Commander that the several Chief Civil Affairs Officers who would in due course require to be appointed should be executive officers carrying on the government of their respective territories on behalf of the Force Commanders concerned and under their general direction. It was not practicable or desirable, nor was it intended, to centralize military administration any further by the appointment of any Principal Civil Affairs Officer with executive control of the C.C.A.O.'s at the Supreme Allied Commander's own headquarters. It was expected that only matters of high level policy would need to be referred here and that these would normally require the personal attention of Admiral Mountbatten, if not reference to London. Accordingly the Civil Affairs organization required, was not a high-powered political or administrative officer with a large supporting staff, but a small staff with an officer to act as a mouth-piece for the Supreme Commander. Such a staff was provided under a Colonel (Civil Affairs). SEAC being an Allied Command, it had been hoped to include an American Officer on this staff, but this was prevented by American reluctance to be in any way associated with the re-establishment of the British colonial system. This Civil Affairs Division was placed at first under the Deputy Chief of Staff (Information and Civil Affairs). After the 8th June, 1945, when this appointment was discontinued, the Division was raised to the standing of a Directorate, and placed under the direct control of the Chief of Staff.¹

At the headquarters of 11th Army Group, which in due course became Allied Land Forces South-East Asia (ALFSEA)², it was not at first necessary to set up a separate Civil Affairs staff as the Commander-in-Chief could depend for advice upon the C.C.A.O. (Burma) who was transferred to this headquarters from G.H.Q. (India) after the establishment of South-East Asia Command. When the C.C.A.O. and his staff were transferred to the Force Commander in Burma their place was, for a time, taken by the headquarters of the C.C.A.O. (Malaya), moving into position for the re-occupation of Malaya. It was only when the latter headquarters in its turn passed to the Force Commander for Malaya that it became necessary, in October 1945, to provide Headquarters ALFSEA with a Civil Affairs Branch of its own. This dealt with detailed Civil Affairs work, especially executive action in connection with procurement of civil supplies, and made possible a reduction in the strength of the Civil Affairs Division at the headquarters, of the Supreme Allied Commander South-East Asia (SACSEA). The latter, however, continued responsible for co-ordination and policy. The Civil Affairs Branch at ALFSEA was abolished on 1st May, and the Civil Affairs Division at SACSEA on

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, Annexure 9.

² cf. p. 60.

8th May 1946. Residual problems were bequeathed to the Chief of Staff or the Principal Administrative Officer at SACSEA.

With the formation of a Command not under the control of the Government of India the political objection to the formal assumption of responsibility by the military authorities for the administration of Burma disappeared. By the end of 1943 British forces were recovering territory in Arakan. For these and other reasons the Supreme Allied Commander decided that the time had come for the assumption by himself of responsibility for the administration of Burma. This was proclaimed with effect from 1st January 1944, and on the same date C.A.S.(B) Headquarters was transferred to the newly created Headquarters 11th Army Group.

The duties of the C.C.A.O. in regard to the current administration of the frontier fringe might have suggested that this transfer should have been to Fourteenth Army rather than to 11th Army Group, so bringing the C.C.A.O. nearer to the territories for which he was responsible. At this period, however, his planning functions took precedence and until these reached the stage of planning for specific operations it was at the Army Group level that they could be most satisfactorily undertaken and integrated with other military plans.

A second point of interest regarding the absorption of the C.A.S.(B) into the SEAC organisation, was that, although all earlier plans, and the Directive on Civil Affairs from the Chiefs of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander, had contemplated that the C.C.A.O. should be placed under the immediate control of the Commander-in-Chief of the land forces, that is to say, of 11th Army Group, he was in fact placed under the direct command of the Supreme Allied Commander. He nevertheless became at the same time a Staff Officer of the Commander-in-Chief, 11th Army Group, and his headquarters actually formed a part, physically and for purposes of discipline and administration, of 11th Army Group.¹ This change of plans, agreed to by the War Office with reluctance, resulted from the absence of any overall military commander of all the allied land forces operating, or likely to operate, in Burma other than the Supreme Allied Commander himself.² For the Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek, had refused to agree to the Chinese forces operating from China being placed under the control of Fourteenth Army or 11th Army Group, and had only reluctantly agreed to leave the Chinese forces operating from India under the command of Fourteenth Army. Even this concession on his part was hedged with reservations; it was to be a temporary measure, valid only until the Chinese advance reached Kamaing, some fifty miles short of Myitkyina, and valid for so long only as Lieutenant-General W. J. Slim commanded this Army;

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staffs, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 189.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 7 and 8.

thereafter these Chinese forces also were to be excluded from any Allied control below that of the Supreme Allied Commander. The C.C.A.O., who would be concerned with operations into any part of Burma, by whatever forces undertaken, had consequently to be placed under the direct control of the Supreme Allied Commander so that his authority might extend to any part of Burma and to dealing even with Chinese troops operating from China. He became therefore, not only the head of the Civil Affairs Service, but also a staff officer both of the Supreme Allied Commander and of the Commander-in-Chief 11th Army Group.

Another last minute change was made in the form of the proclamation issued by the Supreme Allied Commander. This had been drafted before SEAC was set up and then put aside until needed. Admiral Mountbatten decided at once that it was too long. A very much shorter proclamation was urgently drafted in consultation with the C.C.A.O.-designate for Malaya who happened to be at Headquarters SEAC at the time.¹

Much of the detail of the proclamation as originally drafted was transferred to a second proclamation² which was issued by the C.C.A.O. in virtue of the authority delegated to him by the Supreme Allied Commander in the first proclamation.

* * *

The organizational transfer of Headquarters C.A.S.(B) to 11th Army Group was shortly followed by its physical transfer from offices in New Delhi to buildings allotted to 11th Army Group in Old Delhi. The new accommodation was better than the old but it was still insufficient. The move was the beginning of a marked improvement in the integration of C.A.S.(B) with its parent headquarters. SEAC and 11th Army Group were more conscious of the future need for military administration and of the services it could render. Nor were they handicapped by a background of mutual misgiving and recrimination between themselves and the Government of Burma. M.O.7 changed its designation to G(Ops)⁴ and was transferred to 11th Army Group which, for a time, followed the practice of G.H.Q. (India) of interposing a staff officer between the C.C.A.O. and the Commander-in-Chief. Later, however, the C.C.A.O. was accorded the position planned for him as a Staff Officer with direct access to his Commander, whom it was his duty to advise on policy bearing any Civil Affairs implications.

At the time of this transfer the headquarters of the Military Administration had grown, so that it consisted of eighteen officers, including

¹ Proclamation No. 1 of 1944, Burma Military Administration Gazette No. 1 of 1944, cf. Appendix 1.

² Proclamation No. 2 of 1944, Burma Military Administration Gazette No. 1 of 1944, cf. Appendix 2.

the C.C.A.O. In addition, there was the Chief of Police who, although still working under the Government of Burma in Simla, was shortly to join the Administration; there were also five Finance officers, three working at Allahabad, one at Calcutta and one with Fourteenth Army. All these officers were technically a part of the Administration. Subordinate staff had increased but was quite insufficient. There were the following departments—Current Administration, Plans, Finance, Legal, Military Secretary, Engineer Liaison, Police, Welfare, Training, and Supplies.

Towards the end of 1944 the departure of General Stilwell and a change in the attitude of the Generalissimo made it possible to establish an Allied Land Command for South-East Asia and on the 12th November, 1944, Headquarters 11th Army Group became Headquarters ALFSEA. At the same time Lieutenant-General Sir Oliver Leese took over from General Sir George Giffard. In the course of this year the headquarters of C.A.S.(B) had more than quadrupled in numbers. It was organized in the following departments, under the general control of the C.C.A.O. and a Deputy C.C.A.O.:

- (1) General Administration
 - (a) Current Administration
 - (b) Plans
- (2) C.A.S.(B) Administration 'A' and 'Q'
- (3) Finance and Accounts
- (4) Judicial
- (5) Police (including Intelligence Branch)
- (6) Prisons
- (7) Public Health and Medical
- (8) Relief and Labour
- (9) Publicity
- (10) Supply and Industry (with a number of Branches)
- (11) Forests
- (12) Postal

In the field there were now D.C.C.A.O.'s with Fourteenth Army, XV Corps, IV Corps, and XXXIII Corps; Formation C.A.O.'s with divisions and independent brigades; and fourteen 'semi-territorial' S.C.A.O.'s, assisted by C.A.O.'s.

Shortly after the formation of Headquarters ALFSEA an advanced headquarters was moved to Barrackpore near Calcutta. In spite of the improved co-ordination between Headquarters C.A.S.(B) and its parent headquarters the need to move the former forward at the same time was overlooked, with the result that for the first four months of the main British advance into Burma, the most rapidly moving, and in some ways the most important, period of the military administration, Headquarters C.A.S.(B) was separated by almost 1,000 miles from Advanced Headquarters ALFSEA, and by another 300-500 miles from

the area of operations. The move of a small group of C.A.S.(B) officers to Advanced Headquarters could do little to overcome the disadvantages of such a situation. During this period, in the words of the C.C.A.O., 'practically everything had to be left to the resource and initiative of officers on the ground', the D.C.C.A.O.'s at the headquarters of Fourteenth Army (Brigadier K. J. H. Lindop), XV Corps (Wing Commander J. B. G. Bradley), IV Corps (Colonel F. S. V. Donnison), XXXIII Corps (Colonel D. C. P. Phelps) and the U.S. Northern Combat Area Command (Colonel J. A. Liddell) and their staffs. Particularly did this responsibility rest upon Brigadier K. J. H. Lindop at Fourteenth Army. The great and rapid expansion in field staff to meet the needs of this advance, and the subsequent moves and changes affecting the headquarters of C.A.S.(B) will be told later.¹

* * *

It was one of the difficulties of the Administration for Burma that it was forced by circumstances to undertake simultaneously two tasks that in the other territories could be dealt with in succession. In those territories it was possible to constitute and gradually build up planning units which in due course were transformed into the headquarters responsible for administering what had been planned. In Burma the administration had, from the outset, simultaneously to deal with the current problems of an administration that was quite without precedent, and to plan for the future. The General Administration Department, responsible for policy and co-ordination, was accordingly divided into two sections for 'Current Administration' and 'Plans'. In the other Departments it was not found necessary to make a similar physical division, but they in fact performed these double functions, in co-operation, as the case might require, with either the 'Current Administration' or the 'Plans' section of the General Administration Department.

The Administration suffered throughout this period from three other more remediable handicaps. The first of these was shortage of suitable office space. The provision of accommodation for the greatly swollen military and civil staffs brought into existence by the war was a problem of acute difficulty throughout India, and most of these staffs were required to work at war pressure in cramped and uncongenial surroundings. There is little doubt however that the members of the military administration fared even worse than the rest. Partly was this due to their own inexperience of military methods and routine, but partly also was it due to persistent failure of the military authorities to face squarely the implications of the creation and rapid growth of the Civil Affairs Service—a failure exemplified in the omission of

¹ cf. Chapter VI.

ALFSEA, already mentioned, to realise the need for the move to Barrackpore of the headquarters of C.A.S.(B).

A second handicap was a crippling shortage of clerical staff. The Government of India could spare few clerks owing to the expansion of its own services. A very few British Army clerks were made available, but the shortage remained. Many of the better qualified and more experienced clerks in Government service in Burma before the war had been Indians. Most of these had escaped to India in 1942. A few were employed at the headquarters of the Government of Burma in Simla. Others obtained temporary posts under various employers. The rest were granted special half-pay leave by the Government of Burma. Provision was made for the discontinuance of such half-pay if the recipient declined an offer of suitable employment. There was here a large reserve of clerical staff which it was desired to tap. What could be more suitable than that the Military Administration of Burma should employ Government of Burma clerks, or that these clerks should accept such employment for the benefit of the country of their adoption, from which they had previously drawn their livelihood? But the cost of living was high in Delhi, where they would be required to live initially. The majority found it cheaper to continue on half-pay with their families in semi-retirement, rather than to be employed and draw full pay in Delhi, and, quite possibly, have to maintain two establishments. Office and residential conditions in Delhi were inevitably unattractive. In the field they would be still more uncomfortable and possibly dangerous. The Administration searched for means of persuading these persons to do what might not unjustly be described as their duty. A National Service Act stood upon the statute book of Burma, but it applied only to Europeans. The C.C.A.O. appealed to the Government of Burma to aid by discontinuing half-pay remuneration in the case of clerks who declined an offer of employment under the Administration. That Government took the view that to bring pressure through the special leave rules would amount to applying conscription and that it would be improper to do this by the use of rules intended to govern civil employment when they had no mandate from the legislature for doing so. Under his emergency powers the Governor could probably have legislated to extend the scope of the National Service Act, but the Government of India objected to the application of conscription to Indians from Burma when it had not been applied to Indians in India, and the Government of Burma decided that it would be politically unwise to undertake such legislation. And so the matter rested for many months. Then in the middle of 1945, the administration raised the matter with the War Office, and the contention of the Government of Burma was emphatically rejected by the Treasury. But by this time a great part of Burma had been re-occupied and there was no lack of clerical, or

any other, staff. Pre-war employees of the Government were flocking in for employment under the Administration.

A third handicap, the vacillation of policy in regard to the grant of Military Commissions to Civil Affairs Officers, has been mentioned earlier.¹ It was difficult for the military authorities to take seriously, and to accept fully, a service, some members of which were, and some members of which were not, commissioned, particularly when, in addition, there was the greatest uncertainty whether any would be commissioned at all in the long run. And it was impossible for the C.A.S.(B) to plan for the conditions of service of its members with such completeness as would encourage voluntary recruitment of persons outside the reach of the National Service Act.

* * *

The year 1943 was in the main a static period on all three Burma fronts. The Chinese-American forces under General J. W. Stilwell advanced down the Hukawng Valley in October, 1943, to cover the construction of the road forward from Ledo. Although this falls within the period of the present chapter, it will be more conveniently described later,² together with other events in the far north of Burma. The advance of the Fourteenth Army into Burma after the decisive defeat of the Japanese 15th Army in the battle for Imphal will also form the subject of yet another chapter.³ The present chapter will take events in the field to the point at which the Japanese thrust had penetrated to its greatest depth, just before it faded away and collapse began to set in.

The second Arakan campaign, that of 1943-44, need not, from the aspect of military administration, be treated as fully as that of 1942-43. The earlier campaign was of particular interest because of the improvised nature of the administration set up, because of the fresh ground broken in the course of the experiment of that season, and because of the constitutional anomalies involved. Furthermore in 1942-43 Arakan provided the solitary example in South-East Asia of military administration in being. In the second season these reasons were absent.

At the end of the campaign of 1942-43, as the British forces retreated before the arrival of the monsoon, the headquarters of the Administration in Arakan was withdrawn, for the second time, to Bawli Bazaar, just on the Burma side of the Indian frontier, leaving only a narrow strip of northern Arakan under British administration. At Bawli Bazaar it remained throughout the monsoon. In November 1943

¹ cf. pp. 47-49.

² cf. Chapter V.

³ cf. Chapter VI.

British forces advanced in greater strength than in the previous year. The S.C.A.O. became D.C.C.A.O. at the headquarters of XV Corps which was directly responsible for the conduct of these operations. Under him, C.A.O.'s were attached to the divisions engaged, including one to 81st West African Division advancing, some 50 miles to the east of the main axis of operations, down the valley of the Kaladan River. At Bawli Bazaar, an S.C.A.O. was placed in charge, under the D.C.C.A.O., of a 'semi-territorial' administration, so taking the place of the Military Administrator of the previous season. A Civil Affairs Officer went again to the Arakan Hill Tracts in December 1943. He was forced to withdraw his headquarters temporarily in March, as a result of the Japanese counter-offensive to be referred to shortly, but was able to re-establish himself about a fortnight later and then remained in the area until the monsoon so restricted his functions that he was finally withdrawn for the season in June.

On 4th February 1944 the Japanese launched an offensive which forestalled that of XV Corps by a few days. By 6th February, 7th Indian Division had been isolated, its line of communication to the north being cut at Taung and that to the west at the Ngakyedauk Pass¹. A regiment of Japanese fell on the Corps forward maintenance centre at Sinzweya. Although heavily outnumbered for the first few days, the 'Admin Box', as it came to be called, held out until the bulk of one of the brigades of 7th Indian Division was brought in as reinforcement. The rest of the division, having repulsed all attacks, set to work to prevent the escape of the enemy in their rear, while 26th Indian Division closed in from the north and a brigade of 5th Indian Division from the west, and the Japanese forces which had encircled the 'box' were destroyed.

As soon as the Japanese offensive had been broken, XV Corps resumed their interrupted offensive and drove the enemy out of fortified positions along the Maungdaw-Buthidaung road, so breaking the Japanese power in North Arakan.² By the time this advance had been consolidated the monsoon broke, and in Arakan large scale operations in the monsoon are impossible. The Japanese, leaving strong rearguards to maintain contact, began to withdraw from North Arakan in July.

The Administration was re-established in Taung Bazaar, whence it had been somewhat hurriedly evicted by the Japanese counter-offensive, and for the rest of the season the area under administration remained much the same as that during the monsoon of 1943. Although the operations of 1943-44 were superficially little more successful than those of the previous year there was in fact a completely different atmosphere. Throughout the first season the staff of the Administration

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951.

² *Ibid.*

had been keenly conscious that they might at any moment be pushed back into India; this anxiety was altogether absent during the second campaign. There had been time to remedy many of the shortcomings of 1941-42 and the British forces were now incomparably more formidable than in earlier seasons. However, 1943-44 also had its anxieties and troubles for the military administration. There was the case of two Civil Affairs Officers who were surprised and overrun by the Japanese counter-offensive. They escaped into the jungle and began to make their way back towards safety. Unfortunately they found themselves between the contending forces, and in the zone of battle. They sought what cover they could but British machine guns opened fire on them and one was killed. The other, an Anglo-Burmese civilian, clad only in vest and shorts, was not touched and later managed to make his way into the British lines. Here, he was seized by the platoon commander in charge. When he tried to explain himself the reply was 'Civil Affairs? Never heard of them. If you are a civilian what are you doing in the front line? I have a good mind to shoot you as a spy'. And, as the C.C.A.O. observed, this in fact very nearly happened. This incident finally forced a decision that military Commissions must be conferred upon Civil Affairs Officers, whatever the objections.

In the meanwhile, a month after their counter-offensive in Arakan, the Japanese had launched a far more ambitious operation across the Chindwin into Assam. This operation, like the offensive in Arakan, forestalled a British attack, and, in accordance with plans agreed on in the first week in March, IV Corps withdrew its forward divisions to the Imphal plain to fight the decisive battle there. The 17th Indian Division on the Tiddim road was for a time cut off and had to fight its way back. The Japanese thrust on Kohima was made in very much greater force than had been expected, and, before the situation was stabilised and the Fourteenth Army enabled to regain the initiative, there was a very critical period which lasted from the middle of March to the third week in April¹. The Civil Affairs officers were withdrawn from the Kabaw Valley and the Naga Hills. The D.C.C.A.O. at the H.Q. of IV Corps was withdrawn from Imphal, together with his staff, as IV Corps were no longer operating in Burma territory and it was vitally necessary to reduce numbers in Imphal which was besieged and dependent upon supply from the air. The S.C.A.O. in the Chin Hills fell back but was not withdrawn entirely: he was placed, on the recall of the D.C.C.A.O. from IV Corps, under the direct control of the D.C.C.A.O., Fourteenth Army, and continued as a formation Civil Affairs Officer working with the Lushai Brigade and the Chin Levies along the western fringe of the Chin Hills.

The Japanese intention was to isolate Imphal by cutting the road

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, H.M.S.O., 1951.

north to Kohima and the track west to Silchar. While two Japanese divisions and one Indian National Army¹ Division secured the Imphal plain with its airfields and its huge dumps of food and equipment, another Japanese division was to take Kohima and establish a strong defended area there, from which to raid into the Assam valley in order to cut the line of communication to the airfields operating the air lift to China and to the Chinese-American forces endeavouring to open a land route to China. Thereafter the Naga and Chin Hills were to form a barrier to defend Burma from land attack from India, and a base from which to inject the Indian National Army into Assam and Bengal in the hopes of raising a revolt. Stubborn resistance at Imphal and extremely bitter fighting in defence of Kohima held back the Japanese until XXXIII Corps forced its way up the road from Dimapur, relieved Kohima, and then advanced to link up with IV Corps at Imphal. This was done on 22nd June 1944, 26 miles north of Imphal. The force of the Japanese attack was spent and the great gamble had miscarried: everywhere British troops went over to the offensive.² A summary of the advance that followed will be included in later chapters.³

The Japanese offensive had resulted in the withdrawal of the Administration from most of the Chin Hills District, from the whole of the Naga Hills and from that portion of the Upper Chindwin District which had been patrolled by Civil Affairs officers. In the far north, in the Myitkyina District, Sumprabum had been lost to the Japanese earlier in 1943. At the height of the Japanese attack upon India, Civil Affairs officers were functioning in Burma only in the extreme north of the Pruma and Kalapanzin valleys in Arakan, in the Hukawng Valley, and in Fort Hertz.

* * *

We turn back now to the work of the planners in Delhi. These saw their problem at first in terms of the adaptation to their more special military needs of the organization which had existed before the war in Burma. This involved, firstly, a decision as to the pre-war departments that it would be necessary to revive. Before the war responsibility for general administration had rested on a group of services which included the Indian Civil Service, the Burma Civil Service, Class I, the Frontier Service, the Burma Civil Service, Class II, and the Subordinate Civil Service. This responsibility was now placed upon a composite General Administration Department of the C.A.S.(B). A

¹ The Indian National Army was raised in 1942 from Indian prisoners of war in Japanese hands and Indians domiciled in Japanese-occupied territories, to fight against the British for Indian independence.

² Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951 *passim*.

³ cf. Chapters V and VI.

nucleus of the department was already in existence and dealing with policy, co-ordination, planning, and the day to day administration of the frontier fringe. Broadly speaking it was clear that the departments of the military administration would need to duplicate those of the pre-war civil government. But not all the old departments would be needed, for there were some activities of a peace-time government that no merely military administration could be expected to undertake. There were omissions accordingly and in the earlier stages it was decided e.g. to make no provision for the education of the youth of Burma. But if some pre-war departments might not be required, the exigencies of war and of a military administration might require the creation of new departments to discharge functions for which a peace-time Government had felt no need. Such functions were the 'administration', in the military sense, of the Civil Affairs Service (the provision of transport, equipment, clothing, accommodation, and rations, for its own members), the import of supplies for the civil population, and the relief of refugees and displaced persons. These were all functions which in peace-time either did not require to be undertaken at all or were discharged wholly or partly by commercial undertakings. Decisions as to the departments that would be required had to be taken also against the background of the reconstruction plans of the Government of Burma and of the future constitutional policy of His Majesty's Government, either or both of which might modify the nature of the organization to be built up during the military period.

The more detailed work of the planners required, in addition, information regarding operations planned. While Headquarters C.A.S.(B) was still a part of G.H.Q. (India) the C.C.A.O. had difficulty in eliciting this. The lack of it might have caused greater harm if operations at the time had not been limited in intention and had not usually proved still more limited in execution. With the establishment of SEAC and 11th Army Group on 15th November, 1943, the C.C.A.O. was freely admitted into the operational planning.

In the case of Malaya, plans for which were prepared in London months, or even years, before re-occupation, the impossibility of obtaining operational information was overcome by directing all planning to the creation of a picture of what it was proposed to establish once the country had been completely re-occupied. The second stage of planning was then undertaken, and this complete picture, which had been built up department by department, was broken down into local operational or territorial instalments for employment in accordance with whatever operations might ultimately be planned. Unfortunately circumstances did not allow this clear cut, intelligible, procedure to be followed in the case of Burma. The first nine months of the existence of C.A.S.(B) Headquarters were very largely taken up, apart from its pre-occupation with current

administration, with the scrambled preparation and advocacy of plans for militarising staff placed under its control by the Government of Burma, and the preparation of War Establishments to cover merely that part of Burma which was already being administered, or likely in the immediate future to be brought under administration. By the beginning of 1944, however, serious work had begun on longer term plans to cover the whole of Burma.

For these some indication was required of the probable duration of military administration. No definite estimate could at first be given. Although the Commander-in-Chief, India, and the War Office had agreed that the period of military administration should not be longer than necessary, there had nevertheless been general talk and expectation of a period that might extend to four years. It was included, however, in the Directive of the Chiefs of Staff to Admiral Mountbatten, and was the declared intention of the latter, that civil administration should be transferred to the civil authorities as soon as, and so far as, the requirements of military operations would allow the latter to function—although it must remain at the discretion of the Supreme Allied Commander to recommend when, and in what area, such transfer could, in fact, take place. There was, and could be, no divergence in principle between the Governor and the Supreme Allied Commander. There was, however, as we shall later see, room for differences of view as to the date by which circumstances permitted application of the principle.

After a decision had been taken upon the general nature of the organization and of the departments to be created, a planner or a group of planners had to be found to formulate the needs of each department in men and materials. The work of the planners involved the preparation of departmental instructions or the adaptation of pre-war instructions to govern the operation of the departments that were being brought into existence; it involved also the arrangement of courses of training when necessary and possible. At a later stage there followed the task of procuring officers for the posts required, or of making arrangements for their recruitment in a hurry in due course. This task was initially complicated by the fact that the only source of recruitment for many posts was to be found within Japanese-occupied Burma and that this would not become accessible until after re-occupation of the country. At a later stage still, when re-occupation had created an expansion in the demand for recruits, it was this very fact that would alone make the task possible.

The plans of the Finance, Judicial, Supplies, Relief, Publicity, and Labour Departments will be more fully considered in later chapters¹. The work of the other Departments will be briefly noticed here. A bare beginning was made during 1943-44 with plans for the Prison

¹ cf. Chapters XII to XVII.

Department, the Forest Department, the Agricultural Department and the Postal Department. No planning was undertaken for Education throughout this period, and in fact no Education Department was set up in C.A.S.(B) at all for the whole of the period covered by the present chapter. The planning and re-establishment of an educational system can therefore more properly be dealt with in a later chapter. Somewhat fuller reference needs to be made to the planning undertaken for the Police Department, for Public Works and for the Medical and Public Health Department. The police organization which had been set up by the Government of Burma on arrival in India, largely to obtain and collate information regarding Burma, was intended to be transferred to the C.A.S. It continued, however, as a department of the Government after the creation of the C.A.S. on the 15th February 1943, *de jure* under the control of the Government of Burma, *de facto* at the disposal of the C.C.A.O. and the Commander-in-Chief, India. On the 1st January 1944, with the formal establishment of Military Administration, the transfer was made. On 3rd February, 1944, officers of the Headquarters and Field Staff were given military Commissions. In the meanwhile work had proceeded on the drafting of certain amendments that it was desired to make to the law of Burma, on the preparation of an all-Burma War Establishment for the Police, and on the amendment of old, and drafting of new, regulations necessitated by the transfer to the C.A.S., and by the conditions expected in Burma. Ultimately, the Police establishment for the whole country provided for 133 officers and 21,675 other ranks (including 227 civilians). By the end of 1944 some twenty officers and 900 other ranks were actually serving.

Planning for the revival of the Public Works Department was required to take into account the pressing need of the military engineer services for engineers, and particularly for engineers with knowledge and experience of Burma. Many of these were recruited into the Military Engineer Service under the control of 11th Army Group and later of ALFSEA. It was the policy, however, to keep these engineers together in specially created Burma Works Units which were to be employed in, or in connection with, Burma and not to be diverted to other territories that would later fall within SEAC. Meanwhile plans were made by C.A.S.(B), in consultation with the Government of Burma for a C.A.S.(B) Works Department which would ultimately require to be built up almost entirely by the transfer to C.A.S.(B), when the military authorities judged this possible, of the Burma Works Units or of individual members of these units. Responsibility would be transferred at the same time to the C.A.S.(B) Works Department, formed in this way, for much of the work previously undertaken by the Military Engineer Services through the Burma Works Units. In time, the C.A.S.(B) Works Department would

be able to undertake for the Military Administration work of less exclusively military importance and might even begin work required for the return of the Government of Burma. The scale of any such work would inevitably be strictly limited and would largely be controlled by the military authorities who, until civil government stores began to arrive, would control the supply of nearly all materials. Responsibility for works of vital military importance would be retained by the Military Engineer Services until the military authorities felt confident that the C.A.S.(B) Works Department was sufficiently established to undertake responsibility without fear of break down. Ultimately the C.A.S.(B) Works Department would grow into the Public Works Department of the Government of Burma.

Early medical planning was largely concentrated on the procurement of medical stores. During 1943 the Government of Burma, whose Medical Department, like the Police Department, was working under the direction of the C.C.A.O., had prepared a demand for procurement and supply of medical stores on an all-Burma basis. Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, before any action could be taken on this demand, the procedure for obtaining relief supplies, which will be described in a later chapter¹, was beginning to take shape. It was decided that the medical demands must be prepared afresh upon the basis of the estimates of the Working Party which had been set up in the United Kingdom under the chairmanship of Sir Hubert Young. The military authorities, therefore, accepted responsibility for procuring, as an interim measure, only so much of the Government of Burma's demands as was concerned with the immediate needs of the frontier fringe. The C.A.S. Medical Department, created on 16th February, 1944, had to turn its attention at once to preparation of an all-Burma demand within the Young Working Party procedure. This was a slow and laborious process as, first, there were delays in obtaining copies of the Working Party estimates, and then it was found that these had been prepared in American terms and units and that it would be necessary to convert them into British terms before they could be handled by the procurement organisation at G.H.Q. (India). However, by November, 1944, formal demands had been submitted. It is hardly surprising in the circumstances that by the end of 1944 no Young Working Party medical stores had yet arrived in India for the use of Burma and that the medical stores position was 'causing grave concern'. The work involved in the preparation of these indents for Young Working Party stores made it necessary to appoint first one, and then a second, medical stores officer at the headquarters of the C.A.S.(B) Medical Branch. When later C.A.S.(B) medical stores began to arrive they required to be repacked into operational units at

¹ cf. Chapter XIII.

a Medical Stores Depot near Asansol whither the second medical stores officer was sent.

The stereotyped provision made in the lists prepared by the Young Working Party for all countries of the Far East was in some respects inappropriate to Burma. As an example, the provision of large hospital units was excessive and of small hospitals insufficient. But the point is of little importance since, in fact, no hospital units were ever obtained through these channels before the time of the return of the civil government. All that was obtained from this source, during the military period, was an issue of twenty one 'Basic Supply Units', each such unit representing a stock of drugs and dressings sufficient for a population of 200,000 for six months.

Towards the end of 1944 the C.A.S.(B) Medical Branch were warned that they must make immediate preparations for re-occupation of Burma as far south as the neighbourhood of Meiktila. As no Young Working Party equipment could be expected in time for this operation and as, without this and without the reinforcements hoped for from recovery of ex-Government medical officers and nurses when the advance penetrated deeper into Burma, no more C.A.S.(B) medical units could be equipped, it became urgently necessary to find some other units, already formed and equipped, that could be made available, on loan if necessary, to meet this need. The C.A.S.(B) Controller of Medical Services, in consultation with the Director of Medical Services, ALFSEA, applied for, and obtained, the services of two Field Ambulances and of four sections of a General Hospital, all a part of the establishment of the Burma Army, which since the separation of Burma from India in 1937, had been entirely separate from the Indian Army. The few units of the Burma Army which had not disintegrated in the course of the campaign of 1941-42, were at that time not employed on operation duties, and were likely to be earmarked for internal security purposes in Burma on re-occupation. These Burma Army medical units were to perform invaluable service for the C.A.S.(B). A brief account of this will be included in a later chapter.¹

* * *

In the course of the campaign of 1941-42 Burmese guerillas to the number of perhaps 5,000 had fought on the side of the Japanese against the British.² It was also widely believed by the British forces that other Burmans had been guilty of hostile acts against them, although few, if any, such cases could be substantiated. It was not to be wondered at if many members of these forces were left with

¹ cf. Chapter VII.

² For a fuller account cf. Chapter XIX.

distrustful, and even vindictive, feelings towards the people of Burma. The danger, if reoccupation were to be carried out in such a frame of mind, needed no emphasis. It was, therefore, a constant pre-occupation of the Administration, throughout this early period to induce a more tolerant and understanding attitude in the forces that were likely to undertake the re-occupation of Burma.

As early as December 1942, before S.E.A.C. or the Military Administration had come into being, the Secretary of State for Burma had announced that 'Britain will return to Burma: when she does it will be in no spirit of vengeance against those civilians who have been forced by events beyond their control to conceal for a time their loyalty to the cause of the United Nations provided they have not deliberately assisted the enemy's war effort or taken part in injuring or persecuting British or Allied prisoners or interned civilians or minority communities or British or Allied nationals'. At about the same time the Government of Burma, alarmed by the feelings engendered during the retreat of 1941-42, suggested to the military authorities the desirability of issuing instructions and of taking such other steps as seemed possible to temper these feelings. One of the first tasks of the C.C.A.O. immediately on appointment was to press for action on these lines and on 19th March 1943, GHQ (India) issued a Directive on the treatment of the inhabitants of Burma in the course of which it was laid down that 'the guiding principle must be that a policy of leniency will serve our ends better than one of harshness . . .' Nevertheless in April and May 1944 a number of cases occurred in Arakan of the shooting of civilians without trial and in some cases without adequate operational justification for dispensing with trials. At the instance of the Chief Civil Affairs Officer further instructions were issued by Fourteenth Army Headquarters which deprecated 'ruthlessness' and forbade its employment. These instructions still revealed a marked failure to grasp that civilians should, whenever possible, be dealt with by the Civil Affairs Service and that, except to remove or prevent pressing danger, none but Civil Affairs Officers were authorised to punish civilians. The Chief Civil Affairs Officer did not let the matter rest and as a result strengthened instructions were issued by 11th Army Group Headquarters on 17th August 1944 in which it was laid down:

'4. According to the Hague Rules a spy, even when taken in the act, must not be punished without previous trial. Still less can anyone else be punished without trial, which in every case is indispensable . . .'

'5. The Army's normal instrument for dealing with the civilian population is the Civil Affairs Staff and Civil Affairs Officers alone are empowered to try and punish civilians . . .'

On 3rd December 1944 Fourteenth Army Headquarters issued

further, more positive, instructions on the treatment of civilians in which it was laid down:

'3. In re-occupying Burma we are re-occupying a British possession, the native population of which is entitled to the same protection as any other British subjects. We come to the people of Burma as rescuers from a tyrannical foe.'

'4. . . . whenever help can be given civilian inhabitants without impeding operations it will be given.'

This long campaign to protect the lives and rights of the common people of Burma achieved a notable amelioration in the outlook of the re-occupying forces, and was eventually to receive the strong endorsement of Admiral Mountbatten. 'In re-occupying Burma' he later said 'I was determined to base my policy firmly on liberal principles and to make it clear to the people of Burma that we were not returning in a punitive spirit or one of retaliation.'¹ Finally, although this is to anticipate events, the policy of liberality was pressed to a point at which, in the opinion of many of its original sponsors, it failed to protect ordinary citizens and those Burmese who had remained loyal to the British connection, from oppression by those who had taken up arms against the British in 1941 and 1942. In a Directive issued by Admiral Mountbatten on 2nd June 1945 to the Commander-in-Chief, ALFSEA, there occurred the following passages:

'4. The guiding principle which I am determined shall be observed is that no persons shall suffer on account of political opinions honestly held, whether now or in the past, even if these may have been anti-British, but only on account of proven crimes against the criminal law or actions repugnant to humanity. This principle is no more than an elementary point of British justice but it is perhaps advisable to emphasize the reasons why it must be pursued with particular fidelity in the present circumstances.'

'5. The situation in Burma in 1942 was very complex. It is hardly surprising that the sincere nationalist elements in the country, left unarmed and unorganised at the mercy of the Japanese, should have been politically confused and should have collaborated with them, particularly when promised their independence. This must at the time have seemed the only step they could reasonably take; and in our treatment of them we should not confuse them with the treacherous elements who were already intriguing with the Japanese before the war or with war criminals who have assisted the Japanese in the perpetration of atrocities.'

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 1943-45, H.M.S.O., 1951, p. 191.

'6. The Japanese have betrayed the Burmese Nationalists; first of all, politically, since their country's so-called independence proved illusory, and now militarily as well, since the Japanese are proving unable to hold the country against our return. Now is our chance to show the politically active Burmans, who have come to realise that their hopes for the future cannot lie along the road of collaboration with the Japanese, that we are sincere in our expressed desire to help the Burmese to help themselves. It is not my policy, therefore, that any section of the population shall be victimised for the political attitude they may have adopted at any time during this war, or in the period immediately preceding it, unless it can be proved that they consistently supported the Japanese to the end, and actively opposed our return.'

But these matters will be more fully considered in later chapters.¹

* * *

When SEAC was established it became one of the duties of the C.C.A.O. to advise the Supreme Allied Commander, as it had also been his duty to advise the Commander-in-Chief, India, on the co-ordination of preparations for military administration with long-term civil government plans for reconstruction. Admiral Mountbatten early expressed his intention of falling in line, as far as the circumstances allowed, with the long-term policy of the Government of Burma. He could hardly fail to be impressed at the same time by the imperfection of the co-ordination so far achieved between the military planners in Delhi and the civil planners, a twelve hours journey away in Simla, with little contact between the two except through occasional visits of the C.C.A.O. to the headquarters of the Government of Burma. It became a matter of some urgency therefore to define more accurately than had yet been done the demarcation of the spheres of responsibility of the military and of the civil governments, and to devise machinery for co-ordinating the work of the two. It will be convenient to consider now two aspects of the problem, the first that of planning in general, the second that of the arrangements to be made for legislation. A third aspect, the co-ordination of plans for procurement of relief supplies and the rehabilitation of the economic life of Burma, will be dealt with in separate chapters later.²

A conference was held in Delhi in March, 1944, between representatives of the Government of Burma, of SEAC, and of GHQ. (India), the first conference on any such scale to be held between representatives of the civil and military administrations. A beginning was made with the co-ordination of planning in regard to procurement

¹ cf. Chapters XVIII and XIX.

² cf. Chapters XIII and XIV.

of supplies, the recruitment of labour from India, arrangements for publicity and propaganda, and the future administration of the hill areas in Burma. There followed correspondence between Admiral Mountbatten and Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith on the more general aspects of planning and in May, 1944, an agreed note was drawn up on the relationship between SEAC and the Government in regard to the administration of Burma. In this it was stated that officials of the Government of Burma would be made available progressively to the Military Administration, that plans should be prepared for their transfer, balancing the military and civil requirements of manpower, and that military and civil plans should be framed so as to secure the greatest continuity between the military and the subsequent civil administrations. The Government of Burma undertook to keep the Supreme Allied Commander informed of their plans for the future and of their views on current affairs so that effect might be given to these as far as possible in the directives to be issued by him to the C.C.A.O. It is doubtful whether this last part of the agreement did more than give expression to a position that had already been tacitly reached, but it was useful that it should be openly accepted by both parties, and a great advance that there should have been full and frank discussion between the two sides.

In regard to legislation, it was agreed that a somewhat similar procedure should be followed, namely, that the Government of Burma would inform the Supreme Allied Commander of any legislation which it might consider necessary for Burma so that, if other considerations permitted, he would be able to give effect to this by proclamation. In exceptional circumstances it was agreed that it might be preferable for the Governor to enact such legislation himself, in consultation with the military authorities. It was soon found, however, that the Governor wished to make extensive use of what Admiral Mountbatten had looked upon as an exceptional procedure, and to enact himself, after consultation with the Supreme Allied Commander, a number of Acts in connection with the armed forces of Burma. The reason for this was that these forces had moved out of Burma into India and that the required legislation consequently needed to have effect outside Burma; it was at least doubtful whether the legislative powers assumed by Admiral Mountbatten could extend out of Burma into India, which did not fall within his Command. After further consultation the following formula was agreed upon:

- (1) Legislation enacted by the Governor after the proclamation of military administration in Burma would not be valid within Burma. This would not prevent its having effect outside Burma, if this was required.
- (2) If any such legislation needed to be applied immediately within Burma this could be done by a proclamation of the

Supreme Allied Commander applying its provisions to Burma.

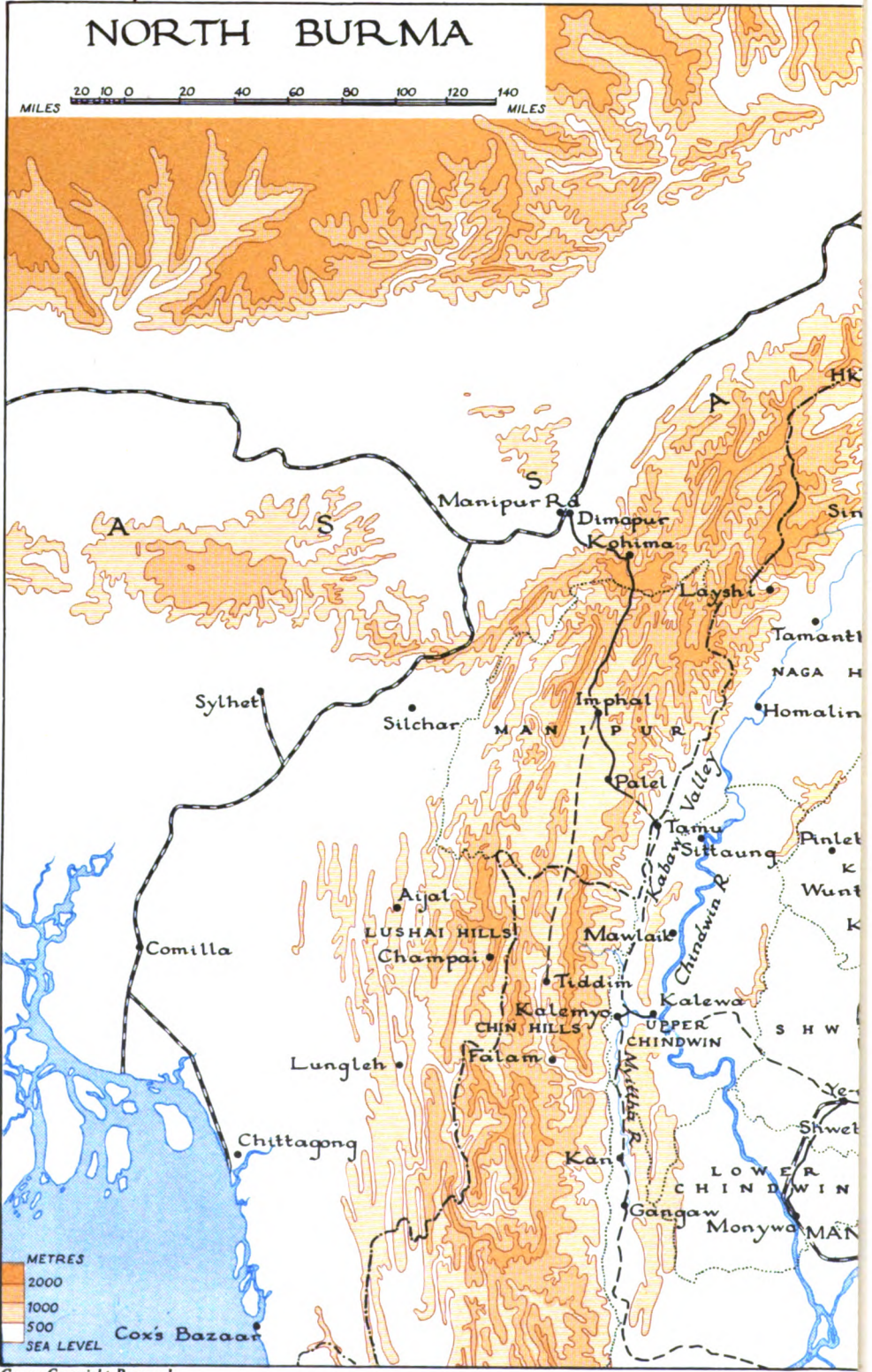
(3) Any such legislation intended only for post-war use should include provision that it would not come into force until a date to be notified, which must not be before the resumption of responsibility by the civil government.

* * *

As 1944 drew to a close the long period of preparation had come to an end. The re-occupation of Burma was beginning and it is to events in the field that we must direct our attention in the succeeding chapters.

Map 3

NORTH BURMA



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CHAPTER V

FAR NORTH

BEFORE TELLING of the main advance into Burma in 1945 it will be convenient to turn back a little in order to deal with events in the far north. Here the Military Administration inherited from the Government of Burma two unusual commitments. One was responsibility for the staff remaining at Fort Hertz which could be reached only by air: the other was the problem of the Civil Affairs arrangements to be made with the American Command which was building the road from India into Burma towards the Hukawng Valley.

We have seen how the Government of Burma never withdrew its administration from the Fort Hertz area; and a general account of the activities of its officers there has been given.¹ For the purpose of the present chapter it is only necessary to add that in June 1942, Chinese troops advancing from China entered the Laukhaung Sub-division of the Myitkyina District, to which the Japanese had never penetrated. The Chinese pulled down boundary pillars, announced that the British had left, and that the Chinese were taking over the country, and then set up a Chinese administration which continued until driven out by the Japanese advance at the end of 1943 and beginning of 1944. At no time had these Chinese made any attempt to fight the Japanese and it was clear that they had entered merely in order to acquire the territory.

There remained the problem of liaison with the Americans. The road upon which the Americans were working had been begun early in 1942 with British-Indian resources. It was to run from Ledo, situated on the railway in Assam, over the Pang Sau Pass in the mountain ranges dividing Burma from India, through the Hukawng Valley, towards Myitkyina.² Thence existing roads to Bhamo and on to Namhkam would give access to the Burma-China road near the Chinese border. Work was suspended during the monsoon but resumed in November 1942. In October a small force of Japanese, with members of the Burma Defence Army (B.D.A.),³ had advanced through the Hukawng Valley towards the road to Hkhalak Ga and

¹ Cf. Chapter I.

² Auchinleck, Despatch, 21 June 43 to 15 November 43. Second Supplement to London Gazette of 27 April 1948, para 5.

³ For a fuller account of this force cf. Chapter XIX.

Namyung, northwest of Shingbwiyang, in spite of some resistance from local Kachins. The civil administration fell back to Ledo where, in December, American military engineers had taken over construction of the road from the British. Chinese troops under training in India took over the task of protecting this road trace. Where did these come from?

During the campaign of 1941-42, three Chinese Armies (the 5th, 6th and 66th), each of three divisions, had entered Burma to aid the British forces. One of the divisions of 66th Army, the 38th, ultimately retreated to India instead of China. Remnants of the 5th Army also reached India. These Chinese troops were concentrated at Ramgarh, near Ranchi in the Central Provinces of India, to be re-equipped and trained under American command. During October-December, 1942, more Chinese were flown from China to India and by the end of the year there were some 30,000 Chinese troops under training in Ramgarh¹. It was a detachment from these forces that was now employed by the Americans to cover work on the road, and that pushed back the Japanese and the Burma Defence Army.²

By 20th June 1943 the road had been extended over the watershed dividing Burma from India at the Pang Sau Pass and had reached a point forty-six miles east of Ledo. Then work was checked by the torrential rains of the monsoon. In November it quickened again and by the 15th of the month the road had been surveyed ninety-nine miles, bulldozed seventy-nine miles, and metalled forty-eight miles, eastwards from Ledo. The covering Chinese forces had been in action for two weeks and advanced to the Tanai Hka and the Tarung Hka rivers, south and south-east of Shingbwiyang, but there were signs that the enemy was strengthening his forces opposite them.

The area re-occupied by this Chinese-American Task Force became an American zone. A small Civil Affairs organisation came into existence in the area on an improvised basis. This consisted of a 'civil liaison officer' attached to the headquarters of the force and two Civil Affairs officers working with the covering troops ahead of the road-builders. It became necessary to regularise arrangements for the administration of those parts of Burma which were to be re-occupied as a result of American operations. A conference was held between the Commander-in-Chief, Eastern Army, the Commanding-General of the Chinese-American force, and the C.C.A.O. (Burma), and it was agreed that a Senior Civil Affairs Officer should be attached to the headquarters of the force 'as a political adviser, co-ordinator, and liaison officer with junior civil affairs officers and the local population.'³

¹ Wavell, Despatch, March 1942 to December 31 1942. Supplement to London Gazette of 18 September 1946, paras. 15 and 16.

² Auchinleck, Despatch, 21 June 43 to 15 November 43 para. 5.

³ *Ibid.*, para. 30.

The American Civil Affairs Section at the Rear Echelon of the American forces in Delhi was to be responsible for maintaining close touch with the C.C.A.O. (Burma) at G.H.Q. (India). In fact, early road building operations during 1943 took place in country so remote and thinly populated that in peace-time it had been virtually unadministered. There was little that the Civil Affairs organisation could do during the monsoon of 1943 beyond acting as a local intelligence organisation and as an agency for procuring labour for work on the road.

* * *

In the autumn of 1943 SEAC was formed and immediately after assuming command Admiral Mountbatten flew to Chung-king to meet the Chinese President and Generalissimo, Chiang Kai-shek. At a conference in Chung-king on 19th October, General J. W. Stilwell, as Chief of Staff of the Chinese forces, explained in broad outline the plans under which simultaneous advances would be made during the 1943-44 campaigning season by the Chinese into Burma from two different directions, one from Pao-shan in Yunnan on the north-east, the other from Ledo in India on the north-west. The Chinese raised the question of the arrangements to be made for the maintenance of order and the establishment of administration in Burma behind their troops entering from China. Admiral Mountbatten said that Civil Affairs officers would be made available to accompany these forces. In discussing their functions and status he agreed that, in operational areas at least, they should be placed under the command of the Chinese field commanders. Detailed arrangements were left to be worked out between the Chinese staffs, Air Marshall Sir Philip Joubert de la Ferté, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Information and Civil Affairs at SEAC headquarters, and Lieutenant-General Sir Adrian Carton de Wiart, V.C., Personal Representative of the Prime Minister and of the Supreme Allied Commander at the headquarters of the Generalissimo.

It was of the greatest importance that there should be no failure to establish British administration behind the Chinese, in order both to prevent usurpation of British authority and to protect local British subjects from the depredations of the Chinese. There was a long history of Chinese claims and violations of British territory in north Burma, and it was known that the inhabitants of Burma feared the presence of Chinese even more than of Japanese troops.

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Preparation began at once at SEAC headquarters for a military mission, with a Civil Affairs component, to be sent to China for attachment to the Chinese Forces that were to operate from Pao-shan

in the north-east. Meanwhile, in November 1943, a Civil Affairs officer was attached to the staff of the British Assistant Military Attaché at Kunming to advise generally on Civil Affairs and more particularly on political questions arising out of the proposed operations¹.

Months passed, however, and no move was made by the Chinese forces from Pao-shan. Nor had the Chinese entered into negotiations to work out details of the general proposal put forward at the conference on 19th October 1943. And in the continuing absence of any operations the need for such negotiations in fact became progressively less urgent. By May 1944, the head of the military mission was still waiting in readiness to fly to China when required. It was planned to provide him with a D.C.C.A.O. and fifteen Civil Affairs officers of various ranks. Nine of these were immediately available, and arrangements were being made for the release of the other seven.

A Directive had been drawn up, the paragraphs dealing with Civil Affairs running:

'7. For the purpose of providing communication between the Chinese Military forces and the Civilian population in Burma . . . the Mission will include officers empowered as Civil Affairs officers under the Proclamations of the British Military Administration (Burma) to take all necessary measures for the assistance of the Chinese forces and the maintenance of law and order. It has been agreed with the Generalissimo that such officers will be responsible for the administration for those parts of Burma occupied by Chinese forces based on West Yunnan. In operational areas they will be under the orders of the Field Commanders, which will be conveyed to them by Military Liaison officers of the Mission. Requests by Civil Affairs Officers to Field Commanders for military assistance will be made through Military Liaison Officers.

8. When you [the Head of the Mission] decide, in consultation with the Commander of the Chinese Expeditionary Force, that conditions in any area have become such that a Civil Affairs Officer may assume territorial responsibility for it, the Civil Affairs Officer will come under the orders of the Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer. The Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer will remain a member of the Mission and under your orders until further notice.'

It will be observed that all communication between the Chinese forces and the people of the country was to be canalized through the military mission, and that all communication between these forces and the Civil Affairs component of the mission was in turn to be canalized through the military members of the mission.

¹ Giffard, Despatch, 16 November 43 to 22 June 44, para. 217. Supplement to London Gazette of 13 March 1951.

At last, on the night of 10th May, the Chinese forces began to cross the Salween River. Most of the crossings were into Western Yunnan, above the point at which the Salween flowed into Burma, but it seemed that re-occupation of Burmese territory was imminent. Accordingly General Carton de Wiart was requested to open negotiations with the Chinese and to obtain permission for the immediate despatch of the mission. It was necessary to obtain the agreement of the Chinese to the provisions of the directive quoted above, and to the principle that civilian offenders of British nationality should, without exception, be tried exclusively by Courts to be set up by the British Military Administration. The Chinese were also to be required to pay compensation for damage wilfully and wrongfully committed in Burma and to agree to the establishment of joint machinery for investigation of claims in this connection. They were also required to agree to financial arrangements, including one that payment for local purchase and labour within Burma was to be made at rates to be determined by the Civil Affairs officers. On 7th June the Chinese gave verbal agreement to the mission being sent and its leader went to China. By this time it was becoming clear, however, that the crossing of the Salween was unlikely to be followed by any other aggressive operations on this front, and that there was once more no immediate prospect of entry of these Chinese forces into Burma. The tempo slowed up again. And in fact no active military operations were ever to be undertaken by the Chinese from the north-east.

The head of the mission continued endless negotiations with the Chinese. Ultimately the Generalissimo was brought to accept the provisions of the directive in principle; no formal acceptance of its provisions could be extracted from him, nor could any formal permission be obtained for the despatch of the mission.

Then in July British Intelligence Officers working in Kokang, a remote part of Burma which the Japanese had not occupied, reported interference with their activities by Chinese forces. On 21st August the Generalissimo gave his consent to the despatch of a mission to Kokang, but continued to withhold sanction for the wider mission. As the Kokang interferences raised political implications two Civil Affairs officers joined the head of the mission in Kunming, who, however, was unable to take them with him to Kokang. Frustrated in their main task these two officers were nevertheless able to aid both Chinese refugees from Burma and some fifty tribesmen from Burma who had escaped from forced labour under the Chinese. They obtained useful intelligence from these persons. They also occupied themselves in handling the accounts of the party. They were withdrawn in November, the Chinese having signified in September that they wished to defer any decision to accept the mission.

Although in these circumstances the main body of the mission could

not be sent to China, it was felt, nevertheless, that it would be dangerous to disperse altogether the staff designated for the purpose since, whether the Chinese ultimately decided to press their advance or not, there was more than a possibility that the Japanese would withdraw from north-east Burma as a result of pressure by Allied troops elsewhere on the Burma front; and if this should happen there was no reason to doubt that the Chinese would flow in behind the retreating Japanese. In such case there must be no hesitation in re-establishing British administration.

At last, however, in January 1945, the persons earmarked were released by the Supreme Allied Commander for other employment under ALFSEA on condition that ALFSEA accepted responsibility for re-assembling the mission or otherwise discharging the duties for which it had been originally formed, in the event of their services being after all required.

* * *

The plan for operations from the north-west was more fruitful. American and Chinese forces in SEAC became the Northern Combat Area Command (NCAC) with General Stilwell as Commanding General. The intricate command arrangements applying to him have already been described.¹

By February 1944, Chinese forces of NCAC ahead of the road builders had consolidated their hold on Shingbwiyang and were continuing their advance south-eastwards towards Myitkyina.² On the 1st of this month the small British force (one regular battalion and Kachin levies) converging on the same objective from Fort Hertz in the north, was placed under the operational control of General Stilwell.³ Operations went ahead slowly through March and April with General Stilwell, shaming, driving, coercing, his Chinese troops into advancing.⁴ Then on 17th May a wide out-flanking movement by the American component of General Stilwell's force succeeded in seizing the Myitkyina airfield. At once reinforcements in the shape of Chinese troops were flown in and the fall of Myitkyina was expected daily.⁵ The forces employed had almost shot their bolt, however, and were unable to press home the subsequent attack upon Myitkyina town, operations degenerating into a protracted 'siege' through the worst of the monsoon weather.

On the very day that the Myitkyina airfield was seized another,

¹ Cf. pp. 58-59.

² Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 34.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

⁴ White, *The Stilwell Papers*, New York, 1948, *passim*, and other information.

⁵ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 60.

larger, British force, operating to the south of the Chinese-American advance, was also placed under General Stilwell's command.¹ This was 3rd Indian Division, the second Wingate expedition. This force consisted of five brigades, of which three had carried out the initial assault, the other two being used as reliefs and reinforcements. Later it was augmented by the addition of some artillery (one Field and one Anti-Aircraft battery) of which the original force had none.² The instructions to this force were:

(a) to help the advance of Lieut-General Stilwell's forces to the Myitkyina area by drawing off and disorganising the enemy forces opposing them, and preventing the reinforcement and supply of these enemy forces,

(b) to create a favourable situation for the Chinese Expeditionary Force to advance westwards from Yunnan across the Salween; and

(c) to inflict the maximum confusion, damage and loss, on the enemy forces in Northern Burma.³

The division was to achieve these results by placing itself across the Japanese lines of communication, over a hundred miles behind the 'front', and exploiting the possibilities of long-range penetration learnt in the first Wingate expedition in 1943. Two brigades were to march in, four were to fly. Of these, 16th Brigade set out on foot from Ledo early in February under cover of the jungle; 77th and 111th Indian Infantry Brigades were flown in on 5th-11th March; 14th British Infantry Brigade and 3rd West African Brigade were flown in on 22nd March-12th April;⁴ 23rd Brigade never came in as it was diverted to the Kohima battle then at its height. Of the four brigades flown in, one was in relief and one was split up to hold brigade bases.

For the months of April and May these forces carried on independent operations behind the Japanese, causing considerable damage and disorganization. On 16th June Kamaing fell to the main body of the Chinese-American forces.⁵ On 27th June Mogaung fell to a Brigade of 3rd Indian Division and Chinese forces.⁶ Now the main body of the Chinese-American forces, the British forces advancing from Fort Hertz, and 3rd Indian Division, all closed in on Myitkyina. The exhausted 3rd Indian Division was relieved by 36th British Division and the besieged town ultimately fell on 3rd August.⁷

A Senior Civil Affairs Officer had been attached to headquarters

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45 H.M.S.O., 1951, p. 60.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 36.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 49-50.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 62. Also White, *The Stilwell Papers*, New York, 1948, p. 306.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 74. White, *The Stilwell Papers*, New York, 1948, p. 311.

NCAC as agreed, and while NCAC came under the operational control of Fourteenth Army he was, conformably, placed under the technical control of the D.C.C.A.O. Fourteenth Army. When, later in the year, Kamaing was reached and NCAC came under direct control of the Supreme Allied Commander the S.C.A.O. became directly responsible in technical matters to the C.C.A.O., and the C.C.A.O. became, in addition to his other functions, a Staff Officer of the Commanding-General.

When the advance began in earnest after the monsoon of 1943, there were three C.A.O.'s forward in the Hukawng Valley. One of the first tasks they were called upon to undertake was the removal of persons living in the battle area, to protect the secrecy of operations. The numbers involved were not large but almost every other conceivable difficulty was encountered in the provision and administration of refugee camps to house these people. As the advance proceeded it became possible either to rehabilitate villages that had been destroyed or occupied by troops, or to aid the refugees to build new villages. As this was done refugee camps could be closed down. Meanwhile fresh camps had been opened to deal with further batches of people rendered homeless. Invaluable help was given in this work by the fifty-six year old Rev. B. C. Case, an American missionary who had worked for many years in the plains of Burma, and who was attached to the Chinese-American forces to aid them with his local knowledge and experience. He organized and supervised extensive planting of vegetables near camps and rehabilitated villages. His death by drowning in the course of the campaign was a heavy loss to Burma.

As the advance continued one Civil Affairs Officer was left behind in the Hukawng Valley. The advent of the monsoon virtually isolated this officer from those that had gone forward. He was able however to communicate with headquarters NCAC. Relief supplies began to come in along the military line of communication and in July the C.A.O. asked for a Supply Officer to assist him in dealing with these. Information gathered by the C.A.O. from civilian sources led to the arrest of Chinese deserters and of one coloured United States Army deserter who had shot an American officer.

* * *

On the capture of the Myitkyina airfield on 17th May the S.C.A.O. established his headquarters in the neighbourhood. The need for reinforcements was such that the American Commander called upon one of the C.A.O.'s to arm Gurkhas found in the locality and issued 200 rifles for the purpose. For forty-eight hours the C.A.O. and his improvised force helped defend the perimeter of the airfield—a rare case of the Civil Affairs Service undertaking a combatant part. But

gradually the scope of its activities expanded. Additional Civil Affairs officers were flown in, including a police officer. The Gurkhas were transformed into police, and the S.C.A.O. began to assume 'semi-territorial' functions for the southern part of the Myitkyina District. A Medical Officer and subordinate staff were appointed from among the refugees found near Myitkyina.

These refugees consisted partly of local inhabitants who had been rendered homeless by the fighting and the destruction of the town of Myitkyina, and partly of persons who had managed to reach Myitkyina during the great evacuation of 1942 and had then been unable to make their way further. There were many women, children, elderly, or sick persons among them. The able-bodied had walked to India by routes further south. Many who could not face the journey on foot had struggled to Myitkyina and waited their turn for air passages. When the air service was cut short by the arrival of Japanese aircraft, many had set out to walk to India through the dreaded Hukawng Valley; 20,000 got through by this route; it is not known how many lost their lives in the attempt. It was those who could not even attempt the journey who were now found at Myitkyina. Most were Indians of the labouring class, but there were also Anglo-Indians, Anglo-Burmese, and Indians of better class, many of whom had been in the employ of the Government. Camps were opened and there was no difficulty in finding persons to administer these from among the refugees themselves. Dependence on air transport meant that the Myitkyina Task Force on occasion suffered shortages of food. In these circumstances little could be brought in at first in the way of relief supplies for refugees. Unofficially, however, much was made available from American military stocks. All able-bodied males in the camps were expected to work but towards the end of August when the total population of the camps was between 8,000 and 9,000 the average daily number of workers was no more than 500 to 600. This was due partly to ill-health, malnutrition, and the consequent apathy of refugees, partly to the absence of any incentive to work owing to the lack of any goods upon which earnings could be spent, partly, it was alleged, to the inadequacy of the staff for dealing with refugees. Nevertheless a proposal by headquarters C.A.S.(B) to fly in Relief and Labour Officers to relieve the general administrative officers of work for refugees was refused by the Commanding General NCAC. This was partly because dependence on air transport precluded the bringing in of any persons not essentially required; and since the S.C.A.O. had in fact found persons to administer the camps from among refugees, it was obviously not essential to bring in Relief and Labour Officers. Partly, also, it was because the S.C.A.O. felt no confidence that imported staff would be any better than his local recruits, and was anxious not to deny to some at least of the refugees the opportunity to earn, to

pay their way, and so to begin to rehabilitate themselves. Many refugees still wishing to go to India were flown out in American cargo planes returning empty. A close 'security' scrutiny of these was undertaken by the police who caught a number of Japanese agents.

Three Civil Affairs Officers had been attached to 3rd Indian Division. They were employed to make contact with local inhabitants, to arrange for the supply of such articles of food as could be bought locally, to arrange for local labour, and generally to act as supplementary Intelligence Officers. They opened a store where they sold cloth and other scarce articles, partly to attract local inhabitants. Little or no administrative work could be undertaken in the restricted circumstances of the expedition, but as much help as possible was given to local inhabitants. It was common knowledge that upon the withdrawal of any intruding British force the Japanese could be expected to return and exact revenge with the utmost barbarity from any inhabitants suspected of having assisted the British. This was what happened after the first Wingate expedition in the previous year. A promise had accordingly been given to the local inhabitants that this time the British forces had come to stay. When some of these were turned northwards to co-operate in the attack on Myitkyina and others were withdrawn to India one of the C.A.O's felt so keenly the breaking of this promise that he refused to leave the area of operations. In fact, it may be added, the withdrawal of the British troops was not in this case followed by Japanese re-occupation, and after some weeks the area came once more under British administration, this time permanently, the C.A.O. none the worse for the experience. Another of the C.A.O's was among the sick and wounded evacuated by Sunderland flying boat which took off from Indawgyi Lake just behind the positions held by the British forces.¹

After the fall of Myitkyina the S.C.A.O. had at his headquarters two C.A.O's, one concentrating on the rehabilitation and administration of the town, the other on judicial work. He had also at his headquarters a Police officer, a Labour officer, and the essential subordinate staff. Outside headquarters he had a C.A.O. at his supply base in India, one left behind in the Hukawng Valley, and one each at Kamaing and Mogaung.

The next problem that forced itself upon the attention of the Administration was that of relations between the Kachins of the hills and the Shans and Burmese of the plains. These relations, never easy, had been exacerbated by the war. The Japanese occupied the plains, and the pacifically-inclined Shans and Burmese could do little but accept Japanese administration. The warlike Kachins never accepted the Japanese authority and, further north, fought throughout the war,

¹ B. Fergusson, *The Wild Green Earth*. London, 1946, pp. 86-96, and information furnished by several officers.

sometimes quite unaided, against the invader. Shans were believed, willingly or by compulsion, to have given information to the Japanese against the Kachins. As soon as the Japanese retreated, the Kachins came down from the hills to exact vengeance, so reviving the blood feuds rooted in Kachin custom, feuds which the British administration had long sought to discourage. It was possible also that the Kachins coveted the richer land which had been worked by the Shans in the valleys. Additional local Kachin officials were appointed and C.A.O's undertook intensive touring to convince the offenders that allegations of pro-Japanese activities of Shans and Burmese would be investigated and dealt with in accordance with the law, but that the Administration would not tolerate lawlessness. The situation improved but did not entirely cease to cause anxiety.

There was anxiety also over the agricultural position. The Myitkyina and Bhamo Districts had imported small quantities of rice even in peace-time. It was soon found by inspection from the air and enquiries on the ground that only one third, or less, of the normal rice area had been cropped. Considerable imports of rice would be needed. The expected shortage of plough cattle and agricultural implements was found. The Sahmaw sugar factory which had taken up a considerable cash crop of sugar cane had been destroyed. In the early stages of the American advance small quantities of salt and other food were brought in by road. Later, supplies were brought in by air to Myitkyina and to Sumprabum further north. The harvest in December would bring in some temporary relief. Little could be done to relieve the shortage of cattle. The supply of agricultural implements was restricted both by earlier underestimates of the need and by the limitation of air transport. Vegetable seeds were brought in and distributed. An agricultural officer of the Government of Burma was lent to advise the Administration which had not yet formed its own agricultural department.

It had been planned to import essential food supplies for 29,000 persons in Myitkyina. By September the estimate of those requiring relief was 45,000 and some 17,000 were actually being supplied. Limitations of air transport made it difficult to increase the flow of supplies but by October small reserve stocks were being built up in Myitkyina and Kamaing. Blankets and warm clothing were in great demand with the approach of the cold weather.

The presence of Chinese troops created many difficulties. Nominally under the command of General Stilwell, since Chiang Kai-shek had conferred upon this officer the authority of a Chinese General, they accepted this control imperfectly in regard to operations and hardly at all in matters of discipline. The looting of villages was a common practice in spite of the fact that the Chinese were rationed by NCAC and not required to live off the country as they would have been under

normal Chinese conditions of service. Behind the Chinese forces came smuggling of goods from India to China, and swindling and speculation to finance this trade. Negro troops had been imported by the Americans to work on the road. As was the case with many of the African troops in the British forces, their presence produced allegations of molestation of women in the neighbourhood. Lastly there were the divergencies between the American and British reactions to a situation which was in essence not unfamiliar to the British, but largely outside the experience of the Americans. The attractions of the Americans' more positive, and less reserved, approach, were for many British observers, offset by what seemed their relative readiness to act on impulse. This showed itself not only in displays of fraternal generosity towards the local inhabitants, but—more embarrassingly—in a tendency to inflict punishment out of hand on persons deemed guilty of malevolence to the Allied cause. Though schooled to disapproval of 'Imperialism', and prone to assume British decadence, they did not, however, allow their reluctance, in principle, to 'rebuild the British Empire' to detract from their warm-hearted readiness to assist the efforts of individual Britons, and individual supporters of the former British Administration.

Behind this loomed the gnarled personality of General Stilwell. It was not for nothing that he had been nicknamed 'Vinegar Joe'. A single-minded, indomitable fighter, unsparing of himself, terse in speech, narrow of outlook and the most difficult of men with whom to co-operate, he was disillusioned with the Chinese and often contemptuous of the British. He was convinced that neither the British nor the Chinese wanted to fight in Burma and that the Americans alone were not 'pulling their punches.'

And behind all this again there was a fundamental divergence between the British and American strategy in South-East Asia. While the Americans were concerned to open land communications that would keep China in the war, both in order that China should engage Japanese forces and in order to preserve a base for American air attacks upon Japan in the future, the British preferred to attack Japan by the method of combined operations through Lower Burma and Singapore, and at the same time to regain control of the territories and valuable resources they had lost in 1941 and 1942.

In the circumstances it is scarcely surprising that the provision of Civil Affairs officers was not altogether welcomed by NCAC and that the numbers were rigidly controlled. What is surprising is the ready and very generous co-operation that was in fact extended to Civil Affairs Officers on the ground by individual American officers, not excluding General Stilwell himself.

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We must turn back for a while to events in the Fort Hertz area.

In March 1943, just after the Military Administration had assumed responsibility, a Japanese advance in the north caused the local Civil Affairs officers to leave Sumprabum and fall back on Fort Hertz. A detachment of regular troops had been re-introduced here by air,¹ and, covered by this and the Kachin levies, the Administration continued in Fort Hertz although its activities were inevitably curtailed. A hospital was kept up for civilians, small quantities of relief supplies were flown in, an attempt was made, by protest and negotiation, to safeguard the eastern frontier from yet another Chinese encroachment, and all possible assistance was given to the combatant forces, including the organization of an elephant pack-supply line. In April 1944, NCAC pressure further south caused the Japanese to fall back and Sumprabum was re-occupied, the headquarters of the S.C.A.O. being transferred thither a little later. Four C.A.O.'s were stationed at Fort Hertz, Sumprabum, Kajitu, and Htingnan. One of these moved across to take charge of the Laukhaung Sub-division a little later. Recruiting was begun for a Home Guard in Fort Hertz to take the place of the troops that had moved south. In July, news was received of a Chinese irruption across the border in the Htawgaw-Hpimaw area. This was repulsed by local tribesmen who inflicted heavy casualties on the Chinese.

Many disputes had arisen or become exacerbated during the absence of the Administration and now called for the S.C.A.O.'s attention. In the most serious a clan feud had broken out resulting in the murder of seventeen persons. Shortly after the resumption of administration relatives of the victims murdered five of the aggressors. The S.C.A.O. led a platoon of the Kachin Rifles to the affected area and rounded up all the offenders from both sides. They were placed in custody for a year and then the case was settled according to tribal law, by exchange of property proportionate to the loss of lives, by mutual animist sacrifices, and by an official adjudication of the matter. In addition, both sides were heavily fined for the two-sided breach of the peace. The settlement endured.

The supply of foodstuffs, up to famine relief scale, was arranged within the limitations of the air transport available, supplies being landed at Fort Hertz and parachuted to other remote places. The Administration managed to introduce permanent terraced rice cultivation in place of the previous wasteful shifting cultivation. Hospitals were opened at Sumprabum, Htingnan, and Kajitu. Schools were re-opened. A Civil Affairs Officer toured the remote valley of the Namtamai in the far north and other areas which had suffered from Chinese incursions.

¹ Wavell, Despatch, March 1942 to December 31, 1942, para. 22. Supplement to London Gazette of 18 September 1946.

By the first half of August the expanding jurisdiction of the S.C.A.O., Fort Hertz, met that of the S.C.A.O., Myitkyina, and a boundary was fixed dividing their spheres of responsibility.

* * *

After the final capture of Myitkyina the forces in NCAC were re-organized and began a further advance, fanning out to the south and south-east. The 3rd Indian Division had been relieved by 36th British Division which advanced along the line of the railway to the Indaw-Katha area; a Chinese Division started along the railway line and then struck off to the south-east for Shwegu on the Irrawaddy river, a little to the east of Katha; the Chinese First Army advanced, still further to the east, down the road from Myitkyina to Bhamo.¹ On 24th October Lieutenant-General D. I. Sultan took over command of NCAC and on 12th November Lieutenant-General R. A. Wheeler became deputy to the Supreme Allied Commander. Both appointments had been, till those dates, held by General Stilwell who now returned to America. The latter's responsibilities in China went to Lieutenant-General A. C. Wedemeyer.² The NCAC forces advancing into the Shan mountains ultimately reached the line of the Burma-China Road, from Hsipaw on the right to the China border on the left. About March, 1945, when most of the Chinese forces were recalled to China, operations on this front died out.³ These Chinese troops had fought their way home all the way from India across northern Burma, almost back into China.

By the end of 1944 Civil Affairs units had established themselves at Shwegu and Bhamo in the Bhamo District. A unit for the northern part of the Katha District accompanied 26th British Division southwards and reached Katha on 12th December. The southern part of the Katha District was reoccupied from the west by the main advance of Fourteenth Army and will be referred to in the next chapter. The town of Katha, had been bombed but some buildings were undamaged. The electric power house was brought into use again without much delay. Government employees, including police, early began to report for duty. The chief collaborators had decamped with the Japanese. By the new year the S.C.A.O. was touring his District in company with his Police Officer. A number of Government employees were discovered at Tigyau on the Irrawaddy.

The S.C.A.O. reported that 'The villagers speak enthusiastically of the good behaviour and kindness of the troops and I have seen several testimonials in the hands of Headmen for good work done by them to help the Army.'

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 80.

² *Ibid.*, p. 85.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 134.

In January 1945, it was decided that it was no longer practicable to combine in one person the posts of S.C.A.O. attached to the forces of NCAC and of S.C.A.O. with territorial responsibilities for Myitkyina; the duties of the latter were rapidly multiplying and the headquarters of NCAC was about to move southwards out of the Myitkyina District. Accordingly a separate S.C.A.O. was appointed to the charge of Myitkyina. It was not long before the northern part of the district, which had been administered from Fort Hertz and later from Sumprabum, was added to his charge, so bringing back into existence the pre-war civil district of Myitkyina. The S.C.A.O. with NCAC was promoted to be Deputy C.C.A.O., and went forward with the headquarters of NCAC to Bhamo. The S.C.A.O.-designate for the Northern Shan States followed the Chinese-American forces along the road from Bhamo to Muse and ultimately established his headquarters in the neighbourhood of Lashio, the old civil headquarters of his district.

By July the D.C.C.A.O. at Bhamo found his work in connection with the NCAC forces rapidly dwindling—operations by the Chinese and Americans had virtually ceased some months before and the troops were now being moved back into China for further tasks there. It was intended that he should become the D.C.C.A.O. in charge of the two Districts of the Northern Shan States and the Southern Shan States which together, before the war, had constituted the Federated Shan States, an area in which the administration was carried on by indirect rule instead of the direct administration in force in the plains of Burma. The D.C.C.A.O. accordingly moved from Bhamo to Lashio, the headquarters of the Northern Shan States.

Taunggyi, the headquarters of the Southern Shan States and the pre-war Federal Capital was re-occupied in August, not by NCAC forces, but from the west, from the neighbourhood of Meiktila, by forces detached from IV Corps to seal off, and later destroy, the Japanese forces in the mountains to the east while IV corps advanced on Pegu and Rangoon.

After the re-establishment of administration in Taunggyi a Civil Affairs party was despatched to Kengtung, the easternmost of the Shan States, across the Salween. Kengtung was reached, after a journey of eighteen days, on 30th September 1945, and administration on pre-war lines was re-established without delay. A little before this, administration had also been re-established in Karenni.

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When the advance had flowed into the Northern Shan States conditions bordering on famine were discovered in the Tawngpeng State, north of Hsipaw. Tea had been widely cultivated in Tawngpeng and the economy of the state was founded on the export to this to pay

for imports of rice. The war in the plains of Burma had completely destroyed the export trade in tea and, consequently, the import of rice. Refugee camps were opened at Hsipaw and Kyaukme and rice was moved from the Mandalay area into Tawngpeng. The situation rapidly improved, but not before there had been many deaths from starvation.

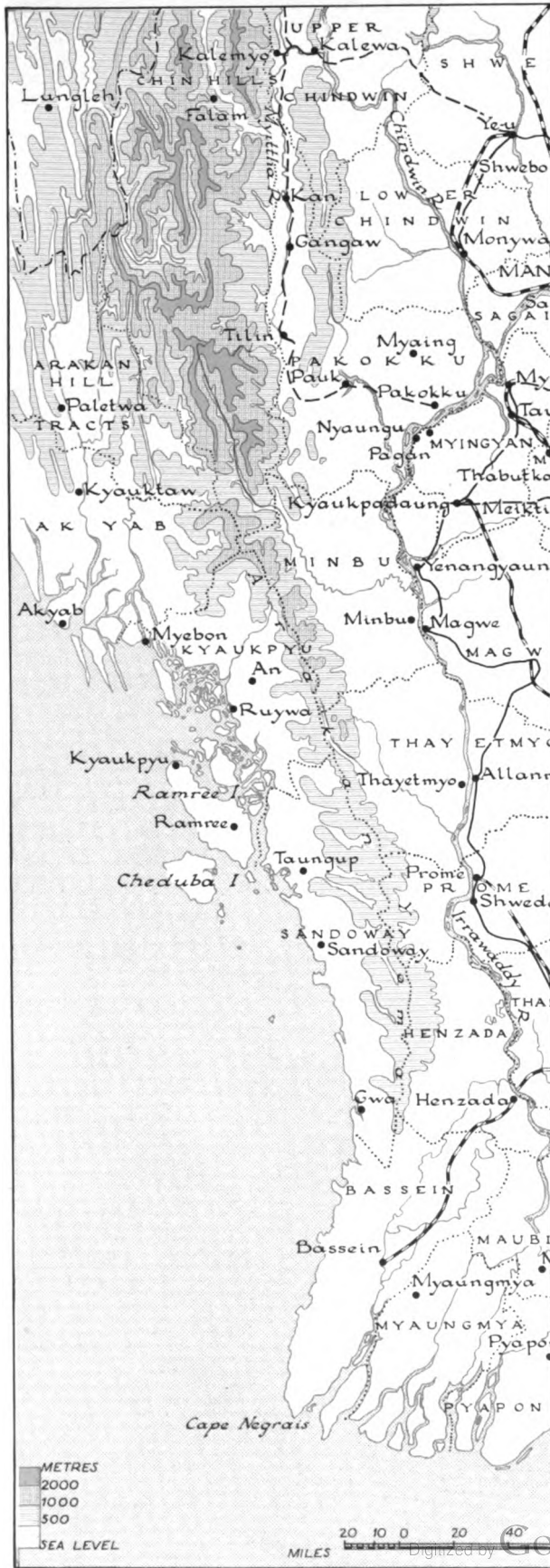
When the Japanese forces withdrew from the far north of Burma, the Chinese-American forces ceased operations and the British forces concentrated upon completing the defeat of the Japanese in southern Burma. The north-eastern frontier was consequently freely exposed to encroachments by the Chinese. In July 1944, they had entered the Laukhaung area, into which they had penetrated two years before, but were promptly attacked and driven out, as we have seen, by local inhabitants. By March 1945, the Laukhaung sub-division was clear of Chinese and administration was operating normally. The Chinese had flooded into the town of Bhamo (which had been razed to the ground) as soon as the Japanese withdrew. They set up a branch of the China Overseas League and it was rumoured that they were intending to open a Consulate-General or a branch of the Ministry of Overseas Affairs. They opened schools and occupied the best of the bombed sites in the town without seeking permission from the Administration. In the Shweli Valley the General commanding the Chinese First Army held flag-raising ceremonies and announced that the valley had been annexed by the Chinese. Many other violations of the frontier and of British sovereignty occurred. In December 1944, and January 1945, two notorious bands of Chinese looters were active in the Sadon area. They were ultimately broken up, the one by Chinese regular troops, the other by local Kachins. In March 1945, Chinese deserters were numerous and troublesome in the Sinlumkaba area and bandits were active in the Shweli Valley and in Kokang. Throughout this period there were many complaints to the Administration against Chinese on the score of looting, robbery, rape, and murder.

An Armed Civil Police force was created on the lines of the frontier constabulary employed before the war. In March 1945, the irregular forces raised by both Americans and British were disbanded. As many as possible of the members of these forces were recruited straight into the Armed Civil Police. This force, aided occasionally by the regular Kachin Rifles, in time dealt effectively with bandits and looters. In the Myitkyina District alone many were killed and wounded, and over 200 were rounded up and eventually deported to China by sea; to have deported them across the land frontier would have been futile as they would immediately have resumed their operations on one side of the border or the other.

In May 1945, there followed a more serious encroachment and the last with which this account will be concerned. A Chinese official

with a detachment of poorly equipped and armed Yunnanese, appeared at Panghkam. This was a village by the Shweli River, on the main road from Bhamo to Lashio, which had at one time been held as a frontier post. The post, together with the road at this point, lay in a tract of land which, though it belonged to China, had been leased to the British for the construction of the road, with all rights of administration, on an annual rental of Rs 1000. The intruding Chinese official did various acts compatible only with full sovereignty and full rights of administration in the leased area, claiming that he was doing these under instructions, because the rental had not been paid and the lease had lapsed. While the British authorities were still ascertaining their precise legal position and whether there had in fact been any default in payment of rent, the Chinese over-reached themselves by interfering with British subjects resident outside the leased area. Brigadier J. F. Bowerman, the D.C.C.A.O. at the headquarters of NCAC in Bhamo, went at once in person to protest to the Chinese official at Panghkam. It was then found that the British-appointed headman at Panghkam had been removed to China. His release was immediately demanded. The prompt and courageous action of the D.C.C.A.O. succeeded in obtaining his release in spite of acrimonious argument and considerable display of force by the Chinese. The Chinese were also warned that if they interfered with residents of Burma territory they would be driven out of Panghkam at once. A company of Kachin Rifles and a platoon of Kachin Armed Police were moved to Bhamo, Selam and Namhkam to reinforce this threat. It was in due course ascertained that there had been no default in payment of the annual rent. But it was not until some time later, when the Chinese regular troops in the area had been withdrawn and the irregular garrison of Chinese in Panghkam had become involved in a clash with Kachin Armed Police elsewhere, that it was felt that the time had come to move the Kachin Rifle Company into Panghkam. This was then done without opposition or trouble.

Subsequent incidents with the Chinese fell to be handled by the civil government on resumption of responsibility for the administration of Burma.



METRES
 2000
 1000
 500
 SEA LEVEL

20 10 0 20 40
 MILES

CHAPTER VI

MAIN CAMPAIGN

THE PURSUIT of the Japanese 15th Army, defeated at Kohima and Imphal, gained momentum as the monsoon abated. British troops crossed the Chindwin at Sittaung, and then at Kalewa, where the two-pronged drive down the Tiddim road and the Kabaw valley converged, and where a pontoon bridge was constructed.

The original intention was 'to reach and consolidate on the line Lashio—Kyaukme—Maymyo—Mandalay—Pakokku'. Both IV and XXXIII Corps were to cross the Chindwin and move east and then swing south, IV Corps on the left. The main concern at this time of General Slim, commanding Fourteenth Army, was to bring the Japanese to battle in an area where his armour could operate most effectively and enable him to destroy beyond hope of recovery all the Japanese forces in north Burma. When it became evident that the Japanese intended to retreat behind the Irrawaddy and use it as an obstacle, he secretly switched the line of advance of IV Corps round the back of XXXIII Corps and south along the Myittha valley to cross the Irrawaddy in the Pagan area, and then to drive with the Fourteenth Army's armour on Meiktila. This manoeuvre, later described by the Japanese Commander-in-Chief in Burma as 'the master stroke', cut the life-line of the Japanese armies in north and central Burma and brought about their destruction.

As soon as the Japanese forces between Mandalay and Meiktila had been crushed between XXXIII and IV Corps, the latter formation took command of operations down the road and railway to Rangoon, and with armoured and mechanised forces thrust rapidly south. XXXIII Corps was given the less spectacular, but no less important, task of clearing the Irrawaddy valley and destroying the enemy, still lurking in considerable strength in the forests west of that river.

XXXIII Corps fought its way down the Irrawaddy valley, against desperate rearguards trying to keep open the escape routes across the river for the Japanese forces withdrawing from Arakan to the refuge of the Pegu Yomas, where the latter hoped to join up with the armies retiring from north Burma.

In the meanwhile XV Corps had been pressing forward in Arakan to secure air bases from which to supply Fourteenth Army advancing on Rangoon. When it became clear that IV Corps might not reach

Rangoon before the monsoon a combined operation was launched from Arakan and entered Rangoon as IV Corps reached Pegu, fifty miles to the north. Headquarters of the Japanese Burma Area Army and the garrison of Rangoon made good their escape before the sea and land routes were finally closed by the combined operation of XV Corps, the Navy, and Fourteenth Army. The Commander of the Burma Area Army set up his headquarters in Moulmein and from there endeavoured to plan the escape of the remnants of his armies, trapped in the Pegu Yomas.

Operations continued in order to mop up the Japanese forces isolated in Burma by the speed of the advance of IV Corps, and to advance on Kyaikto, Moulmein and the Tenasserim Division. On 14th August the Japanese surrendered unconditionally and on 15th operations in SEAC were suspended. It would be an impertinence to dismiss these bold and original operations so hastily if they were not to form the subject of another volume in this series where justice will be done to them. All that is needed here is a bare framework for the narrative of military government.

* * *

For all these operations formation Civil Affairs officers were attached to Fourteenth Army, to the three corps concerned, and to all divisions. They were also provided for any brigades working independently. Their work in an advance of such speed tended, especially at brigade and divisional level, to become that of Intelligence officers, purveyors of local knowledge, collectors of labour, and general mediators in the difficulties bound to arise between the advancing forces and the local inhabitants. They were seldom long enough in any one place to follow up their first contacts with the inhabitants, or to undertake even elementary measures of military government. This had generally to be left to the district teams which were dropped off by formations to initiate the 'semi-territorial' stage.

In Arakan a curious part-time administration, perhaps more 'semi-territorial' than 'formation' in character, was carried on for a while in the Kalapanzin Valley during the monsoon of 1944. This area, at one time occupied by British troops, was now in no-man's land. There were some hundred destitutes in a welfare camp at Goppe Bazaar within this area: these were mostly old and infirm persons or children, and cholera had broken out amongst them, so that it was impossible to move them back to British-held areas until tracks became passable after the rains. There were also 18,500 baskets of paddy¹ at Goppe and Panzai Bazaars needed for the S.C.A.O's food distribution plans. When British troops and the full administration were withdrawn, one C.A.O.,

¹ Unhusked rice.

one Medical officer, and one Welfare officer, with their subordinate staffs, and a small police party, carried on during daylight under occasional sniping. At night they withdrew into British-held areas. It was hoped to remove the destitutes when cholera subsided and the monsoon ended, and at the same time to bring in the paddy.

Two extracts from reports from the Kabaw Valley, on the XXXIII Corps front, will illustrate the kind of minor problems that formation C.A.O.'s were required to deal with.

'The Yasago Headman complained of troops entering the village and carrying off planks and house posts. Although many houses are deserted and some partly destroyed by bombing, the owners still exist and object to their house-building material being removed. 11 Div. has issued an order putting villages out of bounds to all troops not on duty. It is to be hoped that this order will be enforced. It was certainly not being observed in Yasago.'

'The Yasago Headman said that the area set apart for villagers to do their bathing in was being used by troops both African and European with the result that the women were afraid to go. Bathing in the nude is considered rather shocking by the Burmese. They do not object to the troops doing it if they will keep out of sight of the village. Of all the complaints this was the one that was pressed most strongly and the invasion by troops of the bathing area had thoroughly disturbed village life.'

A graver problem required the attention of the D.C.C.A.O. XV Corps in Arakan in June and July 1944. Five members of the Khumi tribe had been shot without trial on the ground that they had actively aided the enemy engaged with this force. It had been laid down in a Directive issued by G.H.Q. (India) on 19th March 1943,¹ that persons accused of such offences must be handed over for trial in Military Administration Courts unless the safety of the forces made this impracticable. An enquiry was held into the shootings. There was some doubt whether it would not have been practicable to have had the cases tried in court. It was clear, however, in the words of the D.C.C.A.O., that the force concerned 'was carrying out a fighting retreat up the valley of the Kaladan, and was being subjected to attacks from all sides. The troops were in a condition of great strain and were nervous'. The officer who ordered the executions 'was therefore acting under considerable stress and had no time to make detailed enquiries and no facilities for holding the Khumis for trial. He had to act quickly and summarily for the security of his men on such information as was forthcoming at the moment . . . he had to act on the Burma Intelligence Corps report regarding the Khumis shot on or about the 20th April, and . . . the two Khumis shot between the 2nd and 6th

¹ Cf. p. 72.

May actually led the Japanese to his positions.' It was also clear that the commander had little or no staff and was unlikely to have been aware of the directive in question. In the circumstances the idea of disciplinary action was dropped. But these were among the cases that led to issue of the more explicit orders of 17th August 1944.¹

* * *

Provision for semi-territorial administration after formation officers had moved on was made by attaching a Civil Affairs team for the administration of a civil district, or occasionally part of such a district, to the division operating in the area, as soon as there was any probability of the district being entered. The officer in charge of a team would be a Senior Civil Affairs Officer of the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, responsible for establishing general administration and co-ordinating and supervising the work of other departmental officers. These would consist, whenever possible, of an S.C.A.O. (Police), accompanied by a nucleus police force of twelve, of a Medical Officer, and of a Relief and Labour officer. There might be a few clerks. On attachment to the division concerned the team was expected to make itself useful in formation activities and to seek out local inhabitants and any government servants found in the area, with a view to setting up such administration as might be possible. Not much could be done usually until the main town of the district was re-occupied. Then the team would be peeled off to begin static administration by recruiting staff, opening courts and offices, recruiting and training a police force, improvising measures of relief where necessary, and making an estimate of the relief supplies that would be required. For Rangoon a larger and more comprehensive team was attached. The arrangements for this will be more fully described in due course.

When a district team was first cast off it remained under the operational command of its parent division. As operations moved forward out of a district the administration would come in turn under the military command of the succeeding formations, i.e. of Corps and of Army. It remained throughout under the technical control of the C.C.A.O., exercised through the appropriate D.C.C.A.O. The true 'territorial' stage was not reached until a line-of-communication organization was set up behind the advancing formations and the Civil Affairs organization could be integrated with this. This stage will be dealt with in the next chapter.

* * *

The first areas to be re-entered as the Japanese flood began to recede were the Chin Hills and Naga Hills Districts. As the Lushai

¹ Cf. pp. 72-73.

Brigade and irregular forces advanced through the Chin Hills, C.A.O.'s resumed administration under the control of the S.C.A.O., who at first worked also in a formation capacity under the Lushai Brigade Commander. Later, in a semi-territorial capacity, he came under the control first of XXXIII Corps and then of IV Corps.

A Civil Affairs Officer re-entered Layshi in the Naga Hills on 9th July from Kohima. In October he was joined by another C.A.O. and soon after moved his headquarters to Tamanthi on the Chindwin, some 180 miles above Kalewa. He reported conditions bordering on starvation, and established contact with American irregular forces and Intelligence organizations working southwards from the main line of the Chinese-American advance on Myitkyina. By December his headquarters was moved down the Chindwin to Homalin and a rather tenuous contact was established with IV Corps further down the valley.

Between the Chin Hills and the Naga Hills, Tamu, in the Kabaw Valley, was re-occupied by XXXIII Corps on 4th August. On 6th, the S.C.A.O.-designate for the Upper Chindwin District, who was at the same time acting as D.C.C.A.O. to XXXIII Corps, arrived to resume administration. A headquarters was established at Tamu which early in 1945 was moved south to Kalewa on the Chindwin. The pre-war headquarters of the District at Mawlaik had been almost entirely destroyed and was unsuitable as it lay some distance off the military line-of-communication from Assam into Burma.

In the northern part of Katha District the administration was re-introduced from NCAC.¹ The team for the southern part was introduced by IV Corps just before this was switched to the right of XXXIII Corps. This change of plan meant that no line of communication came nearer than 80-100 miles, and that little could be done to support the Administration, which was for a time left without even rations or signal communication.

Administration was successively re-established in the Lower Chindwin, Shwebo and Sagaing Districts as XXXIII Corps advanced upon Mandalay.

* * *

When IV Corps was switched to the right of XXXIII Corps, 7th Indian Division led the advance along the Myittha Valley towards Pakokku. A Civil Affairs team for Pakokku District was attached to this Division as it entered the District. The headquarters town of Pakokku was re-occupied on 15th February 1945, and on 21st February the S.C.A.O. arrived to set up administration. Extracts from his reports give a picture of the early semi-territorial stage, both in Pakokku and elsewhere.

¹ Cf. p. 90.

'I found Pakokku Town and the Civil Station largely in ruins, the only consolation being that one or two other towns (notably Monywa) have suffered even more.'

'The first and most obvious task was to repair a sufficient number of buildings in the Civil Station for the accommodation of myself and my staff, the Civil Hospital, the jail, the Record Room, and a Police Station. Also a bazaar for the town was urgently required. All this was put in hand at once and within 2 or 3 days several hundreds of coolies and carpenters had been employed. . . . The town which had been almost completely deserted had sprung to life again and the Civil Station is assuming an air of order.'

'Dacoity¹ is rife in the Pakokku Sub-division. Patrolling by such civil police as were available was started as soon as we reached the affected areas. . . . The population in the Pakokku jail is already about 70 and most of the cases involved have already been tried'.

'There is a great shortage of rice. . . Supplies of paddy were coming into the district fairly well from Lower Burma until about the beginning of the year when imports ceased. . . . In my opinion it is a matter of immediate urgency that a CASB rice agency should be set up for the purchase and internal distribution of rice or other foodstuffs. On what basis the distribution should be made is another headache, for the people will have little currency with which to buy their rice. The only solution I can suggest is that rice should be bartered for other produce . . . but as regards persons who have no produce to offer in exchange I can suggest nothing except the opening of relief works on a large scale'.

'I have taken the following action in connection with local supplies and the control of prices.

(a) A census of crops and cattle is being made. . . .

(b) A control of goods order has been issued . . . requiring all persons in possession of more than 15 baskets of rice to declare their stocks. . . .

(c) Maximum retail prices have been fixed for the more essential foodstuffs. . . .

(d) Efforts are being made to stimulate the production of salt. . . .

(e) Provision has been made for the reception of CASB supplies in a depot at Myaing. None have so far been received. . .

(f) The SCAO's Upper and Lower Chindwin have been warned that we shall need large quantities of bamboo . . . for building purposes. . . .

(g) Owners of vegetable oil mills have been urged to re-open where possible.'

'As soon as I arrived I contacted the former Municipal Secretary who has proved a competent and energetic person

¹ Robbery by five or more persons jointly.

Conservancy carts have been constructed and pit latrines are being dug. . . . Roads are also being repaired and drains cleared of vegetation. I am anxious to do a bit of town planning in the devastated quarters and this matter is also in hand.'

'Most of the old government servants have been contacted. There have been hardly any cases of government servants having behaved in a disloyal and improper manner though most of them accepted employment under the Puppet Government. . . .'

'An order has been promulgated requiring all persons in possession of firearms and military equipment left behind by the enemy to register them and, pending my final orders in individual cases, Station Inspectors of Police have been given powers to grant temporary permits for village defence.'

'Most of the senior officials in this district were required by the Japs to evacuate across the river to Myingyan but some of them evaded arrest. . . .'

'I have had numerous enquiries from school teachers about their prospects of re-employment. . . . No instructions have yet been received regarding education policy apart from a pronouncement that the military administration cannot undertake anything more than elementary education. . . .'

'Medical officers have arrived in Gangaw, Tilin, Pauk and Pakokku. The hospital at Yesagyo is intact and an officer should also be provided for that as soon as possible. The Pakokku hospital has been temporarily housed in the old Post Office and PWD office buildings which have been repaired for the purpose.

Scabies is prevalent and it is very desirable to get in supplies of soap as soon as possible.

Smallpox had broken out in several areas and I have indented for supplies of vaccine lymph but it seems to be in very short supply.'

'A report has been made to Corps on the state of all saw mills in Pakokku and efforts are being made to re-open some of them'

A month later the S.C.A.O. was reporting

'The police and internal security troops have had considerable success in rounding up dacoits and have also shot more than a dozen in action; but the leader of the biggest gang is still at large.'

'We have had about 60 tons of rice delivered so far. Some supplies of cloth, salt, matches and milk have also been received. No soap or thread has so far been received, and only a small quantity of yarn.'

'The most important ground nut oil mill in Pakokku has started production and I am also encouraging the production of home-produced oil by exchange of rice'.

The S.C.A.O. came under the control of IV Corps after he had set up his administration in Pakokku, so reaching the 'semi-territorial' stage.

On 15th April 1945, he passed to the control of 505 Military District a part of the line of communication organization behind the advancing forces, so reaching the 'territorial' stage.

* * *

A Civil Affairs team was attached to the main body of 17th Indian Division when this crossed the Irrawaddy and began its dash for Meiktila. Mahlaing, together with an air strip at Thabutkon, was captured on 25th February. Here the government office was found looted and in complete disorder, but certain documents and records of the Burmese Administration set up by the Japanese were captured. After several days of fierce fighting the greater part of Meiktila town the railway station, and the main Meiktila airfield had been captured by 4th March. A brigade of reinforcements and supplies were at once flown into the airfields for, as was to be expected, the enemy closed in behind the forward elements of IV Corps now in Meiktila, and the land communications to the Nyaungu bridgehead remained closed until nearly the end of March. During that time yet another brigade was flown in bringing the force up to four infantry brigades and one armoured brigade. Once established in Meiktila, 17th Indian Division mobile columns spread out seeking to destroy the enemy and to disrupt his communications. The Civil Affairs team was now able to move out of the town and to visit neighbouring villages, to recruit civilian labour for repair and unloading work on the airfield, to arrange for purchase of local supplies, to arrange for civilian intelligence from more distant areas still under Japanese occupation, to distribute to needy villagers supplies from captured enemy dumps, to take sanitary precautions outside the military perimeter, to arrange medical attention for civilian casualties, and to round up and interrogate suspects in co-operation with the Provost and Field Security authorities.

It had hitherto been the Japanese policy to withdraw with them as they retreated from any area, all local officers of standing and experience. In Meiktila the speed of the advance had been so great that for the first time the whole of the local administration was left behind in a nearby village. The two senior officials hastened to offer their services to the British commanders and it was accordingly proposed to bring them into British headquarters. Before this could be done a curious incident occurred, the facts of which have never been well established. It appears that the two officials were kidnapped, by a joint party of Japanese and members of the Burma National Army,¹ and that their lives were in danger on account of their offer of co-operation with the British. Before any harm could come to them however, the Burmese members of the kidnapping party appear to have turned upon the Japanese and killed them. The two officials with their families were

¹ Cf. Chapter XIX.

then moved into the protection of the British headquarters. Their deliverers were handsomely rewarded. The question arose whether these two Burmese officers should not be continued in charge of the local administration, with the threads of which they were obviously familiar. The policy for the re-employment of senior government employees who had taken service under the Japanese (which will be more fully discussed in the next chapter) required, however, that the conduct of these officers during the Japanese occupation should first be investigated and that they might in due course be re-employed in some other district, only if their behaviour was found satisfactory. It was, therefore, somewhat reluctantly, decided that they could not be left in charge.

As soon as Meiktila was secured columns had pushed out in all directions to destroy enemy communications and supplies, but, as the Japanese concentrated forces for a counter-attack, the scope of these raids lessened, until finally the garrison was for a time forced on the defensive, and the main airfield came under close range artillery fire. Many of the early contacts with neighbouring villages had to be abandoned. It was no longer possible to obtain labour for work on the air field. Headmen who had cooperated and whose villages were now overrun by the Japanese were given sanctuary. Supplies frequently had to be parachuted as the airfield was under Japanese fire. The civil intelligence organization built up on arrival continued, however, to yield good information. At last, on 28th March, the enemy, driven from the strong defended areas he had established north, east, and south of Meiktila, and finding strong relief forces moving towards Meiktila from Nyaungu, gave up the fight and withdrew southwards. The pursuit by IV Corps was immediately set in motion and a fresh start could be made with the establishment of administration.

It was decided very early that the headquarters of the Meiktila District could not be set up in Meiktila itself: the town was completely destroyed, any shells of buildings left would for some time be required for corps headquarters, and there were in any case no inhabitants or business in the town. The S.C.A.O. selected Mahlaing, a small town or large village some fifteen miles out of Meiktila which had been less badly damaged, and where there were still standing in good condition a group of buildings formerly used as a government experimental agricultural station. There the S.C.A.O. took into employment the subordinate staff that had been discovered at Meiktila, and his Police officer recruited and began training a police force.

Outlying township headquarters, of which there were three, were visited, and township officers appointed or recognized. A prison had to be somewhat unsatisfactorily improvised, although a prison to accommodate some 130 prisoners was one of the few comparatively undamaged buildings in Meiktila. A part of this was monopolized by a military telephone exchange, the greater part standing empty, and it

was many months before orders for the allocation of the building to its normal purpose could be obtained. Markets were encouraged in convenient centres. The Meiktila District grew cotton which was woven into clothing and went some way to meet the acute demand for textiles. It also produced vegetables and oil for cooking purposes. The main shortage was of rice.

The ordinary means of transport and the ordinary channels of trade having disappeared, it was one of the first cares of the S.C.A.O. in this, as in other districts, to apply restoratives where possible. Agreements were entered into by him with neighbouring districts for the exchange of vegetables and oil for rice. Bullock cart convoys replaced train transport. And when it was realised that these convoys were likely to be looted, they were escorted with police, or armed so that they could defend themselves. Rice was carried in returning empty military trucks. By one means or another the economy of the country was coaxed back to life.

There was a continual demand from the military authorities for labour to work on the airfield or to unload aircraft and there was always difficulty in meeting this. To those accustomed to inflated Japanese currency, wages paid in the uninflated military administration currency seemed small. And, in fact, the new currency also suffered from a certain degree of inflation. In any event there was virtually nothing to buy, so that there was little incentive to the Burmese to leave their families and the work in their fields. But if 'rations' could be provided, which might mean anything from bare rice and salt to most of the items normally supplied to Indian troops, this would usually attract labour, at least for a time. A Labour camp at first met with little success, but when it was developed into a temporary village where labourers could bring and house their families, where 'rations' would be issued and could be cooked by their wives, and where even a school was started for their children, then these amenities began to outbalance the disadvantages of working away from home and labour became more plentiful.

* * *

Meanwhile on 9th March, 19th Indian Division of XXXIII Corps reached the town of Mandalay. On 14th March the town was sufficiently cleared to permit investment of Fort Dufferin adjoining and on 20th March the Fort was entered and the remaining Japanese surrendered. On 21st March the town was declared entirely clear of enemy.

Although much of Mandalay was destroyed parts were comparatively undamaged and the life of the town revived more readily than in most other towns of Burma. On re-occupation 5,000 to 7,000 out of a

pre-war population of 160,000 were found. In six weeks this number had grown to 35,000 or 40,000.

The story of Pakokku and Meiktila has been told from the standpoint of general administration: for Mandalay it will be told from the point of view of the police. This carries no suggestion that the work of other departments in Mandalay was less important or successful, any more than the selection of Pakokku, Meiktila and Mandalay for fuller treatment than other Districts carries any such suggestion regarding work done elsewhere. Selection is inevitable and there is here an opportunity to pay tribute to the difficult but essential work of the police throughout the re-occupation.

A Civil Affairs team entered Mandalay District on 10th March with forces of 19th Indian Division crossing the Irrawaddy at Singu, some fifty miles north of Mandalay. Immediately one Burmese Sub-Inspector and four constables, ex-members of the District Police force, joined up. The next day, 11th March, Civil Affairs headquarters moved with 19th Division troops to Madaya, some twenty-miles north of Mandalay: here four Burmese officers and forty-five constables of the force came in. A police force was formed and a party sent back to take charge at Singu. Great numbers of firearms were in the hands of unknown members of the public. Small monetary rewards were offered to those who brought in firearms, and also the hope of receiving a licence if those who brought them in were considered sufficiently reliable. Sixty improvised licences were issued between the 11th and 14th at Madaya and many more than that number of weapons were handed in to the police. Ultimately, some 4,000 rifles and some 200 revolvers, sten guns, Tommy guns and Bren guns were surrendered in the district.

On 15th March the headquarters of the Administration moved another stage nearer to Mandalay, to Kabaing. Most of Mandalay town had been re-occupied, but in Fort Dufferin, adjoining the town on the east, the Japanese still held out against all attacks. The Senior Civil Affairs officer in charge of the district police, or S.C.A.O.(P), entered the town, made contact with ex-members of the force, and visited all the police stations he could reach, to ascertain the condition of the buildings. A nucleus police force was established at Maymyo, the old hill station forty miles north-east of Mandalay. Police aided 19th Division in mopping-up operations. Twelve Japanese other ranks were captured, the S.C.A.O. and the S.C.A.O.(P) captured a Japanese officer near the Fort, and police patrols shepherded a small Japanese force into the neighbourhood of 19th Division forces which destroyed the party. The S.C.A.O.(P) and his assistant joined in the final assault upon the Fort. By the 24th March, civil headquarters had been established in Mandalay and the police stations at Singu and Madaya, and about half the Mandalay town police stations were working in improvised fashion. A few days later those at Amarapura and Myitnge

were opened. All police were armed either with weapons collected from the public, or with rifles from military stocks. Early in April the tide of war swept south. Criminals had been deterred by the presence of numerous military forces, but as these thinned out they became active. The police now had to wage war not against the Japanese but against the gang robbers and dacoits. The first engagements were in the north where a small police force harried and finally dispersed five large gangs. In May, sixteen engagements occurred, dacoits being attacked by villagers in one case, by police in the rest. A number of dacoit leaders were killed. Local inhabitants, spurred by rewards for robbers captured or killed, gave willing aid. The unusual readiness of villagers to cooperate was also ascribed by the S.C.A.O.(P) to the fact that as no courts were yet functioning their cooperation would not bring upon them the vexatious liability to attend Court to give their evidence. Assistance was also given to the police by the military forces, the military police in Mandalay welcoming any opportunity to go into action against the dacoits. When the measure of the dacoits had been gained, attention could be turned to clothing and housing the police force which had grown to some 750 officers and men. The excellent discipline and *esprit de corps* were ascribed to the ease with which an unsatisfactory worker could be dispensed with, coupled with the S.C.A.O.'s practice of adjudicating upon complaints immediately in an informal court of enquiry on which were representatives of all ranks of the force not below that of the offender.

* * *

In Arakan, by 27th December 1944, the leading troops of 25th Indian Division had reached Foul Point, last visited by a British patrol in the early stages of the 1942-43 advance. An amphibious landing was planned to be made on Akyab Island from the south, but when it became known that the Japanese garrison had been reduced to one battalion in order to strengthen the rearguard opposing the advance of 81st West African Division further to the east, in the Kaladan valley, it was ordered that 25th Division should cross the Mayu estuary without delay and land on Akyab island on 3rd January. On 2nd January an air observation post artillery officer, seeing the island apparently deserted, landed and found that the Japanese had indeed abandoned the town, if not the whole island.¹ On 3rd January, the D.C.C.A.O. XV Corps, was flown into Akyab in advance of the assault force. He found the town in ruins, the main jetty unfit for use owing to bombing and corrosion, the harbour silted up owing to wrecks, and the water main destroyed by the enemy. The inhabitants met were almost all Arakanese Muslims.² In the D.C.C.A.O.'s own words: 'The

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 110.

² Cf. p. 21.

tragedy of 1942 has left its mark on the community and the hope was freely expressed that the delay before the arrival of the troops would not be great, in case of a further outbreak.'

Two days later, on 5th January, an advance party of the administration for the town and district of Akyab arrived, consisting of the S.C.A.O., a Police Officer with a police party of six, a Medical Officer and Compounder, and a Welfare Office and two Welfare Subordinates. The main party arrived on 20th January. All the equipment provided for the party was lost in transit from Chittagong to Akyab, possibly owing to last moment changes in the original loading plans which had been for an opposed landing. The S.C.A.O.'s first impressions were:

'I estimate that about 98% of buildings in the town are damaged to some extent i.e. considerably more than had been estimated from appreciations of air photographs. Not all the damage was due to bombing, a considerable amount being due to stripping of walls and floors by the Japs for shelters, firewood, etc., while the effects of three monsoons on uninhabited buildings had also taken their toll. The whole town was overgrown with jungle, only a few streets being comparatively free from it, and this enhanced the impression of utter desolation.'

A Deputy S.C.A.O. with the necessary staff was left in charge of 'North Arakan' until communications justified the re-absorption of this wartime administrative area into its peace-time parent district of Akyab.

After the fall of Akyab a series of operations, mostly amphibious, was undertaken to clear southern Arakan (consisting of part of the district of Akyab and the two districts of Kyaukpyu and Sandoway) and to contain and destroy as many Japanese as possible. Assaults were made at Myebon on 12th January, at Kangaw on 22nd January, at Cheduba Island on 26th January, at Ruywa and An on 16th February, at Taungup on 28th April, at Sandoway on 4th May and at Gwa on 15th May.¹ With these the clearing of the enemy from Arakan was complete.

By February an S.C.A.O. was in position to revive administration of the Kyaukpyu District. A detachment of a hundred Tripura Rifles was temporarily allotted for internal security in the District. By 20th February the S.C.A.O. had visited the town of Ramree, which lies in the interior of the island of that name, and made arrangements for re-establishing administration there.

Sandoway was re-occupied on 4th May and brought under administration shortly after.

* * *

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, pp. 111, 112, 125, 147.

The successful actions at, and in the area between, Mandalay and Meiktila, changed the whole character of the campaign. The extensive collapse of the Japanese forces made possible rapid advances and a largely uncontested re-establishment of administration. The pace of this chapter will quicken also and in the absence of interesting or unusual features, no further detailed account of the re-establishment of administration will be attempted. For the record, however, there follows a brief summary of the progress of the re-occupation of the rest of Burma.

While IV Corps was fighting the battle of Meiktila, the Myingyan District, through which the columns directed on Meiktila had ground their dusty way, was progressively re-occupied. A temporary headquarters for the administration was established in the Nyaungu beach-head, from which these columns issued, on 21st February. Here for the first time in the course of the advance Burmans of standing and education were discovered in numbers, many such having taken sanctuary near the pagodas of Pagan. It was not until 4th April that this headquarters could be moved to its pre-war location at Myingyan.

When IV Corps struck south at Rangoon from Meiktila, administration was re-established in its wake, first in the Yamethin District where, however, the headquarters of the Administration was set up at Pyinmana instead of in Yamethin itself, then in the last days of April at Toungoo, and, in the first days of May, in Pegu.

Meanwhile, as XXXIII Corps advanced southwards from Mandalay, administration was set up in the Kyaukse District, in Magwe (with temporary headquarters in Yenangyaung) in Minbu, in Thayetmyo (with temporary headquarters at Allanmyo on the opposite bank of the Irrawaddy), in Prome, in Tharrawaddy, and in Henzada.

On 10th May 1945 Major-General H. E. Rance, a regular officer formerly in the Royal Corps of Signals, succeeded Major-General Pearce as C.C.A.O.

* * *

Civil Affairs planning for the re-occupation of Rangoon had been initiated early, but as the administration of the city, apart from the maintenance of order and the administration of justice, had been almost entirely in the hands of the Rangoon Corporation, it was desired to recruit an officer with experience of service under the Corporation to take charge, first, of planning and, later, of the administration of the city. This officer, Mr. C. B. Rennick, had, after evacuation from Burma, taken civil employment under the Government of India. The most pressing requests to that Government did not avail to obtain his release, since he was employed under the National Service Act which applied the principle of compulsory service to Europeans in India. It

was only the fortunate circumstance that he reached the age of fifty just before the re-occupation of Rangoon, and, escaping the obligations of this Act, was able to terminate his service with the Government of India of his own accord, that made him available for service with the Military Administration. He was immediately posted in March 1945, as D.C.C.A.O. at the headquarters of No. 1 Military Area which was being formed in Calcutta in preparation for the re-occupation of Rangoon. He began with no assistants, no transport and no equipment, but by the middle of April, while at the same time reviewing the plans already prepared, he had gathered round himself a nucleus of these. As it was not known whether Rangoon would fall to IV Corps advancing from the north or to the combined operation planned to come in by sea from Arakan, two advance parties, were organised, each as self-contained as possible. One was sent in by land, leaving Siliguri in Bengal on 20th April; the other left Calcutta by sea on 5th May.

The Japanese had marched out of Rangoon on 29th April. The members of the Burmese Government left behind by them were without influence. Undaunted, a wing-commander of the R.A.A.F., who had been a prisoner of war in the Rangoon jail, assumed charge. There were two quasi-military forces in the city, a detachment of the Burma National Army about 4,500 strong, and a detachment of the Indian National Army about 5,000 strong, and it was feared that there might be a clash between these two bodies. This was avoided, the latter being employed on police duties in the city and the former remaining centred on a northern suburb of Rangoon.

On 1st May a Gurkha parachute battalion was dropped some seven miles south west of Elephant Point and by midday it had annihilated the garrison of the small Japanese post left there. The next day the leading elements of 26th Indian Division were put ashore at the mouth of the Rangoon River. On 3rd May leading troops of the division entered Rangoon without opposition and took over responsibility for the administration.¹ On the following day evacuation of prisoners of war began.

A C.A.O. accompanied 26th Indian Division into Rangoon. On 7th May the D.C.C.A.O. Rangoon and his chief police officer arrived. On 10th May the first two officers of the land advance party flew from Pegu to Rangoon. On 12th May the sea advance party arrived. Thereafter reinforcements came in slowly but fairly regularly. As No. 1 Military Area covered not only the city and civil district of Rangoon but also the neighbouring districts of Insein and Hanthawaddy, the D.C.C.A.O. No. 1 Area was placed in general charge of the S.C.A.O.'s for Insein and Hanthawaddy districts, in addition to being placed in direct administrative charge of Rangoon itself. This temporary departure from the pre-war civil administrative practice, under which

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 157.

the districts of Insein and Hanthawaddy formed a part of the Pegu Division, controlled by the Commissioner, Pegu, who also exercised such administrative functions in the city of Rangoon as were not undertaken by the non-official Rangoon Corporation, worked satisfactorily.

In Rangoon the formation stage passed straight to the territorial stage, without any intervening semi-territorial phase. The subsequent development of administration in Rangoon will accordingly be treated in the next chapter.

* * *

When IV Corps reached Pegu, and then joined hands with 26th Division in Rangoon, a large number of Japanese were cut off to the west of the line so established. These began to drain out of the populous area of the Irrawaddy delta and to mass in the mountainous forest country of the Pegu Yomas for a breakout to rejoin their main forces to the east of IV Corps. The northern-most of the delta districts, Henzada, had been re-occupied by XXXIII Corps. The seaport of Bassein was re-occupied by a combined naval and military force from Rangoon on 25th May.¹ Administration was re-established in both these districts. The remaining three districts of the delta, Maubin, Myaungmya and Pyapon were not re-occupied for some time as the available forces were concentrated on the task of destroying the trapped Japanese forces and as there was a great shortage of suitable water transport, without which the re-occupation of the delta would have been difficult. The monsoon was also approaching, which would have made movement still more difficult. The question arose whether any re-establishment of administration should be attempted in the districts abandoned by the Japanese but not yet re-occupied by British forces. In the words of the C.C.A.O.:—‘It was known that with the withdrawal of the Japanese the Puppet administration had virtually broken down, that murder, dacoity and robbery were universal, that there was very extensive and serious communal trouble between the Burmese and the Karens inhabiting the area, and that such power as existed at all was in the hands of roving well-armed bands of the Burmese National Army which had revolted against the Japanese in March.’² These were known to be suspicious of and likely to oppose, an attempt to introduce British Military administration in the area.’ It was decided that no attempt to re-establish administration was practicable until adequate military backing could be assured. To introduce Civil Affairs officers without sufficient military support would have meant placing them in a position where they could not enforce their authority and where they might themselves be in considerable danger.

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 163.

² Cf. Chapter XIX.

This decision meant leaving the three districts unadministered for some eight or ten weeks and so prolonging and increasing the chaos that the Administration would ultimately be required to deal with; but the decision was probably inevitable and had to be taken again later, in somewhat similar circumstances, east of the Salween, after the general surrender of the Japanese.

* * *

When the Japanese surrendered, on 14th August, they still occupied in Burma an area corresponding roughly to the five districts of Thaton, Amherst, Tavoy, Mergui, and Salween, all in the Tenasserim Civil Division. The re-establishment of administration in these districts presented many of the problems and characteristics of the post-surrender re-occupations of Malaya, Indo-China and Indonesia. As in these countries, and as in the case of the delta districts of Burma, there was a delay of some weeks after surrender before re-occupation could be effected, owing to the difficulties of transport and supply in the monsoon and to the fact that the approaches to all ports along the Tenasserim coast had been mined by Japanese and British and that mine sweeping equipment was not immediately available. As in the case of other post-surrender occupations, responsibility for the preservation of order until British forces could arrive was placed upon the Japanese. British forces arrived in Thaton in the early part of September, in Mergui on 10th September, in Amherst on 1st October, in Tavoy on 10th October, and in Salween on 29th October.

In areas actually occupied by their troops the Japanese had discharged their responsibilities not unsatisfactorily. Outside these areas they had exerted little or no control and the Japanese-sponsored Burmese Government, had practically ceased to exercise any influence. Groups of the Burma National Army, or of guerillas raised by British or American clandestine organizations exercised authority of a kind, or extorted protection money in particular areas. Disorder and ill-feeling of all kinds were rife. In the last months before surrender the Japanese had attempted to bolster up their waning authority by terrorism and brutality against any persons suspected of pro-British or anti-Japanese sympathies. In Amherst District 600 Muslims, men, women, and children, were massacred by them for giving aid to British parachutists. Enmity was strong between Burmans and Karens in all districts. The Karens, staunchly pro-British, had been ready throughout the Japanese occupation to shelter and aid British and American parachutists, the Burmans had often betrayed and harried the Karens. Now the Karens were exacting revenge. A gang of some 700 murdered twenty-one Burmans in Mergui District. In December dacoity in the Sittang Valley on the border of Thaton and Pegu Districts developed into an

organized threat against the Administration. There were shortages, as elsewhere in Burma, particularly of rice, vegetable oil, clothing and soap. A particular task, the rescue of workers on the Burma-Siam railway, will be referred to in a later chapter.¹

Gradually, however, the Administration was able to reassert itself, and by the end of December it was reported by the D.C.C.A.O. that 'crime was down to peace-time level except for Kyain and Kawkareik township'. The Administration had two advantages denied to the earlier Civil Affairs parties. For almost the first time in the whole of the Burma campaign headquarters had caught up with events and it was possible to send in adequate teams properly equipped and supplied. Secondly, the conclusion of operations made it possible for the military commanders concerned to give a higher priority to Civil Affairs needs, and their whole-hearted assistance and co-operation in the tasks of administration. We may conclude this brief summary of events in Tenasserim by quoting the words of the D.C.C.A.O., Colonel W. I. J. Wallace:

'I cannot close the last B.M.A. report without recording two things:

(a) My thanks to all officers and other personnel of the B.M.A. in Tenasserim. Co-operation between departments has been unusually good. With inadequate transport, every kind of equipment short, and subordinate personnel largely untrained, the officers in each district have produced an ordered administration in three months out of something very near anarchy. Much remains to be done, but a good foundation has been laid.

(b) My thanks to G.O.C. 17th Indian Division, his staff and all services, formations and units under his command for their more than generous co-operation and assistance which we still need as Government of Burma officers—and which we are still receiving.

The B.M.A. in Tenasserim has been a happy ship, and though its termination was inevitable it is permissible to record a word of regret at its passing'.

¹ Cf. Chapter XV.

CHAPTER VII

TERRITORIAL ADMINISTRATION

WITH THE re-entry into Rangoon a new stage was reached. The greater part of Burma had been re-occupied and was placed under the control of the Line of Communication Command. With few exceptions, dictated by military needs, the boundaries of this Command, and of its Districts, Areas, and Sub-areas were made to conform with the pre-war civil administrative boundaries, so facilitating the rebuilding of the framework of government and its ultimate transfer to civil responsibility. Everywhere, except in the Tenasserim Division, and in some parts of the Irrawaddy, and the Shan States Divisions, the territorial phase of administration was established. Rangoon was the one major port of Burma and the centre of communications by road, rail, and water. It became urgently necessary for the headquarters of the administration to move thither from Barrackpore. The first request for accommodation was refused but the C.C.A.O.'s protests prevailed and the move of his headquarters began in the middle of June and was completed by August. Much dislocation was caused by the division of the headquarters over the prolonged period of the move, but once in Rangoon many problems were eased. Accommodation although cramped was adequate, and the recruitment of junior staff officers and clerks, which had presented insuperable difficulties in India, now ceased to be a problem at all as public servants of all grades were eager to be re-employed.

* * *

Conditions discovered in Rangoon can best be described in the words of the D.C.C.A.O.:

'The city was found to be in a state of indescribable filth. Back drainage spaces were 6 feet deep in sewage and rubbish, the accumulation of years. The water supply had ceased to function on 22 March 1945 with the bombing of the Gyobu and Hlawga water pipe lines, Sanitary fittings could not therefore function and all sewers were choked. When no further sewage would go down the sanitary fittings, the occupants made holes in the soil pipes and let the sewage discharge into the back drainage spaces on the top of the accumulations of filth already there, and into open road side drains. In the interim between the departure of the Japanese on 25 April 1945 and the arrival of the

British on 2 May 1945 the city was in the hands of looters and bad hats. Banks had been rifled, and furniture, water, sanitary and electric fittings had been looted from all unoccupied properties. The poorer classes were suffering from malnutrition and deficiency diseases generally and the only civil hospital functioning was the State Hospital in the Diocesan Girls School which was in a filthy condition and all surgical cases were septic. This hospital was regarded by the people as the place where one went to die. No maintenance of roads and roadside drains had been carried out during the Japanese occupation and the drains outside the *pucca* area were choked with filth and rank vegetation. No transport of any sort was available for the removal of night soil and rubbish.'

To re-establish the water-supply from Gyobyu, fifty miles away, eighteen shattered lengths of the fifty-nine inch pipe-line, each twenty-five feet long and weighing five tons, were replaced, and many other patch repairs were carried out. In three weeks the water supply to the city was turned on again. Fourteen lengths of the forty-two inch underground water main from Hlawga, sixteen miles out of Rangoon, were removed and replaced by lengths of pipe recovered from a disused water main. Water from this source was turned on in August 1945. Distribution mains had been smashed throughout the city by bombing and there were some 200 major breaks. Countless repairs to hydrants, stand pipes, and house connections had to be carried out. As a result of these efforts *almost 50% more water was supplied daily* to the city, five months after the return to Rangoon, than before the war.

Equally extensive work was necessary on the sewerage system, thirty-six out of thirty-eight ejector stations requiring repairs and the remaining two stations having to be completely replaced. Over 350 major blockages and breaks in the system had to be cleared and repaired. The work of clearing all open road-side drains was vigorously put in hand.

The health unit removed a daily average of 441 tons of rubbish over the period 1st June to 31st October, against a peacetime average, with a fully staffed and equipped department, of 354 tons. Special truck bodies were constructed locally for removal of night soil and fitted to army vehicles.

Strong anti-epidemic and anti-malarial measures were undertaken—in fact, all pre-war public health activities were fully revived. By the end of June, less than two months after the re-occupation of Rangoon, five hospitals with 1,150 beds were in operation. Over 6,500 in-patients were treated in hospitals and dispensaries in the period June—October, and 254,000 out-patients. In addition 19,000 cases were treated at the venereal disease clinic. As elsewhere in Burma there was an acute shortage of conservancy coolies but by the end of October 500

had been recruited and brought in from India and 800 Japanese surrendered persons were also employed on the work. More coolies were being recruited in India.

Recruiting for the Rangoon police force began on re-occupation and by the end of May its strength was already 800, with ex-constables reporting at the rate of 100 a day. Most of the original police stations could be used and were reopened; where necessary, temporary stations were improvised.

The first courts were opened on the 22nd May, and by June were reported to be functioning satisfactorily everywhere. Judicial and Law officers reported back for duty, sixty-six coming in during May, and in the following month these began to be recruited into the Administration. The books of the High Court Library were recovered.

In June a part of the Insein jail was set free for detention of civilian prisoners although members of the Indian National Army were still confined in the rest of the prison. It was proposed to move the latter elsewhere and thereafter to use the whole of the prison for civil purposes, except for a small portion that would be required for military detention cases. By August a number of the jail industries (furniture making, chair caning, and bucket making) were in operation and others were in process of revival. The Rangoon prison, almost as large as that at Insein, was not available for its proper purpose as it was needed for a military depot.

On 13th May the first number of the 'Rangoon Liberator' appeared—a single sheet leaflet that was to grow and eventually become the 'New Times of Burma'. It contained items of war news, local information and official notices. One of these was Price Control Order No. 1 of 1945 fixing prices of paddy, rice, salt, onions, beef, mutton, pork and other items of food stuffs. The first two copies of the 'Liberator' sold for two annas British, the third for twenty Japanese rupees.

A fire Service was created, many old members of the Rangoon Fire Brigade being re-employed. The nucleus organisation brought in by the Administration included two Fire officers formerly employed in Burma and members both of the Calcutta Fire Brigade and of the National Fire Service in Great Britain.

By June the Relief and Labour Department had established three relief camps in Rangoon, housing 3,000 refugees or displaced persons, and seven labour camps. Ultimately over 45,000 skilled and unskilled labourers were supplied daily for military needs including those of the Administration. The department was operating distribution points at which essential commodities were retailed to the public, on payment at full or reduced rates, or free of charge in appropriate cases. Commodities distributed included rice, *dhall*¹, salt, cooking oil, *atta*, sugar, tinned meat, tinned milk, tea, soap, *longyis*, vests, standard cloth,

¹ *Dhall* = lentils. *Atta* = coarse flour. *Longyis* = cotton skirt.

blankets, needles and matches. By July the number of distribution points in Rangoon totalled twenty-three. Ploughshares and kerosene had been added to the articles normally supplied. In September 23% of the population of Rangoon was being provided with its essential requirements through official distribution points. The department also opened a bureau for the benefit of those, mostly Indians, who wished to obtain news of friends or relations in India or wished to be repatriated to India. Facilities for repatriation were confined to persons not required in connection with the war effort in Burma. In September the department organized the repatriation of Burma nationals from Assam and also the repatriation of Indians to India, for which the Government of India had at last given permission.

All utilizable markets and slaughter houses were re-opened, nine out of the pre-war fourteen Municipal markets in Rangoon being in use by August.

By July, a hosiery works, a match factory, an iron foundry, and a bakery were being assisted back into production. A survey was also being made of the possibility of reviving *atta* and *dhall* mills, vegetable oil mills, an ice factory, soap works, a pottery, lime and brick works, a container factory, and a rope works. By September the aluminium works were being revived for the production of domestic hardware of which there was a serious shortage. The aluminium parts of all wrecked aircraft were collected by the Supply and Industry Department for the purpose. By October plans were in preparation for handing over retail distribution, so far made through official distribution points, to retail dealers, in order to re-open normal trade channels.

Countless requests for information and miscellaneous assistance were received by the Administration, ranging from a request for a red plush cushion for the use of the Supreme Allied Commander at a ceremonial parade to one for the services of a piano tuner for the Royal Air Force. These two, and many others also, were satisfactorily met.

It was beyond the resources of the Administration to restore electric lighting generally to the city, but a few of the more important streets were lit comparatively early. Roads suffered from the total neglect throughout the period of Japanese occupation, and little could at first be done to repair them owing to lack of materials.

The re-opening of the port was undertaken by military transportation units working in close co-operation with units raised by the Administration, under a military Port Commandant, the whole under the general direction of the Director of Transportation (Burma) whose headquarters, although an ALFSEA organization, was attached, first to Fourteenth, and later to Twelfth Army. The port was found completely derelict with the one important exception that vessels of limited draught could come alongside three berths. Pontoon landing stages had been sunk, jetties were stripped or in decay, sheds bombed or

looted, machinery smashed, cranes immobilised; wreckage, or deliberately-placed underwater obstructions, rendered berths useless. The view from the roof of the neighbouring Law Courts revealed a heartbreaking mass of twisted steelwork, smashed concrete, debris and wreckage, choking the whole of the Sule Pagoda Wharf area. Work was started at once dredging channels, removing wreckage, repairing decking, clearing the wharves, salvaging and patching pontoons, thatching buildings which had been stripped of corrugated iron sheeting, restoring the perimeter fence to the Port Area. On 10th May, three ships were unloading alongside in a minimum depth of twenty-three feet. By 17th May, four steam tugs, one self-propelled water barge, and some ten steel, and fifteen wooden, lighters were in use.

On the return of the civil government, executive control of the port was transferred from the military, to the Civil Affairs transportation services, although the military authorities retained policy control. On 1st January 1946, full responsibility was transferred to the civil government. By this date it could be claimed that essential facilities had been restored for the handling of 5,000 tons per day. This claim however, cannot profitably be compared with any pre-war figures, and requires some amplification if it is to convey a true picture. Where before the war there had been ten berths, all permitting direct discharge of cargo from vessels brought alongside, there were restored and brought into use, by the end of the period of military administration, seven berths, only three of which were alongside-berths, the remaining four being pontoon-berths. At all these, cargo could be handled only by the acceptance of risks, cost, and lack of security to cargo landed, which, although permissible in the handling of military cargo in war conditions, would have been totally unacceptable in peace-time working. At none of these berths could any cargo be handled according to peace time routine and standards. But no one who had seen the early wreckage and devastation in the port could doubt that those responsible for its rehabilitation had cause for solid satisfaction.

In all, including the police force, there were twenty-eight different units of the administration in Rangoon by the end of October 1945, with a staff of over 300 officers, and 10,000 other ranks.

* * *

Outside Rangoon the story is resumed from the stage reached in the previous chapter. Three major problems continued to obtrude themselves, first, the lawlessness prevalent throughout the country, second—the uneven distribution of food and other stocks and the acute shortages of some commodities, and, third, the need to get the greatest possible area under the plough for the agricultural season that was beginning.

In the early stages lawlessness took the form of gang-robbery and

dacoity, Pakokku, Myingyan, Yamethin and Toungoo Districts causing particular anxiety. Later, when robbery and dacoity were being brought under control, the pilfering of military stores became the most frequent crime, particularly in the Rangoon area. It was at first difficult to obtain information concerning gangs because of the brutality of reprisals against informers. In July two persons were murdered on the outskirts of Rangoon for reporting to the police. In remoter parts this was a frequent occurrence. Dangerous quantities of arms and ammunition hidden throughout the country made the task of the Administration harder. The recruitment of police and the re-opening of police stations raised confidence and checked the activity of criminals, but it led at first to an apparent increase in crime as more persons dared to report. Sometimes the Burma National Army, now known as the Patriotic Burmese Forces (P.B.F.)¹ assisted the police; sometimes the less desirable members, such as may be found in many forces, actively took part in the commission of crime; often criminals acted under cover of membership of the force. However, by June the figures for crime in Upper Burma were improving; and by August the improvement was showing itself in Lower Burma. September saw further improvement, except for a set-back in the Yamethin District where a gang of seventy attacked a police outpost, killed four of the police party, set fire to the buildings and seized 25 firearms and 1,000 rounds of ammunition. By the end of the military period the police force was up to 90% of pre-war strength but morale was still poor, largely because of the lack of suitable uniforms. Criminal courts were trying cases up to a quarter of the pre-war volume. About half the pre-war number of prisoners were incarcerated in some thirty jails—almost the pre-war number, but many were damaged and could not be fully used. Crime was still being committed on a scale unimagined before the war, but the forces of order were beginning to gain the ascendancy.

The uneven distribution and shortages of food and other stocks led to harsh contrasts. Shwebo district reported 'religious processions of hundreds of well-fed villagers in their brightly coloured "Sunday go to meeting" clothes.' Pakokku, not far away, reported that dacoits were 'hunting in packs like hungry wolves', driven to crime by hunger. There was no over-all shortage of rice but the communications of the country had been disrupted by Allied bombing and machine-gunning of trains, boats and bullock-carts, and by Japanese slaughter of draught cattle for food; and the movement of such boats and carts as were left was restricted by the attacks of robbers. At first little could be done by the Administration except to organize and arm convoys of carts. A little later it was able to employ motor transport groups to move stocks from surplus to deficit areas, mostly from Lower to Upper

¹ Cf. Chapter XIX.

Burma. Small quantities of rice were imported by land from India. By July imports for the civil population were beginning to come in through the port of Rangoon and much had been done to revive the milling and bagging of rice. On the Irrawaddy, more and more country boats were being salvaged and brought out of hiding and fitted with patch-work sails. Centres were established where the rice, salt, and fish of Lower Burma could be exchanged for the cooking oil, vegetables, and cotton clothing of Upper Burma.

Most important in the revival of communications was the re-opening of the railway. In July a daily service was instituted between Rangoon and Pegu and a twice-weekly service between Henzada and Bassein. By August the line from Rangoon to Prome was in operation and the service to Pegu was extended to north of Toungoo. Further north, services based on Thazi radiated to Mandalay, Payangasu, Tatkon, and Myingyan. By the time of the hand-over of the railway to civil control, which was made by stages from 22nd October 1945, to 1st January 1946, 800 miles of track had been opened to traffic out of a pre-war total mileage of 2,667, more than forty bridges had been rebuilt, and the average load carried was over 220,000 net ton miles per day. The mileage operated was about one quarter of pre-war, the numbers of locomotives and passenger coaches in use were about one third, and the number of goods wagons about one half.

As in the case of the Port of Rangoon these figures, without qualification, give an unduly favourable impression. Nearly all rolling stock had been damaged by bombing; all suffered from a complete absence of maintenance during the Japanese occupation. Speeds were much reduced. No public passenger services could at any time be operated, although a few civilian passengers were carried under permits from the Administration. Lastly pilfering, robbing and looting of goods on trains was widespread. Curiously, however, the special circumstances of the period created for the first time a 'balanced' railway traffic in Burma. Pre-war traffic had been predominantly north to south, rice coming down to the ports. For some time after re-occupation the greatly reduced southward traffic was balanced by the increased northward movement of supplies and stores for the army, the Administration, and the civil population.

The third problem facing the administration was how to ensure, for the sake both of Burma and of the outer world, that the greatest possible area of land should be ploughed for rice in the current season. By 1944-45 the extent of such cultivation in Lower Burma, the main rice growing tract, had dwindled from a pre-war 10,000,000 acres to 5,600,000. Unfortunately ploughing was already beginning as Lower Burma was re-occupied and there was little time in which to act. There were many deterrents to cultivation. There was fear of the gangs of criminals. There was fear that landlords who had fled to India might

return to impose rack rents upon persons cultivating land without their permission. There was doubt regarding the price that crops would fetch, and still more doubt whether there would be anything to buy with the proceeds. There was lack of currency. There were even areas where lack of clothing confined cultivators to their houses. Remedies were the suppression of criminals and the import of clothing and other consumer goods but neither could be instantaneously achieved. An immediate notice was widely published calling for an increase in cultivation and promising that any cultivator who started the season in undisputed occupation of any land would be protected from eviction, at least until he had sold the crop raised on it. Unfortunately it was not possible to announce a definite price for these crops. The best that could be done was to guarantee prices 'which will enable you to buy the goods you need.' And conviction was somewhat taken out of this promise by the offer of only Rs 120/- per 100 baskets for old paddy, a price but 20% above pre-war and quite out of keeping with current prices for other commodities.¹ Irrigation canals in the Shwebo Mandalay, Kyaukse, and Minbu Districts were repaired to ensure sufficient water for rice cultivation, and in these districts 70% to 90% of the normal area under irrigation was cultivated. In the main rice districts of Lower Burma, however, the area cultivated ranged from 10% of normal in Toungoo and Pegu, the two districts in which had been fought the battle of the break-out, to 60% of normal in Tharra-waddy and Prome Districts where there had been virtually no fighting. These results were disappointing.

The public health and medical work of the administration was more successful. At the end of 1944, before the large scale re-occupation, thirty-one units were in operation, seventeen hospitals (one of 120, one of 100, the rest of 10-40 beds), twelve dispensaries and two Medical Inspection rooms. Five officers were employed at headquarters and seventy officers and 209 civilians in the field. By the end of the military period, these thirty-one units with 600 beds had increased to 225 units with 8,400 beds, and the staff employed had risen to 645 officers and 6,230 civilians, including 590 nurses. In 1945 (for the first part of which year only the less populous areas of Burma had been re-occupied) 109,980 in-patients and 3,691,083 out-patients were treated as against 174,023 and 3,809,724 for the whole of Burma in 1939. During the last two months of the year the attendances were half as large again as the corresponding 1939 averages.

Most up-country hospital buildings had been destroyed so that it was necessary to begin work under canvas, or in temporary shelters or requisitioned buildings. Local staff re-engaged worked with skill, enthusiasm and experience of conditions denied to staff brought in from outside. Generous aid was given by the military medical services

¹ For more detailed consideration of this matter cf Chapter XIV.

and ready access to military resources. In many respects the people of Burma enjoyed better medical attention than could be provided before or after the military period. A particular improvement was the provision of a full diet free of charge for all patients (within the limitations imposed by shortages). The pre-war civil hospitals, with strictly limited funds at their disposal, had not been able to afford to keep their wards full unless a large proportion of the patients paid to be fed or could make arrangements to be fed by their relations. In addition, drugs could be supplied from military resources that had been beyond the reach of the pre-war medical services. After the re-occupation of Rangoon a Health Branch was formed: four mobile anti-epidemic units and four mobile anti-malarial units operated, both in and out of Rangoon. A Field Hygiene Section borrowed from Burma Army performed similar functions in Arakan. Such Red Cross amenities as were received by the medical branch of the Administration were sent from London by the British organisation.

We have seen that it was decided in 1943 to make no provision for education under the Military Administration in Burma. On re-occupation a widespread public demand for education was encountered. The fact that this came at the very time when the Supreme Allied Commander was stressing the need for a liberal policy in Burma facilitated reversal of the 1943 decision. An Education Department was set up and plans begun for the revival of education, at first on a scale that was only a fraction of the pre-war provision, but, from the beginning, on lines that would lead naturally to realization of the Government of Burma's plans for a post-war homogeneous system of schools in place of the heterogeneous pre-war system. The plans were sanctioned by the War Office on 14th July, 1945, but, in fact, steps had already been taken to bring them into effect. They made provision for two pre-university schools, forty-two post-primary schools, 215 five-teacher primary schools, 2,090 single-teacher primary schools and 2,000 subsidised primary schools. By the end of December 1945, 1,639 schools had actually been established with a daily attendance of 105,703, in addition to a large number of private schools recognised by the Administration. These figures may be compared with a pre-invasion number of 391 high schools, 976 middle schools, and 5,445 primary schools, with a total of 604,892 pupils. That less progress was made with the revival of education in Burma than in the other re-occupied British territories, is to be ascribed almost entirely to the lateness of the decision to place responsibility for doing so upon the Military Administration. Even then this decision did not extend to the revival of university education. Students who had somehow, often secretly, struggled on with their education during the Japanese occupation, were crying out to be allowed to complete a university course for which they would soon be too old. To meet their needs the Administration conducted

emergency courses. These were financed by the Government of Burma which, however, throughout its period of exile was entirely dependent for funds upon the United Kingdom. By the end of the military period 458 students were attending these courses and forty-two students were attending civil engineering courses. The Education Department performed various other functions and was also able to salvage 40,000 books and many documents lost from the university and other libraries and much scientific apparatus.

Of the many other activities of the Administration only a few can be even briefly mentioned. The pre-war forest administration was almost entirely restored and in addition a beginning was made with the extraction and milling of timber, a function which had previously been undertaken by commercial firms. The results in output of timber were inconsiderable owing to the time necessarily elapsing between the felling of a tree and its handling in the mill. Much bamboo and minor forest produce was provided for housing the army and the civil population.

Postal services were revived almost to pre-war standard. Telecommunications were considerably better.

The Veterinary Department did much good work.

Seventy tons of rubber were exported to India by the end of June and a hundred tons were awaiting shipment.

Although a beginning had scarcely been made with the collection of revenue, all the main revenue-collecting departments were re-established before the return of the civil government, except the customs department, the re-establishment of which was, however, under consideration.

* * *

Meanwhile, in June 1945, shortly after the move of his headquarters to Rangoon, the C.C.A.O. established an advisory council of twenty-six members, representing all communities and all shades of opinion, which met fortnightly, made available local advice, and afforded an outlet for grievances or criticism. An underlying reason for the establishment of the council was the desire to associate the leaders of the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League as far as possible with the Administration.¹ As more departments moved into Rangoon, sub-committees of the council were created to advise on some of the new departmental activities. A further reason was to be found in the recent declaration by the United Kingdom Government of a constitutional policy for Burma. This involved the setting up of an Executive Council to advise the Governor after his return to Burma: it was hoped that the Advisory Council would be a step towards the creation of such an Executive Council—which itself was intended as a step towards the

¹ Cf. Chapter XIX.

re-establishment of a cabinet of popularly elected ministers. The C.C.A.O. reported of his Council that its advice had been helpful and it was decided later to extend the principle up-country. The D.C.C.A.O. of the Rangoon area had set up his own advisory committee in June and this too was reported as ' . . . proving to be of considerable value.'

* * *

In the early discussions in Delhi regarding the establishment of military administration in Burma the assumption was prevalent that such administration would continue for a long time. It is certain, however, that neither the home government nor Admiral Mountbatten ever intended that it should be prolonged any more than was absolutely necessary. The latter early expressed the view that a hand-over could be effected as soon as Burma ceased to be the scene of military operations or to be required as a base for military operations further afield. In April – May 1945 Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith asked whether the favourable development of operations in Burma might not make an early, if partial, hand-over possible. In the course of discussions through May, June, and July the Supreme Allied Commander agreed to hand over responsibility for Burma, less the Tenasserim coastal strip, even while Burma was being used as a base for further operations, provided that adequate powers regarding communications, labour and internal security were delegated to him by the Governor by constitutional process, and that these were recognized in directives to the Governor from the Secretary of State for Burma, and to himself from the Chiefs of Staff.

On 17th July the Supreme Allied Commander set up a Handing Over Commission, consisting of representatives of the Government of Burma and of the military authorities, which began work in Rangoon in the first half of August under the Presidency of the C.C.A.O. The Commission was required to plan for a transfer as early as possible, to recommend a date for the transfer, and to say whether it would be desirable to make any partial hand-over in advance of the final transfer of responsibility. It was required to summarise the conditions that must be fulfilled before a transfer of responsibility could take place and to plan for the establishment of those conditions; first among these was the ability of the Government of Burma to operate administrative and public services with its own resources up to the standard required for the administration of the country. The Commission was therefore required to plan for the temporary transfer to the civil government of the necessary military staff, for the introduction of civilian staff of that government, and for the supply of materials.

It was intended that the transfer to the civil government of the administrative services should be made in four stages. In the first, full

operational, technical, and administrative control of the C.C.A.O. would continue to be exercised by the Commander of Twelfth Army, under the ultimate control of the Supreme Allied Commander. In the second, operational and technical control would remain with the Army Commander but administrative control would be exercised by the Supreme Commander direct. In the third, control would continue to be exercised as during the second stage, but the Military Administration would be progressively reinforced by civil servants of the Government of Burma, in preparation for the final hand-over. In this third stage all civilians, whether in the employ of the Military Administration or sent in by the Government of Burma, were to remain subject to complete military control through the C.C.A.O. The fourth and last stage would be the hand-over of control to the civil government.

Shortly after the Commission had begun work the Japanese surrender took place. On 21st August the Governor urged the early return of the civil government to Burma on the grounds that the political situation was deteriorating and would inevitably continue to deteriorate still further under a military administration, that the long term policy of the United Kingdom Government required the earliest possible return of the civil government and that it was only the return of this government that would revive the prospect of constitutional advance and so ameliorate the situation in Burma. The cessation of hostilities, he added, had removed all objections of principle to a hand-over. In support of his assertion that the political situation was deteriorating he referred to general dissatisfaction with the Military Administration, to Karen and Arakanese separatism, to the growth of a potentially dangerous underground movement, and to the break-up of the nationalist front and consequent growth of extremism.¹ He could, and did, also point to the publicly voiced dissatisfaction with the arrangements made for the disbandment of the Patriotic Burmese Forces and their absorption into the regular army, a matter which will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.² Admiral Mountbatten was disinclined to admit any deterioration in the political situation, but there is little doubt that there was justification for the Governor's view. The former also drew attention to the great difficulties of transport and supply and to his continued need to use Burma as a base for his operations. He suggested that no hand-over would be administratively possible until after the end of 1945. Protests from the Governor and further discussions resulted in agreement that the hand-over to civil government should be made on the 1st October or as soon after as possible. Logistical difficulties were overcome by Admiral Mountbatten undertaking to make available to the Government of Burma

¹ An account of the nationalist movement will be given in Chapter XIX.

² Cf. Chapter XIX.

the resources with which he would have supported the Military Administration, until such time as civil resources became available. In the changed circumstances resulting from the Japanese surrender the transfer of power was to be absolute, the only reservation in favour of the Supreme Allied Commander being that the Commanders of the Naval, Military, and Air Forces in Burma would continue to be responsible to him, instead of coming under the control of the Governor, and that until the Governor signified the readiness of the ordinary criminal courts to deal with trials of service men these would continue to be tried, for criminal charges brought against them, by Service courts. The Governor also undertook to pass an Act of Indemnity protecting the Crown, the Supreme Allied Commander, and the members of the Military Administration and other military services for acts done during the war with Japan.

Admiral Mountbatten recorded that he agreed to this hand-over against his better judgement and through no desire to shirk responsibility for an extremely difficult problem, administrative and political.

This decision completely changed the basis upon which the Commission was working. Hitherto required to examine the conditions upon which the possibility of a hand-over depended and to recommend a date when they could be established, it was now given a date and required to work out how, and how far, the conditions could be realized in the time left. The Commission was therefore mainly concerned to make recommendations regarding the detailed application of the principle of partial and progressive hand-over. It proposed that, territorially, the first hand-over should cover all Burma except the civil districts of Thaton, Amherst, Tavoy, Mergui, and Salween, and the Karenni States, as these areas were still occupied by the Japanese; and that, departmentally, it should include the General Administration, Judicial, Police, Agricultural, Education, and Revenue Departments, together with part of the Publicity Department. Not to have transferred the first three of these departments would have rendered the hand-over to civil government largely nugatory as without them the government would have found it impossible to discharge its responsibility for the maintenance of law and order. The other departments were those which the brief survey possible in the time showed to be transferable without difficulty.

The Commission in due course recommended the transfer of other departments as follows:—On 1st November 1945, the Rangoon Municipality (partial); on 1st December 1945, the Prison and Immigration Departments; on 1st January 1946, the Forest, Veterinary, Postal, Signals (partial), the Welfare and Labour, the Medical (other than stores), and the Transportation Departments; on 1st February, the Works Departments and the remainder of the Publicity Department, and the Rangoon Fire Services; on 31st March, the up-country Fire

Services, the Custody of Property, and the Medical Stores Departments; and, lastly, on 1st April, the Roads & Bridges Department. No final recommendations could be made by the Commission regarding the various functions of the Supplies and Industry Department, which included road transport, the provision and distribution of supplies and stores, the distribution of petrol, oil and lubricants, and the purchase of rice, salt, hides and rubber, but it was hoped that negotiations still proceeding between the Government of Burma and the military authorities would enable transfer to be made by 31st March 1946. The Finance and Accounts Department (other than the Revenue Department which had already been transferred) was handed over gradually during the period December 1945 to February 1946. The Censorship Department was closed down on 31st December 1945.

Meanwhile the Government of Burma and the military authorities in direct consultation, had agreed that, territorially, the rest of Burma should be handed over on 1st January 1946.

The Commission finally recommended that the appointment of the C.C.A.O. should lapse on 1st February 1946, and that it should itself be dissolved on the same date.

Many felt strongly at the time that the hand-over had been unduly rushed. On hearing that the date had been advanced to 1st October, the C.C.A.O. and his staff protested that such an early transfer would be dangerous. These views were communicated to the Government of Burma but unfortunately never reached the Supreme Allied Commander until it was too late to alter plans. Administratively, some postponement would undoubtedly have resulted in a more tidy transfer, but there was in fact no breakdown. Politically it is doubtful whether postponement would have greatly altered the course of events, or for that matter, whether the actual timing of the hand-over greatly influenced them. The policy of the British Government for Burma was to re-establish direct British administration and to rehabilitate the country, to ensure that the leaders of the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League or AFPFL (whom it considered unrepresentative and irresponsible) were not allowed to arrogate to themselves power in excess of their real political significance, and thereafter to hand over authority to a Burmese Government as soon as possible. The Governor, on his return to Burma, attempted to give effect to this policy. It broke down because it underestimated the growing influence of the AFPFL which forced a much earlier abdication of British authority than had been planned. On the other hand, if the Supreme Allied Commander had continued responsible, would this course of events have been very different? His interpretation and application of this policy, as will become clear in later chapters,¹ involved enlisting the co-operation and friendship of the AFPFL leaders; continued success in this

¹ cf. Chapters XVIII and XIX.

would probably have been possible only if he had been willing to persevere in giving these leaders their head. There is little reason to suppose that this would have meant any postponement of the final transfer of power to the Burmese. True, it might have been made in friendly negotiation, instead of under threat of violence, but unless this had resulted in Burma electing to stay in the Commonwealth the final result would have been little different from that actually achieved. It appears doubtful whether the Burmese leaders could have made any such election at the time—although there are slight grounds for supposing that they were beginning to prepare public opinion for it when the Premier and several of his Ministers were assassinated in July 1947. It is, however, barely possible that even a slight postponement of transfer might have given time for the decision of India to stay within the Commonwealth to become known to the Burmese leaders and to exert its influence upon them before they had committed themselves to the opposite course.

It remains extremely problematical, whether the hand-over from military to civil authority, or the timing of this hand-over, seriously influenced the development of events.

* * *

In many ways the Administration could look back with pride upon what it had achieved in desperately difficult circumstances. But, although initially well-received, it had by the end of the military period largely lost its popularity.

With the public this change of feeling was due, firstly, to the inevitable reaction when it was generally realized that the establishment of the Administration could not mean early restoration of pre-war plenty. A second cause was the inferior quality of much of the subordinate staff of the Administration. This was particularly marked in the Relief and Labour, and the Supply and Industry Departments, which, because their operations were planned to begin before there would be time to recruit in Burma and because, in any case, there had been no equivalent departments before the war whose employees would afford a source of recruitment on re-occupation, had found themselves forced to recruit in India at a time when the competition for persons with knowledge and experience of Burma was so great that it was impossible to insist upon a satisfactory standard. Most of the employees of these departments were Eurasian and many were patronising if not hostile to the Burmese. One such, responsible for the distribution of supplies, was heard to say 'You Burmans are all traitors: I am going to see that you get as little as possible.' And, unfortunately, public contact with the Administration was mostly made through these recruits. Underlying these two causes of dissatisfaction was a feeling of unsettlement and impermanence, caused by the knowledge

that the Military Administration was in any case only a temporary expedient, and enhanced by the utterances of the nationalist leaders who had their own causes for dissatisfaction. One of these was the policy adopted for the disarming and disbanding of the P.B.F.¹ Another was the feeling that posts in the Administration should have been given more freely to leaders of the nationalist movement rather than to Government servants, a feeling which found expression in allegations, of varying credibility, of the employment by the Administration of Japanese agents and collaborators. Lastly, the dissatisfaction was a symptom of a stiffening in the attitude of the A.F.P.F.L. and a raising of their demands which sprang from a quick realisation of the enhancement of their political influence caused by the ending of the war and the liberal treatment accorded to them; the A.F.P.F.L. leaders knew well that demobilisation, war weariness, and the change from war to peace criteria in determining upon the need for violent or distasteful action, would make the ultimate utilisation of troops against them an extremely unlikely contingency.

Unfortunately disillusion and bitterness spread also to many Burmese public servants, most of whom began by being unfeignedly glad to see the British Administration back. The reasons for this merit some attention. At a very early stage in the planning for military administration a study had been made of the policy to be adopted in regard to government employees who continued in office during the Japanese occupation. In an India Command Directive of 19th March 1943, it was mentioned in passing that civil servants who continued in office did not *ipso facto* commit any offence. On 18th June 1943, the C.C.A.O. followed this up with a memorandum, on lines suggested by the Government of Burma. This was based upon Article 43 of the Hague Rules of 1907 regarding the duties of forces occupying enemy territory, which read:—‘The authority of the power of the state having passed *de facto* into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall do all in his power to restore and ensure as far as possible public order and safety, respecting at the same time, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country.’ Consequently, it was pointed out in the memorandum, inhabitants of occupied territory must give to the administration of the occupying forces the same obedience as they would give to their own government, without, however, acknowledging its sovereignty, or giving active assistance in war against their own government. Public servants who during the occupation undertook duties of a kind they might normally have been expected to undertake, and which were directed primarily to the welfare of the people, would not be considered to have conducted themselves improperly. But if they were found to have undertaken duties which directly aided the Japanese war effort, or if they had ill-treated loyal subjects, this would

¹ Cf. Chapter XIX.

be considered improper behaviour. If they were found to have undertaken duties of a kind they would not normally have been expected to undertake, the burden of proving that this did not amount to improper conduct would rest upon them. Nearly two years after issue of this memorandum its principles received the endorsement of the United Kingdom Government and were formally directed by the Army Council to be applied both in Burma and in Malaya. It was accordingly ordered for Burma that no ex-government servant of any but the lowest rank might be permanently employed by the Administration, or draw more than a portion of the arrears of pay or pension due to him from the Government of Burma, until a finding had been recorded that his conduct under the Japanese had been loyal and proper. The criteria to be applied, based on the relevant articles of the Hague Convention of 1907, were:

1. That the discharge by a Government servant of the normal duties of a post to which he might ordinarily be expected to be appointed was loyal and proper, although this might incidentally aid the Japanese war effort;
2. that any active assistance to the Japanese war effort in excess of that recognized above as permissible, any active hostility to the legitimate government, or any ill-treatment of a loyal British subject, amounted to disloyal and improper conduct;
3. that, in assessing behaviour, full allowance must be made for the exercise of coercion by the Japanese;
4. that the higher the standing of the officer, the higher should be the standard of behaviour expected.

A formal enquiry was to be held in the case of all Government servants of higher standing; for others this enquiry might be dispensed with if there was no reason to suspect disloyal or improper conduct.

The considerations underlying this policy were simple and, to those who had fled from Burma to India, self evident; namely, that the re-employment of collaborators without impediment would be strongly resented by members of the public who had remained loyal to the legitimate government, would work injustice to loyal members of the services and would, generally speaking, bring the Military Administration into disrepute.

But how did all this strike those public servants who had remained in Burma?

The background to their thoughts was, certainly, that the failure of the British defence of Burma in 1941-42, amounted to a breach of responsibility, almost to a betrayal. Then—although they would have been the first to admit that British civil officers could have done no good, and might in fact have proved an embarrassment to their Burmese friends, by staying on in Burma—the fact remained that they had seen the British run away from their posts; and—although, again, they

would have admitted that they suffered no temptation to leave Burma themselves—the fact remained that they themselves had stayed at their posts and continued to discharge their duties when it was neither profitable nor particularly comfortable or safe to do so. Also they felt—those at least who paid more than lip service to the humaner standards of the west—that the Japanese occupation had been so unimaginably soul-destroying that it was impossible for those who had not lived through it to understand the full import of the experience, and that they were separated by this knowledge from those who had spent the war in India. If amends had to be made, they did not feel that they alone should do so. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that most public servants who had remained in Burma were ready to welcome back the British with open arms.

A chill fell over this mood, however, when they realized that the first official reaction of their British colleagues on meeting them was one of suspicion or, at the least, doubt. Then they were told that enquiries would be made to ascertain whether their conduct had been loyal and proper, and they realized that their former colleagues would receive evidence from informers, self-seekers, and personal enemies. Even if the evidence was rejected the mere fact that it had been sought and taken was degrading and humiliating. And if it came to the holding of an enquiry they felt that no one who had not suffered the Japanese occupation had the right to sit in judgement, or would be able to make sufficient allowance for actions taken under duress, or under fear of the invader. Furthermore, even when cleared of suspicion, they were apt to find themselves employed in posts inferior to those held by them before the war, and, possibly, under their juniors in government service, or under persons recruited from commercial firms. This arose from the fact that the nucleus of the administration had had to be built up before the beginning of operations. Although it was permissible to depend upon the recovery of ex-government servants in Burma in the later stages of the re-occupation, it was quite unsafe to do so sooner, and for the planning and early operational stages it was not possible to tap this source of recruitment at all. Key posts had to be filled either with such public servants as were available in India, whatever their seniority, or with any other suitable persons that could be recruited. And although it was the policy to make full and appropriate use of public servants discovered in Burma as soon as possible, there were many reasons why this could not be done at once. Further, although the senior staff of the administration was of high standard, much of the subordinate staff recruited in India was, as we have seen, of poor quality. That caution should be exercised about re-employment of public servants of standing and repute when such poor staff had been brought in from India was another understandable source of dissatisfaction.

But what made it hardest for public servants to stomach this treatment, was the very different policy applied to the nationalist political leaders. The insistence upon loyal and proper conduct was rooted in the policy of the home Government to re-establish British administration in Burma and to prevent assumption of power by the A.F.P.F.L. When the nationalist leaders, most of them technically traitors and certainly collaborators, were, received with honour and treated with trust,¹ and when it became clear that it was in the hands of these persons that their own future and the future of Burma lay, disappointment and bitterness, that might have been put aside if the future had been firmly in the hands of the British, were allowed to poison the minds of many public servants.

If such thoughts ought in many cases to be looked upon as the later rationalization of the attitude of persons whose consciences were not initially altogether clear in regard to their relations with the Japanese, they do nevertheless give a general indication of the feelings roused in many by the policy of the Administration in this matter. In the case of those brave men who had the faith never to waver in their allegiance, they may be taken at their face value.

¹ Cf. Chapter XIX.

PART III

Malaya, Borneo, Hong Kong

CHAPTER VIII

LONDON PLANNING

THE CONTINUED existence of the Government of Burma in Simla meant that planning for the re-establishment of administration in Burma was undertaken mainly in India. Since there was no surviving Government of Malaya or Hong Kong, planning for these territories was undertaken in England by the Colonial Office. Although the Governments of Sarawak and North Borneo both remained, in the person of the Rajah and the Court of Directors of the British North Borneo Company, and continued to function in exile, convenience and the need for co-ordination and economy of effort led to planning for these territories being concentrated also in the Colonial Office, which worked in consultation with the Governments concerned. A general survey of the problem was begun early in 1942. The territories concerned were the Straits Settlements (which included Singapore, Penang, Malacca, Christmas Island, the Cocos-Keeling Islands and the island of Labuan off the coast of Borneo) the federated and the unfederated Malay States (the latter including Brunei in Borneo), North Borneo, Sarawak and Hong Kong. Unlike Burma all these territories had been wholly occupied by the Japanese.

It was assumed in the Colonial Office that administration would be re-established through military governments and by the end of 1942 the problem began to take shape.

There were two aspects; first, the formulation of future policy and, second, the preparation of plans for the immediate re-establishment of administration. If this re-establishment was to be through military government, the second aspect was primarily a War Office responsibility. The first was a matter for the Colonial Office, but cannot for that reason be altogether omitted from consideration in this book, since all planning for military administration was required to conform so far as possible with civil policy, since the planners were likely to find themselves drawn into discussions on such policy, and since the military governments might well be required to make such dispositions as would facilitate the introduction of constitutional changes. Public reactions to these during the military period might also have a bearing on the stability of the military governments.

* * *

The administration of Malaya, British Borneo and Hong Kong, before the Japanese invasion, had been complex.

There were three systems in Malaya alone. The first was that of the Straits Settlements, in which direct British administration on the conventional colonial model had been established. The second was that of the Federated Malay States (Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang.) The States in this group had at various times from 1874 onwards asked for, or been induced to enter into, treaty relations with the British, the essence of which was that they gained the support and protection of the British but accepted a Resident whose advice they would seek, and act upon, in all matters not affecting Malay religion and custom. In 1895 the States were formed into a Federation with a Federal Council, and with the Governor of the Straits Settlements as High Commissioner. Thereafter a strong degree of centralization had developed, though some steps had been taken, about 1934, to devolve more authority to each individual State in the Federation. The third system was that of the unfederated Malay States (Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Perlis in Malaya, together with Brunei in Borneo). The British had acquired an undefined suzerainty over the northern of these States in Malaya by transfer from Siam in 1909, and all the States had later at various times agreed to accept Advisers and to seek, and act upon, their advice in all matters of general administration which did not touch the Mohammedan religion. The Advisers acted under the general direction of the Governor as High Commissioner. These States however were unwilling to enter the Federation because of the restriction that membership would place upon their individual sovereignty. But, in spite of considerable restrictions in practice, both federated and unfederated States retained sovereignty.

The Borneo territories of Sarawak and British North Borneo enjoyed a position constitutionally different, from that of the unfederated States, sovereignty being exercised in Sarawak by a British Rajah and in North Borneo by a Chartered Company, subject in both cases to control of foreign relations by the British Government.

Hong Kong, like the Straits Settlements, had been administered on the normal British colonial model. The Governor's Executive Council was predominantly official and even the unofficial members were appointed by the Governor. There was a Legislative Council with a larger proportion of unofficial members, but still with an official majority. There was an Urban Council with some municipal authority, although there was no considerable delegation of power by the Government.

The desirability of creating a more unified and a stronger system of administration in Malaya had long been recognized. It was desirable in order to permit social and economic development which separation had hitherto thwarted; it was desirable also because of the strategic

importance of Malaya which demanded a strong and efficient administration of the area; it was desirable, finally, if the progress of these countries towards self-government was to be pursued with sincerity and yet not lead merely to restoration of autocratic power to the rulers of the States. With this end in view attempts had been made before the war to make the idea of federation more attractive, first, by strengthening the Federation and enlarging its scope, then, conversely, by liberalizing its constitution. Neither method succeeded.

* * *

The break in the constitutional life of Malaya caused by the Japanese occupation offered an opportunity, of bringing into being simplification and reforms that, before the war, had seemed, as far from realization as ever.

Accordingly, the Secretary of State for the Colonies placed a memorandum before the War Cabinet towards the end of 1943, outlining in general terms the need for constitutional changes, and explaining that decisions could not be postponed as planning for military government could not proceed until these had been taken. A War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo was set up on 6th January 1944, and the detailed proposals of the Secretary of State were laid before it. On 22nd March 1944, the Committee approved the general lines of the policy proposed and on 31st May 1944, the War Cabinet also gave its endorsement. By July the Colonial Office was able to issue a constitutional directive to the planners for Malaya.

At this stage planning was to proceed on the basis that a Malayan Union would be constituted in the Peninsula (excluding Singapore but including the settlements of Penang and Malacca) with a strong central authority under a Governor, and with local authorities which should be in some degree representative of the principal communities and interests. Concurrently there was to be created a new Malayan Union Citizenship for persons born, or ordinarily resident, in the Malay Peninsula, or who, in future, became ordinarily resident. This new citizenship was intended, in the words of a White Paper, to enable 'all those who have made the country their homeland to have the opportunity of a due share in the country's political and cultural institutions' and to include 'without discrimination of race or creed all who can establish a claim, by reason of birth or a suitable period of residence, to belong to the country.'¹ It was a recognition of the importance of the Chinese and Indians in the life of Malaya.² The island of Singapore was to constitute a separate Crown Colony with its own

¹ Cmd. 6724.

² For a somewhat fuller account of the importance of the Chinese in Singapore and the Malay Peninsula, cf. Chapter XX.

Governor. The necessary preliminary to the establishment of any constitution on these lines was the surrender by the Sultans of some part at least of their sovereign authority. Then only would it be possible for the United Kingdom Government to legislate for a constitution on the lines desired. It was proposed, therefore, that fresh treaties should be negotiated with the Sultans, giving effect to the surrender required. Similarly in Borneo the physical effects of the war and the change in ideas regarding the administration of non-self-governing territories exercised a decisive influence in shaping the proposals for the future government of North Borneo, Sarawak, and Brunei. As regards North Borneo (which suffered severely as a result of military operations) negotiations were opened in 1944 with the British North Borneo Company for the transfer to the crown of the Borneo sovereign rights and assets. The Government of the territory, with which it was proposed to incorporate the existing Settlement of Labuan, was, on its liberation, to be provided by an Administration under the direct authority of His Majesty's Government. As regards Sarawak and Brunei it was intended to modify existing treaties with the Rajah and the Sultan so as to meet the new conditions arising out of the war. It was proposed that a special representative of His Majesty's Government should be sent to Malaya as soon as possible after the re-occupation to negotiate with the Sultans for the requisite surrender of jurisdiction.

Constitutional policy for Hong Kong was in the early stages considered together with that for Malaya and Borneo, but was soon re-mitted for separate study, as many factors in the problem were different. On 1st May 1945 an exploratory meeting was held between representatives of the China Association, the Hong Kong planners, and the Colonial Office, to consider the possibility of associating the population of Hong Kong more closely with the government of the Colony after re-occupation. It was suggested that this might be effected by conversion of the pre-war Urban Council into a genuine Municipal Council to which certain functions of government might be delegated, e.g. Local Government, Housing, Medical Services, Sanitation, Poor Relief, certain aspects of Education, certain Public Works, Local Finance, and other matters. The size and composition of a possible Municipal Council, and the modifications in the Government that might become necessary as a result of the establishment of such a council, were given consideration.

It was in due course decided that, while the suggestions made on 1st May 1945, might offer the best approach to constitutional reform, detailed consideration of the problem should be deferred until civil government had been re-established, when it would be possible to ascertain the views of the people of Hong Kong on the suggestions. An announcement to this effect was made by the Governor on the

occasion of the re-establishment of civil government in Hong Kong, on 1st May 1946.

* * *

The decision that the re-establishment of administration should be through military governments meant that planning for the re-establishment of administrative machinery was the concern of the War Office. The War Office, however, otherwise pre-occupied and, as yet, unaware of the range and complexity of planning involved, showed no sign of moving in the matter. In February 1943 the Colonial Office took the initiative and entered into talks with the War Office that led to the creation of an informal Colonial Office—War Office Malayan Planning Committee. This in turn led to the formation in July 1943 of a Malayan Planning Unit (M.P.U.), controlled and financed by the War Office, but working in close co-operation with the Colonial Office. Major-General H. R. Hone, (an officer of the Colonial Service) brought back from employment as head of Civil Affairs in the Middle East, assumed charge as Chief Planner and Chief Civil Affairs Officer-designate. The unit consisted of six officers only, as the re-occupation of Malaya was at that time such a remote contingency that the War Office felt unable to sanction a larger staff. However, the complete absence of any information regarding the nature of the operations that would ultimately have to be undertaken forced upon the Planning Unit, at an early stage, a procedure which required a more lavish use of man-power than the military War Establishment would have been able, un-supplemented, to provide. All planning was to aim at creating the complete picture of the organisation that would be required on the ground three months after re-occupation, with the intention that this complete picture should then be divided into instalments that could be successively brought into use as operations developed. A staff of six was clearly inadequate for planning on this scale, so, in order to circumvent the difficulty of obtaining War Office sanction, the Colonial Office made available additional staff, to the number of about thirty, who, while remaining civilians on the Colonial Office establishment, were to work with, and as part of, the War Office Planning Unit. The cost of these reinforcements for the Planning Unit was to be met from Malayan balances until such time as the War Office was prepared to assume responsibility for them.

It will be convenient to complete at this point a summary of the growth and movements of the Malayan Planning Unit and to return later to the plans being prepared. The official War Office strength of the unit was increased to twenty-five in December 1943, to forty-two in January 1944, and to 121 officers plus fifty-three other ranks in November 1944. From January 1944 onwards a growing proportion of

the unit was transferred to India to the headquarters, then at Delhi, of 11th Army Group, South-East Asia Command. In July 1944 a part of the unit in India was moved to South-East Asia Command headquarters, then at Kandy in Ceylon. In April 1945 the Planning Unit was further increased to 162 officers plus 127 other ranks and civilians and the move of the whole unit to India began, a move which took time to complete. In December 1944 the Chief Planner and C.C.A.O. designate began to re-organize his staff in the light of imminent operational needs. He appointed three D.C.C.A.O.'s, one to act as his Chief of Staff, and two to take charge, in due course, of the two territorial divisions (Singapore and Mainland) through which Malaya was to be administered. A shadow administration was being formed.

We now turn back to look more closely at the work of the Malayan Planning Unit. The unit was in many ways fortunate in comparison with the Burma planners. It was able to work undistracted by puzzling commitments of current administration. The area and population of Malaya were much less than those of Burma (50,000 as against 260,000 square miles, and five and a half million as against seventeen million inhabitants) so that the scale and, perhaps, the complexity of the problem were less. The unit was fortunate in having for its Chief Planner an officer with previous experience of military administration in Africa. On balance it was fortunate in the absence of an emigré civil government. While the presence of such a government in the case of Burma provided a valuable repository for knowledge and experience, and a source of recruitment, it inevitably brought also a division of effort and of loyalty that could not fail to hamper those responsible for the planning and execution of military government. Its absence in the case of Malaya not only relieved the unit of these difficulties: it meant that the work of the unit could be carried on in London, which made possible close personal contact with the War Office and the Colonial Office. As a result there was, throughout, a far better understanding by the War Office of what the Malayan planners were trying to do than there ever was in regard to the Burma planners in distant Delhi. A last advantage was that many lessons had been learnt and controversies settled over the case of Burma. The main disadvantage was that practically the whole of the staff of the former civil administration had been interned by the Japanese.

In the case of Burma, planning had been directed, broadly speaking, to the re-establishment of the pre-war administrative organisation, as it stood at the time of the Japanese invasion. In Malaya there were two factors which made it impossible to proceed in this manner. Before the war, most of Malaya had been under indirect administration. But it was the essence of military administration that it should be direct and unified. The Supreme Allied Commander, having assumed to himself full powers of government in order to eliminate all division of authority

or conflict of loyalty, could hardly contemplate any absolute delegation of this authority. Nevertheless he made it quite clear that, even during the period of military administration, the people of the country should be associated to the fullest extent possible with the machinery of government. A second reason sprang from the policy of constitutional change proposed by the British Government. It was hoped that the break with the past caused by the period of Japanese occupation would afford a suitable occasion for the introduction of the reformed constitution. It was therefore of the greatest importance that the Military Administration should not do anything to re-establish, or even to give cause to think that they were re-establishing, the pre-war form of government which it was proposed to modify.

The work of the planners finally found expression in the Key Plan for British Military Administration in Malaya which was approved in March 1945. In its military aspects, the plan reproduced the main features of the organization for military administration in Burma: in fact planning for both countries had been conducted contemporaneously and often in consultation. The functions of the Civil Affairs Service for Malaya, its integration with the military staffs, and the manner of attachment of formation Civil Affairs officers to military formations and their subsequent peeling off to territorial duties were similar to the arrangements reached for the Civil Affairs Service (Burma)¹ and need not be described in detail again. It was planned to organize the formation staff in 'operational groups', each to consist of ten 'operational detachments' of twelve officers and fourteen British other ranks. These detachments were intended to be equipped with transport and stores that would make them self-sufficient, and were so composed that they could make a beginning, at least, with any of the vital Civil Affairs functions during the operational period. These functions were enumerated as Military Government, Finance, Police, Labour, Supplies, Medical, Legal and Works. The detachments may be compared with the 'teams' prepared for each administrative district in Burma; the latter were somewhat smaller and not usually equipped to deal with such matters as Finance and Works. Similar, also, was the conception of the change from the operational to the post-operational phase when the C.C.A.O. in addition to being the military commander's chief staff officer for Civil Affairs, would become the principal executive officer to carry out the Military Administration on behalf of the commander.

Territorially, the key plan involved the setting up of two divisions each under a Deputy C.C.A.O.; the Malay Peninsula or Mainland Division would provide a unified direct administration of the federated and unfederated Malay States, and of the settlements of Penang and Malacca; the Singapore Division would provide for the administration

¹ cf. Chapter IV.

of the city and island of Singapore. The divisions were to be subdivided into regions, of which there were to be nine in the Mainland Division, corresponding roughly to the nine Malay States, except that two States, Perlis and Kedah, constituted one region, while the settlement of Penang constituted another. The settlement of Malacca formed part of the Negri Sembilan Region. Each region was to be placed under a Senior Civil Affairs Officer responsible to the Deputy C.C.A.O. for all aspects of the administration of his charge. Regions were to be sub-divided in their turn into districts in the charge of Civil Affairs Officers, when these became available in sufficient numbers.

It was planned that, when the post-operational stage was reached, the Force Commander should delegate to the C.C.A.O., by warrant, full authority to conduct the military administration, such authority to be exercised in accordance with directions received from the Force Commander or the Supreme Allied Commander. The C.C.A.O. was at the same time to delegate full authority to the D.C.C.A.O.'s to carry on administration in their respective divisions. The effect of this further delegation was to place the C.C.A.O. at a greater remove from the day-to-day conduct of affairs than was the C.C.A.O. in Burma, where no such decentralization took place. Two separate administrations were in fact to be set up by the military authorities as early as possible, in conformity with the constitutional plans for separate governments for the Union of Malaya and the Colony of Singapore, with the very important difference, however, that the two divisions were under unified superior control. The C.C.A.O., relieved of much detail, remained fully responsible for general executive control of the two divisions, the formulation of policy in all administrative and financial fields, and for the direct administration of certain pan-Malayan departments at his headquarters. The latter were mostly concerned with subjects which, under the British Government's constitutional proposals, were to be dealt with on such a unified basis, and the arrangement kept alive the ideal of ultimate fusion of the two territorial administrations. The C.C.A.O. remained responsible, also, for questions affecting the internal organization of the C.A.S., the administration of personnel, supplies, food rationing, price control and, through the Controller of Finance and Accounts, for all Civil Affairs finance. He also had considerable responsibility for the planning and execution of the arrangements for the transfer of the military administration to the two civil governments in due course.

A condensed version of so much of the key plan as applied to the operational period was later prepared and issued as the British Military Administration of Malaya Civil Affairs Operational Plan.

* * *

The Malayan Planning Unit drafted the proclamations and directives necessary to establish, and provide the machinery for, the Military Administration, including provision for setting up military courts and dealing with collaborators. In addition it was decided that the Supreme Allied Commander should be made aware of the general policy to be adopted by the Colonial Office in various fields of administration after the resumption of civil government in order that, as far as possible, this policy should be followed during the period of military responsibility. For this purpose a series of long term policy directives, which finally numbered twenty, was drawn up by the Colonial Office in close consultation with the Planning Unit. The subjects dealt with in these directives were:

Malayan Citizenship	Medical and Health
Chinese Policy	Education
Public Services	Labour and Immigration
Finance	Transport
Custodianship of Property	Posts and Telecommunications
Rubber	Electricity
Tin	Ports and Harbours
Primary production other than Mineral	Broadcasting
Land, Mines and Surveys	Co-operative Department
Social Welfare	Opium

The policies enunciated were to apply both to the Malayan Union and to the Colony of Singapore, and in most cases provision was made for a joint organization for the two territories. The directives on Malayan Citizenship and Chinese Policy and some of the directive on Education, especially its emphasis upon the need for fostering a sense of common citizenship, were integral parts of the constitutional policy for Malaya, which was itself communicated to the unit in a separate directive outside this series.

An important task, as in the case of Burma, was to ensure that suitable staff should be recruited and trained by the time it was needed for the Administration; this was undertaken by the Personnel Planning Staff of the Unit.¹

In spite of the general similarity of the plans for Malaya and Burma, there were two respects in which the position of the C.C.A.O. in Malaya was to differ from that of the C.C.A.O. in Burma. In the first place, he derived his authority from the Force Commander, not from the Supreme Allied Commander. This course had been intended in the case of Burma also, but had in the event proved impracticable because of the peculiar distortions caused to the normal chain of responsibility in Burma by the refusal of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek and General

¹ cf. Chapter XVII.

Stilwell to allow the latter to be placed under the command of 11th Army Group.¹ The second difference concerned his relations with the civil authority. We have seen how, in the case of Burma, after some reluctance, the C.C.A.O. was allowed unofficial direct communication with the civil government, to enable him the better to discharge his responsibility to advise the Force Commander regarding co-ordination of military plans with the long-term plans of the Government of Burma. At no time, however, was he allowed any responsibility for undertaking measures of rehabilitation above the level to which the Military Administration was restricted—the level necessary to prevent disease and unrest.² In the case of Malaya co-ordination of short and long term planning had to be effected between the Military Administration (or the Planning Unit which preceded it) and the Colonial Office, not a Government of Malaya in exile. This co-ordination presented no difficulty and there was no need for special machinery since the Malayan Planning Unit was, to all intents, a joint War Office—Colonial Office organization. But the Colonial Office early took the line that mere avoidance of disease and unrest, though it might be a sufficient objective in occupied enemy territory, was not a sufficient discharge of the British Government's responsibilities towards territories under its protection. This view was accepted by the War Office which agreed, in May 1944, to lay upon the C.C.A.O. for Malaya, in addition to his responsibilities to the military authorities, a responsibility to the Colonial Office for re-habilitation, where this was desirable, above the level to which he was held down in his strictly military capacity. In the discharge of this additional responsibility the C.C.A.O. was to be allowed direct communication with the Colonial Office, provided that this was effected through the military commanders and the War Office, the normal military channels. He was, from time to time, to recommend to the Colonial Office the progressive expansion of his additional 'civil' activities: if these involved bringing in recruits from outside Malaya, such were to come in as civilians employed by the Colonial Office, but must for the period of military administration remain under the orders of the C.C.A.O. in his capacity as a military officer.

The Government of Burma would have readily agreed to the doctrine that in re-occupying British territories obligations should rise above the level of mere prevention of disease and unrest, and did, in fact, not infrequently put forward such views. The germ of the conception of dual responsibility was contained in its proposals of August 1942 for a joint civil and military administration of territories which had not been occupied by the Japanese.³ The War Office, however,

¹ cf. pp. 58-59.

² cf. Chapter XIII.

³ cf. pp. 34-35.

supported by General Wavell, rejected the idea as likely to prove dangerous when large parts of Burma were re-occupied by British forces. The Government of Burma seems never to have pressed the matter again.

* * *

For Hong Kong, and the Borneo territories of North Borneo, Sarawak, Labuan and Brunei, it would have been convenient to add small planning units to the already existing Malayan unit, but for the fact that Hong Kong and Borneo fell outside a British theatre of war. The War Office was consequently reluctant to accept the task of planning for territory for which it had no responsibility, although it appeared likely that planning units would ultimately have to be included, somehow, in the civil affairs organization to be placed at the disposal of such forces as did re-occupy these territories. There was also the difficulty that, when the Malayan Planning Unit became the British Military Administration (Malaya), its authority would require to be confined to the British South-East Asia Command, so that any planning units for territories outside this command would after all require to be separated from the organization for Malaya, even if they had been incorporated at an earlier stage. Planning for Borneo and Hong Kong was, therefore, initially undertaken by exclusively civilian planning groups in the Colonial Office, instead of by War Office, or mixed, planning units.

The Chief Planner and C.C.A.O.-designate for Borneo, Mr. C. F. C. Macaskie of the North Borneo Service, was appointed in October 1943, five other members of the group being added at various dates towards the end of the year and early in 1944. Towards the end of 1944 the total number of planners posted to the group had risen to fourteen. It was not possible to follow the precedent of Malaya and to debit the cost of the group to Borneo balances, as the latter consisted almost entirely of funds under the control, not of the United Kingdom Government, but of the Chartered Company and of the Rajah. The cost was therefore debited to the home government which, however, reserved the right to claim from the Company and the Rajah in due course. The group planned for a gradually expanding Planning Unit and for the later establishment of a unified direct administration of the one British and three British-protected territories in Borneo on lines generally similar to those proposed for Malaya. The C.C.A.O. was to be allowed a dual responsibility to the military and the civil authorities.

A difficulty, not present in the case of Malaya, arose from the fact that Borneo was expected to fall within an American, or possibly an Australian, sphere of operations. The machinery for dealing with this situation was provided by the Combined Civil Affairs Committee set

up in Washington in July 1943, and its London sub-committee set up in February 1944. Clause 6 of the Charter of the Washington Committee read:

'When an enemy-occupied territory of the United States, the United Kingdom or one of the Dominions is to be recovered as the result of an operation combined or otherwise the military directive to be given to the Force Commander concerned will include the policies to be followed in the handling of Civil Affairs as formulated by the government which exercised authority over the territory before enemy occupation. If paramount military requirements as determined by the Force Commander necessitate a departure from those policies he will take action and report through the Chiefs of Staff to the Combined Chiefs of Staff.'

In May - July 1944 a Memorandum on policy in Borneo and Hong Kong was prepared jointly by the Colonial Office and the War Office and transmitted, through the London sub-committee, to Washington where, after slight modification by the Combined Civil Affairs Committee, it was accepted as a statement of policy under clause 6 of the Charter. The memorandum conveyed in general terms the views of the United Kingdom government that the administration of the British territories in Hong Kong and Borneo should be entrusted to a Civil Affairs staff mainly comprising British officers, and conveyed also the information that planning groups for these territories had already been assembled in London to prepare for such an administration; it requested that the military directives to the Force Commanders concerned should include instructions on these lines. The Borneo Planning group prepared a more detailed statement of policy which, in February - March 1945, was also accepted by the Combined Civil Affairs Committee in Washington, under clause 6 of its charter, and transmitted to the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff, and by them (with unimportant amendments) to the Supreme Commander, South-West Pacific Area. The statement established, in theory at least, the dual responsibility of the C.C.A.O., paragraph 6 reading:

'It is intended that the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, British Borneo, should also give such advice as may be necessary concerning His Majesty's Government's long-term plans for reconstruction, in order that, as far as possible, the measures of the military administration may be co-ordinated therewith. He should at the discretion of the Allied Commander-in-Chief, while keeping the latter, or the military commander designated by him, informed, be authorised to communicate direct with London on questions which do not affect the Allied Commander-in-Chief's responsibilities for the military administration of British Borneo.'

In practice, as we shall see, this right of direct access was long withheld but, even when granted, was largely, if not entirely, inoperative, for reasons that will become clear.

The most difficult problem, however, was how to effect actual contact with whatever forces were to be employed to re-occupy Borneo. There was in 1944 little information in London regarding operational plans for the South-West Pacific Area, although it seemed likely that re-occupation would be effected by Australian forces under American command. Negotiations were opened with General of the Army D. MacArthur, through General Sir T. A. Blamey, for the despatch of a British liaison mission to the South-West Pacific Area to ascertain plans and to arrange for the discharge of any civil affairs responsibilities that were likely to fall upon the British. A complication then arose which made the despatch of this mission more than ever desirable. Clause 6 of the Charter of the Combined Civil Affairs Committee provided that 'when an enemy-occupied territory . . . is to be recovered as the result of an operation combined or otherwise the military directive to be given to the Force Commander concerned will include the policies to be followed in the handling of Civil Affairs as formulated by the Government which exercised authority over the territory before enemy occupation'. The limitation imposed by the inclusion of the words 'as the result of an operation' was not fully realised until it became clear in September–November 1944 that the construction placed upon them by the Americans—a construction which had not been expected by the British but which they nevertheless felt unable to contest—was that in the case of territories recovered *without* operations Civil Affairs policies would *not* be included in the military directive to the Force Commander, although such territory lay within his general theatre of operations; and that in consequence no responsibility for Civil Affairs would lie upon the Commander in such territories. Borneo and Hong Kong lay in American spheres of operation and were likely to be recovered in the course of operations in those spheres. Would they be recovered *as the result of an operation*? Might they not be surrendered by the Japanese *without operations*? In the former case the responsibility for Civil Affairs, which would include responsibility for the provision of supplies for the civil population, would rest upon the Americans; in the latter case it would not. It became clear that planning, particularly planning for provision of supplies, must be undertaken by the British so that they would not be found unprepared if, as appeared increasingly likely, events turned in such a way that responsibility for Civil Affairs in Borneo and Hong Kong did not lie upon the Americans.

Proposals were accordingly pressed for the attachment of a liaison mission, and in the course of May a party consisting of three officers and three other ranks, assembled at General Blamey's headquarters in

Melbourne, in readiness for despatch to General MacArthur. By now, however, it had become clear that operations would not pass by Borneo entirely, and that Borneo would fall within the sphere of the Australian forces under American Command. Ultimate responsibility for Civil Affairs would rest, therefore, on General MacArthur under the provisions of clause 6 of the Charter. Immediate responsibility, however, would rest upon the Australian commanders. General Blamey, with subsequent support of the Australian Government, had stated that this responsibility would extend to procurement of supplies for the civil population of British Borneo up to the level required to prevent disease and unrest, and in so far as these were obtainable in Australia. In these changed circumstances General Blamey questioned whether there was still any need for the mission to be attached to General MacArthur's Headquarters, and expressed the view that, if it was nevertheless sent, it would no longer be appropriate for the mission to report back to the War Office direct; he considered that it should now report back through him. The War Office, although ready to fall in with General Blamey's wishes regarding the channels of communication and suggestions regarding the staff of the mission, felt that it would be wise to adhere to the plans for sending the mission to General MacArthur, having regard to the strong case earlier put forward to the Americans. The mission was therefore allowed in July to go to General MacArthur's headquarters; it was much reduced in strength, however, and consisted of only one officer and one other rank. The mission remained in being for some three or four months but by November 1945 had clearly outlived any use it might originally have served and was accordingly withdrawn. Any residual functions were transferred to the recently formed South-East Asia Command Liaison Section in Australia.

In London, meanwhile, exploratory conversations had taken place, beginning as early as May 1944, between General Blamey and the Permanent Under-Secretaries at the War Office and the Colonial Office, regarding the establishment of a mixed British-Australian administration for Borneo. This was followed by frequent interchange of ideas between the United Kingdom and General Blamey's headquarters in Australia through the Australian Army Staff in London. Since the preoccupation of the British authorities at this time with north-west Europe, and the lack in Australia of trained and experienced Civil Affairs planners, rendered these early exchanges largely sterile, a War Office liaison officer, Colonel L. M. Taylor, was sent to Melbourne, reaching Australia in the middle of December 1944.

In London it had been decided, a little earlier, that the planning group must be militarized in preparation for early departure to Australia. The militarized unit was to be known as '50 Civil Affairs Unit'. A War Establishment of 145 officers and 397 other ranks (241

of these to be Asians) had been sanctioned by the War Office and immediate approval was sought for filling this establishment from manpower resources in England up to forty-two officers and twenty-one other ranks. In December Colonel F. E. Stafford, who was to become the Controller of Finance for the unit, left England for Australia as an advanced representative of the unit, accompanied by Dr. Dingle as a civilian adviser, to make arrangements for the reception of the unit, to make appropriate contacts in Australian and American quarters, and to discuss arrangements for suitable persons in Australia to be released for service with the unit. In February the advance party of the unit under the Deputy C.C.A.O., Colonel W. L. Rolleston, left for Australia. In March the main party followed under the C.C.A.O., Brigadier Macaskie.

Meanwhile, in Australia, Colonel Taylor had been negotiating for the provision of Australian officers to make the unit up to strength and for a camp site for the unit on arrival. He had also discussed at General Blamey's headquarters whether the War Establishment should be an Australian or United Kingdom establishment, and what should be its size and composition. Australian opinion favoured an Australian unit with a larger establishment than was contemplated by the War Office. The increase was due partly to the inclusion of small sections of the General Staff and of the Branches of the Adjutant-General and Quarter-Master General, to ensure adequate co-ordination with the task force to which the unit would eventually require to be attached. This was a valuable provision, the need for which was not realized till much later in other theatres.

The history of these negotiations, and of the unit after it reached Australia will be continued in a subsequent chapter.¹

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A Hong Kong planning group was set up in the Colonial Office at about the same time as the Borneo Planning group, the cost, following the Malayan precedent, to be debited to Hong Kong balances until such time as the War Office was prepared to assume responsibility. In February 1944 the strength of the group was nine. In September 1944 Mr. D. M. MacDougall, a senior Hong Kong civil servant, assumed charge as Chief Planner and C.C.A.O.-designate, and immediately pressed for an increase of staff to twenty-eight. He also gave warning that the strength provisionally planned for the operational phase would almost certainly require to be increased.

As in the case of Malaya a series of policy directives was prepared covering the following topics:

¹ Cf. Chapter X.

Administration	Medical and Health Policy
Chinese Policy	Dangerous Drugs
Police	Opium
Prisons	Postal and Telecommunications Services
Immigration Control	Financial Policy
Labour Policy	Monetary and Fiscal Guide
Social Welfare	

By March 1945 interest in the affairs of the group began to quicken. It was still quite uncertain how the re-occupation would actually be effected, but all planning was on the basis of an opposed landing, with Civil Affairs units attached to operational troops. However, a good deal of thought had also been given in the Colonial Office to the possible need for throwing out an advance party to forestall immediate re-occupation of Hong Kong by Chinese regular or irregular troops in the event of Japanese surrender or evacuation before British or American forces could arrive. By May 1945 it was judged that the time had come for militarization of this planning group, which by this time consisted of thirty-eight officers organized, under the C.C.A.O. and a D.C.C.A.O., into a Secretariat Department, and seven other departments, Works, Supply, Legal, Finance, Welfare, Police, and Trade and Industry. As it appeared likely that Hong Kong would fall in an American sphere of operations a statement of Civil Affairs policies had been sent in September 1944 to the Combined Civil Affairs Committee in Washington for transmission to the Force Commander when appointed.

The sudden general surrender of the Japanese before operations had even been contemplated for the re-occupation of Hong Kong meant that plans had to be hurriedly improvised for the re-establishment of British administration before the Chinese stepped in. First, British forces must be placed in Hong Kong as early as possible. The nearest force was the British Pacific Fleet, serving in the South-West Pacific. Units of this were ordered to sail for Hong Kong at once and Rear-Admiral Sir C. H. J. Harcourt, in command, was instructed to proclaim the re-establishment of British administration as early as possible after arrival. In addition, an occupation force of approximately one division, together with the necessary Air component, was to be made available from South-East Asia Command as soon as the Straits of Malacca had been opened to shipping. Members of the British Army Aid Group, an Intelligence organization which had been operating from unoccupied into occupied China, were to move in by air to arrive at the same time as the first units of the fleet.

Secondly, on 11th August, instructions had been sent to the British Ambassador at Chung-king to communicate if possible, with Mr. F. C. Gimson, Colonial Secretary in Hong Kong before the war, who had been interned there by the Japanese. Mr. Gimson was to be

instructed that if he were to be released from internment on the surrender of the Japanese, and were given the opportunity, it would be his duty, and he would have the authority, under the existing Letters Patent, in the absence of the Governor who had been interned elsewhere, to assume administration of the Government of Hong Kong until such time as the Force Commander arrived with authority to establish military administration. These instructions were delivered to Mr. Gimson on 23rd August by clandestine channels.

Thirdly, action was taken to set the seal upon the planned re-occupation by ensuring that the surrender of the Japanese in Hong Kong should be made to the British, not to the Chinese. On 14th August the British Ambassador in Chung-king was instructed to inform the Chinese Government of the plans being made to despatch a naval force to re-occupy Hong Kong. Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek protested at once against these arrangements, pointing out that Hong Kong was not mentioned as a place in respect of which Admiral Mountbatten was to accept the surrender of the Japanese, and that in his view it clearly fell within the area in respect of which he, the Supreme Commander of the China Theatre, was to accept surrender: the Japanese forces within China, in Formosa, and in those parts of French Indo-China lying north of 16 degrees, were to surrender to him. He hastened to add, however, that he had no territorial ambitions in regard to Hong Kong. The Prime Minister telegraphed to Washington pointing out that Hong Kong was British territory and consequently could not be held to fall within China and that the British Government could not admit the right of the Chinese to accept surrender of Japanese forces in Hong Kong, although it would welcome the presence of a Chinese representative on the occasion of the acceptance of the surrender. The Prime Minister asked that General MacArthur should instruct the Japanese that their forces in Hong Kong were to surrender to the commander of the British naval force which was being despatched. On 18th August the United States President accepted this contention, provided that co-ordination was first effected between the British, Americans, and Chinese, regarding the supply through the port of Hong Kong of Chinese or American forces on the mainland still engaged in operations against the Japanese. General MacArthur was instructed by the American Chiefs of Staff on these lines. The Generalissimo again protested that, as Hong Kong lay within a Chinese theatre of operations, the acceptance of the surrender of the Japanese in Hong Kong by the British could take place only by virtue of delegation to the British Commander of his own power to take the surrender in the China Theatre; he added that he had no objection to such delegation and that he had in fact already made the necessary formal order of delegation in favour of the British. In the event, surrender was accepted by the British commander on behalf both of the British Government

and of Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek as Supreme Commander, China Theatre, so avoiding any prejudgment of the delicate issues involved.

The sudden surrender of the Japanese made it necessary for the Hong Kong Planning Unit to go into action at once, with much of its planning uncompleted. In particular, it had not been possible to finish the directives for the Head of the Military Government and for the C.C.A.O., as it was quite uncertain, until the Japanese surrender was imminent, who would be appointed Head of the Administration. After this had been decided, there was further delay, owing to differences of view among the Chiefs of Staff regarding command arrangements in Hong Kong. These could not be resolved until 27th August. On 30th August the military administration directive was approved and immediately telegraphed to Rear-Admiral Harcourt who entered Hong Kong harbour the same day. In this, and in his general directive, he was addressed as Commander-in-Chief and Head of the Military Administration. He was placed under the direct control of the Chiefs of Staff for operational purposes, but under the War Office for the military administration of the Colony. Administrative requirements of the Army and the Royal Air Force were the responsibility of South-East Asia Command; the Navy was to be supported by the Commander-in-Chief British Pacific Fleet. Events in Hong Kong itself will be recounted in a later chapter.¹

¹ Cf. Chapter XI.



CHAPTER IX

MALAYA

IN APRIL 1945 the main body of the Malayan Planning Unit began the move from London to India, and was attached to Headquarters, ALFSEA, at Barrackpore. During the next two months Civil Affairs staff officers were attached for operational planning to Fourteenth Army, to XXXIV Corps, to six divisional headquarters, to various other military staffs and headquarters, and to the Royal Navy. At the same time a Civil Affairs Base Depot at Pallavaram on the south-east coast of India was established for the mobilization and training of persons posted to the Civil Affairs Service (Malaya).

The territory to be re-occupied consisted of the southern extremity of the peninsula which reaches 800 miles to the south from the mainland of south-east Asia where Burma and Siam meet. The Malayan portion of the peninsula is some 400 miles from north to south, and 200 from east to west at its broadest part. The interior of the peninsula is occupied by a system of mountain ranges rising to 6,000 and 7,000 feet in places, mostly running north and south. The main watershed of this system lies nearer to the west than the east coast. A coastal plain, generally of no great width, separates the mountains from the sea. Dense forest covers the mountains except on the lower slopes where this has been cleared to plant rubber or to mine tin. Towns, villages, and cultivation, other than rubber, are practically confined to the coastal strip or to the bottoms of the valleys where streams cut their way out of the interior mountain mass. The country is less than one fifth the area of Burma and has one third the population. The climate is hot, humid, and consequently enervating, and there is little variety between the seasons. The dense forest, steep hills, and fast flowing streams, make the country even more difficult for military operations than Burma. It is richer in natural resources than Burma and its communications had been more fully developed, the road system being particularly good.

The original plan for the re-occupation of Malaya involved an amphibious operation with a landing by two divisions and one brigade, under the command of XXXIV Corps, on the beaches of the south-west coast, between Port Swettenham and Port Dickson. The operation was to be launched, about September 1945, from the ports of Bombay,

Colombo, Madras, Calcutta and Rangoon. When a beach-head had been established advances were to be undertaken both north-eastwards, towards Kuala Lumpur, the old Federal Capital, and south-eastwards, towards the island of Singapore, with its city and port. It was expected that the advance on Singapore would be strongly opposed so it was planned to build up the forces landed to a total of five divisions, one armoured brigade, and one parachute brigade, and to bring in a second, XV Corps, Headquarters and an advanced Fourteenth Army Headquarters to control operations. It was hoped to regain Singapore in three months from landing. Thereafter the interior of Malaya was to be re-occupied by advances fanning out in a northerly direction from Kuala Lumpur.

Ten Civil Affairs operational detachments, two police detachments, a number of Civil Affairs staffs to deal with supplies and transport, and two medical and health units, were to accompany the forces for this operation. Had it been possible to mobilize this party at full strength (which it was not) it would have numbered 209 officers, 439 British other ranks and 200 Indian other ranks (police). It was to be carried in the second to sixth convoys, the last of which would not arrive in Malaya until more than a month after the first landings. Further Civil Affairs reinforcements were to come in after the taking of Singapore.

When, in August 1945, an early Japanese surrender became probable it was decided that re-occupation must be made generally on the lines already approved, since any fundamental alteration of plan, at this late stage, would have involved such changes in loading and mobilization arrangements as would seriously have postponed the launching of the operation. In any case the sea and air transport available in South-East Asia Command were insufficient to allow of any great acceleration of the re-occupation. Nor was it certain whether local Japanese commanders would obey the cease-fire orders; until it was known that they would, plans must continue to assume resistance. The only change made was that Penang and Singapore were to be occupied in advance of the original programme if possible. There was consequently little change required in the general shape of Civil Affairs plans for the landings, but some considerable acceleration of the subsequent timing, for Japanese opposition was in fact unlikely and re-occupation might be expected to proceed swiftly.

An improvised Civil Affairs detachment landed at Penang when this town was re-occupied on 3rd September. Early on 5th, troops landed in Singapore and later in the day the first Civil Affairs units went ashore. The C.C.A.O., Major-General Hone, and the D.C.C.A.O. Singapore, Brigadier P. A. B. McKerron, accompanied this party. The proclamation by the Supreme Allied Commander establishing Military Administration had been posted at the railway station some hours

earlier.¹ On 8th September a Civil Affairs detachment passed through Singapore and reached Johore Bahru. Then, on 9th September, the main landings were made on the Morib Beaches between Port Swettenham and Port Dickson, as originally planned, and, on 10th, seven Civil Affairs detachments and other units went ashore. Everywhere re-occupation was unopposed. Administration was rapidly re-established in the interior. The D.C.C.A.O. Mainland Division, Brigadier H. C. Willan, reached Kuala Lumpur on 12th September and set up his headquarters. The next day two Selangor Region detachments reached Kuala Lumpur, and one detachment for Negri Sembilan and Malacca arrived at Seremban. A detachment reached Kelantan through Penang on 17th. Shortly after, other detachments reached Northern and Southern Perak. On 19th a detachment reached Alorstar for the Perlis, Kedah and Kroh Region. The S.C.A.O., Pahang Region, arrived at Kuala Lipis on 24th September, but the rest of his detachment could not join him until ten days later owing to lack of transport. In Trengganu, on the north-east coast, the S.C.A.O.-designate had been in the area with clandestine forces two or three months before the Japanese surrender. He came out into the open and established himself as S.C.A.O. of the region. Other officers of the clandestine forces took charge temporarily of the Pahang Region until a Civil Affairs detachment could arrive. Of the work of the clandestine forces at this period the C.C.A.O. said 'it would be difficult to exaggerate the value of this assistance, given by officers who knew intimately the area in which they operated and, who, from their association with the Resistance Forces, were in a strong position to exert control and take the initial steps necessary to secure law and order.'

Physical conditions encountered were generally better than in Burma, for Malaya had not been exposed to Allied bombing to the same extent. Where, in Burma, there had been destruction, in Malaya, there was usually nothing worse than dilapidation and neglect. But the roads, which appeared good, quickly crumbled under military traffic, and many bridges had been destroyed. Water supply systems, electrical installations, drains and irrigation canals, were all suffering from neglect to the point of being unusable. There was a grave shortage of rice, which no mere redistribution of internal stocks could cure, and also of clothing and consumer goods. These shortages, together with the inflation of the Japanese currency, greatly increased the cost of living and undermined the wage structure. Widespread malnutrition was found, the lack of protein causing beri-beri, anaemia, and leg ulcers. Malaria and most other diseases had greatly increased. The island of Singapore which in the past, had displayed a prosperous well-tended beauty, was found dirty and neglected. Gardens and open spaces were

¹ Proclamation No. 1 Malaya Military Administration Gazette Vol. I No. 1, cf. Appendix 3.

overgrown, grass and weeds encroached upon many of the roads. Buildings were shabby for want of paint. Many public buildings had been streaked with oil by the Japanese for camouflage. Much temporary and exceedingly shoddy building of coarse bricks and corrugated iron had been undertaken by the Japanese. A good deal of the timber on the island had been felled, leaving untidy scrub jungle in place of beautiful and useful forest land. The civilian population had encroached upon open spaces, main roads, and byways, building squalid and unhygienic shacks of salvaged material. Many large buildings had been stripped of furniture and fittings, even of doors, windows, and floors. There was little or no scavenging or conservancy.¹ On the other hand, tin mines and rubber estates on the mainland, were in better condition than had been expected although few had been worked by the Japanese. Livestock had not decreased as much as had been feared, cattle and buffaloes being only one tenth less than in 1941.

On their arrival the British forces were given a warm welcome. The Japanese had behaved with great brutality and the period of their occupation had been one of shortages and hardship.

The fact that Malaya was re-occupied as a result of a Japanese surrender not only spared the country the destruction of operations; it meant also that it was saved from the anarchic interregnum which caused almost greater damage in Burma. Although the influence of the Japanese rapidly declined when it became known that they had surrendered, their forces were still able to maintain order in towns, so enabling the civil administration to remain in being until the arrival of British troops, in readiness to be re-employed by the military government. So complete was this readiness that the policy of the Administration, to engage Asiatic staff only as need arose and only in the post-operational period, was immediately felt to be politically inappropriate. The C.C.A.O. decided at once to re-employ all permanent Government and Municipal employees, in the certainty that if work was not immediately available it would very soon be found for them. Later, a reaction set in, and senior Malay officials came to feel rebuffed and disillusioned, as did so many officials in Burma, and for similar reasons. The enquiries prescribed for the detection of those who had collaborated with the Japanese, and the resultant delay in making full and immediate use of recovered officials, were felt to spring from a wounding under-estimate of Malay loyalty and ability.

The day-to-day work of the Civil Affairs detachments was generally similar to that undertaken in Burma and described in earlier chapters. No further account is necessary here except to say that, as in Burma, a chronic shortage of transport continually hampered work, and that it was only by ingenious juggling with available resources and by ready

¹ Gilmour, *With Freedom to Singapore*, London, 1950.

assistance from other branches of the army that failures were avoided.

* * *

The speed of re-occupation was such that it was very soon possible to pass to the post-operational phase. On 1st October the General Officer Commanding, Malaya, delegated his authority for military administration to the C.C.A.O. and the separate Civil Affairs chain of command was established; the latter, according to plan, at once made further delegation of his authority to the D.C.C.A.O.'s of the Mainland and Singapore Divisions.

The course of events in the Mainland Division will be considered in the following pages. Events in the Singapore Division will be related in the next section. One important political topic will be reserved for consideration in a separate chapter—the dealings of the Administration with the Resistance forces in Malaya.¹

The D.C.C.A.O. Mainland Division set up his headquarters in the former Federal Secretariat at Kuala Lumpur. From an early stage it comprised a small Secretariat, a Deputy Controller of Finance and Accounts, a Legal Officer, an Adviser on Chinese Affairs and a Personnel Section. A separate Police Headquarters was established and departments dealing with public health, agriculture and forests, road transport, custody of property, and various technical services were progressively set up as staff became available. The Division contained nine Civil Affairs regions which corresponded generally with the nine States of Malaya (four federated and five unfederated). As in Burma, it was the policy to make the military organisation coincide as nearly as possible with the civil regions. With unimportant exceptions this was achieved and in most cases the headquarters of the various military formations were situated alongside regional headquarters. Not infrequently headquarters of battalions coincided with the headquarters of C.A.O.'s placed in charge of the districts into which regions were sub-divided.

It had been laid down by the Supreme Allied Commander that Advisory Committees were to be set up, to be composed of officers and of non-official persons representative of local communities and interests. By the end of the military period such committees had been established in most regions and were reported by the C.C.A.O. to have been 'useful'. No Divisional Advisory Council was set up.

Before the war responsibility for the preservation of law and order in Malaya had been laid upon the Straits Settlement Police Force, the Federated Malay States Police Force (consisting of State contingents and a reserve contingent), and the police forces of the five unfederated States. All of these were in varying degree under control by the

¹ Cf. Chapter XX.

Inspector-General of Police of the Federated Malay States. It was known that these police forces had continued to function after a manner during the Japanese occupation, and they were found still in existence, though depleted in numbers and generally inefficient and ill-disciplined. Police stations in most cases had suffered nothing worse than neglect, but shortages of equipment and lack of supervision had grievously lowered the discipline and efficiency of the forces. Japanese officers were found in nominal control, but outside the towns the forces were totally ineffective. Most of the police stations in the interior had been taken over by Chinese guerillas: in the remainder the police did not dare to emerge, and remained barricaded in the buildings for safety. The immediate tasks of the police department were to purge the forces of undesirables; to re-equip and re-train those retained, with a view to building up their efficiency, discipline, and spirit; and, as soon as possible, to bring the forces up to strength again. For the first three months effort was concentrated upon re-equipping, and giving refresher courses to, existing members of the forces. All were re-armed with .303 rifles. A beginning was also made with re-equipping police stations. Thereafter new recruitment began in order to bring the forces up to strength again. For the revival of police morale the issue of suitable new uniform was known to be essential. Although arrangements had been made for 9,000 complete sets of uniform, suitable for police use, to be available within two months of landing, these could not be completely supplied until five or six months later. However, by the end of the military period the police forces were approaching pre-war strength, though there was still a severe shortage of European officers and inspectors.

As in other countries, crime increased greatly as a result of the war. Murder was extremely common. Cases reported during the military period totalled 600, but it was well known that the actual number must have been far greater. Many cases were never reported, because the police were not acting at all at the time, or because they were operating so ineffectively that reporting did not seem worthwhile, or because of fear of retaliation from the persons informed against. Piracy was common along the west coast of Malaya, pirates coming even into Penang Harbour. In a case off the Batu Pahat river in Johore, armed Chinese boarded a boat, tied up the four members of the crew and then threw them over-board. One member miraculously survived. This form of crime was eventually checked by the marine police acquiring Japanese assault craft and using them for patrols, and by set military operations against the pirates' base on Terutau Island. The re-establishment of courts to deal with the mass of cases resulting from police activity, and the manner of their functioning, will be related in a separate chapter.¹ The prisons on the mainland were recovered in

¹ Cf. Chapter XVI.

workable order and were used throughout the military period for their legitimate purposes.

Second only to the restoration of order and security came the safeguarding of public health. Most of the pre-war hospitals were found intact. They were desperately short of equipment and drugs, and almost completely without mattresses, sheets, blankets, mosquito nets and clothing; hospital diets were grossly inadequate, and there was much evidence of incompetence and neglect. Standards of knowledge and training of the medical staffs had gravely deteriorated. The Administration brought in hospitals, travelling dispensaries, health, and other units. The Australian Red Cross organisation sent in a 'First Aid and Mobile Unit', and a 'Mobile Medical Clinic'. Unofficial civilian teams were provided by 24th Indian Medical Mission and very considerable help was provided by some 150 St. John Ambulance and Red Cross workers sent mainly from England and India. All these, with the unflinching support and assistance of the military medical organization, tackled the situation with energy, so that by the end of the military period, there was hospital accommodation of 25,000 beds (20,000 in government hospitals and another 5,000 in 'estate' hospitals) adequately supplied with essential equipment. There were no serious outbreaks of infectious disease during the military period, but malaria, pulmonary tuberculosis, and venereal disease, had greatly increased during the Japanese occupation. Malnutrition was marked and general.

The Labour Department, which, within a day of landing, was arranging for the supply of civilian labour to the Army for many different purposes, also took a hand in the public health campaign. It was faced with a first task of relieving the destitution that was widespread in nearly all groups of labour. In collaboration with the section responsible for dealing with refugees and displaced persons, camps were set up, in which all destitutes were collected. In Kuala Lumpur these numbered 10,000 and the problem was of comparable size elsewhere. Food and essential medical attention were made available at the camps and in a surprisingly short time the persons sent to them recovered and were anxious to return to their homes to find employment. When the camps were working satisfactorily the scope of relief work was extended into the rubber estates where there were aggregations of labour. The sick were removed to hospital, and the rest were employed as soon as possible on clearing and overtaking arrears of maintenance work on estates, pending the return of the estate managers. This work was financed by the Administration against ultimate reimbursement by the estate owners. As managers of estates arrived in Malaya, responsibility was handed over to them. In addition to other benefits the decision to pay and employ this large labour force on productive work exercised a steadying influence politically.

An important task facing the Administration, the treatment of refugees and displaced persons, will be more fully discussed in a later chapter.¹

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When the C.C.A.O. delegated administrative authority to the D.C.C.A.O.'s on 1st October, the headquarters of the D.C.C.A.O. Singapore was separated from No. 2 Area Headquarters of which it had previously formed part. The D.C.C.A.O. then became directly responsible to the C.C.A.O. for all matters of military government. His headquarters was similar in structure and organization to that of the D.C.C.A.O. Mainland Division, but there was no regional organization below. An S.C.A.O. was put in charge of the revival of municipal finances and administration in the urban part of the island, but the D.C.C.A.O. and his own staff retained immediate responsibility for other aspects of administration in the municipal area and, generally, for the rural area of the island. An Advisory Council presided over by the Chief Civil Affairs Officer and a number of standing Advisory Committees were set up to represent local interests and to keep the Administration in touch with day-to-day problems of reconstruction. These were very successful.

Responsibility for the restoration of essential services, both within and without the municipal area, was placed upon the Military Administration Works Services. These consisted of seven Civil Affairs Works Sections, staffed mostly by members of the pre-war Malayan Public Works Service, and under the immediate command of a former Deputy Municipal Engineer. These Works Sections were fully integrated with the military engineering services under Royal Engineer command, but were ready to be demilitarized and transferred to the civil government whenever this assumed responsibility. In the Mainland Division, where a similar organization was adopted, a certain number of Works officers remained outside these integrated Works Sections, in order to advise the C.C.A.O. generally on public works matters, and to form a nucleus for the future civil Public Works Department headquarters staff.

The Works Sections in Singapore assumed responsibility for roads and bridges, water supply, electricity, gas, sewerage, town cleansing, housing, transport, engineering supplies, Public Works Department workshops, marine works, and various longer-term responsibilities. In due course, when the civil government took over, these responsibilities were transferred, some to the Government of the Colony, and some to the Municipal Commissioners, the staff of the sections being divided and transferred to these two authorities.

¹ Cf. Chapter XV.

Bridges were intact. Roads appeared in good order but required immediate attention to prevent rapid disintegration under heavy traffic. The water supply was thoroughly overhauled and repaired, and by the middle of October consumption was up to twenty-seven-and-a-half million gallons, while by the end of the military period it had reached thirty-one million gallons a day, about three million more than before the war. By that time electricity was being supplied to 33,358 consumers as compared with 31,869 at the end of 1941. The gas supply had suffered greater neglect and damage, but a start was made with restoration. The sewerage system required complete and immediate overhaul, but was brought to a point at which it fulfilled the demands made upon it. The town cleansing department disposed of accumulations of filth and rubbish amounting to 89,000 tons and re-introduced a satisfactory system of town cleansing.

The Police force in Singapore, was found ' . . . suffering from practically every possible disadvantage, inadequate pay, next to no uniform, equipment or transport, and very few officers. Its members were undernourished, dirty, driven to corruption through necessity and untrained.' The Criminal Investigation Department headquarters and police stations had to be kept barred and defended for fear of armed reprisals because of the behaviour of the investigating staff during the occupation. The shortage of police officers was overcome by the loan of officers and men from the 5th Parachute Brigade to assist in training and to take charge of police stations. The force was first purged of members who had collaborated with the Japanese, and of unsuitable persons recruited during the occupation. By mid-December recruiting began again, and by January public confidence in the force was reviving. The action taken by the police on 15th February 1946¹ caused a further rise in public confidence and was followed by an immediate drop in crime. On 1st April a fully functioning police force was handed over to the civil government.

The main Singapore Prison was taken over from the Japanese on 6th September. The first prisoner to be admitted after this was the Japanese ex-Superintendent of the Prison. Changi Prison and the Reformatory were not available for their normal functions during the military period, the former being used as a military prison and the latter for other purposes.

Although Singapore had suffered little destruction in comparison with Rangoon, the problem of accommodation was probably as acute. The headquarters, not only of the Supreme Commander, but of the Commanders-in-Chief of Allied Land Forces and of the Air Force in South-East Asia were moved thither. The port and town were being prepared as a base for operations further east. A large number of prisoners of war, and of interned and displaced persons found refuge

¹ For detailed account cf. Chapter XX.

there from the Netherlands East Indies. An Accommodation Committee was set up in December, as had been done in Rangoon, to expedite the release of property requisitioned. Nevertheless progress in this matter was very slow.

For eight weeks the Royal Navy worked the port, under combined services control. On 3rd November the Chairman-designate of the Singapore and Penang Harbour Boards, aided by an Advisory Committee, began a gradual take-over from the Royal Navy. He assumed full responsibility for the operation of Penang harbour on 1st January 1946, and of Singapore harbour on 1st April. Much of the pre-war staff was lacking at first, no suitable tugs were available, most of the buoys were missing or out of position, there were many obstructions to navigation and nearly all the navigational lights were extinguished. By the end of the military period, however, the port was almost back to peace-time working.

Medical work for the civil population was handicapped by the taking over for military patients of the large General Hospital and of the Mental Hospital. For civilians, use was made of eight smaller hospitals, many of them improvised. These were:

1. The Tan Tock Seng Hospital, 750 beds.
2. The Middleton Hospital, 250 beds.
3. The Kandang Kerbau Hospital, 350 beds.
4. The Victoria Hospital, in a Government School, 200 beds.
5. The St. Andrew's Mission Hospital, 60 beds.
6. An improvised hospital in the Katong Convent School, 200 beds.
7. A small hospital in Mandalay Road.
8. An improvised hospital in a Chinese Temple in Kim Kent Road.

In addition there were a hospital and two clinics for venereal diseases, twenty-two other clinics or welfare centres (seven in the town, fifteen in the rural part of the division) and a travelling dispensary. Persons vaccinated numbered 125,535 and 114,744 were inoculated. Anti-malarial measures were revived to regain for Singapore its enviable freedom from this disease. The Administration distributed 84,573 milk feeds to infants, 32,263 soup meals to children of pre-school age, and 175,650 free meals in schools in the town area. In the rural part of the Singapore Division not much more than a start could be made with similar services, owing mainly to lack of transport. Difficulty was caused by the diversion to Rangoon, where the need was even greater, of the first two shipments of drugs and surgical supplies for the relief of civilians in Malaya. A special problem was presented by the Javanese labourers, who had been brought to Singapore by the Japanese. These were destitute and many were sick and dying. Relief measures were promptly initiated by the Refugees and Displaced Persons Section

which took 1,395 sick Javanese into the Nee Soon Hospital Camp. By March 1946 the section had in its care 2,310 Javanese, nearly all fit and ready to return to work. Other action taken in the relief of refugees and displaced persons will be described in a later chapter.¹

The Labour Department of the Administration and the Civil Labour Control organization set up by the military authorities, working in co-operation, provided labour both for the Administration itself and for other services, the monthly totals rising from 48,500 in the beginning to about 100,000 in each of the months of January, February, and March 1946. Over one third of these totals represented skilled labour.

The general measures taken to bring in supplies for the civil population will be considered in a later chapter.² Here it need only be mentioned that sea-fishing areas were cleared of mines as early as possible, that rice, salt, sugar, and later flour and milk, were rationed; and that steps were taken to stimulate local food production, especially of rice, palm oil, and fish. Price control was attempted, at first with little success, orders in regard to fresh vegetables and fish having to be withdrawn as unenforceable. Later orders in regard to rice, sugar, salt, flour, milk, meat and cigarettes, made when food control staff had been recruited, did something towards lowering prices of these commodities, food prices in general dropping from seven or eight times the pre-war prices soon after re-occupation, to little more than five times in March 1946.

* * *

The post-operational stage had been introduced by the delegation of full administrative authority, first, by the military commander in Malaya to the C.C.A.O., and then by the C.C.A.O. to the D.C.C.A.O's. This second delegation set up two Administrations largely independent of each other but both subject to the general executive control of the C.C.A.O. The system was being moulded into the shape that would allow the earliest transfer of authority to the two civil Administrations which were required by the constitutional policy of the British Government.

What functions remained to the C.C.A.O. after the delegations? Ultimate responsibility for the administration remained with the military commander, under the Supreme Allied Commander, and the C.C.A.O. was required to continue as the chief staff officer responsible for advising the former on all Civil Affairs matters. He was required to establish liaison between the Military Administration and Army, Navy, and Air Force staffs. As head of the Civil Affairs Service, and in charge, under the military commander, of the Military Administration, he was responsible for the formulation of Civil Affairs policy and for

¹ Cf. Chapter XV.

² Cf. Chapter XIII.

the direction and co-ordination of all Civil Affairs activity, especially the activities of the two Administrations, on the mainland and at Singapore. He was in immediate charge of the 'Pan-Malayan' departments. These dealt with supplies, rationing and food control, postal services, printing and publicity, trade and industry, and labour, all matters in respect of which a unified control was desirable. He was also responsible, through the Controller of Finance and Accounts, for the financial activities of the Administration. Until February, 1946 the Finance Department advised also on economic problems, in the absence of an Economic Adviser, for whom the C.C.A.O. had made repeated request. The C.C.A.O. was also responsible for postings and other matters of internal administration for the Civil Affairs Service. Lastly we must not forget the 'civil' side of his 'dual responsibility' under which he was directly responsible, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, for the rehabilitation of Malaya above the austerity level to which the military authorities were limited.

For the discharge of these varied functions, the C.C.A.O.'s own headquarters was initially organized in three 'wings'. The first of these was the central Secretariat under the control of three Principal Staff Officers. These were the Deputy C.C.A.O., responsible for 'military government', the Controller of Finance and Accounts, and the Chief Legal Officer, who was responsible for a residual list of subjects, many with a legal flavour. The second wing consisted of three inspecting and advisory officers, responsible for advising the C.C.A.O. and the territorial D.C.C.A.O.'s on technical matters. These officers were to have ' a full measure of executive authority from the C.C.A.O. within their respective functions'. As the functions of administration expanded and officers became available, other branches were added to these wings. These included the Reconstruction Branch, set up on 1st November 1945 and charged with the task of preparing the way for the resumption of civil government with special reference to personnel problems. The branch worked in close touch with the Hand-over Committee which was set up on 17th December and to which further reference will be made later in this chapter. The third wing was the security staff, charged with responsibility for the collection of political and economic intelligence and for the enforcement of security precautions. This wing was under the dual control of the C.C.A.O. and of the Director of Military Intelligence, first at Fourteenth Army and later at Malaya Command Headquarters. It was represented in the two territorial divisions by the Singapore Security Bureau and by the Combined Security Bureau at Kuala Lumpur. It prepared the way for the establishment of the Malayan Security Service, an organisation that was planned to be independent of the territorial police services and their criminal investigation department, although recruited from their ranks.

When operations for the re-occupation of Malaya began, the C.C.A.O. and his staff were transferred from Headquarters ALFSEA in Barrackpore and attached to Fourteenth Army. On 1st November, Headquarters Fourteenth Army in Singapore closed down, being replaced by Malaya Command with headquarters at Kuala Lumpur. The C.C.A.O. now became responsible to the Commander-in-Chief, Malaya, and he and most of his own headquarters moved to Kuala Lumpur. There, for economy in staff, he set up a combined headquarters with the D.C.C.A.O, without in any way modifying however, the command relationships between himself and the two territorial D.C.C.A.O's.

* * *

Space permits no detailed account of the work of the Administration. Some aspects have been mentioned in earlier sections of this chapter. The more detailed narrative of events in Burma will help the reader to imagine the general background. A few points of special interest may be recounted before passing to the arrangements made for hand-over to the civil government.

Postal services were restored with remarkable rapidity. All post offices in Singapore and Johore were opened by 17th September 1945. By 5th October mail services were operating even in the most inaccessible districts of the Mainland Division. As no stamps were available correspondence up to one ounce in weight was handled free of charge until 19th October when overprinted stamps were put on sale. By March 1946 every important pre-war postal service was functioning, except insurance.

Education made a quick revival in the Singapore Division. Less than three weeks after the first landings, four government English schools, ten government-aided English schools, and fourteen government Malay schools had been re-opened. By the time of the hand-over to the civil government 62,000 children were attending school as compared with 73,000 before the war, and this although nineteen schools, including several of the largest, were still occupied by the armed services. In the Malay Peninsula Division the start was slower but the results, by the time of hand-over to the civil government, even more remarkable. In December a Director of Education arrived, a civilian appointed by the Colonial Office and deriving his authority from the civil side of the C.C.A.O's dual responsibility. By the time of hand-over all but thirty-four out of some 1,900 schools had been re-opened. 60,000 pupils had been enrolled in the English schools, as compared with a pre-war figure of 32,000. In Malay schools the comparable figures were 120,000 against 122,000; in Chinese schools 110,000 against 83,000; and in Tamil schools 18,000 against 25,000. The total showed

an increase of 17·5 per cent over the pre-war figure. Practically all text books and libraries had been lost during the occupation but more than 400,000 volumes were recovered. Students for enrolment were not of normal type. Many, whose education had been interrupted by the war, were much above ordinary school age. A special curriculum was evolved to meet their needs. On the other hand there were four or five years of new entrants with no previous schooling, for whom the primary classes had to be largely multiplied. Most difficult of all were the psychological problems, the complete absence of character building or any habit of study, the bad habits acquired of life and thought. The Education Department was also able to help the Army Education Board in the matter of classes and lectures for troops; many army units, especially technical units, gave generous aid both to academic and trade schools of the Department.

The Administration was charged with the task of reporting upon monuments, buildings of historic interest, museums, and libraries, and of taking such steps as were practicable to preserve and restore these for the future. Little harm had come to monuments, or buildings, other than that caused by neglect. Museums and libraries did not fare so well. The Raffles Library in Singapore had lost over 500 books of reference. The Penang Library was hit by Allied bombs in February 1945 and looted thereafter, losing over 100 valuable historical books and practically all its newspaper files. The library and museums of the Malacca Historical Society were looted and half the books, and the whole of the museum collection, lost. The Selangor State Museum was completely destroyed by Allied bombing, but much of the contents was recovered, twenty cabinets containing entomological specimens and one set of Journals being ultimately found in the Imperial Household in Tokyo. Other museums also suffered losses. In general, however, the harm done was much less than might have been expected.

Very valuable aid was rendered to the undermanned public health and relief staffs by Red Cross and St. John's Ambulance workers; 150 of these in the Mainland Division (thirty from the Australian Red Cross, the rest from the United Kingdom and from India) worked in refugee camps, hospitals, infant welfare clinics, feeding centres, and travelling dispensaries. In September, a gift ship arrived from the Australian Red Cross with 5,000 tons of food, clothing, amenities, and medical supplies for ex-prisoners of war. As these had all been repatriated by then, the consignment, worth £1,000,000, was given to the distressed people of Malaya. The Pan-Malayan Welfare council, under the C.C.A.O., distributed 867,000 parcels to hospitals and deserving persons.

We have seen that the Administration established was a direct administration, by the Supreme Allied Commander through his Civil Affairs officers, in contrast to the indirect administration in force before

the war. The departure from the pre-war system involved in this must not, however, be exaggerated. For while, under that system, the principle of indirect administration had been maintained, the influence of British officials had, in fact, been very great. But there was a change. Where, before the war, the departments in the States had received their guidance mainly through departmental channels, from the federal heads of departments or inspecting officers, and the task of the Resident had been to advise the Sultan in regard to the exercise of the sovereign authority vested in him for his State, now the S.C.A.O. exercised direct co-ordinating control over the departments in his region, and not infrequently had to discharge technical departmental functions himself as best he could, in the absence of the technical departmental officer concerned. In this connection the C.C.A.O. reported that 'there were many who trusted that departmentalism would be kept in rein and that the local team spirit engendered by the Military Administration would persist after Civil Government was resumed'.

* * *

In the case of Burma, the Governor began to press for the return of the civil government, before the greater part of the country had been re-occupied, with the result that hand-over was, in the opinion of many, undertaken prematurely. Events in the case of Malaya followed an entirely different course.

On 10th August 1945 the Colonial Office suggested to Admiral Mountbatten that his responsibility for the administration of Malaya should continue for six or, if possible, eight months from the date of liberation. The Supreme Allied Commander some weeks later agreed but felt that such continuance of responsibility would be incompatible with restriction of his functions to the mere prevention of disease and unrest as the country should not be made to suffer any disadvantage by the continuance of military administration after the end of hostilities. He pressed for his instructions to be liberalised, either to permit of the increased exercise of the civil side of the C.C.A.O.'s dual responsibility, or to relax the austerity imposed on the military side. Of these two ways, he preferred the former.

A prerequisite to any hand-over was the approval by Parliament of the constitutional reforms proposed by the Colonial Office for Malaya. No decision could be taken on these until the preliminary negotiations showed whether the Sultans were likely to agree to the concessions upon which alone the reforms could be based.¹

On 17th December a Hand-over Committee for Malaya was

¹ For brief reference to the course of these cf. Chapter XX.

constituted within Admiral Mountbatten's headquarters which, by now, was in Singapore.¹ Its terms of reference were:

(a) To recommend for the approval of the Supreme Allied Commander the principles on which hand-over to the civil government should be made.

(b) To ascertain and report from time to time to the Supreme Allied Commander the progress made with preparations for the hand-over under various headings, e.g. organization, accommodation, personnel, and supplies and equipment.

(c) To ensure that action by the military and civil authorities concerned in these preparations was effectively co-ordinated.

The 1st March was suggested as a date for the hand-over, but the Committee was enjoined to 'consider and report whether any variation of this date is desirable in Singapore Island or Malaya as a whole, bearing in mind that Singapore must continue for some time to be the base for operations in Java.'

Arrangements had also to be made for the reservation to the Supreme Allied Commander of certain overriding powers in regard to Singapore as a military base, for without these he was not willing to hand over this part of Malaya at all.

The Committee worked on the assumption that there must be ready for transfer to the civil government on the appointed date a nucleus of no less than thirty-six departments, and proceeded by a review of the ability of the Administration to make these available to its successor. It is interesting to compare this list with the short list of six departments actually handed over to the Burma Government on 16th October, 1945.² Most of the departments were already in a form suitable for hand-over to the civil government, but some were organized

¹ The Committee consisted of the P.A.O. SEAC and the M.G.A., ALFSEA, or their representatives, of the F.A., SEAC, the D.C.C.A.O., ALFSEA, the C.C.A.O. Malaya, and of any person co-opted or any visiting representative of the Colonial Office. The Chairman was the Director of Civil Affairs, SACSEA.

² *In Burma*

- | | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. General Administration | 3. Police | 5. Education |
| 2. Judicial | 4. Agriculture | 6. Revenue |

(Part of the Publicity Department was also handed over.)

In Malaya

- | | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| 1. General Administration | 14. Judicial | 26. Lands (including Mines and Geological Survey) |
| 2. Finance | 15. Public Works | 27. Survey |
| 3. Medical and Health | 16. Railway | 28. Audit |
| 4. Agriculture | 17. Harbours | 29. Custodian of Property |
| 5. Forestry | 18. Marine | 30. Immigration |
| 6. Veterinary | 19. Ports | 31. Supplies |
| 7. Road Transport | 20. Telecommunication | 32. Food Control |
| 8. Police | 21. Civil Aviation and Meteorological | 33. Publicity |
| 9. Prisons | 22. Education | 34. Printing |
| 10. Trade and Industry | 23. Customs | 35. Fisheries |
| 11. Labour | 24. Electrical | 36. Game |
| 12. Chinese Affairs | 25. Drainage and irrigation | |
| 13. Legal | | |

on a Pan-Malayan basis, whereas the incoming government was proposing to work through separate departments for the mainland and for Singapore, and therefore required splitting, and some still required to be shaken out from immediate military, as opposed to Civil Affairs, control.

A difficult problem was that of ensuring to the civil government the necessary staff for these departments. When the hand-over drew near, just over 1,000 officers were employed by the Administration. Only one-quarter of these held, or had been offered, substantive appointments in Malaya under the Colonial Office. On hand-over these could be made available for employment under the incoming civil government. The remaining three-quarters would, in the ordinary course of events, require to be posted to military duties elsewhere. It was arranged, however, that they should be retained by the civil government on secondment until their replacement by civilian employees could be arranged, the necessary financial adjustment being made between the War Office and the Colonial Office. Similar arrangements for secondment were made in the case of any of the 350 Warrant Officers, N.C.O.'s, and British and Indian Other Ranks whom the civil government might wish to retain, pending recruitment of local civilians to replace them.

Stores, equipment, and vehicles issued to the Military Administration were to be listed and handed over to the civil government. Works, whether repairs or new installations, were to be similarly treated. Financial adjustment was to be made between the War Office and the Colonial Office. The lists prepared were required to distinguish between items of British origin and items of American lend-lease origin, and to distinguish also between items procured expressly for Civil Affairs purposes and items not so procured.¹ The issue of motor transport to the Administration had fallen far behind programme, but a special effort towards the end of the military period secured to it about three-quarters of what it was entitled to receive. The provision of supplies for the civil population will be dealt with at greater length in another chapter;² here it is only necessary to record that the Committee satisfied itself that the progress made by the military authorities in the delivery of the first six months' supplies was adequate, that the Colonial Office, so far as could be ascertained, was making progress with procurement in respect of the next period of six months, and that an adequate distribution organization had been built up in Malaya and could be handed over to the civil government.

Admiral Mountbatten had agreed to hand over authority to the civil government on the condition that certain overriding powers in

¹ Cf. Chapter XIII.

² Cf. Chapter XIII.

regard to ports, railways and road transport were reserved to himself. The Committee devised machinery for reserving the necessary powers to the Supreme Allied Commander. A Board of Control was set up under civilian chairmanship with representation of all services. By agreement between the civil authority and the Supreme Allied Commander the decisions of the Board were made subject to approval or amendment by the Supreme Allied Commander on grounds of military necessity.

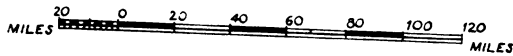
It was a part of the task of the Committee to satisfy itself that all necessary legislation had been prepared. This included the Orders in Council and the Royal Instructions necessary for the introduction of the new constitutional arrangements, and the legislation necessary to ensure the continuance, and modification where necessary, of the law established by proclamation during the period of military administration, until such time as the civil government was ready to modify or dispense with this. An Indemnity and Validating Ordinance required to be enacted by the two civil governors, immediately on arrival, to give validity to the acts of the Military Administration, and to protect its officers from the consequences of their official actions.

The hand-over was finally accomplished on 1st April 1946, by a formal proclamation terminating the Military Administration, and by the swearing in of Sir Edward Gent as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Malayan Union, and of Mr. P. A. B. McKerron as Officer Administering the Government of Singapore; this was followed on 3rd April by the swearing in of Mr. F. C. Gimson as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Singapore.

* * *

The Cocos or Keeling Islands deserve a brief postscript. Before the War these islands formed a part of the Straits Settlements. They were owned by the Clunies Ross family to whom in 1886 Queen Victoria granted a freehold title to them. The islands were never occupied by the Japanese and in 1942 the Governor of Ceylon was empowered to make Defence Regulations for them. On the death of Mr. J. S. Clunies Ross in August 1944, a Military Administrator was sent to the Islands but military administration was not formally established there until the issue of a proclamation on the 20th July 1945, by the Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia. At the time of the proclamation a Fortress Commander was appointed to the islands; and, while the Military Administrator was placed under the operational control of the Fortress Commander, he received technical instructions from the Chief Civil Affairs Officer for Malaya. The islands reverted to the administration of the Colony of Singapore with the re-establishment of civil government on the 1st April 1946.

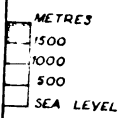
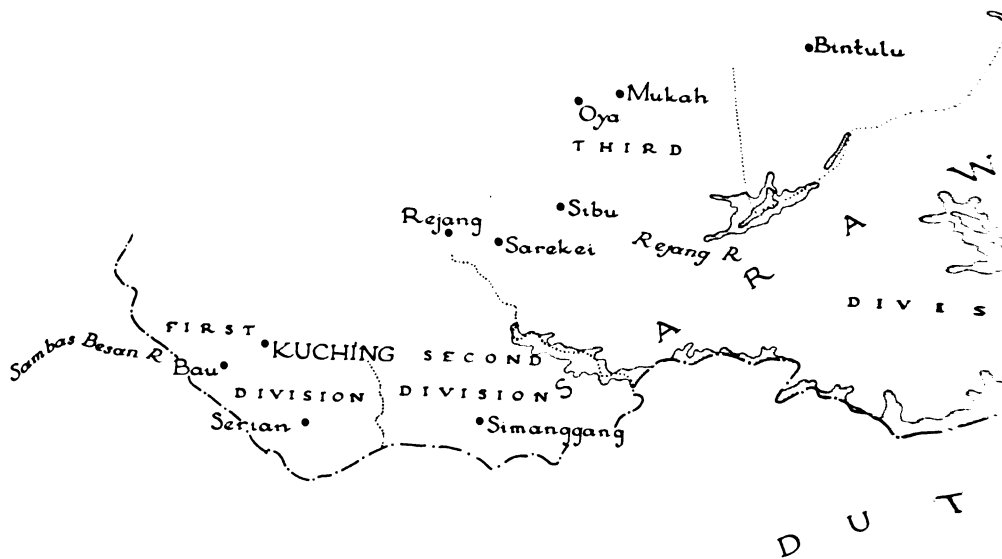
BRITISH BORNEO



S O U T H

C H I N A S E A

Kuala
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CHAPTER X

BORNEO

WHEN IN MARCH 1942 the Japanese had broken through the centre and western end of the Malay barrier and were advancing fiercely upon the crumbling eastern end, which rested upon New Guinea and the north of Australia, it was agreed between the United States and Great Britain that the conduct of operations in the Pacific should become an American responsibility. In April General MacArthur was appointed Supreme Commander of the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA) under the United States Chiefs of Staff. General Blamey, already Commander-in-Chief of all Australian Military Forces, with his Main Headquarters (known as Land Headquarters or L.H.Q.) in Melbourne, became in addition Commander-in-Chief of the Allied Land Forces under General MacArthur in SWPA. These forces were then, and for a long time to come, predominantly Australian. The first task of the American-Australian forces was to halt the Japanese advance and to preserve Australia as a base from which a counter-offensive could ultimately be launched; the second was to build up strength in the Australian base to make possible the launching of this offensive. By the second half of 1943 both these tasks had been accomplished and the Allied advance was already beginning. This developed as a double thrust; the one under General MacArthur, commanding the forces in the South-West Pacific Area and certain land forces from the South Pacific Area, along the line of the Solomon Islands and the northern coast of New Guinea in the direction of the Philippines; the other under Admiral C. W. Nimitz, commanding the forces in the Central Pacific Area, from the direction of the Hawaiian Islands by way of the Gilberts and Marshalls to the Marianas, whence it could threaten both the Philippines and the main Japanese Islands. By September 1944 General MacArthur's advance had penetrated to Morotai in the Moluccas, north-west of New Guinea, pushing aside and leaving behind numerous isolated pockets of Japanese resistance. By this time the advance of Admiral Nimitz's forces had reached the Marianas, and Palau Island between the Marianas and the Philippines. In the following month the attack upon the Philippines was launched. For this, General MacArthur employed American land forces, leaving the Australian forces, which until a few months before had borne the weight of land operations in the South-West Pacific Area, to deal with Japanese armies by-passed in

the Solomons, New Britain, and Australian New Guinea.¹ Specialist units, however, might be employed with either part of the forces in the theatre, whether Australian or American.² By May 1945 General MacArthur and his executive staff were at an advanced headquarters in Manila. His main headquarters was still in Brisbane, an intermediate headquarters being at Hollandia. While the Manila headquarters now looked in the direction of Japan, that of one of its subordinate formations, I Australian Corps under the Command of Lieutenant-General Morshead, had been left behind at Morotai, the northern-most of the Halmahera group of islands in the Moluccas, to watch the left flank of the main advance in SWPA and to deal in due course with Japanese forces remaining on that flank in Borneo.

It should be added at this point that while the Australian forces in SWPA were operationally under the command of General MacArthur, administratively they were supported and controlled by Land Headquarters in Australia and by General Blamey in his other capacity of Commander-in-Chief Australian Military Forces. Advanced L.H.Q. was at this time at Morotai alongside I Australian Corps. A forward echelon of Advanced L.H.Q. was at Manila with General MacArthur's forward headquarters.

* * *

It has been recounted earlier³ how the Borneo planning group was assembled in London, what plans were made for the re-establishment of administration in the British territories in Borneo, and how the group was militarized as '50 Civil Affairs Unit'. We have seen also how a Liaison Officer was sent by the War Office to Australia in November 1944 on a mission to L.H.Q. and how he was followed in December by Colonel Stafford and Dr. Dingle, and in February by an advance party of 50 Civil Affairs Unit which left England for Australia under command of the D.C.C.A.O.

In Australia also the need to plan for military administration in territories recaptured from the enemy had been foreseen. A proposal to form a section for the purpose in the Department of the Army was dropped, however, in view of the wide power and responsibility conferred upon the Australian Commander-in-Chief in time of war, in administrative as well as in operational matters, and of the creation by

¹ The 7th and 9th Divisions, intended for inclusion in I Australian Corps in the operations in Borneo, were re-training in North Queensland; the 6th Division was fighting in the Aitape - Wewak area of New Guinea; the II Australian Corps (3rd Division and two independent brigades) was fighting in Bougainville, and the 5th Division was fighting in New Britain.

² In Borneo a very important part was played by U.S. shipping, from naval vessels to river craft.

³ Cf. Chapter VIII.

him of a Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs in his own headquarters. Planning for military administration thus became the responsibility of an unconventional department of L.H.Q. which, through its Director, enjoyed immediate personal communication with the Commander-in-Chief Australian Military Forces. This direct access resulted from the wide responsibility conferred upon the Director to keep the Commander-in-Chief informed on current matters, to conduct scientific work in respect of military problems, and to advise on Civil Affairs. What it gained in the way of quick decisions on questions of principle was apt to be lost in the working out of detail owing to lack of staff experience and disregard of the normal military channels.

Little use appears to have been made of information regarding the principles applied to Civil Affairs planning in the United Kingdom which was transmitted to this Directorate from the Australian Army Staff in London, and little or no thought appears to have been given to plans for the administration of British Borneo until the War Office Liaison Officer arrived in Australia. As soon as discussions began between him and the Directorate it became clear that Australian military opinion would strongly, and very understandably, favour an Australian Civil Affairs organization for Borneo if operations for the re-occupation were to be conducted by Australian forces.

At the beginning of February the Liaison Officer, Colonel Taylor, telegraphed that proposals for an Australian War Establishment for the Civil Affairs staff required for Borneo were under consideration in Australia and that Australian recruits could be made available without delay in the event of approval. This did not mean that it was not intended to make use of the British 50 Civil Affairs Unit when this arrived, but the manner of doing so was not at this stage altogether clear. Nor, it may be added, was it at all clear that the unit would arrive in time or in sufficient force. Colonel Taylor passed on a suggestion from General Blamey that, as the main party of the British unit could not be expected until the end of April, an advanced party should be sent out at once, under the C.C.A.O. or the Chief Administrative Staff Officer (C.A.S.O.), to form a headquarters upon which the main body of the unit could build on arrival. It was in response to this suggestion that the advanced party of six under the D.C.C.A.O., was sent out towards the end of February, arriving in Australia towards the end of March. In the meanwhile telegraphic negotiations between the War Office and L.H.Q. had resulted, on 17th March 1945, in the War Office agreeing that, if operations were to be under Australian Command (and this now seemed almost certain), it would be necessary to set up an Australian Civil Affairs organization, and that in order to ensure the flexibility required in operational conditions there should be an Australian War Establishment, and that

L.H.Q. and not the War Office would have to be responsible for decisions regarding approval and filling of such an establishment. The War Office expressed the hope that the best possible use would be made of the staff that had been recruited in the United Kingdom and was then being sent out to Australia, 'in ranks and posts for which chosen by us. This choice has been made mostly in accordance with proposals of Colonial Office which take into account their general efficiency and experience as administrators and also in some cases their particular knowledge of Borneo'. It was suggested that any of this staff not required immediately within the Australian Civil Affairs organization could remain with 50 Civil Affairs Unit in Australia which might act as a holding unit. Ultimate financial adjustments and the time for reversion to United Kingdom responsibility were left over for later agreement.

The Australian War Establishment then under discussion in the Directorate comprised 210 officers and 493 other ranks, of whom 259 might be Asian civilians recruited after arrival in Borneo. It made provision for a headquarters of some fifty-eight officers and 149 other ranks, consisting of a General Administrative Section, and of Departments for Finance, Police, Legal, Supplies, Medical, Public Works, Education, Agriculture, Lands and Survey, Marine, and Native Labour. In addition there were to be a group of General Staff officers and a group of 'A and Q' officers. Under the control of this headquarters there were to be set up two Civil Affairs Area Headquarters, one for Sarawak and one for North Borneo—the latter to include also Labuan and Brunei—each constituted on lines similar to the C.C.A.O.'s Headquarters except that there was to be no General Staff or 'A and Q' element. The rest of the war establishment consisted of seven detachments, three known as type A Detachments and four as type B Detachments. Type A Detachments were to consist of eighteen officers and forty-four other ranks, type B Detachments of fourteen officers and thirty-one other ranks. Either type was intended to be self-sufficient and equipped to start all essential functions of administration in any re-occupied area, but this ideal was imperfectly realized in practice. The detachments were intended for the seven divisions into which it was proposed to divide the territory to be re-occupied, four divisions in Sarawak and three divisions in North Borneo. They would supply staff also for the subordinate districts into which these divisions were to be sub-divided.

The war establishment was drawn up to provide sufficient numbers for the ultimate territorial set-up in view when the whole territory had been re-occupied. Earlier operational requirements could be met by partial filling of the establishment.

The London war establishment had been drawn up with the post-operational 'civil' requirements of the territory most in mind; the

Australian establishment was directed primarily to the needs of the operational and 'military' period. This difference of emphasis, perfectly correct in the earlier stages of re-occupation, was to continue longer in Borneo than elsewhere, to a point at which it suggested a difference between the United Kingdom conception of military administration as an organization ultimately intended to stand on its own feet, and the conception current in the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs.

It was not yet clear how the members of 50 Civil Affairs Unit, now on their way out from England, were to be fitted into this war establishment, but it was the intention that some way of doing this should be devised.

Plans for the creation of a Borneo Wing at the Civil Affairs School which had been established near Canberra to provide training for officers posted to the Australian Military Administration in New Guinea came to nothing, but a number of the earlier Australian recruits for Borneo attended courses of instruction at this school. Any training received by British recruits (some of whom already had Borneo experience) was given under arrangements made at the headquarters of 50 Civil Affairs Unit after landing in Australia. Otherwise each detachment was left to train itself as best it could.

* * *

The main party of 50 Civil Affairs Unit, consisting of thirty-eight officers and nineteen other ranks, under the command of the C.C.A.O., Brigadier Macaskie, reached Australia on 9th April and went to Ingleburn near Sydney, where accommodation had been arranged for the party by the War Office Liaison officer and the appropriate Departments of L.H.Q. No definite arrangements had yet been made for the assimilation of the unit into the Australian military organization. Meanwhile the C.C.A.O. was excluded from all planning done in the Directorate of Research and Civil affairs. Such instructions as he received were conveyed to him by the War Office Liaison officer, which was no part of that officer's original functions.

By the 20th April General Blamey intimated that it was probable that a Civil Affairs Task Force would be needed to discharge operational functions, in advance of employment of the full administrative unit designed for the discharge of territorial or post-operational functions, and that it had therefore become urgent that the Australian Civil Affairs organization for Borneo should be brought into being and organized as a military formation; he therefore ordered immediate filling of the Australian war establishment to the extent that this was necessary to provide the Task Force required. The unit so raised was to be known as the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (B.B.C.A.U.).

An advanced headquarters of this unit consisting of six officers and a few other ranks was formed to command the Civil Affairs Task Force. This advanced headquarters was to come under the immediate operational control of the commander of the forces carrying out the invasion of Borneo. In technical matters it was placed under the direct control of the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs at L.H.Q. Although described as an 'Advanced' H.Q. it had no corresponding Main or Rear H.Q. In no respects did it come under the control of the C.C.A.O. although it did send copies of situation and other reports to 50 Civil Affairs Unit. The C.C.A.O.'s functions at this time, pending decisions on the manner in which the British unit should be assimilated, were virtually confined to planning for post-operational stages when it might be hoped that fuller use would be made of the unit. Use was made, however, of the services of individual members. These were transferred, on terms still somewhat undefined, to the B.B.C.A.U., and the Task Force at this stage drew its members from both British and Australian sources, roughly in the proportion of one to two.

The British unit acted as a holding centre while the necessary formalities were initiated for the secondment or attachment of its members to the Australian Military Forces with a view to their posting to the B.B.C.A.U. Recruits from the Australian Forces used the unit somewhat as a mobilization centre. When possible, officers were put through summary courses of instruction at the unit to fit them for their Civil Affairs duties in Borneo.

That the C.C.A.O. was not allowed control or contact in regard to the Task Force is perhaps understandable in the unusual circumstances of 50 Civil Affairs Unit not having been absorbed into the Australian military organization. Difficulties arose, however, from this and from the facts that the C.C.A.O. was excluded from planning and preparation in the Directorate and that the Task Force was placed under the Command, not of the senior officer, the D.C.C.A.O. of the British unit, but of one of his juniors, a Lieutenant-Colonel of the Australian unit.

On 27th April the small Advanced Headquarters left Ingleburn for Morotai to take part in operational planning at the headquarters of I Australian Corps and to make arrangements for the arrival of the closely following Civil Affairs party. This was a Type A Detachment with a normal strength of sixty-two which had been warned on 23rd April to be ready to move out of Australia at seven days notice. It was also to be a mixed detachment drawing its members both from the United Kingdom establishment of 50 Civil Affairs Unit and from the new Australian recruits to the B.B.C.A.U. The latter inevitably predominated owing to the small number of United Kingdom members yet available.

Advanced Headquarters, B.B.C.A.U., reached Morotai on 2nd

May. It was followed a few days later by the first parties of the Type A Detachment, which began to arrive on 7th May.

The War Office Liaison officer remained in Melbourne where he was accommodated in the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs. He was soon joined by a few officers from 50 Civil Affairs Unit who were attached to L.H.Q. for planning and liaison purposes, mostly in connection with the procurement of civil supplies. These did not, as one might have expected, include the C.C.A.O. A little later members of the largely ineffectual liaison mission, a fuller account of which has been included in an earlier chapter,¹ also arrived at L.H.Q. on their way to General MacArthur.

* * *

Meanwhile, at the end of April and the beginning of May, that is, at about the same time as Advanced Headquarters, B.B.C.A.U., was moving forward to Morotai, Colonel Stafford set out on a mission to Morotai and Manila. Colonel Stafford has already been mentioned as one of the two advanced representatives of 50 Civil Affairs Unit in Australia. With the arrival of the unit he assumed the duties of Controller of Finance and Accounts. But with the return of Colonel Taylor to England in April he had, at the request of General Blamey, and with the agreement of the C.C.A.O., given on the very day the latter arrived in Australia, also assumed the post of War Office Liaison officer in Australia. It was presumably in the discharge of this last function that he travelled to Morotai and Manila. For at Morotai, at the headquarters of I Australian Corps, the operational plans for Borneo, the issue of a Civil Affairs operational directive, and the provision of relief supplies were discussed. At Manila, at the headquarters of the South-West Pacific Area, the discussions were concerned with the issue of the instructions that would be required to give effect to the Civil Affairs policy directives which, having been prepared in London and placed before the American Joint Chiefs of Staff through the Combined Civil Affairs Committee,² had then been transmitted by the Joint Chiefs of Staff to General MacArthur. The discussions also dealt with the issue of the proclamations prepared in London, drafts of which Colonel Stafford had brought with him, and with the arrangements for the provision of relief supplies. All these matters concerned, not the Controller of Finance and Accounts, but the War Office Liaison Officer, if indeed, they ought not more properly to have been left to the C.C.A.O. to deal with in person.

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¹ Cf. pp. 147-148.

² Cf. pp. 145-146.

Before turning our attention to the activities of the Civil Affairs Task Force and of the Advanced Headquarters B.B.C.A.U. in Borneo, it will be convenient to summarise the subsequent history of 50 Civil Affairs Unit. In June its status and functions were at last defined. Brigadier Macaskie, the C.C.A.O., was placed in command of both 50 Civil Affairs Unit and B.B.C.A.U. and he himself came under control of L.H.Q. through the Department of Research and Civil Affairs. At Ingleburn 50 Civil Affairs Unit continued to function as a holding centre. Individual members of the unit were sent forward when required for duty with the B.B.C.A.U. forward parties, whether they had been formally transferred with Australian Commissions into the B.B.C.A.U. or not. On 17th July the C.C.A.O. moved forward from the holding centre to take command in Borneo, arriving at Labuan on 22nd July. Advanced Headquarters B.B.C.A.U. thereupon became Headquarters B.B.C.A.U. Thereafter 50 Civil Affairs Unit, greatly reduced in numbers, remained in Australia, still as a mobilisation and holding centre, but with decreasing work and responsibilities, until the transfer of Borneo from the Australian Command to South-East Asia Command. The B.B.C.A.U. being an Australian organisation was then dissolved. United Kingdom members of the unit reverted to the original British 50 Civil Affairs Unit and fifty-seven Australian officers who volunteered to continue in the administration of Borneo were posted to it.¹ This was shortly afterwards given the new official designation of the British Military Administration (British Borneo), in line with SEAC practice in Burma and Malaya.

* * *

However, we have been anticipating events in the forward areas and must now retrace our steps. But first let us see what sort of a territory it was in which the B.B.C.A.U. was to operate.

Borneo is a large island—the third largest in the world—east of Malaya and Sumatra, north of Java. Its area is 284,000 square miles, a little greater than the area of Burma, some three times that of the United Kingdom. It has a mixed population of some 1,800,000 or only just over one tenth of the population of Burma and not much more than one thirtieth of the population of the United Kingdom. More than two-thirds of the Island, and close upon 1,000,000 of the population, fell within the Netherlands East Indies, the remainder being British or British-protected territory. Of the 800,000 to 850,000 inhabitants of the British portion of the island, some 80 per cent were of Bornean and Malay races; most of the remainder were Chinese immigrants. Of the sprinkling of other races Indians were the most numerous. The climate is warm and humid with a rainfall of 60-180

¹ The unit numbered 144 officers and 44 other ranks in January - February 1946.

inches, heaviest during the period October to February. The interior consists of jungle-covered mountain ranges which in the northern part of the island rise to over 13,000 feet. A coastal strip, seldom more than forty miles in depth, consists of low-lying flat or undulating land. Cultivation is mostly confined to the coastal belt though it extends also up the river valleys. Rubber, rice, sago and coconuts are the most important crops cultivated. Even so the island is not self-sufficient in rice, which has normally to be imported in considerable quantity. The forests contain valuable timber and there is a considerable fishing industry. Oil is won and exported from Sarawak and Brunei, this export taking second place only to rubber. In North Borneo a metre gauge railway runs from Jesselton to Beaufort and thence to Melalap in the interior. A branch line connects Beaufort with Weston on Brunei Bay opposite Labuan. The total length is only 120 miles. In the interior and in the north there is an extensive system of bridle paths, well-graded, and generally well-bridged. In Sarawak communication is mainly by water, round the coast and up the numerous and fairly large rivers in the interior. Motorable roads are not extensive in either territory.

* * *

The re-occupation of the harbours and oilfields of Borneo was to be the task of I Australian Corps which had been established at Morotai when the Americans advanced upon the Philippines. On 1st May, as a preliminary to re-occupation of Borneo itself, 26th Australian Brigade of 9th Australian Division, aided by Dutch troops, landed on the island of Tarakan off the north-east coast of Borneo, to secure control of the oilfield on this island. Occupation of the island was completed by the end of the month. Then at 10.15 a.m. on 10th June 1945, the rest of 9th Australian Division, 20th and 24th Brigades, under command of the Australian I Corps, placed for the purpose of the Borneo operations under the direct control of G.H.Q. SWPA, landed without opposition on Muara Island, on Brunei Bluff, and on the island of Labuan, all on the north-west coast of Borneo. The strictly limited objectives of the operation were to gain a harbour on the west coast of Borneo, to gain air facilities, and to gain control of the oil and rice producing areas; and for these purposes it was unnecessary to occupy more than a narrow coastal strip. This had an important bearing on the scale of Civil Affairs activity that could be contemplated. But before beginning an account of Civil Affairs work it will be convenient to summarise as briefly as possible the subsequent course of military operations in Borneo.

On 11th June, 20th Brigade, which had landed on Muara Island and Brunei Bluff, advanced in the direction of Brunei town both overland and up the Brunei River by landing craft. On 15th June it began

an advance southwards along the coast, towards Miri, which was reached on 23rd June. A period of consolidation followed, coupled with deeper patrolling, which resulted in the whole of the coastal strip from Miri to Papar coming under Australian control, including the oilfields at Seria and Lutong. Patrols then progressively penetrated further inland to gain control of the rice producing areas and rubber plantations. No attempt whatever was made at this stage to re-occupy the far interior with its forests and mountains.

Meanwhile the landing of 24th Brigade on the small island of Labuan was also prospering. By 21st or 22nd June the capture of the island was complete. This was quickly followed by landings on the mainland at Weston near Labuan, with the object of advancing northwards upon the important centre of Beaufort. By 28th June all organized resistance at Beaufort was at an end.

By the middle of July the tasks set for these various operations were all completed. There had been no penetration into the interior where, however, certain guerilla forces were operating, raised and led by officers of the British and Australian clandestine organizations, some of whom had been introduced before the landings of 10th June.

With the surrender of Japan in August, it became necessary to take steps to re-establish British administration throughout the British or British-protected territories on the island of Borneo, and three tasks were set to the Australian forces, namely to re-occupy Kuching in Sarawak, Jesselton on the north-west coast, and Sandakan on the north-east coast. At the same time Borneo was transferred from the American South-West Pacific Area and became an independent Australian Command.

The main Japanese forces in Borneo surrendered to the General Officer Commanding 9th Australian Division on 10th September, but some detachments refused at first to lay down their arms, and the surrender did not become complete until 8th November 1945 when one of these, known as the Fujino Force, which had marched to the Ulu Trusan in the interior, destroying everything in its path, gave up ideas of further resistance and surrendered to the Australian forces.

* * *

We can now turn back and trace in greater detail the part taken by the Civil Affairs Task Force in these events. Having assembled at Morotai, this embarked for British Borneo on 30th May – 1st June, leaving a small liaison detachment with Headquarters I Australian Corps. For the landing, the staff of this party was disposed as follows. An Advanced Headquarters of five officers and four other ranks under the Command of Lieutenant-Colonel K. C. McMullen was attached to 9th Australian Division. Eleven officers and eleven other

ranks ('Y' Detachment) were attached to 20th Australian Infantry Brigade which was to be responsible for the landings on Brunei Bluff and Muara Island. Thirteen officers and ten other ranks ('Z' Detachment) were attached to 24th Australian Infantry Brigade which was to be responsible for the landings on Labuan Island. Advanced Headquarters and the two detachments all landed on 10th June very shortly after the first troop landings, Advanced Headquarters and 'Z' Detachment on Labuan Island, 'Y' Detachment on Brunei Bluff.

On the same day the commander of the Australian I Corps, acting under the authority vested in him by General MacArthur, published Proclamation No. 1.¹ It is noticeable that this declared a state of Martial Law in British Borneo whereas the corresponding proclamations in Burma, Malaya, and Hong Kong established Military Administrations. This reflected no difference of concept, however, being due merely to the issue of the Borneo proclamation at a time when it had not yet been decided to bring the proclamations for territories within Colonial Office responsibility into line with the proclamation for Burma. Proclamation No. 2 by the Commander of 9th Australian Division was published at the same time.

The Civil Affairs officers who landed on Labuan found practically every building in the town of Victoria destroyed by the preliminary naval and air bombardment, and the native population completely bewildered. All Government buildings on the island were destroyed except the hospital, the experimental farm and the lighthouse buildings on Pulau Papan. Normal arrangements for food supply had been entirely disintegrated. Contact was established as soon as possible with the inhabitants, and by the evening of 10th June sixty were accommodated in the 'native compound' which had been established in the 'beach maintenance area'. Here a hospital had been opened and five tons of supplies landed, so that a beginning could be made with relief measures. Within a week the numbers in the compound had risen to 3,000, including many Javanese who, as in Malaya, had been imported by the Japanese as labourers. These were suffering from the effects of extreme malnutrition and were many of them in a dangerously weak condition. Over 100 tons of Japanese rice was found on the island and taken over for relief purposes. One N.C.O. and three native police of the Civil Affairs unit on Labuan were killed on 24th June in skirmishes with overrun Japanese groups, several days after organized resistance had ceased. Two native civilians were killed at the same time. Nevertheless, pre-war government servants early rallied to the Administration.

When the forces which had landed at Muara Island and Brunei Bluff began to fan out on 11th June, some Civil Affairs officers accompanied the troops who went in craft up the river. They landed three

¹ British Borneo Military Administration Gazette Vol. I No. 1, cf. Appendix 4.

and a half miles east of the town of Brunei. These officers found similar but slightly less difficult conditions, as the town of Brunei had not been so severely damaged as Victoria on Labuan Island. The Sultan of Brunei was reported to be in the Limbang area and on 17th June came in to the re-occupying troops and, subject to the over-riding directions of the military command, was restored to his government and authorized to fly his flag. When the perimeter of the occupied area was extended as far as Papar, which lay in well populated country, an influx of refugees began, in search of food and medical attention.

Everywhere a warm welcome was given to the occupying troops who, themselves behaving with the kindness and friendliness which is a tradition in the treatment of native populations by British or Dominion troops, received the general impression that the pre-war administration must have been well built on solid foundations of goodwill.

When the operations launched on 10th June achieved their objective, the Civil Affairs staff, reinforced by the arrival of further Civil Affairs Detachments, was still working as an integral part of the forces that had been made responsible for maintaining order in the strip of occupied territory, without any 'shaking out' of a separate Civil Affairs chain of responsibility at any level. Advanced Headquarters B.B.C.A.U. was with 9th Australian Division at Labuan. 'W' Detachment was at Miri with its headquarters at Miri and a sub-detachment at Kuala Belait. 'X' Detachment was at Labuan, 'Y' Detachment at Brunei, and 'Z' Detachment at Beaufort, with its headquarters at Beaufort and sub-detachments at Weston, Mempakul and Papar.

At last, on 22nd July, Brigadier Macaskie arrived at Labuan from Australia to take charge as C.C.A.O. Until then, he had been nominally represented at Advanced Headquarters by his Deputy C.C.A.O., Colonel Rolleston, while a junior officer commanded the task force. This arrangement ceased with the arrival of the C.C.A.O., but the C.C.A.O. found that he was allowed little say in controlling the operations of the unit: as an example it may be recorded that appointments to specific posts in the unit were made, not by the C.C.A.O., but by the Director of Research and Civil Affairs 4,000 miles away in Melbourne, without experience of civil or military administration. To this may be ascribed the occasional subordination of experienced civil administrators to young officers lacking any experience of either civil administration or military staff work. Even if the earlier exclusion of the C.C.A.O. from command of the unit was desirable in the interests of integration and flexibility,¹ this later tight subordination to the Director of Research and Civil Affairs prevented any elasticity and sealed off all local knowledge and experience.

On the transfer of Borneo from American to Australian command at

¹ Cf. pp. 176-177.

the conclusion of hostilities, it was necessary to ensure that Proclamations 1 and 2, and other proclamations issued under the authority of Proclamation 1, did not lapse with the withdrawal of the American authority under which they had originally been issued: they were continued in force by a proclamation issued by General Blamey, Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces.¹

* * *

After the Japanese surrender, three task forces were despatched to re-occupy the remainder of British Borneo. Civil Affairs parties accompanied these forces and administration was re-established at Kuching in Sarawak on 11th September, at Jesselton on the north-west coast on 14th October, and at Tawau and Sandakan on the north-east coast on 17th and 19th October.

It was at first doubtful whether limitations of shipping and supply would permit the Kuching task force to make a permanent occupation and the Civil Affairs officers were consequently ordered to act as observers only. The detachment was composed almost entirely of Sarawak civil servants, every one of whom volunteered to remain and re-introduce British administration even if the task force had to be withdrawn. These officers were recognized and given a warm welcome, and the restrictions upon their activities placed them in a delicate position; however, good sense prevailed and they were allowed to re-establish the machinery of government in anticipation of the position becoming clearer, and in the event the task force was not required to break off its occupation of Kuching.

Officers of the Australian Services Reconnaissance Department or S.R.D., comparable to the British Force 136, which will figure more largely in Part V of this volume, had been introduced by sea or from the air, some weeks before the landings at Labuan and Brunei, in order to raise guerilla forces behind the Japanese. There was here no question of supporting or of raising any indigenous Resistance movement for there was no community sufficiently numerous and at the same time sufficiently advanced politically to provide the conditions for the growth of such a movement; but there were sturdy jungle fighters to be raised who, under Australian or British leadership, could be expected to do more than inconvenience the Japanese. Shortly after the landings at Labuan and Brunei it was arranged by the C.C.A.O. and the Services Reconnaissance Department, with the approval of the Chief of Staff, Advanced L.H.Q., to introduce B.B.C.A.U. officers also in these enemy-held areas, to work with the S.R.D. officers and their guerillas, to distribute food and medical

¹ Proclamation No. 14 of 13th November, 1945, British Borneo Military Administration Gazette No. 4 of 1st December, 1945.

relief to civilians, within the strict supply limitations imposed upon them by the manner of their entry and subsequent maintenance, and to begin to re-establish British administration behind the Japanese and to pave the way for the B.B.C.A.U. to take over responsibility from S.R.D. Communication was maintained with these parties by wireless and by means of Catalina flying boats, which were able to land on many of the rivers of the interior.

After the surrender of the Japanese a first step towards transfer of responsibility from S.R.D. to the B.B.C.A.U. was taken when it was decided that the unit should assume responsibility with effect from 1st September 1945, for financial and supply commitments in the interior. Accordingly, between 2nd and 12th September, additional B.B.C.A.U. officers were introduced for this purpose. Responsibility for other matters still remained with the guerilla forces.

Then in October instructions issued for the progressive withdrawal of S.R.D. and for the early assumption of full responsibility for administration in S.R.D. areas by the B.B.C.A.U. More officers were introduced and by the end of October the transfer was completed, including the hand-over of the wireless links set up by S.R.D.

The Japanese Fujino force which had retreated into the Ulu Trusan, did not surrender until 8th November. The B.B.C.A.U. then established a simple form of administration even in this remote area, so bringing, nominally at least, the whole of the British territories in Borneo once more under British government. The operational phase was finished.

But if the operational phase was over, there was to be no immediate introduction of the full post-operational plan for military administration; this involved the severance of the Civil Affairs staffs from the military headquarters to which they had been attached and the establishment of a separate Civil Affairs chain of responsibility. For the next two months an intermediate phase came into existence.

The two Civil Affairs Area Headquarters, the one for Sarawak, the other for North Borneo, Brunei and Labuan, were not yet established, and there could consequently be no shaking out of the civil affairs chain of responsibility at this level. Nor was there any at the level of the C.C.A.O. However, a beginning had been made at a lower level when, on 22nd August, all Civil Affairs Detachments had been brought under the direct control of the C.C.A.O. instead of, as heretofore, being under the local commanders.

During this period the headquarters of the B.B.C.A.U. continued on Labuan (where indeed it remained throughout), and the territory to be administered by it was divided into six divisions as follows:

1. The Kuching Division, comprising Kuching, Simanggang, Bau and Serian.

2. The Sibü Division, comprising Sibü, Sarekei, Rejang, Mukah and Oya.
3. The Miri Division, comprising Miri, Marudi, Bintulu and Sibuti.
4. The Brunei – Labuan Division, comprising Brunei, Labuan, Kuala Belait, Limbang and Lawas.
5. The Jesselton Division, comprising Jesselton, Weston, Kudat, Mempakul, Papar, and Beaufort.
6. The Sandakan Division, comprising Sandakan, Simporna, Tawau, Sapi and Lahad Datu.

* * *

Although it had been the intention since the surrender of the Japanese that British forces should relieve the Australian forces in Borneo and that the area should then be transferred from the Australian Command to South-East Asia Command, the tasks laid upon the latter as a consequence of its great enlargement on 15th August 1945, made such demands upon its resources that it was not possible to do this until the beginning of 1946. The Australian forces in British Borneo were then relieved by 32nd Indian Infantry Brigade and certain units of the Royal Air Force, and on 5th January the Commander of 32nd Brigade took over control of the military forces in British Borneo from the Commander 9th Australian Division. On 10th January 1946 British Borneo was formally transferred to South-East-Asia Command.

On 5th January Admiral Mountbatten had issued the British Military Administration (Continuance) Proclamation, 1946, establishing the British Military Administration (British Borneo), or B.M.A. (B.B.), to replace the administration previously functioning, and continuing in force until further orders all proclamations, orders, instructions and directions, issued in virtue of the various earlier proclamations establishing martial law in Borneo.¹ This was followed, on 8th January 1946, by a Proclamation delegating to the military commander in Borneo all the powers assumed by the Supreme Allied Commander and authorizing the military commander to make further delegation of authority.² Admiral Mountbatten at the same time issued instructions that such further delegation should be made as soon as possible.

The background to these steps was the Civil Affairs Directive on Borneo issued to the Supreme Allied Commander by the War Office. Under this the British territories in Borneo were to be administered by

¹ Proclamation No. 21 of 5th January, 1946, British Borneo Military Administration Gazette Vol. II No. 2 of 1st February 1946.

² Proclamation No. 22 of 8th January, 1946, British Borneo Military Administration Gazette, Vol. II, No. 2 of 1st February 1946.

him as one territory, and his administration was to be directed both towards meeting the requirements of the military authorities and towards preparing conditions for the return of civil government as early as he considered this possible. The Supreme Allied Commander was to be responsible for the prevention of disease and unrest and the development of the natural resources of the territory required to meet world shortages. Responsibility for the provision of supplies to prevent disease and unrest for the first six months was laid upon the military authorities; the provision of supplies above this level for the first six months, and for all purposes thereafter, was to be the responsibility of the Colonial Office. The principle of dual responsibility, successfully applied in Malaya, was intended to be applied to Borneo also. Responsibility for the future constitutional relations of the territories in British Borneo with each other and with the United Kingdom was reserved to the home government.

With the withdrawal of Australian authority, the Australian British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit ceased to exist and its place was taken by the still surviving British 50 Civil Affairs Unit, now to be known as the British Military Administration (British Borneo). To this were transferred all British members of the B.B.C.A.U. together with so many of its Australian members as volunteered to continue to serve as attached members of the new unit.

At last, on 21st February 1946, the full post-operational organization was introduced. Although a Civil Affairs Service had been constituted it had not been allowed to develop into a real Military Administration, as this was conceived in Burma, Malaya and Hong Kong. Partly this may have been due to the difference of emphasis mentioned earlier.¹ Partly it may have been that the unit never really gained the confidence of the Australian commanders; they felt it lacked equipment, experience of military organization and procedure, and cohesion within its own ranks. A team spirit was difficult to create in a unit whose members were drawn from such different sources and who came to the unit with such different motives. Now, however, the officer commanding the military forces in British Borneo delegated by proclamation to the C.C.A.O. full powers to conduct the Military Administration in North Borneo, Labuan, Brunei and Sarawak.² The C.C.A.O., following the precedent set in the case of Malaya, immediately delegated authority by warrant to the Civil Affairs Area Commanders of North Borneo and Sarawak, in respect of the territories contained in their Areas, to exercise 'the rights powers and duties which by any written law' had been vested in the principal secretaries of the Governments of Sarawak and North Borneo. In fact, however,

¹ Cf. p. 175.

² Proclamation No. 30 of 21st February 1946, British Borneo Military Administration Gazette, Vol. II, No. 4 of 1st March 1946.

there was little decentralization by the C.C.A.O's headquarters, and Area Commanders made their most valuable contribution as inspecting officers.

At the same time there was brought into play, theoretically at least, the principle, successfully followed in Malaya, of allowing the C.C.A.O. a dual responsibility, to the War Office through normal military channels for the discharge of the legitimate but restricted functions of a military administration, and to the Colonial Office for the discharge of activities which had no military significance but which the Colonial Office felt called upon to undertake as a result of the resumption by His Majesty's Government of responsibility to the people of British Borneo, following liberation of the territory. In practice, however, little use was made of this direct access to the Colonial Office, for Sarawak, North Borneo, and Brunei had not been Crown Colonies, their post-war status was still uncertain, and there were no Borneo balances under the control of the United Kingdom Government against which resultant expenditure could be debited.

Throughout this last period the headquarters of the Administration remained on Labuan Island, still under canvas. A month before handing over to the civil government it moved into more solid quarters—although even then the move was only into temporary huts which had previously been occupied by Tactical Headquarters of the Royal Air Force.

The C.C.A.O's principal staff officers were a Chief of Staff (with the rank of Colonel) a Colonel (C.A.) Finance, a Colonel (C.A.) Supplies, an S.O.I. (C.A.) Legal, an S.O.I. (C.A.) Medical, and an S.O.I. (C.A.) Constabulary, each with his subordinate staffs. The six territorial divisions had been increased to eight. On 1st January 1946, the date originally fixed for the transfer from Australian Command, the divisions had been grouped into a North Borneo Area and a Sarawak Area, four divisions to each.

Area Headquarters Staffs were interposed between the divisions and the headquarters of the Administration; at Jesselton for North Borneo, at Kuching for Sarawak. The territorial administration consequently was:

NORTH BORNEO AREA.

- West Coast Division, or B.M.A. Jesselton.
- East Coast Division, or B.M.A. Sandakan.
- Interior Division or B.M.A. Keningau.
- Brunei-Labuan Division or B.M.A. Brunei.

SARAWAK AREA.

- 1st Division, or B.M.A. Kuching.
- 2nd Division, or B.M.A. Simmanggang.
- 3rd Division, or B.M.A. Sibu.
- 4th Division, or B.M.A. Miri.

This administration was gradually being assimilated to that in force before the Japanese occupation so as to facilitate the hand-over of responsibility to civil governments in due course—the Sarawak Area corresponding to the State of Sarawak, the Brunei-Labuan Division of the North Borneo Area corresponding to the State of Brunei and the settlement of Labuan, and the remaining Divisions of the North Borneo Area corresponding to the State of North Borneo.

At the same time the Police Force, the Agricultural Department and other Departments, were being divided into distinct departments for the two Areas, capable of independent existence on the revival of civil government, but subject, for the military period, to direction from the headquarters of the Administration at Labuan. Action was also taken to ensure that all officers who had previously been employees of the Sarawak government were posted to the Sarawak Area, which was to be the first to return to civil government.

* * *

This chapter has so far been mainly concerned with the building up of the machinery of administration in Borneo and with the manner in which this was geared into the greater military organization for the conduct of operations in Borneo and the South-West Pacific Area. It has been much, perhaps too much, concerned with difficulties and frustrations. It is time that we turned to conditions on the ground and gave some account of what the administration and the Australian Military Forces were able to do for the people of Borneo. The good will, co-operation, and enthusiasm here displayed enable a very different story to be told.

Conditions found on first landing have already been briefly mentioned. All coastal towns in North Borneo, and the town of Brunei, were found much damaged. The inhabitants had fled to the jungle or to nearby villages. Cultivation had lapsed, or cultivated land had been destroyed. The ordinary processes for feeding the towns had been disrupted. Sarawak, with the exception of the Miri oilfield, had suffered much less damage than North Borneo. But throughout the territories with which we are concerned neglect and deterioration were evident—in the towns (so far as these were not destroyed), in public buildings, in the railway, in the inland water transport services, in the public services generally. For the last nine months of their occupation the Japanese had given up all attempt to maintain buildings or other works. Roads on the mainland, however, were still in fairly good condition, and rubber plantations, though neglected, were comparatively undamaged. Factory machinery had been removed from these in most cases, and very little tapping had been undertaken. Fires had been started on the oilfields at Seria, Miri, Kuala Belait and Kuala Badas. Thirty-seven oil wells had been set alight and it was three

months before the last fire was extinguished. The value of the petroleum destroyed in these fires was estimated at some four and a half million pounds sterling. Conditions were particularly bad in the remote area known as the Ulu Trusan, lying east and south-east of Brunei on the borders of British North Borneo, Sarawak and Dutch Borneo. It was here that the Australian clandestine forces had first begun operations, as early as March 1945, which had developed on an abnormally large scale and resulted ultimately in the killing of numbers of Japanese. The destruction caused by these operations, the demands upon local resources by the combatants, and the withdrawal from normal agricultural operations of many of the able-bodied males meant that famine already threatened at the time of the Japanese surrender. Conditions were greatly worsened by the retreat into this area, destroying all crops as it went, of the Japanese Fujino force, which for nearly three months refused to obey the orders of surrender.

The Japanese had undertaken no relief measures for the civil population in general and given them practically no medical attention. There was, consequently, widespread malnutrition and a marked increase in such diseases as malaria, tropical ulcers, scabies, beri-beri and in some areas yaws. One of the most urgent tasks of the Administration was to relieve these conditions. The measures taken to bring supplies to the civil population will be described in another chapter.¹ The medical measures taken to deal with the malnutrition and increase of disease fell into three phases. In the first, which had its beginnings before the coastal landings of 10th June, Australian guerilla officers, and Civil Affairs officers later attached to them, made available to inhabitants of the remote interior medical attention which, though rough and ready, was greatly in excess of the scale that had been possible before the war. The second phase began in the coastal areas with the landings of 10th June. The B.B.C.A.U. medical services and stores were as yet quite insufficient for the pressing needs of the civil population. Fortunately the light battle casualties suffered made it possible to employ many units of the Australian Army Medical Services solely on work for civilians, setting up hospitals, organizing medical patrols, and initiating measures of hygiene control, with the assistance of such B.B.C.A.U. medical officers as had arrived. It was not until the third phase, after July, that the medical department of the Administration was able gradually to take over responsibility, first for the coastal area, and some months later for the interior. Many of the hospitals had been damaged, only those at Kuching, Sibul, Kuala Belait and Labuan remaining substantially intact. The last of these was requisitioned by the army authorities and kept under requisition for the whole of the military period. All the hospitals lacked equipment. There were great initial difficulties over medical supplies; the original

¹ Cf. Chapter XIII.

forecast of requirements proved insufficient, partly on account of the large number of Javanese found in urgent need of medical treatment; there were also many shipping delays. However, by the end of the military period the situation had improved and the medical services provided by the Administration for the people of the country were as good as those available before the war, and, in some places and respects, better.

It was not only in medical matters that the Administration was at first largely dependent upon the Australian Military Forces. Much of its equipment and nearly all of the motor vehicles required for movement of refugees, sick persons, and supplies were found at the last moment from Australian Army resources. Early steps in physical reconstruction, such as the repair of roads and essential buildings and the rebuilding or replacing of bridges, were largely undertaken by the Australian military engineer services. Restoration of public utility services—water supplies, drainage, sewerage—was also undertaken by the Royal Australian Engineers, and the Australian Electrical and Mechanical Engineers. This dependence was due in part to difficulties in planning and provision. In other respects it was not unusual or improper. Other Administrations were similarly, but perhaps not so greatly, indebted. Intended to be integral parts of the military organization, they were entitled to expect the support of the other parts, so far as this could be given without interfering with the main object of defeating the enemy.

One of the first tasks of the Administration was to build up again a police force under the provisions of the Police Proclamation.¹ Great difficulties were encountered. All the police forces of the states were found in a ragged, disorganized and demoralized condition, and were inefficient for lack of training. The force in Sarawak was, in addition, greatly tainted by collaboration with the Japanese and many of its members had to be dismissed. It was clear that the force would have to be built up again virtually from the beginning. A short cut was attempted by the experiment of recruiting ex-guerillas into the force, but this did not prove successful—the conversion from guerilla to policeman was difficult. By the end of October 1945, however, the force had been brought up to two-thirds of the pre-war strength, which had been 1,867 for all the states of British Borneo, and up to three-quarters of the strength sanctioned for the military period. Nevertheless at this time it was not yet possible to report favourably on the discipline and efficiency of the force. By December the training schools at Kuching and Jesselton had been re-established and new recruits were being trained, while N.C.Os and constables were being put through refresher courses. By the end of the year considerable progress had been

¹ Proclamation No. 10 of 12th September 1945, British Borneo Military Administration Gazette No. 2 of 1st October 1945.

made and the force was regaining its spirit and beginning to re-assert itself in the suppression of crime and the maintenance of order. In March the Police Department was divided into two departments, one for the North Borneo Area, one for the Sarawak Area, to facilitate the approaching transfer to separate civil governments. On 15th April the Sarawak Administration, including its police force, was handed over to the Rajah.

On 26th April 1946 the Police Proclamation was repealed in respect of North Borneo.¹ The Constabulary Ordinance of 1903 thereupon revived and the police force for this area became once again the North Borneo Armed Constabulary. The Proclamation was repealed entirely on 26th June 1946² and the Police Force Enactment, 1920, of Brunei and the Brunei Police Force revived. The North Borneo Armed Constabulary was proclaimed as the Police Force for Labuan. When Sarawak was handed back to civil government the force was up to the full pre-war strength of 1,085. When transfer was made of the remaining states their police forces were slightly above pre-war strength.

In the early stages of re-occupation an unusually large number of crimes of violence, including murders, were reported to the police. There were also allegations of collaboration to investigate. In regard to these there appears to have been some overlapping and possibly delay because of the presence of members of the U.S. Army Counter-Intelligence Corps whose activities included investigation of such cases. The most frequent form of crime however was theft or illegal possession of military stores. As the numbers, efficiency and spirit of the police force revived, crime was brought under control, and by the time of the transfer to civil authority the volume of crime was not markedly abnormal. There was certainly nothing comparable to the post-liberation wave of crime in Burma.

The work of the military courts in dealing with prosecutions undertaken by the police will be recounted later.³

The Administration's policy was to encourage education to the full but in the beginning its efforts were considerably limited by lack of staff and equipment, and the destruction and damage caused to buildings. Here Education Officers of the Australian Military Forces played a valuable part. In Sarawak by the end of the military period there were 189 schools with approximately 19,000 pupils against pre-war figures of 229 and 21,995, and in January 1946 the Kuching Teachers' Training College had been re-opened. In the other territories the

¹ Proclamation No. 34 of 25th April 1946, British Borneo Military Administration Gazette Vol. II No. 8 of 1st June 1946.

² Proclamation No. 41 of 25th June 1946, British Borneo Military Administration Gazette Vol. II No. 10 of 5th July 1946.

³ Cf. Chapter XVI.

results were even more satisfactory, the total number of pupils being 11,067 against a pre-war figure of about 12,400. Most of the schools were primary schools, but more advanced schools were opened at a few centres.

In the interior, after some delay owing to the operations against Fujino Force, a more ambitious administration was established than the area had known before the war, Lieutenant-Colonel E. P. Hill A.I.F. and Major T. Harrisson playing a prominent part. The latter officer reported a marked de-population of the interior which he ascribed to lack of medical attention and to lack of education in hygiene, self-discipline, and anti-malarial precautions during the war years.

The Post and Telegraphs Department found all Post Offices destroyed and an almost complete lack of postal equipment and forms. However with the aid of the Army and Air Force mail services, a skeleton postal service was started in October 1945. This was progressively developed but at no time could money order, postal order or insurance services be re-introduced owing to lack of forms—though Malayan and British postal orders could be cashed with effect from January 1946. In January the Royal Air Force began weekly flights to the north and twice-weekly flights to the south from Labuan carrying official passengers and mails. Of the forty-five wireless telegraph stations in use before the war not a single one was found intact. No land telegraph line equipment was found and the telephone lines and instruments had been very severely damaged. In North Borneo two out of every five telephone operators had been killed by the Japanese: in Sarawak nearly all had survived but many were in a very poor physical condition. The European staff which it had been possible to assemble for the Administration was insufficient. None of the equipment ordered for restoration of telecommunications arrived and only two per cent of the materials. Restoration of services was consequently a difficult matter and depended almost entirely upon the assistance, generously given so far as possible, of the Services Reconnaissance Department, the Australian Military Forces, and the Royal Australian Air Force. By September, sixteen out of the forty-five wireless telegraph stations were operating, by December, thirty, and by January 1946, thirty-five. A proportion of the land lines and telephone lines had also been brought into use.

The State Railway in Borneo consisted only of some 120 miles of track, serving about twenty rubber estates. Bridges, tunnels, buildings, the permanent way, locomotives and rolling stock had all suffered severe damage or been destroyed during the operations. Much of the railway was put into working order and operated with jeep locomotives by the Royal Australian Engineers for operational purposes. As the advance proceeded sections of the line were handed over to the

B.B.C.A.U. Railways Staff (which, however, for a long time consisted of one officer and one locally re-engaged clerk only).

The Weston-Beaufort South branch was the first to be handed over. Hitherto operated with jeep engines, the section was now worked with one recovered and repaired steam locomotive. The sections from Beaufort to Melalap, from Beaufort to Papar, and from Papar to a point five miles short of Jesselton were successively taken over; and the repair of the last five miles to Jesselton was begun. At first one steam locomotive could be used as far north as the Bongawan Bridge. Here the original bridge had been destroyed and replaced by a Bailey Bridge, which could carry only jeep locomotives. Gradually, as a few more locomotives were repaired and bridges were strengthened, it became possible to work more of the line with steam. Except on the Weston branch no passenger coaches were used until almost the end of military administration. The railway was used mostly for the movement of civil supplies and of goods required for the restoration of the country's economy. From the middle of May charges began to be levied for the use of the railway. Somewhat surprisingly, in the first six and a half months of 1946 the tonnage of goods carried was nearly 50 per cent more than in a comparable period before the war.

But shipping, both for inland and for coastal waters, was of much greater importance to British Borneo than the railway. By October, the Administration had seven small vessels under its own control and was negotiating with the Australian Government for the transfer of nine more from the clandestine forces. There were also plans for acquiring recovered Japanese craft and certain other vessels, some to be obtained from as far away as the Moluccas. Most of these vessels were fit only for use in inland waters or protected coastal waters. For other water transport the Administration depended upon the resources of the 9th Australian Division, and, on at least one occasion, of the R.A.A.F. The withdrawal of the Australian forces in January and February hit the Administration hard. It could no longer depend on Australian resources in craft and could no longer make use of the Australian Marine Workshop for the repair of its own somewhat dilapidated craft, and the Australian troop movements had first call upon any other coastal shipping available. March saw an improvement in the situation, for the troop movements were completed, a Marine workshop arrived from South-East Asia Command to replace the Australian workshop, and the S.S. Darvel arrived, the first coastal ship to be operated by a merchant company. The situation improved still further in April as the following figures for civil supplies distributed by the Administration from Labuan to ports on the mainland will show:

January	.. 1,100 tons	March	.. 5,179 tons
February	.. 3,150 tons	April..	.. 7,500 tons

It was hoped that it would not be long before cargo could be broken down at Singapore, instead of at Labuan, and shipped direct to ports on the mainland.

After the hand-over of Sarawak to civil authority, the Administration continued to distribute supplies from Labuan to Sarawak ports, leaving internal distribution, however, to the Sarawak Government. Contrary to the usual experience elsewhere, the B.B.C.A.U. and its successor the B.M.A. (British Borneo) showed a very substantial profit on its supply account, a profit which materially reduced the cost to the British taxpayer of the military administration. This was mainly due to the inclusion in the cost of imports of a 5 to 10 per cent margin to cover overhead expenses and the addition in some cases of a further 10 per cent in lieu of customs duties.¹ With the approaching dissolution of the Administration in North Borneo also, negotiations were entered into with firms which had previously operated in Borneo and with the Straits Steamship Company with a view to their taking over the distribution of civil supplies.

* * *

Towards the end of 1945 it became known that the United Kingdom government was planning that authority should be transferred to civil government in Borneo on 1st March 1946. It was not until February however that a Handing-over Committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Brigadier E. C. J. Woodford, the Officer Commanding Military Forces in British Borneo. The Committee held its first meeting on 26th February, by which time it was known that the date for transfer had been postponed to 1st April because negotiations by the Colonial Office regarding the future constitutional arrangements for the territories of Sarawak and North Borneo had not yet been completed. As the Committee pursued its investigations, the Military Administration was progressively moulded into the lines of civil government. Postings of officers were increasingly arranged so that officers with Sarawak service found themselves in the Sarawak Civil Affairs Area and officers with Chartered Company Service in the North Borneo Area. In the event, transfer of Sarawak to the Rajah's Government was made on 15th April. On 1st June of the same year the Rajah, with the approval of the Council Negri, ceded his authority to His Majesty's Government and the new Colony of Sarawak came into existence. But certain services, particularly in regard to the distribution of civil supplies, continued to be discharged for the benefit of Sarawak by the Military Administration until its final dissolution on 15th July.

The fact that in Sarawak responsibility was handed over to the

¹ Cf. Chapter XII.

Government of the Rajah instead of to a colonial civil government of the usual type, was recognised by the entering into an agreement of Admiral Mountbatten and the Rajah. Under this the Rajah undertook to pass legislation indemnifying the Crown and British Commonwealth Forces for acts done during the war or the period of military administration. The Supreme Allied Commander agreed to allow Civil Affairs staff and South-East Asia Command forces to continue to be employed, so long as these were available, for internal security purposes in Sarawak. Members of these forces, if charged with criminal offences, were to be tried by courts martial, not by civil courts. The Handing-over Committee, sitting in Labuan, was required to make to the Supreme Allied Commander and to the Rajah such further recommendations as appeared necessary to complete the smooth transfer of administration. As negotiations between the Colonial Office and the North Borneo Company for the transfer of sovereignty to the Crown had not yet been concluded it was not possible to hand over North Borneo to civil administration at the same time. The public in Borneo, inarticulate and unversed in politics, showed little interest regarding the outcome of these negotiations or the form of the future constitution. Preparations continued for the transfer, however, and in April there began to arrive the first of the British North Borneo officials who had suffered internment and then been sent on leave to recuperate before being employed again on the administration of the territory. On 30th May the North Borneo Civil Affairs Area Headquarters was disbanded, the divisions of North Borneo becoming directly responsible to the headquarters of the Administration. After further postponements, transfer of administration in North Borneo was effected on 15th July. The territory was simultaneously taken over from the Chartered Company by His Majesty's Government to become the new Colony of North Borneo. Labuan was at the same time both transferred to civil government and incorporated in the new Colony. Hand-over in Brunei was made on 6th July, the State resuming its pre-war status.

The Committee was mainly concerned with the arrangements to be made for ensuring transfer of sufficient stores and equipment to enable the civil governments to continue functioning—especially of motor and other forms of transport; with arrangements to be made to ensure the continuance of distribution of supplies until responsibility for this could be undertaken again by commercial firms; and with arrangements for ensuring sufficient staff for the civil governments.

In regard to stores and equipment, agreement had to be obtained to the handing over of lend-lease material, especially motor vehicles, to a civil government: this was ultimately given, and the proviso that such material was not to be transferred to commercial organisations caused little difficulty as there were few such organisations yet in the field. Arrangements had also to be made for the provision of rations for

civilians after hand-over until such time as the civil governments could make other arrangements to ensure the supply of food to their employees and to employees of the commercial organizations which were about to start operations.

It was arranged that the Civil Affairs Unit should retain sufficient staff to provide for its own winding up, for the temporary continuance of such essential activities as the civil government was not in a position to take over immediately, and for temporary secondment of officers to the civil governments in cases in which such reinforcements were necessary. There was for some time difficulty in obtaining permission to second in this way officers of the Australian Military Forces. Much detail was dealt with by the Committee, including such matters as the continuance of supply of firewood to Hong Kong under a contract made with the Administration there.¹

The B.B.C.A.U. and the B.M.A. (British Borneo), fulfilled their purpose; the Military Administration had relieved acute distress, restored order and security, and prepared the way for the smooth resumption of civil government. It had also carried out the first essential steps towards rehabilitation. Progress in this respect had been slow, owing not only to lack of materials but also to lack of financial resources, which lack was itself due largely to uncertainty regarding the future political status of Sarawak and North Borneo. The story was told that, when two Members of Parliament visited Sarawak to sound local opinion as to the proposed cession of the State from the Rajah to the United Kingdom Government, an old native headman said, 'Well, the Rajah's government was a good government, perhaps the King's will be better, but the government we should really like is the B.M.A.'. If this view may owe something to the absence of taxation and to the free distribution of relief supplies during much of the military period, yet perhaps there is some truth in the story. The point on which there cannot be any doubt, however, is the debt owed by the Administration to the Australian Military Forces for aid of all kinds. In acknowledgment of this a heraldic representation of the Australian 9th Divisional sign now finds a place in the coat of arms of the new Colony of British Borneo.

¹ Cf. Chapter XIV.

CHAPTER XI

HONG KONG

THE BRITISH COLONY of Hong Kong was acquired in three steps, the island of Hong Kong itself in 1841, Kowloon on the mainland opposite in 1860, and the New Territories, also on the mainland, in 1898. The island is thirty-two square miles in area, the whole colony 391 square miles. The total estimated population before the Japanese occupation was a little over 1,000,000, of which all but some 22,000 were Chinese. Just under half the total population inhabited the island, just over half the mainland. These figures took no account of the fluctuating population of refugees from the mainland of China. Just before the war it was believed that these amounted to some 750,000. The actual population of this small colony



was, therefore, little short of 2,000,000. The climate is sub-tropical; dry and cool from October to April; warm and damp from May to September. Most of the annual rainfall of eighty inches falls during the May – September period. The colony with its fine harbour lies at the mouth of the Canton River, up and down which proceeds the bulk of the trade between South China and the rest of the world. Like Singapore the colony adopted a free port policy, under which freedom of entry and exit was accorded, both to men and to commodities, for the prosperity of the colony depended upon attracting this trade into its port and markets.

* * *

Early in August the atomic bombs were dropped and the Japanese surrendered. We have seen in an earlier chapter the plans made in London to place a British force in Hong Kong as soon as possible and to despatch a Civil Affairs unit to re-establish administration. We have seen also that two weeks were to pass before Rear-Admiral Harcourt's naval force could reach its destination. This was in part due to the negotiations taking place between London and Chung-king, and Admiral Harcourt's force was held up in Subic Bay for a few days awaiting instructions to move. Another week elapsed before the C.C.A.O. could arrive by air from India. Much happened in Hong Kong in the meanwhile.

The Japanese Imperial rescript, accepting the Potsdam declaration, issued on 14th August 1945. Immediately after this date rumours began to circulate among the internees in Hong Kong. In Stanley Camp 2,500 European and Eurasian civilian residents had been interned. This was an improvised prison in the ancillary buildings, such as warders' quarters, grouped round the regular Stanley Prison, and in other neighbouring buildings. Most of the members of the civil administration of Hong Kong, including the recently appointed Colonial Secretary, Mr. F. C. Gimson, had been interned here in 1941. As the senior officer present of the Hong Kong Government, Mr. Gimson had assumed responsibility for the administration of the camp throughout his period of internment and was recognized both by the Japanese and by the internees as the controlling authority, in particular over Government officials. During internment he had appointed a committee of officials and non-officials to prepare alternative plans for the re-establishment of British administration in accordance with the different sets of circumstances that might arise when the Japanese surrender ultimately came about. A nucleus government was in readiness to put the appropriate plans into execution. That these arrangements were comprehensive may be judged from the fact that they extended to the smuggling of a message, out of Hong Kong to unoccupied China

and so to London, asking that Hong Kong dollars should be printed and kept in readiness for issue as soon as the administration for which they were preparing was set up. When rumours began to circulate, Mr. Gimson, as the senior officer in the camp, asked for an interview, at which he enquired whether there was any foundation for them. He pointed to the danger of incidents between internees and their guards if the state of uncertainty was allowed to continue. On 16th August he was informed that His Majesty the Emperor, in order to avoid continued loss of life, had been graciously pleased to accept the terms offered at Potsdam. 'In other words', added the Japanese officer with an expressive gesture, 'we lose and you win'.

The general recognition of Mr. Gimson as the senior officer in the camp enabled him successfully to call upon the internees needed to put his plans into execution. Immediately all those required for essential work in the re-establishment of administration left the camp. The Japanese protested against this sally on the ground that it had not yet been decided whether Hong Kong should be surrendered to the British or to the Chinese (in whose theatre of operations Hong Kong was in fact understood to have fallen); but this was brushed aside as an impertinence and they were told to obey the orders of the emergency Administration of Hong Kong. A Provisional Government was set up as nearly as possible on the lines of that in existence before the Japanese occupation—although it was never able to extend its control to Kowloon on the mainland.

Most of the older European employees of the public utility companies had been interned in Stanley Camp. They were allotted definite duties in the plans prepared and were carefully instructed in these during internment. They were charged with the immediate task of ensuring that the Japanese employed on the public services, and the civilian labour employed under their control, allowed no break-down or default in the functioning of these services, particularly of the water supply upon which the life of the community depended. The Port was taken over and prepared for use by Commander J. Jolly R.N.R. who had been Master Attendant before the war and had taken a major part in the planning of the emergency administrative measures. Arrangements were set in train to procure rice and other essential food stuffs from the mainland, the operations for this purpose involving the despatch of Chinese agents almost to Canton.

Some 250 British members of the former police force had suffered internment at Stanley Camp. Only some of these were available at this time but, debilitated and stale though they were, it was they who had to form the nucleus of the new force. Some 700 Chinese gangsters, who had been allowed by the Japanese to run gambling dens in return for maintaining law and order, were used as police in the hope that they would keep themselves out of mischief and the rest of the Chinese

underworld in control. They were denied the lucrative perquisite of the gambling dens, but were compensated by the receipt of pay and a promise that they would be allowed to make their escape when it became possible to re-establish a more orthodox force. In addition a plan prepared during internment was put into action under which an auxiliary police force was recruited from Chinese university students. Although this was not in the event much used in the rôle for which it had been intended, it proved outstandingly useful in furnishing guides and interpreters on the arrival of the re-occupying troops.

Stocks of Japanese *yen* were seized and steps taken to overprint these for issue by the Provisional Government if the Hong Kong dollars asked for from England did not arrive in time. In the meanwhile there was nothing to be done but to allow the *yen* to continue in circulation and find its own level.

Army nurses who had been interned as prisoners of war aided the doctors in improvising medical facilities. Indian prisoners of war who had been dispersed by the Japanese as working parties were visited, concentrated, and given such medical treatment as was possible. A newspaper was published, the range of wireless communication was extended.

The immediate assumption of responsibility by an organized administration under an official of standing and personality went a long way towards preventing the wholesale and wanton looting that caused such damage in Rangoon and Singapore. Nothing, however, could prevent the sporadic looting, mostly of wood for fuel, that developed later.

There was, through all this period, an ever-present fear, fed by frequent rumours, that the Chinese forces from Canton, perhaps abetted, possibly even supported, by American forces, would advance into British territory and occupy Hong Kong. A message from the Secretary of State for the Colonies was received on 23rd August, by clandestine channels from Chung-king, to the effect that a British Administration should be set up at once and should not hand over to any other authority without the approval of the British Government. There was as yet no direct means of replying to London, but a messenger, a British employee of the Public Works Department, made his way from Hong Kong to Portuguese territory, reaching Macao on 27th August. The British Consul-General there was able to transmit a message through Lisbon to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, reporting that Mr. Gimson had already set up an administration and that this could carry on for a while. Mr. Gimson added that it was vital that the incoming naval commander should meet and confer with him immediately on arrival and suggested a landing near Stanley Camp before entering the harbour of Hong Kong. A day later, on 28th August, facilities had been so far restored that Mr. Gimson was able

to broadcast a message to the world announcing the re-establishment of British administration in Hong Kong, and conveying congratulations to Their Majesties.

And now the task force despatched by the British Pacific Fleet was drawing near. Its commander sent a message to the Japanese announcing that a British aircraft would make a landing at a stated time on the Kaitak airfield at Kowloon, and requesting that this should be met by Japanese representatives. The Japanese authorities informed Mr. Gimson that they were not proposing to comply with this request as they had not yet been empowered to do so. Mr. Gimson then said he would send his own naval representative. The Japanese refused permission, adding that in any case the airfield was under water and could not be used—which was known to be untrue. Mr. Gimson insisted that if the Japanese adhered to their decision they must reply to the British naval authorities warning them that no representative would be sent and making it clear that it was they who were responsible for preventing Mr. Gimson's representative from attending. Second thoughts prevailed and the envoy was met both by a Japanese and by a British representative. He departed again taking both representatives with him. (It may be added that on its return journey this aircraft landed in Chinese occupied territory. Chinese crowded round and when they became aware of the presence of the Japanese representative, showed a strong desire to cut the latter's throat. 'You can't do that', said the pilot, 'he's our prisoner,' to which the Chinese replied, 'You cut it then—here's the knife.') On 29th August the task force concentrated, some 10 miles off Hong Kong. Mine-sweepers, the submarine depot ship 'Maidstone', submarines, destroyers, cruisers, including a Canadian armed merchant cruiser, the aircraft carriers 'Indomitable' and 'Venerable' and the battleship 'Anson' constituted the force. Would the local forces observe the general surrender? On 30th the force moved into Hong Kong, the ships companies being at action stations.¹ The chief danger to the force at this stage came from the aerial mines, which had been profusely dropped by the American Air Force. These were intended to be sterile by the 1st July but experience had shewn that this sterility could not be relied upon entirely. A channel was therefore decided upon and a rough and ready sweep made. At 11 a.m. the force entered the harbour. There was no opposition but three Japanese suicide boats were seen moving out of a bay in an adjoining island. These were attacked by aircraft and sunk. The aircraft then bombed all the other boats lying in this bay. Immediately after anchoring in the harbour, parties of seamen and marines were landed and the dockyard seized, all Japanese being turned out. Whilst a few Japanese in the town continued sniping aggressively to the last, others attempted to commit suicide. A group

¹ Gibson, 'Sweet Waters', Blackwood's, January, 1946.

of Chinese attacked a tram upon which another party rode, beating some of them to death. Mr. Gimson came on board to meet Admiral Harcourt. These two then went ashore and proceeded to Stanley Camp where a dedicatory service was held and the British flag was formally raised again in Hong Kong.¹

* * *

Immediately the life of the harbour and the town began to revive. Chinese crackers were heard instead of rifle shots; Union Jacks were displayed that had been concealed throughout the occupation. But on every junk and on nearly every house there flew the flag of China.¹

Admiral Harcourt, the Commander-in-Chief, Hong Kong, who was at this time still unaccompanied by any Civil Affairs staff, gave immediate recognition and encouragement to Mr. Gimson's administration which he found in being. On 1st September he proclaimed the establishment of a Military Administration and, in a further proclamation, the appointment of Mr. Gimson as Lieutenant-Governor of the colony to exercise, subject to general or special instructions from himself, all powers of the Governor. The revival of the Executive and Legislative Councils and of the civil courts of the colony was also proclaimed.² Naval and Royal Marine parties, joined a few days later by the Royal Air Force, undertook the policing of the colony, working in conjunction, where possible, with the remnants of the civil police force rallied by the provisional government. On 1st and 2nd September reports of the action taken were telegraphed by the Commander-in-Chief and by the newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor to the Admiralty and the Colonial Office. The Lieutenant-Governor suggested that the Administration set up by him should continue and that the Civil Affairs parties on arrival should be absorbed as much needed reinforcements for this. But to this the War Office replied that full military administration must be established as originally directed, and the Colonial Office urged that Mr. Gimson and his colleagues should return to England on leave as soon as the C.C.A.O. had arrived and was able to assume responsibility.

Although first impressions were of ruin and disorder, material damage to the colony was less than had been expected. The town looked seedy and run-down, lifeless and hushed. There had been neglect and deterioration, but although there had been serious looting, the damage from bombing and shell fire was comparatively slight, at least in the city. The old Secretariat was practically undamaged. The residential areas on the peak had suffered more severely but this was

¹ Gibson, 'Sweet Waters', Blackwood's, January, 1946.

² Proclamation No. 1. Hong Kong Military Administration Gazette, Vol. I, No. 1 of 12th October 45, cf. Appendix 5.

due to looting. As elsewhere, roads rapidly disintegrated when heavy traffic was put on to them and repairs could only give first aid as there was a grievous shortage of materials. Port works had suffered, mainly from unchecked deterioration. The railway from Kowloon to Canton was working, but owing to serious shortage of rolling stock and locomotives it was possible to run only one train a day in either direction—and this not infrequently failed or had to be cancelled. Released prisoners of war and internees had done a great deal towards getting the services of the city into action again before the arrival of the C.C.A.O. Their efforts were powerfully reinforced by the fortunate arrival on 4th September of a convoy of some 3,000 technicians of the Royal Air Force who had been on their way to prepare airfields in Okinawa from which to bomb the mainland of Japan. These men with all their equipment, as well as technicians of the Navy, were at once turned on to the task of reviving the essential services of the city. A great debt was owed to them for their work.

In the meanwhile so much of the Civil Affairs party for Hong Kong as had been assembled by the time of the Japanese surrender, was seeking to make its way out from England. The C.C.A.O., Brigadier MacDougall, and nine Civil Affairs officers were flown to India at the earliest opportunity, leaving England on 26th August. After some delay they were flown on to Hong Kong, which they reached at last on 7th September, having flown twenty-four hours non-stop from Madras. The C.C.A.O. found in existence the Administration which has been described. The members of this provisional government had all suffered the rigours and privations of internment since the fall of Hong Kong in 1941 and had deeply overdrawn upon their remaining strength. The naval officers who first made contact with them on arrival in Hong Kong recorded that 'they were not capable of great mental effort, had no power of decision, short memories, and made frequent minor mistakes in conversation.' The C.C.A.O. wrote that 'the internees did wonders—some performed miracles, but by the time we arrived their small and carefully hoarded strength was waning and the situation was beginning to catch up . . . seeing what they had attempted and in part accomplished, one was proud to be a Hong Kong man.' But what they had accomplished, tribute though it was to the determination, endurance, and spirit of the internees, made the task of the incoming C.C.A.O. difficult and delicate in the extreme. It was an almost inevitable danger that the Civil Affairs party should be looked upon as interlopers, and their arrival as implying lack of confidence in the internees. Yet His Majesty's Government had decided that all territory recovered as a result of operations should be placed under military government and, although the conclusion of hostilities had invalidated many of the reasons for this policy, all the plans and resources, such as they were, for the re-establishment of administration

in Hong Kong were military not civil; untold confusion would have resulted from any last moment reversal of policy. Furthermore it was obvious that the internees would do themselves and their own interests nothing but harm by trying to carry on, and that all except a few irreplaceable specialists should be got out of the country for a rest and change as quickly as possible. By the good sense of all parties, by the skill and understanding of the C.C.A.O., and most of all, perhaps, by the personality and tact of Admiral Harcourt, this delicate and difficult take-over was effected with the minimum of disappointment and friction.

On the 8th September 1945 the Prime Minister telegraphed to Mr. Gimson:

'My admiration has been aroused by the vigour and courage with which you, in spite of the ordeal of internment, yourself took the first steps, and later gave your assistance to Admiral Harcourt, in re-establishing British rule in Hong Kong. I want you and those who worked with you to realise how highly I appreciate your unyielding spirit and fine work.'

To which Mr. Gimson replied:

'I and all members of the public services and organisations who took part in the provisional administration after the Japanese surrender are grateful for the honour done to us by the praise in the message I have received from you. Duty required that we should do what was possible and we are glad if what we did was useful and gained your approbation in however small degree.'

* * *

The C.C.A.O. and his small staff were plunged straight into the post-operational phase of administration and there was from the beginning extensive delegation of responsibility to the C.C.A.O. by the Commander-in-Chief.¹ Notwithstanding this delegation, the military services probably took a greater personal part in the work of rehabilitation and administration in Hong Kong than in any of the other territories with which this book is concerned. The Navy and Air Force began to enforce order and revive essential services before the Civil Affairs staff could reach Hong Kong at all. The Army was shortly to join in the work, giving aid particularly in the distribution of supplies, and in the provision of medical and educational facilities. And when the Civil Affairs organisation came into operation there was no pressing need for the military forces to be taken off the work of rehabilitation, since hostilities with Japan had ceased and since, unlike the situations that developed in Indonesia and Indo-China, no other major military tasks claimed their attention. Above all, however, this

¹ Proclamation No. 4. Hong Kong, Military Administration Gazette, Vol. I, No. 1 of 12th October 45.

determined and practical co-operation of the services in the rehabilitation of Hong Kong was a reflection of the attitude and personality of the Commander-in-Chief and Head of the Administration.

On 17th October Admiral Harcourt's Directive on Civil Affairs of 30th August¹ was amended so as to introduce the principle of dual responsibility, namely, that there should be placed upon the C.C.A.O., in addition to his responsibilities to the military authorities, a responsibility to the Colonial Office for rehabilitation above the level to which he was confined in his military function. Unfortunately the quantity of supplies that it was possible to move into the territory was, at all times within the military period, so restricted that there was little chance of reaching, and none of exceeding, the austerity, disease-and-unrest, standard permitted to the C.C.A.O. in his military capacity.

The most urgent task after setting up the Military Administration in place of the Provisional Government was to introduce a sound currency. This will be referred to again in a later chapter on Finance,² but it so greatly overshadowed other problems at the time that some reference must be made to it here. On arrival of the C.C.A.O. the Japanese *yen* was still current throughout Hong Kong, and all transactions, including official payments, were being conducted in this currency; indeed there was no other. It had been planned to re-introduce normal Hong Kong currency but the nearest stocks were still lying in Colombo. The Provisional Government, whose plans in this respect were strikingly similar to those prepared by the Hong Kong Planning Unit in London, had put in hand the over-printing of Japanese *yen* notes for use as stop-gap currency, but stocks of these were not large enough for them alone to be used to supplant the *yen* in circulation. When the first consignment of Hong Kong notes arrived on 12th September the combined stocks were still dangerously low, but it was decided that the new currency must be introduced at once and the risk of a break-down accepted. This was done on 14th September, the day before pay day. As a result nine-tenths of the population found themselves with no money and very little immediate prospect of obtaining any. It was perhaps fortunate that the next three days were rainy and unpropitious for protest or agitation. Measures were simultaneously taken to put currency promptly into circulation. These included the employment and payment of 30,000–40,000 unskilled labourers on cleaning up the city, the payment of an advance of two weeks pay to all subordinate government servants, and of a rehabilitation allowance of one dollar a day to all non-European essential workers, the authorization of the banks to make advances in certain cases, the distribution of \$150,000 in relief to the destitute, and the

¹ Cf. p. 152.

² Cf. Chapter XII.

making of advances to fishermen to enable them to catch and market fish. At the same time a certain amount of hoarded pre-war money was found to be returning into circulation. In one way and another enough British currency was pumped into the hands of the public for the life of the community to continue. A grave shortage of all supplies had already started new prices at a level ten times higher than that in force before the Japanese occupation. The measures taken to put currency into circulation inevitably tended to push these still higher. The C.C.A.O. reported that 'The problem was to find a balance between what was immediately necessary to prevent a complete breakdown and what would push inflation beyond control.' Maximum prices were fixed for rice and certain other basic commodities. In the case of rice, the most important of these, stocks were largely procured and controlled by the Administration so that orders restricting prices could be effective. In regard to the other commodities this was not so, and the orders could have little more than a psychological effect, for there was no staff yet to enforce their observance. After five or six anxious weeks prices began to show a definite, if very slight, downward trend. In dealing with this situation the C.C.A.O., who had as yet no financial adviser on his staff, received invaluable help from Mr. H. R. Butters, the Financial Secretary of the colony, who had been interned in 1941. Tribute must also be paid to the resource and the resilience of the Chinese in Hong Kong.

Meanwhile on the 11th September Major-General F. W. Festing with the 3rd Commando Brigade landed in Hong Kong. This force had been despatched by Admiral Mountbatten upon whom lay the responsibility for providing ground and air forces, and for supplying equipment, stores and food for Hong Kong, although the Colony was not technically to become a part of his Command. It was this force that brought the first consignment of the new Hong Kong dollars; up till then the re-occupation force had conducted its transactions on credit or on a barter basis. On 12th September General Festing assumed responsibility to the Commander-in-Chief and Head of the Military Administration for the preservation of law and order. This brought to an end the period during which the ultimate responsibility for the preservation of peace had rested exclusively upon the Navy, but for some months yet Royal Marine and Naval parties continued in cooperation with the Commandos.

Meanwhile both Indian and Chinese members of the regular police force began reporting for duty, but they were in a debilitated state of health, lacking in morale, and much in need of training, particularly those Indian members of the force who had suffered internment. Their health was so poor that the medical authorities would not at first allow them to work more than half normal hours, and their morale was so low that it was found useless at first to employ them on their own,

although they could be used to reinforce naval and, later, military patrols. In the course of the next two months three-quarters of the two Chinese contingents reported for duty; only one-tenth of the Indian contingent became available. There was a serious shortage of officer and inspector staff, whether British or locally recruited; three months after the re-occupation only half the British officers sanctioned were in service, and only a quarter of the Inspectors, whether British or locally recruited. (As against this, however, the war establishment allowed for 186 local inspectors, compared with the pre-war strength of forty-three). Attempts to enlist new local recruits were abortive during the first three months, largely because the rates of pay offered were insufficient. Arrangements were made to recruit 300 Indians from Lahore but none of these actually arrived during these months. Fortunately, however, the extensive assumption by the military forces of responsibility for the maintenance of order afforded a breathing space in which the Administration obtained the approval of the Colonial Office for a revision of the conditions of service and of the organisation of the rank and file of the police force; this revision resulted in the raising of police pay to a level at which the service for the first time became attractive to Chinese of a good class. This was a far reaching reform.

A small temporary Police School was started and some sixty men were given a refresher course during the first two months. The functions of the school were largely those of a convalescent home to restore the members of the police force to a state of health in which they could be called upon to perform a full day's work. All police buildings had suffered from the general neglect, some being entirely uninhabitable. Uniforms and equipment all needed replacing. Emergency supplies of the former were made out of captured Japanese material.

In contrast, however, with the other territories re-occupied, Hong Kong remained surprisingly free of serious crime, in spite of the dangerous number of firearms known to be in the hands of the public. These were used in a number of robberies and piracies. Looting was very common at first, much of it for fuel, of which there was a universal shortage, but was gradually brought under control. Investigation of the activities of collaborators added greatly to the work of the Police, offering opportunities to the ill-disposed for the preferment of false accusations and for the employment of every kind of extortion. The local branch of the Kuomintang were prominent in their virtuous pursuit of alleged collaborators, their activities often degenerating into mere blackmail. Minor police activities, such as control of traffic and hawkers, could be revived only by degrees as the other demands upon the attention of the force permitted.

The buildings of the one prison in Hong Kong (Stanley Prison) were in good order and were brought into use at once. Camp prisons

were established for war criminals and collaborators, the former being under military as opposed to Civil Affairs control.

On 16th September the C.C.A.O. was reporting on the condition of essential services. Trains, ferries, telephones, electric power, lighting, docks and wharves were all working, though on a reduced scale. The railway was owned by the Government, the other services by public utility companies. Damage to these public utility services was not so great as had been expected, but their rapid revival was largely the fruit of the work of the Provisional Government and of the armed services. The water supply was structurally little damaged, though the filter beds had become fouled and required complete cleaning. Garbage and refuse had been allowed to accumulate everywhere. Drains were blocked, and the colony's highly developed anti-malaria precautions had been completely neglected. Sanitary fittings had been smashed or looted. Conservancy was virtually non-existent owing to damage and neglect of the water-borne system, and to the great shortage of dry latrine pans, night soil buckets, and junks for removing night soil from collecting stations. The Health Section of the Military Administration, although even more deplorably understaffed than most of the other departments, tackled the problems of town cleansing and sanitation with energy. Negotiations were begun at once with the public utility companies. It was probable that the Administration, in pursuance of its policy of keeping down the cost of living, would at first be driven to require these to operate on terms that would not enable them to cover their costs. The Administration desired, however, to avoid requisitioning the services and to allow them to resume commercial working as soon as possible. It was therefore ultimately arranged that the companies should function with their own boards of directors under the general control of the Administration and that the Administration should meet the losses and in due course pay a fair rent for the use of the companies' property and plants. In the meantime every possible improvisation was employed to ensure, with very considerable success, that the services should not in fact come to a stop.

The Medical Branch was faced with a multitude of problems, chief of which, perhaps, was the need to revive measures against malaria. The vigorous co-operation of the three services and of the Administration ensured a good start in this respect. Another problem was created by the great increase in venereal diseases during the Japanese occupation. Hospitals had not suffered much damage but were dirty and neglected, and time would be needed to bring them into full use. The large Queen Mary Hospital, opened only in 1937, was essentially undamaged, although in a state of indescribable filth and chaos. It was a month before any of its beds could be brought into use, and even this revival was largely due to the work of the released internees and of the

Royal Navy. The Kowloon Hospital on the mainland was in similar condition. Most of the other hospitals in existence before the occupation were quickly brought into use. The worst damage was suffered by the two contagious diseases hospitals, but fortunately the Administration was not required to deal with any serious epidemics. All hospitals, whether originally dependent on public funds or not, received financial support from the Administration.

The arrangements to be made for the demobilization of members of the Hong Kong Volunteer Defence Corps, including its Nursing Detachment, claimed a good deal of attention at the time, although not, perhaps, matters of wider historical interest. The volunteers had all been residents of Hong Kong, although of different races and of different domiciles. They had fought with determination and distinction in 1941. Most of them had then suffered internment, though some had escaped to the mainland and made their way into unoccupied China. It had been decided as far back as 1937 that there should be equal pay for all volunteers, regardless of race. It had never been decided, however, whether the principle of equal treatment was also to be applied to the various allowances to which members of the force might become entitled. Proclamation No. 14,¹ issued by the Administration soon after re-occupation, made provision for the benefits admissible to volunteers on release from service. In the case of volunteers domiciled outside Hong Kong, these included provision for repatriation (or cash in lieu) and also 'overseas war benefit leave'. These provisions discriminated to some extent in favour of Europeans and only too easily appeared even more discriminatory than they really were. They aroused considerable feeling, particularly as, throughout the period of internment, the Japanese had made no difference in the treatment accorded, and as equal service had been rendered by all races during the battle in 1941. The position was further complicated by the action of the military organization for the recovery of prisoners of war and internees (R.A.P.W.I.), members of which arrived before the C.C.A.O. and before proclamation No. 14 had been published.² They admitted volunteers to the benefits of repatriation who, when the proclamation was issued, were found not to be entitled. However, the situation was ultimately satisfactorily cleared up on the basis of liberal and, as far as possible, equal treatment for all.

The control of immigration from the mainland of China posed another problem. Before the Japanese occupation the entry of Chinese into the colony had been legally at the discretion of the Government of Hong Kong, but actually unrestricted, since the prosperity of the colony required the greatest freedom of entry and trade. On the

¹ Proclamation No. 14. Hong Kong Military Administration Gazette, Vol. I, No. 1 of 12th October 45.

² The work of R.A.P.W.I. will be referred to more fully in Chapter XV.

establishment of military administration it was desired for political reasons to re-establish the legal position that entry could not be claimed as of right. It was at the same time desired for practical reasons to prevent immigration on a large scale until the colony was better able to deal with increased responsibilities. The Chinese on the other hand were anxious to obtain entry to the colony on the unrestricted scale of the pre-war period. In fact the Administration had not the staff to enforce any real control of immigration, although fortunately the difficulties of transport at first provided an effective check upon any undue increase. In the end the difficulty was settled by a compromise (highly satisfactory to both parties, so far as it went) under which the Military Administration conceded entry, which they could not themselves prevent but trusted natural causes would in fact restrict, in return for food, which the Chinese undertook, but were in fact unable, to supply. By the beginning of 1946, however, it became clear that the natural obstacles to immigration were being successfully overcome and that the population of Hong Kong was increasing at a rate of something like 100,000 a month. In March it became necessary to apply an indirect deterrent to this increase by refusing ration cards for rice to immigrants unless they were essential workers, or ex-residents of the colony.

In October – November 1945, the Chinese Nationalist Government desired to send two Chinese armies from Southern China to Manchuria to fight the Chinese Communists. These Nationalist forces were to be embarked from Kowloon on American ships in Hong Kong Harbour and to be taken by them to their destination. The presence of detachments of these armies within British territory, and their passage through Kowloon, led, throughout the period of military government, to many local irritations and to a general feeling of tension and anxiety, owing to the wide-spread public belief that these troops were arriving in order to take over Hong Kong from the British.

Although Hong Kong was fortunately spared the more acute political problems of nationalism, there was nevertheless a strong Kuomintang organisation in the Colony which was always ready to cause trouble. The disparity between prices and wages on re-occupation offered to any hostile or dissatisfied persons a ready means for doing so, and the problem of reducing this disparity received a great deal of attention. At a very early stage the basic coolie wage was raised at one stroke from 25 cents to 1 dollar a day. At the same time all possible measures (and at first few indeed were possible) were taken to bring down the level of prices. Throughout the first three months of the administration every telegraphic report from the C.C.A.O. drew attention to the desperate shortage of supplies of almost every kind and emphasized that continuance of the surprisingly satisfactory situation in the colony must depend upon the early arrival of stocks for the

civil population. Meanwhile the Administration energetically set about helping itself. Rice, peanut-oil and vegetables were procured, at desperately high prices, from the Canton delta. An officer, intended to be employed on the control of immigration, was sent instead to Borneo to arrange for supplies of fuel wood; an arrangement was entered into with the Military Administration there but there were difficulties and delays in bringing the wood to Kong Hong.¹ Another officer was sent to Shanghai in search of coal. A small Hong Kong ship was sent, at the risk of seizure, with yet another officer on board, to Kwang Chow Wan on a similar errand; 2,800 tons of anthracite dust was obtained from Hongay in French Indo-China, 8,000 tons of bituminous coal from Ching Wang Tao. A personal signal from Admiral Harcourt to General MacArthur yielded a shipment of coal from Japan, for which some return was made by sending a consignment of sago. For the first two months of the administration the only supplies sent in from outside were one shipment of 6,000 tons of rice (about ten days' supply) and one shipment of 4,000 tons of coal. For everything else the Administration had to depend entirely upon its own efforts.

The colony was in fact fed from three sources; stocks left behind by the Japanese, which were either looted and so brought directly into circulation, or taken over by the Administration and distributed in more orderly fashion; purchases from the mainland; and the very few shipments sent in from outside. In one way or another the Administration provided over 23,000 free meals daily in relief of the destitute.

The repatriation of internees was initially dealt with by the R.A.P.W.I. organization, but once the Administration was set up it took an increasing share in this work until the R.A.P.W.I. organization finally handed over complete responsibility.² On re-occupation of the colony some 2,770 persons were found who had been interned in Stanley Prison and Ma Tan Chung Camp. Of these 1,014 were repatriated almost at once, with very slight scrutiny of their claims to be domiciled outside the colony. Included in this party were a number of the Hong Kong Volunteers who had no claim to such treatment. After the Administration had been established 1,031 Europeans and fifty-two Indians were sent home on various occasions in six ships which called between 17th September and 4th October. The Administration had established a Repatriation Office by this time and a much closer scrutiny was given to applications and a record kept of embarkations. Thereafter the task of this Office was to deal with the few persons still seeking repatriation, many of whose cases presented puzzling complications of domicile and nationality, and to see to the final closing down of Stanley Camp and the settling within the colony of those still left there. A number of persons were repatriated through

¹ Cf. Chapter XIV.

² Cf. Chapter XV.

Hong Kong who had taken refuge in Macao or Kwantung or elsewhere on the mainland, or had been interned in Canton.

* * *

On 21st November 1945, the C.C.A.O. was informed by the War Office that it had been agreed between them and the Colonial Office that 1st February 1946, should be accepted for planning purposes as the tentative date for the hand-over to the civil government. On 7th January 1946, the Head of the Military Administration proposed postponement to 1st March. His reasons were that he wished to allow the Administration time to complete the emergency arrangements it had been making for procuring civil supplies; that he wished to avoid increasing pressure upon these supplies by demilitarizing members of the Administration and so taking them off the military ration strength; and that he wished to allow time for improvement, not only in the matter of supplies, but in regard to the political situation and the arrival of reinforcements for the Administration. The War Office was disinclined to admit the validity of these reasons, but the Colonial Office pressed for postponement till 1st April. It had been decided to re-appoint as Governor Sir Mark Young who had held office at the time of surrender in 1941 and had been interned by the Japanese. He was unlikely to be fit to resume charge until April, and it was considered politically and psychologically desirable that the resumption of civil government should be made by Sir Mark Young and no other person. It was decided to postpone the hand-over to 1st March or 1st April at latest.

On 18th February the Head of the Military Administration proposed that a full and complete transfer of power should be made on 1st April subject only to the following reservations:

- (a) that service personnel accused of criminal offences should continue to be tried in military courts until the civil government signified readiness of the civil courts to undertake such trials,
- (b) that the Port Executive Committee set up by the Military Administration should continue in operation so as to secure to the military authorities the necessary control over port facilities — although civilian organizations might progressively assume responsibility for the actual working of those facilities.

The civil government would be required to exercise its powers of requisition to continue to meet the essential needs of the services, and also to pass an Act of Indemnity to safeguard the Crown, the Commander-in-Chief, the Services, and the Administration of Hong Kong, for acts done during the war and during the period of military administration. At the same time a Hand-over Committee was set up in Hong Kong to study the measures, particularly legal and legislative,

that would need to be taken to prepare for the return of the civil government. A proclamation to terminate Military Administration and an Indemnity and Validating Ordinance were drafted. Another Ordinance was drawn up to continue in force after the return of the civil government certain provisions of the proclamations issued by the Administration. The intention was to preserve so much of the proclamations as would be required to enable administration to continue until the civil government had time to decide how much of this proclamation-law it needed to carry forward, and what other legislation it must introduce.

The continuance of Chinese troop movements through Kowloon, and the problems thus raised, led to the suggestion that the hand-over might be still further postponed, or that, in the alternative, the Commander-in-Chief might become the first civil governor. The second alternative was rejected, but it was decided to postpone the hand-over to 1st May 1946. On that date the Administration handed over to the civil government, with Sir Mark Young as Governor.

Throughout the period of military administration excellent relations and the warmest and readiest co-operation subsisted between the members of the Administration, the Commander-in-Chief, and the three Services. If this was, in a measure, due to the absence of any of the more contentious political problems which might have tested this accord more seriously, the excellence of relations remains a fact, and a fact of great importance. This happy state of affairs, for which, it must be admitted, the other territories under military government offered no very convincing precedents, was largely due to the character and personality of the Commander-in-Chief, Admiral Harcourt, and contributed in a great measure to the excellent progress towards recovery made in Hong Kong.

PART IV

General

CHAPTER XII

FINANCE

WE HAVE SEEN HOW, towards the end of 1942, it was decided that military, not civil, administrations were to be made responsible for the re-establishment of administration in British territories in South-East Asia and the Far East.¹

Somewhat surprisingly, the Commander-in-Chief, India, proposed to the War Office, on 23rd December 1942, that the entire cost of the military administration of Burma should be borne by the civil government of that country, including the pay and allowances of civil administrators commissioned into the Civil Affairs Service, and also, in most cases, the cost of civil engineering or other projects which it was considered necessary to carry out on military grounds. This proposal (which incidentally was agreed to by the Government of Burma) clearly exposed the fundamental misconception which prevailed at G.H.Q., India, and which was vitiating its dealings with the newly formed Civil Affairs Service. If the administration of re-occupied territories was really to be military, and if the Civil Affairs services were to become an integral part of the military organization and not remain a body of equivocal and slightly suspect civilians masquerading in uniform, then there could be no reason for not placing financial responsibility fairly and firmly upon the War Office. Two telegrams from the War Office, one sent before receipt of General Wavell's telegram, set out the proper view. Members of the Civil Affairs services must be unmistakably in the army and subject to its discipline, and, since the administration was to be military, financial responsibility must be borne by the military authorities, not by the civil government of Burma. That the Treasury reserved the right to claim in due course that Burma should pay a part of the cost of military administration, detracted in no way from this fundamental principle.

This decision placed upon the military authorities responsibility for a range of monetary and economic problems that fell outside the experience of the normal organisation for advising the War Office and military commanders on financial matters. In the War Office a special section of the Financial Branch, F.5, had already been created to deal with the problems of finance which the acceptance of responsibility for

¹ Cf. Chapter III.

military administration in Africa had forced upon the army.¹ The Commander-in-Chief, India, made proposals in regard to Burma which ultimately, and without any fundamental alterations, led to the appointment on 1st June 1943, on the lines of Middle East experience, of a Controller of Finance and Accounts (C.F.A.) responsible for advising the C.C.A.O., and, through him, the Force commander, on all financial problems arising in connection with military government in Burma. In accordance with normal army financial practice, the Controller of Finance and Accounts, although under the command of the C.C.A.O., and the Force commander, and owing a responsibility to them, was at the same time directly responsible, and had direct access to, the Accounting Officer at the War Office, at this time the Permanent Under-Secretary of State for War (Finance). In course of time Controllers of Finance and Accounts were appointed for the other military administrations with similar responsibilities.

We have seen that when South East-Asia Command came into existence, no attempt was made to centralize military government by placing any superior Civil Affairs officer at the Headquarters of the new command in executive charge of the C.C.A.O.'s of the several administrations.² It was similarly decided not to centralize Civil Affairs finance. For this reason, and on account, also, of the direct access to the War Office enjoyed by the Controllers of Finance, the upward channel of communication from these officers ran normally to the War Office, not to SEAC. In any case, Hong Kong never fell within the Command and Borneo was brought into it only at a later stage.

Separate accounts were opened for each administration by the several C.F.A.'s. These records were civil, rather than military, in their general form, since this was more appropriate to their subject matter and would in due course ease the return of civil governments. In Malaya their form was conditioned in part by the Colonial Office proposals for the future government of the country. Quarterly statements had to be submitted to the War Office. In the case of Burma and Malaya, these passed through the Middle East Exchequer and Audit authorities.

The only class of cash transactions relating to military government that was excluded from these accounts was the disbursement of pay to military officers and other ranks employed by the administrations. In the case of Burma this exclusion extended also to the pay of 'civilian officers' and important 'civilian employees' as defined in accounting directions. All these transactions were recorded in the usual manner by the military pay services, except that in the case of Burma the

¹ Rennell of Rodd, *British Military Administration in Africa, 1941-47* H.M.S.O. 1948, p. 23.

² Cf. p. 57.

accounts of civilian officers, of civilian employees, and of military officers specially commissioned into the Army in Burma Reserve of Officers for Civil Affairs work, were handled by the appropriate department of the Government of Burma.

A supply accounting procedure also had to be built up in all territories for the large imports of relief supplies expected. In Borneo this was undertaken by the Supplies Department under its own responsibility and never came under the C.F.A. In Burma a system of stock accounting was planned by the Controller of Finance and Accounts, but broke down because of poor communications and the speed of military operations. An improved system was introduced on 1st July 1945. Thereafter stock accounting slowly improved although the C.A.S.(B) Base Ordnance Depot in Rangoon never succeeded in keeping an adequate check on the return of invoices for stocks issued, with the result that it was impossible to establish correspondence between stores issued by the Depot, and stores received by consignees, in more than 49% of cases. In contrast the figure in the case of the C.A.S.(B) Base Supply Depot was 91% which, in the circumstances, was considered good.

In all territories internal audit was conducted by an Audit Section of the C.F.A.'s own headquarters, although detailed arrangements varied. Nowhere could they be very effective, owing to difficulties of communication and the acute shortage of financial staff. External audit of the records submitted to the War Office was conducted by the normal methods applicable to military accounts under the authority of the Comptroller and Auditor-General.

In the case of Burma, on grounds of practical convenience, the C.F.A. was initially not confined to advising the Force commander on 'civil' financial matters; he was required to advise on all financial questions, including those of a military character. The only matters excluded from his field were questions of military pay and conditions of service, advice upon which was provided by the Deputy Paymaster-in-Chief. This arrangement continued for a little over a year, but in November 1944 it was found necessary to appoint a separate Financial Adviser who would relieve the C.F.A. of all his 'military' functions. This was partly because of the great increase in the 'civil' work of the C.F.A. which resulted from the progressive re-occupation of Burma, but partly also because of the probability of the Force commander being required to operate beyond Burma, when the C.F.A. would have to be left behind to his primary duties in Burma.

* * *

Before South-East Asia Command was formed, the cost of the campaign against Japan on the eastern frontier of India had been

borne, in the first instance, by the Government of India, which made available rupee currency for the purpose. Ultimately, however, India was to be held responsible only for expenditure included in her normal defence budget, for expenditure on measures taken in India for local defence, and for a share of the expenditure on measures 'taken jointly in the interests of Indian Defence and of H.M.G.' For all other expenditure incurred by her on the war against Japan she was to be reimbursed by the United Kingdom Government. On the formation of SEAC this arrangement was altered. Thereafter the home government was to re-imburse India for all the currency used by the new Command. The resultant additions to India's sterling balances were likely to embarrass her government, which was also politically unwilling to continue responsible for financing the approaching reconquest of Burma. It was accordingly decided that the Military Administration for Burma must issue its own currency.

This took the form of Indian notes, of all denominations, overprinted. For smaller amounts Government of India coin was to be used, but arrangements were also made for the printing of special British Military Administration notes of small denominations in case it proved impossible to move the coin into Burma in the early stages, owing to the weight involved. The printing of notes was to be undertaken by the Government of India, the cost being borne by the British government. Custody of the notes, and their issue for circulation, and receipt on withdrawal from circulation, were at first undertaken by the military pay services. The War Office was required to pay into a Currency Deposit Account of the Treasury the sterling equivalent of notes issued by the Reserve Bank to the military authorities. On the other hand, the War Office was to be credited with the equivalent of notes returned by the Administration to the Reserve Bank. The balance remaining in the Deposit Account would provide sterling backing for all currency issued by the Administration and left in circulation.

In Malaya it was decided to use the new Malayan dollar currency, printed for the Malayan Currency Commissioners but never actually put into circulation before the Japanese occupation. This was moved to Malaya by the army pay services and there placed under the control of the C.F.A. who, acting for the Commissioners, put currency into circulation as required, against payment of the sterling equivalent by the War Office to the Currency Commissioners' account with the Crown Agents for the Colonies in London.

This Malayan currency was also used in Borneo. Stocks were made available in Australia and were moved to Borneo by the Australian army pay services and placed under the control of the C.F.A. who, as agent for the Commissioners, issued currency required against credit of sterling by the War Office to the Commissioners.

In Hong Kong, before the Japanese occupation, the note issue had

been largely in the hands of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corporation, the Chartered Bank of India, Australia and China, and the Mercantile Bank of India, although the Government had also issued one dollar notes and small coin. It was planned that the Military Administration should revive the note issuing powers of the Banks and obtain part of its requirements from them, against payment of sterling by the War Office through the Crown Agents for the Colonies into the Hong Kong Exchange Fund, which provided backing for the bank note issue. Arrangements were also made for the supply of Government notes and coin against payment of sterling into the Hong Kong Note Security Fund in London.

In Indo-China all currency arrangements were handled by the French administration and need not be recounted here. In Indonesia, however, the British commander was to assume a certain responsibility by taking material decisions in opposition to Dutch advice.¹ The Netherlands Indies Government had undertaken responsibility for providing notes and coin for the re-occupation of Dutch territories in the Far East. By August 1945 it had placed three-quarters of its stocks in Australia, for use in the South-West Pacific Area, and one quarter in India, for use in South-East Asia Command. On the transfer of most of the Netherlands East Indies from SWPA to SEAC, in August 1945, further stocks were hurried from Australia to SEAC but these could not arrive till February 1946. Movement of currency from SEAC bases into Indonesia was undertaken by British pay services. Release of currency for circulation was to be made on the authority of the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs organization (NICA) which was required to supply immediately any currency required for SEAC operations. An ultimate settlement of accounts between the British and Netherlands Governments for money so provided, was to be made in London under the terms of a Mutual Aid Agreement entered into by the two governments.²

Currency released for circulation in Burma, Malaya, and Borneo was at first handled by the military pay services which provided the Administrations and other military services with their cash requirements. As the Administrations established treasuries, and as their share of the total expenditure grew, the relationship was reversed and the treasuries took over these banking functions from the pay services. In Hong Kong currency was released to the commercial banks. In Indonesia Dutch currency was released first to NICA pay services, later, on the supersession of NICA, to Allied Military Administration Paymasters and, by March 1946, to commercial banks and Dutch treasuries.

In Burma, at an early date, the Reserve Bank of India (which before

¹ Cf. p. 224.

² Cf. p. 235.

the Japanese occupation had acted as the central bank for Burma as well as for India) returned to Rangoon so that it could act, under an agreement to that effect, as bankers for the Administration.

Everywhere a certain amount of pre-evacuation currency returned to circulation when re-occupation took place. In Borneo this amount was unexpectedly large. Such currency was accepted by the Administrations in payment of dues, but was then withdrawn from circulation.

* * *

When British forces had occupied Italian territory in North Africa, and Allied forces later landed in Sicily and Italy, the currencies provided for initial use by the invading forces were not intended to replace the Italian *lira*. This continued to circulate at a recognised rate of exchange, although the British Administration set up in Africa would not itself receive it, except to a limited extent in payment for relief supplies or Government taxes. The currencies brought in with the forces were supplements or temporary substitutes. The indigenous system of currency and credit was to be revived and continued in operation so as to prevent financial collapse.¹ In re-occupying British territories invaded by the Japanese in the Far East, it was decided that, apart from minor concessions, no value whatever should be given to Japanese currency or to any local currencies introduced under the Japanese regime. This intention completely to destroy the monetary systems, which, by the time of re-occupation, might be assumed to have become generally accepted, caused much controversy during the planning period.

The case for non-recognition was very strongly supported from two quite different standpoints. From the one, it was argued that to give any value at all to Japanese money would expose the British currencies to inflationary pressure that would be heavy, since it was known that very large amounts of currency had been put into circulation by the Japanese, and would also be quite incalculable, since it was not known how large these amounts were. Furthermore, if re-occupation were to be gradual, the Japanese would be given the opportunity of pumping still more currency into circulation in the course of the campaign and so putting even greater pressure on the British currencies. In the event, it was found that, up to the fall of Rangoon, the Japanese had issued in Burma some Rs 2,310,000,000 worth of currency as against a British peace-time circulation of about Rs 335,000,000. A further amount of some Rs 85,000,000 was left by the Japanese in the vaults of the Reserve Bank in Rangoon when they abandoned the town. This was looted before the arrival of the British. In the four months after the fall of Rangoon and before their surrender, over Rs 3,000,000,000 more

¹ Rennell of Rodd, *British Military Administration in Africa*, H.M.S.O., 1948, Chapter XV.

was issued by the Japanese. In Malaya it was conservatively estimated that the Japanese, during the period of their occupation, issued \$4,000,000,000 worth of currency, against a normal circulation of about \$220,000,000. Meanwhile, apart from any liability that might be incurred in regard to Japanese currency, many other factors would in any case be tending to cause inflation of the British currencies. The other standpoint from which the policy of non-recognition received support was that, since re-occupation was likely to be gradual, the giving of value to the Japanese currencies would put into the hands of the enemy a strong power to buy treachery behind the forces of re-occupation. It was also argued that a policy of non-recognition would tend to discredit Japanese currency, even within enemy occupied areas, as soon as doubts arose regarding the ultimate success of Japan.

The main argument against non-recognition was that this destruction of the monetary system would inevitably cause hardship, particularly in towns, and particularly to the many people who had been forced by the Japanese to accept their currency in payment for goods or services. The poor and ignorant would be most affected, since the quicker-witted might be expected to dispose of their stocks of Japanese currency in time. The initial pauperisation of a large part of the population of re-occupied territories would have undesirable political results, and would be likely to lead to disturbances that might embarrass the Administration. It could scarcely be disputed that considerable hardship would be caused. But the advocates of non-recognition could urge that the accumulation of large stocks of enemy currency was likely in most cases to be the result of profiteering or collaboration. And the poorer people, particularly in villages, turned over such cash as came into their hands so quickly that their balances of Japanese currency at any given time were unlikely to represent more than a very small proportion of their wealth. And, taking a broad view, the currency and credit systems involved were so much less substantial than those of an industrialized European community, that the hardship caused by their destruction would be in no way comparable.

It was ultimately decided that the disadvantages of this course would have to be accepted and that there must be no general recognition of enemy currency. Discretion was given, however, 'in the event of undue hardship', to accept such currency, at a greatly depreciated rate, in payment for relief supplies and government dues, until such time as sufficient British currency had been put into circulation to afford an alternative means of payment. And, in fact, in British territories, this policy was enforced with so little difficulty, apart from some criticism in the press in England and last moment hesitations in Penang, that it was scarcely necessary even to have recourse to these discretionary provisions.

But in Indonesia, the Dutch, although generally in agreement with this policy, were prevented by circumstances from giving effect to it. The narrow limits within which the Dutch found themselves confined,¹ and the hostility of the Indonesians, which culminated in the *de facto* government of the Indonesian Republic declaring Dutch currency illegal and making possession thereof punishable with death, made it impossible to issue such currency except for internal military circulation. For other purposes Japanese guilders, stocks of which had been captured, continued to be used. No rate of exchange was fixed, but their value steadily fell. Early in 1946 the Dutch were anxious to declare their own currency legal tender throughout the Netherlands East Indies. But with Allied influence still narrowly confined, and the Republican ban still operative, this would have deprived the inhabitants of the Allied bridge-heads of the power to purchase from the surrounding country, upon which they depended for food. The British commander consequently felt obliged to refuse his consent. In March, however, captured stocks of Japanese guilders were running low, reinforcements of Dutch currency had begun to arrive, and the general political situation shewed improvement. At Dutch request the British commander at last declared Dutch currency legal tender throughout the Netherlands East Indies with effect from the night of the 6th March 1946. The Japanese guilder was given an exchange value by the Dutch at the rate of one guilder to three cents new Dutch currency. Some eight months later it was demonetized. At about the same time the Republican Government retaliated by issuing another currency of its own.

* * *

In Burma the introduction of the British Military Administration currency was deferred until the scale and success of operations had demonstrated that permanent occupation was in progress, not a fleeting raid. Only then could this currency be expected to command confidence. The actual date of introduction was 1st May 1945.

In Hong Kong, the Provisional Government had no choice but to allow the depreciating Japanese *yen* to continue in circulation. Pending the arrival of Hong Kong dollars, stocks of *yen* were printed by the Government from Japanese plates and then over-printed for use as emergency currency. The C.C.A.O. on arrival felt it urgently necessary to terminate this state of affairs. Stocks of Hong Kong dollars arrived on 11th September. On 13th the Japanese *yen* was demonetized and the dollars put into circulation in the hope that use of the over-printed *yen*, or the arrival of further stocks of dollars, would provide currency for further issues in quantity sufficient to avoid a break-down.

¹ Cf. Chapter XXII.

In the event further stocks did arrive both from the United Kingdom and from Chung-king in time to make it unnecessary to have recourse to the emergency *yen*.

* * *

If no value was to be given to Japanese currency, steps had to be taken to put British currency into circulation as early as possible. Payment for the goods and services immediately required by the forces of re-occupation could be relied upon to go a long way towards doing this. Civilian labour was needed for work on roads and airfields, and to handle supplies at airfields, docks, and depots. Local supplies were required in order to economise in precious airlift. Compensation was payable for injury to persons or for the use, damage, or destruction of property. Public services required to be restored. Troops had money of their own to spend. In addition there were plans for the purchase and export of rice, tin, rubber, and other commodities. And arrears of pay and pensions were to be paid to government employees and pensioners. Where these disbursements did not act quickly enough, or missed important centres, they were re-inforced by advances—to banks, to cultivators in the delta of Burma (amounting to some £450,000¹) to fishermen in Hong Kong, to owners and cultivators of rubber, and other estates in Burma and Malaya.

The total amount of B.M.A. (Burma) currency put into circulation during the military period was about Rs 340,000,000. But Rs 170,000,000 was withdrawn, leaving currency in circulation of Rs 284,000,000, or about £21,000,000, as compared with a pre-war Rs 335,000,000. Nearly £1 million of British Indian coin was also put into circulation. In Malaya the amount was \$178,765,000, or about £20,000,000, in Borneo \$11,489,080 or about £1,340,400, in Hong Kong \$56,881,616 or about £3,555,100.

* * *

Territories which had formed part of the sterling area resumed this status on re-occupation and their currencies were valued at their 1940 exchange rates. The Netherlands Indies Government also valued its guilder at the pre-war rate of 7.60 to the £. Although the guilder in Holland had been devalued to 10.691 the Dutch nevertheless tried to maintain for official purposes a par rate of exchange between their two

¹ The Military administration wished to make these advances interest free, on the grounds that they were in essence a relief measure made necessary by the decision to give no value to Japanese currency and that a political gesture was needed at this period. The Government of Burma viewed these advances as normal Agricultural Loans and contended that it would prejudice their schemes for Agricultural credit if no interest were charged. This view prevailed with H.M.G. and interest was levied at the normal rate for such advances of 6½% per annum.

currencies. In March 1946, however, the Netherlands Indies guilder (just proclaimed legal tender) was devalued and brought into line with the guilder in Holland. The over-valuation of the guilder for these months caused some loss to the British forces who were debited for the Netherlands currency issued to them at the excessive rate adopted. This was roughly offset by the arrangement under which a small quantity of Japanese currency was issued to British troops free of charge. This issue became necessary because the Dutch currency was not accepted outside official circles; and since the Dutch would fix no exchange value it was impossible to raise a debit for it.

It was planned to establish exchange control as early as possible, in Burma through the agency of the Reserve Bank of India which early re-opened in Rangoon,¹ in the other British territories through the agency of the Controllers of Finance and Accounts. In Burma this was delayed by the fact that the customs department was not revived until nearly the end of the military period, when smuggling of currency and other commodities along the road from Assam into China forced the Administration to action. In Malaya, the customs organization was more quickly revived and control began to operate in January 1946. But in neither of these territories, nor in Borneo, was there any urgency about the establishment of exchange control since there was virtually no private trade before the end of the military period. In Hong Kong it had also been planned that the Administration should monopolize the import and export trade for the first six months, but less than two months after the landing of the C.C.A.O. a strong public demand developed for the re-opening of the colony to private trade. The war was over; American importers had goods ready on the west coast of America; Chinese traders had American dollar credits which they wished to spend. On 12th November exchange dealings within the sterling area were permitted; on 23rd November the colony was re-opened to private trade, under a system of import licences; on 4th December full exchange facilities were revived and control imposed on foreign exchange. Export licence machinery was not set up for fear that this might divert the newly reviving trade to other ports. The whole future of Hong Kong depended upon the re-establishment of its position as a great free port handling the bulk of the South China trade.

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It was clear during the planning period that one of the greatest financial problems facing the administrations would be that of controlling the inflation that must inevitably result from the operations contemplated. We have just seen the vast pouring out of purchasing

¹ Cf. pp. 223-224.

power that they must cause, and how even this had to be further increased, in some places and in the early stages, in order to ensure that everybody had money with which to buy necessities as soon as possible. At the same time there was an acute shortage of goods upon which all this purchasing power could be spent. For the whole period of the Japanese occupation there had been virtually no imports. Much property had been destroyed, particularly in Burma, by battle, or in order that it should not fall into the hands of the enemy. Indigenous production of a few commodities had increased, but in no case sufficiently to meet demand. More often such production had decreased, whether for lack of raw materials, or because machinery could not be repaired or replaced, or because of danger from battle or disorder. Even if the goods were available somewhere in the occupied territories, the destruction or gradual deterioration of transport systems was such that there were great areas of local shortage. In addition, the disastrous fall in the value of the Japanese currencies had created an inflationary outlook from which it was difficult to wean people; it did not seem that any money could ever be worth much again.

The steps taken to increase the supply of goods and to facilitate their distribution are described elsewhere in this book.¹ Efforts were made at the same time to keep the increase of purchasing power within bounds. A limit was placed upon the arrears of pay and pensions that might be disbursed at once, three months of either in Burma, three months pay and six months pension in Malaya. The spendings of troops were channeled as far as possible through canteens and so out of the re-occupied territories. With the conclusion of operations, attempts were made to control expenditure more tightly. It was planned to suck out some of the excess purchasing power by taxation as early as possible, but time was needed to re-establish the machinery of collection, and most of Burma was re-occupied at a season when agriculture was looking for finance rather than prepared to pay taxes.

Little else could be done to alleviate the fundamental disparity between money and goods; but various palliatives were applied, not, it must be conceded, with any great measure of success. In Malaya, Hong Kong, and Borneo, rice was imported and sold at rates considerably below the cost of importation. In Hong Kong this subsidy cost the administration 150,000 dollars a day, and probably helped to keep prices in general from rising further than they did. In Malaya the measure was swept away by the extreme scarcity of supplies, including rice itself, and was probably largely ineffective.

In all re-occupied territories some control of prices was attempted. But supplies which the administrations could effectively control, because they imported them, were at first almost entirely lacking, and,

¹ Cf. Chapter XIII.

even towards the end of the military period, were still scarce. Supplies which were not so short could not easily be controlled. And control of distribution was rarely effective because it would have required a standard of administration unattainable in these territories during the military, or perhaps any, period.

Furthermore, in spite of warnings, there were, particularly in Burma during the early stages, attempts to control too many commodities. And when lists of controlled commodities varied from area to area, such trade as had revived tended to be forced into unnatural, and more expensive, channels, so causing local shortages, and sometimes actually forcing up, instead of lowering, prices. For all these reasons the attempts to control prices by the issue of orders were largely abortive. Later the raising of control from unessential items, and better co-ordination of the commodities retained for control, was followed, after a temporary upward movement, by a slight fall in prices.

Attempts were also made to control wages of persons employed by the armed forces, whether for purposes of the military administration or not. In Burma it was initially sought to make these conform to a level not more than 50% above that in force before the war, although this bore no relation whatever to the cost of living.¹ There were several reasons for this. It was hoped that the cost of living would fall as soon as goods became available and as soon as world prices for such commodities as rice began to make themselves felt. If this hope were to be realized, any fixing of wages at a level commensurate with the current cost of living would lead to an early need for downward revision of wages, a process always difficult and, in the circumstances, possibly dangerous. It was decided to fix a basic rate not out of keeping with the levels it was hoped ultimately to achieve, and to bridge the difference meanwhile by dearness allowances and the provision of essential supplies free or at cheap rates. In the other territories similar considerations prevailed, but it was early realised that to keep prices and wages down to the level hoped for in Burma, was not likely to be feasible.

Borneo of all the territories re-occupied, suffered least from inflation. In fact it was only towards the end of the military period that prices showed any marked upward tendency. This may be largely ascribed to the lower standard of living in Borneo which meant that no overpowering demand for foreign imported goods developed. Here as elsewhere, the Administration subsidized the sale of rice and other foods, but with greater success.

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¹ Cf. Chapter XVII.

It was the aim of all the administrations to revive the revenues of the pre-war governments and to re-establish effective control of the spending of their proceeds. The collection of taxes was desirable, not only to prepare for the return of civil governments, but, more immediately, to offset, however slightly, the expenditure being incurred by His Majesty's Government, to re-establish the authority of the British administrations, and, above all, to aid in combating inflation. But certain taxes were seasonal and collection could not begin at once. The productivity of import duties was severely limited because, during the military period, there were virtually none but military imports, and these paid no duty. Time was needed to revive the machinery of tax collection. However, most of the pre-evacuation sources were at least made to start to yield revenue. In Burma, excise duties and land revenue began to be collected. A beginning was also made with income tax, assessments being made on salaries and pensions paid by the Administration, and preliminary work being undertaken to facilitate collection in the following year of tax from other sources of income. It should perhaps be noted that while the pay offices which deducted tax from salaries and pensions were situated in India, the proceeds of all income tax collected by them belonged legally to the Government of India. That Government, however, agreed that the tax collected by pay offices from all members of the Civil Affairs Service in Burma should be credited to the British Government upon which fell the cost of the Administration in Burma.

In Malaya the most important sources of revenue were import, export, excise, and entertainments duties. Duty on rubber exports was collected even before the end of 1945. Collection of the other duties began in 1946. In Hong Kong excise duties on liquor and tobacco, entertainment tax, and various licence fees, yielded the bulk of the revenue. In Borneo customs duties and licence fees were re-imposed and a beginning made with collection. Even before this could be done a disguised levy of customs was made by the inclusion in the cost of many imports of an element in lieu of duty. In accordance with the general policy of the British Government, opium monopolies, which before the war had, with customs duties, formed the main source of revenue in Borneo, were not revived. The total prohibition in Borneo of opium smoking was enforced without difficulty. Opium addicts had been unable to obtain supplies during the greater part of the Japanese occupation because of shipping difficulties and had either died or been cured of the craving. Although working under the handicaps of destroyed buildings, inadequate staff, and loss of all records, the Borneo customs department steadily re-established itself and was by the end of the military period ready for the hand-over to the civil government in good working order.

Budgetary control of expenditure was nowhere restored during the

military period, although such restoration was the goal set before all the administrations. Control in Burma was exercised through the issue of directions specifying very precisely the objects upon which expenditure might be incurred, and through graduated and conservative delegation of the power to sanction such expenditure. In Malaya, on the mainland, general authority was accorded to all expenditure on the basis of the 1941 estimates, special authority being required to exceed these under any sub-head. In Singapore, where the administration was small and compact, expenditure was incurred and controlled mostly under *ad hoc* authorisations. In Borneo control was exercised through a system of financial and establishment warrants which was described as 'in effect . . . a form of day to day budgetary control'. In Hong Kong a similar system prevailed.

* * *

On re-occupation all commercial banks which had continued to operate during the Japanese occupation were closed. Non-Japanese banks were allowed to open again as soon as they were found to be solvent and under adequate control, and after enemy assets, and assets suspected to have arisen from looting or co-operation with the enemy, had been blocked. Banks which had evacuated in the face of the Japanese advance were, generally speaking, encouraged to return and resume operations as soon as possible. In Burma this encouragement was withheld for some six months on the grounds that the presence of these banks was not at first required for the direct furtherance of the war, and that it was consequently undesirable further to tax transport and accommodation by bringing them in. Remittance facilities, to the extent of public demand, could be made available by the Reserve Bank; and few private depositors had not evacuated to India. True, some of the banks had financed agriculture, but the season was such that their presence for this purpose would not be required for several months; and the main business of the banks, the handling of shipping documents, would not arise during the military period, owing to the absence of private trade.

The three indigenous banks in Burma did not wish to re-open. In Malaya the indigenous banks were mostly open again after a fortnight. The banks which had evacuated opened about a month later. In Borneo there were no considerable banking facilities until the end of the military period. Until then internal remittances and remittances between Borneo and Malaya and between Borneo and Hong Kong were handled by the Administration itself.

In Hong Kong, the three note-issuing banks were re-opened with all speed. There had been no evacuation of these banks when the Japanese occupied Hong Kong and all had suffered 'liquidation', which gave

rise to many difficulties. In the course of this 'liquidation' the Japanese had first confiscated, and secured full payment to themselves in respect of, the Hong Kong Government account and the Bank of China account. Thereafter the assets of all the banks were realized and paid into a pool from which all creditors were to be paid, at an equal rate, regardless of the proportion borne by the assets of each bank to the claims of its own creditors. This situation was finally complicated by the fact that there had not been enough notes to pay the claims. It was in these circumstances that the banks had been compelled by the Japanese to make the issue of what came to be known as 'duress notes'. The status of these notes as legal tender was reserved by the Currency Proclamation for decision later when the full circumstances of their issue could be ascertained. However the frequent forging of alterations to dates and signatures on these notes, with the object of making them acceptable as legal tender, began to arouse public distrust of all high denomination notes. To counter this, liability for the 'duress' notes had to be accepted and they were declared legal tender on the 2nd April 1946.

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Although the provisions of international law regarding the care and use of property in occupied enemy territory were inapplicable to re-occupied British territory, it was, nevertheless, to the advantage of the re-occupying forces to safeguard not only property belonging to British or Allied persons, but property that might be of use to themselves, and any property the looting of which might give rise to heavy claims for compensation. All the administrations therefore set up organizations on the lines of those for the custody of property in occupied enemy territory. In Burma and British Borneo these organizations were placed under the control of the C.F.A. In Malaya and Hong Kong they formed a part of the Legal, not the Finance Branch, on the face of the matter a more appropriate arrangement. Authority for the custody of property was everywhere taken by proclamation and a custodian appointed who was made responsible, in general terms, and within the limits of his slender resources, for control of:

- (a) enemy state property not immediately required for use by the re-occupation forces,
- (b) private property being used against the interests of these forces,
- (c) private property of which no owner could be found,
- (d) property of Allied Governments or nationals.

To facilitate the discharge of the last of these responsibilities so far as it related to private property, it was arranged that committees of inspection, representing the various commercial undertakings mainly

concerned, should be allowed entry before the grant of general permission for private traders to return, so that they might inspect property and take such interim action as seemed practicable on behalf of absent owners.

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When the time came for the transfer of responsibility from military to civil governments, the hand-over was made, as far as possible, in accordance with the principle that the administrations should be handed over as going concerns, together with all their assets and liabilities.

In the case of receipts and disbursements, all transactions occurring after the date of transfer were to be on civil government account, whether they related to the period before the transfer or not. The only exception to this rule was that certain receipts directly relating to expenditure incurred by United Kingdom funds, e.g. cash advances by the military administrations, were not to be credited to the civil governments even if they were received after hand-over. These were to be credited back to the United Kingdom funds from which the advances had originally been made. All cash balances in the hands of Civil Affairs officers were required to be turned in to the administrations before the assumption of responsibility by the civil governments who paid to the War Office the sterling equivalent of the surrendered balances.

Stores and fixed assets passed to the civil governments without payment. The British Treasury reserved the right, however, to include a demand in respect of these in any claim made by them on the civil governments for the cost of military administration. A record of such assets transferred was to be compiled for this purpose.

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The net total cost to the War Office of the British military administrations with which this book is concerned was represented by the aggregate of the net local costs of administration in each territory. So long as war methods of financing army expenditure continued, that is, until 31st March 1946, this aggregate was charged to the general War Office Vote of Credit, without previous presentation of estimates to Parliament—although for practical convenience it was allocated to Vote 11 of the normal heads of Defence expenditure. After 31st March peacetime budgeting was revived and provision was required to be made in detailed War Office estimates. Only in two cases, however, did military administration continue after this date, in Hong Kong and in Borneo. In the case of Hong Kong, where it continued for only one

month, the War Office was required to bear the cost, since it was on military grounds that the re-establishment of civil government had been delayed. In Borneo, subject to one quite inconsiderable exception, the Colonial Office was required to accept responsibility, on the ground that it was inappropriate for the cost of administering colonial territories to be borne by the War Office after the restoration of the peacetime system of estimates. Subsequent justification, before the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament, of expenditure debited to the War Office on account of military administration was the responsibility of the Accounting Officer for that office. To the extent, however, that any of this expenditure was incurred as a result of Burma or Colonial Office policy, he was entitled to call for support in this task from the Accounting Officers of these departments.

The net cash costs of the administrations in Burma, Malaya and Hong Kong, were £8,525,720, £3,452,891, and £254,183. In Borneo there was a surplus of revenue over expenditure of £1,005,200. This may be ascribed partly to the profits on supply account referred to elsewhere,¹ and partly to the extreme, perhaps excessive, rigour of the financial control exercised. Before criticising this, however, it must be remembered that, while Malaya and Hong Kong were fortunate in disposing of balances in the United Kingdom which could be employed to supplement the austere scale of military expenditure, Borneo balances mostly vested in the Chartered Company and the Rajah of Sarawak. Over these balances the Colonial Office exercised no control. On the other hand, in Burma, which boasted no balances, the British Government was not unwilling to support a more generous financial policy. In reaching the figures quoted above, credit has been taken for receipts from sales of relief supplies during the periods of military government, and to this extent the real cash costs have been disguised. These receipts ought more properly to be set off against the cost of relief supplies, which was borne mainly by the various supply departments in the United Kingdom, and only to a very small extent by the War Office. These receipts for Burma, Malaya, Hong Kong and Borneo were £2,807,072, £3,920,220, £1,581,880 and £953,558. If these are not deducted from the cash costs shown above, the total net cash cost of the administrations in British territory amounts to £20,490,324.

To these figures there needs to be added the cost of army officers and other ranks employed by the administrations. The estimated figures for Burma, Malaya, Hong Kong and Borneo are £438,314, £499,197, £295,000, and £166,962. The Burma figure of £438,314 needs to be increased, however, before any useful comparison can be made with the other territories, by the cost of pay and allowances disbursed by the Government of Burma to officers commissioned in the Army in

¹ Cf. p. 196.

Burma Reserve of Officers. The cost of these cannot readily be ascertained. We may assume the total cash cost of military administration in British territories to have been, very roughly, £22 millions.

To obtain a true picture of the cost of these administrations to the War Office, however, there should be brought into account also the value of goods and services passing between the administrations and the other branches of the military forces. On balance the administrations were all heavily indebted to the forces. In the case of Burma the amount was £4,289,527. For the other three territories no figures are available but it is probable that the combined amounts for these added up to a total comparable to that for Burma. It is probably necessary therefore to add something like £8,000,000 to the cost of administration in British territories for the value of goods and services supplied by the other branches of the military forces. The total cost to the War Office may, therefore, have been in the neighbourhood of £30,000,000.

Finally, United Kingdom revenues had to bear the cost of relief supplies procured for these territories by other departments under War Office authority, to the extent that such supplies were either lost, or issued free or at reduced rates to indigent persons.¹

In the case of Borneo, the British Government accepted full responsibility for the cost of the Administration to be set up, whether re-occupation was made by American or Australian forces. The decision that operations should be undertaken by the Australians brought into play also the general principles governing allocation of responsibility for the cost of Australian forces employed in British commands. Under these the British Government was required to bear the cost of all stores and supplies provided for the Administration by Australia, including relief supplies for the civil population. It was also required to bear the cost of maintenance of all members of the Administration, whether British or Australian, at a *per capita* rate, although actual maintenance would be undertaken in the first place by Australia. It was, finally, responsible for the pay and allowances of British and Asian members of the Administration. Australia on the other hand, was called upon to bear the cost of all initial equipment for the whole of the Administration, and of the pay and allowances of its Australian members. Difficulties arose later, not over the broad principles of responsibility, but as a result, apparently, of a misapprehension regarding the respective responsibilities of the C.F.A. and of the officer in charge of supplies in regard to accounting procedure. It was not until December 1945, after a considerable struggle, that the C.F.A. gained the right to scrutinize claims for payment on account of supplies or services, made available to the Administration, before these were presented to the War Office.

¹ For further detail cf. Chapters XIII and XV.

In Indonesia, the re-establishment of administration by the Dutch under British military control, was to be governed by a Civil Affairs agreement, entered into by the British and Dutch Governments, which will be further considered in a later chapter.¹ It was intended to supplement this by a separate financial agreement, but the latter had not yet been executed at the time of the Japanese surrender, although its provisions were being observed as far as possible. It was ultimately signed in London on 20th December 1945, but was to be deemed to have come into effect on 1st June 1944. Under this the Netherlands Indies Government was to bear the whole cost of military administration in its own territories. It was also to provide the British forces with Netherlands Indies currency as required by them. Whether the British were to reimburse the Dutch for this currency was to be determined by reference to the general principles of the agreement. Under these, the Netherlands Indies armed forces fighting Japan were to receive from the British Government, free of charge, equipment and maintenance best so provided, while, conversely, British forces similarly engaged in Netherlands Indies territory were to receive from the Netherlands Indies Government, free of charge, such material and facilities as the latter could best procure. To the extent that currency provided for the British forces was spent on material or facilities which under this agreement were to be supplied by the Dutch free of charge, no payment for the currency was required to be made by the British.

We shall see in due course how the Dutch administration came to be superseded by an Allied Military Administration.¹ This did not disturb the arrangement under which the whole cost of government was to be borne by the Dutch. Accordingly no direct expenditure was incurred by the British on military government in Indonesia. However, as we shall also see, the British military operations in Indonesia, both those of the combatant forces and those of the forces engaged in the revival of the public services, were partly conducted in order to re-establish Dutch administration. To the extent that this was so, and to the extent that the cost of these operations was not borne by the Dutch under the agreement, it is proper to look upon a considerable, but not precisely ascertainable, part of the general cost of the operations as incurred on military government. The total cost of these up to 31st March 1946, by which date active support in the re-establishment of Dutch administration had greatly decreased, was very roughly £8,000,000.² Similarly a part of the much smaller cost of British operations in Indo-China may properly be regarded as having been incurred on the re-establishment of administration in French Indo-China.

¹ Cf. Chapter XXII.

² H. of C. Deb. Vol. 21 Col. 601.

CHAPTER XIII

RELIEF SUPPLIES

THE ASSUMPTION by the military authorities, throughout the area with which this book is concerned, of responsibility for the relief of civilians was so far-reaching and, until the war of 1939-45, so entirely without precedent, that we should perhaps pause to look at the reasons that led to its acceptance.

Under international law a military force occupying enemy territory incurs certain minimum obligations in regard to the administration of such territory, which, upon any view of the matter, must include the prevention of starvation of the civil population. These obligations do not, legally, apply to an army re-occupying its own territory, metropolitan or colonial, or the territory of its allies. Morally, however, in such circumstances, they lie even more heavily upon a government, which will in any case wish to do for its own subjects at least as much as it is required by bare law to do for its enemies. This legal and moral obligation is strongly reinforced by practical considerations. Outbreaks of disease or the occurrence of unrest in occupied territory expose the occupying forces to danger and divert them from their main task of making war against the enemy. If in the past it was possible to dismiss these obligations as somewhat academic, or to discharge them by last moment improvisation, the scale and intensity of modern war and its deployment of economic forces, made it imperative to plan and prepare for the prompt and sufficient meeting of these obligations, if famine, epidemics, or other disasters were to be avoided. A retreating enemy must be expected to suck out with him such resources as he could, and to destroy effectively most of those he could not. There was also a propagandist aspect to the matter. Next to the demonstration of overwhelming military superiority, the best propaganda, to friend or foe, was the provision of food and clothing to people who had been chronically short of these during the enemy occupation. In addition, it was soon learnt that the mere offer of money wages, in re-occupied countries where there were no goods to be bought, would not attract the labour which the military forces so urgently required; goods must be imported so as to give wages some power to purchase. In south-east Asia there was yet another local, but compelling, consideration. It was out of the question for the Military Administration which took over responsibility for the government of Burma to fall short of the persistent civilian efforts that were already being made to introduce

supplies into that part of the country which had not been occupied by the Japanese.

For all these reasons there was no escaping the commitment to provide supplies for the relief of civilians. The decision that the territories with which this book is concerned were to be placed initially under military governments laid the task firmly upon the military authorities and upon the administrations they proposed to set up.

* * *

We saw in an earlier chapter¹ how the Japanese advance in 1942 stopped short of the boundaries of India, leaving the 'frontier fringe' still under the administration of the Government of Burma, and how that government became involved in responsibility for relief of the civil population of the fringe. A purchasing and despatching organization was improvised in Calcutta in 1942 to provide essential supplies and equipment and a sprinkling of amenities for the administrative officers who remained in the fringe. This was taken over by the Government of Burma as its Supply Directorate, to continue this work and to provide also the most urgently needed supplies for the civil population of the area. The Directorate bought for the most part in the open market and built up its own organization for moving supplies beyond railhead. If its operations, judged by later standards, were petty and expensive, there are many who look back with gratitude upon the services rendered by it, services performed with a personal touch that was inevitably lost in the great expansion of later days.

While this organization was being developed along the fringe, the Government of Burma formed a Reconstruction Department in Simla to plan for general rehabilitation after expulsion of the Japanese. Although events in Arakan² were beginning to suggest the probable shape of arrangements for the administration of re-occupied territories, the principle of military administration had not yet been accepted by the Government of Burma.³ Attention of the Reconstruction Department was consequently turned to the provision, both, immediately, of relief supplies for the civil population and, in the more distant future, of technical supplies for the administration itself, for the public services, and for industry. Towards the end of 1942, however, it became clear that administration on re-occupation would become a military responsibility and in February 1943 the Civil Affairs Service (Burma) was constituted.⁴ It was realized, both in London and in Delhi, that this would mean a new and considerable supply commitment for the army, but not, at first, how great this responsibility would ultimately

¹ Cf. Chapter. I.

² Cf. Chapter II.

³ Cf. Chapter III.

⁴ Cf. pp. 53-54.

become. The C.C.A.O. was required, among his other duties, to advise the Commander-in-Chief on the control and development of the economic life of Burma 'having regard to the primary aim of facilitating military operations'. More particularly, he was made responsible, to the extent that military considerations permitted or required this, for planning 'provision, holding, transportation and distribution' of all supplies for the military administration of Burma, whether (a) relief supplies for the civil population, (b) departmental equipment for the administration itself, or (c) technical stores for the administration, for the public services, and for the rehabilitation of industry. It is with the arrangements evolved for the discharge of military responsibility in regard to the first of these categories that this chapter is concerned.

When, during 1940 and 1941 in north-east Africa, the responsibility for the feeding of the civilian population had been assumed by the military administrations, this was satisfactorily discharged mainly by the restoration and development of normal channels of supply, a process which generally speaking proved not too difficult. Direct participation by the military administrations was almost entirely confined to emergency provision.¹ In any case the scale was comparatively small. Italy and the Far East were to provide more formidable problems, because of the larger scale, the higher standard of living of the people, the greater difficulty of reviving normal trade channels, and the tightening of controls everywhere caused by the progress of the war. In the Far East it was also the first time, except for the quite inconsiderable precedent of British Somaliland, that the increased obligations of a re-occupation of British, as opposed to enemy, territory were being encountered.

The C.C.A.O.'s first task in Burma was to relieve the civil government of the current responsibility for the provision of relief to the frontier fringe. For this purpose he took over the Burma Directorate of Supply and its field organization on 1st November 1943. Purchase of relief supplies in the open market thereupon virtually ceased, stores being obtained thereafter through military procurement channels. These were intended to be moved into Burma down normal army channels, but the C.C.A.O. felt it impossible entirely to close the private line of communication he had inherited until it became clear that his needs were really flowing down army channels in sufficient quantity.

While meeting, as best he could, these current commitments and planning for the continued provision of the limited requirements of the frontier fringe, his main preoccupation was, however, with the preparation of estimates for supplies on the very much greater scale that would

¹ Rennell of Rodd, *British Military Administration in Africa, 1941-47*, H.M.S.O., 1948, Ch. XVI.

become necessary when large areas of Burma began to be re-occupied. He was concerned also with the development of machinery for approving such estimates and handling the resultant demands, and with ensuring their procurement.

To aid the C.C.A.O. there was constituted, about the middle of 1943, a Burma Supply Council, three members of which were civilians with commercial experience of Burma, and the fourth a soldier with service in the military 'Q' Branch. It was intended to place upon this council the general responsibility for advising on the rehabilitation of trade and industry. This part of its functions shortly fell in abeyance when, as will be seen, these matters became the exclusive concern of the Government of Burma.¹ In connection with relief supplies the Council was required to recommend what range of commodities should be provided and to make plans for their retail distribution pending the re-opening of commercial channels. By November 1943 the Council had completed its recommendations regarding commodities to be procured. These were rice, *atta*, *dhall*, salt, milk, cooking-oil, kerosene oil, matches, cloth, blankets, *dahs*, *mamooties*, umbrellas, thread, needles, yarn, vests, soap, and iron bars (for the manufacture of implements)². A minimum scale was drawn up, where appropriate, for these commodities per head of population.

While the Burma Supply Council went on to consider the machinery to be created for retail distribution, the Administration embarked upon the task of preparing estimates and demands on the basis of the commodities recommended by the Council. This was a period of great difficulty and uncertainty for the planners, for, although it seemed clear that the normal army procurement procedure would have to be amplified to deal with the unfamiliar demands which would be placed upon it, there was as yet little understanding by other branches of the army of the size of the problem, and little or no information available to the planners regarding the machinery and procedure that was being built up in London for the procurement of relief supplies.

Meanwhile, the Government of Burma, realising the complexity and over-riding importance of the supply problem, whether for the military period or for later civil reconstruction, had recalled Mr. A. H. Seymour, one of its officers on the point of retirement but re-employed in the Ministry of Production, to take charge of their supply planning. Much was owed later, both by the Military Administration and by the Government of Burma, to the determination of Mr. Seymour to obtain for Burma a fair share in whatever supplies were to be available after re-occupation, and to the knowledge and experience of the ever-developing machinery in London for dealing with problems of civil

¹ Cf. Chapter XIV.

² *Atta* = coarse flour, *Dhall* = lentils, *Dahs* and *Mamooties* = domestic and agricultural implements.

supply which enabled him to translate his determination into action and the supply of goods. The Government of Burma estimates prepared at this time sought to cover the whole field of Burma's requirements for two or three years after re-occupation. To the extent that they covered the military period there was some duplication of the work of the military planners, but it was far from clear yet what the division of responsibility was to be, and what procedure would require to be followed to ensure the arrival of relief supplies within the period of army responsibility. But for the work done on these estimates it would have been difficult to avoid the most serious delays in procurement of supplies for Burma.

Comparable long term planning for Malaya, Borneo and Hong Kong was initiated at about the same time in the Colonial Office. A start had also been made in the Colonial Office, or in the planning units set up during 1943 under Joint Colonial Office and War Office action, on planning the provision of supplies for the period of military responsibility in these territories.

* * *

Meanwhile, at a higher level, combined Anglo-American machinery had been taking shape to ensure that the needs of civilian relief in all theatres of operations should receive their appropriate share of world production and resources.

British operations in the Middle East and north-east Africa, during 1940 and 1941, had brought with them acceptance in January 1941 of the principle that administration of occupied enemy territories was initially a military responsibility. On the re-occupation of British Somaliland, this principle was applied for the first time to a British territory also. Problems of civilian relief arising in the course of the African campaigns were dealt with locally and were fortunately not of such magnitude as to make any heavy demands upon British or American sources of production.¹ The needs of Europe would, obviously, be altogether larger and more complex. From the winter of 1942-43 onwards work on civilian relief planning for Europe had been undertaken by an Inter-Allied Committee on Post-War Requirements, aided by a network of Advisory Committees, in conjunction with the Relief Department of the Board of Trade and other departments of the British Government. This was to result, in June 1943, in the production of a Minimum Imports Programme for the needs of most of the European Allies for the first six months after liberation.

Meanwhile, in June 1942, as the War Office came to realize the complexity of the responsibility which it had assumed for military government, it set up an inter-departmental committee to ensure co-ordination of the work of the many departments affected. This was

¹ Rennell of Rodd, *British Military Administration in Africa 1941-47*, H.M.S.O., 1948, Ch. XVI.

known as the Administration of Territories (Europe), or AT(E), Committee. Besides War Office members it included representatives of the Foreign Office, of the Board of Trade, of various inter-Allied relief organizations, and of American organizations. It dealt both with general plans for military government and with planning for the provision of civilian relief. By March 1943 its work in the latter respect had so increased that a Shipping and Supply Sub-Committee was set up to relieve the parent committee. The sub-committee was to be concerned primarily with the shipping and supply problems of the period of military government, but was also to be allowed to bring under review plans for later periods, and to ensure co-ordination of these with military plans. Its members included representatives of the Ministries of Production, Supply, Food, and War Transport, and of the Relief Department of the Board of Trade.

In August 1943 the War Cabinet, feeling the need for closer co-ordination of planning for military government, set up a ministerial committee to advise on armistice terms and the military administration of occupied enemy territories and their ultimate hand-over to territorial governments. In November 1943 another ministerial committee was set up to advise concerning supplies to and from 'liberated and conquered areas'. At the same time two official committees were set up, to work under the two ministerial committees. These official committees to some extent superseded the AT(E) Committee and its Shipping and Supply Sub-Committee.

The preparation of detailed estimates of civilian relief requirements for Europe was undertaken by working parties of experts under the chairmanship of Sir Hubert Young, organised by the relief department of the Foreign Office. They dealt each with their own particular categories of supplies, and worked in close touch with the AT(E) Committee and the Shipping and Supply Sub-Committee.

Meanwhile combined Anglo-American machinery had been established in America—the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS), the Combined Civil Affairs Committee (CCAC) with its Supply Sub-Committee, and the system of Combined Boards for the allocation of Allied resources in raw materials, shipping, production, and food. In the course of 1943 it became clear that estimates for civilian relief would have to be placed before the relevant Combined Boards. In respect of the military period this would be done by the CCAC, in respect of later periods by the organization created to give effect to the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agreement (UNRRA). UNRRA and CCAC had already begun work to this end. The estimates of the Young Working Parties (YWP) for Europe were already nearing completion and it was decided in London not to start afresh through UNRRA and CCAC channels but to use the almost completed estimates as the basis for Anglo-American discussions which it was

hoped would result in the submission of provisional estimates to the Combined Boards in shorter time than it would take to complete fresh estimates by UNRRA and CCAC. The first YWP proposals for Europe began to reach the Combined Boards, on this provisional basis, in October 1943.

In November 1943 the Cabinet had approved continuance of the method of co-ordinating relief estimates by working parties, and it was decided to apply the method in the preparation of a survey of requirements for the Far East.

* * *

A new working party for the Far East, again under the chairmanship of Sir Hubert Young, began at once and completed its estimates in May 1944. They covered a period of two years, divided into four six-monthly periods, for Burma, Malaya, British Borneo, and Hong Kong, and dealt with eight categories of supplies; food, agricultural supplies, medical supplies, soap, clothing and footwear, communal requirements, individual household requirements, and newsprint. Many important categories which had been studied for Europe were not touched upon by this working party. These included public utilities, transportation requirements, telecommunications, broadcasting transmitters and receiving sets, solid and liquid fuel, contractors' plant, containers and packing materials, repair of industry and houses, and maintenance of industry. Nor were raw materials considered. The field of these omissions was covered by a second working party, under the chairmanship of Mr. W. B. Brett, which began about the middle of 1944. *Ad hoc* arrangements were made to prepare estimates not dealt with by either of these two major enquiries.

The Young Working Party estimates were prepared with regard to alternative assumptions; the one, that damage would be confined to what might be called normal operational damage; the other, that maximum damage would be done both in the course of operations and by the enemy before abandoning the territory occupied. They also took account of the fact that in each year there would be a period of greater need and a period of lesser need according to the time that had elapsed since the bringing in of the last harvest. The general basis of the estimates was that in the first six months only so much of relief requirements should be imported as would prevent disease and unrest, but that in the three subsequent six-monthly periods a standard should be aimed at, sufficient to restore the normal activity of the community and to enable it to take its part in producing for civilian relief and the war effort. A few points follow concerning the several categories of supplies.

Food estimates aimed at providing 1700 calories per head of population, on the assumption that, after making allowance for the different

climatic conditions, this was equivalent to the 2000 calories planned for Europe. Provision was made for supplements for moderate and heavy work as this became necessary and for special classes such as mothers, children and hospital patients.

The estimates for agricultural supplies were planned to ensure fullest possible development so as to reduce the need for imports of food and if possible to create an exportable surplus.

In preparing the medical supply estimates account was taken both of the general level of pre-war medical development and of the depletion of stocks expected, territory by territory.

The soap estimates were planned very nearly to restore pre-war standards of consumption, except that Hong Kong, with a comparatively high pre-war consumption, would have to be content with proportionately less.

Clothing and footwear estimates were related to basic minimum wardrobes for the proportion of the population expected to be destitute. For Burma it was assumed that this proportion would be 100%, in the other territories, 80%. As far as possible imports were to be in the form of piece goods that could be made up after importation.

Communal requirements were supplies needed to provide services for feeding and sheltering homeless persons and were estimated in the light of conditions expected in the several territories. Dispersal centres were to be provided for temporary cases, permanent camps for persons requiring longer care.

Individual household requirements covered the bare essentials for cooking and eating, sleeping, lighting and heating, personal and toilet needs, smoking, stationery, and miscellaneous household needs, to the extent that these were expected to be wanting.

Newsprint was to be provided on a scale that would permit, possibly, of an increase on pre-war circulation, as it was felt to be of prime importance to counter the effects of Japanese propaganda.

The estimates were compiled mainly on information furnished by the Government of Burma, and by the Colonial Office, the latter aided by the planners for military governments in Malaya, Borneo and Hong Kong. These planners had in fact already done a good deal of work in this connection, but on a basis somewhat different from that now required by the working party. The planners for military administration in Burma, out of touch with the London machinery in this connection, aware also that the Government of Burma was furnishing information, made no direct contribution to the preparation of these estimates.

It had next to be decided where responsibility should lie for procurement of the supplies covered by these estimates. It was not possible to make any forecast of the probable duration of the various military administrations—this might vary greatly in the different territories.

It was common ground, however, that a hand-over to civil government should be made as soon as the military authorities considered this compatible with the needs of their operations. For planning purposes, therefore, an assumption was made that military responsibility would last for no more than six months. The YWP estimates, which covered a period of two years, had already been prepared on the basis of four six-monthly periods and it was an easy matter to make the military authorities responsible for procurement of supplies for the first of these periods only, leaving the civil authorities responsible for the remaining three periods. This division of responsibility had the further advantage that it gave the civil authorities time to build up their organization for handling the goods that would in due course be made available to them: the military authorities already had their machinery for procuring and handling supplies.

* * *

There was much yet to be done, however, before the estimates of the working parties could result in the movement of goods towards the countries requiring them. They had first to be scrutinized by a 'vetting group' of the official committee on supplies to and from liberated and conquered areas. To the extent that the War Office sought to apply at this stage the 'disease and unrest' standard to the estimates for the first six months, there would appear to have been a danger of duplication of work since the expert working parties had based their estimates for this period precisely on this standard. The War Office insisted however that it must be allowed scrutiny at this stage since it would have to obtain general financial approval to the estimates and must remain ultimately responsible for handling the goods covered by them.

The Burma Office and the Colonial Office examined the estimates for the remaining three six-months periods. At the same time they had to decide whether they should add to their eighteen-months share such items of the first six-months estimates as the War Office was unable to accept. The most important action taken at this stage, however, was that the War Office undertook 'preliminary procurement', so warning the production authorities of the nature and scale of the demands that they would in due course be called upon to meet.

Simultaneously the estimates for Burma and Malaya were sent to SEAC for examination from the operational aspect, particularly with regard to their demands upon shipping space in the theatre.

The estimates, as modified in the course of this double scrutiny, in London and Kandy, were then laid before the Shipping and Supply Sub-Committee of the AT(E) Committee, for consideration in the light of production that might be expected to become available and with reference to wider shipping commitments. It should be noted that, at

this stage, it was decided to proceed on the second of the alternative assumptions on which the estimates had been prepared, namely, that maximum damage had been caused. It was also decided, in October 1944, that provision should be made for the season of 'greater need'.

It had been expected that the estimates for the military period would be presented to the Combined Boards through the CCAC, in accordance with the procedure adopted for the European estimates, but when it was ruled, after some hesitation, that procurement in SEAC was a British, not a 'Combined' responsibility, it was also decided that the estimates should be laid before the Combined Boards without going before the CCAC. The estimates for the post-military periods, however, were laid before the Combined Boards after UNRRA had been informed of them and been given the opportunity to co-ordinate them with requirements for other areas. On receipt of the estimates, the Combined Boards allocated production, confirming or modifying preliminary procurement arrangements already made. In the case of SEAC, allocation was made, whenever possible, upon the resources of the Eastern Group Supply Council, which mostly lay in India.

There were at last definite allocations against which formal demands could be laid.

* * *

Preparation of these demands, together with the necessary detailed specifications, had now to be undertaken by the planners for Burma and Malaya, and in both cases this meant that much of the work already done had to be discarded or revised and that much new ground had also to be broken since, for example, the YWP estimates for Burma included many items outside the range to which the Burma Supply Council had confined itself. When SEAC operational planning was sufficiently advanced, instalments of these demands, appropriate to the operations contemplated, were placed on GHQ (India), the administrative base of SEAC, in the same manner as other military demands. Whenever possible they were then allocated to be met from Indian production. Such as could not be accepted by India were passed back to the War Office for allocation against British resources or for further transmission to America.

In the cases of Borneo and Hong Kong the preparation and placing of formal demands presented greater difficulties, since these countries lay in the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA), an American theatre of operations, and there was doubt regarding responsibility and procedure for obtaining such supplies. In the course of 1944, however, it was agreed that while the British would be responsible for procurement of Civil Affairs supplies in SEAC, in SWPA this responsibility would lie

upon the Americans. Consequently no action was taken on the British side to procure supplies for Hong Kong and Borneo, although work continued through the year on Young and Brett Working Party estimates, culminating in December 1944, in the approval of a programme for these territories. But in November 1944 the Americans had disclaimed any responsibility for relief or other civil affairs supplies for these territories, if their re-occupation were to be effected without operations, or as the result of fighting elsewhere. As no information was available in the United Kingdom regarding the operations contemplated in SWPA it was quite uncertain whether procurement for these territories would be an American or a British responsibility. And even if the course of operations were to place responsibility on the Americans, uncertainty was by no means removed since it was not known how they would discharge their responsibility—clearly they might, with much justification, throw back the actual procurement of supplies onto the British. Further uncertainty was introduced when it appeared that any operations taking place in Borneo might be conducted by Australian forces. It was to clear some of these doubts, especially in regard to procurement of supplies, that a Civil Affairs liaison mission was sent from England to Australia and then to GHQ South-West Pacific Area.¹

There had been no clarification, however, before events, early in 1945, showed that operations in Borneo were imminent. On his own initiative the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, who realised that unless immediate action were taken there would be no relief supplies at all for the re-occupation, suggested an arrangement under which he, on behalf of the War Office, and without prejudice to the ultimate division of responsibility between British and Americans, would obtain from the Australian supply organization, for the earlier stages of operations, at least the major items of such relief supplies in the approved YWP programme as were procurable in Australia. Items unprocurable in this manner could be demanded later from either American or British sources.

Only when the War Office accepted General Blamey's offer was the suggested arrangement referred to the Australian Cabinet together with proposals regarding ultimate financial responsibility. This clearly lay upon the U.K. but there was some reluctance further to increase Australian sterling balances and as the Advanced Party of BBKAU was preparing to leave Australia for Borneo no decision had yet been taken that the Australian supply machinery would be available for Borneo civil supply requirements. Time was slipping away, and General Blamey could no longer postpone action. Arrangements were improvised on his own authority. Fifty tons of relief supplies were provided to arrive with the assault force—thirty five tons of rice, seven

¹ Cf. pp. 147-148.

tons of meat, seven tons of vegetables, and one ton of soap. The Australian Red Cross organization promised 100 packs of male and female clothing for released European internees. Arrangements were also made for a further 250 tons of food stuffs, obtained from American stocks, to be sent from Morotai to arrive in Borneo eleven days after the landings. These were of American type. Ten days later it was planned to land relief supplies from Australian stocks available in the Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane areas, which should provide for 50,000 persons for two months. These supplies were of Australian Army pattern and many items were scarce. Owing to expansion of the area occupied General Blamey then decided that he must again make emergency provision on operational grounds for 150,000 persons for the next two months. This course of action was approved by the Australian War Cabinet, which also agreed to meet any demands from the Commander-in-Chief for a further period of three months, provided this was on a basis of repayment by the United Kingdom. Such a demand was in fact placed upon Australian Land Headquarters for supplies for 850,000 persons for one month when the Japanese surrendered and the whole of British Borneo came under administration. The arrival of these supplies as shipping became available, the requisitioning of rice in Sarawak, and the hand-over of military stores by the Australian forces before they withdrew from Borneo, tided the Administration over until stocks began to flow in through SEAC channels.

Meanwhile, in the course of further discussions with the Americans in Washington it had become clear, at about the time when operations were actually taking place in Borneo, that they were unwilling to accept responsibility for civilian supplies for the whole six-months military period; if they assumed temporary responsibility for 90 or 120 days this should give the British time to get supplies to the area of operations. It also appeared that they would count as a part of their contribution, whatever General Blamey might be able to raise in Australia. Clearly the American contribution was likely to be infinitesimal. The War Office decided, therefore, early in August, to begin procurement itself of relief and technical supplies for Borneo, without waiting for exact information regarding the Australian and the American contributions. Procurement of the whole of the technical supplies, and of two thirds of the relief supplies, for the whole of the first six-months period was set in train. For subsequent periods the Colonial Office would have to provide. Few if any, of the technical supplies arrived within the period of military administration but substantial quantities of relief supplies reached Borneo after its transfer to SEAC and before the assumption of responsibility by the civil governments. Even as this decision was being taken it was learnt that the Americans were after all unwilling to bind themselves to provide

supplies for any specific period at all to cover the lag in the arrival of British-procured supplies. They were ready, however, to accept responsibility for an unspecified period until British supplies could reach Borneo. Theoretically the gap was covered; in practice little or nothing was received from American sources at all. As an improvisation the measures devised in Australia and in Borneo were admirable and far better than might have been hoped. But the problem of procuring civil supplies for this area had not really been faced at all and the situation was saved barely by this improvisation. Saved it was, however, by Australian efforts, until Borneo was transferred to South-East Asia Command.

In the case of Hong Kong there was even less warning that re-occupation was imminent. However, in August 1945 the War Office had put in train procurement of two months relief and technical supplies. (It is of interest, perhaps, that even at this date, these supplies were not required to be ready *in the country of origin* until 1st April 1946. By that time the military administration was more than six months old and had, in the event, only one more month to run). Although Hong Kong was never brought within SEAC, the forces of occupation, other than the Royal Navy, were to be supplied by that command. Civil Affairs supplies were accordingly intended to flow down SEAC channels. It was some time, however, before these channels reached Hong Kong and, when they did, there was little to put into them for the Administration. The colony had largely to fend for itself, making use of abandoned Japanese stocks, or of supplies imported from the mainland of China by every sort of contrivance and improvisation. Missions in search of supplies were sent to Borneo (firewood), Shanghai and Hongay (coal), Kwang Chow Wan (peanut oil), Australia (building materials), India (cotton yarn), and to Okinawa and New Guinea (surplus war equipment). At no time during the first three months was there more than a ten days reserve of rice. By 25th October 6,000 tons of rice had been imported from SEAC territories, against estimated minimum requirements of 21,000 tons. By the end of November 17,000 tons had been imported against 36,000 tons required. In the New Year, however, matters began to improve.

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The case of the Dutch territories in Indonesia was different. Although Sumatra fell, from the beginning, within SEAC, it did not come within the scope of the Young and Brett Working Parties. The Dutch planners worked separately but kept in touch with the British working parties with the result that their estimates showed no great discrepancy. They covered a period of six months only, the Dutch being confident that they could rely upon indigenous production after

that. The estimates were screened by SEAC, and in London and Washington, after which procurement was undertaken by the Dutch through the agency of the Dutch Purchasing Commission. Shipment was to be the responsibility of the British, and handling and distribution in the theatre of operations was to be under the control of the British commander in agreement with Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs (N.I.C.A.) authorities. As it was clear that supplies procured by the Dutch could not arrive in time, arrangements were made for Sumatra to receive an equitable share of rice, medical supplies, and food and clothing of European type, from resources under the control of SEAC and GHQ (India).

Until the revision of the boundary between SEAC and SWPA at the time of the surrender of Japan, the rest of Indonesia did not fall within a British theatre of operations. On revision, the area was handed over, partly to British, and partly to Australian, command. SEAC missions were dispatched at once to GHQ SWPA, to the Australian military authorities in Australia, and to the Netherlands Indies government also in Australia. It was ascertained that SWPA had initiated procurement from American sources for Celebes and six territories to the east. An assurance was sought by Australian Land Head Quarters that these supplies would continue to be made available to the Australian Command and to SEAC, in proportion to the areas being taken over by them. Besides this, SWPA had prepared a 300,000 ton programme for civil supplies for Indonesia, excluding Sumatra. Only half of this programme had been approved by the War Department in America, and in practice the Dutch had experienced great difficulty and little success in effecting any procurement against even the reduced programme. Admiral Mountbatten immediately declared the whole programme necessary to the discharge of his responsibilities and urged the War Office to inform all concerned of the fact and to press for speeding up of procurement in all quarters.

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This is possibly the most convenient place to notice the effect upon relief and other Civil Affairs supplies of the American Lend – Lease Act, passed in March 1941. Under this, munitions of war and any commodity or article required for defence, together with materials and services for the production or operation of these, might be transferred by the United States to any other country whose defence was deemed vital to the defence of the United States. In the words of the Act, ‘the terms and conditions upon which any such foreign government receives any aid authorised . . . shall be those which the President deems satisfactory, and the benefit to the United States may be payment or repayment in kind or property, or any other direct or indirect benefit which the President deems satisfactory’.

In Africa and Europe the military forces of the territories liberated were early declared eligible for the receipt of stores under the provisions of this Act. Stores required for the civilian populations of liberated territories were held not to qualify generally for Lend – Lease terms. These were required to be paid for ultimately by the country which enjoyed them.

This distinction worked satisfactorily enough in Africa and Europe. In south-east Asia, where the territories to be re-occupied were mostly British dependencies, it was found necessary to make modifications. In these territories Civil Affairs military staff actually working with military formations were accepted as being, what in fact they were, a part of the military forces; and stores required for them were held to come under the scope of the Act. It was at first held that stores required for such staff working away from military formations, and also stores required for civilian staff, and the civil population generally, did not come within the scope of the Act, and would require to be paid for by the country benefitting from them. Later, as it was realized both that the effort involved in the provision of such stores for British dependencies could not be distinguished from the general British war effort, and that it was intended to restrict the provision of them to the scale necessary for the promotion of that effort, it was conceded by the United States Government that all such supplies for the military administrations in British colonial territories in the Far East should be eligible for Lend – Lease terms. It was stipulated that the quantities to be issued should be kept as low as possible, and the right was reserved to demand payment later, particularly in the case of capital goods. A record was therefore to be maintained of all Lend – Lease goods issued for Civil Affairs purposes.

Lend – Lease ceased to operate in the Far East on 2nd September 1945. Shortly after this the military administrations began to hand over to the civil governments. The question then arose, how the transfer of stores received under Lend – Lease terms should be treated, for such transfer must clearly constitute diversion from the purposes for which they had originally been issued. In December 1945 a general understanding was reached between the British and the American Governments for the striking of a balance in regard to Lend – Lease and Reciprocal Aid and other claims arising out of the war, and in March 1946 a series of agreements was signed to give effect to this understanding. Under these the British Government acquired full rights in respect of all Lend – Lease articles in the possession of its armed forces, including the right to dispose of them for civilian use within the United Kingdom and in the British colonial dependencies if desired. This was subject, in the case of any particular article, to the provision that the United States Government had not previously announced the intention to exercise its right to demand return, a right which, in fact, was

rarely invoked. The War Office was then able to issue instructions that the transfer of Lend – Lease stores to civil governments should be treated in all respects like the transfer of British stores; that is, that no immediate cash adjustment would be required but that the British Government reserved the right to claim some payment from the governments concerned as a part of any contribution to be made by them to the net cost of military administration.

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We are not concerned in this volume with the further details of procurement action until the time when civil supplies began flowing towards the territories for which they were destined.

It was decided from a very early stage, in the case of Burma, that these supplies must flow down normal military channels to convenient terminal points on the military lines of communication, and be handled in the course of this movement by the appropriate army services. The desirability was not at first realized, but soon made itself felt, of attaching representatives of the Administration to these services and to the military headquarters and depots concerned, to aid in identifying, calling forward, and moving these supplies, which came mostly from India. In the case of Malaya, Major-General Hone, warned by experience in Africa, pressed for a different procedure. Not until January 1945, however, was a compromise approved by the War Office under which supplies of kinds that were normal army requirements would be handled as in Burma while supplies of other kinds would be drawn in bulk by the Administration from base depots at the ports or ports i.e. somewhat farther back along the channel. Beyond these points, however, handling and distribution were to remain the responsibility of the Administration, which had to evolve the organization necessary for the purpose. This was not the same in all territories.

In Burma, supply officers of the Administration were able to handle without difficulty the small flow of supplies for the frontier fringe. A more elaborate organization would become necessary for distribution of the flow resulting from the Young Working Party estimates. It was agreed, towards the end of 1943, that planning for this distribution should be undertaken by the Government of Burma, and that the organization should take the form of a 'consortium' of civilian firms, to be selected on the advice of the Burma Chamber of Commerce. When, more than a year later, the re-occupation of Burma began, this distributing organization was not ready. The Administration had urgently to expand its Supply and Industry Department and to improvise arrangements for retailing the supplies coming forward. The expanded department was organized in three main 'wings'. The Provision Wing controlled the movement of supplies from terminal points

on the army channels of supply to District Supply Depots. The Distribution Wing assumed responsibility for staffing and controlling these depots, of which ultimately there were sixty. The Distribution Points, which were fed from these depots, and from which distribution to retailers, or to village headmen, was made, had to be staffed by the Relief and Labour Department until October 1945 when the Distribution Wing took over responsibility for these, at the same time absorbing most of the Relief and Labour Staff involved. There were ultimately 401 of these Distribution Points. The Motor Transport Wing was responsible for the physical movement of supplies from army line of communication terminals to District Supply Depots and Distribution Points. Even when the main hand-over to the civil government took place, in October 1945, the organization evolved by the Government of Burma was so unrelated to the difficulties of the time, and to the arrangements of the Military Administration, that it was several months before a transfer could be made of the machinery for the distribution of supplies.

In Malaya, the Supply Department of the Administration was required both to move supplies from terminal points on the army channels to up-country sub-depots, and to staff and control these sub-depots. Distribution from sub-depots to retailers and principal wholesalers was to be effected by a Supplies Distributing Unit of civilian merchants—the 'consortium' which the Government was to have provided for the Administration in Burma, but operating one step lower down in the organization. At the last moment the Administration in Malaya was informed that the other military services would be unable to staff and control the Base Depots and that it must itself assume responsibility for doing so. The placing of this unexpected commitment on the Supply Department, which had not been designed for the task, contributed to the financial losses incurred by the Administration. It might have been even more disastrous if there had in fact, during the first months of re-occupation, been more than a dribble of relief supplies arriving.

In Burma, although responsibility for the Base Depots was not intended to be placed on the Administration, this nevertheless found itself forced, after a time, to establish its own Base Depots in Rangoon, on account of the inability of army depots to make available the space required.

In Borneo, relief supplies were moved into the country from Australia, through normal military channels, and were handled in the process by the Australian army services. Thereafter it was intended that the Administration should take over responsibility for unloading and distribution to wholesalers or retailers. But throughout the early stages supplies on Labuan were in fact handled almost exclusively by the Australian Military Forces, and supplies on the mainland were

handled by them until they were placed in B.B.C.A.U. depots. Sale to the public was through normal commercial channels where these were considered satisfactory. Elsewhere it was entrusted to official distribution depots. When Sarawak was handed over to civil government, in advance of the rest of British Borneo, there was a period during which the Administration continued to handle the movement of supplies into Sarawak, although internal distribution had become the responsibility of the civil government. During the military period negotiations were opened with merchant firms concerned before the war with wholesale distribution throughout British Borneo, and at the time of hand-over to the civil government arrangements had almost been reached under which these firms would undertake sale to retailers at agreed prices.

In Hong Kong, from a very early date, distribution of all but a few reserved commodities, was made through normal retail agencies.

The relief supplies, imported to British territories in the manner described above, were sold to wholesalers, to retailers, or to the public at prices which were calculated on the basis of cost price, with an addition to cover freight, insurance, customs duty, port and handling charges, profits of retailers and other charges normally incurred, the aim being, not only to reimburse the British Government, but to avoid any sudden rise of prices when supplies could once again be retailed through private trade channels. Provision was made for sale at concession rates, and for free distribution, to the old and infirm or to the able-bodied who could not obtain work;¹ but most of the supplies imported were sold at full rates. There was, however, a very big proportion of loss by looting, pilfering, or misappropriation. In Burma, issues worth a little over £1,000,000 were unaccounted for, out of a total of about £10,000,000 worth of relief supplies imported to that country.

The problem arose at the time of hand-over to civil governments of ensuring that the change should cause no delay or break in the flow of relief supplies, often very small yet. It was eventually agreed that, even after the date of new procurement by the incoming civil government, the War Office would continue to provide and ship all relief supplies which had been approved for procurement during the military period, regardless of the actual date of hand-over.

* * *

What did all this preparation and effort achieve in the actual provision of supplies to the people who needed them?

In Burma, relief supplies provided through military agency were worth £10,769,609, but the supplies actually put into the country before the conclusion of military administration amounted only to

¹ Cf. Chapter XV.

£6,616,270. The rest arrived after the civil government had resumed responsibility. The supplies covered by the second of these figures represented 47% of the medical supplies, 28% of the veterinary supplies, and 27% of the general mass of relief supplies, which it had been planned to provide during the six months of military responsibility on the basis of the YWP estimates.

In Malaya, supplies provided through military agency were worth £11,921,623. It is not clear what proportion of these arrived during the period of military administration but it must have been considerably higher than in the case of Burma for it appears that some 75% of the food to be provided actually arrived before hand-over. The proportion for other relief supplies was certainly not so high as this.

In Borneo, the value of relief supplies provided through military agency was £2,368,863, in Hong Kong £4,175,251. Perhaps a half of these quantities arrived before the hand-over to civil authority. Nor is it clear what proportion such arrivals bore to the YWP estimates, but they probably represented better results than in Burma. The remainder of the supplies procured on the basis of the YWP estimates, to the extent that they were not diverted to meet other urgent needs, were imported later under arrangements made by the respective civil governments.

The value, per head of population, of relief supplies provided in Malaya, Borneo, and Hong Kong was roughly three times that of the supplies for Burma. This, and the higher proportion of planned supplies actually delivered in these three countries, is largely explicable by the fact that these countries all needed to import food, whereas Burma was largely self-supporting in this respect and was even able to export small quantities of rice to the deficit countries. Furthermore, much of the administration of Burma was undertaken while war was still being waged; the other territories were not re-occupied until after the Japanese had surrendered. This, however, would not appear to be the whole of the explanation, for medical supplies, individual household goods, newsprint, and packing materials were imported to Malaya in quantities slightly greater than for Burma, although the population of Malaya was only one third that of Burma. There is no clear reason for this discrepancy, although the higher ratio of medical supplies is probably ascribable to the existence in Malaya of a large immigrant population working on estates, which was more ready to use hospital facilities than the Burmese labourer or cultivator, who was more likely, in sickness, to return to his village and seek indigenous medical treatment. Most probably it was one aspect of the advantage enjoyed by the Malayan Planning Unit over the Burma planners through working in London in close contact with the War Office and the Ministry of Supply. Most other relief supplies were provided to Burma and Malaya in the three to one proportion of the populations of the two countries.

A condensed and rationalized account, such as that in this and the preceding sections, inevitably creates an impression of orderliness that was unfortunately often lacking in the actual provision and distribution of relief supplies. There were serious difficulties to be overcome in addition to those normally encountered in all preparation for military operations. Most of the Civil Affairs planners were totally inexperienced in the working of the military supply organisation. The military staffs found themselves called upon to handle a startling variety of commodities of which they, in their turn, had no experience. Over all hung the inevitably low priority accordable to civil shortages in competition with operational demands. Shipments were diverted without warning. Shipping documents were often lacking. There was at times the utmost confusion on delivery. But a good deal was achieved and it is improbable that any really pressing civilian needs went altogether unrelieved.

CHAPTER XIV

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

THE GENERAL restoration of the trade and industry of re-occupied territories clearly fell outside the scope of the military administrations but it was early realised that they could not entirely escape responsibility in this respect. The revival of certain industries might become necessary even for the bare prevention of disease and unrest, for providing employment or meeting immediate requirements of the military forces, for saving shipping on imports, for creating exportable surpluses of relief supplies, or, lastly, for aiding the general war effort on broader lines through the production of essential commodities not otherwise obtainable, or to obtain which elsewhere would make unacceptable demands on the limited transport resources available. This was recognized in the earliest instructions from the Commander-in-Chief (India) to the C.C.A.O. for Burma who was made responsible for the 'development of the economic life of re-occupied territories' and more particularly for supplying the 'needs for the rehabilitation of commerce, industry, and export to meet military requirements, internal necessities and the war effort of the Empire.' These responsibilities were to be exercised with due regard to 'the primary aim of facilitating military operations.' Similar responsibilities were laid upon the planners for Malaya, Borneo, and Hong Kong.

Planning for the restoration of trade and industry in Burma, Borneo, and Hong Kong, was all based on the principle that private trade must not be permitted to revive during the military period, so that there should be no undesirable distraction from the main task of defeating the enemy. It would in any case be quite impossible in the early stages to handle imports or exports except by military agencies through military channels. In the case of Burma there were more particular reasons for the adoption of this policy. In the first place, it was especially undesirable in a country where political consciousness and progress along the road to self-government were greater than in the territories under Colonial Office control, that the forces of re-occupation should appear primarily as the agents for the restoration of British business, towards which political circles in Burma entertained feelings of jealousy and resentment. In the second place, before the war much of the trade and industry of Burma had been in the hands of Indian firms or individuals. To exclude the latter from taking part in the rehabilitation of industry if the British firms were allowed to take a part would be invidious or

impracticable. Yet confidence in their discretion was insufficient to permit their admission to the preliminary planning that would be necessary. The only solution was to take the matter right out of the hands of commercial enterprise. In the third place, the British firms which had operated in Burma before the war did not necessarily view the prospect of rehabilitating their undertakings with enthusiasm. With the likelihood of early independence for Burma, their own future looked far from secure. They had received no compensation yet for destroying their plant and stocks in accordance with orders to deny the use of these to Japan. Without compensation many were in no position to start operations again on their own. For Burma had suffered much greater destruction both from such 'denials', and from operations, than her neighbours.

Malayan planning from the earliest stages followed a somewhat different line. It was realised that imports of relief and of technical supplies would require to be handled by the Administration, but the revival of other industries required during the military period was to be effected by appropriate commercial enterprises selected and 'sponsored' by the Administration. Retail distribution of the relief supplies imported by the Administration was also to be entrusted to a Supplies Distributing Unit consisting of civilian merchants previously operating in Malaya.

We may now turn to more detailed consideration of the course of events in the several territories.

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Hong Kong, the last of the administrations to be set up, may be briefly dismissed, since the policy of excluding private trading was early abandoned. If such exclusion had been appropriate to the circumstances of a contested re-occupation of Hong Kong, it soon became clear that it was not appropriate to circumstances as they had in fact developed. American importers pressed to be allowed to send in supplies which they had ready for shipment. Chinese merchants, with credits in the United States and the United Kingdom, pressed to be allowed to use them. The almost complete failure of official imports in the early stages enabled these traders to urge that refusal of their applications would impede the arrival of much needed supplies and so adversely affect the prevention of disease and unrest. It was also felt that delay in re-opening Hong Kong to private trade would endanger the post-war lead which Hong Kong appeared to have gained over other China ports. Clearly there was in the circumstances no good reason for delaying the revival of private trade and on 23rd November the Colony was thrown open to such trading, except for a few commodities. By the middle of December the first commercial ship had

arrived, and numberless small ships and junks were visiting the port. Hong Kong retained its lead and many foreign trading firms transferred their head offices to Hong Kong from other ports, especially from Shanghai, where the International Settlement had been restored to Chinese control.

In the meanwhile direct action by the Administration had been successful in forming a Fishery Co-operative Society, in connection with the advances to the fishing industry which had been made primarily to get Hong Kong currency into circulation. This was followed by the formation of a Vegetable Growers Co-operative Society. Little progress could be made during the period of military administration with rehabilitation of the dock yards and foundries owing to lack of materials. Some help was given to the revival of a number of minor industries by the requisition and distribution of such raw materials as were available in the colony. These industries included soap-making, *rattan*-manufacture,¹ tanneries, flour and rice mills, match factories, paint works, rubber and canvas shoe factories, nail-making, and boat-building.

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In Borneo, operations up to the time of the surrender of the Japanese were planned to occupy only a limited coastal strip. Although this included the main oilfields and much of the area under rubber, an occupation in such limited depth gave little opportunity for the revival of trade or industry, and none for private commercial enterprise. After the Japanese surrender the rest of Borneo was progressively brought under the control of the Administration, the scope of whose functions was also gradually increasing. By September five small saw mills had been brought into operation and it was hoped that three brick kilns would soon be working. By October a Rubber Purchasing Unit had arrived, which was directly responsible to the Ministry of Supply in the United Kingdom. It began a preliminary inspection of rubber estates with a view to encouraging the earliest possible resumption of tapping and export of rubber. Its exclusion from the C.C.A.O.'s control contributed to a lack of co-ordination that handicapped the work of the unit. In the following month representatives of the large planters were allowed to visit Borneo to inspect estates and the Administration undertook to look after these on a care and maintenance basis on behalf of the owners. By January the purchasing unit was receiving rubber but was unable to arrange shipments out of the country. The large planters, having formed the Borneo Rubber Estates Owners' Company, sent representatives who began to open up plantations. In the following months steady progress was made with rehabilitation although shortages of all commodities made this a slow task.

¹ *Rattan* = climbing palm, cane.

Planning for the rehabilitation of the oilfields had been undertaken in London by the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, the Borneo Planning Unit not being directly involved. A few of the staff of the Company who were in Australia on military service, were transferred to the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit to enable them to enter Borneo at the earliest date to begin work on the fields. Soon after, civilian staff of the Company also arrived. The Administration provided rations for the Company's staff and employees and facilitated the operations of the Company to the extent that this could be done by the re-establishment of government generally. All but twelve of the wells set on fire by the Japanese were extinguished by Australian engineers working under the guidance of the Company's staff. To deal with the twelve worst fires it was found necessary to bring in an American expert. All fires were out by the end of September in which month also reconstruction of the refinery at Lutong was begun, and the pipe lines from Kuala Belait to Lutong were repaired. By November 2,000 gallons of motor spirit were being produced monthly at Miri. Sale to civilians began at fifty cents a gallon. By February substantial progress had been made in the revival of the industry, 1,560 Asians being employed.

In September enquiries had been received from the administration in Hong Kong regarding the possibility of obtaining firewood to meet the acute shortage referred to in an earlier chapter.¹ In October a representative arrived from Hong Kong and made arrangements under which the Borneo Administration would accept responsibility for placing contracts for the cutting of 6,000 tons of firewood during each of the ensuing three months and for the movement of this fuel to Sapu Point on Muara Island. The Hong Kong authorities were to arrange for shipment from this point, and to place further demands for their needs after the first three months. The first ship arrived to load in mid-November. Further shipments were made from time to time but did not keep pace with cutting operations or the original demands, and in March cutting had to be suspended. In April an agent despatched by the Hong Kong Government took over full responsibility for the procurement of fuel. It was then hoped that normal commercial machinery for this supply would soon become available.

After the transfer of Borneo to SEAC and with the return of more settled conditions, the need made itself felt for the revival of private trading. Merchants who had previously operated in Borneo were encouraged to return, and commercial shipping was induced to resume the Borneo coasting trade. The S.S. Darvel made its first call under operation by a merchant company in March 1946. By the time of hand-over to civil government arrangements were almost complete under which a number of small craft operated by the Administration

¹ Cf. Chapter XI.

were intended to be transferred on loan to the Straits Steamship Company to enable the latter to resume the coasting trade from Labuan.¹

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In Malaya the administration depended from the start, for the revival of such industries as were required during the military period, upon selected commercial firms. These were initially:

- The Malayan Collieries.
- The United Engineers.
- The Hume Pipe Company.
- The Singapore Cold Storage Company.
- The Wearne/Borneo Motors.
- Fraser and Neave Breweries.
- The Singapore Traction Company.

Later, sponsorship was extended to the Far Eastern Oxygen Company, when members of this firm became available on release from internment, and also to a group of Bankers and Insurance agents. The assistance given to these firms by the Administration was mainly in procuring release of staff from military employment, and in pressing for priority for their orders for materials. Much good work was done by members of these firms released from internment who deferred their return to England until the operations of the firms had been revived and other members had arrived to ensure continuity of working.

The Administration was not directly concerned with the revival of the rubber and tin mining industries, but was able to give considerable incidental assistance. Inspection committees organised by the industries were given facilities for surveying plantations and mines. Thereafter revival was undertaken by the industries themselves under Colonial Office sponsorship. The Malayan Rubber Estate Owners' Company was formed in London for the rehabilitation of the larger estates. Although it failed to enlist the adherence of local owners and encountered some jealousy from these, the Company nevertheless made an important contribution towards general recovery. Arrangements in Borneo, which have already been mentioned, were modelled on those for the Malayan Company. Purchase of production becoming available in the early stages was made by a Rubber Produce Buying Unit and a Tin Ore Buying Agency, both under the auspices of the Ministry of Supply.

Inspection committees were also constituted for copra estates and oil palm plantations. The Administration itself conducted a survey of rice mills and supported commercial demands for milling requirements. Loans were made to the timber and pineapple-canning industries.

¹ In fact, only one was eventually handed over.

The prosperity of Singapore, as of Hong Kong, depended upon the early revival of its external trade. It was the policy from the start to re-establish its free-port status, and there was no official discouragement of private trade. The physical difficulties to be overcome, however, were great. The first trade to revive was that with the Rhio-Lingga Islands, which brought food and fuel to Singapore in small boats. Next, the trade with Hong Kong and China, in foodstuffs and Chinese manufactured and natural products, shewed signs of life. A trade with Australia grew up at the same time. In all these cases the main difficulty for importers was the lack of return cargoes. Imports from India and Europe were brought in through official channels in connection with estimates prepared by the Young Working Party for relief supplies and the Brett Working Party for technical stores. Exports were almost entirely confined to rubber and tin purchased by the Ministry of Supply buying organisations. Shipping difficulties, the operation of world controls, and the absence of the European merchants, who had handled the bulk of the external trade of Singapore before the war, made any greater revival impossible during the military period.

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The case of Burma requires fuller consideration since here private trade was effectively excluded throughout the military period and the Administration was consequently saddled with responsibility for ensuring that other appropriate agencies were available to revive such trade and industries as military needs required and permitted. When the Administration first assumed this responsibility, early in 1943, the Government of Burma was already planning for the general rehabilitation of the economic life of the country. Clearly there would be overlapping. This unsatisfactory state of affairs was at first accepted, and arrangements were made during the summer months of 1943 for its mitigation by allowing the C.C.A.O. informal access to the Government of Burma planners. No clear division of responsibility was attempted. This arrangement was ended in November 1943 when it was decided by the War Office in consultation with the Burma Office, that the Government of Burma alone should be responsible for all plans for the rehabilitation of industry and that, instead of the military planners duplicating any part of this work, the Administration would simply utilize so much of the plans prepared, and agencies created, by the Government of Burma as was needed for the military period. This decision brought a welcome clarification of responsibility.

It was closely followed by another, taken jointly by the SEAC authorities and the Government of Burma, that all planning by their respective staffs should be fully co-ordinated and that, in fact, the two groups of planners should work together as a single team (a decision

which would have been more fruitful if the two sets of planners had not been physically separated by a distance of 250 miles). The industries in regard to which the Administration would depend upon the civil government, both for planning and for execution, were those concerned with the production of rice, timber, vegetable oils, pulses, cotton, salt, sugar, and hides. The plans for the rehabilitation of these industries were described as 'projects' and involved the creation, for particular industries or groups of industries, of official or semi-official bodies which should operate through the agency of firms formerly engaged in the trade in Burma. It was shortly after this that the decision, referred to in the previous chapter, was taken, that a ninth industry for which the C.C.A.O. would rely upon the Government of Burma planners would be the retail distribution trade.

Although at the time these decisions did much to clarify responsibility for planning they had in the event extremely unfortunate results, for in regard to none of the industries which the Administration wished to rehabilitate a year later, when the re-occupation of Burma began, had any plans or preparations by the Government of Burma reached the stage of approval by the Burma Office and Treasury or taken sufficiently detailed shape to be brought into action. At the last moment therefore the Administration found itself faced with the need to improvise not only, as we have seen, a retail distribution organization, but also schemes for the rehabilitation of the rice and the salt boiling industries, which, but for its reliance upon the civil planners, it might have been working on for the whole of the previous year.

* * *

Of the projects for which the Administration was relying upon the Government of Burma, incomparably the most important was that for the revival of the rice trade.

The group of countries that fell within the limits of South-East Asia Command had been, in the aggregate, large exporters of rice before the war. Nevertheless most of the area did not produce enough rice for its own consumption. Burma, Siam and French Indo-China, had been able not only to supply the rest of the area but to export largely outside it, especially to India. The world food shortage caused by the war made it a matter of the widest possible concern that no time whatever should be lost in reaching and developing the rice supplies of these exporting areas as soon as they were re-occupied. This need was locally heightened by the fact that many of the areas first to be re-occupied were among those normally dependent upon imported rice and must be expected to be in urgent need of supplies.

Hopes were naturally focused upon Burma; besides being the largest exporter of rice in South-East Asia, this was the only British territory

in the area which had exported rice at all, and it was likely to be the first to be re-occupied. Through 1944 the Government of Burma was engaged on the complex task of planning an official or semi-official organization to be built up out of the European commercial interests concerned with the rice trade in Burma before the war. Its proposals could not be sent to London before January 1945. In the following month South-East Asia Command gave its general approval to the proposals so far as they concerned the military period but stipulated that, although the civil government was to be responsible for planning, financing, and setting up the agencies to work within this period, executive control of these must rest with the military authorities. This proposed division of responsibility caused some alarm and delay in London. On 24th April the War Office asked South-East Asia Command whether it could not waive this stipulation and a month later this was agreed to. But by then the re-occupation of Lower Burma was in progress and it was too late for any immediate implementation of the rice project by the civil government.

In March 1945, the Akyab District in Arakan, a considerable rice-exporting area, had been re-occupied. It was estimated that 60,000 tons of paddy¹ were available for export. The monsoon was approaching. The Administration proposed an emergency scheme under which it would repair and operate such mills as could be got working again and would purchase and mill the available paddy. War Office approval was given on three conditions; that it was impossible for anyone but the military authorities to undertake the task; that approval was not to prejudice settlement of the larger question of responsibility for execution of any all-Burma scheme; and that any surplus after meeting the needs of the army and of the civil population in Burma should be turned over to the Ministry of Food for allocation in accordance with Combined Food Board directions from America.

At about the same time, with the re-occupation of most of Burma north of Mandalay, the Military Administration was faced with the need to undertake another emergency scheme for the purchase and distribution of rice, edible oils, and cotton, in order to remedy local surpluses and deficits discovered. Rice was bought in Shwebo and moved to the neighbouring districts of Lower Chindwin, Sagaing, Mandalay, Pakokku and Myingyan, in exchange for cotton, edible oils, and other local produce. The absence of any previous planning for such schemes by the Administration meant that these arrangements had to be improvised in the field at a time when senior officers were being swept forward by the advance and were already fully extended by the many other problems of the re-establishment of administration.

By May, Rangoon and much of the rice plains of Lower Burma had

¹ Unhusked rice.

been re-occupied and recovery of the rest was imminent. A considerable surplus of rice from previous seasons became available for purchase. It was clear by now that no organization could be put into the field by the Government of Burma for the current season. The Administration was therefore called upon to improvise plans for yet another emergency scheme, but a scheme on a much larger scale than the earlier ones. It was to come into operation pending the setting up of the Government of Burma rice project, and was again not to prejudice any arrangements regarding ultimate responsibility for rehabilitation of the industry which might be made by His Majesty's Government, which was still considering the comprehensive plans prepared by the Government of Burma.

The purpose of the scheme improvised by the Administration was twofold. Primarily, it was to purchase all available rice, whether in Arakan or in Lower Burma, so as to meet the needs both of the military forces and of the civil population in deficit areas, and at the same time to make some contribution towards the needs of the outside world—particularly of India and Malaya. Secondly, it was to bring rice mills into operation again by making available machinery, sacks, and other stores, on a repayment-of-cost basis. It was hoped that this would not only increase the quantities of rice becoming available for immediate purchase by the administration, but that it would also restore circulation to the industry generally by milling and bringing into the market the accumulated stocks of paddy from past years which deterred cultivators of rice from expanding, or even maintaining, the area of rice land brought under the plough.

The scheme was handicapped throughout by lack of experienced officers. That it had any at all was due to arrangements under which rice experts required for the civil government project had been drafted into the Civil Affairs service in readiness for employment. There was also delay in provision of sacks and other stores on account of the last minute nature of the scheme. Finally, there was the universal shortage of transport.

The price which the Administration fixed for its purchases of stocks of paddy and rice found on re-occupation was widely criticized, being Rs 120 per 100 baskets of paddy, or a mere twenty per cent above pre-war prices, at a time when the cost of most other commodities in Burma was up by 400 per cent or more, and the price of paddy in neighbouring Bengal was equivalent to Rs 426. There were a number of reasons for fixing this low price. First, the administration was still hoping to establish a general price level about fifty per cent above the pre-war level. If this proved impossible it still hoped to bring prices a long way down towards this level before abandoning its original aim. Then, secondly, the rice it was buying at this early stage was old rice of inferior quality for which it had long appeared that there would be no

market at all; millers were consequently in no way reluctant to sell at the price fixed by the Administration. To have increased the prices offered would have done nothing directly to encourage cultivation; the benefits would have gone to the millers and land-owners, or to the dealers, not to the cultivators. Lastly, as a result of buying this rice cheap the administration was able to sell cheap. This not only reinforced the efforts of the administration to bring down the general level of prices; it also made it possible to economise on dearness allowances to civilian labour since such labour was allowed to buy rice at the cheap rate.

Notwithstanding many handicaps, the Administration had purchased 445,532 tons of rice and 6,403 tons of paddy by the time the scheme closed down. Of these quantities, 94,068 tons of rice were made available to the civil population in deficit areas and 177,000 tons of rice and 5,000 tons of paddy were exported, mostly to India and Malaya. A small part of the balance was required for military needs in Burma. The remainder was handed over to the Government of Burma Agricultural Projects Board on 31st March 1946 when at last it was in a position to take over responsibility.

As an improvised scheme for buying up the paddy and rice available in Burma at the time of re-occupation, which is what it primarily was, the C.A.S. (B) rice scheme was probably more successful than anyone had a right to expect. It was not so successful in attaining its more remote purpose of bringing about an extension in the area under rice cultivation. Rice land in Lower Burma, which had covered 10,000,000 acres in 1941-42, had slumped to 5,600,000 in 1944-45. In 1945-46, the first season after re-occupation it fell still further to 4,874,000 acres. In attempting to increase this area the scheme ran into difficulties that could not be met by the mere provision of plough cattle and agricultural implements, the organizing of a market and the fixing of a price, even if it had been possible to apply these remedies with full effect. In fact they could not be so applied, for the Administration was still fighting to overcome the obstacles in the way of introduction of its scheme and was unable, try as it might, to give any convincing signs, during the critical first weeks when ploughing had to begin, that it really would be able to offer an increased market to the cultivator for his produce. Nor, in view of the complete uncertainty regarding the levels at which prices would ultimately settle down, was it possible for the Administration to offer a specific or minimum price for the next harvest. The best that could be done was to guarantee 'prices which will enable you to buy the goods you need'. The conviction was inevitably somewhat taken out of this promise by the price which the Administration was paying for current stocks. The lack of cattle and of implements would have been a more serious deterrent if other factors had not already combined to reduce the need for these. But even if

markets, prices, and implements had been assured, there were more deep-seated influences at work which it was beyond the power of the Administration to counter before it was too late to sow. The Japanese invasion had completely disrupted the economy of Burma, based on the export of the surplus of rice. The security and ease of communication of the period of British rule had made possible this trade and the remarkable increase in the wealth of the country. In three years of Japanese occupation the country's economy had slipped back to a life of local subsistence and self-sufficiency little removed from that obtaining before the British annexation. The problem on re-occupation was to create again the security and confidence that would enable this economy to be rebuilt. This involved the re-establishment of order in the country and of reasonable security for life and property. It meant also, the re-opening of communications. The provision of currency was necessary, and the re-establishment of that confidence in money which had been destroyed by the Japanese inflation. It required the provision of consumer goods which alone could give any value to the rupees put into the hands of the public. Above all, it involved convincing the people of Burma that the British had come back with the intention, and the ability, to govern the country. These various aspects of the problem facing the Administration are discussed at greater length elsewhere.¹ It is not surprising, however, that in the few weeks left before the planting of the rice crop little more than a start could be made with these forbidding tasks.

* * *

The Administration also improvised a scheme for the purchase and internal re-distribution of salt and for the provision of essential stores for the salt-boiling industry. By the time this scheme was handed over to the Government of Burma Salt Department 1,180 tons of salt had been purchased.

Three Ministry of Supply schemes were operated by the Administration for the purchase of rubber, hides, and tung-oil. The Ministry made available a civilian to take charge of the hides scheme; all other staff was provided by the Administration. Ten and a half tons of tung-oil, 3,447 tons of rubber, and 74,816 hides, were purchased. A Petrol, Oil and Lubricants Group, members of which were made available by the oil companies, which had operated in Burma, but were commissioned into the Civil Affairs Service, operated, partly under the normal military Supplies and Transport organisation, partly under the Administration, for the import and distribution of these commodities.

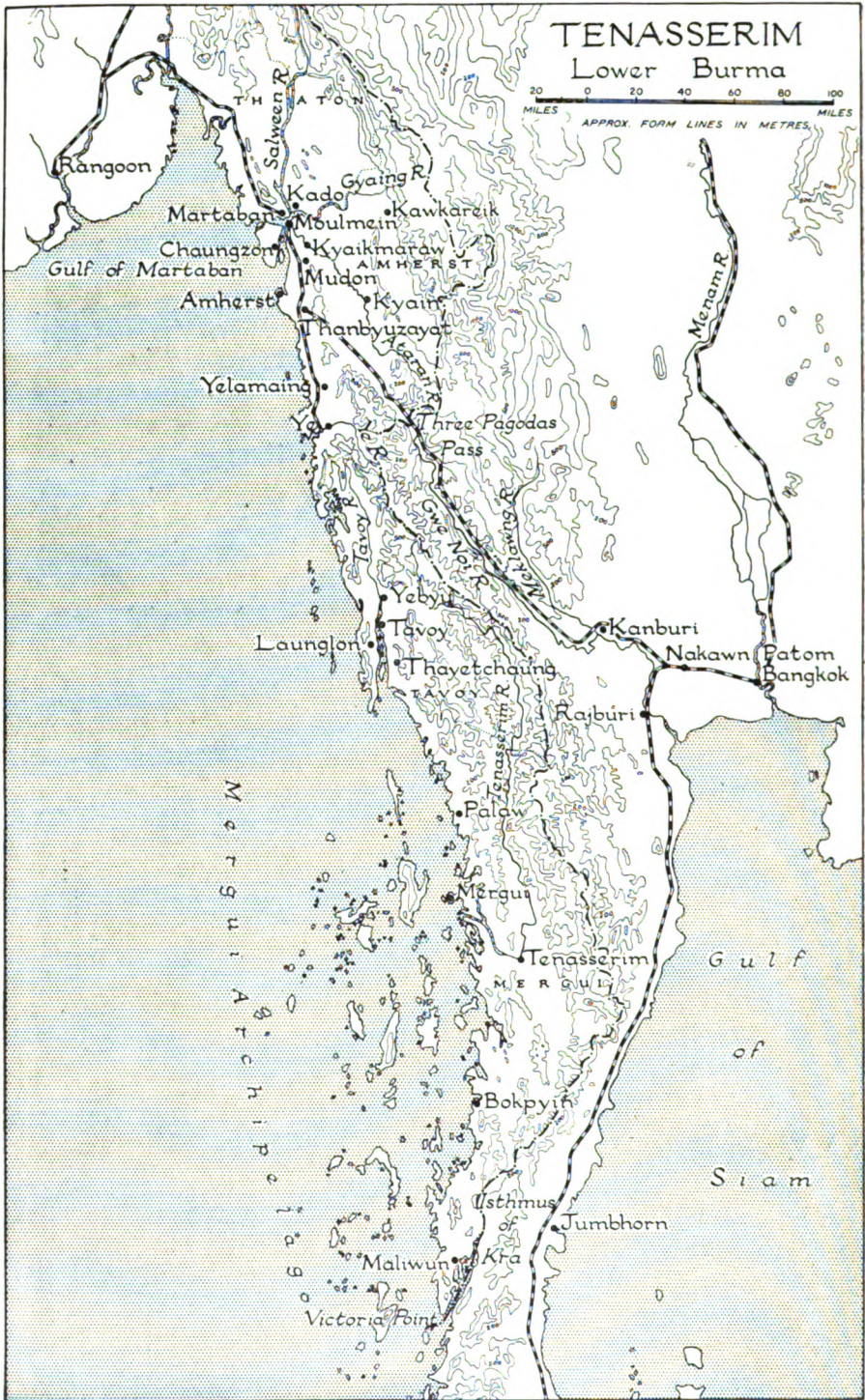
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¹ Security and Communications—Chapters VI and VII. Currency—Chapter XII. Consumer Goods—Chapter XIII. Political intentions—Chapters XVIII and XIX.

Procedure for obtaining the equipment and stores required for the industries to be revived during the military period was not uniform. The estimates prepared by the Brett Working Parties¹ did not cater directly for the needs of individual industries. They were concerned with requirements for the restoration of transport, communications, and other public utility services, and aimed rather at creating the conditions in which industry could reconstruct itself. Stores required for industries whose revival was a pre-requisite to the full operation of the plans for civilian relief, such as the emergency restoration of the milling of rice and the pressing of oil, were included in the estimates of the Young Working Party. No provision was made in these estimates for the more general revival of the industrial side of agriculture. In the case of Burma the civil government was responsible for preparation of the rice project, and undertook compilation of the estimates of stores required. Estimates of the requirements for major industries of importance to the war effort, such as the production of rubber and the mining of tin, were made separately by the Ministry concerned in London. 'Sponsored' industries prepared their own estimates in co-operation with the planning units affected.

Demands for procurement of stores covered by the Young Working Party estimates were prepared and submitted in accordance with the appropriate procedure. Demands for the rest were handled outside the recognised procedure for demands against these estimates, and pressed by the administrations concerned, each on their merits.

¹ Cf. Chapter XIII.



CHAPTER XV

REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

THE EARLIEST military planning for the relief of civilians in south-east Asia was undertaken in May 1943 at the headquarters of the Administration for Burma. Humanitarian considerations apart, the vast and tragic flight of civilians from that country during the campaign of 1941-42, and experience in Europe during 1939 and 1940, had clearly shown the danger and inconvenience that might be caused to military forces by the presence of refugees in battle areas, or along lines of communications. Planning was undertaken by the Relief and Labour Department of the Burma Administration to guard against this danger, and to relieve the destitute. It was based largely on experience gained during the evacuation of 1941-42, and mostly took the form of preparation for the provision of camps.

In addition, however, it was early realised that major factors in any relief operations must be the provision of essential food and other commodities, and the general revival of the economy of Burma. The Supply and Industry Department was already at work on plans for these. It was not yet clear, however, where responsibility would lie for the distribution of goods procured. It might have to be divided between the Relief and Labour Department and the Supply and Industry Department. In fact, during the early period in the frontier fringe, distribution was made, sometimes by the latter, direct to village headmen as the representatives of their villages, sometimes by the former, whether through camp organizations or otherwise. After a month or two of preparation on these lines the Relief and Labour Department was disbanded by G.H.Q. (India) on the ground that need for such planning would not arise for at least another year.

The department had received an unfortunate start in life by being named the 'Welfare Department'. The army already had its Welfare Services which were concerned, not with the relief of distress, but with the provision of such luxuries and amenities as could be permitted in active service conditions. Misconception regarding the scope and functions of the new department were almost inevitable, and there was in consequence a tendency to attach unduly low priority to its needs. Eighteen months later it was to be renamed the Relief and Labour Department and it will so be referred to throughout this book.

Meanwhile, the Malayan Planning Unit in London had begun work on the same problem. In the absence of whole-time relief planners, responsibility was laid upon the medical planning staff. Preparation was made mostly in terms of the utilization of workers to be organized by the British Red Cross Society and the Order of St. John in the United Kingdom, and of the provision of medical assistance for refugees, displaced persons, and civilian casualties. But the background to the problem was fundamentally different for whereas Burma normally exported large quantities of rice and might even be expected on re-occupation to produce most, if not all, of her essential food, Malaya was largely dependent for her stocks of rice upon imported supplies. Local food deficiencies in Burma could probably be met by internal re-distribution. In Malaya imports were essential if the people were not to starve, and planning for these bulked even larger than in the case of Burma.

Behind the planning for particular territories, work was also begun in London, as we have seen,¹ on the more general preparation of estimates and the initiation of procurement with the object of ensuring that the relief supplies for the various territories in the Far East should become available when required. These estimates, prepared by the Young Working Party, were directed mainly to the provision of imports required to meet the general shortages of essential goods in the territories to be re-occupied. But they also made certain provision for those who were unable to pay or to work for these goods. Their needs could in the first place be met by distribution free, or at less than the normal retail prices fixed. If this form of relief proved insufficient, there were two other methods planned. For persons requiring a slightly greater measure of assistance, provision was made in the estimates for the equipment and maintenance of 'dispersal centres' where they could be given temporary accommodation. For those requiring a longer period of assistance provision was made for 'permanent camps'.

It will be remembered that these estimates were drawn up on alternative assumptions, the first, that damage found on re-occupation would be not greatly in excess of that known to have been caused at the time of preparation of the estimates, the other, that maximum damage would have been done deliberately by the enemy, and by both parties in the course of the battles leading to re-occupation. To meet the second of these conditions it was assumed that dispersal centres would be required for 1% of the rural population, for 5% of the population of towns of 100,000 to 500,000, and for 10% of the population of towns of 10,000 to 100,000. It was further assumed that permanent camps would be required for a similar proportion of the population. Only half of the persons to be accommodated in dispersal centres were expected to pass on to permanent camps, but it was

¹ Cf. pp. 243-246.

assumed that a comparable number would enter permanent camps direct, without first passing through dispersal centres. Additional provision was recommended to meet exceptional needs; in the case of Burma, to provide for the return from India of refugees who had fled from Burma in 1941-42; in the case of Singapore, for the size and special conditions of the town; and in the case of Hong Kong, for refugees or other inhabitants returning from the mainland of China. It was assumed that persons would remain in dispersal centres no more than seven days on average, but that in permanent camps half the inhabitants would stay for three months and the other half for six months or more. On these, and certain other, assumptions regarding the maximum numbers that might have to be housed at any one time, the estimates made provision for the establishment of dispersal centres and permanent camps as below:

	<i>Dispersal Centres</i>	<i>Permanent Camps</i>
Burma	143	215
Malaya	72	109
Borneo	8	11
Hong Kong	37	52

To meet the alternative conditions, in which damage would be on the lesser scale, provision could be reduced as below:

	<i>Dispersal Centres</i>	<i>Permanent Camps</i>
Burma	39	59
Malaya	19	29
Borneo	—	—
Hong Kong	17	12

These estimates were drawn up in consultation with the planners for individual territories and indicate the lines along which the latter were making preparation.

Meanwhile planning had been resumed at the headquarters of the Administration for Burma, as the C.C.A.O. foresaw, with justification, that the services of a Relief Department were likely to be required in Arakan during the approaching campaigning season. The original planning for Burma, early in 1943, had involved the setting up of a training school for Relief and Labour staff. The proposal was now revived, but, even when it had been decided to set up the school, there was difficulty in obtaining suitable accommodation. By way of substitute a course of training had to be improvised in camp in Arakan, and it was not until January 1945 that instruction could be given in the country palace which the Nawab of Rampur State had offered as a permanent location for the school.

The relief work of the several Administrations was everywhere to

be re-inforced, in varying degree, by the work of unofficial organizations. The Burma planners were early required to decide what part should be played by these. Persons anxious to assist in relief work in Burma were mostly members of the missionary societies which had worked in the country. Roman Catholic missionaries (generally Italian, French, or Irish, and therefore not at war with the Japanese) had remained at their posts when the Japanese occupied the country. Others had left in the general evacuation of Europeans. These were now competitively anxious to re-enter the country at the earliest possible moment. Although the planners were reluctant to reject any offer of assistance, they were held back by two considerations. In the first place, it was the accepted policy of the British in India and Burma to abstain from interference in the religion of the people. Accordingly the Government of Burma had not greatly encouraged Christian missions. With the advance of Burma towards self-government and the growth of nationalist feeling, the Government had become more than ever careful to give no cause for criticism that it was supporting or favouring these missions. The Military Administration was equally concerned not to mark its assumption of authority by sponsoring the return of the missions—much in the same way as it did not wish to appear to sponsor the return of British commercial interests. In the second place, it was feared that the missionary societies might be more concerned with religion than with relief, and the Administration was doubtful whether it could in these circumstances count upon the loyal and impartial execution of its relief programme. It was decided that no unofficial organisations would be permitted to operate during the military period as such, but that if individual members of organisations wished to volunteer for service in the Relief and Labour Department they would be welcome. There was no lack of volunteers on these terms and much good work was done by them as employees of the Administration. The adoption of this policy meant, however, that the part played by unofficial organizations was less in Burma than in the other territories which did not suffer from similar inhibitions. However, a small Red Cross Unit was in the event attached to the Relief and Labour Department, and some seventeen charitable institutions of all denominations, which were found operating in Burma on re-occupation, were aided by the supply of free basic rations.

Planning for Malaya had from the start accorded a much larger share in relief work to the well-known societies such as the British Red Cross, the St. John's Ambulance war organization, the Friend's Ambulance Unit, and the Salvation Army. The work of these societies was to be co-ordinated so far as possible by the Council of British Societies for Relief Abroad. Much valuable work was in the event done by these organizations, and also by individuals or local societies in Malaya. In Hong Kong these large societies were also active; in

addition the Bishop's Social Welfare Council co-ordinated the work of a number of minor welfare organizations. Within Borneo unofficial organizations played no part, but the Australian Red Cross sent generous aid for released internees.

* * *

Turning to particular cases in which relief was undertaken, it is perhaps well to make clear that it was frequently allied military needs, not the acts of the enemy, that caused the 'displacement' of persons. Villages might require to be moved to make space for the construction of airfields. Whole tracts of country might require to be cleared of inhabitants in order to secure greater freedom of movement for allied forces, or to prevent leakage of information of troop concentrations to the enemy. The first two occasions on which the Relief and Labour Department was called upon to act in Burma on any considerable scale were cases of this kind.

One of these occurred in the early stages of work on the Ledo Road¹ when the American commander required the removal from the construction area of all local inhabitants in order to ensure secrecy. It was one of the earliest tasks of the Civil Affairs officers attached to the Chinese-American forces to evict these persons and to arrange for their accommodation and care in camps until they could be allowed back to their villages. The problem here was small, to be reckoned in hundreds rather than in thousands, and was in fact handled largely by general administrative officers rather than specialist staff of the Relief and Labour Department. But if the problem was small, almost every other sort of difficulty was present.

Meanwhile a proposal was canvassed in Arakan for the clearance of civilians from the area of 'no man's land' immediately to the south of Maungdaw, in order to prevent infiltration of Japanese agents along the estuary of the Naf River under cover of the civilian population. The proposal was dropped in October 1943, only to be revived in a hurry in January 1944, very shortly after the C.C.A.O. had resumed work on planning for relief, so giving rise to the second occasion on which the Relief and Labour Department was called upon to act. In a matter of three or four days the local officers of the Administration completed the evacuation of some 30,000 civilians out of the area between Maungdaw and Lambaguna. Some 17,000 of these were housed in camps built by themselves under the direction of officers of the Administration near Baluhkali, also known as Kappagaung, a little north of Maungdaw. The rest dispersed into neighbouring villages or crossed the border into India.

At about the same time a similar evacuation was made at the

¹ Cf. p. 78.

request of the military authorities from the neighbourhood of Bawli Bazaar. Perhaps as many as 3,000 civilians were moved out of this area into a camp near Mromigyaung which had been previously built to meet any sudden refugee problem.

No compensation was paid to these 33,000 persons ordered out of their homes. In contrast, later in the year, when an area had to be cleared on the Indian side of the border, merely for the training of commandos, full compensation was paid to those evicted. Yet these mass movements in Arakan were loyally accepted without serious complaint. Later, when these displaced persons were able to return to what remained of their own villages, the camps built by them became homes for the destitute, whose numbers had been greatly increased by the prolonged operations in these areas. Paddy was locally requisitioned and rice was imported by the Administration from Chittagong to feed those in the camps. Attempts were made to find work for them. But, like farmers the world over, most made their way back to their own villages and land as soon as they were allowed, and there continued to cultivate their crops, even if the battle swept over their fields. By the end of 1944 only 1,000 still remained in the care of the Relief and Labour Department.

While these tasks were being discharged, the Japanese unloosed their counter-offensive¹ early in February. This resulted in the addition to the responsibilities of the Relief and Labour Department of care for some 2,500 refugees fleeing before the advancing enemy in the Kalapanzin Valley. These were first accommodated at Taung Bazaar, but with the continued advance of the enemy had to be moved again, over the watershed, into the Naf Valley to be received in camps there. The preparations already made for receiving displaced persons enabled the Administration to deal with this extra refugee commitment in its stride.

In the course of 1944, on the capture of Myitkyina by the Americans,² some 3,000 refugees were discovered in the neighbourhood. These included persons of many races and of very varied standing who had started on the journey from Burma to India in 1942, but had at the last been deterred by the difficulties and had remained where they were, near the airfield to which they had struggled in the hope of being rescued by air. They included a number of persons of education and standing. In the early stages Relief and Labour officers were not allowed to enter Myitkyina to take part in work for these refugees. The lack of transport, of housing, and of food in Myitkyina, and the extent of the dependence of the American forces upon air transport, made the Commanding General extremely reluctant to allow any increase in his forces. In any case, the S.C.A.O. was dealing with the problem and

¹ Cf. p. 64.

² Cf. p. 83.

administering his refugee camps not unsatisfactorily through his administrative officers and through responsible refugees themselves. He was willing to continue in this manner and was also anxious not to deprive his refugee helpers of the tonic of taking part in their own rehabilitation. Later, however, when the situation became easier, Relief and Labour assistants were allowed to enter and set the general administrative officers free for the other work that was crowding upon them.

The only other occasion on which any of the British Military Administrations was called upon to handle a large scale refugee problem occurred during the last two months before the end of the war with Japan. The Japanese forces in Burma, which had been trapped to the west of the speedy advance of IV Corps from Meiktila down the road and railway to Pegu and Rangoon, concentrated their scattered remnants in the hills and jungle between the IV Corps line of advance and the Irrawaddy Valley.¹ They then struck eastwards, against the flank formed by the British forces with the object of reaching the Karen or Shan Hills and rejoining the remnants of their main body in Siam. A fierce battle developed up and down the road and railway, mostly between Pegu and Toungoo. Some 50,000 Burmese and Karen villagers were driven from their villages. No less than twenty five relief camps were set up, by the Relief and Labour Department and the Red Cross, in which these refugees could be sheltered and fed until the battle subsided and they could reinhabit their villages or set about rebuilding them.

The relief of the destitute, as opposed to refugees and displaced persons, was normally effected by the free distribution of supplies or cooked meals, rather than by the establishment of camps. In Burma, however, camps had to be opened for the Anglo-Indian and Anglo-Burmese community. These people, with few exceptions, had taken no part before the war in the trade of the country (except as salaried employees of the big European firms) or in cultivation of the soil, and had earned their living as public servants, often as employees of the Railways or the Post Office. They had no villages to which they could go back, or plots of land which they could till.

When the Japanese forces ebbed out of the Northern Shan States and British administration was re-established, there was discovered in the State of Tawngpeng a condition more nearly approaching famine than was found anywhere else in Burma, or probably, in any other area re-occupied in the Far East. The economy of this Shan State depended on the export of tea to the plains of Burma whence rice was imported in exchange. Fighting in the plains and in the foot hills skirting Tawngpeng had prevented all export of tea for several months. Consequently, there was no import of rice from the plains. The

¹ Cf. p. 110.

resultant shortages caused many deaths from starvation. As soon as the existence of these conditions was realised efforts were made to move rice from the Shwebo and Kyaukse areas, through Mandalay town (which itself depended upon the surrounding country for its supplies) and up the Burma-China road to Kyaukse and Hsipaw where camps were established for the feeding and medical treatment of the starving. The situation soon improved.¹

Two spectacular cases of the relief, or more correctly the prevention, of destitution, in Burma were the operations known as 'Hunger 1' and 'Hunger 2'. To understand the need for these it is necessary to look back. The greatest guerilla operation of the war in south-east Asia took place in the hills to the east of Toungoo in March 1945, when some 10,000 Karens, armed and led by British officers fell upon the retreating Japanese, harried them and obstructed the movement of their troops. This great rising coincided with the rice planting season and by drawing off nearly all the fit and active men of the area caused a very serious drop in cultivation. It was early realized that the assistance of these tribesmen to the Allied cause would be given at the cost of widespread starvation, unless steps were taken in time to import rice into the Karen Hills. The country was virtually without roads, so that many areas could be reached by porters only. Parts were so remote that these men would consume on their journey all or most of the rice they could carry. It was decided that the provision of rice to avoid starvation was a debt to the Karens which must be discharged and Operation Hunger 1 was undertaken. While the less remote areas were supplied with rice by motor transport, mules, bullock carts, and porters, the remoter parts were supplied from the air, bags of rice being loaded on to aircraft near Rangoon and Toungoo and dropped in clearings far into the hills. This was difficult and dangerous work for the Royal Air Force as many of the more distant dropping zones had inevitably to be selected and marked by local inhabitants with little knowledge or experience and only such instructions as could be hastily rushed to them, and nearly all were tucked away deep into the hillsides and difficult of access by aircraft. This operation took place towards the end of 1945 largely on the representation of the civil government to which most of Burma had already been transferred. Some of the areas to be fed lay, however, in the part still under military administration; and the procurement and movement of the rice, up to the point when this was handed over to the Royal Air Force was the responsibility of the Supply and Industry Department which had not yet been handed over to the civil government.

Not long after the completion of this operation similar difficulties developed in the Kachin Hills in the far north of Burma and Operation Hunger 2 was launched. The physical problem in this case was even

¹ Cf. pp. 91-92.

more difficult as the areas involved lay 700 miles to the north of the plains from which the rice would have to be drawn. Railway communication with the far north had been destroyed and the only road was so circuitous and poor as to be almost useless, even if there had been the motor transport to use it. The method employed was to carry the rice by road and rail from Lower Burma to Meiktila, 300 miles to the north. Here it was loaded into Halifax bombers which, however, had not been modified to facilitate supply dropping. These flew north to the hungry areas in the Kachin Hills, dropped so much of their freight as had been stowed in the bomb-bays and could so be delivered, and then landed at Myitkyina, to discharge the rest of their cargo on the ground. While the Halifaxes returned to Meiktila for more rice, supply-dropping Dakotas operating from Myitkyina dropped the rice landed there into the hills. This second operation was carried out entirely within the area of civil government responsibility, but the Supply and Industry Department was still a military organization, its transfer to the civil authorities not taking place until 31st March 1946.

In Borneo, the leading officers of the administration, landing on Labuan Island on D Day, were faced with the problem caused by the complete destruction of the town of Victoria and disruption of the civil food supply system by the preliminary air and naval bombardment of the town in, or near, which most of the population of the island had been residing. A 'native compound' was established on the day of landing, and by that evening sixty persons had already collected there. In less than a week the population had grown to 3,000 persons, who were sheltered, fed and given medical treatment by the Administration. Later the compound was moved to the centre of the island. On the mainland at Brunei conditions were similar but the destruction had not been so complete. In the Papar area the line held by the occupying forces ran across country that was normally thickly populated; large numbers of refugees flocked in to obtain food from the Administration, the number at one time reaching 12,000 a day. Here and at Brunei 'compounds' were also established. Later a special problem was encountered in the Ulu Trusan, a remote area of Borneo in which guerilla operations had begun against the Japanese as early as March 1945, and to which the last Japanese force to surrender retired, destroying crops as it went. An acute shortage of food developed in this area resulting in a poor state of health and an excessive death rate. Relief supplies were moved into the area as early as possible.

On re-occupation of both Malaya and Borneo it was found that the Japanese had impressed large numbers of natives of Java and drafted them overseas in order to provide a competent and docile labour force. Some 10,000 of these displaced persons were found in Malaya, mostly suffering from disease owing to extreme under-nourishment and

to lack of any medical care. They were collected in camps in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur where adequate food and medical care were provided. It was reported that most of them regained their health and strength remarkably quickly. Almost as many were found in Siam, whither they had been sent from Malaya to work on the Burma – Siam railway, which will be referred to in more detail shortly. It was impossible, within the period of military administration in Malaya, to begin repatriation of these persons to Java, on any large scale, owing to the disturbed and difficult conditions in that country.¹ Continuing arrangements had therefore to be devised for their care until the situation improved in Indonesia. In the meanwhile as many as possible were employed by the public services.

Those sent to Borneo were fewer, but some 2,500 were found, in a dangerously poor state of health. For this reason, and because of their very primitive sanitary customs, those entering compounds provided by the Administration had to be segregated from other destitutes or refugees.

There is a second half to many refugee problems when refugees wish to return to the country in which they were originally domiciled. Two main examples of this type of problem occurring in south-east Asia were the repatriation to Malaya of Malays who had fled to India in fear of the Japanese invasion, and the much larger and more complicated problem of the return to Burma of the half million Indians who had fled from the country in 1941 and 1942 for fear of the Burmese or Japanese. The Military Administration was spared anything but indirect concern with the larger of these two problems which remained for the incoming civil government to handle. The number of Malays who had evacuated to India, and were known to be in that country awaiting repatriation, was about 4,000. It was decided that the first to be allowed back should be those for whom accommodation was known to be available. A committee was set up in Malaya to make arrangements for the return of these persons and to ascertain whether they could in fact be housed, and later to organise camps for the reception of those who could not. About half of the 4,000 were allowed to return during the period of military administration.

* * *

The most notorious case of persons displaced by the Japanese, and the one with which the Administrations of Malaya and Burma found themselves most concerned, was that of the labour forcibly recruited for the building of a railway from Siam to Burma, and no apology is made for treating this at somewhat greater length.

Work on this project began shortly after the occupation of Burma. The line took off in a north-westerly direction from the existing railway

¹ Cf. Chapter XXII.

in Siam, about fifty miles west of Bangkok, and crossed the mountain ranges dividing Siam from Burma by the Three Pagodas Pass, 1,000 ft. above sea level. It then ran down the valley of the Ataran River to join the railway in Burma near Thanbyuzayat, about thirty miles south of Moulmein—a total distance of about 250 miles. To construct this railway the Japanese brought 46,000 prisoners of war, mostly British, Dutch, and Australian, from camps in Malaya and elsewhere. In addition forced labour, to a number that probably reached 150,000, was imported in roughly equal quantities from Burma and Malaya. These workers included Burmese, Malays, Tamils, Javanese, and Chinese. A few may have been enticed to the railway by offers of high wages; most, particularly after news filtered back of the fate of the early drafts, were forcibly recruited. This is not the place to enlarge upon the inhumanity and neglect with which these unfortunate persons were treated. It is sufficient to say that one out of three of the prisoners of war lost their lives on the work, and that the death ratio was still higher among the forced labourers, probably reaching three out of seven among those drafted from Burma, and as much as one out of two among those from Malaya. Of the 30,000 or more who lost their lives from Burma, some 3,700 were buried in a cemetery at Thanbyuzayat, and some 8,400 in cemeteries along the line; of the others there was no trace at all.

After the Japanese surrender immediate relief was brought to those still on the railway by a branch of the special ALFSEA military staff created for the purpose. This was the organization for the Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAPWI) which will be more fully described later in this chapter. Its responsibility was confined, however, to the rescue of military prisoners of war, and did not extend to dealing with the displaced persons found on the railway. It gave such emergency aid as was possible to the great numbers of the latter, but the task of rescuing them was left to the Military Administrations concerned. Unfortunately, as we have seen earlier, although the Japanese surrendered in mid-August, it was not possible for the Administration in Burma to assume responsibility for that part of its territory into which the railway ran, until the end of October 1945. Then without delay two medical officers set off up the line. Meanwhile a camp was constructed at Thanbyuzayat in which survivors could be received, fed, and given urgent medical attention. In Rangoon arrangements were also made for a transit camp to handle the considerable numbers expected to be passed back from the Thanbyuzayat camp on their way to their villages up country. But only some 3,000 – 3,500 workers from Burma were found. All the rest, who still had the strength, had escaped as Japanese authority collapsed and had set off to make their way back to Burma as best they could, perhaps after all dying in the jungle on the way.

It was difficult for workers impressed from Malaya to make their own way home for in their case the journey was much longer and more difficult. Besides, many of these men were Javanese who had been brought into Malaya from overseas; to them Malaya was no more home than Siam or Burma. A group of ex-prisoners of war which volunteered to stay and care for these workers, and to repatriate them, found some 35,000 still on the railway. These were mostly Tamils taken off the estates in Malaya, but there were also Chinese, Malays and a number of Javanese. While the workers from Burma had been employed mainly on the section of the line falling on the Burma side of the Three Pagodas Pass, most of those from Malaya had been put to work on the Siamese side. Some 25,000 of the survivors were collected into camps at Kanburi in Siam where the railway left the jungle and hills and entered the plains in the direction of Bangkok. The remaining 10,000 were concentrated two or three hundred miles further south, on the railway from Siam to Malaya, near the Isthmus of Kra.

Evidence regarding the condition in which workers on the railway were found is contradictory. But there was clearly widespread (though not universal) malnutrition. Camp accommodation was not inappropriate to the poorer class of labourers employed. For those with a higher standard of living it was harsh. Clothing was inadequate. So long as a worker could keep clear of sickness, conditions were not intolerable. But chronic malnutrition, unhygienic camps, and the malarial nature of the country took their toll with terrible frequency. And once a man fell ill his chances of survival were slight. He would be driven to work so long as he could stand. After that he was put into a shack known as a 'hospital', with no furniture, few drugs, no clothes, and only unsuitable food. Few came out again alive.

Workers concentrated at the Isthmus of Kra were moved in November 1945 by rail to a camp near Alor Star, just within the northernmost boundary of Malaya, where they were fed and given medical treatment to prepare them for the remainder of the journey. Those in the camps at Kanburi were similarly prepared for their longer journey back. For them repatriation could not begin until January 1946. The first part of the journey was made by rail to a reception camp at Bangkok, whence two ships made regular journeys to Malayan ports, carrying about 800 passengers every time. By the end of the military period two thirds of these workers on the railway had been brought back to Malaya.

Most of those from Burma who reached the camp at Thanbyuzayat had been recruited from villages in the central plains, and their further repatriation presented a problem to the Administration, since rail communication between Moulmein and the rest of Burma was entirely disrupted and road communication was not much better. Particularly was this so in October when the country had not yet

dried up after the monsoon rains. It was planned to use sea transport from the camps to Rangoon, across the Gulf of Martaban. To hasten the movement of these persons, the vessels available were augmented by the use of four Z craft, which were powered barges or lighters intended for use only within port limits. The passengers on these were herded onto open decks with no protection against the weather, and little to prevent them falling overboard. The monsoon roughness of the sea had not yet abated. Embarkation on open beaches was a difficult, not to say dangerous, matter. As a result of the slow rate of dispersal and also, perhaps, of seeing and hearing how passengers had fared on the Z craft, the remaining inhabitants of the camps set off on foot, determined to make their own way through Martaban, Thaton and Kyaikto to their homes. This raised a fresh problem, since it was known that the Thaton District through which these unfortunate persons would travel was already very short of rice; the marchers, if they were unable to buy food, must be expected to resort to indiscriminate looting. Rice brought in by sea from Rangoon was ferried back from Moulmein to Martaban and pushed up the road through Thaton along the route that would be taken by the marchers. So provided for, these caused no breach of the peace.

* * *

The main responsibility within South-East Asia Command for persons rescued from internment was withdrawn from the Military Administrations by the creation of the special organization already referred to for dealing both with Allied prisoners of war and with civilian internees. This organisation was a special branch of the staff set up at the headquarters of Allied Land Forces, South-East Asia, early in August 1945, as soon as the surrender of Japan appeared imminent. It was entirely separate from the Military Administrations, but its responsibilities touched upon those of the latter at various points, and when the organization was in due course wound up, its residual commitments were passed on to the Administrations concerned. It was known as the organization for Recovery of Allied Prisoners of War and Internees (RAPWI) and was responsible for the relief and repatriation of all Allied prisoners of war. It was responsible also for relief and repatriation of all civilian internees who were domiciled either in India or out of Asia. Internees domiciled in Asia elsewhere than India remained the responsibility of the appropriate Administrations. In the event the majority of interned persons required to be dealt with by RAPWI, but a small commitment was finally passed on to the Administrations.

RAPWI control staffs were attached to such formations under the command of ALFSEA as were expected to discover prisoners and

internees in large numbers. In particular, such control staffs were set up in Rangoon and Singapore, through which centres the great majority of released persons would be passed on their way to India, or to the countries in which they had been previously domiciled. After the Japanese surrender, while this organization was being built up, and the necessary transport, supplies, and accommodation were being made ready, leaflets were dropped from the air to camps or centres where it was known that there were concentrations of prisoners and internees. These leaflets informed them of the arrangements that were being made for their relief. Emergency supplies were dropped from the air and as soon as possible RAPWI teams, consisting normally of one officer, one N.C.O., one Medical officer and one Medical orderly, with essential medical supplies and comforts, were sent in by air or any other means available, to bring emergency relief and make preparations for evacuation as soon as the main forces of occupation arrived.

All Allied Prisoners of War recovered were evacuated to India, or, if shipping permitted, direct to their country of domicile. Civilian internees, if domiciled out of Asia, were evacuated on similar principles. Civilian internees of Indian domicile were evacuated to India. If civilian internees were domiciled elsewhere in Asia, responsibility for their care and movement was handed over to the appropriate Military Administration, at the earliest possible opportunity. During its brief life the RAPWI organization repatriated some 86,000 persons from British territories, Indo-China, and Siam. In addition it took a considerable part in the rescue of more than 120,000 persons in Java and Sumatra.

The organization was dissolved on 15th January 1946, with its main task completed. By this time the persons still dependent upon RAPWI were mostly Dutch nationals, and the Dutch authorities had made, or were making, arrangements to take over care of them. Responsibility for the small number of other persons in RAPWI charge was passed on, in the case of prisoners of war, to the appropriate military services, in the case of civilians, to the Administrations concerned.

In Singapore and Malaya the Administrations assumed responsibility for some 8,000 Dutch nationals from Java and Sumatra until the Dutch authorities could complete their arrangements. These were partly Indo-Europeans, partly European Dutch on their way home to Holland. When first rescued from Japanese internment camps on the arrival of the forces of occupation they had remained in Indonesia. On the outbreak, in October and November, of the terror that will be described later¹ these persons fled, or were evacuated, to Singapore. The Dutch authorities set up their own organization to care for them, but problems of accommodation and supply were inevitably thrown back upon the British Administrations.

¹ Cf. Chapter XXII.

In Hong Kong No. 4 RAPWI control staff began operations immediately upon re-occupation and before the Administration was sufficiently established to take part. During this early period 1,014 civilian internees were evacuated with little or no check upon their eligibility for repatriation. Over the next period, 17th September – 4th October, the Administration was closely associated with the RAPWI staff in the evacuation of a further 1,037 European and fifty-two Indians. A much closer scrutiny was now possible of claims to evacuation, and much more discrimination was exercised and better records of repatriation maintained. Thereafter the problem decreased in size—though it increased in complexity. The civilian internment camp (Stanley Camp) was closed; accommodation had to be found for the several hundred internees who had elected to remain in Hong Kong, for public or private reasons; the remaining civilians who wished to get away had to be evacuated; shipping space for these was now very limited, and there were difficult cases to be dealt with of Central and South Americans, British West Indians, and others whose evacuation raised unusual problems. The closing down of the RAPWI organization in January 1946 ushered in the third period when responsibility for these problems was entirely handed over. This resulted in a considerable increase in the work of the Administration.

In Borneo the Australian Military Forces and the Administration made joint and very successful arrangements in Labuan for the reception and care of released prisoners of war and internees.

Events developed somewhat differently in Java and Sumatra. Here RAPWI undertook one of its biggest and most difficult operations. Although control was at first British, much of the staff was Dutch in this territory. In December the organization became technically an Allied body though there was at first little change in its actual composition. On 15th April 1946 control and administration passed to the Allied Military Administration which was by then increasingly Dutch in complexion. By this time all prisoners of war had been rescued and sent to places of safety; the task that remained was to succour and resettle civilians released from Japanese internment or from subsequent internment by the Indonesians.¹

* * *

Precise figures are not available to give any general picture of the scale of the relief work actually undertaken. And such figures as are available permit of no exact comparison between the various territories. The best that can be attempted is to build up an impression.

In many of the big cities arrangements were made for the provision

¹ Cf. Chapter XXII.

of free meals to those in need. In Singapore 84,000 milk feeds were given to infants, 32,000 soup meals to children of pre-school ages, and 175,000 free meals in schools. In Kuala Lumpur some 10,000 persons, mostly women and children, received two free meals a day for a period of about two months. In Penang some 8,000 received free meals for some weeks after re-occupation. In Hong Kong close on 25,000 persons were fed daily throughout the military period. In addition, temporary relief of various kinds was provided for some 10,000 refugees from the mainland of China, and for 2,300 persons who were being repatriated to the interior of China from Australia, Manila, and Hainan. Rations were also issued free, or at reduced prices, to some 2,000 persons daily. In Burma it was preferred to give aid by the issue of free rations where necessary instead of by the provision of free meals. In October 1945 the Relief Department was issuing rations, free or on payment, to over 90,000 of the population of Rangoon and 25,000 in the rest of the Rangoon Military Area. Comparable figures are not available for the rest of Burma, but the number must have been considerable. The cost to the British Government of such issues in Burma was £414,775. In Malaya, owing to the extreme scarcity of essential supplies, much use was made of the grant of cash relief, some 850,000 dollars being distributed in this way on the mainland alone. In Burma the Administration was firmly opposed to this method, except on a very limited scale in special circumstances, preferring the issue of essential supplies without payment. It was considered that relief in cash would merely add to the already strong inflationary tendencies, and that as relief had never been given in this form even in peace-time, it would be both undesirable and administratively impracticable to introduce in post-war conditions a system that had been considered unsuitable in peace.

Over forty refugee camps were opened in Burma, mostly during the year 1945. Twenty of these were still open at the time of hand-over to the civil government. We may assume that rather more than 100,000 persons were taken into these camps at various times as against the numbers estimated by the Young Working Party which were 235,890 inhabitants of Burma and 50,000 returning refugees from India. In Singapore eleven camps and hostels were opened and dealt with some 30,000 persons. On the mainland of Malaya a large number of camps was opened which accommodated 105,000 persons. The YWP estimates for the whole of Malaya were based on a number of 145,366. The total cost of relief in Malaya was about £1,000,000. In Hong Kong, where the main relief effort was concentrated upon the provision of free meals, five centres were in due course also opened for the accommodation of destitutes, mostly non-Chinese. The number of persons taken in at these centres was of the order of 1,000. In addition, some 10,000 destitute persons from the mainland of China were

sheltered, fed and clothed. The Young Working Party had estimated 100,000 such refugees.

In Borneo, apart from the cases of the Javanese displaced persons, who have already been mentioned, and of a smaller number of Chinese, the relief of the destitute was not a major problem. The needs of the indigenous people were mostly met by some initial free issues of clothing and food. At no time was it necessary to open camps for them.

CHAPTER XVI

LAW AND JUSTICE

IN THE INITIAL proclamations establishing military administration in the British territories in south-east Asia¹ full legislative, judicial, executive, and administrative powers were assumed by the military authorities. It is the primary purpose of this chapter to consider the direct exercise of the first two of these functions, the making of law and the administration of justice, within British territories. Some account will be attempted also of the extent to which these authorities became indirectly concerned with the exercise of legislative and judicial functions in Allied territories recovered. Lastly reference will also be made to the departmental organization employed, and to certain legal problems in connection with the transfer of authority to civil governments.

* * *

The legislative functions may be taken first. Under international law, when military forces relinquish, or are expelled from, enemy territory, which they have temporarily occupied in the course of war, the whole body of the laws previously in force in such territory revives as the occupying armies withdraw. The Administrations set up by the Allied forces of re-occupation in south-east Asia were not bound to accept this revival since they were military administrations and it is the essence of such systems that they derive their authority from the necessities of war, not from legislation by constitutional process, and that, while military necessity lasts, they need not be governed by such legislation. It was nevertheless found convenient to respect this revival, as far as possible, in all areas in which Allied troops operated in south-east Asia, and this for two reasons. In the first place it ensured that the justice to be administered was based firmly upon legislation that had been originally passed by constitutional legislative authorities, so to some extent protecting the Administrations from the charge of exercising dictatorial powers. Secondly, the adoption of this course relieved the Administrations of the formidable task of building up a legal system from nothing, and ensured that the law to be administered by them should, fundamentally at least, be familiar both to the people living under it, and to some, at least, of the magistrates and judges charged with its administration.

¹ Cf. Appendices 1-5.

But there was diversity in the manner of application of this principle by the several Administrations.

There were, first, the British and British-protected territories which had fallen completely under the occupation of the enemy, namely, Malaya, Borneo, and Hong Kong. In these, express provision was made in the proclamations establishing military administration for the revival of all laws existing immediately before the Japanese occupation, 'subject to the provisions of any Proclamation and in so far as military exigencies permit'.¹ In the case of Malaya there was added also the following condition: 'Provided that such of the existing laws as the Chief Civil Affairs Officer considers it is practicable from time to time to administer during the period of military administration will be administered'. A very wide discretionary power was thus conferred upon the C.C.A.O. which might have left the public in vexatious uncertainty regarding the law in force. Under the proclamation the public were '. . . advised to consult the nearest Civil Affairs officer if in doubt as to whether any existing law is being administered', but it is not difficult to imagine circumstances in which there would be little time or opportunity for such consultation. The provision was, in fact, a recognition of the complex situation resulting from the large number of legislative authorities that had existed in Malaya before the war. There had been the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, the Federal Council of the Federated Malay States, the State Councils of each of the four individual federated States, and the State Councils of the five unfederated States. The endowment of the C.C.A.O. with this discretionary power does not, in fact, appear to have caused hardship or complaint. In all three territories provision was made, by an interpretation proclamation or otherwise, for equating the differently styled officers of the Administrations with the civil authorities who had been empowered to act under the pre-evacuation law.

Slightly different conditions were encountered in Burma where the country had never been totally occupied by the Japanese and where a Government of Burma continued in existence. This Government, although itself evacuated to India, retained and continued to exercise legislative authority, actually over that part of Burma which it still controlled, and contingently over the rest. It had, before evacuation and during its exile, considerably modified the law of Burma in ways which will be noticed later in this chapter. It was therefore the 'laws in force in Burma on the 31st day of December 1943', not the laws as they stood before the Japanese occupation, that were deemed to remain in force in Proclamation No. 2 of 1944 regarding the maintenance of order.² And there was no need of an Interpretation Proclamation, as the amendments made by the Government of Burma had already

¹ Cf. Appendices, 3, 4, and 5.

² Cf. Appendix 2.

given powers under the ordinary law to officers of the Civil Affairs Service.

The Administrations set up in British and British-protected territories had, therefore, initially at their disposal the body of pre-evacuation law. This could be, and was, amended by the Supreme Allied Commander who also delegated this power, subject to certain conditions, to the Force Commander or the C.C.A.O. concerned. In addition, legislation could be enacted on matters beyond the reach of the pre-evacuation law by means of proclamations. Even in such cases, however, it was generally preferred if possible, to act through modification or extension of an existing law, in preference to enacting altogether fresh legislation.

In fact, in Burma thirteen proclamations were issued in 1944, the first year of military administration, the first of these by the Supreme Allied Commander, the rest by the C.C.A.O. in virtue of powers delegated to him in Proclamation No. 1. In 1945 twenty proclamations were issued, two over the signature of Admiral Mountbatten, the rest by the C.C.A.O.

In Malaya seventy-seven proclamations were issued in the Malay Peninsula Division and sixty-one in the Singapore Division, forty-seven of these being common to both Divisions. The first and last of these proclamations were issued by the Supreme Allied Commander; during the operational period, that is up to 1st October 1945, all other proclamations were issued by the commander of the military forces in Malaya; thereafter, authority was delegated to the C.C.A.O. and by him again, as part of a general process of devolution, to the D.C.C.A.O's in charge of the two Divisions of the Administration. Accordingly, one proclamation in the post-operational period was issued by the C.C.A.O., all the rest by the D.C.C.A.O's.

In Borneo the first proclamation was issued by the Commander of I Australian Corps, in virtue of authority derived from General MacArthur, the Commander-in-Chief, South-West Pacific Area. Thereafter proclamations were normally issued by the officer commanding 9th Australian Division in virtue of authority delegated to him by the corps commander. On the occasion of the exclusion of Borneo from the South-West Pacific Area and its transfer to Australian command, a proclamation was issued by the Commander-in-Chief, Australian Military Forces, to continue the validity of earlier proclamations issued under the authority of General MacArthur, now withdrawn. Thereafter proclamations were issued again by the officer commanding 9th Australian Division until Borneo was transferred to South-East Asia Command. Two were then issued by Admiral Mountbatten, after which proclamations issued over the names, first, of the brigadier commanding 32nd Indian Infantry Brigade, and later (but not until March 1946), of the C.C.A.O. The proclamations terminating military

administration in the various Borneo territories were issued by the Supreme Allied Commander.

In Hong Kong the first sixteen proclamations were issued by the Commander-in-Chief, Hong Kong. In the last of these he delegated authority to the C.C.A.O. and all subsequent proclamations were issued by this officer, with the exception only of the proclamation terminating military administration, which was again issued over the name of the Commander-in-Chief.

The subjects legislated for by the Administrations will be sufficiently suggested by a selection from the titles of proclamations:

- Maintenance of Order
- Price Control
- Criminal Procedure Code (Amendment)
- Establishment of Moratorium
- Currency
- Custody of Property
- Requisitioning
- Road Transport
- Co-operative Societies
- Convictions by Japanese Tribunals
- Post Office Savings Bank
- Customs
- Establishment of Official Gazette
- Pawnbrokers
- Explosives and Firearms
- Opium

A very wide ground was covered as the Administrations, with all convenient speed, set about picking up the threads of normal civil administration.

That so many more proclamations were issued in Malaya than in Burma is primarily due to the fact that much of the essential adaptation of peace-time law to war conditions had already been effected in Burma by the civil government. Also, proclamations in Burma were often more compendious, dealing in one proclamation with matters dealt with by several in Malaya. Nor did the Administration in Burma find it necessary to issue so many amending proclamations.

A difficulty that was special to Burma, the existence at the same time of two legislative authorities for the same area, namely, the Supreme Allied Commander and the Government of Burma, has been noticed in an earlier chapter.¹ The solution agreed to was that:

- (1) legislation enacted by the Governor after the proclamation of military administration would not be immediately effective within Burma;
- (2) if the Governor nevertheless wished any such legislation

¹ Cf. pp. 75-76.

to have immediate effect this would be conferred by proclamation of the Supreme Allied Commander;

(3) legislation intended for post-war use would be so drafted as not to come into force until after the termination of military administration.

It was the policy of Admiral Mountbatten that the legislative powers which he assumed should be used with economy and never, if this could possibly be avoided, so as to increase the severity of any pre-occupation law. He hoped in this way, as by his general acceptance of the doctrine of the revival of this law on the expulsion of the Japanese, to forestall criticism that his administration was illiberal or more dictatorial than military circumstances compelled, and to enlist the co-operation of the people of the territories re-occupied. Accordingly, he rejected a proposal by the C.C.A.O. (Burma) in April 1944, that whipping, already legal punishment for certain crimes, should become an admissible penalty for certain other offences, including that of assisting the enemy. Commanders in the field had been pressing the C.C.A.O. for more speedy and exemplary punishments, and his proposal had been made because no prisons had yet been recovered from the Japanese for the reception of persons sentenced to imprisonment. Then, early in 1945, the same C.C.A.O. proclaimed that failure to surrender firearms would, in certain circumstances, be punishable with death. War had put very large quantities of weapons into the hands of persons unknown and possibly dangerous, both to the Administration and to the peaceful public. On re-occupation, notices were issued requiring surrender of firearms by a certain date; weapons would be re-issued on license in suitable cases; failure to surrender would be punishable with death. Admiral Mountbatten felt that such a sentence, although technically for failure to surrender, would in fact only be justifiable, if at all, on account of the use to which it was suspected that the holder might put his firearm. This, he felt was a departure from the code of civilised countries where penalties were imposed only for crimes proved to have been committed, not for motives suspected. The C.C.A.O. was required to reduce all penalties in this connection to pre-occupation severity. At a later stage, however, in Malaya, when the Administration encountered the vast general increase in robberies and looting and in the use of firearms in the commission of these offences, the Supreme Allied Commander agreed to the imposition of the death penalty for the illegal carrying of arms.

* * *

In territories that had not been under British rule before the Japanese occupation, the law that revived was the law of a foreign country. In the case of Indonesia the provisional governments of the Netherlands and the Netherlands Indies readily conceded that this.

must not be allowed to hamper the Supreme Allied Commander and that, during the initial operational stages at least, he must have full authority to take any measures for the safeguarding of the forces under his command which the military situation might make necessary. Nevertheless ultimate sovereignty lay with the Dutch, the re-establishment of Dutch administration was one of the objects of the Supreme Allied Commander's operations, and, furthermore, it was proposed, if only for reasons of man-power, to carry on such degree of military government as might become necessary, through the agency of a Dutch organization, namely, the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs organisation (N.I.C.A.). For all these reasons it was decided that formal legislative authority should be resumed by the Dutch from the start, although in the early stages this would have to be subject to the overriding powers of the Supreme Allied Commander, if it became necessary to exercise them on military grounds. It was planned, therefore, that no proclamation assuming full authority should be issued by the Supreme Allied Commander. Instead he was to publish a notice that the troops under his command would accept the surrender of the Japanese forces, and would maintain order until the lawful government could operate again and that, meanwhile, the laws of the country, modified by the Supreme Allied Commander only so far as the interests of good order made this necessary, would be enforced by officers of N.I.C.A.¹ It was planned that the publication of this notice should be followed immediately by the issue of a more formal proclamation by the chief officer of N.I.C.A. announcing what law would be administered. This was in fact to be the 'State of Siege' (equivalent to martial law in British usage) which had been proclaimed immediately before the Japanese occupation and which would automatically revive on re-occupation. Events in Indonesia, however, were to bear little resemblance to these plans.

There was a different approach in French Indo-China. Before any planning for overt operations began, and before the French had been able to turn their attention from Europe to the Far East for the purpose of any detailed planning, it became clear that the re-occupation would take place as the result of the surrender of the Japanese and not as the result of military operations. The French, for their part, were dedicated to the task of re-building their lost prestige as a great power. Consequently, while the Dutch planners for Indonesia accepted dependence upon SEAC for the re-establishment of their administration, French plans, drawn up at a much later stage, were far more concerned to avoid the disadvantages that must ensue if their administration appeared to have been re-established, not by themselves, but by foreign forces. Accordingly the agreement between Admiral Mountbatten and the French provided that the forces of South-East Asia

¹ Cf. Appendix 7.

Command would enter the country only to enforce surrender of the Japanese forces and to liberate Allied prisoners of war and internees. No responsibility was placed upon them to maintain order or to re-establish French administration. No notice or proclamation was to be issued by the Allied Commander. The law to be administered, and the manner of its promulgation, were matters for the French, not for the occupying forces of South-East Asia Command. In all cases the Allied (but in fact British) Force Commander was to be required to conduct his dealings with the civilian population through the agency of the French Administration. It may be noted in passing that the inevitable paramountcy of military interests and the inability of the French Administration to function without the support of British troops ultimately drove the Force Commander in French Indo-China to issue a proclamation on 19th September 1945, announcing his intention to ensure the maintenance of order in that part of Indo-China which fell within his command.¹ But he did not proclaim any law that would be enforced. Events in this connection are set out in greater detail in a later chapter.²

* * *

We turn now to the judicial, as opposed to the legislative, functions of the Administrations. In all British territories one of the early legislative acts was to impose a moratorium upon most claims for payments. This was important primarily because the Administrations could not at first hope to deal with more than those pressing problems of criminal justice upon which depended the maintenance of order. It was desirable also in order to allow some time during which the problems of civil justice could begin to shape themselves out of the chaos in which the occupation had left contractual and other relations. And in such uncertain conditions it was not equitable to apply with strictness the law of limitation to claimants. The moratorium applied, with a few exceptions only, to all debts incurred, and other claims for payments arising, before the date of the moratorium proclamation. The exceptions varied slightly from territory to territory but, in general terms, were concerned with:

- (a) claims by the crown or local authorities
- (b) claims not exceeding stated small amounts
- (c) (except in Burma) claims in respect of wages, salaries, and professional services, work and labour.

The effect of the moratorium was that all legal rights and obligations, in respect to any class of claims affected, remained in abeyance, and

¹ Cf. Appendix 6.

² Cf. Chapter XXI.

that the administration of civil as opposed to criminal justice was virtually suspended, only a few, mostly native, courts carrying on with the hearing of petty civil suits.

In Burma the moratorium was not imposed until the forces of re-occupation were deeply and permanently advanced into the country, but even before that there was in practice no means of enforcing claims to payment since the Administration set up no courts for the purpose. In Borneo it was imposed on 21st August 1945, the beginning of the period of expansion beyond the original limited objectives, when courts of the Administration first began to function in supersession of martial law courts. Elsewhere it was imposed immediately after re-occupation.

The administration of criminal justice on the other hand was one of the earliest functions of government to be revived, in support of the police forces in their campaign to restore and maintain public order. The courts set up in Malaya showed the influence upon the planners of court martial procedure. Provision was made for Superior Courts and District Courts. The former might be either British Officer Courts, or Assessor Courts. In a British Officer Court a President sat, aided by two military officers selected from a panel appointed for the purpose. In an Assessor Court the President was aided by two civilian assessors. The more serious cases were reserved for trial by a British Officer Court. In District Courts a Presiding Officer sat alone. By the middle of October 1945, Superior and District Courts had been set up throughout the Malay Peninsula Division, except in the States of Kelantan and Trengganu. By the end of the year Superior Courts were functioning in all Regions and the work of District Courts had increased so much that additional courts had to be opened in many places. In Singapore a District Military Court was opened on 8th September, and by January 1946 six of these courts were functioning. The first Superior Military Court was opened on 5th October and another in February 1946. Court buildings were found intact and adequately furnished and most of the clerical staff were available for immediate re-employment.

In Borneo a Supreme Military Court was established, consisting of the legal officer and of certain other officers at the headquarters of the Administration, all members being required to sit for the exercise of its more important functions. There were in addition Superior Military Courts which were constituted by Senior Civil Affairs Officers of Districts, sitting alone, and District Military Courts of the First, Second and Third Class, which were constituted by such officers as were appointed Military Magistrates, sitting alone. The proclamation establishing these courts was dated 3rd September 1945, nearly three months after the landings in Borneo. The Commander of 9th Australian Division had been reluctant to act sooner because many officers of

the Administration lacked judicial experience and some local magistrates were alleged to have collaborated with the Japanese. Until the establishment of these courts, any judicial proceedings necessary were conducted, as nearly as possible in accordance with court martial procedure, under the inherent authority of the military commander. Ultimately a practical demonstration of the fatuity of convening a court martial to try a petty case of chicken theft led to the setting up of Military Administration courts. On the 9th February 1946 there was another change. The Military Courts Proclamation of 3rd September 1945 was cancelled and three fresh proclamations were issued, under which the pre-evacuation courts of North Borneo and Sarawak were reconstituted (although for the time being deriving their authority from the proclamations and military needs, not from the permanent constitutions of these territories). Brunei and Labuan were also given courts on the North Borneo pattern and brought within the jurisdiction of the High Court of North Borneo. This re-arrangement facilitated greater employment of Malay, Chinese and native Magistrates, so freeing the very few British Officers for executive work. It was also a useful preliminary step towards the change over to full civil administration.

In Hong Kong a judicial body was constituted, known as the Standing Military Court. The members of this sat as a General Military Court for the trial of more serious offences, in which case the President or Vice-President was assisted by two other members, who might be British officers, or selected civilians, or one officer and one civilian. For the trial of less serious offences the members of the Standing Military Court sat singly as a Summary Military Court, Class I or Class II. Two summary courts were provided for Hong Kong at first but the number was later reduced to one. One such court was set up in Kowloon on the mainland. Very few cases required the convening of a General Military Court. The number of cases coming up for trial was small, owing to the limitations placed upon the activities of the police by their low strength, poor training, and many other pre-occupations.

In Burma events followed a somewhat different course, owing to the fact that the Government of Burma and its courts had never ceased entirely to function. The C.C.A.O. proclaimed that all Government of Burma courts ceased to exist on the establishment of military administration; at the same time he set up exactly corresponding courts, so that in practice all existing courts continued to function, the only difference being that their authority flowed from the Supreme Allied Commander and his assumption of judicial powers, instead of from the normal constitution of Burma.¹ As the re-occupation of Burma proceeded, further courts were set up by the C.C.A.O., all

¹ Cf. Appendix 2.

equated as closely as possible to pre-evacuation courts. This close correspondence, like that in Borneo after the change of 9th February 1946, must have helped to make the system of justice more familiar and intelligible to the public. In Burma, where it was possible in most cases to post to the charge of the courts persons with at least some previous experience of the trial of cases, magistrates in nearly all cases sat singly, as under peace-time procedure. In detail, this meant the setting up of courts of Special Judges, District Magistrates, Sub-divisional Magistrates, and Magistrates of the First Class, corresponding to the courts similarly named under the law in force before the establishment of military administration. No courts corresponding to the High Court or Courts of Sessions were set up; nor, at the other end of the scale, was it found necessary to appoint magistrates of the second or third class. All or most of the magistrates and judges appointed were given powers to try cases in a summary way, that, is, with a greatly reduced record of proceedings. At the end of 1944 eighty nine courts were in operation. By the time of hand-over military officers and civilian employees to the number of about 700 had been endowed with magisterial powers, which in the case of the former conferred a personal rather than a territorial jurisdiction. Before the war there had been some 570 Courts of Stipendiary Magistrates and 130 Courts of Honorary Magistrates, all with territorial jurisdiction.

For Indonesia it had been planned that the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs organisation should set up courts deriving their authority from the 'State of Siege' and the revival of Dutch sovereignty. But it proved impossible to set these up, for the reasons that led to the conversion of this Civil Affairs organization into the Allied Military Administration, Civil Affairs Branch (AMACAB)¹. Consequently there were no courts for the trial of offenders arrested by the police. A proposal by the British commander to set up mixed courts, with a British judge and one Dutch and one Indonesian assessor, was rejected by the Commander-in-Chief, ALFSEA, as being contrary to the British Government's policy that civilian offenders in foreign territories must be tried by the courts of the legitimate authorities, and that there must be no assumption of jurisdiction by the Allied commander in such cases. A proposal to set up Allied Military Courts as a part of AMACAB was also abandoned for similar reasons. The Supreme Allied Commander decided in mid-November that as there were still no courts opened by the Dutch civil authorities, action should be taken to set up Dutch military courts. The right to review sentences of death imposed by these courts for political crimes was to remain with the Supreme Allied Commander. On 31st December there were still no courts, civil or military, but the Chief Commanding officer (C.C.O.), AMACAB, for West and Middle Java was authorized to establish

¹ Cf. Chapter XXII.

'Netherlands Indies Courts'. At last, on 3rd January 1946, in anticipation of the establishment of these courts, Dutch military courts were set up in Batavia for the trial of offenders against the military administration. Then, on 6th February, courts, both benches of judges and single judges, were opened by the civil authorities in Batavia. They were to try all persons, other than British subjects, who had committed any offence against the military administration, and were also to deal with cases against collaborators. These courts operated within the key area of Batavia for the remainder of the period of British occupation.

* * *

The law to be administered by the various courts in British and British-protected territories was, basically, the law in force before evacuation, but certain additional offences were created to meet the circumstances of a military occupation, e.g. by the 'Offences against the Forces' proclamation in Malaya, and in a few cases the penalties for offences against pre-evacuation law were enhanced. In Borneo, the Indian Penal Code was at first used in all four territories, partly in order to secure uniformity, but partly also to obviate difficulties arising from lack of local law books. This Code had already been adopted in North Borneo before the war; in Labuan and Brunei the Penal Code in force had been the Malayan Code used in the Straits Settlements; Sarawak had used its own Code; this and the Malayan Code, however, were both based on the Indian Penal Code.

While procedure for the courts derived generally from that in force before the war, it was simplified and accelerated; there was at the same time a reduction, in some respects, of the records required to be kept of proceedings. In the case of Burma much of this amendment of the procedural law had already been effected by the Government of Burma, after evacuation and before the establishment of military administration, by three Acts, the Special Judges Act, 1943, the Courts (Emergency Provisions) Act, 1943, and the Emergency Provisions Act, 1943. Under the first of these, Special Judges could be appointed with power to try any offences and impose any sentence authorized by law, without previous committal proceedings. These judges dealt with all cases which before the war should have been tried in Sessions Courts, with their procedure of previous commitment and of trial with the aid of assessors. Under the other two enactments, enhanced powers could be conferred upon officers not normally eligible for them, and hostages might be taken from villages in certain cases. The number of offences for which whipping could be awarded was increased. The right of appeal was withdrawn in most cases although sentences of death still required confirmation by a Judge of the High Court.

The abolition of the right of appeal, first effected by this Government

of Burma legislation, became a regular feature of criminal procedure under all the military administrations. To counter-balance this, a petition for review was allowed to any convicted person, although in Borneo and Malaya it was denied in certain petty cases and in Burma it was denied to persons whose sentence of imprisonment did not exceed two years. In addition, provision was made, and was in fact very liberally used, for review by senior officers on their own motion, both in the field and at the headquarters of the Administrations. No death sentence was to be carried out without confirmation, in Burma by the Force Commander or the C.C.A.O., elsewhere by the Force Commander. And if there was any political aspect to the case, confirmation was required also by the Supreme Allied Commander himself. In Malaya and Hong Kong cases in which long terms of imprisonment were imposed also required confirmation by the C.C.A.O. or by an officer appointed by him in this behalf. In Malaya such confirmation could also be given by the President of the Superior Court.

In spite of considerable abridgment of procedure, care was taken to safeguard the principles of natural justice, under which an accused person must know what he is charged with, and must have the right to call his own witnesses. (In one respect the procedure for a military court in Burma was actually more exacting than that for a pre-war court, since the former was required to write a judgment, setting out the reasons for its finding, whenever an order of conviction was passed. This had not always been necessary for the latter in less important cases.) It is even more important to the good administration of justice that judges should enjoy, and be known to enjoy, independence of executive control, and that their decisions should not suffer modification on extra-judicial grounds. The creation of public confidence in the ability of the judiciary to resist the executive is at all times difficult; for a military government, set up expressly to ensure unity of command, the task is all but impossible. In actual fact the military executive authority strictly denied itself the exercise of the power to intervene, except in one respect. This was in regard to cases with political implications, sentences in which required the confirmation of the Supreme Allied Commander. Here judicial were made to give way to political considerations. In other respects the judiciary was as independent under military administration as under the constitutional civil governments. Whether it was equally successful in gaining the confidence of the public is another matter. In Burma, where the growth of nationalist and Communist feeling encouraged criticism, it probably was not.

A point which gave rise to some criticism on the re-opening of the civil government courts in Burma was the manner and adequacy of publication of changes which had been made in legislation during the Japanese occupation. Such legislation had been published in the

official gazettes of the Government of Burma or of the Military Administration, but as neither of these had circulated in Burma at the time, and as the effects of this legislation could not be made known through the local press or the proceedings of the legislature, it was arguable that offenders might in certain circumstances be unaware of the law against which they were held to have offended. In fact, the law was little changed in essentials, allowance was made by the Courts for the possibility of such ignorance, and the pressure of work was so great that no borderline case was likely to be sent up for trial at all. Nevertheless, the lack of proper information as to the law in force (especially as to Section 5 of the Defence of Burma Act, which had been amended in 1943 while the Government of Burma was in exile in India) must almost certainly have meant some convictions for offences that did not exist. It is true that in almost every case of a conviction of this kind, the accused could probably have been convicted under the same section of the same Act as it actually stood—or under some other Act, for the scope of the original section 5 of the Defence of Burma Act was almost identical with that of Section 121 of the Indian Penal Code. It is also true that the military judiciary acted in good faith. But the fact remains that some accused persons may just possibly have been prejudiced, and some persons improperly convicted.

* * *

The most common offences before the lower military courts, in all territories, were wrongful possession, looting, and theft, of military stores. Before the higher courts, robbery and dacoity (which is robbery by five or more persons jointly) were the most common, and in most cases the accused carried firearms. Many of the offenders were juveniles and in Singapore the C.C.A.O. said: 'A Salvation Army Officer was permanently in attendance and the Presiding Officer was assisted by two members of a voluntary panel of public-spirited citizens who sat with him in an advisory capacity. This experiment seemed likely to be a success and should be the forerunner of an officially sponsored probation system in Singapore'.

The trials of war criminals were not held in the courts of the military administrations. Special tribunals were set up and the prosecutions were handled by the staff of the Judge-Advocate-General or by specially engaged lawyers. The preliminary investigations were carried out by Field Security staff or specially appointed teams of investigators, assisted in some cases by the police of the administrations concerned.

A class of case that raised difficulties of policy and practice and that sharply divided opinion both in and out of the Administrations, concerned the prosecution of persons for 'collaboration offences', which

may be taken to include treason, treachery, sedition, and any other offences committed with intent to help the enemy.

The law was clear enough. In Burma, Section 121 of the Penal Code provided a penalty of death or transportation for life for the offence of 'waging war against the Crown'. Section 5 of the Defence of Burma Act provided that any person who ' . . . with intent to wage war against His Majesty, or to assist any State at war with His Majesty, does any overt act towards or in furtherance of such intent . . . ' was liable to be punished with death or transportation for life, or imprisonment for a term which might extend to ten years, or with whipping, or with fine. In Malaya, the Penal Code contained similar provisions in regard to waging war against the Crown, and there were also provisions under the Treachery and Looting Enactment, 1941, and the War Offences Ordinance, 1941, which defined and enlarged the offence of treachery and imposed a penalty of death.

It was less clear whether, and to what extent, the law should be put into motion. In the circumstances of the Japanese occupation, automatic prosecution, whenever there might be evidence, was unthinkable. Acts of apparent disloyalty might often have been committed under duress or under genuine misapprehension. To mark the British return by inaugurating such a rigid and ruthless policy would neither ease the resumption of relations, nor justly express British feelings in the matter. On the other hand, it seemed equally unthinkable to abstain altogether from enforcement of the law. Such a course would give undesirable encouragement to those really guilty of treachery, would be looked upon by the general public as a sign of weakness, and would mean breaking faith with those who had suffered for their loyalty to the British connection. The matter was discussed throughout 1944, in London and in India, and opinion hardened in favour of a middle course under which ringleaders and persons in positions of authority should be prosecuted and treated with exemplary severity, whenever there was sufficient evidence, while those in subordinate positions, who had merely acted on the orders or example of others, should be treated with leniency.

In March 1945, before this policy had received final approval, the Supreme Allied Commander decided to accept the co-operation of the Burma National Army which was about to desert the Japanese for the British side.¹ The whole of this force was in law guilty of active collaboration with the enemy. To facilitate the change of sides, the Supreme Allied Commander wished to modify the proposed policy by including a fundamentally new provision, that there should be no arrests throughout the period of military administration for political offences committed before re-occupation. This modification was rejected by the War Cabinet, and a little later, approval was given to the

¹ Cf. Chapter XIX for a detailed account.

original policy of severity for the ringleaders and lenience for the rest. On 30th June 1945 the Supreme Allied Commander promulgated this policy in a directive. Although no immunity from prosecution was to be accorded to members of the Burma National Army it was agreed that services rendered by them to the Allied cause should be taken into account in deciding whether to prosecute, and, in the event of conviction, in passing sentence.

Trials were to be held as soon as possible after capture of the persons concerned. The Supreme Allied Commander added that leniency was particularly to be shown to young politically-minded Burmans ' . . . whose co-operation it is of such importance to us to have in shaping the future of Burma.' For Burma, it was laid down that Special Tribunals would be appointed, apparently under the Defence of Burma Act, a wartime enactment of the Government of Burma, to deal with the most prominent collaborators and to ensure that their treatment was uniform and exemplary. Others could be tried by Special Judges, appointed under the Special Judges Act, 1943. In either case previous committal proceedings were unnecessary. In Malaya, provision was made, under Proclamations 21 of the Malay Peninsula Division and 19 of the Singapore Division, for the establishment of Special Courts for dealing with collaboration offences. These courts were, however, designed not for the final trial of collaborators, as in the case of the Special Tribunals in Burma, but for the preliminary investigation of allegations of collaboration. They were set up to meet a situation that had not been expected. Instead of well-docketed complaints from prisoner of war and civilian internee camps, an overwhelming number of ill-prepared allegations were received from the public, mostly from persons of little substance. As in the early months the police force could not cope even with ordinary crime, another channel had to be formed for dealing with collaborators. If the Special Courts found that a *prima facie* case was established, a further preliminary enquiry was held before a District Court, after which the accused could be committed for final trial by the appropriate Superior Court. As the three judicial proceedings were preceded by yet another police investigation by Field Security Sections, it is difficult to see how these trials could be held with the promptness enjoined. This cumbersome procedure may be compared with that employed in Burma, under which such cases, after investigation by the police could be finally disposed of in one judicial proceeding instead of three.

In Singapore there was a widespread public demand for action against collaborators and a Special Court was set up in October 1945. In November several such courts were set up in the Malay Peninsula Division. In the same month it was reported that, while the Governments of India and Ceylon had expressed the view that too many arrests had been made, the general public in Malaya felt that there

had been too few. By December there were Special Courts in all Regions of the Malay Peninsula Division and the Court in Singapore had made considerable progress in dealing with cases before it. Many accused persons had to be released, however, for lack of sufficiently reliable evidence and it was becoming clear, as might have been, and perhaps was, foreseen, that in Singapore, as elsewhere, accusations were being made with little foundation and frequently for motives of spite and revenge. By January complaints of collaboration under investigation in the Peninsula Division numbered 1392; but it was clear that here also a large proportion of cases would have to be withdrawn for lack of evidence. It is difficult to ascertain comprehensive and reliable figures, but, to judge from such as are available, roughly half the cases which came before the Special Courts for investigation were dismissed, the remainder being sent for committal by the District Courts, for trial by a Superior Court.

The course of events in Burma was somewhat different. When the Supreme Allied Commander's directive was issued in June 1945 the fringes of Burma had already been under military administration for eighteen months. The policy adopted in regard to the prosecution and trial of collaborators during this period had, generally speaking, been in line with that ultimately enjoined by Admiral Mountbatten. During the whole of 1944, when an inconsiderable proportion of the country had been re-occupied the total number of convictions for serious offences against the state, a heading which presumably included all offences of collaboration, amounted to forty-one. It is probable that most of these convictions occurred in Arakan and in the far north, in the re-occupied portions of Myitkyina District. The corresponding figures for 1945 are significant. During a period when the greater part of Burma, including Rangoon, came under re-occupation and the total convictions for all offences increased from 668 to 28,725, the total of offences against the state increased only to 101. No Special Tribunals were constituted. It is very clear that, just when the re-occupation was becoming well established, when Admiral Mountbatten had announced his policy of exemplary sentences for persons in responsible positions, and when it might have been expected that the punishment of collaborators would have been systematically undertaken, the interest in these cases evaporated.

There were several reasons for this. While in Malaya a strong public demand for the punishment of collaborators manifested itself, the general feeling in Burma was very different. It may be that too many persons were smirched. It is certain that much 'collaboration' was committed under duress. There were cases in which the Burmese police, who had been ordered by the Japanese to torture their compatriots, apologised to their victims and took care not to hurt them so long as the latter made such sounds as might be supposed to proceed

from tortured persons; it was not surprising that the 'victims' in such cases were reluctant to prosecute the police who had 'tortured' them. Except when complaints were prompted by motives of malice, it was clearly the instinct of Burmans to let bygones be bygones, and police and local official opinion was strongly opposed to prosecutions. Many officers of the Administration, conscious of the arguments for prosecution, were, nevertheless daunted by the difficulty of passing judgment upon the acts of persons placed under the arbitrary and ruthless rule of the Japanese. They were also held back by the Supreme Allied Commander's policy of not proceeding against 'politically active Burmans'. Most of all were they deterred by the treatment accorded by the Supreme Allied Commander to Aung San.¹ Since it was decided that it was not justifiable or not politic to proceed against the Commander of the Burma National Army, there could be no justice in proceeding against others. And when sentences upon collaborators were denied confirmation, or were reduced, following the intention to give credit for services rendered to the Allied cause, the policy of punishing such persons was quietly allowed to sink out of sight.

* * *

Each C.C.A.O. was provided with a Chief Legal Officer in charge of a Legal and Judicial Department. On its legal side the department was responsible for drafting proclamations, rules and orders, for the conduct of prosecutions, and for furnishing legal opinions when required. On the judicial side it was responsible, on behalf of the C.C.A.O., for establishing military courts, for providing and appointing the magistrates or presiding officers of these courts, and for dealing with petitions and reviews of cases, or laying these with recommendations before the C.C.A.O. if his orders were required. In Malaya, Borneo, and Hong Kong, it was found convenient to make the Chief Legal Officer responsible for handling also, on behalf of the C.C.A.O., a variety of other subjects in addition to strictly legal matters, which in various territories included police, prisons, and custody of property.

It was the intention that each Deputy C.C.A.O. in the field should be provided with a similar Legal and Judicial Department. In the early stages, especially in Burma, it was not always possible to do this, owing to lack of staff with the requisite training and experience, but by the time administration was emerging from the 'formation' stage, and some local lawyers had been uncovered, it was becoming possible to provide most or all D.C.C.A.O.'s with legal and judicial advisers. In Burma these were infrequently called upon to undertake drafting, since this was mostly done at the C.C.A.O.'s headquarters. In Malaya the establishment of two virtually separate administrations for the

¹ Cf. Chapter XIX.

mainland and for Singapore, each frequently issuing its own proclamations, meant that most drafting was undertaken at the headquarters of the two D.C.C.A.O's, which were accordingly equipped with considerably larger Legal and Judicial Departments than were the headquarters of the eight territorial D.C.C.A.O's in Burma.

At a lower level the S.C.A.O's in charge of districts were normally themselves magistrates or presiding officers of military courts, exercising at the same time a general supervision over the work of other courts in their charges. These normally consisted of C.A.O's sitting alone, of C.A.O's sitting together, or of locally appointed magistrates.

Recruitment of Legal and Judicial Officers before re-occupation was made mostly from any available members of the pre-war magistracy or judiciary of the territory concerned; legal practitioners with experience of the territories were also employed. After re-occupation the services could be enlisted of local judges or magistrates, not suspected of collaboration with the enemy. In Burma, Legal and Judicial Officers of all grades from the lowest to the highest could be recruited from this source. Elsewhere, it yielded recruits mainly for the lower posts in the department. If recruits were still required, the net was cast wider and any persons of legal training and experience were brought in, with or without local experience. But throughout, there was an acute shortage of suitably qualified persons.

* * *

When the time came for transfer of responsibility by the military administrations to civil governments, this was normally effected by cancellation of the proclamation under which power had originally been assumed. This cancellation swept away all the amendments or fresh legislation enacted under the authority of proclamations.

The incoming civil governments were faced with the need, first, to give such validity as was necessary to the acts of the military administrations done under the authority of proclamation-law no longer in force, secondly, to ensure that they were themselves armed with the legislation needed to meet the tasks ahead of them, and, thirdly, to arrange for the transfer of the day-to-day administration of justice from the military to the civil government courts.

The first need was met by the enactment of an Indemnity and Validating Act (or Ordinance) by the incoming governments. This gave retrospective validity, before the substantive law, to the legislation of the military period up to the time of its repeal, and to the acts of military courts so far as these might be held inconsistent with this law. Protection was also given to public servants and others from liability for acts done by them in good faith in the discharge of their duty.

The second need was met in various ways. The incoming governments had at their disposal all the substantive law which revived on the transfer of power, most of which had, in fact, been treated as valid by the military administrations. But the abnormal circumstances created a need for additional legislation in many respects, such as had been used by the military governments. In Malaya the incoming government met this need by extending temporarily the validity of all proclamations other than those establishing military administration and the military courts, with the intention that, during this respite, they would decide how much of the military legislation should be placed on the statute book. Even so, certain immediate modifications were required at the time of hand-over to make it possible for the incoming governments to administer the law at all. In Borneo and Hong Kong the validity of certain specified proclamations was continued, the rest being allowed to disappear with the military administrations.

In Burma conditions were complicated by the piecemeal hand-over. At the first transfer of power, on 16th October 1945, there was no cancellation of the proclamation of military administration, or of the subsidiary proclamations, as these were still needed for the parts of Burma not handed over. In regard to the rest of Burma, the Supreme Allied Commander relinquished, as from 16th October, the authority assumed by him in the basic proclamation, so putting all subsidiary proclamations into abeyance and allowing the Government of Burma Act and the authority of the Governor to become effective again. Only when the hand-over was completed by the transfer of the remaining area to civil government on 1st January 1946, was the proclamation of military administration, and the legislation that flowed therefrom, formally cancelled. No action was taken by the Government of Burma to continue the validity of any of the military administration proclamations. It was realised some time after the hand-over that the Indemnity and Validating Act was defective in regard to the law of requisition. While it effectively protected the military authorities from legal proceedings in respect of requisitions made by them, it did not give continuing validity, after 16th October, to requisitions of property made by the military authorities before that date. The Burma Requisitioning (Continuance) Act was passed to safeguard the situation. It was also realised that the lapsing, as a result of the Supreme Allied Commander's relinquishment of authority, of the Currency Proclamation on 16th October, in the part of Burma then handed over, meant that the currency taken over by the Government of Burma was not legal tender until the Monetary Arrangements Order could be suitably modified. It was some weeks before this could be done.

The third need, to arrange for the hand-over of the current business of the courts, was also met in various ways. At one extreme, the

governments in Malaya made provision for the jurisdiction of military courts to continue after the hand-over, for the strictly limited purpose of enabling them to try to a conclusion any cases which had been instituted before the end of military administration. In dealing with these unfinished trials they were to proceed, so far as this was possible, in accordance with the procedure that had been in force when the proceedings were instituted. This was a simple, and by far the most satisfactory, solution to the problem. Similar arrangements were made in Borneo where they could be operated with even less difficulty and risk of dislocation, owing to the fact that courts exactly corresponding to the civil government courts had been re-established some time before hand-over. In Malaya there was no such close correspondence.

In Hong Kong military court trials which had not been completed at the time of hand-over were required to be tried again *de novo*. The only discretion conferred upon the Attorney General was that he might make use of completed committal proceedings before the military courts, to support indictments to be preferred by him before the Supreme Court re-established by the civil government. Provision was also made to ensure that persons committing offences during the military period did not escape liability to trial before the civil government courts merely because the proclamations against which they had offended were repealed on the return of the civil government.

Least satisfactory were the arrangements in Burma. Here, in spite of suggestions to the contrary by the Secretary of State, the Government decided that all cases pending in the military courts at hand-over must be tried again from the beginning. The practical results were that the already inadequate accommodation for persons in custody while under trial was still further overcrowded; and that most military magistrates were kept without work for the last weeks of the military period, having been instructed to take up no cases that they did not feel confident of finishing before the hand-over, and that when they became civil magistrates again, they began work once more with some weeks arrears of cases.

CHAPTER XVII

MISCELLANEOUS

(i)

Labour

IN APRIL 1945, the military forces employed in South-East Asia Command totalled 1,304,126. They included a military labour force of 110,000, recruited into Pioneer or Labour units raised in India or Ceylon, on conditions that varied considerably in regard to the areas in which units might be called upon to serve. All recruits into these units, however, were fully enrolled members of the military forces. This 'military' labour was supplemented by a body of some 413,000 civilian workers. These were of two kinds, 'regimented' and 'unregimented'. Regimented civilian labour was formed into units, raised on an approved war establishment, and was quasi-military in nature. Most of these units had been recruited by the Indian Tea Association and consisted of tea-estate labour, often under the command of its permanent employers and accompanied by its own medical officers. Many had first been raised for work on roads or airfields in Assam in 1941-42 and had rendered notable service during the extrication of the British forces and the evacuation of civilians from Burma at that time.¹ 'Unregimented' civilian labour consisted of locally-recruited civilians not formed into units. Of the total civil labour force of 413,000 in April 1945, regimented labour accounted for 184,000, unregimented labour for 229,000.

Whatever differences there might be between the functions of the various military administrations, the task of providing labour was in all cases laid upon them with unmistakable emphasis. Except in the case of Malaya, direct responsibility for the provision of unregimented labour was accordingly placed upon the Administrations. In Burma the Relief and Labour Department recruited workers, who were then placed at the disposal of Civil Labour Control Teams set up by the military authorities, which, through their Labour Exchanges were responsible for distributing resources to the various military bidders, including the Administration itself.

In Borneo, where the provision of labour was looked upon as the prime function of the Administration, recruitment was effected by the Labour Department. There was at no time difficulty in obtaining the requirements of the forces or of the Administration. In Hong Kong

¹ For an account of this work cf. Tyson, *Forgotten Frontier*, Calcutta, 1945.

also, which never became a part of South-East Asia Command, recruitment of labour for all purposes was carried out by the Labour Department of the Administration. A permanent Labour Board was set up in November 1945 with representatives of all branches of the Services, of the Administration, and of the larger European employers of labour. Only in Malaya was there a departure, more apparent than real, from these arrangements. There recruitment was conducted by the Civil Labour Control Teams themselves, but in consultation with the Labour Department of the Administration. On the mainland of Malaya, however, Labour Exchanges had been set up by the Administration before the arrival of the military Pioneer and Labour organization. These Exchanges were in due course handed over to the Civil Labour Control Teams.

Until populous areas had been recovered, from which local labour could be recruited in large numbers, there was, naturally, a much greater dependence upon military labour and regimented civilian labour for meeting the needs of the army. At the beginning of the military period, and when South-East Asia Command was first formed, the demands upon the Administration in the frontier fringe of Burma were local, sudden, and often of extreme urgency, but not of such size or duration as to be reflected in the totals already quoted for the various types of labour employed. As re-occupation progressed, however, so did the proportion of unregimented labour increase. In April 1945 it was already 229,000 as against 184,000 regimented labour and 110,000 military labour. By February 1946 it had grown further to 300,000 as against 5,000 regimented labour, 47,000 military labour, and 44,000 surrendered Japanese.

* * *

Four categories of unregimented civilian labour were recognised, Clerical and Supervisory Labour, Miscellaneous Labour, Artisan Labour, and Unskilled Labour. The first two categories were paid by the month, the last two by the day. General conditions of service were not abnormal for the time and place. Injury pay was admissible to all categories for injury or sickness arising out of the nature of the employee's work, *if there was a reasonable prospect of the employee returning to duty*. Provision was made for the payment of compensation in respect of all categories for injuries resulting in permanent disablement or death. In the case of Burma a stepped scale of compensation was adopted which allowed about eighteen months' full pay as compensation for death or total disablement in the case of lower paid workers, and tapered down to ten months' pay for workers in receipt of Rs 250 per mensem, and just over eight months pay for workers in receipt of Rs 300, the highest rate admissible to civilian labour.

In Malaya a more liberal scale was adopted of twenty-four months' pay for death or total disablement, regardless of the rates of pay drawn. And higher grades of staff, drawing pay in some cases up to \$700, came under these provisions. In Burma, comparable grades fell under a different category of 'Civilian Employees' who qualified for more favourable pensions or gratuities under various Extraordinary Pensions Rules or War Injuries Pension Rules of the Government of Burma.¹

In both territories, in the case of disablement that was only partial, the compensation was proportionally reduced.

The all-important question, however, of the level of wages to be adopted, could not be answered until re-occupation had taken place, and even then admitted of no easy solution. It was known that galloping inflation had set in during the Japanese occupation. The last stages of this, in the weeks preceding re-occupation were to carry prices to fantastic levels. Cases were recorded in Burma where a pair of bullocks and a cart that had been bought and sold in 1942 for Rs 180, were sold, reluctantly, to the Japanese in March 1945, for Rs 20,000. In April 1945 an employee of the Burmese Government wished to buy a bicycle, in poor condition, and for this purpose drew an advance of Rs 10,000. It was intended to cut off this inflation by the drastic expedient of refusing any value to Japanese money, and then to make a fresh start with British currencies.² Even with these, some degree of new inflation was bound to result from the disproportion between inevitably lavish military expenditure and scarcity of consumer goods. In the case of Burma '... it was hoped before the Military Administration was driven from its policy [of attempting to force down prices by selling rice, salt, and a limited quantity of other goods to civilian labour at prices approximately twenty per cent above pre-war levels] it would be able to bring about a general price level around fifty per cent above the pre-war level'. In Malaya a more flexible objective was adopted '... to fix prices at world levels so far as these could be ascertained...'. In practice it seems that a level comparable with that aimed at in Burma was in the minds of the planners for Malaya, if conditions elsewhere would permit this. Planning for wage rates in both territories was undertaken against this background, but the methods adopted were somewhat different, reflecting the greater precision of the Burma objective.

¹ The Superior Civil Services (Extraordinary Pension) Rules, 1936.
The Secretary of State's Services (War Injuries Pension) Rules, 1944.
The Burma Extraordinary Pension Rules.
The Burma War Injuries Pension Rules 1944.

Under these rules provision was made for the award of pensions to a maximum of Rs 4000 per annum and of gratuities to a maximum of 3-4 months' pay to the injured person or his family.

² Cf. Chapter XII.

For Malaya, the basic wage rates, upon which planning was founded, corresponded, in the higher grades, to the rates in force before the outbreak of the war in Europe. At the lowest grades, for unskilled labour, they represented an increase over these of at least fifty per cent, perhaps as much as a hundred per cent. But there had been inflation in Malaya during 1940 and 1941, and the rates for unskilled labour were probably less, even so, than the rates in force immediately before the outbreak of war with Japan. A Cost of Living Allowance was planned if actual price levels made this necessary. For Burma the basic wage rates adopted by the planners were much more consistently those in force before the outbreak of war in Europe. They were to be augmented if necessary by a Dearness-Allowance.

In the event, after an initial period of great uncertainty and difficulty, prices soared away above the modest increase that the planners had envisaged, till they were, perhaps, 1000 per cent above pre-war levels. A hesitant downward trend followed and some stability was first reached in Burma at 400-500 per cent and in Malaya at 700-800 per cent above these levels. The general course of events in this connection and the measures taken to counter inflation have been more fully recounted elsewhere.¹ But the fight to push down prices was only partially successful and the problem of wage levels had to be faced.

Neither in Burma nor in Malaya were wage levels ever brought into correlation with prices during the military period. The need to do so was urgent, but many reasons held the administrations back, in addition to a natural reluctance to add to the burdens of the British taxpayer if this could be avoided. In the first place, it was far from certain that prices had yet found a permanent level. In fact the administrations were attempting energetically, and with some success, to lower them. If wages were at once raised the whole way to meet prices and the latter fell further, the administrations, or the civil governments that were to succeed them, would be faced with the difficult and unpopular task of reducing, or entirely withdrawing, the increases given. Then, any increases granted would still further add to the already formidable inflationary tendencies of the time. Thirdly, any increase in wage rates for employees of the administrations that would fully meet the rise in prices within the re-occupied territories, would be out of all proportion to the levels of pay within the armed forces in those territories, and to the wage and price levels still held in India, upon which country the forces of occupation were based. Lastly, any such increase might well break down the economic structure of Burma and Malaya.

The fundamental consideration, however, was that money throughout this period had lost its value because there was nothing to buy with it. No rate of increase could conjure up the goods needed: it could only push prices higher in the scramble for the few imports available.

¹ Cf. Chapter XII.

The individual would be no better off and the administrations would be left to face the very real dangers and difficulties. In Burma, furthermore, there could be no case for an increase of wages in full proportion to prices, so long as the arrangement was continued, under which rice was sold to employees of the Administration at prices considerably below the market rate. For all these reasons, there was a well-founded reluctance to introduce increases in wage rates and a tendency to persevere first with the general measures for lowering price levels, which have been described in earlier chapters.¹

In the case of Malaya, the first step taken to reinforce these measures was to subsidize the price of imported rice in the hope that this would influence the price of other commodities as well. This was done in October 1945. Further attempts to gain time for prices to fall were made in Burma and Malaya by increasing wages through the discretion allowed to the Labour officers to confer advance increments, and to re-classify labour into more highly paid grades. But this discretion was not intended for this purpose and any relief so afforded could only be infinitesimal—and was in any case largely illusory.

By December it had become clear, in Malaya, that the subsidy on rice was ineffective in bringing down prices, or checking their rise. It was decided to grant a temporary twenty per cent increase of pay to all persons earning less than a hundred dollars a month. In January 1946 it was found necessary to re-inforce this measure by making free issues of important food stuffs in order to keep labour at work at all.

For Burma, the grant of Dearness Allowance was approved before extensive re-occupation took place. This was to be regulated with regard to the price of rice, the staple food. The current price upon which the level of the allowance was to be calculated was not, however, any market price, but the price at which the Administration was selling rice to civilian labour and, if stocks were sufficient, to the general public. This price corresponded to an index figure of 120, with 100 representing a normal level before the outbreak of war in Europe. So long as stocks were adequate this was a partially satisfactory procedure, but there were times when stocks were insufficient, or of such poor quality that they required to be supplemented by purchases in the open market. The price there was likely to correspond to an index figure of 400, perhaps more. The only other commodity obtainable from official distribution points at prices comparable to those for rice, was salt. Cooking oil, and imported goods (especially cloth) were also sold when stocks were available (which was frequently not the case), but the prices fixed for these were appreciably above both the 120 level fixed for rice, and also the 150 level which the planners had more generally in mind. Everything else had to be bought in the open market and paid for at inflated rates.

¹ Cf. Chapters XII and XIII.

The allowances could never, therefore, entirely have covered the increase in the cost of living; nor would it have been right to attempt to make it do so, for, until imports arrived, it was plainly necessary for all belts to be tightened. But there were other limitations placed upon the allowance. Firstly, it reached a maximum when prices rose to a level of 200; any increase above this was not reflected at all. And most prices in the open market were far above this level. Secondly, the allowance tapered markedly. An increase in the price of rice by a hundred per cent would be fully reflected in the allowance for the lowest grades of labour. Workers in the middle grades who would spend on food a lower proportion of their total income, would receive an increase of about fifty per cent. Workers in the highest grades, drawing pay of Rs 250. would receive an increase of little more than ten per cent of their pay. With the allowance calculated, as in fact it was, on a price of rice twenty per cent above the pre-war level, unskilled labourers actually received an addition to pay of twenty to twenty-five per cent, the workers in the middle ranges an addition of six and a quarter per cent, and the highest paid workers, an addition of only two and a half per cent. Until imports began to flow in, however, it is doubtful whether any more liberal increases could have been justified.

Hong Kong, being at no time a part of South-East Asia Command, never came under the ALFSEA organization for the recruitment and control of labour. The importance of an adequate supply of labour and the danger from strikes led to the creation of a strong Labour Department and an advisory Labour Board in the colony. Recruitment of labour, whether this was required for the Administration or for any other of the military Services, was the responsibility of the Labour Department. The inevitable inflation set in as acutely as in Burma and Malaya. But in Hong Kong, with more easy access to such foodstocks as were in existence on the mainland, recovery was quicker and, over the period 13th October to 1st December 1945, the aggregate cost of ten main items of food and fuel was roughly halved, leaving the general price level at something like 400, or 450, compared with a pre-war figure of 100. From the beginning wages were built up on 1941 rates plus the 1941 High Cost of Living Allowance, plus a rehabilitation allowance at a flat rate of \$1.00 a day. For unskilled labour this raised the pre-war rate of 60 cents a day to \$1.00 a day, plus the rehabilitation allowance of \$1.00 or to an index figure of 333 compared with a pre-war 100. But for more highly paid labour, with the rehabilitation allowance remaining constant, the situation was less satisfactory. It was clear that further changes must be made and in November, on the recommendation of the Labour Board, revised basic hourly wages were prescribed for all daily labour. The fixed rehabilitation allowance became variable and was increased to \$1.20 in the

case of unskilled labour and \$1.50 for higher grade labour. It was at the same time tied to the cost of ten main items of food and fuel. This gave some relief, but work was begun soon after on a more radical revision and simplification of salary scales for all government employees. This task could not be completed before the end of the military period and was in due course passed on to the incoming civil government.

In Borneo inflation did not take serious effect until the military period was almost over. Throughout the early stages there was no difficulty in recruiting labour on wage rates that were virtually the same as those in force before the war. When prices did begin to rise and the grant of a cost-of-living allowance had to be considered the hand-over to civil governments was so imminent that the problem was bequeathed to them.

* * *

In the case of Burma a particular problem was created by the extent to which labour employed before the war, particularly in the docks and in transport and industry, had been Indian. In 1941-42, Indians, to the number of 400,000, fled to India before the Japanese. Rather more remained behind in Burma. Two aspects of the matter presented themselves to the planners in India. On the one hand, the Indians who had remained in Burma would not suffice to provide all the labour required for the operations of South-East Asia Command and for the working of the great base to be built up in Rangoon, so that labour would require to be imported from India. On the other hand, it was expected that many Indian refugees would wish to return to Burma. Here, it would seem, was the supply to meet the demand. But the Government of India was not disposed to allow such an easy solution.

To understand the situation that arose it is necessary to go back a little. At the outbreak of war the total population of Burma was seventeen millions. This number included over one million Indians who, as a result mostly of unrestricted immigration, were increasing faster than the Burmese. This Indian minority did not assimilate itself to the indigenous people of the country, being sharply different in race, religion, customs, language and temperament. Its standard of living was lower than that of the Burmese. Indians were willing to work longer and more regularly, to do work that the Burmese would not do, and to do all this for wages upon which the latter could not live. Burma could not easily dispense with unskilled Indian labour, yet the Burmese held Indians in contempt. At the same time they resented the hold these were gaining, by their industry, in most walks of life. The decade 1930-40, with its increasing economic stresses, led to exacerbation of these feelings and in 1938, on the pretext of an insult to the

Buddhist religion, anti-muslim riots and massacres broke out, over most of the country, resulting in the death of some 200 Indians and the wounding of some 750 more. This outbreak of anti-Indian feeling followed closely the almost complete transfer of political power to Burmese hands as a result of the introduction of the 1937 constitution. It was whipped up by irresponsible politicians and the press, largely with the object of embarrassing the Ministry. A committee of enquiry was set up and in accordance with one of its recommendations a commission was appointed to examine the question of Indian immigration. The commission recommended the imposition of restrictions upon Indian immigration whereupon negotiations took place between the Governments of India and Burma. An agreement was reached which recognised two conflicting but complementary principles, the right of Burma to determine the composition of her own population, and the right of Indians who had permanently identified themselves with Burma to be deemed a part of that population. In some respects, particularly by imposing a literacy test in certain cases, and by making marriage or co-habitation of an Indian with a Burmese woman cause for cancellation of the permission to enter or remain in Burma, the agreement went further than had been recommended by the commission. When it was published in India it aroused much criticism and opposition, and pressure was brought to bear on the Government of India to secure relaxation of the prohibitions imposed by Burma. As a measure of retaliation, therefore, and in order to have some thing with which to bargain, the Indian Government, secure in the knowledge that Burma was in certain respects largely dependent upon the use of Indian labour, placed an embargo upon emigration of unskilled labour to Burma.

It was against this involved background that the admission of Indians to Burma on re-occupation had to be considered, whether these were viewed as returning refugees or as labour required for the military forces.

South-East Asia Command was concerned to import, for the period of military responsibility, a labour force of 150,000 to 200,000 men. In the course of 1944 it appeared that the Government of India would be willing to permit recruitment of this Indian labour for Burma, if it was militarily necessary to do so, but only on conditions. These included a degree of militarisation of the labour required, and, more particularly, its repatriation to India on the conclusion of military employment. In fact permission was given for the recruitment, on these terms, of 16,000 skilled or semi-skilled workers and of 160,000 unskilled labourers. Meanwhile, the general question of raising the embargo on immigration of unskilled labour was under discussion between the Governments of India and Burma. It was soon found by South-East Asia Command, however, that the skilled and semi-skilled labour coming forward,

most of which consisted of Indian refugees from Burma, was not willing to sign on for service in that country unless it was to be allowed to resettle there permanently. To meet this difficulty the Government of India, in return for the concession by the Government of Burma that these persons might settle permanently in Burma, if they wished, consented to relax the stipulation regarding repatriation by the military authorities of the 16,000 skilled and semi-skilled labourers. Strictly speaking, however, the general embargo on emigration had never applied to these persons. All unskilled labour was still required to be brought back to India at the end of the military period.

The sudden and general removal of all such labour, just when the military authorities were handing over responsibility, was likely to cause a break-down in the public services and the trade and industry in the country that would acutely embarrass the incoming civil government. On 13th March 1944 the Government of Burma had approached the Government of India with proposals for dealing with this difficulty, and also for controlling the general return of refugees and for negotiating a fresh immigration agreement, to replace the unpopular agreement of 1941. It was hoped that the Government of India would drop the embargo altogether, or at least extend the duration of the conditional relaxation granted for military purposes.

In the course of 1944 a request by South-East Asia Command to be allowed to recruit 20,000 conservancy coolies was refused. Then when South-East Asia Command attempted to recruit another 48,000 skilled labourers, without relaxation of the provision for compulsory repatriation, it was again found that these would not come forward unless they were allowed to settle permanently in Burma. Accordingly, in April 1945, the military authorities were urging the Government of Burma to press the Government of India to relax once more their stipulation regarding repatriation so as to allow recruitment of these 48,000 skilled labourers.

In the following month the Government of India replied expressing its willingness to waive the repatriation condition in regard to the 160,000 unskilled labourers recruited into the Pioneer Corps, provided that the Government of Burma would allow these to settle permanently in Burma. This the Government of Burma, mindful of the reaction to be expected from Burmese opinion on re-occupation, felt unable to concede. The resultant deadlock continued until long after the conclusion of military responsibility in Burma. In the event, however, the heavy recruitment of local unregimented labour within Burma, referred to earlier in this chapter, and the employment of surrendered Japanese, enabled the needs of the military authorities to be satisfactorily met without further importation of labour from India.

* * *

Economic dislocation in the Far East inevitably created industrial unrest. It was least serious in Borneo, the least industrialised British territory recovered. In Burma, the civil government took over before there had been time for unrest to be formulated into grievances. In neither of these territories did any industrial disputes occur during the military period. In Hong Kong there were a number of incipient strikes, but as the causes of these were economic, not political, the Administration experienced comparatively little difficulty in settling them in an atmosphere of good will. In Malaya and Singapore strikes were more numerous and serious. Most were fomented or exploited for political ends and were correspondingly difficult to settle. The most serious, the general strike of 29th January, and the subsequent demonstrations on 15th February 1946 will be more fully referred to in a later chapter¹ on political developments in Malaya. Other big strikes took place on the Batu Arang Coalfields, at the Eastern Smelting Works in Penang, on the railway, and at the docks. There was also a fairly general strike of essential workers in December 1945.

The rise in prices and consequent economic distress were greater in Malaya than in the other British territories re-occupied, and there was at all times a real shortage of rice. There was also a more highly developed and determined political organization ready to make the fullest use of these conditions for its own ends. The leaders of the nationalist movement in Burma were slower to realize or less ready to take advantage of the difficulties of the Administration. Ironically, it was this very fact that brought to them a degree of success that was denied to the much more redoubtable organisation in Malaya, for they did not make their effort until after the military period and after British military strength in Burma had been dispersed, by which time there was neither the will nor the means to resist it. In Malaya, the first effort came more promptly, during the military period, when there was still the force available to meet the challenge. The success with which this was done insured that the effort was not renewed until a later period when the dangers of Communist infiltration were more keenly realized and the determination to resist it had revived.

(ii)

Recruitment and Training

The four British military administrations set up in the Far East were to become responsible for the government of some twenty-five million people scattered over an area that had fallen within the jurisdictions of five different British colonial governments and of the Sultans of the

¹ Cf. Chapter XX.

federated and the unfederated Malay States. Recruitment and training of staff for these administrations was no small undertaking.

Throughout this area, before the war, virtually all subordinate recruitment had been done locally from persons indigenous to, or domiciled in, the several territories. In Burma this had been true also of much of the superior staff. Other recruitment had been done in Europe. At the time of the Japanese occupation, when Europeans escaped or suffered internment, persons locally recruited, with few exceptions, remained in their own countries, most commonly resuming their normal work under the administrations set up or sponsored by the invaders. It was, rightly, expected that these would be eager to return to service under the British and plans were made for their re-enrolment as soon as they could be found and cleared of any charges of collaboration, and to the extent that the administrations could make use of their services. To have done otherwise would have been impossible and undesirable.

There were a few exceptions to this exclusive reliance upon local recruitment for subordinate staff. In the case of departments that would be required to begin operations before there had been any opportunity to recruit in re-occupied territory, or of departments with no pre-war counterparts and, consequently, no ready pool of old employees to draw from, arrangements were made for the raising externally, before re-occupation, of a nucleus staff to carry on until local recruitment could begin.

Two points need to be made in connection with the local recruitment of staff. The first, and less important, is that, to those who had waited three years and more under the Japanese for the return of the British Government, which they had long served and were now anxious to serve again, it appeared a somewhat disingenuous and unnecessary complication that the incoming administration should claim to be a different government, a military as distinguished from a civil government, especially when, as was often the case, the men who came back as soldiers were the same as those who had gone out as civilians. The only results of the change appeared to be that, instead of slipping straight back into their old jobs in familiar conditions and surroundings, they were required to enter into new and strange conditions of service, the necessity for which was not at all apparent to them, and that the new government could, if it suited its purposes, dissociate itself from the civil government that had preceded, and would again succeed it. The second, and more important, point concerns the inquiries held to ensure that only those whose conduct had been 'loyal and proper, should be re-employed. The effect of these upon public opinion and upon the popularity of the Administrations in Burma and Malaya has been discussed in earlier chapters and need not be re-examined here.¹

¹ Cf. pp. 128-131 and 156.

It is sufficient to say that this was one of the substantial reasons for the rapid decrease in the popularity of the Administrations in Burma and Malaya which set in after the first warm-hearted weeks.

* * *

For superior staff, plans needed to be made for extensive external recruitment. This was true, even in the case of Burma, because many key appointments had still been held by Europeans before the war and because in any case, the re-establishment of administration on first re-occupation could not wait upon the coming forward of suitable local recruits. It was not known how soon they would become available (and, indeed, for some time, the Japanese, when they retreated, took care to withdraw such officers so as to deny their assistance to the British), or how long enquiries into collaboration would take and how many would be found tainted. External recruitment and training of superior staff was therefore an important pre-occupation for the planners.

For such recruitment there were three main sources. The first consisted of those government employees who had escaped internment at the time of the Japanese occupation; the second, of persons who, although without experience of administration, had knowledge of the countries concerned; the third, of volunteers from the armed forces, generally without either previous experience of administration or connection with the countries they would be required to administer.

The main task in regard to the first two of these sources was to trace the persons concerned and to press for their release at the appropriate time from the various kinds of war work, civil and military, into which they had been swept. It was a frustrating undertaking owing to the inevitably low priority accorded to Civil Affairs needs until territory had actually been re-occupied.

The task in regard to the last source was to devise terms that would attract recruits of suitable type. Work on this was begun early by the Malayan planners (who were going to be much more dependent upon this source of recruitment than the other Administrations) and by the Colonial Office. Similar arrangements were also prepared for the other areas administered by the Colonial Office. The Burma Office was not at first drawn into this planning as it was assumed in the War Office that the needs of Burma for recruits from this source would be slight and could probably be met by improvised recruitment in India. It later became clear that Burma could not afford to be omitted altogether from plans to attract such recruits.

The terms offered were finally published in Army Council Instruction No. 1426 of 1944 in October of that year. For Colonial Office territories they included the offer of a ten year contract after the military period, with eligibility for appointment to the permanent and

pensionable civil service. For Burma it was impossible to offer such long term prospects; eligibility for appointment to the civil services in Burma on a non-pensionable basis, but with lump sum grants in lieu of pension, was the best that could be promised. These obviously less attractive terms might have handicapped Burma in the matter of recruitment. But, in fact, events moved so fast in that country that little use was made even of the few recruits that did come forward in response to these terms before Burma achieved complete independence.

* * *

Very soon after the establishment of South-East Asia Command plans were drawn up for a Civil Affairs Training School for the Far East to be set up in India or Ceylon. Meanwhile, however, a Civil Affairs Staff Centre had been created in England at Wimbledon to train Civil Affairs staff for the Middle East, Africa and Europe. The first course opened on 16th February 1943. It was decided that training for the Far East should also be undertaken at this centre, and in June 1944 a meeting was held in London to consider the arrangements required. In November of the same year the centre was enlarged and reorganized into two wings, one for North-West Europe and one for the Far East, each to take 200 students at a time.

There were three sides to the work of the centre. The first was concerned to impart general training in the basic duties of persons employed on civil affairs or military government, the second, to familiarise civil affairs officers with the organization and duties of the rest of the military staffs, the third, to give more particular instruction regarding the territories and people to be brought under administration. Emphasis varied for the different categories of persons from which recruitment would normally be made. For those with experience of the countries into which they would be sent the third aspect would be less important. For those who had been in civil employ it would be the second that required emphasis; for those without experience of administration, it would be the first; for new recruits from the armed forces, it would be the third.

Instruction in all aspects was given at the Civil Affairs Staff Centre, except that language courses were provided at the School of Oriental and African Studies, at the London County Council School of Languages, or, if necessary, under special arrangements made by the War Office. In addition, for those lacking all military experience, a brief course of rudimentary military training was given at the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineer Officers Training School at Kettering.

Courses for the Far East began in December 1944. The first four lasted only three weeks and were intended mainly for members of the Malayan Civil Service. Subsequent courses were intended to last eight

weeks, but after the first the period was cut down to seven and then to six weeks as the need for Civil Affairs officers grew more urgent. One other three weeks' course was held. The longer courses were intended to meet the needs of persons volunteering from the armed services in response to Army Council Instruction No. 1426. The syllabus for the longer courses covered Military Organization and Staff Duties (including Civil Affairs organization), Regional Instruction, Functional Instruction and Instruction in General Colonial Administration. Additional subjects included Tropical Hygiene and Sanitation, and a Language course. Outside lecturers assisted, instructional films were shown, museums were visited. Students worked in syndicates formed on the basis of the territories for which they were destined.

The instruction given in the Far East Wing has been criticised on two grounds. The first is that the conceptions underlying courses of training originally devised for the occupation of enemy territory were insufficiently modified to meet the case of recovery of territory that had originally been British. The second is that there was an almost total absence from the instructing staff of persons with first hand knowledge and experience of the Far East. There is no doubt that the centre was better equipped to prepare administrators for North West Europe than the Far East. In fact, however, the officers sent out from the centre displayed a high standard of training, and of general competence and ability. It is doubtful whether in the time allowed markedly better results could have been attained by any other methods.

* * *

The Burma Administration drew few recruits from the Civil Affairs Staff Centre, having a much higher proportion of pre-war Government employees to call upon; furthermore, such new recruitment as was necessary took place very largely in India, not in the United Kingdom. No alternative training arrangements were provided for such recruits to the higher grades of the administration. The Malayan Administration depended upon new recruits for some three quarters of its higher grade staff and most of these passed through the Staff Centre. In addition, training was given at the Civil Affairs Base Depot for Malaya at Pallavaram. This was intended to amplify the training already given at Wimbledon, but later, owing to lack of time, many officers were sent straight to Pallavaram and took the course there as their only training. The Borneo Administration drew some recruits from the Centre but most of its staff was Australian or was recruited in Australia. Proposals were discussed for setting up a Borneo Wing at a Civil Affairs School that had been established by the Australian military authorities at Duntroon near Canberra to train staff for their administration of New Guinea, but these led to nothing. Such training as took place in

Australia for Borneo was given at Ingleburn at the headquarters of the British Civil Affairs Unit.¹

Hong Kong officers received training, if at all, at the Wimbledon Centre, but had to be recruited at such short notice that there was little time for training of any kind.

In regard to subordinate grades recruited externally, the Burma and Malaya Administrations set up police schools in India to train Indian recruits as a nucleus force for use in small parties in important areas on re-occupation.

The Burma Administration also set up a school for the training of relief workers. There was great difficulty in obtaining accommodation, but in July 1944 His Highness the Nawab of Rampur State offered his country palace for the purpose. There was then delay in completing the adaptations necessary to this building and the first course could not start until January 1945. In the meanwhile a staff had been collected and a school improvised in re-occupied Arakan.

(iii)

Propaganda

Each of the military administrations was equipped with a publicity or propaganda department. These were intended ultimately—but perhaps not until after the re-establishment of civil government—to serve the needs of the administrations of the separate territories. For the whole of the military period, however, they were required to subserve the wider needs of British propaganda in the war against Japan. To these there was no predominantly Civil Affairs aspect and it is unnecessary in this volume to do more than sketch the organization involved.

Control in London of propaganda to the Far East was initially undertaken by the Political Warfare (Japan) Committee which, in regard to Japan, was guided by an agreed Anglo-American plan and, in regard to territories occupied by the Japanese, was guided by the Foreign Office, the Burma Office, or the Colonial Office, as was appropriate. Early in 1945 this committee disappeared and its responsibilities passed to the Political Warfare Executive, under the joint control of the Minister of Information and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

In India there were in 1942 at least five different organizations concerned with emission of propaganda to Japan and the occupied territories—in addition to bodies concentrating on propaganda within India. First and foremost there was the Far Eastern Bureau of the British Ministry of Information. Originally set up in Hong Kong, it

¹ Cf. p. 175.

retreated first to Singapore and then to Delhi. It broadcast from All-India Radio and prepared news-sheets and operational leaflets to be dropped by the Royal Air Force for the consumption of the Japanese and of the inhabitants of occupied territories. In addition, the Intelligence Directorate of G.H.Q. (India) was responsible for certain propaganda which the Far Eastern Bureau could not undertake. The exact demarcation of the spheres of these two organizations was continually under discussion but had not been clearly established before the creation of South-East Asia Command. Force 136, the British organization for clandestine operations in the Far East, was responsible originally for clandestine propaganda only, but later for 'front line' propaganda as well. There were, finally, two American organizations, the Office of War Information for overt propaganda, and the Office of Strategic Services for clandestine propaganda. To this cluster of psychological warriors there was added in 1942 by the Government of Burma a Propaganda Office, which became virtually an integral part of the Far Eastern Bureau, and which alone was naive enough actually to include in its designation any reference to propaganda.

The creation of the South-East Asia Command late in 1943 added yet another interest. The over-riding concern of the Supreme Allied Commander in propaganda against the Japanese and towards occupied territories could hardly be disputed, and, having established his own Psychological Warfare Division, he set about integrating the existing organizations with his own. The Burma Propaganda Office was absorbed into the C.A.S. (Burma) Publicity Department and was then attached to the Psychological Warfare Division. Integration of the G.H.Q. (India) and Force 136 organisation was effected in a somewhat similar manner. The Far Eastern Bureau was to prove more difficult to absorb, and never came under the Supreme Allied Commander's control. The American organizations also resisted assimilation. Although the authorities in Washington were agreeable to the setting up of a Combined Anglo-American Psychological Warfare Division, General Stilwell resolutely refused to accept such an arrangement on the, probably valid, grounds that British and American policies in the Far East diverged too widely to permit of such unification. A combined Liaison Committee was the most that he would concede for the resolution of differences.

It is impossible to assess the efficacy of the work of the Psychological Warfare Division in South-East Asia Command, but its claim to have played a major part in bringing about a rise in the proportion of Japanese troops surrendering to Japanese troops killed (from 0.6 per cent in the first three months of 1944 to 12.5 per cent in June and July 1945) cannot be allowed to go unchallenged. Early in 1944 the Japanese in Burma, hitherto consistently victorious, launched an offensive that was intended to carry them into India. Their morale was at its

highest and there can scarcely have been occasion or even opportunity for surrender. By the middle of 1945 they were broken by defeat and disease, starving and cut off from escape out of Burma. Most lacked the strength to resist capture or the resolution to take the only other way to avoid falling alive into the hands of the enemy. In such a disaster there is no need to look to Psychological Warfare to explain the increase in surrenders.

* * *

On 1st September 1944 the Military Administration for Burma set up its own Publicity Department. The Government of Burma Propaganda Office was taken over and redesignated the C.A.S.(B) Information Section. This was then attached to the Psychological Warfare Division of South-East Asia Command, as we have seen, and sent to the Forward Base in Calcutta, a thousand miles nearer to the front, and in close touch with the Royal Air Force which undertook the dropping of news sheets and leaflets. From here in due course the section moved into Burma, shaking itself out partially from the Psychological Warfare Division in doing so, in preparation for the time when the section could be left behind in Burma while the division turned its attention to other territories and moved on with South-East Asia Command headquarters to Singapore.

In Calcutta the section was concerned with preparation of material for broadcasts and for leaflets to Burma. Its main and most effective work was the production of a weekly news-sheet in Burmese called 'Laynattha', or the 'Spirit of the Air,' an average of some 25,000 copies being dropped weekly, although actual figures were liable to vary very greatly as other demands upon the always insufficient supply of aircraft waxed and waned. This news-sheet achieved a very wide circulation and great popularity in Burma. But speaking generally, this was a difficult and depressing period for the propagandist: good advertising is no substitute for good wares; and in the absence of military success it was difficult for advertising to be good.

After return to Burma the activities of the section increased greatly. It took on the former Government Press (which was found in a good state of preservation), published one English and three Burmese newspapers, and prepared large quantities of special pamphlets. On 10th September broadcasting was resumed in Rangoon. Six Mobile Film Units were employed from the middle of October. Information rooms were opened at fourteen centres throughout the country. Cordial relations were established with the reviving local press. The Department was handed over to the Government of Burma in two instalments, on 16th October 1945, and on 1st January 1946.

General planning for Malaya began in London, as we have seen, and this included plans for a Publicity Department. While these were

being prepared, lecture tours were undertaken by members of the Malayan Planning Unit and articles were prepared for the press, with the double object of reviving the good name of Malaya after the disasters of 1941 and 1942, and of preparing the public, in the United Kingdom, in India, in America, and in Australia, for the far reaching constitutional changes which were being planned.

On re-occupation of Malaya a Printing and Publicity Department was set up on an all-Malaya basis with headquarters at Singapore. Broadcasting was improvised from the earliest days of the re-occupation, good relations were established with the local press which, with great assistance in newsprint from the Administration, was able to resume publication at quite an early stage. A number of publicity campaigns were undertaken in regard to the intentions of the Administration, news-sheets were produced, information rooms opened, lectures organized, and aid given to the film industry. On 17th March the Department was divided in preparation for the hand over on 1st April to the two civil governments of Singapore and the Mainland.

In Hong Kong a Press Relations Office was established and the C.C.A.O. reported that this proved a successful innovation which it was hoped to retain after the resumption of civil government. The C.C.A.O. also reported that 'the two papers controlled by the Chinese Communist Party showed a high standard of journalism throughout the military period. Their editorial policy was constructive and helpful'. The rest of the vernacular press was not so helpful, but a warning by the Administration that it was not prepared to allow good relations between China and Britain to be jeopardised, resulted in a marked improvement of tone. The English press was co-operative and supported the Administration.

In Borneo a small Public Relations Department was planned to provide leaflets, broadcasting, and posters as required, and to conduct relations with the press. It proved sufficient to meet the not very exacting requirements of a less-developed society. The lavish display of flags by the American units operating in Borneo made it desirable to correct the impression that U.S. forces were entirely responsible for the re-occupation.

To all occupied territories in the earlier stages, when there was not much comfort or profit to be derived from the news, the underlying theme of propaganda was the exploitation by the Japanese of the territories occupied by them. Later, as the tide of Japanese invasion began to ebb, the emphasis was shifted to the communication of factual news.

The most successful of the methods employed was probably the distribution by air of the 'Laynattha' in Burma; the C.C.A.O. claimed that this news-sheet attained 'a greater popularity than any paper had ever done in Burma . . . '.

In the circumstances broadcasting as a method of propaganda obviously left much to be desired. There were few receiving sets in the territories at which the broadcasts were aimed, many of these had gone out of order, and there were harsh penalties for those caught listening to Allied broadcasts. And yet it is probable that the cases in which these broadcasts were heard in occupied territories exerted an influence quite out of proportion to their small number. The hearers were men of courage, men who believed in the Allied cause, and who derived deep satisfaction and strength from the news heard in danger. It was remarkable how quickly and widely information received by them was circulated. Even more remarkable, perhaps, was the credence accorded to the news given, even in the worst times, when there was, surely, little to suggest that British hopes would come true.

PART V

Political

CHAPTER XVIII

THE POLITICAL PROBLEM

IN TIME OF PEACE in south-east Asia, British political authority flowed from His Majesty's Government through the Burma Office or the Colonial Office to local governments, and political relations with foreign powers were conducted by the Foreign Office and its diplomatic representatives. The effect of the creation of South-East Asia Command and of the establishment of military government by the Supreme Allied Commander was to divert the flow of political authority in the area affected into a single new channel, through the Chiefs of Staff in London to the Supreme Allied Commander and from him to the military commanders or Chief Civil Affairs Officers concerned. The political authority thus exercised by the Supreme Allied Commander was in important respects greater than that of the civil governors or diplomatic representatives temporarily superseded since he was able, if military necessity required, to disregard legal or constitutional limitations in British territories and to overrule the sovereignty of foreign powers. He was, moreover, the sole judge of what military necessity did require.

We have been concerned in earlier parts of this book with military government on the administrative plane, viewed from both territorial and topical aspects. At this level there was varying, but generally considerable, delegation of authority to the several Chief Civil Affairs Officers. The remaining chapters will deal with military government at the political level where responsibility was largely reserved by the Supreme Allied Commander to himself. At this higher level the heads of the Administrations were intended to act in an advisory, rather than an executive, capacity on political matters affecting their own territories.

Upon Admiral Mountbatten fell the perplexing task of conducting the early fateful contacts of the West with the up-surge of nationalism in south-east Asia which had been released, first, by the collapse of the European powers before the Japanese, and then by the defeat of the latter at the hands of the Allied forces. The question of the policy that should govern these contacts rapidly over-shadowed all other political problems. The remaining chapters of this book will accordingly deal with the emergence and treatment of this problem in Burma, Indo-China, and Indonesia, and of the somewhat different situation that

arose in Malaya. In Borneo and Hong Kong it required no answer during the period of military government.

* * *

In those dependent territories of south-east Asia where nationalism was a force to be reckoned with before the second world war, the attention of the casual observer was apt to be monopolised by the clamour of the small groups of extremists dedicated to the attainment of national independence immediately and by the use of force if necessary. It was consequently easy to assume an absence of nationalist feeling in the people at large. But there was in most of the countries concerned an underlying and widespread preference for self-government, even if this was to be bad government, springing from a natural pride strongly reinforced by the political teachings of the West. This preference mostly found no expression and seldom led to action. There were many reasons for this. There was fear of the power that the European wielded. There was respect for his scientific knowledge and practical ability. There was, here and there, a true feeling for European culture and political ideals. There was genuine friendship for individual Europeans. Many Asians had begun to acquire a vested interest in the undoubted material benefits that European rule had brought—greater security for all, a higher standard of living and culture for some. At the same time there was a scarcity of leaders of the necessary stature among the extremists, for the ablest men were likely to find a career within the existing framework. Again, before the war there had been no obvious occasion for the detonation of revolution. Above all, perhaps, there was the mere habit of being governed, which ensured that most people accepted the existing administration without much more than a grumble, and preferred to approach independence by decently-spaced stages. It was only the few who broke through these restraints; and this not always because they were more courageous, or more patriotic, but often because they had less to lose by destroying the existing social order and plunging the country into chaos and violence. They were often, and were often felt by their own compatriots to be, irresponsible, and were accordingly, in a sense, unrepresentative of their people. In a wider sense, however, most of the latter were at heart in sympathy with the ultimate objects of the extremists and could not but be stirred by the thought of their personal bravery, however much they might disapprove of their methods.

Much of this inertia was broken down by the war. Respect for the foreign rulers, fear of their power, ebbed away as the Europeans were defeated and fled before the Asian conquerors, or were imprisoned and humiliated by them—though personal friendships often survived. Vested interests disappeared as the old society crumbled away. The habit of generations was rudely broken. The absence of Europeans

opened to larger numbers than before the experience of employment in administrative work and thus, rightly or wrongly, dispelled diffidence in their own ability to do the work of Europeans. And chaos both threw up the leaders, giving the tough and ruthless their opening, and brought the opportunity to break with the past.

Nationalism, thus released from its inhibitions, was deliberately encouraged by the Japanese, at first with the aim of enlisting its support in the crusade against the white man, later, as the possibility of defeat forced itself upon them, in order to leave a legacy of trouble to the forces of re-occupation. In particular, youth movements were formed, sometimes armed, and trained to violence against Europeans and Americans. In quite a different, unintentional way the Japanese did almost as much to stimulate nationalism by their arrogance and brutality. These roused hatred against themselves as foreigners and so strengthened feeling against other foreigners also.

But it was not only the Japanese who encouraged nationalism for their own ends. There were few countries in south-east Asia where Communists did not seek to work their way into power under cover of such movements. And there were few countries in which the British and their Allies did not also seek to raise the forces of nationalism against the Japanese. Local under-ground movements were befriended, training was given in sabotage and guerilla warfare, arms and money were supplied. In fact all parties, friend and foe alike, were vigorously engaged in whipping up nationalist enthusiasm.

It was hardly a matter for surprise, therefore, that when the Allies re-entered Burma, Indonesia, and Indo-China, they found a nationalism that was a very different force from that which they had known before the war. Nearly all the inhibitions which had kept it in check had been dispelled so that the movement had gained in strength and confidence. Everywhere nationalist armies had been raised, whether to eject the Japanese or to resist the return of the Europeans, or both. These armies, by western standards, were ill-equipped, ill-trained, ill-organized, and not very large. Yet they had their own limited, but not ineffective, techniques; and their members had fought, and some had died, for the independence of their people; there could be no greater stimulant to nationalism. And everywhere its leaders called for 'freedom', a slogan that few dared resist—neither the indigenous moderates, shamed or terrorised into support by their fiery compatriots, nor most of the returning European powers, bound by their own professions in the Atlantic Charter, conscious also of world opinion, and influenced by the steady growth of a social conscience in the west which had coloured the whole trend of their colonial policies. There was no doubt of the new strength of the nationalist movements.

It is more difficult to answer fairly the question whether the movements were in fact representative of the majority of the people or not.

Precise evidence is lacking for no elections were, or could possibly have been, held immediately upon re-occupation; there was neither the organization nor the atmosphere for a free and fair test of opinion. When, considerably, later, elections were held in Burma they revealed overwhelming support for the nationalist front; but by this time it was clear that this would soon be in authority. Faces were already turned towards the new masters who were unlikely to be so tolerant as the old. And who else was there to vote for? If there ever had been a body of moderate opinion, the trend of events had long since swung it over to the side of the extremists. It was the contention of those who disputed the representative character of the nationalist fronts that the swing need never have occurred if the returning powers had shown from the outset that they were determined to re-establish themselves; had this been done, they claimed, the moderates would have swung in the opposite direction. It is impossible to say. Probably, however, this view made insufficient allowance for the rapid development of nationalism during the occupation and the effect of war in releasing violence.

It is true that older people were not unanimously behind the movements; and although the latter could generally count on the support of town-dwellers and the intelligentsia, country folk were often lethargically indifferent. There was no doubt at all, however, but that youth was whole-heartedly, fanatically, behind them, and willing to fight if need be. It is difficult to feel that the development of events after the military period has not increasingly vindicated the soundness of Admiral Mountbatten's largely intuitive estimate of the vitality of the nationalism he encountered. And in judging the results of the policy actually followed in Burma and Indonesia, it is with the conditions that the colonial powers might reasonably be expected to have established by the opposite policy *in post-war conditions*, that comparison must be made, not with the conditions that had prevailed *before the war*. There was never any possibility of creating these again.

It is much easier to answer the question whether these movements were democratic or not. In no instance did their leaders rise to power through any democratic process; they were self-appointed, basing their position on force; some, as their records show, aspired to a Communist regime; others were at that stage infected with the totalitarian philosophy, from which they only later escaped, construing freedom to mean freedom from foreign domination, not the adoption of any genuinely democratic system of government. Democracy, indeed, had as yet but slender roots in any of the countries of south-east Asia, and only time could show whether the leaders of the nationalist movements could or would lead their followers in such a way that to the concept of freedom from alien rule would be added the practical benefits of true democracy.

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Within the British Commonwealth national consciousness had never been discouraged. It had, in fact, been given a political character by teaching and example. The frequently re-affirmed policy of British Governments was to offer to this growing force an increasing share in the ruling of its own people, and so to afford it an outlet into constructive political channels. Until the year 1942 this constitutional progress was conceived as reaching its consummation in the grant of self-government within the Commonwealth. In that year the prospect was extended by the recognition of the right of India to complete self-determination, including, if she wished it, the right to leave the Commonwealth. For India the opportunity to exercise this right was imminent. For Burma it still lay in a more remote future. Malaya, Hong Kong, and Borneo had their feet on lower rungs of the constitutional ladder and most of the general remarks in the rest of this chapter do not apply to them. In regard to Indonesia and Indo-China, the Dutch and French Governments, more doubtful of the ability of their dependencies to look after their own affairs, were far from convinced of the wisdom or necessity of a policy of the kind pursued by the British. Nevertheless they also professed generally liberal intentions.

Burma was both the first British territory to be re-occupied and that which had already travelled farthest towards independence. The British Coalition Government announced in May 1945 that it intended to rebuild a stable British-controlled administration, and to maintain it for a sufficient period to ensure recovery of the country, before relinquishing responsibility. This procedure would enable restitution to be made for the disasters and misery resulting from the failure to defend the colonial territories in 1941-42. It appeared to offer the best chance of preventing such a collapse of authority as would create a vacuum dangerous to stability in South-East Asia, and so to peace in the world. It would at the same time allow rehabilitation of British interests in Burma. To grant independence to a society that was not economically and administratively on its feet again would achieve none of these results, and it was not thought that the Burmese would be able to restore stable government and the economy of the country by their own efforts.

It was clear from the outset, and became much clearer as soon as re-occupation began, that the intended procedure in Burma would involve conflict, both with the importunity of the nationalist 'front', for an earlier transfer of power, and with the claims of the nationalists to speak for the whole of the country. For the new nationalism could not be expected to acquiesce readily in the full re-establishment of foreign authority. It congratulated itself on having learnt the lesson that promises of political independence, even if fulfilled, would be vain if economic dependence were to be forced upon them again. It feared,

above all things, the restoration of British commercial interests and was ready to go to all lengths to fight this.

The British Government was encouraged to face this unpleasant conflict by views widely held not only in British, but later in French and Dutch circles also. According to these views the nationalist 'fronts' in Burma, and later in Indonesia, and Indo-China had little real unity and were far from representative of the people of their countries. It was felt that, although there were honourable exceptions, the nationalist leaders had often gained their position by collaboration with the enemy and that the appearance of popular support had been created by terrorism, extortion, and the other pressures commonly employed by totalitarian movements. Many of the leaders, according to these views, were irresponsible, some mere gang commanders. Most were, technically at least, guilty of treason towards the governments established before the Japanese invasion. Some had been guilty of brutal crimes against compatriots for no greater reason than that these had stood loyally by their pre-war governments in the hour of invasion. To recognise such men as the leaders of their people, it was argued, would be a condonation of violence and brutality that must release forces dangerous to the re-establishment of stable government; it would, further, be a betrayal of the many people who had suffered at the hands of the nationalists for their loyalty to the legal government; it would, finally, mean the abandonment of responsibility for the interests of the vast number of ordinary, moderate, non-political men and women with a small, but real, stake in the country, who asked only to be allowed to till their fields in peace and to sell the produce of their labour in security. In this view, if these moderate elements could only be released from the fear imposed by the extreme nationalist organizations and could be assured that the returning Allied forces really meant to re-establish a strong and enduring administration, they would come forward in their true colours and support the re-introduction of stable British and Allied Governments.

In the case of Malaya, where it was the Chinese resistance movement, and no nationalist front, that posed the problem, there was felt to be the same need to break the ascendancy gained over moderate elements by terrorism and extortion. Although the guerrilla leaders could not be suspected of collaboration, it gradually became clear that their movement, originally rooted in the Chinese struggle against the Japanese, had fallen grievously under Communist control.

When, in August 1945, a Labour Government came into power, there was no formal disavowal of the policy so far contemplated of re-establishing colonial government before parting with authority, but it was clear that interpretation and emphasis might become somewhat different.

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In the application of such a policy to the rapidly changing and sometimes obscure circumstances of a fast-moving military campaign there might well be differences of opinion. Both by the terms of his directive from the Chiefs of Staff and by the force of events, the Supreme Allied Commander was endowed with considerable latitude.

Constitutional policy as such was no concern of his; he was, however, sharply interested in the manner of application of the policy of progressive constitutional advance, as its political results might render the tasks of his Military Administrations difficult or impossible, and might in the last resort necessitate decisive diversion of combatant forces from the task of defeating the enemy.

His views began to take shape over the case of Burma. Here the British Government had promised self-government as soon as possible after the war, but had envisaged that some time would have to elapse before the country would be in a fit state to receive it. In his judgement, it appears, events were moving so fast that transfer of authority could be little delayed and must inevitably be made to the existing nationalist front, whatever procedure was in fact adopted by him or by the civil government that would succeed him. In that case, it was surely futile to suppress, or to attempt to suppress, with effort and difficulty, a movement that would certainly survive such repression. It might well be dangerous to do so, if this were to involve the use of military force. Not only would this seriously diminish the strength available for use against the Japanese, but resort to force might be expected to offend British feelings and would certainly alienate world opinion. It would, surely, also be impolitic, by insisting, or attempting to insist, upon the re-establishment of an administration under British control, to antagonize the very people to whom this administration would so soon be handed over.

Furthermore, whether or not this nationalist front was genuinely representative, it was in fact the only political organization in the field. It might have difficulty in controlling its own extremists, but it nevertheless displayed a vigour and cohesion that were new in the political life of the country. As the Supreme Allied Commander said of the Burma National Army, when this was about to desert the Japanese for the British, it included the organized and politically conscious elements in the country, those elements, in fact, which could cause, or refrain from causing, trouble for the British.

Psychologically, also, Admiral Mountbatten felt that a policy involving repression was misguided. In an early draft of a Directive to ALFSEA he referred to 'the traditional British policy of leniency and conciliation in similar circumstances which has on many occasions in the past transformed rebels into patriots'. He never weakened in his adherence to the attitude underlying such a policy. Any policy of repression would give to the nationalists the opportunity of martyrdom.

The Supreme Allied Commander hoped that they would become instead, not heroic opponents of returning imperialism but useful, if inconsiderable, allies of his own forces in the expulsion of the Japanese.¹

Broadly speaking, then, Admiral Mountbatten appears to have believed that the best hope of creating the political conditions necessary both to the success of his military operations and to the early re-establishment of civil government lay in the adoption of a policy that would at the same time promise the greatest hope of establishing a stable government to which responsibility might safely be transferred, and also gain the friendship and loyalty of the nationalist leaders. For both these purposes he felt it necessary to recognise, and, in so doing, of course to strengthen, the influence of these leaders so that they would have the authority to wield the power that was so soon to pass to them. Even if this hope of stability proved illusory, he must have felt that the next best guarantee of peace in Burma would be that the new government, whether stable or not, should be bound by friendship and gratitude to the British Commonwealth.

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But internal political considerations were not alone involved. There must always have been present in the mind of the Supreme Allied Commander, perhaps even more insistently, the external political aspect of this problem, an aspect which fell somewhat outside the field of his Civil Affairs advisers. To this we must now turn.

Before 1941 the outside world had known or cared little about the political or other problems of south-east Asia. All this, again, was changed by the Japanese invasion. Knowledge of this part of the world was perhaps no more precise, but many more people were interested and anxious to interfere in its affairs. The powers with a direct interest were Britain, France, Holland and the United States, each with its dependencies in the area. India, on the threshold of independence, was interested not only because of the considerable Indian population scattered over the area, but because the Allied forces charged with its re-conquest were then largely Indian in composition, and because in her hour of fulfilment she felt over-whelmingly impelled to assist others who were still reaching out for their freedom. Australia and Russia were in due course to display an interest also. What was the attitude of these powers to be towards the emergent nationalism?

France and Holland alone of these might be expected to support the vigorous re-establishment of pre-war colonial administration to the

¹ In this he was only partially successful; it was widely believed, particularly in the remoter parts of Burma, that the Japanese had been driven out by the B.N.A. with the aid mostly of American, and possibly also of British, forces.

length even of using force, if necessary. The attitude of the British Government itself was not so clear. Dealing with the problem in the territories of Burma and Malaya while the war was still in progress, it showed some inclination to firmness. But the Labour Government, that came into power just before the Japanese surrender, could be expected to accelerate the application to India and Burma of the policy of granting self-government at the earliest possible date. With the transfer of power in these countries so near, it would be very unwilling, in the face of general war-weariness, to adopt a policy of firmness in its own territories, if by so doing it might be compelled to use military force. It would be still less likely to favour a course of firmness in Indo-China or Indonesia where the interests to be restored were foreign while the casualties would be Indian or British.

Public opinion in India was strongly opposed to the employment of Indian forces to deny independence to fellow-Asians; Muslims, in addition, could not be expected to stomach for long the employment of Muslim troops against co-religionists. Opinion in the United States, hotly critical of political imperialism, would certainly be ranged against any policy involving restoration of pre-war colonial rule. The Government of Australia early made a bid for political influence in post-war south-east Asia by supporting the claims of Indonesian nationalism, until these began to embrace New Guinea. Russia could be expected to oppose any re-establishment of western rule and to make the fullest propagandist use for her own ends of any attempt to do so.

But it was not only the countries directly interested, that contributed to world opinion on south-east Asia. The development of international machinery had conferred upon other governments the right to be heard, governments which were sometimes obstructive, sometimes merely time-serving. The improvement in communications and broadcasting was greatly enlarging the potential audience for problems of international politics. This new world audience, generally ill-informed, often irresponsible, was influenced by the growth of a social conscience, which tended, over-readily perhaps, to condemn any form of colonial domination as shameful. It was influenced, in the case of Indonesia, by one-sided reports which the lifting of Press censorship after the Japanese surrender made it impossible to counteract. The nationalists of Indo-China and Indonesia lost no time in broadcasting their cases to this audience. As background to these, it would have before it the declared policies of the colonial powers sooner or later to confer self-government upon their dependent peoples. It would be unlikely to accept the awkward but probably true contention that there would be a better hope of translating these policies into enduring fact if colonial administration were to be re-established first, as a starting point for further progress, than if authority were to be relinquished immediately in unstable conditions to persons not yet proved fit for its exercise.

The British Government's ultimate policy had been repeatedly asserted both in and out of Parliament. In regard to India, the Acts of 1919 and 1935 made substantial transfers of power. In 1940 the British Government had accepted the principle that Indians should themselves frame a new constitution for a fully autonomous India.¹ In regard to Burma it had been stated in Parliament on 22nd April 1943 that the aim of the British Government was to assist Burma to attain complete self-government within the British Commonwealth as soon as circumstances permitted.²

The Dutch, in December 1942, looked forward to ' a commonwealth in which the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam and Curaçao will participate, with complete self-reliance and freedom of conduct for each part regarding its internal affairs'³

The French, in March 1945, declared their intention to create a French Union that should include an Indo-Chinese Federation and said 'Indo-China will enjoy, within this Union, its own freedom'. The inhabitants of the Federation ' without discrimination of race, religion, or origin and with equality of merit will have access to all Federal posts and employment in Indo-China and in the Union.'⁴

The vaguely liberal tone of these pronouncements was given further expression in the Atlantic Charter of 1942 to which the colonial powers concerned had signified their adherence. The second clause of this charter read ' . . . they [the United States and the United Kingdom] desire to see no territorial changes that do not accord with the freely expressed wishes of the peoples concerned.' The third clause read ' . . . they respect the right of all peoples to choose the form of government under which they will live; and they wish to see sovereign rights and self-government restored to those who have been forcibly deprived of them.' The Charter of the United Nations included the following aims: ' . . . to re-affirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small; . . . to ensure . . . that armed forces shall not be used, save in the common interest'

Against the background of these professions there could be little doubt what attitude would be taken by world opinion towards any attempt to re-establish colonial rule against opposition. And, whether this opinion was right or wrong, superficial or well-informed, it could not easily be disregarded. Britain could afford, even less than most, to disregard and so to stultify the organization for mutual security that she was helping to build and upon which she must expect increasingly to depend for protection against major aggression. Accordingly, when

¹ Cmd 7047.

² Hansard 388 H.C. Det. 5.S. Col 1806-7.

³ H. R. Isaacs, *New Cycle in Asia*, New York, 1947 p. 180.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 159.

faced in Burma with the question whether or not to accept the co-operation of the Burma National Army after its defection from and rising against the Japanese, the Supreme Allied Commander said to the Chiefs of Staff that the ultimate political argument in favour of letting this Army aid his forces against the Japanese was that only by the exercise of a strict political censorship would it be possible to keep news of this 'rebellion' from the rest of the world. If it should leak out that he had prevented the Burma National Army from fighting the Japanese and bringing freedom to Burma, this would have effects upon liberal opinion in America and England that it was particularly undesirable to bring about at that time. And over the case of Indonesia the Supreme Allied Commander repeatedly made it clear that he would approve no political solution that was not acceptable to world opinion.

* * *

But any attempt to analyse Admiral Mountbatten's attitude in terms of politics alone, or first, overlooks the fact that he was a military commander, waging what still promised to be a long and bitter war against Japan. The military considerations involved will be set out more fully in another volume of this series but the political picture would be incomplete without some general reference to them.

Less than six months after the creation of South-East Asia Command the Japanese launched their great offensive which was intended to break through the mountains of Assam into the plains of India and to cut the line of communication from India to China at its western end. This offensive was held at Imphal and Kohima, with little to spare, after which the forces of the new Command pushed aside the shattered remnants of the Japanese armies and at the end of 1944 advanced into Burma. Resolute and undefeated Japanese forces were still available, however, to cover the crossings of the Irrawaddy and the plains of southern Burma so that quick results were not yet expected. Military Commanders, at all times concerned to keep casualties to their forces to the minimum, were disinclined to neglect the advantages to be gained from such information or guerrilla activity as might result from contacts with Burmese clandestine organisations, of whatever political complexion.

The successful operations at Mandalay and Meiktila, about March 1945, completely changed the outlook. The prospect opened of early re-occupation of the whole of Burma, of access to Burma's surplus rice, of the occupation of Rangoon to provide a base for further operations, if, but only if, Rangoon and its port could be reached before the monsoon. Without these the British forces would be driven back to central and northern Burma by the break of the rains and the whole timetable of operations might be set back almost a year. There were only

seven weeks in which to cover more than 300 miles to Rangoon. The Japanese were courageous and stubborn fighters and there was no reason yet to suppose that they had reached the breaking point. The race against the weather might be won by a matter of days, almost of hours. Admiral Mountbatten could neglect no aid however slight, could reject no offer, if by so doing he might add to his difficulties. It was under the compelling pressure of these considerations that the decisions, which will be recounted in the next chapter, were taken in Burma.

In the case of Malaya the prime military consideration was that the information upon which alone operations could be firmly planned was unobtainable except through the resistance organisations. It was the absence of such information in regard to Java that fatally handicapped operations there from the outset.¹ And although the war in Japan had concluded before the re-occupation of Indonesia it is important to realise that these were indeed full scale military operations.

¹ Cf. Chapter XXII.

CHAPTER XIX

NATIONALISM IN BURMA

IN 1917, under the stress of the war, the British Government announced that its policy for the political future of India, of which Burma then formed part, was '..... the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'. In 1923, in pursuance of this policy, a measure of self-government was established in Burma. In 1935 a further instalment of self-government was conferred and Burma was at the same time separated from India. In October 1941, U Saw, then premier of Burma, went to London and demanded immediate 'dominion status'. This demand was rejected and U Saw tried to turn to the Japanese and was interned in consequence. There followed the Japanese invasion and the withdrawal of the Government of Burma to India. On 18th April 1943, the Secretary of State for Burma, in reply to a question in the House of Commons, said that the aim of His Majesty's Government was to assist Burma to attain complete self-government within the British Commonwealth as soon as circumstances permitted; there was, however, no detailed pronouncement at this time on constitutional policy. The Governor of Burma repeatedly pressed for clarification of this general policy, though he was prepared to leave the timing of any public announcement to the Supreme Allied Commander in the light of the needs of his military operations.

A year later the Governor was suggesting that the policy might be:

- (i) That full self-government within the Empire should be promised to Burma after the lapse of seven years.
- (ii) That during this period of seven years His Majesty's Government should concentrate on the rehabilitation of Burma with the help and advice of the Burmese.
- (iii) That the Burmese people should decide on the constitution which they wished to have when self-government was granted.
- (iv) That a treaty defining their future relationship should be concluded between Burma and the United Kingdom.
- (v) That the excluded areas¹ should continue under the direct control of the Governor until mutual agreement could be reached between their people and the Burmese regarding federation with Burma proper.

¹ The 'excluded' or 'scheduled' areas were the areas inhabited by the non-Burmese hill peoples of Burma.

Admiral Mountbatten was aware of these proposals but did not consider that it was for him, the military commander, to express views on their details. He supported the Governor's request for a pronouncement provided that its terms would aid his operations and that he should be the judge of the time for its issue.

The United Kingdom government was reluctant to make any pronouncement until the liberation of Burma had proceeded further¹ and the course of events had become clearer. It was, therefore, not until 17th May 1945, that a statement issued², generally endorsing the Governor's proposals, except that no period was specified after which self-government would be granted. Many felt this was an unfortunate omission. Much had happened however before this statement was made.

* * *

Political developments which largely determined the future of Burma begun unobtrusively enough in the second half of 1942. But we must first go back a little further still.

When in June 1940 the British Commonwealth remained alone in the field against Germany the British War Cabinet asserted their confidence that victory was still possible through a combination of the three weapons of naval blockade, air bombardment, and subversion of the administrations in conquered territories. By this decision clandestine warfare, hitherto the poor relation of several departments, was raised to respectability, and there was built up the Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.); the new organization was freed from direct responsibility to the military and political departments and placed under the personal control of the Minister of Economic Warfare, through whom it had ready access to the War Cabinet and the Prime Minister. This arrangement ensured flexibility, quick decisions, and easy approach to the highest authority. But the responsibilities of the organization towards political and military authorities were imperfectly defined and largely unenforceable with the result that insufficient use was often made of local knowledge and experience, especially in political matters. As Chief of Combined Operations Admiral Mountbatten had been in close working relations with the Special Operations Executive before being appointed to South-East Asia Command.

A branch of the organization, which came to be known as Force 136 and will so be referred to in this book, was set up in the Far East, and by the middle of 1942 was establishing contacts with Burma under Japanese occupation.

* * *

¹ Hansard 406 HC DEB 5S Column 1122.

² Cmd. 6635.

In Burma, as in any other country under foreign rule, nationalism had always been endemic, little more, perhaps, than a symptom of self-respect. It became a political movement and the creed of a political party only in 1919, stimulated by proposals to exclude Burma from the instalment of self-government planned for India. The seeds of the particular movement that was ultimately to carry Burma to independence were not sown until the 1930's in the University of Rangoon, where certain Burmese students, including one Aung San, developed an interest in politics. Aung San organized a students' strike of a political nature, became President of the University Students Union in 1938, and on leaving the University became General Secretary of the 'Thakin' or 'Master' Party, a nationalist revolutionary group with, however, only three out of 132 seats in the House of Representatives. After spending seventeen days in prison for promoting strikes and disturbances, Aung San visited India in 1940 as leader of the Thakin delegation to the Indian National Congress and met Gandhi and Mr. Nehru. When in 1940-41 the Government of Burma was at length driven to proscribe this disaffected and unrepresentative group because of its hostility to the established government and the allied cause, some thirty of its members, including Aung San, escaped to Hainan, where they were received and given military training by Japanese.

When after Pearl Harbour the Japanese invaded Burma from Siam, these young Burmans accompanied them to raise Burmese guerilla forces. The Burma Independence Army, as these were known, while not materially affecting the issue of the campaign against the Allied forces, fought with some bravery and exercised a moral effect upon the Allied troops quite out of proportion to its numbers, being largely responsible in one way or another for the apprehensiveness of fifth column activities felt by the Allied troops. As the Japanese advanced into Burma these young Burmans sought to set up a provisional administration behind them, and in doing so some behaved with a brutality that may occasionally have been necessary, as they claimed, for the re-establishment of order, but was too often nothing but revenge upon loyal employees of the departed government. In due course the Japanese put down these attempts at setting up an administration: a puppet government was a part of their plans for Burma but the young and extremist Thakin Party was not influential enough and at the same time, perhaps, not tractable enough for their purpose.

* * *

At the time when Aung San and his lieutenants had fled to Hainan, another small group of the Thakin party remained in Burma. The party in general had been communistic and revolutionary in outlook but this section had formed its left wing. The chief persons in it were

Thakins Soe, Than Tun, Tin Shwe and Thein Pe. The group was at first strongly anti-Ally in sympathy and some of its leaders had been detained in prison under the Defence of Burma rules. When Russia entered the war in 1941 these leaders performed a somersault which had its parallels in several other countries and declared themselves ready to assist the Allies. This change of heart was viewed with suspicion by the British and it was some time before it was decided that they might be released. In the event the Japanese overran Mandalay, where the Thakins were imprisoned, before orders of release could take effect and it was the approach of the Japanese which restored them to freedom.

The four men mentioned above, impelled by sentiments that were more nationalist than anti-fascist, decided to prepare for resistance against the Japanese, ultimately joining forces with Aung San and the Burma Independence Army, smarting from their suppression by the Japanese. Thakin Soe resumed his clandestine activities—but now against the Japanese. Than Tun accepted employment in the Japanese ‘puppet’ administration. There is no reason to doubt his later claim that he did this with the object of working for the nationalist cause from within. Thein Pe and Tin Shwe walked out to India in July 1942 to re-establish contact with the British.

* * *

It was through these left-wing and unrepresentative elements that Force 136 began its contacts with occupied Burma. Thein Pe and Tin Shwe had been received by the Burma Government in India with feelings compounded of curiosity and not unnatural suspicion. It was not long, however, before they were introduced to Force 136 and both agreed to co-operate with this organization in clandestine activities against the Japanese. In the early stages these activities were directed primarily to the obtaining of intelligence from the interior of Burma and secondarily to the establishment of contacts that might be useful if more active operations should develop later.

In the dry season of 1942-43 Tin Shwe was put ashore by motor launch behind the Japanese lines in Arakan to enable him to walk into Bassein district and to make his way thence to Rangoon, there to deliver an official message to the anti-Japanese Communist elements. A month later he was picked off again by motor launch from the same spot on the coast. He brought with him an Arakanese confederate, Nyo Tun, and a good deal of information from Rangoon. Nyo Tun, it was later claimed, had been sent out by Thakin Soe for the express purpose of making contact with the British. Tin Shwe also brought a wife with him who entered heart and soul into the Resistance business. He reported that Than Tun and Thakin Soe had made headway with the organization of an underground movement in Rangoon which might

at the appropriate time assume the part of a Resistance movement. Aung San was not mentioned: he was now a Major-General and Commander-in-Chief of the Burma Defence Army which the Japanese had set up and recognized as a successor in place of the very uncontrolled Burma Independence Army. He could therefore not take any prominent part in an underground anti-Japanese movement at this time: nevertheless late in 1943 information was received by wireless from Major H.P. Seagrim, a British officer who had stayed behind in the Karen Hills to the east of Burma, that Aung San was not satisfied with his position and the position of Burma under the Japanese.¹ No more could be done in this first open season after the loss of Burma.

In the next open season, 1943-44, the Arakanese Nyo Tun went back into Arakan overland but was given away almost at once and hunted by the Japanese for some three weeks. He got out again safely in the middle of the monsoon some three or four months after he had gone in. But although Nyo Tun was prevented from getting to Rangoon himself, he managed to despatch an agent with a request to the underground workers there to send out some dozen or twenty members of the subordinate officer, or 'cell leader', type for training. He also brought back information that there was an underground movement in Arakan, distinct from that in Burma, under a notorious and criminal ex-monk, U Pyinnyathiha. Nyo Tun brought a few Arakanese out with him for training in subversive operations.

As it was not known whether Nyo Tun's emissary had ever got to Rangoon, one of these Arakanese volunteered to go back in August-September 1944 and take a micro-photo message with him to the workers in Rangoon. At about the same time as this was happening some members of the Burma Defence Army, known as the Burma National Army (BNA) since the grant of independence to Burma by the Japanese on 1st August 1943, were captured in fighting further north, on the Chindwin front. According to these men their officers had told them that the Japanese fortunes were now on the wane and that they must remember that a time was coming when they would have to turn against their temporary masters. This demonstrated that the anti-Japanese movement had spread into the BNA and suggested that the BNA would co-operate with the Japanese for just so long as it suited them, or for so long only as they could not avoid doing so. Independence for Burma (under the communistic Thakin party) was, however, what they were pursuing, rather than the defeat of the Japanese. It now appeared likely that the Japanese would be defeated and that the BNA might draw advantage from this for the nationalist cause. A report also came through at about this time that Aung San, at the celebrations of the first anniversary of the conferment of independence

¹ For an account of Major Seagrim's activities, cf. Iain Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs*, London, 1947.

on Burma by the Japanese, had spoken contemptuously of the Japanese brand of independence. He was taken to task for this speech by the Japanese.

Major-General Pearce, the C.A.A.O., although appointed by the Supreme Allied Commander to be his 'principal adviser on political matters in Burma' and charged with the responsibility for tendering advice on political issues touching that country, knew nothing of these activities, after the initial contacts between Thein Pe and the Government of Burma. In themselves they were harmless enough, but if he had been consulted he would undoubtedly have given warning of the dangers that lurked in flirtation with this unrepresentative and revolutionary group.

* * *

But courtship was allowed to drift into an informal understanding and the next stage was not so harmless. In mid-September 1944 Thein Pe had prepared a lengthy document which was in essence an appeal for a policy of trust and co-operation with the Thakins, for the arming of civilian guerillas, and for the reconstruction of the regular Burma Army after the war on the basis of the 'embryonic guerillas'. Nobody appears to have been consulted, not even the Supreme Allied Commander, or the C.C.A.O., before the Commander, Force 136 replied '... we take this opportunity of affording you our formal recognition as the Anti-Axis Association of Burma. We prefer to give you our whole-hearted assurance of military aid only, and leave the political questions in regard to the absorption of the Anti-Japanese forces after the war to the recognised Government of Burma to whom we are referring the matter; but we should like to point out to you that it is up to the forces of the interior to show their worth, and if they fulfil the trust which we propose placing in them then the Civil Government will be unable to ignore their demands.' This reply was far from consistent with the attitude which the Chief Civil Affairs Officer was at that time disposed to recommend towards the Thakin movement. He regarded this and its leaders, particularly Aung San, with the gravest suspicion and was disinclined to enter into any arrangements for co-operation with them. In contrast the reply promised immediate military assistance and sympathetic consideration for political claims in the future in return for collaboration against the Japanese. It is true that the Governor of Burma, though not officially informed, had been made aware through private channels of Thein Pe's appeal, and had expressed himself as personally in favour of trying the policy of trust advocated therein. But at this time the control of policy in matters of this sort did not rest with him. It was vested in the Supreme Allied Commander. It is indeed remarkable that official assurances which contained such far reaching implications for the future should have been made without consulting

the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, and apparently without the approval of the Supreme Allied Commander.

* * *

Time was now beginning to press; the Japanese had suffered defeat at Imphal and Kohima and the tide was clearly turning. The stage was approaching when Force 136 might hope to play a more active part than merely to collect information. They took steps to intensify contacts with the Thakin-controlled group of parties now known as the Anti-Fascist Organization (AFO). But before these could bear fruit, two incidents occurred which made it quite clear to the C.C.A.O. that something was being kept from him.

In November 1944 it was reported from the Shwebo District that some of the worst criminals of the area had been employed as British agents; one such, apprehended on a charge of murder, actually pleaded that he had been so employed and been promised an amnesty for his work. This was in fact probably the doing of one of several other clandestine organisations operating in Burma, but the news was alarming.

In Arakan, at about the same time, the 81st West African Division, advancing down the Kaladan Valley, captured a number of dangerous criminals wanted for the murder of Muslims in 1942 and for collaboration with the Japanese. These would probably have been executed out of hand had they not claimed to belong to guerillas raised by two officers who had recently been sent into Arakan by Force 136 in pursuance of the contacts already made there. As the advance progressed into Arakan and military administration was set up it became clear that many of the known criminals, whom the administration was anxious to get behind barbed wire as soon as possible, were in the ranks of these guerillas. Major-General Pearce, visiting Arakan, found himself reluctantly driven to grant an amnesty to some six hundred of the more formally recruited guerillas, having regard to the undertakings given to them by Force 136 and to the extreme personal danger in which the two officers would be placed if he failed to grant the amnesty to which these men considered themselves entitled..

As a result of protests from Fourteenth Army and ALFSEA that they were dangerously uninformed of the operations undertaken and contemplated by the clandestine organizations and that they obtained little intelligence from them, possibly also as a result of Major-General Pearce's protest at the state of affairs disclosed, a closer liaison and control was established between these organizations and the headquarters of Fourteenth Army and ALFSEA. As a result the C.C.A.O.'s advanced headquarters in Barrackpore was at last consulted in February 1945, regarding plans to introduce Force 136 officers into Burma for the purpose of arming civilians of the AFO as guerillas. The

Deputy C.C.A.O. at Barrackpore, Brigadier R. G. B. Prescott, at once protested against these plans, arguing that the AFO was an extremist group, addicted to communism and terrorism, with little support in the country, and that in return for any assistance given it would certainly expect a substantial share in the future government of the country. The General Staff at ALFSEA took the view that the political objections raised by the Deputy C.C.A.O. outweighed any probable military advantages of the plans, and on 15th February General Leese, the Commander-in-Chief, ALFSEA, ordered that no further arms should be supplied to the underground movement in Burma.¹

On 18th February the Commander of Force 136 in Kandy addressed a letter to Admiral Mountbatten protesting against this decision² and urging that a strengthened guerilla movement would greatly assist his clandestine operations. He naturally linked the question with that of supporting the underground movement in Malaya, pointing out that further assistance should not be provided to that movement if it was likely that in the end its activities would have to be restricted for similar reasons.

Admiral Mountbatten ruled that the political objections raised by the Deputy C.C.A.O. could not be allowed to interfere with his 'broad policy' for Burma, adopted after taking into consideration the views expressed by the Governor of Burma. The reference to the Governor might suggest that the 'broad policy' was a political matter; this, however, would be to miss the significance of the adjective employed; it appears that what Admiral Mountbatten had in mind was the 'broad' conception of his campaign in Burma, a conception that was primarily concerned with military objectives but had necessarily to take into account also political considerations to the extent that these might affect the success of his operations. It involved a determination not to reject the aid of anyone who was willing to fight the Japanese. In its political aspects it was shortly to find expression in a paper by Admiral Mountbatten which some weeks later issued as the directive of 2nd June, 1945, on the 'Policy to be adopted towards the Burmese'.³ In the original paper he referred to 'the traditional British policy of leniency and conciliation . . . which has in the past resulted in such achievements as the transformation from rebels into patriots of Generals Smuts, Botha and others' and recorded his strong personal sympathy with such a policy.

As a precaution against the obvious dangers of this policy it was laid down that arms were not to be distributed to the AFO *as an organization* but to specified individuals only who might be armed for specific

¹ That the attitude of the C.C.A.O. and his staff was not fundamentally illiberal would seem to be clear from pages 71-74.

² Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, pp. 142-44.

³ Cf. pp. 73-74 where quotation is made from this directive.

operations. It was, perhaps, inevitable that this distinction should result in very little practical difference in the manner of distributing arms, and that later the attempt to enforce it should have been virtually abandoned.

* * *

We can turn back now to trace the intensification of contacts referred to some pages earlier. One of the members of the BNA who had been captured on the Chindwin, having volunteered for the task, was parachuted near Pegu in November 1944, without preparation on the ground for his reception. He was to make contact with the underground movement in Rangoon and to arrange for the arrival and concealment of an agent and wireless operator. A month later on the appointed night those in the aircraft thought they saw the flash of a torch as signal to proceed and dropped the agent. He found nobody to receive him, but he escaped capture, set up his wireless set, and reported what had happened. The problem now was how to put him in touch with the first emissary, presumably in Rangoon.

Just about this time a group of Burmans came over to the Allied forces near Bhamo, apparently in response to the message sent by Nyo Tun before he had been hunted out of Arakan. One of these men was parachuted near Pegu and succeeded in putting the two agents in touch. A few days later a message was received from the Pegu operator that he was enciphering a message from Than Tun.

This proved to be a request for large sums of money, in gold, and for something like 20,000 firearms to be dropped in for the underground movement. In reply Than Tun was asked to say in what areas he could receive and conceal wireless operators, initially for purely intelligence purposes, later perhaps for co-ordinating guerilla operations. On receiving Than Tun's reply that such operators could be received almost anywhere in Lower Burma, a programme was started, spreading over January - March 1945, which involved dropping operators near Kyaukse in Upper Burma, and Tharrawaddy and Tavoy in Lower Burma. Over this period Fourteenth Army troops had advanced into Upper Burma, XXXIII Corps having taken Mandalay and IV Corps having seized Meiktila. It was becoming clear that the Japanese had been heavily defeated in Upper Burma and that their retreat to Lower Burma might easily be turned into a rout. Than Tun was eager to arm as many as possible of the AFO and to let them rise as individuals all over the country and fall upon the Japanese. It was explained to him from Calcutta that small groups should be organized to operate under control, against specified objectives. He was also urged not to let the AFO 'rise' until the British advance had penetrated deeper and Force 136 gave him the word. But Than Tun was loth to accept this limited method of working and it soon became clear that personal contact

must be made with him to try to get these differences of outlook resolved. Then early in March news was received that the BNA would, on 16th March, ostensibly leave Rangoon for the Irrawaddy valley front, but that in fact there was to be a defection from the Japanese with the object of coming over to the Allied side.¹ A special emissary was dropped in to persuade Than Tun to desert the puppet government and go into hiding near Toungoo, where he would be under the protection of the guerilla groups that were gathering round the agent parachuted there, and where discussions could be held with him. Than Tun went into hiding near Toungoo and on 20th March a Force 136 officer was dropped in to him. This officer landed some twenty miles away from Than Tun's place of hiding, the other side of a river, of a main road, and of the railway line connecting Rangoon with Upper Burma. He was met and expeditiously conveyed across these obstacles before dawn and then led to Than Tun. But he could not persuade Than Tun to co-operate or to give any indication of his own intentions.

Then, on 27th March 1945, it became clear what had been in preparation behind Than Tun's morose secretiveness. The rumoured rising of the BNA took place. The Force 136 officer near Toungoo signalled that a large scale defection from the Japanese had begun. Similar reports came from the other wireless operators. At the Burma Military Academy in Pegu 180 cadets had deserted on the night of the 24th March, killing some of their instructors as they went, and heading for the jungle. Further defections took place in the following days and by 29th March it was clear to the Japanese that the greater part of the BNA had deserted. This was a spontaneous move which owed little to the direct instigation of Force 136. A few days earlier the Supreme Allied Commander had received information that this defection might be imminent though it was not expected quite so soon.

On 27th March he proposed to the Chiefs of Staff that he should make use of the revolt, not knowing that the 'revolt' had in fact already started. He said that Generals Leese and Slim considered that 'the highest operational priority' should be given to support of the rising; he added however that the C.C.A.O. had pointed out that there was a danger that this acceptance of the co-operation of the BNA might offend the respectable elements in the country; and that Aung San had, on a strict interpretation of the law, been guilty of treason in 1942. Admiral Mountbatten proposed to support the rising for immediate operational reasons and on more general military grounds—both were insistent at this date, with Rangoon 300 miles away and the monsoon due in seven weeks. There was also the further reason that if he discouraged the only resistance movement in Burma proper, when tribesmen in the hills on the borders of Burma had already been armed and employed as guerillas, he would, besides throwing away the positive

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O., 1951, p. 144.

military assistance the BNA might be able to provide, lose the chance of fighting over territory in which the local population was friendly, and he might even become involved in having to suppress the BNA by force. He was also very conscious that if he should be driven to suppress the BNA, this might have most unfavourable effects upon world opinion.

The Supreme Allied Commander used four additional arguments to support his view. In the first place he would be doing no more than had already been done in Italy, Rumania, Hungary and Finland. Secondly, he would be able to leave to the civil government a useful if not valuable, legacy of having helped the Burmese to liberate themselves. Thirdly, it might be possible to steal the thunder of the AFO and BNA if their military exploits could be made to appear in the setting of having helped the British rather than of having opposed them. Lastly, without rigorous political censorship, knowledge of the rebellion was bound to leak out and liberal world opinion would be unfavourably affected if it became known that he had declined this offer of help. In reply to the C.C.A.O.'s warning he pointed out that the respectable elements had been inactive throughout the war, while it was the elements he was now proposing to encourage that were the most active politically and most likely to be in a position to cause difficulty to the British Government.

Admiral Mountbatten's telegram was placed by the Chiefs of Staff before the India Committee of the War Cabinet for a decision upon its political implications. The Governor of Burma was in England at the time and attended the meeting.

The decision of the Cabinet Committee was that while they saw grave dangers in the course proposed unless the AFO and the BNA were handled with the utmost care, they had no option but to accept the proposal since it was urged on military grounds. They added the condition, however, that the part to be played by the BNA must be allowed no undue publicity. On this important point it is desirable to quote the instructions sent to Admiral Mountbatten on 30th March:

'Your support of the Resistance movement, and a degree of recognition of it and its leaders thereby accorded, may have the most far-reaching political consequences; and H.M. Government attach particular importance to seeing that in the eyes of the population of Burma as a whole, the movement shall be put into its right perspective. The respectable elements of the community, as you observe in paragraph 4, have been inactive as yet; but the section which is now contemplating action is led by personalities who have in the past been actively hostile to us and actively pro-Japanese. Their action will not be on our behalf, but by way of retaliation against the Japanese, who have let them down. Our support of this element therefore may be a source of misunderstanding and offence to elements which are

less active but more dependable. It is therefore important that any support to the collaborationist leaders which we may give should not create the impression in Burma that we regard these men as the liberators of their country in any way, or that we are asking other elements to give them their allegiance. It is therefore essential that it should be made perfectly clear that these leaders must not consider their contribution of great importance, and that they must be reminded more clearly than you suggest, that as ex-collaborators with the Japanese they have a lot of leeway to make up, in our eyes as well as in the eyes of their compatriots who have suffered at the hands of the enemy. There is a grave danger that if we do not treat them with caution, other leaders and supporters of the Resistance movement will, when normal Government returns, base upon the comparatively unimportant assistance they have given a claim for political control and possibly for immediate political concessions, which H.M. Government would not consider. At all costs the building up of an EAM-ELAS in Burma, with the unfortunate consequences that would result, must be avoided.¹

In accordance with the decision of the United Kingdom Government, the help of the BNA was accepted. Some at least of its units fought courageously and suffered severe casualties in full scale operations. Most were employed for scouting, guerilla, and flank guard purposes. These despatched Japanese stragglers and committed acts of sabotage against Japanese communications. They were under the control of Force 136 officers, a control that was always light and frequently non-existent. There were even occasions when it was these units that exercised control over the British officers. Early in May the BNA and the AFO guerillas were credited by Force 136 with killing over six hundred Japanese, claims to many more being rejected as unfounded.

Meanwhile Force 136 guerilla groups were completing recruitment, and took their part in harassing the Japanese. Other parties joined in spontaneously. All these groups, in so far as they were Burmese, consisted mainly, but not exclusively, of members of the AFO.

When it was found that the BNA were giving useful help, General Slim, with the consent of Major-General Pearce and the approval of Admiral Mountbatten, decided on 21st April to 'ex-filtrate' Aung San to co-ordinate and gain maximum value from the activities of his forces. Force 136 officers warned General Slim that this would inevitably be construed by Aung San and the BNA as recognition of Aung San and forgiveness of past offences, and that it would be politically impossible to try him for any of these, if this course were followed. The decision to proceed was probably inevitable if use was to be made of the BNA, and did not in itself run counter to the instruction of the

¹ This paraphrase of the original cipher telegram is that used by S.E.A.C. at the time.

War Cabinet quoted; but it made compliance with the conditions in those instructions difficult and was to lead rapidly, as some may think, to their considerable disregard.

A message was sent to Aung San with an assurance that, whatever might be the outcome of negotiations, he would be sent back without harm to where he came from. There was some delay in responding to this message but on 15th May the British forces in Allansmye observed a boat crossing the Irrawaddy towards them. It flew a red flag with white stars and contained Aung San and some of his staff. They were taken to the officers' mess and given a meal. Thereafter the party was conveyed to the airfield and flown immediately to Fourteenth Army Headquarters at Meiktila.

At the meeting with General Slim the following morning Aung San claimed to be the representative of the provisional Government of Burma under which he led the BNA. He demanded that the provisional government should be treated as an ally and offered to place himself under the orders of the Allied Commander in the field provided he was himself recognised as an Allied Commander. General Slim absolutely refused any recognition of the provisional government as an ally and said that the only terms on which he would accept co-operation from the BNA were that they acted, not as Allied troops, but as a local force completely under his own orders. He explained very carefully that under British Law Aung San was liable to trial and condemnation to death, not only for political offences, but that the extent to which he co-operated in the future against the Japanese would be considered as mitigation of his past actions. On the request of Aung San, General Slim also said that if the BNA behaved satisfactorily and co-operated thoroughly, he would seek to ensure that a certain number were incorporated in any regular forces that might be raised in Burma after the war. He made it quite clear that this would not extend to including the BNA in its entirety and was satisfied that Aung San understood this. Aung San would not abandon his pretensions to the status of Allied Commander or take any decisions regarding the BNA without first consulting his 'Provisional Government'. The meeting concluded and Aung San was allowed to return for the necessary consultations and to collect information as to the strength and dispositions of his forces which he had been unable to furnish. A few days later General Slim informed Aung San that he was ready to employ and ration units of the BNA then in action against the Japanese, provided these placed themselves unreservedly under British command. Other members of the BNA would be permitted to volunteer for recruitment in the future defence forces of Burma. Aung San accepted this offer but asked that he should be consulted before any important decision was taken affecting the BNA, and that the BNA should be re-organized as a regular force. His confidence had greatly

revived since the day when he crossed the Irrawaddy to Allanmyo.

The meeting with General Slim had pointed the extreme difficulty, perhaps the impossibility of simultaneously utilizing and depreciating the BNA as instructed by the War Cabinet. But, in the event, however no more was heard of any 'Provisional Government'.

* * *

By now, however, a new situation had developed. The speed of the British advance left the BNA and the AFPFL¹ guerillas in rear of the battle. Everywhere advancing forces found the red and white-starred AFPFL flag displayed. In every town and large village they found a local AFPFL Headquarters which had taken upon itself the task of 'maintaining order' as soon as the Japanese withdrew. Armed youths stood guard over these headquarters and exacted toll from all non-military traffic. In some areas members of the BNA and AFPFL refused to accept orders from officers of the Military Administration, refused to surrender arms when ordered, terrorised both the police recruited by the Administration, and also ex-Burma government servants, village headmen, and members of the public who were disposed to co-operate with the military government, removed government records, and generally lived on the country. Many reports were received that they were more unpopular than the Japanese had ever been. It was only the unexpectedly prompt arrival of Civil Affairs officers that frustrated the intention of these young men to establish an administration of their own, as later the nationalists were to do in Indonesia. Off the main lines of the British advance the BNA forces arrived in the villages as the victors who had driven out the Japanese, with, possibly, inconsiderable assistance from the Americans or even the British, and acted accordingly.

On 15th May Admiral Mountbatten had reported the new situation to the Chiefs of Staff. It was the responsibility of Force 136 to disarm and disperse the guerillas which they had raised and armed. In regard to the BNA he proposed that this, being an organized force, should be made a part of the Allied forces and so brought under military discipline; its members should at the same time be brought onto the pay roll of British forces and be supplied with rations. He considered that if this were done it would be possible to treat as dacoits any armed bands that had not been regularized in this fashion, or had not been recruited by Force 136. He further proposed that when the BNA had been so incorporated, those members who were willing, and could pass the necessary medical examination, should be absorbed into the regular Burma Army, which was at that time in course of reconstitution; the rest would be gradually disarmed and disbanded.

¹ Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League, as the AFO was now designated.

The Supreme Allied Commander added that he saw no alternative to this course except to declare the BNA an illegal organization, and that as General Leese estimated that the existence of a hostile BNA in his rear would require the services of up to two divisions to protect his lines of communication and preserve order in the country generally, he was opposed to such a course.

The next day, immediately upon receiving a report of General Slim's meeting with Aung San on 16th May, the Supreme Allied Commander, apparently fearing that negotiations with Aung San might break down and that the active hostility of Aung San and the BNA would be incurred, asked the Governor of Burma to agree to Aung San being informed that the Governor would 'consider including members of this provisional government among the representatives of other parties' in his Advisory Council on the restoration of civil government. The Governor vigorously refused on the grounds that this would depart radically from the policy of depreciation laid down by the home government. On receipt of a report from Admiral Mountbatten concerning this matter, the Prime Minister became uneasy at the way events were developing, and on 21st and 22nd May the Chiefs of Staff strongly re-emphasized the dangers of giving any encouragement to Aung San and the BNA and the extreme importance of effectively correcting any pretensions on his part to represent a 'Provisional Government of Burma'.

The Chiefs of Staff also approved the Supreme Allied Commander's proposals for disarming the BNA and instructed him to deal with the problem in two stages. In the first stage he was to continue to make use of the BNA units as long as he could profitably employ them in mopping-up operations; he was authorised to pay and ration them if this would prevent their living off the country. In the second stage he was to concentrate them at holding centres and bring them under control as organised guerilla or auxiliary forces forming a part of, and subordinate to, the British forces in Burma. They were to be told that the intention was to make them available for further operations if necessary, and that opportunities might arise for enrolment in the regular Burma Army when the civil government returned. Enrolment as individuals was apparently in mind though this was not explicitly stated. In the meanwhile, nominal rolls were to be prepared and the opportunity was to be taken to investigate any cases in which charges could be framed of the commission of atrocities against British subjects or of any other serious crimes.

On 30th May Admiral Mountbatten held a meeting in Delhi at which the Governor of Burma, General Leese, General Slim, Lieutenant-General Sir Montagu Stopford, Major-General Rance (who had recently relieved Major-General Pearce as C.C.A.O.) and others were present. It was agreed that the Chiefs of Staff's plan

for concentrating the BNA with a view to ultimate enrolment in the regular Burma Army was practicable. General Slim, under no illusions regarding the probable political consequences of the course which had been adopted, warned that it would sooner or later be necessary to arrest Aung San and other members of the 'Provisional Government' unless they atoned for past misdeeds by present good behaviour. Admiral Mountbatten said he was not prepared to arrest Aung San as a traitor and to declare the BNA illegal, as he was convinced this would lead to civil war. It was also decided by the Supreme Allied Commander and the Governor that it would be highly undesirable to impose any political censorship on mention of the BNA. At the same time no undue publicity should be accorded to Aung San. It was next decided that so much of the BNA as had transferred its allegiance should be given a new name. Patriotic Burmese Forces (PBF) was selected. At this meeting, also, the Supreme Allied Commander, still anxious to avert the hostility of the leaders of the BNA and AFPFL, suggested that the Governor should hold a meeting with these and other political representatives of the Burmese people to explain the policy of the British Government for the future of Burma.

On 16th June Admiral Mountbatten met Aung San and Than Tun in Rangoon informally. The latter asked that gradual enrolment of volunteers for the regular army should start at once and that a gratuity should be paid to disbanded members of the force. It was agreed to pay the gratuity and Aung San and Than Tun were told that arrangements for enrolment had already been made. The question whether enrolment was to be of individuals or of units was not raised. The request for 'gradual enrolment' possibly suggests an individual basis. Aung San said he would issue orders to stop looting by armed bands, of which the Supreme Allied Commander complained, and agreed that any bands disobeying his orders might be treated as mutineers or dacoits.

On 20th June Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith met Burmese political leaders on board H.M.S. Cumberland in the Rangoon River. If the Supreme Allied Commander's main interest in this meeting was that it should prevent the leaders of the BNA and the AFPFL causing trouble to the Military Administration, Sir Reginald was anxious to give a more general explanation of the policy of the United Kingdom Government for the future of Burma and to gain acceptance of this not only by these leaders but by other political parties as well.

* * *

Instructions were drawn up providing that detachments of the Patriotic Burmese Forces should be dealt with one at a time, that a travelling recruiting centre should register volunteers for enrolment

in the Regular Army, and that registered volunteers should report, after three months' leave with pay, for final enlistment. They also provided that 'enlistments would be distributed between battalions and companies and would not be formed into whole units', in order to obviate inclusion within the Burma regular forces of a private army owing loyalty primarily to Aung San. Disbandment and registration began on 30th June.

Less than a week after the official initiation of the disbandment programme difficulties began to appear. At a meeting on 6th July to consider the instructions for recruiting centres, Aung San refused agreement, without apparent reason. At a further meeting, on 9th July, it appeared that what Aung San objected to in the instructions was the provision that no promise of re-enlistment should be given at the time of disbandment. This was intended to prevent the giving of any undertaking to persons later found ineligible for recruitment e.g. on medical grounds, but Aung San suspected sinister motives. At a third meeting, on 11th July, Aung San changed his ground and sought to be reassured on four points regarding the constitution and organization of the future regular Burma Army, the chief of these being that battalions of the new army should not be 'mixed' battalions of Burmese and hill people but 'class' battalions consisting either of Burmese or of other races. At a meeting on 15th July the Supreme Allied Commander informed Aung San that his four stipulations were agreed to in principle. This was a definite change of policy on what was understood and had been implied. Aung San then said that 'so long as the incorporation of the patriot Burmese Forces in the Burma Army was carried out in accordance with the stipulations which had now been accepted by the Supreme Allied Commander, he had no request to make regarding his own personal position'. It is not clear what this meant; it is certain that Aung San never said that he would now order the PBF to disarm. His pretensions were still rising and he was trying to gain time. He was determined that the incorporation of the PBF into the regular army should not involve the break up of the units of the PBF or the dissolution of the personal loyalty of these units to himself.

The Supreme Allied Commander's plans for disbanding the BNA and absorbing suitable members of this force into the regular Burma Army involved the creation of two posts of Deputy Inspectors-General under a British Inspector-General of the Burma Army, and the appointment of Aung San to one of these posts, with the local rank of Brigadier. The proposal to make this appointment was viewed with misgiving in London. It was felt to be inconsistent with the policy of the British Government towards Aung San and the BNA, and it was feared that the grant of this high rank to Aung San might unduly strain the loyalty of the regular Burma Army, create resentment among civil employees

of the Government of Burma, and have a disturbing effect on the people generally. But on 9th August 1945 the Rt. Hon'ble F. W. Pethick Lawrence, Secretary of State for Burma, advised the Prime Minister that the proposal must be judged in the light of developments since the issue by the Chiefs of Staff of the telegram of 30th March. He went on to say:

'Lord Louis Mountbatten is satisfied that the BNA have to a very great extent "worked their passage home" by virtue of the value of the guerilla services that they rendered to the 14th Army. With the recovery of Rangoon, personal contact has been established with Aung San both by the Military Commanders and the Supreme Allied Commander himself and also, on one occasion, by the Governor. All these officers are prepared to accept it as a fact that at the present time Aung San is one of the most important figures in Burma. So far as can be judged his ambitions tend in the direction rather of a military career than direct engagement in politics, but with a considerable force of Burmans strongly devoted to his personal leadership, there is no question that he is a political force also. Unless he can be employed under Government in such appointment as he is willing to accept, there is an obvious danger of his being driven with elements of the BNA into underground activities. In view therefore of this very difficult situation, it is submitted that action on the lines proposed by Admiral Mountbatten should be approved, but that at the same time everything possible should be done to mitigate the dangers which are inherent in this course also. There has been some indication, for example, that Aung San had hoped that the BNA would be allowed to continue as a separate organisation of "Burma State Troops" functioning alongside the regular Burma Army. The separation of the Burmese element of the Burma Army under his own administrative charge might be misunderstood by him as a concession to this point of view. It should be made quite plain to him therefore that the Burma Army, including its Burmese element, is part of the forces of the Crown in no way different in that respect from other British forces. Furthermore, there seems a real danger that the battalion commanders and officers of the Burmese battalions and also the other ranks so far as they are not composed of ex-BNA personnel may much resent being placed directly under Aung San even for administrative purposes. It would therefore seem important that when once the two Burmese battalions (mainly ex-BNA) of the new Army have been constituted the functions of the Deputy Inspectors-General should not be such as to empower them to issue instructions or deal direct with battalion commanders but rather to advise the Inspector-General who would himself deal with them and issue any instructions. With these modifications it is suggested that Admiral Mountbatten's proposal should be approved: but it does seem

desirable to consider carefully whether a lower "local" rank than that of Brigadier would not be adequate'.

The Prime Minister accepted the Secretary of State's recommendation.

Meanwhile, in the course of July and August it had become clear that the PBF in general were not disbanding and that arms were being retained, presumably for the use of a revived 'underground' movement. It was discovered that Than Tun had issued a 'directive' to 'discontinue the revolt' against the British. It appeared that this was intended to supersede an earlier 'directive' of August 1944 in which the AFO had been told that the next step after the rejection of the Japanese was to be a revolt against the British. It was not clear how far the countermanding orders meant what they said, or had been received and understood in the country. It is perhaps of interest that this second 'directive' recognised that there were three courses open to the British in dealing with the PBF: the first to take over and employ the PBF *en bloc* with British advisers; the second to merge the PBF in the regular army with British officers in controlling posts; the third to disband and re-enlist the PBF as individuals. The third course was described as the 'ugliest' possibility. The main cause for the reluctance to disband was, presumably, that it had become clear that absorption of the PBF into the regular Burma Army was being undertaken in this 'ugliest' manner which sought to disintegrate the original PBF units.

At first Aung San himself appeared to be trying to secure implementation of the agreements of 16th June and 15th July. By the end of August however he was refusing co-operation and the attitude taken up by him and the other leaders of the AFPFL was that the new Burma Army should be built up by accretions to the PBF units, which must continue in existence as units, and not by absorption of the PBF as individuals into the reconstituted Burma Army which, they somewhat brazenly claimed, 'now exists more or less in name only'. On 24th August the AFPFL refused to proceed with disbandment of the PBF in the IV Corps area until the method of disbandment had been further discussed.

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In order to ascertain the reasons for the breakdown of the arrangements previously agreed upon and to resolve the differences that had arisen, Admiral Mountbatten determined to hold a conference at Kandy with representatives of the PBF and AFPFL. An impressive opening meeting was held on 6th September with the Supreme Allied Commander, General Slim, now Commander-in-Chief ALFSEA, and

General Stopford, the Twelfth Army Commander,¹ present, together with members of their staffs, representatives of the CCAO, and other officers, to the number of some twenty in all. Aung San led the PBF and AFPFL delegation which numbered eleven. There were also present U Tin Tut, a Burmese member of the civil service in Burma, to aid Aung San in the presentation of his case. Mr. T. Driberg M.P., who had been accredited as a war correspondent to SACSEA, but in view of his position as a Member of Parliament had a dual standing, was permitted to attend as an observer. Apart from the statement by General Slim, referred to in the next paragraph, the barest lip service was now paid to the need for depreciation; the delegates were treated as honoured guests, and Aung San was offered the post of Deputy Inspector-General of the Burma Army, carrying the rank of Brigadier, in accordance with the decision of the Home Government which had been conveyed to the Supreme Commander in the preceding month.

The Supreme Allied Commander was well aware that one of the main points that would come up for discussion was Aung San's desire that the reconstitution of the regular Burma Army should be effected 'with Burmese Patriotic Forces and the indigenous guerrilla units . . . as its nucleus'. At a preparatory meeting held the previous day with the Governor of Burma, before the arrival of the PBF and AFPFL delegation, he had proposed to meet this request either by suggesting that the PBF should be transformed into a Burma National Militia or by agreeing that PBF battalions should be incorporated into the regular army as units.

Next morning, Admiral Mountbatten discovered, in conversation with General Slim and Lieut.-General Stopford, that there were clearly faults on both sides, which were preventing the disbandments from being carried out successfully. General Stopford's view was that Aung San should bring his own difficulties into the open; and he undertook to discuss those of them which might appear well-founded, with Aung San, after the meeting. Accordingly, the Supreme Commander changed his intended tactics; for it was clear that if Aung San had indeed any legitimate causes for complaint and realised that these would be fairly dealt with, he would have no excuse for not standing by the existing agreement, and would be unlikely to press his demand for re-enlistment by battalions.

The meeting began with a recapitulation by the Supreme Commander of his general policy for Burma; General Slim followed with an account of all the aid received by the Allied forces from the various irregular formations in the country, with the object of putting the PBF contribution into proper perspective. Admiral Mountbatten had

¹ Twelfth Army H.Q. replaced Fourteenth Army H.Q. which was withdrawn from Burma to prepare for the assault upon Malaya.

agreed, at his meeting with the Governor of Burma the previous day, that at this stage he would ask Aung San point-blank whether or not he stood by the agreement already reached on the future of the PBF; but in the light of his conversation with Generals Slim and Stopford, he felt that he should ask Aung San to explain exactly what his difficulties were; and he accordingly did so.

Aung San rose immediately to read a long carefully prepared statement which referred to numerous difficulties. It was not easy to distinguish what was important and what unimportant, but the following passage was clearly fundamental:

'The reaction to incorporation as now done, i.e. recruitment of individual PBF personnel, instead of incorporation of such portion of the PBF as may be found eligible into the Burma Army, is devastating. Those individuals already dealt with feel (while others anticipate a feeling) that they have lost their soul, that they are made to give up an organisation which has already become a nation[al] institution, and that their services and sacrifices are being dismissed with a very meagre recognition. It will therefore be a great mistake to continue with the incorporation of the PBF personnel in the way now done. Unless the present arrangement is superseded by one that reasonably satisfies PBF aspirations it will surely lead to widespread misunderstanding and dissatisfaction'.

Throughout Aung San's speech points were noted for further discussion at a staff meeting to be held that afternoon. But no note was made of this important point and, as soon as Aung San ended, Admiral Mountbatten brought the meeting to a close, saying that there was obviously no difference on any matter of principle and that only points of detail needed clarifying. He went on to express his relief that this should be so since he had throughout acted on the assumption that he was dealing with honourable men and had felt keen disappointment when it appeared that they might have come with the purpose of going back on their word.

During the luncheon interval following the meeting, a series of informal conversations took place between Admiral Mountbatten and Generals Slim and Stopford, in which it transpired that all were satisfied that if the attendant difficulties could be resolved, the principle of individual re-enlistment could be made to work. Admiral Mountbatten then had an informal talk with Aung San, in which he gave him to understand that he was not prepared to consider Aung San's new suggestion of re-enlistment by battalions, although he was fully prepared to have the difficulties and misunderstandings cleared up.

Consequently, at the afternoon meeting under General Stopford this main contention of Aung San's was never touched upon, not even

when 'Procedure for amalgamation of PBF and Burma Army' was being discussed.

A final meeting was held by Admiral Mountbatten to confirm arrangements reached at General Stopford's meeting, and the conference broke up, Aung San paying a warm tribute to the 'transparent fairness and high-mindedness' of the Supreme Allied Commander, which, he said, augured well not only for the present but for the future.

The question of Aung San's proposal for a new agreement had not been mentioned again by either side; and the risk of any further recriminations, or new points being interjected, had been avoided. All need for the Supreme Commander to put into effect either of the two possible solutions (which he had notified the Governor of Burma, at the preliminary meeting between them, that he might be compelled to use) had been obviated, for the principle of individual re-enlistment remained intact. Moreover, since the ventilation of grievances and the realisation that they would be fairly looked into, it now seemed that this principle would have a better chance of working out in practice. This indeed proved to be the case.

The conference dispersed in an atmosphere of mutual congratulation and the results were received with satisfaction in the Burmese Press.

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Recruitment continued on the individual, not the unit, basis. Then early in October a disturbing report was received from Headquarters, Twelfth Army, which suggested that the AFPFL and PBF leaders were in fact not at all satisfied with the results of the Kandy meetings. Admiral Mountbatten immediately queried the correctness of this report on the ground that Aung San and the other leaders had expressed themselves to him as completely satisfied at the end of the conference. The report was discussed at a meeting, and General Stopford explained that he had investigated its sources and that it appeared that many of them referred to events and opinions dating from before the conferences in Kandy. It was finally held by the Supreme Allied Commander and the Twelfth Army Commander that the report was based on pre-conference material and consequently gave a mis-leading picture of affairs after the conference. A revised report was directed to be prepared to replace the original document. But in the light of after knowledge, it would appear that not all of the leaders were satisfied and that many of the rank and file certainly were not.

The real test, it may be said, is whether disbandment and recruitment to the regular Burma Army improved. At the time of the conferences in Kandy the statistics in regard to the PBF showed little improvement on the figures for the 5th August, namely 789 persons

disbanded, 169 arms handed in, and 554 registrations for future enlistment. The effect of the terms of the agreement reached at Kandy early in September could not make itself felt until October, as time was needed to modify procedure for disbandment. In the course of October, November, and December, however, the procedure was put into motion and by the end of that period 8,324 members of the PBF had passed through the centres, of whom 4,763 had volunteered and been found fit for enrolment in the Regular Army. It was estimated that only 450 of the PBF still remained to be passed through the centres. And of those found fit the very great majority did in fact enlist after their three months leave. A surprising quantity of arms (over 14,000 weapons of all kinds) was handed in. Disbandment had proceeded satisfactorily; to this extent the PBF and their leaders had honoured the agreement made at Kandy.

But there were reservations; 3,500 had not volunteered. It was not long before a new body, the People's Volunteer Organisation (PVO) came into existence. Professedly an ex-service association for social work, there is no doubt that this included many of those who had not volunteered for the regular army. Not many months after the return of the civil government it was indulging in such military activities as dummy weapon drill and tactical exercises on the open spaces near the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon. In November, in Myaungmya, Aung San spoke to a gathering of the PBF, ostensibly in support of the disbandment and recruitment programme. But his speech to his hearers actually conveyed a different meaning. These are the orders, he said, it is for you to consider whether you follow them. It began to appear that while Aung San had probably not relinquished his claims upon the personal loyalty of those members of his forces who had been recruited into the regular army, it was in the form of the PVO that he and the AFPFL executive had decided to preserve the flower of their private army. This, however, carries us beyond the period with which we are concerned. When the civil government returned the Governor took his stand on the original policy of the War Cabinet which involved keeping the AFPFL in its place. But it was now too late. The AFPFL, drawing strength from the sources discussed in the previous chapter, went into determined opposition. In less than a year it had forced its way into effective power. British rule in Burma was a thing of the past.

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Telling the story of British administration in the Far East, and of the political problems which it encountered, from the standpoint, mainly of the Chief Civil Affairs Officers and of the Supreme Allied Commander, has meant, almost certainly, that less than justice has been

done to the nationalist leaders and particularly to Aung San in Burma. Perhaps amends can best be made by attempting to convey a fuller impression of this Burmese leader who was assassinated in July 1947.

Aung San was born in 1917 and first came into public notice as a student at Rangoon University. There was then little beyond a dislike of authority to suggest the capacity he was later to develop. He edited a students' periodical and in 1936 published a distasteful libel concerning the Burmese Bursar of University College. He remained truculently unrepentant and was 'sent down' for a time but even this penalty was promptly rescinded at the instance of the Ministry of Education because it provoked a students' strike.¹

Aung San returned in triumph and became President of the Students' Union. After taking a pass degree in Arts he began to read Law but soon desisted and became General Secretary of the Thakin Party. This party consisted of youthful extremists who professed a 'vaguely Communist ideology',² and had a hammer and sickle emblem, a secret oath, a revolutionary technique and an ultra-nationalist spirit. Until Russia entered the war, they followed a line hostile to the British and to the Government of Burma. But, as we have seen, they had few followers and only gained three seats out of 132 in the House of Representatives. So far there was little to suggest any future for Aung San other than that of an agitator likely to suffer recurring terms of imprisonment.

It was the turn of events that gave Aung San his chance. The proscription of the Thakin Party in 1940 caused him to flee. It appears that Japanese agents in Burma had made contact with members of the party before the outbreak of war. So he crossed the frontier into Siam and made his way to Hainan. He was received by the Japanese, and with a handful of his friends, thirty in all, was given a course of military training by Japanese officers in Hainan or Tokyo.

He had an altogether new status when he returned to Burma with the Japanese armies. He had rendered valuable service to the invaders. In the early stages of the invasion he was able to seize, and for a time wield, part of the authority of the conquerors. When the new order began to crystallize he took his place in it as Commander-in-Chief of the newly constituted Burma Defence Army. Although mistaken, he was not alone in supposing that Japan would win the war or allow Burma any real independence; but he was quite alone, among public men in Burma, in having the courage to criticise the Japanese; and he had gained a position from which, on the return of the British, he

¹ The periodical edited by Aung San did *not* lampoon the British staff, nor was Aung San prevented from taking his degree for this or any other reason. cf. Woodrow Wyatt, *Southwards from China*, London, 1952, p. 91.

² Cf. Ian Morrison, *Grandfather Longlegs*, London, 1947, p. 62.

was able to advance until finally he forced the latter to precipitate the grant of independence.

When the British, planning to reoccupy Burma, wished to seek local assistance for acquiring information and launching clandestine operations, SOE, in their turn, chose to make their contacts with the Thakin Party, for precisely the same reasons as had weighed with the Japanese. The group was hostile to the existing government, was ready to cooperate with an invader, was experienced in clandestine work, and had an underground organization. Members of the group who had fled from Burma to India were at hand, available for the planning and concerting of action. When the British forces re-entered Burma, Aung San and his followers, now grown into the Burma National Army and the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League, were able once again to render, or claim to render, service to the invaders. Once again they seized, and were able to wield, part of the authority of the conquerors. Once again Aung San was elevated; and this time he was no longer one of a number of personages in Burma: he had become the outstanding military and political figure, the only person with whom it seemed profitable for the British to treat.

His meteoric rise and his prospects of future power fired the imagination of the Burmese and gained him their support. But there were other reasons for the prestige that was now his. By his own achievements, by his raising of a Burmese army, and by this army's achievements, he had restored self respect to a proud people. There was about him a spartan air, a certain ruthless idealism and integrity—the fanaticism of his earlier days grown somewhat more mellow—that made him very different from pre-war politicians and appealed to the rising generation, the youth of the country.

His complete dissociation from the major political parties of the time operated to his advantage. The British had introduced parliamentary government in the hope of enlisting the support of the people for a government which would be their own. An alien and artificial system, it succeeded in little but alienating many and bringing government into disrepute. It put power into the hands of the second rate who, having learnt the outward conventions of the game, proceeded to play it for their own profit. Aung San's crudity and forthrightness came like a breath of fresh air in this atmosphere of corruption and intrigue.

It was not only the younger generation who longed for a cleaner and more vigorous public life. The more thoughtful and responsible members of society had also been repelled. But their position was different; they were an inconsiderable minority, unable openly to claim support from the British element in government because it was alien, yet deeply distrustful of Aung San and his associates whom they regarded, not entirely without reason, as youthful upstarts if not actual

gangsters. Aung San had no difficulty in disposing of these moderates; they were scattered, without much cohesion, and the fact that many of them were engaged in the work of government as judges or administrators, or even as humble village headmen, rendered them suspect. Moreover they were handicapped by their respect for law and order. Further, the Burma National Army provided Aung San with an unrivalled propaganda machine, whereas the moderates had none; its detachments, scattered over the country, spread his gospel, and the arms they carried were a salutary warning to any would-be opposition.

When, after the period with which this book is concerned, real power was passing from the British to the Anti-Fascist Peoples' Freedom League, a cleavage soon developed between those elements that were in any strict sense Communist and the rest of the movement, which stood revealed as primarily Nationalist and only secondarily, if at all, Communist in general outlook. Meanwhile Aung San was to develop statesmanlike qualities which shewed that his character could grow with events. For the last ten months of his life he was virtually prime minister, realizing, for the first time, the size of his country, the plurality of its races and the complexity of its problems; the volume of work told on his health and at times he was out of his depth but he was man enough to acknowledge it, winning the respect of the British administrators with whom he was now in daily contact. His assassination deprived his country of the one man who might have been able to enforce discipline on his followers in the lawless years that lay ahead.

For the British at that time it was difficult to think of Aung San as anything but disloyal, a traitor and a collaborator. But these words may be out of place under the circumstances. His people were under first one and then another alien rule. For such persons, when war and invasion have shaken the structure of society and shattered the normal setting of life, a desperate and miserable conflict may arise between technical loyalty to the lawful but departed government and natural loyalty to their own people, a people required alike by public interest and international law to obey the effective government of an occupying power. It is true that, like so many underground leaders in other countries, he was preoccupied with securing the position of his own group after the war. But the sharpness of the conflict and the difficulty of passing judgment were acknowledged in Burma by the reluctance to prosecute for alleged collaboration with the enemy.

British rule had lasted long enough for the Burmese to take its benefits for granted and remember only its defects, forgetting what the state of the country had previously been. Ever since the First World War men had been imbibing ideas of self-determination. And in 1942, with terrible suddenness, the British forfeited their right to expect loyalty by their complete inability to protect their people from the horrors of invasion.

To the Burmese Aung San was a patriot, whatever his shortcomings and his admixture of motives. His vision of independence for Burma, a rebirth of national pride for its people, and power for himself, were probably one picture, not three. He alone was able to unite his people, speak for them, and give expression to their spirit as no one else had done since the days of Alaungpaya two hundred years ago.

* * *

The original instructions of the War Cabinet regarding the leaders of the Resistance movement, conveyed in the telegram of 30th March 1945, have been reproduced at pages 353-354. Politically, the heart of them was that these must not be allowed 'to use the comparatively trifling aid given by them to us as an argument for the grant of a predominant position in the government and perhaps constitutional advances which the home government would not feel ready to consider', Yet in less than two years from the date of these instructions the United Kingdom government entered into negotiations with representatives of the Burmese people which resulted in the immediate recognition of a provisional administration and the transformation of this, a year later, into a sovereign government outside the British Commonwealth. The Burmese representatives to whom this transfer of power was made were the 'collaborationist leaders' of the Resistance movement referred to in the telegram of 30th March. This state of affairs bore no likeness to what had been in the minds of the War Cabinet in 1945. It is interesting to see how the matter later presented itself to Mr. Churchill, who had been Prime Minister when these instructions were issued. In a debate in the House of Commons in 1947 on the Bill to confer independence upon Burma, he said:

'U Aung San went over to the Japanese, and raised what we might call a Quisling army to come in at the tail of the Japanese and help conquer the country for Japan. Great cruelties were performed by his army. They were not very effective in the fighting, but in the infliction of vengeance on the loyal Burmese—the Burmese who were patriotically fighting with British and Indian troops to defend the soil of Burma from Japanese conquerors—great cruelties were perpetrated on those men, because they had helped us to resist the Japanese.

After two or three years of desperately hard fighting, under conditions indescribably trying to British troops—climatic, and conditions of disease indescribably painful to British troops—two or three years of that followed, a struggle swinging to and fro, sometimes with most anxious crises, until at length the balance turned in our favour, and when it turned U Aung San, as soon as he saw that Japan would be defeated—and it became quite evident that it was a matter of time only as to who was to win the

great struggle—made overtures to Admiral Mountbatten, the Supreme Commander, that he was willing to come over to the winning side and bring his army with him, for what it was worth. I was at that time responsible, and upon the advice of the Chiefs of Staff, and with the approval of the Cabinet, we accepted those overtures.

I was in favour of that because of the general aim and importance of shortening the war, saving the unnecessary shedding of British blood, and bringing the whole of the Burma position forward into line with the American advance in the Pacific; but of course it is not a very agreeable transaction, when a traitor rebel leader, who has come in with foreign invaders, brings his army over to your side, when so many cruelties and outrages have been perpetrated—still, in war time, the great thing is to get to the end of the war as soon as possible in a victorious manner. I certainly did not expect to see U Aung San, whose hands were dyed with British blood and loyal Burmese blood, marching up the steps of Buckingham Palace as the plenipotentiary of the Burmese Government.¹

The steps by which this position was reached are of great interest but most of them fall outside the period of military administration with which alone this history is concerned. Many of the early discussions and dealings affecting the AFPFL leaders took place, however, under the authority of Admiral Mountbatten and the Military Administration and they must be assumed to have had their part in shaping subsequent developments.

Many who had knowledge of the instructions of the War Cabinet felt that recognition of these leaders in fact went further than had originally been intended. Most of the senior staff officers of the Administration in Burma, unaware of these instructions, unaware also for long of Admiral Mountbatten's guiding principles in these matters,² nevertheless felt that the policy adopted towards the leaders was inconsistent with what they did know of the attitude of the home government, as manifested on other occasions. There was, for example, the Government's statement of policy of 17th May 1945.³ And a month later, in the House of Commons, Sir Stafford Cripps said: 'We do not want to see in Burma or in any other country, the rapid seizing of power by any particular group of people, in order to improvise some form of government'.⁴ Above all there was the insistence of the home government upon 'loyal and proper' conduct before government servants might be re-employed, with all its implications.⁵ These officers

¹ Hansard 443, H. of C. Deb. 5. 5. Columns 1848-9.

² Set out in a directive of 2nd June, 1945, cf. p. 350 and pp. 73-74.

³ Cf. page 344.

⁴ Hansard 411 H.C. Deb. 5. S. Column 509.

⁵ Cf. pp. 127-131.

felt they would be failing in their duty if they did not draw attention to what they believed, rightly or wrongly, to be the dangers of the policy that was being followed.

Without seeking to pass judgment in such a matter it seems desirable to summarise the main steps in the relations with the leaders of the AFPFL and BNA after the decision to accept the aid of the latter, and to indicate the questions that future historians may be called upon to answer.

There was, first, the Supreme Allied Commander's proposal of 16th May that the Governor should undertake to include members of the AFPFL provisional government in his Advisory Council. This was emphatically rejected by the Governor and the authorities in the United Kingdom as departing radically from the policy of the War Cabinet. It can have exerted no influence upon subsequent developments as it was never disclosed to the AFPFL. The matter is of interest only as exemplifying the difference of attitude between the Supreme Allied Commander and the War Cabinet which has been discussed in the previous chapter. After the civil government returned to Burma Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith was in fact to make an attempt to include in his Advisory Council representatives of the AFPFL. This failed because the latter sought to impose quite unacceptable conditions. But this was six months after the events now under consideration, and the developments with which this chapter has been concerned had greatly changed the whole military and political situation in favour of the AFPFL.

Through the succeeding months there followed the meetings and conferences with Aung San and the AFPFL leaders which have been described earlier in this chapter.¹ Then in his report for 1945 the CCAO said:

'From an early date every effort had been made to associate the leaders of the Resistance Movement as far as possible with the Military Administration. An Advisory Council to advise the CCAO on the conduct of the Military Administration and to provide a channel for the representation of grievances and criticisms was formed in June. Similar Councils were formed in most districts to advise the local BNA authorities. On all occasions where decisions on important policy were required the advice and co-operation of AFPFL leaders both national and local were sought.'

The question arises whether the status accorded to the leaders of the AFPFL throughout these months involved the adoption towards them of a more indulgent attitude than had been contemplated by the War Cabinet. If it did, the question further arises whether this attitude was militarily necessary in order to avoid provoking a civil war that

¹ Cf. particularly pp. 358-361.

would have embarrassed the Administration and endangered operations or whether the risk of such a conflict was too slight to require the adoption of such an attitude.

Then in August the home government decided that the post of Deputy Inspector-General of the Burma Army might be offered to Aung San, carrying the rank of Brigadier. It is possible to take very different views of the effect of this decision. Having regard to its recognition of Aung San as 'one of the most important figures in Burma', and to the change of government that had very recently occurred in the United Kingdom, it can be held that it revealed a movement of opinion in London in conformity with the development of events in South-East Asia and even that it fundamentally modified the spirit of the instructions of the War Cabinet. On the other hand it was not suggested by the Secretary of State for Burma that any review was necessary of the attitude prescribed on 30th March, nor was any submission to this effect made to the Cabinet. It is accordingly possible to take the view that what this decision did was to approve departure from the prescribed attitude, but only to the extent that this had become necessary in order to enable Aung San to be appointed Deputy Inspector-General, and subject to a general re-affirmation of the original policy. In support of this view it can be urged that the Secretary of State added:—'at the same time everything possible should be done to mitigate the dangers which are inherent in this course', and:—'it would seem desirable to consider carefully whether a lower "local" rank than that of Brigadier would not be adequate'.

Lastly, there were the Kandy conferences. The question here is whether the attitude taken up at the conferences towards Aung San and the leaders of the BNA and the AFPFL was in line with the expectations of the War Cabinet, to the extent that these may be held to have been modified by the change of government in the United Kingdom and the decision to offer Aung San the appointment of Deputy Inspector-General, and, if not, whether it was still militarily necessary, after the conclusion of the war with Japan, to accord such standing to the Burmese delegation. In this connection it has to be remembered that although the war with Japan was over, Singapore was not yet rehabilitated, and that the operations in Indo-China and Indonesia, and the whole undertaking for the recovery of prisoners of war and internees still remained to be conducted.

Before leaving these questions to the future, there are two points which should perhaps be made.

We must constantly remind ourselves that throughout these confused and momentous happenings, it is difficult, probably impossible, satisfactorily to disentangle political from military motives, if only for the reason that the existence of a favourable political climate was in itself a military asset of great, perhaps decisive, value. Finally,

whatever view the reader may find himself taking of the question whether and of the extent to which Admiral Mountbatten judged it militarily necessary to depart from a political attitude intended by the War Cabinet, he may well come to the conclusion that, in the revolutionary situation encountered, and in the prevailing temper of world opinion,¹ no other course was, in fact, open to the Supreme Allied Commander.

Out of this question yet another arises and that is whether the full co-operation of Aung San and the BNA could have been enlisted without according such importance to them. On the one hand it can be argued that it is far from clear what grounds existed for the Supreme Allied Commander's ever-present fear that Aung San would turn hostile, a fear which prompted him, even before the effect upon Aung San of his meeting with General Slim could be known, to request the Governor to promise representation on his Council to the AFPFL, and which apparently underlay many of his other contacts with Aung San. For after meeting General Slim, and even before that, Aung San, it can be argued, must have realised that willing co-operation was his best, if not his only, chance to extricate himself from the predicament into which he had fallen by taking up arms against the British. On the other hand it can be contended that the success of the British operations depended so fatefully upon Aung San not turning hostile that it was right to insure against any possibility of his doing so, however, slight the risk and heavy though the premium might prove.

Perhaps the fairest view will prove to be that Admiral Mountbatten, judging it necessary on military grounds, and exercising the discretion undoubtedly vested in him, moved forward further than had originally been envisaged by the Coalition Government but that the Government, although apprehensive of the results, was not sufficiently disturbed to call a halt and consequently accepted responsibility for the course he was pursuing. When the Labour Government took office in 1945 it closed up to the position reached by Admiral Mountbatten and gave its unqualified approval and support to the attitude which he had adopted.

¹ Cf. pp. 338-341.

CHAPTER XX

RESISTANCE IN MALAYA

IN MALAYA it was the Chinese, not the Malays, that posed the main political problem for the Military Administration. And although clandestine contacts in no way created the problem it may be that they precipitated the time when it had to be faced.

Trade contacts between China and Malaya date from very early times but the first permanent settlements of Chinese in Malaya appear to have been established in Malacca during the fourteenth century.¹ These settlements were small and showed little tendency to increase. It was not until the establishment of British control that the Chinese community expanded. There were few Chinese in Penang or Singapore when these came under British administration. By 1941 Chinese accounted for 166,974 out of a population of 247,460 in Penang and 599,659 out of a population of 769,216 in Singapore. In the four federated Malay States the Chinese accounted in 1941 for 989,635 out of 2,212,052 and in the four unfederated States for 465,892 out of 1,872,329. By 1941 the population of Malaya including Singapore was estimated to be 43 per cent Chinese, 41 per cent Malay, 14 per cent Indian, .6 per cent European and .4 per cent Eurasian. All other races accounted for 1 per cent.

The Chinese maintained a virtual monopoly of the retail trade of the country. With the development of industries the immigration of Chinese was encouraged in order to provide a labour force, and virtually the whole of the labour on tin mines was Chinese. Most labour on rubber estates was Indian but a proportion of Chinese was nevertheless employed in this and in other basic industries. The cultivation of rice, however, remained almost exclusively in the hands of the Malays. The Chinese also owned many of the smaller tin mines and rubber estates, and had a predominant share in the ownership and operation of the secondary industries of the country. Market gardening and the rearing of pigs and poultry were almost entirely in the hands of the Chinese. They also held shares in the larger British-owned undertakings. Before the Japanese occupation it was estimated that £40,000,000, out of total foreign investments of £130,900,000, was Chinese. British investments were believed to amount to over £50,000,000.

¹ For much of the material in this and the following paragraphs the writer is indebted to Dr. Victor Purcell's book *The Chinese in Malaya*, London, 1948, to which the reader in search of fuller information is referred.

The political status of the Chinese did not match their economic importance. Those born in the British settlements enjoyed British citizenship. In the absence of representative institutions this carried with it no right to a vote. They were eligible for appointment to Executive, Legislative and Municipal Councils within the Settlements. It was only with the creation of the Straits Settlements Civil Service a few years before the outbreak of the war that they had become eligible for admission to the higher ranks of the Government services, but the numbers so employed were increasing. Chinese not born in the Settlements were eligible for membership of local Councils but their standing in the territories of the Sultans was generally ill defined, and they were not treated as subjects of the Sultans, even when born in the States. They had no share in the government and only a minor place in the civil services of the Federated Malay States.

In spite of the difference of status between the Straits-born and other Chinese, and of a certain difference of emphasis in their loyalties, the Chinese formed a remarkably united community which showed no tendency to assimilation with the Malays. They were prone to look upon themselves primarily as overseas Chinese, and only secondarily as citizens of Malaya. It was in recognition of this separatism of the Chinese, and of the special nature of their problems, that the 'Chinese Protectorate' was created in 1877, a department of the British colonial administration which increasingly became the channel for contact between the Government and the Chinese community.

It was not surprising that there should have developed, before the Japanese invasion, a demand for greater equality of status with the Malays, in view of the great increase in numbers of the Chinese to a point at which in 1941 they just outnumbered the Malays throughout Malaya and were in an overwhelming majority in the important centres of trade and industry, and in view also of the very much greater share taken by the Chinese in the economic life of the country.

The Chinese propensity to form secret societies, often of political, sometimes of terrorist, character, led to the enactment in Malaya of the Societies Ordinance of 1889 which rendered unlawful all societies, with certain exceptions, if they had not been registered under the Ordinance, and made any connection with their activities punishable under the criminal law. The society with which we shall be most concerned was the Malayan Communist Party which, in spite of its name, was entirely Chinese by inspiration, and almost entirely so in membership. This party came into existence in the early 1920's, about the time that nationalism became a political creed. Its organisers were Chinese who, together with representatives of most of the other peoples of south-east Asia, had been trained in Moscow for the part of Communist emissaries. In 1928 it was purged out of the Kuomintang or Chinese nationalist movement, thereafter continuing a

separate existence with 'cells' established in many parts of the country, and working through other secret societies. When, in 1938, the Sino-Japanese war led to the establishment by the Chinese community of the 'Anti-Enemy Backing-Up Society' the Malayan Communist party, following the universal Communist technique, secured control from within by infiltration into this already somewhat leftist organization; a control which, though covert, eventually became complete. The 'Anti-Enemy Backing-Up Society' was mainly anti-Japanese in purpose and sought by such means as it could to organize assistance for the Chinese in their continuing struggle with Japan, but was by no means free of the anti-British bias which went with the general anti-imperialist attitude of the Communist party.

The outbreak of war with Germany evoked a strong display of loyalty by the Chinese community at large, which did everything in its power to aid the British. Chinese were the largest subscribers to a War Fund which remitted £375,000 for the relief of distress in London. A sum of £575,000, to which the Chinese were again the largest contributors, was sent to England for the Malayan Bomber Fund. And all the while the Chinese were continuing to subscribe to their own Chinese Distress Relief Fund.

The approach of the possibility of war between Britain and Japan led to the Malayan Communist party announcing the terms upon which it would co-operate with the British¹, an offer which the Malayan Governments showed no inclination to accept. The party accordingly continued its anti-British activities, in particular organising strikes to express its displeasure at the closing of the Burma Road into China under Japanese pressure during 1940.

The attack of Germany upon Russia in June 1941 and the British alliance with Russia began a change in the attitude of the party, which was completed by the entry of Japan into the war, when it hastened to offer its fullest assistance to the British in the struggle against Nazism and Fascism. As in Burma, there was a very natural hesitation on the part of the Government to accept the aid of a party which had always been anti-British and which still professed political views incompatible with the continuance of British government in Malaya. Any assistance given by the party would be for its own convenience and there was no reason whatever to assume any fundamental change in its long-term policy of ejecting the British from Malaya and setting up a Malayan Republic, of Communist complexion and under Chinese control.

At the end of December 1941 a Chinese Mobilisation Committee, was formed, ostensibly by a wealthy Chinese (who professed allegiance to the Kuomintang but was in fact of strong leftist sympathies) but actually on the initiative of one Lim Bo Seng who later took a

¹ Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, London 1948. p. 220.

leading part in the activities of Force 136, shortly to be described, and was ultimately captured and tortured to death by the Japanese. The efforts of the Committee received support from all sections of the Chinese community.

As neither the Kuomintang nor the Communist party had been registered under the Societies Ordinance both were unlawful societies. The former had gradually won tacit acceptance over the years; the latter had become, over the same period, progressively less acceptable. Now, however, the unlawful standing of the Communist party was no longer pressed, so that its offers of assistance against the Japanese might be utilised.

* * *

In May 1941 there had been set up in Singapore a branch of the clandestine organization that was later to become the Special Operations Executive (S.O.E.).¹ In July it established a training school for subversion and sabotage behind an advancing enemy.² In the words of General Percival, the commander in Malaya, the organization 'suffered from an excess of secrecy and from a lack of knowledge on the part of the gentlemen responsible as to how to set about the work',³ and for this and other reasons it at first received little encouragement. After the outbreak of war with Japan it was given more scope and began training small parties to be left behind the advancing Japanese for sabotage and guerilla warfare. Some of the Communists were released from prison to take part in this training. The organization naturally drew upon the Chinese rather than the Malays, since China had long been at war with Japan and the Chinese were more ready to come forward. Some of these recruits were sponsored by the Kuomintang, most by the Communist party. At the same time Mr. J. D. Dalley of the Malayan Police was called upon by General Percival to raise a Chinese force to aid in the defence of Singapore.

A force of 5,000 was created and given the name of Dalforce. Communists in detention had been released when it was decided to accept the help of the party, and those who were not recruited into the S.O.E. "stay behind" groups mostly went into Dalforce. Other Chinese and a few Malays and Indians were included but predominantly it was a force of Chinese Communist youths and girls. A blue uniform was improvised by Chinese tailors. The force was armed with such weapons as could be collected, mostly sporting rifles, shot guns, and Greener guns obtained from the police. It fought with courage

¹ Brooke-Popham, Despatch, 17 Oct. 40 to 27 Dec. 41. Supplement to London Gazette of 20 Jan. 45, para. 9.

² F. Spencer Chapman, *The Jungle is Neutral*, London 1949, p. 11.

³ Percival, Despatch 8 Dec. 41 to 15 Feb. 42, para. 51 Supplement to London Gazette of 20 Feb. 48.

and determination, suffering very heavy casualties; at the end many who could not escape were captured by the Japanese, stood up on the beaches of Singapore and machine-gunned to death. Later the remnants of this force, together with the S.O.E. 'stay behind' groups, became the nucleus of the Resistance movement in Malaya.

Singapore fell on 15th February 1942. The 'Anti-Enemy Backing-up Society' was driven under ground and faded out. But the strong patriotic and anti-Japanese feelings of the Chinese in Malaya led to the spontaneous and sporadic growth of local Resistance groups. The Malayan Communist Party, small in numbers and working in secret, nevertheless survived the efforts of the Japanese to stamp it out, and by infiltration and opportunist support and intervention secured a flexible but very effective control of many of these Resistance groups. On these were gradually built up two wider organizations that came to be known as the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) and the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union (MPAJU), each with its own executive, but both closely, if covertly, controlled by the central executive committee of the Communist party.

The Army was the military wing of the movement, comparable in some ways to the Burma National Army but honourably distinguished by the fact that it at no time fought on the Japanese side. The wider flung civilian Union, comparable to the AFO in Burma, was able to aid and support the Army with information, recruits, and supplies. The *de facto* leaders of both organisations were Communist though many of the members might not be so.

A number of Chinese 'stay behind' parties had been trained by S.O.E. and left at large at the time of the surrender. These joined MPAJA groups or served as nuclei for the formation of fresh groups. A few European parties were also left behind which operated amongst the Chinese groups but retained their European composition. Lieutenant-Colonel F. Spencer Chapman was the only European to attach himself to, and actually become a part of, a Chinese party¹. Although the MPAJA groups with which he worked were glad enough to take advantage of his technical knowledge and military experience, they retained a strongly independent character and he was, at least in the physical sense, virtually their prisoner. Nevertheless he managed to remain throughout a personality and his invaluable contribution was the revival of British prestige wrought by his endurance and courage, which greatly facilitated the task of those who were to return later to organize the support of the guerilla movement in aid of British operations.

The 'stay behind' parties, which had been equipped and organized to lie low in Malaya only for a short period while Singapore held and

¹ For the record of his experiences refer to F. Spencer Chapman, *The Jungle is Neutral*, London, 1949.

was then early reinforced, were unable throughout 1942 to establish wireless contact with the British forces at the greater distance of India and Ceylon. In May-June 1943 a party consisting of Major J. L. H. Davis, an officer in the Malayan Police Service, then serving with Force 136, and of five Chinese, was landed in Malaya and later picked off again by submarine, bringing reports of the well-organized, Communist-directed, Anti-Japanese Army and Anti-Japanese Union. Later in the same year, in August, Major Davis went in again, remaining in Malaya this time with the Anti-Japanese Army, in hiding in the jungle. In September Captain R. N. Broome, a member of the Malayan Civil Service, followed in. Negotiations were begun with the leaders of the MPAJA.

The Central Executive Committee was understandably hesitant about entering into any agreement. Its publicly proclaimed object was the achievement of independence for Malaya and the establishment of a Malayan People's Republic under Communist control. Would the British return to Malaya or not? In 1942, this seemed far from likely, although many inhabitants of Malaya shared the faith of the British that they would. If they did not, there would be disadvantages and little advantage, other than the immediate supply of arms and money, in entering into an agreement. By 1943, however, the probabilities were already very different. Further the British were now allies of the Russians: possibly a friendlier attitude towards the Party would result. On the other hand the Malayan Communist Party, with deep-rooted anti-imperialism, was committed to a policy that involved the expulsion of the British from Malaya. However, on 31st December 1943, an agreement was reached between one Chang Hong, who described himself as the elected representative of the Malayan Communist Party, the Anti-Japanese Force, and the Anti-Japanese Union, and Major Davis, Captain Broome and Tan Choon Lim, described as military representatives of the Supreme Allied Commander. In this, Chang Hong undertook that the Communist party would co-operate fully with the Allied forces while these were retaking Malaya and for this purpose would 'follow the instructions of the Allied Commander-in-Chief in so far as military operations in Malaya are concerned'; this co-operation should continue so long as the military authorities were responsible for peace and good order in Malaya. It was further agreed that the only action immediately possible was to keep anti-Japanese feeling alive, to foment labour trouble, and to carry out acts of sabotage, particularly against shipping. The British representatives undertook to send arms, ammunition and medical supplies by all possible means. Political matters were excluded from the agreement, the British representatives taking the line that they were military officers concerned with military matters and not authorized to discuss political questions; and political commitments,

other than commitment by the logic of events, were more successfully avoided than in Burma. In point of fact the British Government's proposals for the constitutional future of Malaya were conceived long before the conclusion of this agreement and were in no sense caused by any undertakings entered into with the Chinese Communists. The agreement was later ratified by the Central Executive Committee of the Malayan Communist Party. It was not possible to get any news of the signing of this agreement out of Malaya until more than a year later, for in spite of several attempts by the British forces to communicate with the officers left or landed in the western part of Malaya, 1944 passed without contacts.

Early in 1945, with the favourable development of operations in Burma, it was decided to expand clandestine activities in Malaya. And just at this time, on 1st February 1945, wireless contact was at last established with Major Davis. The terms of the agreement reached on 31st December 1943 were transmitted to South-East Asia Command, and on 26th February a party was parachuted in to join this officer. On 17th March a second meeting was held with the Communist leader at which the terms of the agreement of 31st December 1943 were reaffirmed.

On 11th May Admiral Mountbatten sought the instructions of the Chiefs of Staff as to the policy to be adopted regarding these Resistance forces in Malaya. That support should be continued to them, had been decided in principle, once in February when he had decided to arm AFO civilians as guerillas in Burma, and again in March and April when the War Cabinet had decided to accept the aid of the Burma National Army. He said that there were in Malaya three sections of the Resistance movement; the MPAJA and MPAJU section which, though it included a Communist element, was in his opinion primarily anti-Japanese; the Kuomintang section, concerning which not much was known; and the Malay section, which was small and undeveloped and not likely to be well-organized. His proposals were that the assistance of the first and third sections should be used for the military advantages to be gained and that further enquiries should be made regarding the second section in order that policy towards it might be formulated. The political danger of using the first section lay in the strength that this would lend to a post-war claim for equality of status in Malaya for the Chinese. He hoped such a claim might be forestalled by early publication of the home government's post-war policy for Malaya which included the offer of Malayan Union citizenship to those Chinese who had made the country their home¹. Support was to be conditional upon the movement working under the Supreme Allied Commander's direction, and all possible

¹ Cf. p. 137.

safeguards were to be taken to disarm the guerillas at the conclusion of hostilities.

In retrospect it seems that the extent of Communist control and of indirect Russian influence over the Resistance movement was at this time underestimated, in spite of the reports sent by Major Davis which throughout emphasized that, although the guerillas were anti-Japanese and prepared to co-operate with the British, they were in fact Communist-controlled. Consequently the objectives of the movement were unlikely to be satisfied by any mere pronouncement regarding Malayan Union Citizenship. Its goal was the establishment of a Republic of Malaya, and defeat of the Japanese was important merely as a step towards this goal, a step which would have to be followed by the defeat or expulsion of the British before there was any chance of realising the real objective.

On 7th June 1945 the Chiefs of Staff approved the Supreme Allied Commander's proposals, adding that they considered that the most important requirement from the military point of view was that the greatest possible degree of internal security should be achieved after re-occupation. They pointed out that the proposals for Malayan citizenship were still only provisional and that there could consequently be no publication of constitutional policy yet: they were anxious that the Malay movement should be encouraged as well as the Chinese in order not to convey any impression of partiality. Association with the Resistance movements was to be purely military. The C.C.A.O. and the Colonial Office were fully informed at all stages during the development of these clandestine activities, and the political dangers attending them were brought to the notice of the War Office on a number of occasions, particularly towards the end of 1943, and of the S.A.C. about a year later. On 24th July 1945 the Supreme Allied Commander issued a directive, closely following the lines of the instructions that had been issued earlier to liaison groups attached to the Burma National Army, but with two differences: as claims to political equality for the Chinese were to be expected, express instructions were included that future constitutional policy was not to be discussed; and the instructions regarding the approach to be adopted towards the guerillas, which in the Burma directive accepted the fact that all the BNA had crimes of collaboration to expiate, were modified to meet a situation in which some of the guerillas had, while some had not, collaborated with the Japanese.

But in Malaya itself the decision to make use of the guerillas had really been taken long ago. That was what Major Davis had been sent in to do in August 1943 and he never had any doubt that this was his task and that he would be required to proceed with it. It was a matter of irrelevance whether the guerillas were anti-Japanese, or even anti-British, and whether relations between British and Chinese were

friendly or unfriendly. There it was a matter of cold policy whether co-operation suited the purposes of the two parties. The British wished to use the guerillas to assist their regular forces to eject the Japanese; the Chinese wished to treat the British as would best suit their purpose of establishing a Communist Republic of Malaya. Both parties approached co-operation on a basis of self-regard.

Late in May 1945 the date for operations in Malaya had been advanced from November to mid-August, so that the expansion of the guerilla movement had to be greatly accelerated. In the first fortnight of July over a hundred persons were successfully dropped in by Force 136. A good deal more was now learnt about the nature and mutual relations of the three sections of the Resistance movement with the result that on 4th August Admiral Mountbatten drew up proposals to be laid before the Chiefs of Staff. Whereas in May he had proposed 'increased support' to the MPAJA and MPAJU and to the Malay Resistance organisation, and further investigation of the Kuomintang guerillas, he now recommended that he should be authorised 'to accept the fullest co-operation' of the MPAJA and MPAJU, that he should try to induce the Malay Resistance movement to co-operate with those Chinese, but that he should be released from any obligation to the Kuomintang movement. His reasons for these proposals were; that the MPAJA and MPAJU had expressed enthusiastic 'pro-Malayan' sentiments, whereas the Kuomintang stood for the strengthening both of the Chinese community as a separate community in Malaya, and of the bonds between this community and China; that there was great hostility between the two sections of guerillas so that it would be difficult to back both; that he trusted the Communist party's undertaking to co-operate with the British during the period of military administration; and that clandestine operations yielding valuable intelligence were entirely dependent upon the friendship and support of this section. True the 'pro-Malayan' sentiments of the Communists involved the expulsion of the British, the establishment of a Communist-dominated Republic of Malaya, and, without doubt, the dominance of the Chinese; but Admiral Mountbatten still felt that the rank and file of the Communist guerillas could probably be weaned from these views if other methods could be devised of granting to them the equality of status with Malays which was what they most desired; for this purpose he pressed again for the publication of the British plans for the future constitution of Malaya, which included the creation of Malayan Union citizenship. His proposals were crowded out by the many problems of the imminent surrender of Japan and there is no record of any decision upon them by the Chiefs of Staff.

Before operations planned against Malaya could be launched, the Japanese surrendered unconditionally, Malaya was liberated without

bloodshed, and there was, after all, to be no occasion for the guerillas to fight alongside the British. The military authorities found themselves suddenly faced with the task of controlling the guerillas, now deprived of their main outlet by the Japanese surrender, and later of disarming and disbanding them with the minimum disturbance of the peace.

The whole of Singapore Island was re-occupied by 8th September 1945, but three weeks and more were to elapse, in more remote parts of the Peninsula even four and five weeks, before the arrival of British forces to establish the Military Administration. During this period it was planned to make use of the Force 136 liaison officers, and the guerilla groups to which they were attached, to aid in maintaining law and order outside the main towns: within the towns this responsibility devolved upon the Japanese¹. Some of these liaison officers were to establish administration in areas to which Civil Affairs officers could not be immediately introduced. Already on 11th August, when the surrender was becoming imminent, a steadying message had been sent to the guerillas by the Supreme Allied Commander. They were told that victory was near, and that Allied forces would soon reach them. They were congratulated on the part they had played. They were instructed to keep away from Japanese-held areas so as to reduce the danger of violence and bloodshed. On 16th August it was decided by the Allied Command that the guerilla forces should not come out of hiding until it was known beyond doubt that the Japanese would obey the surrender orders. By the 22nd or 23rd August the position was becoming clearer and authority was given by the Supreme Allied Commander for the guerilla forces to move into any areas vacated by the Japanese in order to prevent the destruction of property, to guard communications and vulnerable points, and to prevent banditry and looting. By the end of August, Major Davis and other officers of Force 136 had entered Japanese-occupied towns, and on or about 11th September it appears that authority was given for the guerilla forces themselves to enter Japanese-occupied areas to maintain order, if the Japanese had not assumed responsibility for doing this. So long as the guerilla forces were not allowed to come into the open, control by Force 136 had been weakening as guerillas continually slipped away to the towns and more populated areas. As soon as these forces were allowed to enter such areas liaison officers were able to revive their authority. Then, in the middle of September, British forces began to take over effective control throughout the country, and the guerillas passed under the command of these forces.

The re-occupying troops received an enthusiastic welcome from the Resistance movement, but it was noticeable, as in Burma, that the flags displayed were rarely British; honour was accorded mostly to

¹ Mountbatten. *Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff 1943-1945* H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 282.

the Chinese flag¹. A sprinkling of British, American, and Russian flags did not really conceal the facts that the Chinese had expected the re-occupation to be performed by Chinese troops and that they were inclined to believe that it was the Chinese guerillas who had defeated the Japanese.

Throughout the interim period before the establishment of military administration the guerillas in many places took the law into their own hands. Most police stations were found to have been seized by them, with the ordinary police station staff disarmed, displaced and terrified. In other stations small detachments of police were found to have barricaded themselves within the buildings for their own safety. In the State of Johore, in the Muar—Batu Pahat districts, the seizure of authority by the guerillas allowed the Japanese, by playing upon Malay feelings, to provoke widespread attacks by Malays on Chinese. It is believed that 400 Chinese were killed in these disturbances—mostly innocent persons made to suffer for the behaviour of the guerillas.² But during this difficult period there were only two serious clashes reported between the Japanese and the guerillas, at Slim in Perak on 27th or 28th August when the MPAJA ambushed five Japanese trucks, and at Serendah Police Station on 31st August when the Japanese attacked the MPAJA in the police station in reprisal. Where officers of Force 136 were able to assert their influence, some restraint was placed upon the activities of the guerillas and some sort of legality was thrown over their proceedings. Wherever the Union Jack was hoisted the better elements rallied to the support of authority. But there were many armed bands who, whether they did or did not claim to be members of the MPAJA, had in fact no connection with the Resistance movement, acknowledged no control by Force 136, and were merely bandits.

* * *

The task now was to consolidate control over as many MPAJA guerillas as possible, after which groups not recognised could be hunted down as bandits, and the guerillas themselves could be disarmed and demobilized. In accordance with the instructions of the Supreme Allied Commander, it was decided by Lieut.-General Sir Miles Dempsey, now commanding Fourteenth Army, that guerilla units should remain under military command and be employed on guard or garrison duties, and that they should be clothed, rationed, and paid \$30 a month as from 14th August 1945. In order to cast the net as wide as possible this treatment was to be extended not only to recognized guerillas but to such other groups as could plausibly claim to have formed part of the MPAJA. Those ready to surrender their arms at

¹ Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, London, 1948, p. 263.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 264-5.

once were to be paid \$150 and disbanded. Terms for final pay-off were to be settled later and the date for this was provisionally fixed as 1st December 1945. Disbandment was the responsibility of the clandestine organizations and the military commanders, not the Civil Affairs staff, but the Administration was throughout closely concerned with its progress.

Negotiations were begun with the MPAJA leaders regarding arrangements for final disarming and disbandment. If the guerillas were not to disappear into the jungle with their arms, a policy of co-operation had to be pursued and the arrangements for disbandment, although they might be expressed in the form of an order, must in fact be acceptable to the guerilla organization. The process was not so much one of exploratory discussion as of hard bargaining, of ascertaining first what one side was ready to give, then what the other would be willing to take, of gradually narrowing the gap between these two conceptions, and finally of deciding what terms between the two had a chance of acceptance. The negotiations were concerned chiefly with the amount of gratuity on final pay-off. Aid for resettlement, grants for rehabilitation, vocational training, and ex-service men's clubs were also discussed. Purely political demands were not advanced as it was well understood that these were outside the scope of the negotiations. The gratuity finally agreed upon was \$350, in spite of misgivings as to the inflationary effect of disbursements on this scale.

Underlying these negotiations was the determination of the MPAJA leaders to prevent the dissolution of their wartime guerilla forces and current political asset. No formal demand was recorded that these should be retained as a permanent military force to replace or augment the Malay Regiment but the suggestion appears to have been made. The task of the British military authorities was to persuade the guerilla leaders that they would be likely on the whole to obtain better terms for themselves by negotiation, disbandment and disarmament on agreed conditions, than by returning to the jungle with their arms to wage guerilla warfare against the British. Negotiations were conducted in a friendly atmosphere, but outside the meetings tension grew as weeks passed without settlement. There was no certainty of success, and cases did not cease to come to light in which the guerillas tried to dispute the re-establishment of British authority by the Administration. In retrospect, however, it appears that at an early stage in the negotiations the guerilla leaders had decided upon the course which was adopted at about the same time by the leaders of the BNA in Burma, namely, to agree reluctantly to disbandment after obtaining as many concessions as possible; to surrender a sufficient number of weapons, their own or others, which could be obtained without difficulty in the arms-saturated condition of the country, secure in the knowledge that if they had surrendered their own arms there would not be the

slightest difficulty in finding others; and to preserve the framework of their organization 'underground', for use in the next stage, the expulsion of the British and the establishment of the Republic of Malaya. While the MPAJA, like the BNA, surrendered more, in some areas many more, arms than had ever been issued to them, there was a marked shortage in the number of the more popular weapons returned, i.e. of Sten Guns, carbines, pistols and revolvers. There were also extensive thefts of arms from military depots throughout this period.

By the 15th November final agreed plans had been drawn up for the disbandment of the guerillas. These were to be concentrated in twelve centres, where ceremonial parades were to be held at which British campaign ribbons were to be issued; arms were to be handed in and gratuities paid out, and the disbanded guerillas were then to be returned to their home areas. The British Military Administration was to be responsible for assisting them to obtain employment and later for the introduction of education and vocational training schemes for such of these persons as required them.

Impressive disbandment parades were held at various centres on 1st December 1945 and, somewhat later, in Singapore, Admiral Mountbatten personally presented campaign ribbons to some of the leaders of the guerillas. About 6,800 men were disarmed in all and received their gratuities. 5,497 weapons were surrendered (4,765 having been originally issued).

* * *

But this, of course, was not the end of the matter. The MPAJA had been formally disbanded, but the framework of its organization remained, often in the guise of ex-service associations. The MPAJA continued as the People's Democratic Movement. The Central Executive Committee of the Communist party remained and exhorted the members of these associations to continue the struggle for independence, and worked continually to prevent them co-operating with the Administration. And, in spite of the agreement of 31st December 1943 to co-operate with the British during the period of military administration, in spite also of the omission from its revised declaration of objects of 'the establishment of a Malayan Republic', and of 'combination with Russia and China to fight for independence', the Malayan Communist Party never recanted its revolutionary anti-imperialist creed.¹ Party rallies, rice riots, strikes, inflammatory speeches and articles, all the devices of agitation were brought into play to work up tension and feeling against the British and the Military Administration. At Ipoh Communist demonstrations on 21st-23rd October developed into a 'sit down' strike in which troops had to open fire to disperse the

¹ Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, London, 1948, p. 261 and footnote to page 277.

strikers. Three persons were wounded and three killed. On the same day at Batu Gajah the SCAO had to be rescued by troops from a crowd of 5,000 collected outside the Court House. On 23rd November a gang of forty to fifty Chinese went to the newly opened police station at Plentong in Johore and told the police with threats that they must evacuate the police station within a month. The extremist Press published inflammatory articles. A General Labour Union was created purporting to represent all organized labour in Malaya.¹ In fact its members were appointed by, and the Union itself was under the control of, the Malayan Communist Party, and there was ample evidence that the General Labour Union was more concerned to press political demands and to over-awe the Government than to ameliorate the lot of its members. To conform with the policy which the Colonial office proposed for adoption on return of the civil Government, the Administration had decided not to enforce registration under the Societies Ordinance. Consequently nothing was known of the objects of the many new Chinese societies that were being formed. Many of these were a part of the protective network of organizations behind which the Malayan Communist Party operated.

Tension was heightened by an outbreak of hostilities between Malays and Chinese. The fact that the Malays, unlike the Chinese, had no recent background of war with Japan and had accordingly not been stimulated to such active resistance; the facts of the employment by the Japanese against the Chinese Resistance movement of the almost exclusively Malay police force, and of the absence for three and a half years of restraining British control; all these had exacerbated feeling between the two communities. In November 1945 Malays killed forty two defenceless Chinese, mostly women and children, at Padang Lebar in Negri Sembilan. In March 1946 there was a big retaliatory attack by Chinese in which thirty or forty Malays were killed.

The abrupt change over from war to so-called peace conditions brought many difficulties. The members of the Resistance forces had raised food and funds by the time-honoured Chinese methods of demanding these at the point of the gun. The officers sent in by Force 136 had been compelled to acquiesce in these methods, even to encourage their use. It was too much to expect that with the surrender of the Japanese and the return of the British these methods should be instantly abandoned. But now, what had a few days ago been a recognized part of guerilla activity had quite suddenly become 'extortion', 'intimidation', and 'murder'.

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¹ Purcell, *The Chinese in Malaya*, London, 1948, p. 271.

A case of this type was that of Soong Kwong, General Secretary of the MPAJU in Selangor. A Chinese named Chan Sau Meng was seized by the MPAJU and kept tied up in one room for a week. Then on the 10th September Soong Kwong interviewed him and accused him of extorting money. The punishment for this was death for himself and his family, Soong Kwong said, but Chan Sau Meng would be released on payment of \$300,000. A promissory note was signed, Chan Sau Meng was released and in due course brought \$32,000 in cash together with jewellery and other property. The only difference between this and countless other incidents of the same kind was that the Japanese had surrendered and that the war was now over. On the other hand British administration was not re-established, even formally, in this area until 12th September.

Soong Kwong was arrested on 12th October by the Royal Air Force Police, apparently without reference to the Military Administration Police, and tried in the first week of November by a Court consisting of a President (an officer of the Administration) and two Assessors, natives of Malaya. He was acquitted of a charge of wrongful confinement; on a charge of extortion the President found him guilty, the Assessors not guilty. In accordance with the law, a retrial was ordered, before a different President and other Assessors. Although the evidence clearly justified a conviction the result was the same. The refusal of the Assessors to convict was undoubtedly due to intimidation. Such frustration of justice by terrorists was intolerable. A third trial was held, this time before a court consisting of British officers, and resulted, on 3rd January 1946, in a conviction and sentence of four years rigorous imprisonment.

The proceedings against Soong Kwong had throughout created much political interest and agitation which the repeated trials had done nothing to allay. The conviction was followed by petitions to the Supreme Allied Commander, including one from the guerilla leaders presented at the time when he decorated them with British campaign medals on 7th January. Agitation increased and there were rumours and threats of a general strike if Soong Kwong were not released. On 24th January the D.C.C.A.O. Brigadier McKerron, reviewed the case and recommended to the Supreme Allied Commander that, while the conviction was amply justified on legal grounds and must therefore stand, the circumstances of the time should be taken into account and the sentence of imprisonment be entirely remitted, except for the short period of confinement already undergone, and that, instead, Soong Kwong should be required to enter into a bond with two persons as sureties in \$1000 each to be of good behaviour for one year.

On the 25th Admiral Mountbatten discussed the case with Lieutenant-General Sir Frank Messervy, the military commander

in Malaya, and the C.C.A.O.'s deputy, Brigadier A. T. Newbould. He was apparently inclined to accept the recommendation of Brigadier McKerron but came to no final decision in the matter. On 28th after further discussion with Brigadier McKerron he decided to accept the recommendation and approved the issue of a statement to the Press to make clear that the Administration had not been, and would not allow itself to be, intimidated by the agitation in connection with this case. But on the 29th January, before action could be taken on the Supreme Allied Commander's orders, the threatened strike began. There was no attempt whatever to conceal the nature of this challenge to British authority by any appeal to economic grievances: the strike was openly called to over-awe the Administration and secure the release from imprisonment of Soong Kwong and certain other persons who were under arrest for various crimes, including extortion and murder, and to force the return of certain property seized by the police. The direct challenge had come much sooner in Malaya than in Burma, where it did not develop until after the return of the civil government.

On the strong representation of the Military Commander, the C.C.A.O., and the D.C.C.A.O., Admiral Mountbatten recognized that this had completely altered the situation and that release of Soong Kwong would now be hailed as a victory for the strike; he decided to postpone the issue of any announcement, and the taking of any action to remit the sentence upon Soong Kwong, until this could be done outside the threat of violence. A statement on the strike was released to the Press:

'The present strike in Singapore has no connection with wages or conditions of labour. It is merely an attempt to subvert the law and to coerce the authorities into the release of persons who have been arrested on various serious charges.

The only effect of the strike is to penalise the public by interruption of essential services—transport, distribution of food, etc., and preventing people from earning their livelihood.

The strike is not by the will of the majority, but through the intimidation of a small minority which is seeking its own ends'.¹

The strike took effect from the morning of the 29th. It was officially estimated that some 150,000 persons took part in Singapore. Some 3,500 organized intimidators made certain of public co-operation. There was much interference with essential services and shops were compelled to shut although most shopkeepers did not favour the strike. In fact genuine support was noticeably wanting, it being estimated that 95 per cent of Chinese and Indians, and 99 per cent of Malays were unwilling participants. But, while it lasted, intimidation procured an impressive measure of public co-operation. The General Labour

¹ The Straits Times, 30th January 1946.

Union appears, however, to have felt the insecurity of its hold on the strikers and to have decided upon a retreat. The strike was called off on the evening of the 30th January. The General Labour Union lost much prestige. On the 3rd February the decision in the Soong Kwong case¹ was announced. On the 4th the revision of the sentence was given effect and Soong Kwong released. The Administration had won the first round.

* * *

The Communists returned to the attack almost at once. After the strike on the 29th, public confidence continued to be undermined and fear to be disseminated by agitation, at first for the release of Soong Kwong, then for other objects, and by 8th February it was becoming clear that a second and stronger challenge to authority was imminent. On the mainland the Administration had already been requested by the General Labour Union to allow a public holiday on 15th and had already refused this demand. It was expected that a similar request would be preferred in Singapore by the Malayan Communist party or the Union. Ostensibly the holiday was to be a mark of mourning for the surrender of Singapore to the Japanese on 15th February 1942; in fact, there was no doubt that it was intended to be a day of rejoicing for the defeat of the British on that date and also to bring the British and their administration into contempt. It was also clear that the Communist leaders intended to force the Administration to grant their request or, failing in that, to defy any order of refusal and to use intimidation to force a largely unwilling public to assist in this defiance. All watched this second round between the Communists and the Government.

At a meeting on 9th February Admiral Mountbatten was reluctantly persuaded by the D.C.C.A.O. Singapore, supported by Lieutenant-General Sir Miles Dempsey, the Commander-in-Chief, A.L.F.S.E.A., and the Chief of Staff, South-East Asia Command, Lieutenant-General Sir Frederick Browning, that this was a serious challenge which must be met if British administration was to continue at all, and that the only way to meet it was to strike at the Communist leaders. He refused to act by preventive arrest, but agreed, still reluctantly, to expel the leaders who, being alien Chinese, were liable to banishment under the pre-war Banishment Ordinance. His reluctance proceeded not only from his personal conviction of the advantages to be gained from a liberal approach but from the knowledge that it was at that time a part of the British Government's policy for the future of Malaya that the power to banish should not be used. He stipulated that the expulsions should be made under the immigration

¹ The Straits Times, 5th February, 1946.

laws and not under the Banishment Ordinance (a procedure which, though more cumbersome than banishment, appeared practicable and would avoid the use of the term "banishment"), that a limit of fifty should be placed on the numbers to be expelled, and that particular circumspection should be exercised before acting against any Chinese who might later qualify for Malayan Union citizenship under the new constitution proposed for Malaya. He further stipulated that Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek should be told of the proposed action and the reasons for it (this was done and in due course a reply was received that the Generalissimo did not demur) and finally that a warning should be issued locally of the steps about to be taken. It seemed clear that the steps decided upon involved executive action, not judicial proceedings.

A second meeting was held on 11th February at which the C.C.A.O., Major-General Hone, who had not been present on the 9th, suggested that it would be possible to avoid both the procedural awkwardness of action under the immigration laws, and the political undesirability of 'banishment' under the Banishment Ordinance, by employing the Expulsion Order, an Order which derived its authority from the Banishment Ordinance but did not necessitate the use of the term 'banishment'. Admiral Mountbatten accepted this suggestion. There were alternative procedures under this Order, the one by executive action, the other by prosecution before a court. The C.C.A.O. understood that it was executive action, not proceedings in court that had been decided upon and there seems no doubt that this was in fact the decision of the meeting. The Supreme Allied Commander had authorised executive action at the meeting on the 9th and did not place any restriction upon such action at the second meeting; in view of the importance attached by the C.C.A.O. to proceeding executively there can be little doubt that any restriction placed upon his authority to proceed in this manner would have been contested and recorded. The terms of the warning to be issued were approved but unfortunately without record of discussions or amendments.

Very shortly after this meeting the Malayan Communist party made its expected request for a public holiday on 15th February in order to hold a rally and processions to 'commemorate the fall of Malaya under the Japanese Fascists' regime'. In refusing this request for a public holiday and prohibiting the rally and processions planned, the South-East Asia Command authorities expressed appreciation of the desire to celebrate the liberation of Malaya from the Japanese occupation but suggested that a more appropriate date for this would be the anniversary of the Japanese surrender to the Supreme Allied Commander.

On the 13th February at 4 p.m. the warning was released for publication. It ran as follows:

'Since it was established in Malaya more than five months ago, the British Military Administration has not only allowed but encouraged full freedom of speech and of the Press, in line with the Civil Governments of the United Nations who fought and won a war to preserve liberties of this kind.

The Administration, however, has no intention of allowing advantage to be taken of this, nor that civil disturbances should be fomented, hatred of the Administration aroused, or the just processes of the law impeded in any way. The people of Malaya have given their full support to the Administration's policy of freedom of expression, and the Administration is assured of their support in the action it is proposed to take, to prevent recurrences of the recent abuse of this freedom.

The British Military Administration wishes to give full warning that it will not tolerate pressure by any elements, either with a view to using the strike weapon in an attempt to interfere with the course of the law; or to endanger the peaceful living conditions of the population at large, by extortion, intimidation, or other illegal means.

The Administration will use its full power to suppress actions of this kind, from whatever quarter they may come. Persons guilty of such conduct will be arrested and prosecuted and, if aliens, may in addition be repatriated to the country of their birth or citizenship'.

The last paragraph of this warning could only mean that aliens might be repatriated *in addition* to being arrested and prosecuted, i.e. after judicial proceedings, and did not therefore correctly represent the decision taken which was that persons guilty of such conduct would be arrested and prosecuted, but that if they were aliens they might, instead, be repatriated without judicial proceedings. The notice was drafted in haste and strain and this point must have been overlooked.

On the next day, 14th February, nearly all the Chinese newspapers contained 'A call to the Public' to take part in the rally and procession on the 15th. This had been communicated to the Press by the Communist leaders in Singapore. Owing largely to the firm attitude taken by the Administration beforehand, the demonstrations on the 15th were only partially successful, no large number of people taking part, but there were several clashes with the police, when processions were taken out in defiance of orders. The only serious ones were in Singapore itself, at Mersing and Labis in Johore, in Malacca, and in Penang. In Singapore a meeting was forbidden to form into a procession and ordered to disperse. When the crowd nevertheless formed up, the leader was again told to desist and the police took up a position to head off any advance. The crowd would not break up and advanced upon the small police party, those at the head armed with sticks, crow-bars, bottles and other weapons. When an attempt was made to

arrest the leader the mob advanced and attacked the police. These, in danger of being overwhelmed, opened fire. Two of the crowd were killed and others injured. A Court of Enquiry which was convened immediately and published its findings on the following day, 16th February, held

‘That the order to fire was given only when it became necessary to give it and that to have delayed before giving the order would have resulted in the overwhelming of the police and ultimately in more serious casualties and grave disturbances of public order in Singapore. The police action in this connection nipped in the bud what might have developed into a very grave situation in the town had the procession been permitted to proceed and obtain accretion of numbers as it went along.

That the allegations of use of excessive force after the dispersal of the crowd, although founded in fact, are coloured and savour somewhat of sensationalism. This is doubtless due to a lack of general knowledge of the background behind the incident . . .’

The ringleader was one of the injured and was removed to hospital but his injuries were not serious. He was later charged in court with having taken part in an unlawful assembly, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment.

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Some thirty hours after the release of the public warning of 13th February, that is on the night of 14th-15th February, the eve of the disturbances related above, a number of Chinese were arrested. A few more were arrested in the course of the following days. They were all prominent members of organizations promoting the unrest which culminated in the events of the 15th February, and many of them were known to have taken part in preparations for the rally and processions planned for that day. Some or all of them had defied the warning by preparing the appeal to take part in the rally and processions for the holding of which leave had been refused.

After Brigadier McKerron had personally reviewed with great care the dossiers of all who had been arrested, he recommended that nine of them, all alien Chinese, should be deported to China under expulsion orders as approved by the Supreme Allied Commander. All the others arrested were released. Since, however, five out of the nine persons recommended for deportation were likely to qualify for Malayan Union citizenship, and therefore fell within the category of persons in regard to whom especial care was to be taken, the proposals for deportation were, towards the end of February, laid before the Supreme Allied Commander for his approval. A tenth recommendation for deportation was submitted later. Admiral Mountbatten's original dislike of the action proposed revived and he

refused approval on two grounds, namely that no judicial proceedings had been taken, and that the arrests had followed so soon after the warning that there had been no time to learn whether the persons arrested had taken heed of the warning or not.

As to the first of these grounds there seems no doubt that, notwithstanding the terms of the published warnings, executive action had originally been authorized and that the insistence upon judicial proceedings took the Administration aback and represented a change in the orders of the Supreme Allied Commander. Such proceedings were in fact totally impracticable because of the terrorization of witnesses by the Communist party. When the civil government, on its return a month later, deported the persons arrested without proceedings in court little or no protest was raised.

As to the second of these grounds, the events followed so soon after publication of the warning that it was quite impracticable for the Administration to prove that each individual person arrested was aware of the warning and had defied it. In order to justify executive deportation under the Expulsion Order, it was sufficient to establish that such action was in the public interest. The Administration, conceiving that this was what it was required to do, concentrated upon proving the unsatisfactory record of the leaders, which inevitably depended almost entirely on their behaviour before issue of the warning. It made no serious attempt to prove individual defiance of the warning—although, in fact, it was satisfied that the persons arrested must, in general, have been aware of the warning, and it could point to the call to the public in the Chinese press as evidence of defiance. But this was not what Admiral Mountbatten required, and it should have caused no surprise that he refused to act on these grounds. For, had there ever been room for doubt whether executive or judicial action was intended, there can never have been any doubt that no action at all would be approved by him unless it was clear that the persons to be acted against had failed to profit from the warning issued. At no time did he approve or condone the imposition of any penalties whatever retrospectively. Besides being satisfied that no injustice had in fact been done to the particular persons arrested, it was quite as important to him to convince the public, both in and out of Malaya, that the matter had been so handled by the Administration that there could have been no injustice. For this the time available had indeed been short.

The Commander-in-Chief ALFSEA and the Supreme Allied Commander's Chief of Staff strongly represented that there should be no release of the ring-leaders arrested. Admiral Mountbatten was firm in his refusal to expel without trial in court but eventually agreed to the leaders being kept in custody until the return of the civil government which was now only three weeks distant.

It may be added that at least one of the persons deported was later to become a person of influence in the Communist Government in China; and also that on the mainland of Malaya, where the policy of deportation was considered but never adopted, many of those who would have been deported were among those who subsequently, in June 1948, took up arms against the civil government in Malaya.

But the threat to the administration had been met and defeated by the stand taken in Singapore on 14th-15th February. This had caused an immediate rise in confidence in the Government and an improvement in conditions throughout the country, an improvement which showed no recession to the date of hand-over to the civil government.

The very promptness of the challenge had facilitated its repulse, for the threat had developed so fast and obviously that there was no mistaking its nature. And the military authorities were still responsible for the maintenance of British authority and still disposed of sufficient troops to meet the threat. In Burma the challenge came more gradually and less overtly, and by the time it was recognised the civil government had taken over and demobilization had reduced the forces readily available to a point at which the threat could no longer be countered.

But there was another factor. Although the threat came in both countries from a minority, in Burma this minority was Burmese and could plausibly arrogate to itself a nationalist and representative character that would have hardened world opinion against repression. In Malaya, the minority was Chinese and could, at best, pretend to speak for half the people, and that less plausibly because of the different attitudes of the indigenous and the non-indigenous members of the Chinese community, so that it was more easily demonstrated that the liberty of the ordinary citizen depended upon the successful meeting of the threat.

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Before leaving Malaya brief mention must be made of a different but very important political matter which concerned the Military Administration, but only incidentally. Reference has been made earlier¹ to constitutional reforms planned for Malaya. It was early established that responsibility for the introduction of these lay with the Colonial Office, not with the Supreme Allied Commander and the War Office. A pre-requisite to the introduction of these changes was the surrender by the Sultans of their sovereign authority to enable the home government to pass the necessary constitutional legislation. It was decided to send a special representative of His Majesty's Government to explain the reforms to the Sultans and to seek their agreement, and Sir Harold MacMichael was eventually selected for this task. The

¹ Cf. pp. 137-138.

Administration was concerned to prepare the way and make routine arrangements for his mission.

Sir Harold landed in Malaya on 11th October 1945 and in the course of the following weeks met all the Sultans and explained to them the constitutional arrangements proposed. All agreed to make the required surrender of sovereignty and on 22nd January a White Paper was released setting out the British Government's policy and proposals for the future constitution of Malaya.¹

These proposals involved the establishment of a Malayan Union comprising the nine Malay States, the two British Settlements of Penang and Malacca, and a separate colony of Singapore. In the Union a Governor was to exercise the legislative and other authority surrendered by the Sultans, with the aid of Executive and Legislative Councils, to which both official and non-official members would be nominated. This central government would delegate powers of local administration to Councils in the constituent States of the Union. It was intended that the position of the Sultans as traditional and spiritual leaders of their people should be preserved. To aid them in the discharge of these functions the Sultans were to be empowered to appoint Advisory Councils, the members to be approved by the Governor. A Central Advisory Council of Malay Rulers, presided over by the Governor, was to scrutinise religious legislation proposed by Sultans and their Councils and to perform certain advisory functions. Since the Chinese within the proposed Union were fast approaching equality of numbers with the Malaya, and since many of them looked to Malaya as their home, it was further proposed to create a Malayan Union citizenship for persons who had been born, or had been ordinarily resident for ten out of the past fifteen years, in Malaya, or who in the future might be ordinarily resident for five years in the Union or Singapore. There was nothing tentative about these proposals. They were to be introduced as early as possible after the return of the civil government.

A storm of protest broke out from the Malay community, in which the Sultans of Perak and Kedah took the lead, but were soon followed by most of the other Sultans, and in which many Malay associations joined. The spontaneity and genuineness of these protests could not possibly be doubted. On 29th January the Sultan of Perak protested that the White Paper 'instead of safeguarding the status and dignity of the Rulers completely deprived them of their authority.' On 30th January the newly-recognized Sultan of Kedah telegraphed to the Secretary of State protesting that he had signed the agreement with the special representative under duress. On 1st February the C.C.A.O. was met at Kota Bahru by a parade of some 3,000 people bearing placards and banners. The crowd included 300 women, an

¹ Cmd. 6724.

unheard-of thing in a very strict Muslim State such as Kelantan. The demonstration was entirely orderly but deeply impressed the C.C.A.O. On the same day a meeting of Malay associations at Johore telegraphed to the Secretary of State challenging the legality of the agreements made with the special representative on the ground that they had been concluded without reference to the Sultan's Ministers. Early in February the Sultan of Johore, who had gone to England at the end of 1945, showed to the Secretary of State in London three telegrams which he had received, the first from a Captain Ahmad protesting against Malayan Union citizenship and against acceptance of the new constitution without consulting Malayan opinion, the second from 'Johore Malaya officials' protesting against the Sultan's reply to the first, and the third from 'Malays of Johore Bahru' challenging the legality of the agreements, mainly on the ground that there was no consultation with, and approval by, Ministers and people. These protests did not appear to emanate from particularly influential quarters; on the other hand there was nothing to suggest that they had been instigated by any political party. On 10th February the Sultan of Kelantan protested to the Secretary of State and appealed for modification of the proposals. On 16th February popular feeling in this State grew so hot that the Sultan spoke to a gathering of his people, in order to allay their apprehensions, and in the course of his speech said that the contents of the White Paper were not the contents of the agreement he had signed, and that neither he nor his advisers had been given any opportunity to study the White Paper before its publication. On 21st February the Sultans of Kedah, Perak, Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, and Selangor and, by subsequent addition, the Sultan of Trengganu, cabled to the Secretary of State appealing that an independent commission be sent to conduct inquiries in Malaya. On 1st March what Major-General Hone described as a 'representative and much advertised meeting of the newly-formed Pan-Malayan Congress', assembled at Kuala Lumpur and cabled a resolution of protest to the Secretary of State on the grounds that the new proposals deprived the Sultans of their authority and amounted to annexation in violation of the spirit of the Atlantic Charter, and that the agreements had been concluded unconstitutionally, without the knowledge, and against the wishes, of the Sultan's subjects and would destroy the existing Malayan and constitutional structure.

It would fall outside the scope of the present volume to discuss fully the reasons for the violent hostility evoked by the proposals of the British Government or to examine in detail the course of the negotiations between the special representative and the Sultans, which preceded its manifestation. The fact remains, that these violent protests were made by the Sultans, backed up by the Malays.

Although the Administration was not itself directly concerned with future constitutional policy, it inevitably acquired a responsibility for allaying the fears of the Sultans and their people and for keeping the Colonial Office adequately informed of reactions to the policy proposed. It was itself, in addition, interested to prevent such a degree of dissatisfaction and opposition as would make more difficult its own manifold tasks. The Chief Civil Affairs Officer warned the Secretary of State that Malay opinion was strongly opposed to the proposals of His Majesty's Government and in particular to the Malayan Union citizenship. He added that informed and moderate opinion among the Malays recognized the desirability of conferring full political rights on all who genuinely looked upon Malaya as their home, but that many felt the proposals went further than was necessary or wise. Major-General Hone did not suggest that the citizenship proposals should be dropped but urged that the introduction of the new citizenship should be deferred so as to give the incoming Governor an opportunity to consider Malay objections.

On 9th March His Majesty's Government announced that, although the arrangements for introducing a Malayan Union on the return of the civil government would go forward, the proposals for Malayan Union citizenship would not be brought into force at the same time. The principle of common citizenship was reaffirmed, however, in unmistakable terms. Then, on 18th March, in the course of a debate in the House of Commons, a number of important concessions were announced to meet the objections of the Sultans.¹ These, however, were too late to reconcile the latter, who were now thoroughly alarmed, and when, on 1st April 1946, the Military Administration handed over to the civil government and the new constitution was established and the Governor installed, nothing that the Administration did could prevent them absenting themselves from the ceremony for the occasion.

Although falling beyond the period of this book, it should perhaps be added that rather more than a year later, after full consultation with the Sultans, with representatives of the Malay people, and with representatives of the other communities, the proposals for Malayan Union and Malayan Union citizenship were abandoned in favour of a scheme of Federation with Federal citizenship. The provisions governing this citizenship gave considerably more protection to the Malays than the proposals for Union citizenship and the Federation restored to the Sultans the sovereignty they had enjoyed before the war.

¹ Hansard H. C. Deb. 5.S. Columns 1540-1565.

CHAPTER XXI

INDO-CHINA

EARLIER CHAPTERS have been concerned in some detail, with the military administrations established in British, or British-protected, territories both at the administrative and at the political levels. Considerable, if less well-defined, administrative and political responsibilities were also assumed by the British military authorities in the foreign territories of Indo-China and Indonesia, and this narrative would be incomplete without some account of these. Admittedly no formal British Military Administrations were proclaimed in these countries, but within certain limited areas administrations came into existence of a clearly military character since they were set up by the local military commanders and remained responsible to the latter in administrative, and, even more markedly, in political matters. And these commanders were British. And again, although the staffs charged with general administration were not in the main British, yet it was British military technicians who were largely responsible for the revival of essential public services. Furthermore, outside these limited areas of active administration, the vacuum left by the absence of any effective government tended always to suck the British military commanders into situations in which they found themselves driven to accept varying degrees of political or administrative responsibility. A full political history of these times and of the complex and delicate problems arising would fall beyond the scope of this book. But throughout the first months after landing of British forces the question was always present whether, and if so to what extent, the British commanders should assume political or administrative responsibilities outside these limited areas. Some description must be attempted of the sharp and distressing dilemma facing these commanders and of the manner in which it was met. This dilemma, was mainly the result of three conflicting considerations. On the one hand were the obligations of friendship felt by the British towards their Dutch and French allies. On the other was loyalty to the liberal policies focused in the Atlantic Charter. Thirdly, the balancing of these first two considerations had to be undertaken in full knowledge of the restrictions imposed upon the British commanders by the fact that virtually all the troops under their command were borne on Indian, not British, establishments. In this and the following chapter these matters will be treated as fully as the scope of the present volume

permits. But it must be remembered throughout that nothing short of a full political history could do justice to the difficulty of the decisions required and to the tension of the atmosphere in which they had to be taken.

* * *

The French Colonial territories in Indo-China before 1939 consisted of the colony of Cochin China, with capital at Saigon, and the four protected territories of Annam, Tongking, Cambodia, and Laos, with capitals at Huë, Hanoi, Pnom Penh, and Vientiane. These territories taken together occupied on the east of the Indo-Chinese peninsula a position roughly comparable to that of Burma on the west; they were slightly greater in area and were inhabited by a population one third more numerous. Cambodia and Cochin China lay in the rich rice-growing plains of the lower Mekong. Tongking covered the delta of the Red River further north and the mountainous interior leading up to the highlands of Yunnan and China. Annam included both the eastern coastal strip and mountainous country inland. Laos consisted of the riverine areas east of the middle Mekong and the remote and mountainous areas of the north-west. Climatic conditions were generally similar to those described for Burma and Malaya. The principal product was rice which before the war was exported to the quantity of some one and a half million tons yearly.

In 1940, on the surrender of France, the French Government of Indo-China adhered to the Vichy Government. Shortly after this the Vichy authorities, under pressure from the Japanese and the Germans, entered into an agreement with the former under which Japanese forces were to be allowed facilities for landing in Tongking and for moving north-westwards towards Yunnan in order to cut China's sole remaining land communications with her Allies.¹ Towards the end of 1940, the Siamese, encouraged by the Japanese, invaded Laos and Cambodia with the object of acquiring territories which they had, under pressure, recognized in the past as falling under French protection. When, in January 1941, it appeared that the French forces in Indo-China might succeed in repelling this invasion, the Japanese intervened to impose a settlement whereby portions of Laos and Cambodia were returned to the Siamese. The Japanese themselves exacted trading facilities from the French. In August of this year the Vichy Government was compelled to make further concessions under which Japanese forces were allowed access to any part of Indo-China and were given bases in the south.² Little was left by now of French sovereignty but the outward trappings.

¹ André Gaudel, *L'Indochine Française en face du Japon*, Paris, 1947, pp. 77-78.

² *Ibid.*, Second Part, Chapters III, IV, and V.

Nationalism had long existed in Indo-China, and in 1911 this took shape as an organized movement. The movement gathered strength and risings occurred, in 1930-31, and in 1940, which were suppressed by force and with considerable loss of life. Thereafter the League for the Independence of Viet Nam, or Viet Minh, which had come into existence in 1941 'went underground'. When the Japanese began to dominate the country they encouraged Viet Minh in its anti-French activities—but the nationalists also seized the opportunity to indulge in anti-Japanese activities in pursuit of their own ends, at least in the far north.

In the second half of 1944, after the Allied landings in France and the establishment of a Provisional Government on French territory, the 'Direction Générale, Etudes et Recherches' (DGER) a Free French clandestine organization, working in Calcutta in concert with the British Force 136, established contact with the French in Indo-China and a Resistance movement was developed there, mostly in French army circles, and at first without the knowledge of the Governor-General. 'Politically advanced' Annamites were also drawn into this conspiracy.¹

Early in 1945 American clandestine organizations in the Chinese Theatre began to operate in Tongking along the northern boundary of Indo-China. There were also guerillas drawn from the Viet Minh organization headed by the Russian-trained Communist Ho Chi Minh. By the time of the Japanese surrender, considerable areas of Tongking had already been 'liberated' in these operations. The increasing activity of these Resistance movements was one of the main reasons for the coup d'état on 9th March 1945, when the Japanese displaced the French Government, interned many of the French, and assumed direct control of the administration of Indo-China.² This move largely put an end to the Free French Resistance activities in the south. The guerillas in the north, along the borders of China, continued their work.

After assuming direct control the Japanese first proclaimed the independence of Cambodia, of Luang Prabang (a part of Laos), and of Annam. Subsequently Tongking, and later still Cochin China, were incorporated with Annam to form the Empire of Viet Nam, or 'Land of the South', the name of these three countries before the French annexation. A puppet Viet Nam Government was maintained in power by the Japanese.

By the time of the Japanese surrender the Viet Minh guerillas in the north had established their influence over much of Tongking, and on the 18th August they claimed to set up a government with

¹ Admiral Decoux, *A la Barre de L'Indochine*, Paris, 1949, Part 3, Chapter IX.

² *Ibid.*

headquarters at Hanoi.¹ This was, naturally, a Communist government. A week later they established themselves in the south, at Saigon.² At the same time the Emperor of Viet Nam abdicated at Huë in favour of the new regime.³ On 2nd September this government published a declaration of independence which also recorded the establishment of the Republic of Viet Nam.⁴ No Allied troops had yet set foot in the country, except for members of clandestine organizations and advanced parties of the organization for the rescue of prisoners of war and internees.

There had at first been uncertainty as to the Command in which Indo-China was to fall. Originally allotted in 1942 to the Chinese Theatre, it was intended, on the formation of South-East Asia Command, that Indo-China should be transferred to the new Command, but when Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek resisted this transfer, the matter was allowed to rest on the convenient uncertainty of a gentlemen's agreement that both Commands should be permitted to operate in the territory and that precise boundaries would be considered when the need for them arose. Besides this uncertainty whether Indo-China fell in the Chinese or South-East Asia theatres, there was also the possibility that it might, in the event, be occupied by American forces from the South-West Pacific theatre of war.

On the surrender of the Japanese the boundaries of South-East Asia Command were extended in the manner decided at the Potsdam Conference during the previous month and the uncertainty regarding Indo-China was at the same time cleared up. That part of the country south of latitude 16° north was formally added to the South-East Asia Command. Indo-China north of this line was formally allotted to the Chinese Theatre of Operations. This late dichotomy, made to save the Generalissimo's face, could not but have, and did have, the most adverse effects upon arrangements for the re-establishment of French administration throughout the territory.

* * *

We can turn now to the plans and preparations made for the re-establishment of French administration in Indo-China.

We have seen that the Direction Générale, Etudes et Recherches, operated in Calcutta to stimulate and support the Free French Resistance movement in Indo-China. Out of, and under cover of, this organization there developed in Calcutta, apparently without the knowledge of the Government of India, a French Military Mission and

¹ H. R. Isaacs, *New Cycle in Asia*, New York, 1947, p. 156.

² *Ibid.*, p. 156.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 156 and 161-162.

⁴ *Ibid.*

a French Colonial Mission. There was also at the headquarters of South-East Asia Command a French Military Mission, the Head of which (at first General R. C. A. H. Blaizot, then in August 1945 General P. F. M. Leclerc) was intended to control all French organizations, and to prepare for the arrival of French forces in the Far East, and also to keep in touch with the heads of the Resistance movement in Indo-China.¹

British and Dutch plans for the re-occupation of their territories contemplated bringing in a comprehensive skeleton administration to which flesh would be added by the recruitment of subordinate staff after re-occupation. French plans did not need to be so elaborate for it was hoped to uncover a complete French administration in Indo-China. This would need re-inforcement, and collaborators would have to be replaced, but it was not contemplated that the organization would have to be rebuilt from the ground. There was not, therefore, the same elaborate and detailed planning as was undertaken by the British and the Dutch. But in April 1945 the French Military Mission at South-East Asia Command, in consultation with the French organizations in Calcutta, had, with the agreement of the British, set on foot arrangements to assemble and train in India or Ceylon a group of some hundred French civil administrators, in preparation for the time when Indo-China would be re-occupied. These were to reinforce the administration that it was hoped to uncover and also to furnish Civil Affairs officers to accompany the French or British forces effecting re-entry. A small number were, in this last connection, put through the British Civil Affairs Staff Centre at Wimbledon to facilitate their working with British forces.

In August General Leclerc, head of the French Military Mission at South-East Asia Command was appointed Commander-in-Chief of all French forces in the Command, including French Civil Affairs staff (or civil administrators). Vice-Admiral Thierry D'Argenlieu had been designated High Commissioner and Governor-General of French Indo-China with the intention that he should assume responsibility when the situation permitted. It was at this stage, on 8th August 1945, that the Supreme Allied Commander suggested to the War Office that a Civil Affairs agreement in regard to Indo-China ought now to be negotiated with the French, on the lines of that entered into with the Dutch for the Netherlands Indies. The matter was taken up by the Foreign Office and on 30th August a draft memorandum drawn up by the French, dealing with questions of administration and jurisdiction, was sent to the Supreme Allied Commander for consideration. This followed the lines, not of the Netherlands Indies agreement, but of the agreement drawn up between the United Kingdom and France

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, Annexure 9, p. 260.

in respect of France in Europe. On 10th September Admiral Mountbatten's comments and a revised draft, differing in important respects from that prepared by the French, were telegraphed to the War Office. Although the text as finally agreed to by the French was not communicated to Admiral Mountbatten until 9th October, he was instructed just before the events of 19th-24th September in Saigon, which will shortly be related, that he might proceed in accordance with the provisions of the draft sent by him to the War Office on 10th September, subject only to certain unimportant modifications.

The memorandum agreed to by His Majesty's Government and the French Government recognised that the purpose of the British forces in Indo-China south of latitude 16° north was to ensure, in co-operation with such French forces as could be made available, control of the headquarters of the Japanese Southern Armies with a view to

- (a) enforcing surrender and disarmament of the Japanese armed forces throughout South-East Asia Command, and
- (b) liberating Allied prisoners of war and internees in Indo-China;

and that the British forces would occupy such key positions and exercise in them such authority as were necessary for the fulfilment of these purposes. It was not contemplated that the Supreme Allied Commander should assume to himself any measure of administrative authority outside key areas, nor was it made his responsibility to re-establish French sovereignty, or to maintain order generally in southern Indo-China. In fact it was expressly stated that administrative responsibility throughout Indo-China rested solely on the French authorities. Even within the key areas the British Force Commander was to conduct his dealings with the civil population through the agency of the French Administration. Generally speaking, members and followers of the British armed forces committing offences were to be tried by British military courts, while all other persons were to be tried by the appropriate French courts. The timing of the withdrawal of British troops was to be in the discretion of the Supreme Allied Commander. No responsibility was placed upon South-East Asia Command for the provision of supplies for Civil Affairs purposes or for the prevention of disease and unrest; this was a matter for the French. Additional memoranda were negotiated later dealing with currency, property control, and other matters.

The general tenor of the agreements was to safeguard French sovereignty from avoidable encroachment by the Allied Commander. They differed in this from the agreement with the Netherlands Indies which, as will be seen,¹ was drawn up in 1944, with the likelihood in mind of a re-occupation of Netherlands East Indies territory during

¹ Cf. Chapter XXII.

active military operations against the Japanese, and was therefore mainly concerned to safeguard the temporary paramountcy of the military over the civil authorities. In so doing it tended to force upon the Allied Commander a responsibility for re-establishing Dutch administration because the Dutch were prevented from doing this themselves. The French agreements were in this regard much more appropriate to post-surrender conditions than the Dutch.

In the meanwhile, on 13th August, Admiral Mountbatten had received his instructions from the Chiefs of Staff confirming that his two primary tasks were to enforce the surrender and disarmament of the Japanese forces and to liberate prisoners of war and internees. More specifically, in respect to French Indo-China, he was instructed to send a force to Saigon to establish control of the main headquarters of the Japanese Southern Armies; this force was, however, not to occupy more territory than was necessary for the discharge of these duties. French troops and Civil Affairs staff would be sent out to him as early as possible to support and relieve his forces.

Major-General D. D. Gracey, commanding 20th Indian Division was appointed to command in Indo-China. He was to discharge dual functions, both as the commander of Allied Land Forces, and as the head of a Control Commission. As commander of Allied Land Forces he was under the immediate orders of ALFSEA, and was given five tasks, to secure the key area of Saigon, to disarm the Japanese, to maintain order, to rescue Allied prisoners of war and internees, and to liberate Allied territory as far as his resources permitted. This last task would appear to have placed duties upon General Gracey in excess of those laid down by the Chiefs of Staff. It was not specified in what areas he was required to maintain order, but further instructions received a fortnight later made it clear that his responsibility did not extend outside the key area unless called upon by the French for assistance, and that even then he must refer any request for assistance to the Supreme Allied Commander before taking action. As head of the Control Commission General Gracey was under the immediate orders of the Supreme Allied Commander. In this capacity his instructions were to assume control of the headquarters of the Japanese Southern Army, to aid in the rescue of prisoners of war and internees and to examine and, in the case of river and sea approaches to Saigon, to improve, communications in southern Indo-China.

Provision was made on the staff of the Control Commission for two Civil Affairs staff officers, to advise on Civil Affairs generally and to facilitate dealings with French civil authorities in the key area. In fact it would appear to have been more appropriate to attach them to the headquarters of the Allied Forces in Indo-China rather than to the Control Commission, having regard to the division of responsibility between these two authorities. It was in any case some time before

these officers arrived to take up their duties. No financial adviser was posted to the Commission or to the headquarters of the Allied Commander in Indo-China and no political adviser became available until some ten days after the arrival of General Gracey.

* * *

On 13th September the first British troops, were flown into Saigon—a part of a brigade of 20th Indian Division. These occupied and protected vulnerable points while Japanese forces were charged with maintenance of order elsewhere in the three key areas of Cochin China, namely, Saigon—Cholon, Thudau Mot—Bien Hoa—Lai Taien, and Mytho. On the 17th September the Viet Minh leaders gave wide publicity to the establishment of the Independent Republic of Viet Nam, and the claim of the Republic to administer the whole of the territories of Tongking, Annam, and Cochin China. In fact, however, the republic had at this time little or no authority and there was no effective civil administration, and no maintenance of order whatever. Looting and attacks upon the French were common. Vituperative and provocative broadcasts and press articles against them poured out from Hanoi, the headquarters of the Republic of Viet Nam, and also from Saigon. Nor could the Republic, whose government was Communist in character, count upon the support of the mass of the Annamite people for these, nationalists though they might be, were by no means all supporters of communism. To ensure the safety of French civilians and of his own perilously small force, General Gracey was driven to assert his authority and responsibility as against the pretensions of the Republic. On 21st September, therefore, after due warning to the Viet Minh leaders on 19th, he issued a proclamation that he had been charged by the Supreme Allied Commander, and that it was his firm intention, to ensure maintenance of order not only within the key areas of Saigon but in all Indo-China south of Latitude 16° north.¹ In so doing he undertook a task that had not originally been laid upon him. He assumed no responsibility for other functions of government, although in fact most of the public utility services within the key areas were shortly to be kept in operation only by the efforts of the British military services, and the large population of Saigon was to be fed only by the measures put into operation by the administrative staff of the Allied forces, in the face of active opposition from members of Viet Minh.

The issue of the proclamation brought but a fleeting improvement in the situation and the French were still unable to set up an administration through which the British Commander, in accordance with the Civil Affairs Agreement, might exercise control of the civil population. Accordingly on 23rd September a handful of French troops

¹ Cf. Appendix 6.

on the order of General Gracey, seized the Government buildings and police stations in Saigon from the armed forces of the Republic. The Saigon radio station was also seized, and later re-opened by French under British control. The Annamites retaliated and a few days of difficult street fighting followed in which British, Indians, French, and Japanese endeavoured to restore order. By the end of the month the situation had improved somewhat although sporadic fighting and sniping continued. In spite of hostilities there were at all times many Annamites who wished to co-operate with the French and British in restoring order and who viewed with disgust the brutal methods adopted by the Viet Minh extremists. It was now possible to entrust the administration of the Saigon area to French police in accordance with the original plans. British forces helped to keep the main public utility services going and the Japanese provided essential labour. The Annamites took no part in the administration of the city, some because they were active members of the Viet Minh, many more because they were terrorised by Viet Minh into withholding their services.

On the 24th September Admiral Mountbatten reported General Gracey's assumption of authority outside Saigon and suggested to the Chiefs of Staff that a choice must now be made between two courses, the first, actively to implement this assumption of authority, the second, to confine British responsibility to enforcing the surrender of the Japanese and to maintaining order for this purpose in the key areas of Saigon only, leaving to the French the responsibility for exercising authority elsewhere. He recommended adoption of the second course as soon as the French were prepared to take over responsibility. The Chiefs of Staff replied that while the Supreme Allied Commander's primary responsibility was to maintain order in the Saigon area so as to discharge the tasks originally laid upon him, the unavoidable delays in the arrival of French troops made it desirable to widen his functions to the extent that he would be authorized to assist the French in maintaining order outside the key areas provided he could do this without prejudicing the discharge of his primary responsibility. The British Commander accordingly remained generally responsible for the maintenance of order in Southern Indo China.

Meanwhile hostilities continued between Viet Minh and the French, but on 2nd October General Gracey succeeded in establishing a truce, and, under strong persuasion by the British commanders, the two parties were brought into negotiations. It gradually became clear, however, both that the negotiations were unlikely to lead to any solution, because the Viet Minh representatives were not the effective leaders of Viet Minh, and that these representatives were, for the same reason, quite unable to prevent their own forces from breaking the truce. When the hope of setting up effective authority by negotiation finally faded, General Gracey, now reinforced by the remainder

of his division, gave due warning of his intentions and then occupied by force the whole of the key area of Saigon in which previously British troops had been employed only to guard vulnerable points. His plans involved action against armed bands, searches for arms and disarming of Annamites, the prevention of looting or other provocative action by his own troops; all, as he explained, with the purpose of securing the least possible disturbance to the life of the ordinary citizen. Within this area full authority, military and civil, was to be exercised by the British military commanders. Actual control of the civil population, however, was still to be exercised through the French civil administration, and no formal British Military Administration was to be established.

Stiff fighting followed, in the course of which the need for quick justice led to the suggestion that British military courts should be established, a suggestion which, as in Java, had to be rejected as it would have involved an assumption of sovereignty quite contrary to the policy of the British Government. With the assistance of the Japanese forces the key area was eventually firmly occupied and the French Administration established, at least in its capital.

* * *

With the French firmly established in Saigon and with French troops arriving faster than had at one time seemed likely, Admiral Thierry D'Argenlieu moved to Saigon on 30th October and assumed responsibility as High Commissioner and Governor-General of French Indo-China, and as Commander of all French forces in that country. In this last respect he was placed under the operational command of General Gracey. The overall responsibility of the latter for the maintenance of order remained unimpaired as French troops had not yet arrived in sufficient numbers to make transfer possible, but General Gracey was not in the event ever called upon to use British forces outside the key areas to maintain order or to assist in re-establishing French administration.

On 1st January 1946, by which time the French troops in the country numbered close on 30,000, the French Administration assumed full responsibility for maintaining law and order throughout Indo-China south of 16° north except only in regard to certain zones where the Japanese troops were still being concentrated and disarmed for evacuation; in these areas the British were to remain responsible for the preservation of order. On 28th January 1946 the Control Commission at Saigon was dissolved, General Gracey left the country, and even this limited British responsibility for the maintenance of order ceased. Thereafter there remained but two battalions of British troops whose tasks were strictly confined to the guarding of the few Japanese

still to be concentrated and evacuated, the protection of the Inter-Service Mission that remained to complete this concentration and evacuation, and the provision of liaison with the French forces and administration.

On 4th March Indo-China South of latitude 16° north was altogether excluded from South-East Asia Command, although the Inter-Service Mission still continued to deal with the repatriation of the remaining Japanese. Relations between French and British had been excellent throughout the period during which Indo-China had formed a part of the Command.

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CHAPTER XXII

INDONESIA

THE AREA now known as Indonesia consists of an archipelago of six main island groups, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Celebes, the Moluccas, and New Guinea, excluding, however, those parts of Borneo and New Guinea under British and Australian administration or protection. It covers over 700,000 square miles of territory, and extends 3,000 miles from west to east and 1,000 miles from north to south. The population numbers seventy millions. Java, with an area of only 54,000 square miles, less than that of England and Wales without Scotland, holds fifty of these seventy millions, and is the most densely populated major area in the world, with highly developed road and rail communications. Although the rest of Indonesia has not been developed to the same extent as Java, it is immensely rich in primary products, with tin production second only to that of Malaya and representing, in 1940, 18 per cent. of world output. It yielded also other valuable minerals, 40 per cent. of the world production of rubber, 95 per cent. of cinchona, 80 per cent. of pepper, 74 per cent. of kapok, and many other agricultural products. It also possessed valuable oil fields. The area had become virtually self-sufficient in food production. Scenery and climate are of the kind already described in earlier chapters on Malaya and Borneo. Before the Second World War, the area was administered by the Netherlands Indies Government. The European population was more numerous than in the British territories already described, was not confined to the ruling class as tended to be the case in British territories, and was much more ready to establish a permanent domicile. Its numbers were swelled by a large Indo-European community which was technically considered Dutch. Many of the officials in the Netherlands Indies were persons of mixed blood.

The Government consisted of a Governor-General and, since 1918, of a Volksraad or People's Council. The Council at the outbreak of war numbered sixty members of whom thirty represented the native community, twenty-five the Dutch and five the remaining communities. Of these, the Chinese were the most important. Twenty-two of the members of the Volksraad were nominated by the Governor-General, thirty-eight were elected by members of urban and rural councils; of these electors not far short of half were themselves nominated, and the rest were chosen by a very restricted electorate. A high proportion of the members so brought into the Volksraad were officials. The

Governor-General was required to obtain the consent of the Council to the budget and to legislation on internal affairs, and the Council had the right to initiate and amend legislation, to ask questions, and to express its views by a vote of no-confidence. Any conflict of opinion between the Governor-General and the Council on matters other than legislation was decided by the Legislature in Holland, any conflict as to legislation by the Crown.

National consciousness in the Netherlands Indies, an old but latent force, first grew into a more definite nationalism about the end of the nineteenth century when Dutch policy, as a result partly of a growing sense of social justice in the west and partly of a desire for increased markets for European manufactured goods, sought to improve the conditions of the people by strengthening the village as a social unit and building it up into an instrument for democratic self-government. The Russo-Japanese War stimulated all nationalist movements in the East, and nationalism soon after this took more definite shape as a creed and a political movement, appealing at first to the educated classes, but from 1911 onwards widening its attraction by invoking the support of religious feeling.¹ The movement received backing and a great measure of leadership from the Indo-European community, and from certain sections of the domiciled European community, leadership which served to give to the original movement a strong Socialist, and later Communist, complexion. The movement was marked however by a multiplicity of groups and divergence of theories and policies, and was much weakened in consequence. As the prospect of self-government became more real at the close of the war of 1914-18, sections of the European community took fright and began to draw back and organize themselves against the grant of real autonomy. In 1926, after a series of strikes, a Communist rising was put down with firmness.² Many of the nationalist leaders were imprisoned or exiled. Political now began to coincide with racial divisions, and by 1939 the nationalist movement, hitherto sectionalized and disunited, at last achieved some unity with the formation of the *Gaboengan Partai Indonesia*, a federation of Indonesian nationalist parties.³ Japanese aggression and the threat of war on the one hand led to a tightening of administration, and on the other evoked support for the Dutch from some quarters, and so caused a closing of the ranks, superficially at least, and the outbreak of war in 1941 found the Netherlands Indies apparently more united⁴ than for a very long time. But nationalism although temporarily obscured remained a real and strong force in the country.

When the Netherlands Indies were occupied by the Japanese in

¹ Van Mook, *The Stakes of Democracy in South-east Asia*, London 1950 p. 114.

² Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, 1948, pp. 234-235.

³ Wolf, *The Indonesian Story*, New York, 1948, p. 4.

⁴ Furnivall, *Colonial Policy and Practice*, p. 236.

1941, a part of the Dutch Administration, including the Governor-General, remained to be interned. The rest, including the Lieutenant-Governor-General Dr. H. J. Van Mook, was ordered to make its way to Australia, where an interim Dutch Government was set up at Brisbane.

In December 1942 the Queen of the Netherlands broadcast an announcement in which she said that a conference would be convened on the conclusion of the war to consider both the mutual relations and the internal constitutions of Holland and the Dutch colonies. She contemplated a large measure of autonomy for the colonies, but gave little indication of the constitutions in mind for them beyond generalising that the people had earned the right to participate in deciding as to their future and that there would be no room for discrimination according to race or nationality.¹ The announcement was never effectively made known to the people of Indonesia owing to the Japanese occupation.

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When the South-East Asia Command was created towards the end of 1943 Sumatra was placed within its theatre of operations. The Command, nominally Allied, and in limited respects Anglo-American, was in effect British. For this command to set up a military government on the re-occupation of Dutch territory would involve more than the mere inter-departmental transfer of responsibility for administration resulting from the establishment of military government within British territories. It would mean the temporary surrender of sovereignty by one Allied Power to another.

The drawing up of an agreement between the British and Netherlands Governments to regulate administration in Sumatra was discussed in London between the Supreme Allied Commander, the Dutch Prime Minister, and the Dutch Minister for Colonies (then Dr. Van Mook), and again in Kandy during April 1944. An agreement was prepared on lines already reached for the rest of the Netherlands East Indies, which fell within General MacArthur's South-West Pacific Area, and for the Dutch territories in Europe. The proposed agreement was examined in London and referred to the Americans and other parties interested. It was not, however, until August 1945 that the Supreme Allied Commander was told that he might act on the assumption that the Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs Agreement had been agreed to, subject to ratification by the Governments concerned.

Under this agreement the necessity was recognised for 'a first or military phase' during which the Supreme Allied Commander would have full authority to take any measures made necessary by the military

¹ H. R. Isaacs, *New Cycle in Asia*, New York, 1947, pp. 178-181.

situation. Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs (NICA) staffs for the administration of Sumatra were to be placed under the Supreme Allied Commander's control, and administration was to be conducted by him as far as possible through the agency of these staffs. The Netherlands Indies Government and its administrative and judicial services were to be revived in readiness to resume responsibility when the Supreme Allied Commander considered this possible. After resumption the Netherlands Indies Government was to afford to the Allied Commander all possible assistance, more particularly in regard to the movement of troops and supplies. Arrangements were also entered into regarding the respective jurisdictions of the Netherlands Indies Government and of the Allied military authorities, under which members of the Allied forces and persons employed by, or accompanying, them were placed under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Allied military authorities.

This agreement was drawn up to govern a reoccupation in the face of enemy resistance, circumstances which, in the event, did not obtain. It was therefore largely concerned to ensure that the civil administration in the rear of advancing forces of occupation should be confined to that conducted under the authority of the Supreme Allied Commander. That no area relinquished by the enemy should be left without an administration at all would be ensured, it was assumed, by the needs of the military operations.

A NICA unit known as the Sumatra Planning Unit began work at headquarters South-East Asia Command in April-May 1944, in anticipation of approval and ratification of the proposals referred to above. It had then a strength of three officers. It rapidly expanded and was distributed as proved convenient between Advanced Headquarters, and Main Headquarters, SEAC, and also Headquarters, 11th Army Group (later ALFSEA). So as to avoid undermining Dutch sovereignty, there was to be no formal or public assumption of authority by the Supreme Allied Commander. Instead it was planned that he should issue a *notice* on the arrival of forces in Sumatra announcing that troops under his command would accept the surrender of the Japanese forces, and would maintain law and order until the lawful government could function again; and that until this could take place the laws of the country, modified by the Supreme Allied Commander only so far as the interests of good order made this necessary, would be enforced by officers of NICA. The publication of this notice was to be followed by the issue of a formal proclamation by the appropriate NICA officer that the martial law ('state of siege') proclaimed by the Governor-General before the Japanese occupation, had automatically revived and was still in force. A Dutch Chief Civil Affairs Officer (to be known as the Commanding Officer, NICA) was to be appointed; during the formation period he would be a staff officer of the military

commander, responsible for conducting the administration of the civil population on behalf of the latter; at a later stage wider authority would be delegated to him by the Force Commander or the Supreme Allied Commander. He would in both these stages, be permitted to communicate with the Netherlands Indies Government, provided this was done through normal military channels. In fact it was proposed to follow closely the lines upon which military administration was planned to be built up, and civil government ultimately restored, within British re-occupied territories.

From April 1945 onwards it was contemplated that at some time the greater part of South-West Pacific Area should be transferred to British and Australian control so as to set American forces free for the final assault upon Japan. The Americans pressed for transfer as early as possible; the British were unwilling that South-East Asia Command should have this additional responsibility laid upon it until Singapore had been re-occupied and prepared for use as a base. Then at the Potsdam conference, on 24th July 1945, Admiral Mountbatten was informed of the intention to use the atomic bomb and of the expectation that Japan would surrender immediately after this. He was pressed to accept transfer before the re-occupation of Singapore. While this proposal was under consideration the Japanese surrendered and Admiral Mountbatten was informed that he would be required to accept transfer immediately from the South-West Pacific Area of territories that would include Indo-China (south of 16° north), Java, Borneo, and Celebes.¹ With this transfer he was saddled with what was to become the most explosive political problem in the Far East. The Dutch, it is said, unsuccessfully protested against this change of command boundaries on the ground that they had placed the bulk of their limited resources for the administration of the Netherlands Indies behind the American advance, which was based on Australia, and would find it impossible to transfer the weight of these at this late hour to the South-East Asia Command, based on India.²

It became urgently necessary to ascertain what the Dutch plans were for the administration of the vast territories now suddenly transferred to South-East Asia Command, what resources would be available for the purpose, and whether the administrative arrangements for these territories would be regulated on the lines of the agreement already discussed for Sumatra. After a visit by the Chief Staff Officer, NICA, from South-East Asia to the interim government and to the NICA planning organisation for the South-West Pacific at Brisbane, Dr. Van Mook visited Admiral Mountbatten's headquarters and it was decided, on 4th September, that the principles of the Civil Affairs

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, paras. 629, 631, 636.

² Wolf, *Indonesian Story*, p. 16.

agreement for Sumatra should be applied also to the new territories, and that the NICA organisation for these territories should be set up within South-East Asia Command, at first under a Chief Commanding Officer, NICA, but later, after Batavia had been re-occupied, under the Lieutenant-Governor-General, Dr. Van Mook himself. He would have a dual responsibility, to the Netherlands Government as head of the Netherlands Indies Government, and to Admiral Mountbatten as Chief Commanding Officer for the whole of NICA.

The expectation at this time was of a smooth re-establishment of Dutch authority, of the building up of a military government throughout the Netherlands Indies, staffed by Dutch but controlled by the Supreme Allied Commander, and of early hand-over to a Dutch civil government. It was not until this expectation was belied in Java and Sumatra that the effect upon the Civil Affairs agreement of the cessation of hostilities became more and more apparent; different constructions were placed upon the document by Dutch and British, and the general inappropriateness of its provisions to the circumstances of a re-occupation conducted without enemy opposition, and without sufficient forces of re-occupation, became woefully clear.

* * *

Dutch soldiers and civilians who did not escape from the Netherlands East Indies in 1941, together with many Indo-Europeans and some Indonesians suspected of pro-Allied sympathies, to the number of 82,000 in all, were interned by the Japanese, many in remote parts of the interior, and many in conditions of great hardship; 13,500 were imprisoned in Sumatra, the rest, including all the 6,000 military prisoners, in Java. As in Malaya and Hong Kong, the internees made secret plans for the resumption of pre-war administration on the Japanese surrender and had a shadow government ready for the day.¹

Outside the camps the people of Indonesia were brought under the influence of Japanese propaganda similar to that employed in Burma and Malaya. It was directed particularly to the youth of the country, for they were more easily moulded and the future lay with them. Through the schools, but still more through youth organisations on the Nazi model, playing upon the desire for independence, a fanatical hatred of the Dutch and other Europeans and Americans was instilled. The young were trained to ruthlessness and to sacrifice. All respect for their elders, or for the traditional restraints of their people, was undermined. Above all, arms were placed in their hands and they were encouraged to indulge in licentiousness and brutality.²

¹ Translation of the *Report of the Parliamentary Commission (States General) Dutch East Indies*, p. 9.

² Wehl, *The Birth of Indonesia*, London, 1948, pp. 2, 15-16.

On 15th August 1945 rumours began to circulate in the internment camps that the Japanese had capitulated. By the following day it was generally known that surrender had taken place, although no formal announcement had been made by the Japanese. The shadow administration prepared to come out and assume the government of the country. But on this day a broadcast was heard from the interim government in Australia, calling upon the population of the Netherlands Indies to obey the Japanese; from this it appeared that the Allies were placing the responsibility for the civil administration of the country upon the Japanese, until Allied forces could be landed. At about the same time leaflets were dropped by Allied aircraft on many camps telling the inhabitants that they would help the Allies and themselves if they would act in accordance with five paragraphs of advice. The first of these was to 'stay in your camp until you get further advice from us.' The others gave medical hints and suggestions for action that could be taken within the camps to expedite the work of rescue parties when these did arrive.¹ These first instructions from the outer world, conceived for their protection, nevertheless struck chill upon the internees. For three and a half years they had been in prison at the mercy of the Japanese, often in conditions of great misery and squalor, supported only by their hopes for the great day of liberation. The day had come and all that had happened was that they were told to remain in the custody of the Japanese.² Disappointment and bitterness were inevitable.

From the 15th August onwards those in camps began to be allowed more food and freedom and to be treated with more consideration. But after the first few days of relief and elation these concessions brought compensating disadvantages in their train. Many internees, especially Indo-Europeans, or Europeans domiciled in the Netherlands Indies, walked out of the camps to go back to their homes, or what was left of them, or to their relations and friends. Routine and discipline broke down in many of the camps, with immediate ill effects upon sanitation and health.

Throughout the occupation the Japanese had built up the nationalist movement in Java, at first to enlist its support in the war, later, as their control weakened, to buy off its hostility. The Japanese had established no direct military administration. They preferred to leave the government in the hands of the Indonesians and to place their demands upon them. Compliance was insured not only by military pressure but by reducing the country to economic dependence. For the three and a half years of the occupation, therefore, the Indonesians had been learning to run their own administration, often in the face

¹ D. O. W. Hall, *Prisoners of Japan*, War History Branch, Dept. of Internal Affairs, Wellington, New Zealand, 1949, p. 30.

² For the reasons cf. pp. 421-422.

of great difficulties. A few days before surrender the Japanese summoned the Javanese leaders, informed them that the Japanese had now decided to confer independence upon the people of Indonesia, and discussed final arrangements for the declaration of a Republic of Indonesia.¹ Before this plan could be consummated the Japanese had surrendered. On 17th August, however, the Indonesian leaders, aware of the surrender, but determined not to forfeit the prize for which they had struggled so long and suffered imprisonment and exile at the hands of the Dutch, proclaimed in Batavia at the house of Vice-Marshall Maeda of the Imperial Japanese Navy, the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia.² The preamble to the constitution then promulgated ran:

‘Since independence is the right of every nation, any colonial system in this world is contrary to humanity and justice and must therefore be abolished.

Our struggle for an independent Indonesia has come to a successful stage, and the Indonesian people are on the very threshold of an Indonesian State—independent, united, sovereign, just and prosperous.

With God’s blessing and moved by the high ideal of a free national life, the Indonesian people declare their Independence.

The establishment of a national Indonesian Government is for nurturing the Indonesian people and their territories; for promoting public welfare; for uplifting the standard of living, and for participation in the founding of a world order, based on independence, eternal peace and social justice. Our national independence is embodied in the constitution of the Indonesian State, set up as a republic with sovereignty vested in the people. We believe in an all-embracing God; in righteous and moral humanity; in the unity of Indonesia. We believe in democracy, wisely guided and led by close contact with the people through consultation so that there shall result social justice for the whole Indonesian people.’³

It is claimed that the Japanese tried to dissuade the Indonesians from proclaiming the Republic. If they did, this was a last moment reversal of policy to preclude a charge of connivance by the Allies, a reversal that did not, and probably was not intended to, carry conviction to the Indonesians. The embarrassment to the Allies of the existence of the Republic cannot have been unwelcome to the Japanese whose control of the nationalist movement had for some time been weakening, and who were now alarmed at the uncontrolled force released by the final collapse of their authority.

¹ H. R. Isaacs, *New Cycle in Asia*, New York, 1947, p. 175.

² *Ibid.*

³ Reproduced in *New Cycle in Asia* by H. R. Isaacs, said to be quoted from the official English translation published in ‘The Voice of Free Indonesia’ No. 1 Jakarta, October, 1945.

By the 19th or 20th the public began to realise that the Japanese had surrendered. Disorder broke out, nationalist demonstrations took place, and sporadic attacks were made upon the Japanese. A beginning was made at once by the Republican Government with the recruitment of an Indonesian police force, drawn from disbanded Indonesian auxiliary troops raised by the Japanese, and from members of the many youth organizations which the Japanese had formed during the occupation. Throughout most of Java the Japanese began handing over their functions of local administration to the Republican Government, in blank disregard of the orders issued to them by the Supreme Allied Commander that they must remain responsible for civil administration until the arrival of the Allied forces. But, worse, they also began handing over their arms to the newly-recruited police force, to the Republican Army (also formed out of the auxiliary troops raised by the Japanese) and to many youth groups outside these forces. In some parts of Java, and in other parts of Indonesia, this wholesale transfer of arms did not take place, but at no time was it difficult to obtain arms and ammunition in the post-war period. By the 29th August the Preparatory Commission of the Indonesians gave place to the first Republican Government with Dr. Soekarno as President.¹

After early days of emotional fraternisation with internees a change of temper swept over the Indonesians. While conditions deteriorated within the camps also, the internees and many other people of moderation waited impatiently for the landing of Allied troops or for some lead from the Interim Government. The Japanese strengthened the defences of some of the camps, fearing attack by Indonesians. Other camps, however, had already been handed over to the latter to guard. About the 3rd or 4th of September M. Spit, former Vice-President of the Council for the Netherlands Indies, who had been acting as spokesman for the internees, issued an appeal, after a conference with the Japanese commanders, to those internees who had left their camps to return to the camps where they could be protected by the Japanese upon whom this duty had been laid by Admiral Mountbatten.

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The change of command boundaries decided upon at Potsdam on 24th July 1945, had added half a million square miles of land to the million square miles, and a population of eighty millions to the forty-eight millions, already within South-East Asia Command, and pushed the limits to which its commander might be required to operate some 2,000 miles further from his existing bases.

The logistical resources available to the Command, which might have been sufficient for piecemeal occupation of the vast area in the face of

¹ Wolf, *The Indonesian Story*, New York, 1948, p. 17.

resistance, were insufficient for its immediate and simultaneous occupation after the Japanese surrender. And before they could be deployed at all a new base must be established in Singapore.

Nor was it certain whether the Japanese forces in this area would obey the Imperial order to surrender. Most of them were undefeated and some had threatened to continue fighting. To minimise the possibility of resistance it was ordered that no Japanese-held territory should be occupied until the general surrender had been formally made to General MacArthur in Tokyo Bay. And after this it became of the first importance to establish control of the main Japanese headquarters in Saigon. Only after this had been done, and the new base at Singapore had been established, could general re-occupation be undertaken. Weeks must clearly elapse before British troops could be landed in Indonesia.

The increase in the Supreme Allied Commander's responsibilities was far greater than the mere increase in the area of his command, for Java was much more densely populated than other areas in his charge, and was the home of a well established nationalist movement. Nowhere throughout the new area was there any government functioning at the time of the surrender. The shadow government planned in the internment camps of Java lacked the force ever to have established its authority. Admiral Mountbatten had no option in the circumstances but to place upon the Japanese Supreme Commander and his forces the responsibility for maintaining order until the Allied forces could arrive to relieve them.

* * *

On the 13th August, the Supreme Allied Commander had received instructions from the Chiefs of Staff that his main tasks after surrender of the Japanese would be:

- (a) the re-occupation of key areas in order to enforce surrender and disarming of the Japanese,
- (b) the rescue of Allied prisoners of war and internees,
- (c) the protection of British interests in China, and
- (d) participation in the occupation of Japan.

In regard to Java and Sumatra it was explicitly stated that these tasks were to involve the despatch of forces to accept the surrender of the Japanese and to prepare, by the introduction and establishment of Netherlands Indies Civil Affairs officers, for the eventual handing over of administration to the Dutch civil authorities.

There was at the time little information available regarding conditions in Java and that little was misleading. None was provided by South-West Pacific Area on hand-over of responsibility.¹ During the

¹ Mountbatten, Report to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 43-45, H.M.S.O. 1951, p. 183.

six and a half weeks that were to elapse before British troops landed the picture grew clearer. On 3rd September the Netherlands Intelligence organization in Brisbane, sadly out of touch, had expressed the opinion that there might be active, although probably ineffective, opposition to any Dutch return to Java by the Republican Army in that island, numbering 40,000 to 45,000, but at no time did this organization sense, or give any warning of, the strength of nationalist feeling that was to be encountered and the acute political difficulties that were to arise. It was known, however, that the Indonesian Republic had been proclaimed, although at no time does it appear to have been expected that the new republic would fight for its life. First reports came from the teams for the rescue of prisoners of war and internees which began to arrive in Java about the 7th September. In most parts the Japanese had begun to hand over responsibility for maintaining order to the Indonesians, in defiance of the orders issued to them by the Supreme Allied Commander. The newly proclaimed Republican Government was not yet sufficiently firmly established to maintain order. The administrative machine, which had functioned under Japanese control during the occupation, carried on with varying energy. It was at first not unfriendly to the RAPWI teams which did what they could to alleviate the conditions of the internees and began to evacuate them from the interior to more accessible localities. These teams soon found themselves involved in many functions of civil administration. The restoration of public utility services such as gas, electricity, water, posts, telephones, transport and public works, the distribution of supplies and revival of economic life, the organization of medical and hygiene services, were all of first importance to the improvement of conditions for the prisoners and internees. In some matters the Japanese forces could help, but in most the only way to achieve anything was to work through and with the Indonesian Administration and to negotiate with local leaders to obtain co-operation. Much was done by direct action, the number of civilian staff recruited by the RAPWI organization later rising to more than 10,000 in Java alone. In this way the RAPWI teams set up a *de facto* local administration in several places. In their dealings with the Japanese and the Indonesians they found themselves undertaking political functions far beyond anything that had ever been contemplated.

On 8th September a small advanced party of Allied officers was parachuted into Java. Rear-Admiral W. R. Patterson, approaching Batavia on H.M.S. Cumberland, with Mr. Van der Plas, Chief Commanding Officer, NICA, and a few NICA officials, on board, as well as emergency relief supplies for Allied internees and prisoners, had been warned by the Supreme Allied Commander that it would be extremely dangerous for British forces to be used to put down

freedom movements in the colonial territories of other powers, even if these movements were spurious. On the other hand he was instructed to do nothing that might imply recognition of the Indonesian Republic. This meant that he was permitted neither to use the Republic nor to suppress it.

As soon as H.M.S. Cumberland reached Batavia on 15th September information began to come in from the advanced party, from RAPWI teams, and especially from Lieutenant Colonel L. Van der Post and other British officers who had been released from internment in Java. While Mr. Van der Plas and his staff pushed on with their plans for the establishment of NICA administration as soon as the forces of occupation arrived, realization grew among the British that the Republican Government and the nationalist movement were stronger and more firmly established than had been suspected. The Republican Government had by now taken over charge of some at least of the public utility services and was operating them not ineffectively. If law and order were not so successfully maintained and if the Government was imperfectly in control of its own extremist supporters, it nevertheless remained true that there was no other government or administration in existence. Furthermore, the nationalists, or at least the extremists among them, were determined not to acquiesce without violence in the re-establishment of Dutch authority. And although the Indonesians in general did not evince the same dislike for the British, it was by no means certain what their attitude might become, especially if they felt that British troops were being employed to re-establish the Dutch. RAPWI officers reported large meetings claiming the right to retain independence, and attacks by Indonesians making it impossible to move internees by night. Released internees domiciled in Java could not be dispersed to their homes for fear of molestation. One such who marched into his old shop in the main street of Batavia and demanded it back was murdered by the Indonesian employees, the Japanese manager trying in vain to protect him. There were many similar incidents.

Whatever might be the ultimate Allied policy towards the Republic (and the Supreme Allied Commander had already asked the Chiefs of Staff for guidance on 5th September), it was clear that in these circumstances and in the early stages of operations, with the very few troops available, no general re-occupation of the country would be possible and that military operations must be strictly limited in their objects to what was indispensable for the basic tasks of rescuing internees and prisoners and disarming the Japanese. Accordingly on the 28th September, one day before British forces were due to land, the Supreme Allied Commander limited their original tasks, which had included general preparation for the eventual handing over of administration to the Dutch civil authorities, by ordering that law and

order were now to be established only to the extent necessary to carry out the occupation of the two key areas of Batavia and Surabaya, the concentration and disarming of the Japanese, and the rescue of prisoners of war and internees. The Japanese and the prisoners and internees were mostly in the interior, some in camps hundreds of miles from Batavia and Surabaya. Within the key areas military administration was to be set up and full authority exercised, over military and civilians, through NICA. Outside key areas the responsibility for the re-establishment of Dutch sovereignty was to rest entirely upon the Dutch who would enter through the key areas. No assistance in this task was to be given by British troops outside key areas.

This decision was a serious blow to the Dutch and understandably caused much disappointment. Legally, Dutch sovereignty revived as Japanese control became ineffective. It could also be pointed out by the Dutch that the declared policy of the British Government was not to recognise any changes of sovereignty brought about by the war. And on 18th June 1940, at the time of the surrender of France, Mr. Churchill had said in the House of Commons 'We abate nothing of our just demands—Czechs, Poles, Norwegians, Dutch, Belgians, all who have joined their causes to our own, shall be restored.'¹ Further, it could be argued, legalistically in the circumstances, but with some force, that under the NICA agreement it was the responsibility of the Supreme Allied Commander to re-establish administration throughout the country against the time when this could be handed over to the Dutch—in fact this was the course upon which Admiral Mountbatten publicly announced on first landing that he was engaged. The Dutch could rightly take pride in their uniquely well-developed colonial empire in the Indies; failure to restore it would have disastrous effects upon both the Dutch and the Indonesian economy. The Dutch had not expected opposition and did not rate its strength highly, they were confident that it would quickly collapse if met by force, or perhaps even by the clear intention to use force, and that its collapse would remove the sole obstacle that prevented the moderates, and the unpolitical millions, from welcoming the Dutch back. They felt it a betrayal of these people to negotiate with the extremist leaders some of whom had whipped up hatred of the Dutch and so caused bestial atrocities not only against them, but against Indo-Europeans, and even against their own people suspected of co-operating with the Dutch. Above all, they could not bring themselves to contemplate negotiation with Dr. Soekarno. But they had no troops available to undertake the task themselves, although seven companies of Dutch native troops were due to arrive very shortly, and there were some six brigade groups of better-quality troops ready in Holland to be moved to Indonesia. Whether or not these forces would have been sufficient

¹ Hansard 326 H.C. Deb. 5.S. Col. 60.

to restore the situation, and it is more than doubtful whether they would, the refusal of the Allied shipping pool to release their ships left the Dutch feeling that they were being denied the chance to apply their full resources to Indonesia before it became too late. For the reasons set out above, and in view of the losses sustained by them in 1941 and 1942 in the defence of Malaya and Australia, the Dutch felt they had a right to expect that the Supreme Allied Commander would not, as they saw it, evade the responsibility of re-establishing their administration.

* * *

Admiral Mountbatten had still received no instructions from the Chiefs of Staff or the War Cabinet as to the policy to be adopted towards the Republic, but the course he adopted was fundamentally forced upon him by the composition of his forces: of the thirty battalions soon to reach Indonesia only four were British; the rest, and all the formation headquarters, were borne on Indian Army establishments. The use of these forces against the Republic was deeply unpopular with Indians, and the Government of India might at any time refuse permission for continued employment. The likelihood of such a refusal could be reduced only by placing the closest restriction upon the tasks of Indian forces in Indonesia. The political situation in India was such that the United Kingdom Government would certainly feel unable to overrule such a refusal. Whatever its obligations towards the Dutch, it could not insist upon the employment of Indian forces to bring Indonesia back under Dutch control when it had itself already decided to free India from British control. In any event signs were not wanting that the adoption of such a course would gravely offend Australian and American opinion. In this connection it must also be remembered that part of the Supreme Allied Commander's staff was American, entitled to direct communication with the military authorities in America.

A totally new situation had been brought about by the refusal of the Indonesians to accept the return of the Dutch; by the fact that the Republic was administering much of the country, if somewhat uncertainly; and above all by the fact that the internees and prisoners whom it was desired to rescue were in camps in the interior of the country, many guarded by, all at the mercy of, the Indonesians who tended, later if not at first, to look upon these unfortunate people as hostages.

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At last, on 29th September, the first troops were landed in Java,¹ when one battalion of the Seaforth Highlanders, forming part of 1st Indian Brigade, was put ashore at Batavia, the first area for occupation. These were the leading troops of 23rd Indian Division, commanded by Major-General D. C. Hawthorn, upon whom had been laid the task of occupying the key areas of Java. Lieutenant-General Sir Philip Christison flew in the same day with his ADC, a Staff Officer, and a wireless set, and established an Advanced Headquarters. On 30th September he became Commander-in-Chief Allied Forces throughout the area of the Netherlands Indies, 5th Cruiser Squadron and the Royal Air Force Group being placed under his command except for operational orders. The rest of 1st Indian Brigade followed in three days time.

A state of complete lawlessness and disorder was found. Where the Japanese had not already handed over responsibility for the maintenance of order to the Indonesians, their control was fast weakening. The Indonesian Administration had withdrawn at the approach of the British. Arson, looting, murder, and many things worse than mere murder, were rife. A few of the main points in the town were guarded by British or Dutch naval parties. Some public utility services were still operating, most had stopped. RAPWI parties carried on in the face of great difficulties. The Dutch were met with violent hostility so that the NICA staff accompanying the forces was largely ineffective. Then widespread attacks began against defenceless Dutch, Indo-Europeans, Ambonese, and other minority communities. There is little doubt these had been planned before the landings took place. It had been published in the press that the 'People's Army' had 'declared war' on the minority populations.

The Supreme Allied Commander's notice, drafted long before in the happier context of Sumatra and now published without alteration, that his forces had come to protect the people and maintain law and order until such time as the lawful government of the Netherlands East Indies was once again functioning, was scarcely appropriate to the situation now developing. In fact Admiral Mountbatten later refused to be bound by the terms of this notice, although the Foreign Office had drawn the attention of the Netherlands Government at the Hague to it by way of reassurance as to British intentions. It was early decided, before the second key area, Surabaya, could be occupied, that the Batavia key area must be expanded by the occupation of Bandoeng, more than a hundred miles into the interior, on account of the numbers of internees confined there and of its importance as a railway centre, and in the hope also of exercising some control over the War Department of the Indonesian Republic, which was situated there. In order to reach Bandoeng it was necessary first to

¹ A brief account of events outside Java will be found in the last section of this chapter.

occupy Buitenzorg on the road connecting Batavia and Bandoeng. This was done on 14th October and Bandoeng was entered on 17th, the advance encountering guerilla resistance. The line of communication connecting the three towns was never brought under administration. In fact it was at all times rare for a convoy (which required the protection of a complete Infantry brigade with tanks and artillery and also air support) to reach its destination along this route without encountering road blocks, sniping, and occasionally fierce resistance, and without sustaining heavy casualties. With the move inland the 'war on the minorities' was intensified. Many RAPWI teams operating outside the occupied areas were seized and taken into custody. Some Dutch members of these teams were murdered.

At the same time as this advance was being made, British troops landed at Semarang in Central Java, and established an additional key area there for the rescue of prisoners of war and internees. They found an uneasy quiet, following extremely bitter fighting which had broken out between Japanese and Indonesians as a result of the refusal of the former to hand over their arms in this area.

Surabaya, which under the original plans was to have been the second of two key areas to be occupied, was in fact the third key area to be established, after the occupation of Semarang. Its occupation was originally decided on for the disarming of the Japanese, as Surabaya had been the largest Japanese naval base after Singapore. There were also prisoners of war and internees to be rescued. In Surabaya Japanese arms and tanks and other equipment had passed straight to the Indonesians, who were consequently particularly well-armed and well-organised. The landings began on 25th October, one brigade of 23rd Division being put ashore. The docks were plastered with anti-Dutch slogans and the local Indonesian authorities requested that their permission for the landings be sought beforehand. This was brushed aside, and the landings proceeded without incident. Negotiations were entered into with the local Indonesian leaders for the release of internees and prisoners of war. On 27th October leaflets were dropped from the air in accordance with a general programme drawn up without reference to conditions in Surabaya. The terms of the leaflets were based on the notice of the establishment of military administration issued by the commander of 23rd Indian Division and had been agreed to by General Christison at an earlier stage. They included a demand that all Indonesians should surrender their arms to the British under threat of punishment. This ran counter to the arrangements which had been negotiated with difficulty on the spot over the past two days. The atmosphere changed at once and no weapons were surrendered. An attempt by the British troops to disarm the inhabitants of Surabaya led to the launching of fierce attacks by the Indonesians. The British brigade narrowly escaped complete

destruction and it was only after 5th Indian Division had been landed and had conducted three weeks of bitter and intense fighting that Surabaya was completely cleared and occupied.

We must turn back to the steps that were taken to set up administration within the key areas. Even before the arrival of the forces of occupation, the RAPWI organisation, staffed mainly by Dutch but under British command, had improvised in Batavia and Semarang something that in limited respects virtually amounted to local administration. When the British forces landed they were largely without NICA staff, which did not arrive in numbers until a fortnight later. The Indonesian administrative authorities offered their co-operation in the rescue of internees, and in such matters as the provision of labour for the unloading of military stores and of food stocks imported for the people of Indonesia. The Dutch authorities protested that these arrangements must be made through them so as to avoid according recognition to the Republic. The British were willing to fall in with such a procedure. But when the Dutch placed demands upon the Indonesians they were rejected. The needs of the military forces, of the prisoners and internees, and the need to distribute food to the people of Indonesia, forced the British to come to administrative arrangements with the Indonesians direct.

Then, as NICA staff began to arrive in greater strength to set up an administration according to plan, the Indonesian administration withdrew. The members of NICA were received with such violent hostility that they were quite unable to follow up the issue of the Supreme Allied Commander's 'notice' by proclaiming military administration and the revival of martial law. A vacuum was left into which the British military authorities were quickly sucked. On 13th October Major-General Hawthorn, commanding 23rd Indian Division, published a notice of the establishment of an Allied Military Administration in Batavia under his command. It was a British Officer, not a member of NICA, who was placed in charge of so much of the police force as was still at its posts, and who organized a joint force of Indonesians, Dutch and British to establish control of main roads and important centres. Such public utility services as were functioning were operated by Indonesians, often with the aid and advice of the appropriate British military services, and of the RAPWI and Red Cross organizations. With few exceptions the Indonesians would not allow the Dutch to take any part in the operation of these utilities. Military administration was similarly proclaimed in Buitenzorg and Bandoeng. Although nominally Allied, it was in fact under close and absolute British control.

At the end of October, as the situation showed no improvement, it was decided to disband NICA altogether and to set up in its place the 'Allied Military Administration, Civil Affairs Branch' or AMACAB.

Ex-members of NICA were absorbed into this as civilians. Typical AMACAB detachments included both Dutch and Indonesian members of the general Netherlands Indies civil service, police officers, technical officers for public works under a 'co-ordinator', and also officers to deal with supply and distribution, public health, schools, welfare, registration, and other subjects. A Commanding Officer in charge of the Batavia Detachment was attached to, and under the command of, the British Brigade Commander for the area. A Chief Commanding Officer with supervisory duties for the whole of West Java was similarly attached to and under the command of the Commander 23rd Indian Division. The Commanding Officer and Chief Commanding Officer were Dutch and were both entrusted with full legislative and executive powers, but subject, for the time being, to the general control of the Supreme Allied Commander. One British Civil Affairs staff officer was appointed to provide liaison between the British Command and this virtually Dutch Administration.

AMACAB looked like NICA under another name, but there were differences. British command of AMACAB was closer than it was intended to have been in the case of NICA. And AMACAB, operating within confined territorial limits, was, even within those limits, personal rather than territorial in character, controlling only Dutch, Indo-Europeans, and other minority communities. Indonesians were controlled, if at all, by the Republican administration. A curious situation developed in which there might almost be said to be three governments operating concurrently within the key areas, the Allied Military Administration, the Indonesian Republic, and the British Command working through its own military services.

As AMACAB gained strength it took over the administration, department by department, from the RAPWI organisation and the British services. The change of name from NICA to AMACAB did something to deflect Indonesian hostility and by early December the following departments had come into existence, perhaps in somewhat embryonic form: Economics and Supplies; Public Works; Medical; Finance; Civil Administration and Police; Legal; Education; Welfare and Social Matters; Shipping; Oil; Dutch Army; and Dutch Navy. No courts had yet been established. Most public utility services were operated by Indonesians who refused to allow co-operation by Dutch technicians, but some were operated by the Dutch, and others by the British Engineer Services.

Meanwhile, however, the British commanders' primary task of disarming the Japanese and rescuing prisoners and internees was still being rendered difficult, and at times impossible, by Indonesian attacks and resistance, even within the key areas. On 14th December the Supreme Allied Commander reported to the Chiefs of Staff that a choice must be made between two ways of setting about this task:

either there must be a meeting between Dutch and Indonesians under a British chairman at which the Indonesians must be brought to undertake to cease attacks upon prisoners of war, internees, and troops; or else force must be employed within the key areas to round up the extremists, temporarily confiscate transport used by these, disarm the Indonesian police, and impose order. He did not recommend the first of these courses as the Indonesian leaders had already shown at Surabaya and on other occasions when brought into negotiation with the Dutch that, whatever their own wishes and views might be, they were not able to assert their authority over the more violent of their supporters. After some delay the second course was decided upon and put into operation on 27th December. A cordon was thrown around the city of Batavia, key points in connection with public services were seized, terrorists and kidnappers were rounded up, unauthorized arms and vehicles were seized, and the Police force was purged of undesirable characters and a new force of Dutch and Indonesians organised under a British Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner. The perimeter of the area was held by British posts and patrols. The town itself was divided into seven divisions and a British military police sergeant was placed in charge of each as superintendent, aided by both a Dutch and an Indonesian assistant. The British authorities insisted that proper use should be made of Dutch technicians in the public utility services. Some Indonesians left their work in consequence, and all were subjected to pressure from the extremists to do so, but some 80 per cent remained at their posts and gradually more returned. This firm action and assumption of closer control of the administration by the British restored the confidence of all moderate elements and impressed the extremists. Shops re-opened, people went about their business, the life of Batavia began to revive. A similar, if less marked, improvement in the situation extended also to Buitenzorg, Bandoeng, Semarang, and Surabaya.

The development of events in these other key localities had not been dissimilar, though the areas held were smaller and the organization established less elaborate. At Bandoeng the administration was carried on, at first by RAPWI, later by AMACAB, in the face of great difficulties from attacks and encirclement by hostile Indonesian forces. When British troops occupied Semarang, after the early fighting and massacres in the neighbourhood, little attempt was at first made to establish any form of civil administration more elaborate than patrolling of the area by a police force recruited from British and Japanese troops. Later, in January, a party of ten carefully selected Indonesians, formerly in Dutch civil employ, was sent from Batavia to aid in organizing an administration, and on 15th January AMACAB was established.

In Surabaya, after the situation had been restored by the operations

of 5th Division, the British troops were charged with the task of establishing a police force, controlling traffic routes, and of restoring public services and organizing rationing. At first the revival of the utility services was undertaken by a civilian unit known as the 'Allied Civil Engineering Service' and consisting of a hundred ex-interred Dutch technicians working under the Commander of 5th Indian Division. The British Provost staff improvised police arrangements. At no time did any NICA staff work in Surabaya. By December an AMACAB team was authorized to proceed from Batavia to Surabaya to take on the task of civil administration.

* * *

The question arose on several occasions¹ whether the Supreme Allied Commander should not be authorised to accept a measure of responsibility for maintaining law and order and for re-establishing Dutch sovereignty outside the key areas, somewhat on the lines, perhaps, of the authority assumed by General Gracey in Indo-China and subsequently approved by the Chiefs of Staff. But the reasons which had led Admiral Mountbatten on 28th September to decide that no assistance could be given by British troops in the re-establishment of Dutch sovereignty outside key areas lost no weight with the passage of time. Outside these areas the British commanders confined themselves to such action as was directly necessary to enforce surrender of the Japanese and to extricate internees and prisoners of war, and to attempting to bring the Dutch and Indonesians into negotiations with each other. After many weeks of patient work the two parties, each afraid to yield anything of sovereignty or to accord any recognition to the other, were brought into conference, under the influence of Sir Archibald Clark Kerr (later Lord Inverchapel) who had been sent to Batavia by the British Government as Special Ambassador on a mission to assist in bringing about agreement. By this time the possibility that British-Indian troops might be called upon to re-establish Dutch sovereignty by force throughout Indonesia had

¹ Actually on three occasions:

(a) On 30 September 1945 when COS instructed SAC to assist Dr. Van Mook in issuing a proclamation that the Republic was not to be recognised.

(b) On 15 October 1945 when COS expressed the view that it would have been in line with their instructions to SAC of 13 August 1945 to employ his forces to maintain law and order, even outside the key areas, in the event of civil disorder arising from actions of the Indonesian freedom movement, and agreed to SAC's proposal that he be authorised to exceed his original instructions to the extent of backing the Dutch with a 'show of force' if the latter were ready to open negotiations with the Indonesians, on the basis of the Queen's broadcast of 1942, giving Dr. Van Mook discretion to include Dr. Sockarno if necessary.

(c) On 3 December 1945 when SAC reported to the COS that he must either contract the area under his control to make sure of holding Batavia, or make a fundamental change of policy and undertake re-establishment of order throughout Java with British troops.

finally receded. Attention from this time on was increasingly directed to arrangements for the relief of British-Indian by Dutch Forces and towards the date to be fixed for the termination of military administration in the restricted sphere of the key areas. Ultimately the Netherlands Indies, less Java, Sumatra, and the Riouw Archipelago, was handed over to the Dutch on 13th-14th July, and Java, Sumatra and the Riouw Archipelago on 30th November, the date upon which South-East Asia Command was dissolved.

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We must turn back for a brief glance at events in Indonesia outside Java. In Sumatra the situation at no time became so difficult and dangerous as in Java. There was not the same political consciousness and hostility towards the Allies. The Japanese forces had obeyed the order issued by the Supreme Allied Commander, had maintained law and order in the island and had not handed over responsibility and their arms to the Indonesians. It was consequently possible for the British forces to occupy the key areas of Medan, Palembang, and Padang without encountering the opposition met in Java and without inflaming political feeling. It was also possible to conduct operations in the interior for the rescue of prisoners and internees without encountering armed opposition as in Java. There were in any event fewer persons detained in Sumatra, so that it was not necessary to multiply the occasions on which forces had to be despatched into the interior, so stirring up Indonesian apprehension of reinstatement of the Dutch. The areas occupied in Sumatra were small and compact and with a fair degree of co-operation from the local Indonesian republican officials a tolerably satisfactory administration was improvised in them. Outside these areas civil administration was controlled, perhaps not entirely effectively, either through the Japanese military organisation or through the local Indonesian officials, who, while looking to the Republic, were not so determined, or able, to refuse to co-operate with the British forces as was the case in Java.

In the other islands of the Netherlands Indies the Indonesian Republic never succeeded in exercising control. In such of these islands as were re-occupied by forces of South-East Asia Command little difficulty was experienced in setting up NICA administration in accordance with the plans originally prepared. But it is to the islands, which until the Japanese surrender fell within the South-West Pacific Area and thereafter came under direct Australian command, that we have to turn for the fullest and smoothest implementation of the plans drawn up between the interim Netherlands Indies Government at Brisbane on the one hand, and the commanders of the South-West Pacific and South-East Asia theatres on the other.

There was little or no nationalist opposition expected or found in these islands, so that Australian forces could be employed in smaller numbers and consequently landed earlier than the forces of South-East Asia Command in Java and Sumatra. Dutch European and native troops were available and employed from the beginning firmly, sometimes ruthlessly, to re-establish Dutch authority. Precautions were taken to prevent the spread of nationalist agitation from Java. There had been no wholesale arming of the nationalists by the Japanese. In these territories the complete NICA plan was realised without serious opposition and in a short space of time courts of justice were established, and police forces, public services, transport by land, water and air, irrigation, public health, agriculture, veterinary care, schools, and other functions of administration were re-organised. By the time that these areas were transferred to South-East Asia Command, on 2nd February 1946, a NICA administration was in full planned swing, an arrangement which it was at no time found necessary to alter.

CHAPTER XXIII

CONCLUSION

IT IS, perhaps for readers, rather than for the writer, of contemporary official history to draw conclusions. But in this final chapter an attempt will be made to recapitulate a number of matters which seem significant or likely to repay further study. In doing so the writer has occasionally allowed himself more freely than in earlier chapters, and more by way of opening the discussion than for any other purpose, to express views for which there is no authority whatever other than his own judgement. This does not mean that responsibility for facts and views expressed earlier in the book does not rest exclusively upon him. It does, but he has in this concluding chapter allowed himself a little more freedom to suggest opinions.

* * *

The United Kingdom has a long, and in many ways honourable, tradition of unpreparedness for war. In the case of most branches of the armed forces the outbreak of the Second World War consequently involved a vast and rapid expansion of embryonic staffs and organizations. In the case of Civil Affairs and Military Government, however, unreadiness was so complete that there existed virtually no nucleus of thought, and no staff at all, upon which to build. In fact, as one writer has observed, 'this singular absence of study, direction and material led the more cynical to conclude that the British Army was not designed, and never expected to occupy enemy territory'.¹ There was nothing but the somewhat complacent assumption that, if civil administration showed signs of running down, the situation could be restored by declaring martial law, without giving thought, however, to the need for providing men or materials for the carrying on of military administration.² What else to do with the fruits of victory had scarcely been considered.

Military Government is a subject that has a somewhat dry and academic flavour; a matter for the specialist, even for the crank. Even more is this true if it is described as Civil Affairs. Yet, with the awful scale and intensity of modern warfare, it needs no demonstration

¹ Rennell, *British Military Administration in Africa 1941-47*, H.M.S.O. 1948 p. 15.

² Cf. pp. 10 and 29.

that the lives and happiness of millions may depend upon the rapid introduction and constructive functioning of military governments in the rear of advancing armies. In political relations especially the actions and attitudes of the military governments may well exert a decisive influence upon the temper and direction of events. For the establishment of such governments is apt to coincide with the rare occasions upon which the raw material of history has been rendered malleable. If the recruitment of a Civil Affairs staff is postponed until after the outbreak of hostilities, and if the rest of the military organization has been denied earlier opportunities to become acquainted with the functions of the new staff, the latter is unlikely to have gained the standing and confidence to make its views sufficiently felt when decisions involving the most fateful political considerations require to be taken. The need for such decisions is only too likely to arise during planning and early operations, e.g. in connection with the use to be made of clandestine organizations in the countries to be invaded. In the case of Burma the omission to inform the C.C.A.O. of the early plans for the arming and utilization of the Anti-Fascist Organization guerillas, and to obtain his advice regarding their implications, could hardly have been allowed to occur if the Civil Affairs Service for Burma had been a better established, better known, more influential part of the staff at the time.

The difficulty remains, however, that it is civil, rather than military, administrative experience that is required as the basic qualification for becoming a Civil Affairs officer and that persons possessing it cannot usually be spared from their peace-time duties until after the outbreak of war.

* * *

The controversy whether Civil Affairs staff should or should not be given military rank ended in a decision that they should, but it remains an open question whether this was in fact the best course, at least when the territory to be occupied was British, not foreign.

The main reason for its adoption was to safeguard the unity of military command: it was feared that the paramountcy of the Army's needs would not be sufficiently ensured if members of the Civil Affairs staff remained civilian political or administrative officers, merely seconded to the appropriate military command. But if such officers had been clearly instructed regarding their obligations towards the military authorities their service need not have been any less conscientious or loyal towards these than that actually rendered by them as commissioned officers. Any dual loyalty to their civil governments and to the military authorities would have been little, if at all, different from the conception of Dual Responsibility which was later propounded by the Colonial Office and accepted by the War Office in

regard to Malaya, and thereafter in regard to Borneo and Hong Kong also. This was not held, or found in practice, to impair in any way the fundamental unity of military command. There was a long tradition in India of the successful working of such a relationship between the Indian Army and Political officers who were civilians. Unfortunately this tradition was quite unknown to members of the British Service.

A second reason for the commissioning of Civil Affairs staff was to accord the standing and authority within the military machine to enable them to discharge their duties satisfactorily and expeditiously. In a somewhat limited sense this reason was probably valid. But this consideration cut both ways. If the commissioning of a Civil Affairs officer gave him authority over his juniors it might well reduce his influence *vis-à-vis* his seniors. And the dressing up of sometimes exceedingly unmilitary civilians as high-ranking officers did not make it easy for their more military colleagues to take them as seriously as was desirable. It is possible that a civilian political officer, depending for his influence upon personality, experience, and his civilian standing, rather than upon military rank, would in fact have carried greater weight with the military staffs and commanders. The truth is that the influence of Civil Affairs officers, whether endowed with military rank or not, depended to an exceptional degree upon character and personality; for even if disguised as soldiers it was well known that they were not 'real' soldiers.

A further reason for commissioning Civil Affairs staff was that this automatically solved difficulties of discipline and compensation for injury or death. It was, in fact, as we have seen, this consideration that finally forced the decision to confer military commissions on Civil Affairs officers in the Far East.¹ But although the decision solved certain difficulties it created others: elaborate provision required to be made to govern the pay and conditions of service of civil servants transferred into the military forces, and it seemed to some that an altogether disproportionate amount of time and effort had to be consumed in the preparation of instructions for this purpose, at the expense of more constructive planning for the relief and administration of the territories to be re-occupied.

A last reason for the decision to confer military rank upon Civil Affairs officers was the desire to integrate the new staff with the existing military organization and to draw its members fully into the military circle. The decision bore little fruit in the early stages in Delhi. Later, as the writer can testify from pleasant personal experience, it achieved a great measure of success such as could hardly have been gained in any other way.

¹ Cf. p. 49.

In occupying foreign territory another, probably decisive, consideration arises. Mere civilian officers do not share in the prestige of a victorious army. Denied the enjoyment of this, they may find their task difficult, perhaps impossible.

* * *

The Civil Affairs Services and Civil Affairs officers were so described at all times in the Far East, but there were disadvantages in the nomenclature adopted. The essence of a Civil Affairs Service is that it is military. The use of the word 'civil' worked against full integration of the new staff with the rest of the military organisation.¹ And 'Civil Affairs' did not readily suggest the idea of a government. In North and East Africa Civil Affairs officers were originally described as Political officers, but this practice was discontinued because of a feeling that no military officer should be concerned with politics, and because the functions of Civil Affairs officers were at that time and place administrative rather than political. Yet they could not be described as Administrative officers, because of the danger of confusion owing to the specialised 'A' and 'Q' meaning attached to 'Administration' in the Army. There would seem to be less objection to their being described as Military government officers. But there is an objection even to this terminology. Military governments are temporary governments only, which will hand over to a permanent civil government at the earliest possible date. Caretaker governments of this kind are by their nature largely debarred from attempting to deal with the longer term problems which are the rightful concern of permanent governments, and are in consequence largely confined to administrative functions. To describe them as governments rather than administrations may be felt to trench upon the preserves of the civil governments that will follow. And if the latter are Allied, not British, governments, such trespass may be resented as an infringement of sovereignty.

* * *

The doctrine of the separate Civil Affairs chain of command has been referred to earlier but is summarised again below.² During the early operational phases it was the practice for Civil Affairs officers, from the C.C.A.O. downwards, to be attached to, and to form a part of, the staff of the Formations engaged. Under this arrangement authority flowed down the normal military channels and Civil Affairs officers at the various levels received their orders, not from the C.C.A.O. direct, but through or from the military commanders to

¹ Cf. pp. 54-55.

² Cf. pp. 44-47.

whom they were attached. Under the doctrine referred to above, it was intended to establish a separate Civil Affairs chain of command as soon as possible after conclusion of the operational phase. This was to be brought about by the Force Commander delegating his responsibility for military government to the C.C.A.O. At the same time other Civil Affairs officers would cease to be attached to the various Formation Commanders and begin to receive their instructions, not through these Commanders, but directly from the C.C.A.O. In this way a separate chain of command was to be set up, parallel to the normal military channels, and the military administrations could begin to stand on their own feet.

In North and East Africa this doctrine was well understood and theoretically well observed, although there was occasional difficulty in practice.¹ In the planning and preparations for Burma it was never clearly grasped or accepted and was never fully applied, although parallel chains of command were in fact prescribed in the instructions issued by the Supreme Allied Commander.² In Malaya and Hong Kong the doctrine was given full expression.³ In Borneo it was adopted only after the transfer of this territory to South-East Asia Command.⁴ In Italy it was applied early, and fully, in North-West Europe scarcely at all.

Unless a separate Civil Affairs chain of command is established there is in practice a danger that Formation Commanders will impose their own ideas, to the detriment of the building up of a sound and consistent policy in military government. On the other hand, if such a chain of command is established there will inevitably be occasional friction resulting from the clash of personalities working in parallel. With tact and goodwill and a proper sense of the ultimate objective, however, it should generally be possible to avoid such friction, and if this is done the parallel system almost certainly yields the best results. A very happy example of the successful application of the doctrine in Hong Kong has been noted earlier.⁵

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A significant addition to the theory of military administration was evolved in South-East Asia Command in the conception of Dual Responsibility. This was an admission of the principle, strongly pressed by the Colonial Office, that the mere prevention of disease and unrest, to which the military administrations were confined by

¹ Cf. Rennell *British Military Administration in Africa* 1941-47, H.M.S.O. 1948 pp. 301-302.

² Cf. p. 46.

³ Cf. pp. 157, 160, and 204.

⁴ Cf. p. 187.

⁵ Cf. Ch. 11.

their charters, was not an adequate discharge of British responsibilities towards communities whose members had been, and still were, British subjects or British-protected persons. There had been little occasion for the development of the theory in North and East Africa since, with the comparatively unimportant exception of British Somaliland, no British or British-protected territory was re-occupied. The discretion allowed to the Chief Civil Affairs Officers (then known as Chief Political Officers) at Cairo and Nairobi to refer matters to the Resident Minister of State and to take his instructions 'when reference to London is unnecessary or would entail unacceptable delay'¹, was not an example of dual responsibility. It was a device for shortening existing channels of communication to the home government by bringing a part of that government to Cairo, not for creating fresh channels, and gave the C.C.A.O. no responsibilities that did not already rest upon him. The germ of the theory was present in the proposals put forward by the Government of Burma for administration on re-occupation. Unfortunately, the political climate was unfavourable at the time and the proposal was rejected by the military authorities with such firmness that it was never pressed again by the Burma Government. It was in regard to Malaya that the theory first received serious consideration and that it was ultimately formulated in a directive issued jointly by the War Office and Colonial Office after a conference on 18th April 1944. Under this, the paramountcy of military needs having been properly safe-guarded, it was recognized that the C.C.A.O. owed a dual responsibility, to his military superiors on the one hand, and to the Colonial Office on the other. In recognition of this he was allowed access to the Colonial Office with a view to providing amenities in excess of the 'disease and unrest' level in territories for which the Colonial Office was responsible. A dual responsibility of this nature was, in theory, laid also upon the C.C.A.O.'s in Borneo and Hong Kong, but was in practice inoperative for various reasons. But the conception does appear to have made an addition to Civil Affairs theory, without being in any way incompatible with real unity of military command.

* * *

It has been said earlier, in connection with the distribution of relief supplies, that any condensed and rationalised account of the working of an organisation tends to convey an unduly rosy impression of method and order.² The point needs to be applied more generally to the whole field of Civil Affairs activity. The plans may have been logical, and from an interior view, well executed. From the outside

¹ Cf. Directive quoted at p. 305 of Rennell *B.M.A. in Africa* 1941-47 H.M.S.O. 1948.

² Cf. p. 256.

the results were not always so impressive. Civil Affairs staffs were often unmilitary and dangerously ignorant of the workings of the military organization of which they were required to become a part, just as other members of that organization were often ignorant of the functions of Civil Affairs officers. The result was sometimes confusion and incompetence that should have been avoided.

The quality of Civil Affairs recruits was sometimes poor, for it was inevitable that the fighting services should have first claim upon the limited resources of manpower. Particularly does this seem to have been the case in regard to subordinates of the Relief and Labour Department in Burma and in regard to some of the General Administration officers in Borneo. The fact that few of the latter were members of the Borneo civil service led to much jockeying for future position. In Burma, where most such officers already had a niche in the peacetime hierarchy which would not be affected by rank or position in the military administration, there was little disposition to indulge in such manœuvring and little to be gained by it.

More broadly, while the propagandists contrasted Allied 'liberation' with enemy 'occupation', the distinction between the two processes was not always so clear to those who were being 'liberated'; both, at least in the early stages, were apt to mean for the public little but the seizure from their owners of the largest cars and the best houses. In some territories, particularly after the surrender of the Japanese and the inevitable relaxation of discipline on the conclusion of operations, the Allied forces were generally felt to come badly out of comparison with the Japanese in their respect for private property. In these cases looting was an important reason for the change of public feeling towards the Allied forces and the Administrations set up by them.

* * *

The question arises, in the broadest and most general terms: how good was the administration of Civil Affairs in the Far East? Very different answers are possible. The soldier, speaking from the background of a complex organization built up to assume direct and detailed responsibility for recruiting, training, feeding, clothing, arming, and moving disciplined bodies of men, will tend to notice first the inexperienced and often incompetent manner in which the Civil Affairs Services administered their own staffs, and the uncertainty and imprecision of their relations with the public. The civil servant, whose task has been to administer the law, and so, by a remoter and more indirect control, to create, cautiously and gradually, the conditions for the life of an unregimented community, will tend to notice first the improvisations, the inevitable unfairness

and the extravagance of the make-shift administration as compared with a settled peacetime government.

Clearly, neither of these views does justice to the hybrid task of the military administrations, not military, not civil, but in many ways more difficult than either. That task was to set up, in all territory occupied by the military forces, administrations of a standard sufficient to ensure that those forces should operate under the most favourable administrative, political and economic conditions, yet not so elaborate as to withdraw more than the necessary minimum of men or materials from the main task of defeating the enemy. In Burma and Borneo alone, of the territories with which this history is concerned, were the administrations called upon to discharge their full task while military operations were still in progress. When the other territories came to be occupied, active operations against the Japanese had ceased, and there was no longer the same vital need to test every measure by its effect upon the task of concentrating men and amassing resources to defeat the enemy. In Burma and Borneo the Civil Affairs Services, greatly aided, as was only proper, by the other branches of the Army, can claim a high degree of success, within the limits of what was required of them. At no time was there any serious outbreak of disease. At no time was it necessary to divert to internal security duties any troops that should have been employed on active operations. If success in harnessing the economic resources of these territories to the allied war effort was not so striking, this was due more to the nature of the problem than to any defects in the measures taken. It is doubtful, to say the least of it, whether any other form of organization could have achieved better results or done so much.

Of the other territories with which this history is concerned, two were British and two were not. In the latter, in Indo-China and Indonesia, no British Civil Affairs Service was put to the test. The responsibility assumed by the British Commanders was political rather than administrative (although, in fact, members of the British forces took a not inconsiderable part in the administration of the areas in these territories occupied by Allied forces). In the British territories, Malaya and Hong Kong, which were occupied after the surrender of the Japanese, a certain widening and liberalizing of the task of the administrations was permissible, as also the application of accumulated military resources pending their final dispersal. Here it became one of the main tasks of the administrations to prepare, in full and as early as possible, for the return of the civil governments. It is some indication of the success achieved in this task that in both territories the administrations were in fact ready to hand over responsibility before the civil governments were ready to accept it.

* * *

One final and all-important, if obvious, point must be made. This book has by its nature been confined to a limited and highly-specialized aspect of the British military effort in the Far East, the establishment of military administrations. The reader will scarcely need to be reminded, but the writer cannot conclude happily without saying, however briefly, that the need for military administration arises only when battles have been won and territory occupied. Battles were won in the Far East, as elsewhere, by the skill, endurance, determination, courage and spirit of the Allied fighting man, of whatever race or rank. It would be unthinkable to end without paying tribute, however shortly, to these men. They indeed brought relief and the opportunity of freedom to the people whose countries had been darkened by the Japanese invasions of 1941 and 1942. All that the military governments could do was to try to make fruitful the gift of these men.

Appendices

APPENDIX I

Proclamation No. 1 of 1944 Military Administration

1. I, Admiral the Lord Louis Mountbatten, G.C.V.O., C.B., D.S.O., ADC., Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Command, do hereby declare that until further notice I assume for myself and successors full judicial, legislative, executive and administrative responsibilities in regard to all the territories of Burma now or at any time occupied by the Forces under my command and exclusive jurisdiction over all persons and properties therein.

2. I delegate to the military officer for the time being holding the appointment of the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Burma, full authority to conduct on my behalf the military administration of the civil population in the said territories, subject always to any orders and directions which I may issue from time to time. And for this purpose the said Chief Civil Affairs Officer is authorised to delegate sufficient powers to any officers under his command.

(Signed) LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN,

Supreme Allied Commander
South East Asia.

Dated this 1st day of January 1944.

APPENDIX 2

Proclamation No. 2 of 1944 Maintenance of Order

I, the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Burma, in exercise of the authority vested in me by the Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia Command, hereby PROCLAIM :

ARTICLE 1

Laws. The provisions of all laws in force in Burma on the 31st day of December, 1943, shall be deemed to remain in force except in so far as they may be suspended, varied or supplemented by this or any subsequent Proclamation or by Regulations or Orders made under the authority of any such Proclamation.

ARTICLE 2

Courts. All courts and tribunals existing on the 31st day of December, 1943, shall cease to exercise the jurisdiction and powers then vested in them, and except as I may otherwise from time to time direct, jurisdiction and powers of a like kind thereto shall, as from the 1st day of January, 1944, be exercised by corresponding courts and tribunals hereby established by me.

All such courts and tribunals shall have jurisdiction over all offences under any Proclamation, Regulation or Order.

No person shall act as judge or magistrate or otherwise exercise judicial powers in any capacity unless appointed by me or under my authority.

ARTICLE 3

Jurisdiction. The jurisdiction of any court or tribunal shall not extend over members of the British or Allied Forces or over those persons of enemy nationality who, if captured, would be entitled to be treated as prisoners of war:

Provided that any person who is employed by, or is in the service of, or is accompanying any part of the said Forces, shall be tried for any offence under any Proclamation, Regulation or Order by a court or tribunal established under this Proclamation, unless the local commander by general or special order directs that he be tried by court-martial.

ARTICLE 4

Confirmation of Death Sentences. No sentence of death imposed by any court or tribunal for any offence shall be put into execution unless and until it be confirmed in writing by me or by an officer authorised by me in that behalf.

ARTICLE 5

Petition and Review. There shall be no appeal from the decision of any court or tribunal.

Any person sentenced to death or transportation or imprisonment for a term exceeding two years may lodge with the court or tribunal, within 15 days of his conviction a petition addressed to me against his conviction or sentence or both.

A Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer, a Civil Affairs Officer in charge of a district or the Legal Adviser may at any time call for the record of any case for the purpose of review.

ARTICLE 6

Proceedings. The record in every case which results in a sentence of death shall forthwith be transmitted to me or as I may direct.

The record in every other case in which is filed any such petition as is mentioned in Article 5 shall, together with such petition, forthwith be transmitted to me or as I may direct.

Upon a consideration of the record and of such petition (if any) as is mentioned in Article 5, an order may be made confirming the finding and sentence, or quashing the conviction, or reducing, enhancing or varying the sentence, or ordering retrial by another court or tribunal.

ARTICLE 7

Proceedings to be Public. The proceedings of every court and tribunal shall be public except when, for reasons to be recorded in writing, the court or tribunal orders otherwise in the interest of justice or of military security.

ARTICLE 8

Administrative Provisions. All persons who, in Burma, on the 31st day of December, 1943, were lawfully exercising and discharging administrative powers and duties under the authority of the Governor of Burma shall, subject to such directions as may from time to time be given by me or under my authority, continue to exercise and discharge the administrative powers and duties with which they were then entrusted.

C. F. B. PEARCE,

Major-General,

Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Burma.

Dated this 1st day of January 1944.

APPENDIX 3

Proclamation No. 1

Military Administration Proclamation

Whereas by reason of military necessity and for the prevention and suppression of disorder and the maintenance of public safety it is necessary to place the territories of the Settlements of Singapore, Penang and Malacca, all islands and places forming part thereof and all British waters adjacent thereto, and the Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, Pahang, Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Perlis, all islands forming part of such States and the territorial waters thereof (hereinafter called Malaya) under military administration:

Now, therefore, I, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Knight Grand Cross of the Royal Victorian Order, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Companion of the Distinguished Service Order, Personal Aide de Camp to His Majesty the King, Honorary Lieutenant-General and Air Marshal, Supreme Allied Commander South East Asia, *hereby proclaim as follows* :

ESTABLISHMENT OF A MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

1. A Military Administration to be called the British Military Administration is hereby established throughout such areas of Malaya as are at any given time under the control of Forces under my command and shall continue only so long as I consider it to be required by military necessity.

ASSUMPTION OF POWERS AND JURISDICTION

2. I hereby assume for myself and my successors full judicial, legislative, executive and administrative powers and responsibilities and conclusive jurisdiction over all persons and property throughout such areas of Malaya as are at any given time under the control of the Forces under my command.

DELEGATION

3. Subject always to any orders and directions which I may issue from time to time, I delegate to the General Officer Commanding Military Forces, Malaya, all the powers, responsibilities and jurisdiction assumed by me, and such General Officer Commanding is authorised to delegate such powers, responsibilities and jurisdiction as he may deem necessary to any Officer under his command and to empower such officer further to delegate any of such powers, responsibilities and jurisdiction.

ORDERS TO BE OBEYED

4. All persons will obey promptly all orders given by me or under my authority and must refrain from all acts which impede the Forces under my command or are helpful to the enemy, from all acts of violence, and from any act calculated to disturb public order in any way.

EXISTING LAWS TO BE RESPECTED

5. (i) Subject to the provisions of any Proclamation of the British Military Administration and in so far as military exigencies permit:

(a) all laws and customs existing immediately prior to the Japanese occupation will be respected:

Provided that such of the existing laws as the Chief Civil Affairs Officer considers it is practicable from time to time to administer during the period of military administration will be administered;

(b) all rights and properties will be respected:

Provided that rights and properties acquired during the Japanese occupation may be subject to investigation and to such action as justice requires.

(ii) With regard to paragraph (a) of sub-section (i), the inhabitants of the said territories are advised to consult the nearest Civil Affairs Officer if in doubt as to whether any existing law is being administered.

SUSPENSION OF COURTS

6. All Courts and tribunals, other than military courts established under my authority, are hereby suspended and deprived of all authority and jurisdiction until authorized by me to re-open.

REVOCATION OF JAPANESE MILITARY ADMINISTRATION PROCLAMATIONS

7. It is hereby declared that all Proclamations and legislative enactments of whatever kind issued by or under the authority of the Japanese Military Administration shall cease to have any effect.

SHORT TITLE

8. This Proclamation may be cited as the Military Administration Proclamation.

Signed at Kandy, this fifteenth day of August, 1945.

(Signed) LOUIS MOUNTBATTEN,
Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia.

APPENDIX 4

Proclamation No. 1

A Proclamation to proclaim Martial Law and to establish Military Administration.

Whereas by reason of military necessity and for the prevention and suppression of disorder and the maintenance of public safety it is necessary to place the territories of North Borneo, Brunei, Labuan and Sarawak, all islands and places forming part thereof and all British waters adjacent thereto (hereinafter called British Borneo) under martial law as martial law is understood and administered in territories under His Majesty's jurisdiction and protection:

Now, therefore, I, Leslie James Morshead, Lieutenant-General, General Officer Commanding First Australian Corps, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Douglas MacArthur, General of the Army, Commander-in-Chief, South West Pacific, do hereby proclaim:

PROCLAMATION OF MARTIAL LAW

1. Martial law is hereby proclaimed throughout such areas of British Borneo as are at any given time under the control of the Forces under my command, and shall be enforced only so long as it is considered to be necessary.

ASSUMPTION OF POWERS AND JURISDICTION

2. I hereby assume for myself and successors full judicial, legislative, executive and administrative powers and responsibilities and conclusive jurisdiction over all persons and property throughout such areas of British Borneo as are at any given time under the control of the Forces under my command.

DELEGATION

3. Subject always to any orders and directions which I may issue from time to time, I delegate to the officer for the time being commanding the Ninth Australian Division all the powers, responsibilities and jurisdiction assumed by me, and such officer is hereby authorised to delegate such powers, responsibilities and jurisdiction as he may deem necessary to any officer under his command.

EXISTING LAWS TO BE RESPECTED

4. (1) Subject to the provisions of any Proclamation and in so far as military exigencies permit:

(a) all laws and customs existing immediately prior to the Japanese occupation will be respected and such of the existing laws as the

Chief Civil Affairs Officer considers it practicable from time to time to administer during the period of military administration will be administered;

(b) all rights and properties will be respected: Provided that rights and properties acquired during the Japanese occupation may be subject to investigation and to such action as justice requires.

(2) With regard to paragraph (a) of subsection (1), the inhabitants of the said territories are advised to consult the nearest Civil Affairs Officer if in doubt as to whether any existing law is being administered.

REVOCATION OF JAPANESE MILITARY ADMINISTRATION PROCLAMATIONS

5. It is hereby declared that all Proclamations and legislative enactments of whatever kind issued by or under the authority of the Japanese Military Administration shall cease to have any effect.

SHORT TITLE

6. This Proclamation may be cited as the Martial Law Proclamation, 1945.

Signed this 10th day of June, 1945.

L. J. MORSHEAD,

Lieutenant-General,

General Officer Commanding First Australian Corps.

APPENDIX 5

British Military Administration, Hong Kong Proclamation No. 1

A Proclamation to establish a military administration

Whereas the forces of the enemy have surrendered to the force of His Britannic Majesty and his Allies and whereas I Cecil Halliday Jepson Harcourt, C.B., C.B.E., Rear Admiral in His Britannic Majesty's Fleet and Rear Admiral Commanding Eleventh Aircraft Carrier Squadron, British Pacific Fleet, am in supreme command of the forces of His Britannic Majesty in the colony of Hong Kong now liberated by and under control of those forces and whereas by reason of military safety it is necessary to place the colony and new territories and its dependencies under military administration pending the restoration of the civil government.

Now I do hereby proclaim:

ARTICLE 1. ESTABLISHMENT OF A BRITISH MILITARY ADMINISTRATION.

A military administration to be called the British Military Administration is hereby established throughout the colony of Hong Kong.

ARTICLE 2. ASSUMPTION OF POWER AND JURISDICTION.

I hereby assume for myself and my successors full judicial legislative executive and administrative powers and responsibilities and exclusive jurisdiction over all persons and property throughout the colony of Hong Kong.

ARTICLE 3. EXISTING LAW TO BE RESPECTED.

Subject to the provisions of any proclamation enactment or order of the British Military Administration and in so far as the military exigencies permit,

(a) All laws existing immediately prior to the Japanese occupation will be respected and administered.

(b) All rights and property will be respected provided that the rights and property acquired or alleged to have been acquired during the period of the Japanese occupation will be subject to investigation and, therefore, such action as justice may require.

ARTICLE 4. REVOCATION OF ENACTMENTS BY JAPANESE AUTHORITIES.

All proclamations, enactments, orders, and the like issued or made by or with the sanction of any Japanese authority during the period of Japanese occupation are hereby suspended unless and until expressly revived by the authority of the British Military Administration.

ARTICLE 5. SUSPENSION OF COURTS.

All courts and tribunals (except Courts Martial held by virtue of any statute) other than courts and tribunals established by the authority of the British Military Administration are hereby suspended and deprived of all jurisdiction until authorised by the British Military Administration to re-open.

ARTICLE 6. ORDERS TO BE OBEYED.

All persons shall obey promptly all such enactments and orders issued or made by or under the authority of the British Military Administration and must refrain from all acts which impede forces under my command, from all acts of violence, and from any acts likely to disturb public actions in any way.

ARTICLE 7. SHORT TITLE.

This proclamation may be quoted as the British Military Administration Proclamation.

Given under my hand at Hong Kong this First day of September, 1945.

C. H. J. HARCOURT,

Rear Admiral.

APPENDIX 6

Proclamation

1. With the unconditional surrender to the Allied Nations by all Japanese Forces signed in the name of the Emperor of Japan at Tokyo on 2nd September 1945 the Supreme Allied Commander of all Allied Forces in South-East Asia Command, Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O., has delegated to me, General D. D. Gracey, C.B., C.B.E., M.C., the Command of all British, French and Japanese forces and all police forces and armed bodies in French Indo-China south of 16° latitude with orders to ensure law and order in this area.

2. Let it be known to all that it is my firm intention to ensure with strict impartiality that this period of transition from war to peace conditions is carried out peaceably with the minimum dislocation to all public and utility services, legitimate business and trade, and with the least interference with the normal peaceful activities and vocations of the people.

3. I call on all citizens in the name of the Supreme Allied Commander to co-operate to the fullest extent to achieve the above object and hereby warn all wrongdoers especially looters and saboteurs of public and private property and those also carrying out similar criminal activities, that they will be summarily shot.

4. The following orders will come into immediate effect.

A. No demonstrations or processions will be permitted.

B. No public meetings will take place.

C. No arms of any description, including sticks, staves, bamboo spears, etc., will be carried except by British and Allied troops and such other forces and police which have been specially authorised by me.

D. The curfew already imposed on my orders by the Japanese authorities between 21.30 and 05.30 hours in Saigon and Cholon will be continued and strictly enforced.

APPENDIX 7

Notice to the people of Java

The forces of the United Nations have decisively defeated the Japanese by land, sea and air, and the whole Japanese nation has unconditionally surrendered to the United Nations. Troops under the Supreme Command of Admiral the Lord Louis Mountbatten have arrived in your country to accept the surrender of the Japanese forces, on behalf of the United Nations, and to protect the people and maintain Law and Order until such time as the lawful Government of the Netherlands East Indies is once again functioning.

By command of Admiral the Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia, the Netherlands East Indies laws with which you are familiar, will be applied and enforced by the Officers of the Netherlands East Indies Civil Administration now present in your country, subject only to any further orders which the Supreme Allied Commander may be obliged, in the interests of good order, to issue.

APPENDIX 8

Notice by Commander Major-General D. C. Hawthorn, D.S.O. Allied Land Forces Java, Bali, Madura, Lombok

1. COMMAND OF FORCES IN JAVA

All Allied Land Forces in Java are under my command.

2. JAPANESE FORCES

The Japanese forces are pledged to carry out all orders issued by me on behalf of the Supreme Allied Commander.

3. DUTY OF ALLIED LAND FORCES IN JAVA

The Allied Land Forces have the following tasks:

(a) To protect and succour APWI on behalf of the United Nations.
(b) To relieve Japanese Forces at present employed on Internal Security.

(c) To maintain Law and Order in those areas occupied by Allied Troops.

(d) To concentrate all Japanese forces in Java in certain temporary concentration areas, then to disarm them and then to remove them to final concentration areas where they will remain until they are returned to Japan.

(e) To set up a Military Administration in those areas, occupied by Allied Forces.

4. THE ALLIED MILITARY ADMINISTRATION BATAVIA

Batavia within the boundaries hereinafter described is hereby declared an area under Military Administration which takes effect from today.

5. BOUNDARIES OF ALLIED MILITARY ADMINISTRATION BATAVIA

On the West by Bandjir Kanaal—on the South by the Bandjir Kanaal and the West to East railway line but including that portion of Meester Cornelis South of the railway line. On the East by the K. Boeran and the K. Tjakoeng and thence Northwards to include the dock Area at Tandjong Priok—and Kg. Kodja.

6. WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES DESCRIBED IN PARA 5 THE FOLLOWING ARE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE MILITARY ADMINISTRATION ACTING ON MY ORDERS

Law and order—including all forces charged with the preservation of law and order.

Supply and distribution of essential commodities particularly food. Essential Public Services—including railways, tramways, water supply, electricity and gas supply, telephones, telegraphs, cables and broadcasting.

Control of all premises, stores, stock piles, and installations formerly in the hands of the Japanese, or persons of any nationality appointed by them or acting on their behalf, irrespective of ownership . . . previous to the Japanese occupation.

Public health and sanitation including the control, collection and distribution of medical supplies of all descriptions.

Control, maintenance, and safeguarding of all RAPWI and Red Cross Organisations.

Any other matters over which I may deem it necessary to assume control.

7. OPERATION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

All services operated by the Japanese or under their direction or handed over by them to other persons for operation will continue to be so operated until they are taken over by the military administration. Until so taken over control will be exercised by me through the Japanese Civil Administration whose orders will be accepted by all concerned as coming from me.

8. OFFENCES AGAINST THE ALLIED MILITARY ADMINISTRATION

(a) Striking, or incitement to strike, from any work connected with public utilities as heretofore described.

(b) Offences against the person.

(c) Sabotage of any kind.

(d) Looting.

(e) Bearing of arms.

(f) Improper possession of property of any kind.

(g) Refusal on racial grounds to sell any article of food clothing or human necessity normally offered for sale. Food must be available to all classes and races of the public.

(h) Interference by unauthorised persons of free movement of all persons on the public highways.

(i) Failure to obey or refusal to obey any orders issued by the Military Administration.

9. IN AMPLIFICATION OF PARA 8 (c)

Sabotage includes the malicious destruction of public or private property operated for the public benefit or for use by the military administration. Persons found guilty of this crime are liable to such punishment including death as the courts may decide.

Persons caught in the act of sabotage are liable to be shot.

10. IN AMPLIFICATION OF PARA 8 (D)

Looting—looting includes the removal of any private property from any place without the written consent of the owner freely given and countersigned by the A.M.A. The ownership of all public and private property formerly in the hands of the Japanese is vested in the Allied Military Administration and no transfer of such property by the Japanese made before or after this notice is valid.

When there is doubt as to ownership my decision is to be accepted. The punishment for looting may include DEATH. Persons caught in the act of looting are liable to be shot.

IN AMPLIFICATION OF PARA 8 (E)

Bearing of arms: The only persons allowed to bear arms in the area described in para 5 are members of the Allied Military forces and Regular uniformed Police.

The bearing of arms includes carrying or possession of guns, rifles, swords, daggers, spears, bombs, hand-grenades, or light or heavy automatic firearms of any kind.

Persons seen bearing arms henceforth are liable to be shot.

Persons bearing arms and refusing to deliver them on demand to the Allied Forces are liable to be shot or on arrest to such penalty, including DEATH, as the courts may decide.

II. RIOTING AND DISORDER

All forms of rioting and disorder are forbidden. It is an offence to call meetings political or otherwise to incite disorder or which in themselves become disorderly.

Signed D. C. HAWTHORN,

Major General,

Commander Allied Land Forces Java, Madura, Bali, Lombok.

October 13th 1945.

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