

¶The future of a rich region.

MALAYSIA UNDER THREE FLAGS

LINKING Asia with Australasia lies Malaysia, one of the wealthiest areas of the earth and today also one of the most strategic. Here live about 85,000,000 people, of whom roughly 75,000,000 may be classed as Malays, under the flags of the United States, Holland, and Great Britain. Except for Java, Malaysia is sparsely settled. In the Philippines, for example, only one-fourth of the arable land is cultivated, while in terms of food production the islands are capable of sustaining a larger population than that of Japan on the same standard of living and similarly intensive cultivation. British Malaya, the mainland part of Malaysia, which extends from Singapore to the Siamese border, is even more sparsely populated than the Philippines, but its vast wealth is more mineral than agricultural.

If we take Malaysia as a whole, the natural resources are almost fabulous. Except in coal, tungsten and antimony, there is more mineral wealth than in all China, Manchoukuo and Japan combined. Iron is not extensive, but the Philippines alone have more than all China. British Borneo and the Nether-

lands Indies contain some of the richest oil deposits in the world.

Alone among Asiatic peoples, the Malays never developed either a nation or a civilization of very high order. The Filipinos apparently achieved some sort of alphabet, but whether it was invented or borrowed is not known, for all their pre-conquest culture was ruthlessly destroyed by the Spanish.

Invasion, immigration, conquest and close contact with Australasia have all left their impress on both the blood and the culture of the Malays. Probably not more than half of them are racially pure.

Malaysia is polyglot in culture and blood, but all the Malays have much in common. In attitude toward life, they tend to be kindly, smiling, happy-go-lucky, preferring leisure to more tangible things. They never make good coolies; for they won't work that hard.

A survey of a typical rice region in the Philippines, made a few years ago, showed that the average peasant spent only seven hundred and five hours a year working on his farm and about five hundred hours a year in other work, such as fishing—or a total of less than three

hours and a half a day. A Chinese under similar climatic conditions would average not less than ten hours a day and probably more.

Nor do the Malays show much aptitude for business. Where competition is on an equal basis, as in the Philippines, most big business is in foreign or mestizo hands, while small business throughout all Malaysia is largely carried on by the Chinese, with Japanese and Arab merchants also very prevalent.

Another striking difference between the Malays and other Asiatics is their social democracy on the basis of a pronounced sex equality. The Balinese are Hindus in religion, but they never adopted a caste system or the Hindu attitude toward women. Veils are all but unknown among the Mohammedans. Few of the Filipinos have ever adopted the Spanish Catholic traditions of cloisters and chaperons for maidens. Regardless of religion, there is little Puritanism or prudery, and men and women work and play together in equality that long antedated and almost approaches the apogee of the most advanced western feminism.

Love, gambling, and music are the principal pastimes; gambling is the worst vice. The Malays rarely drink to excess, and although both the Dutch

and British maintain opium monopolies, only the Chinese patronize them to any appreciable extent.

Under the flag of the United States, the Filipinos were loosed from the blighting bondage of Spain and endowed with a democratic colonial administration that has enabled them to become the freest and most advanced people *en masse* that exist east of Suez. I make this statement flatly, without exception. In one item alone—literacy—the Japanese are probably somewhat ahead, but in all else—especially liberty and the standard of living—the *mass of the Filipinos are much better off than the masses of Japan*, while comparison with any other Asiatic country would yield fantastic contrast.

On the far other hand, the natives of the Netherlands Indies are the most ruthlessly exploited of any Asiatic peoples excepting possibly the Koreans. The natives of British Malaysia stand between these two extremes.

The American record in the Philippines will probably long stand unique in the annals of imperialism. In many respects it is certainly something to be proud of, but lest Americans be too cocky it is well to remember the conditions under which the islands were seized. They were only incidental to a war

for ousting Spain from Latin America, where the record of the United States has often been none too savory. And they were acquired in an outburst of imperialism that was far more emotional than economic; for American capitalists had too much opportunity in the yet relatively undeveloped United States and in Latin America to take much interest in a colony on the other side of the world. Few Americans ever settled in the Philippines, only about twelve thousand at the peak in 1912; and not more than about \$50,000,000 of American capital was ever invested there, mostly by small entrepreneurs in the wake of the American occupation. Today there are less than two hundred American firms in the Philippines employing less than one thousand Americans at a total annual salary of approximately \$3,500,000!

The worst aspect of American rule has been the color line drawn by most Americans. But, save in such places as the Army and Navy Club of Manila, the Filipinos have never been Jim Crowed. And certainly there was vast improvement from Spanish times when the conquerors ruled, as Governor Izquierdo (1871-1873) put it, "with a crucifix in one hand and a sword in the other." Nor were there ever any *de fac-*

to limitations imposed upon Filipino agitation for national independence. Whatever else any Filipino school child ever learned in his little palm-leafed schoolhouse, he found out and remembered that Patrick Henry had proclaimed, "Give me liberty or give me death."

Dutch colonial policy, in contrast, may be most charitably described as stern paternalism. Every effort is made to keep the natives in their place—a very inferior place. There is practically no education for them; ninety-seven per cent are illiterate in any and all languages. They are even discouraged from learning spoken Dutch, all the Dutch learning Malay instead. Missionary work is severely limited. Proselyting is forbidden; the missionaries can conduct schools and convert a native who asks to be converted, but there must be no evangelical activities.

An equally profound aspect of Dutch policy is that embodied in the rule that no white man can touch a native against the native's will, and this principle is rigidly enforced. Nor is there any police brutality, at least publicly. In many areas, Dutch rule is indirect, through native sultans, and both their rapacity and Islamic law are somewhat mitigated by Queen Wilhelmina's raj. For instance, when a Sumatran *mullah*, act-

ing as judge, sentenced a thief to pay back what he had stolen and have his right hand amputated, the Dutch official who watched the proceedings let the sentence sink in well before he spoke; then, pointing to a picture of Wilhelmina, he said, "Her Majesty, the Queen, does not want any of her children mutilated, so your hand will be saved by her grace, but you must pay back what you have stolen and then work a month on the public highways."

Since the Dutch are much freer from color prejudice than British or Americans, there has always been more interracial marriage in the Netherlands Indies than in the Philippines or British Malaya, and Eurasians springing from Holland on the paternal side enjoy a European status. There are native status, European status, Eurasian status, Chinese status and so on, in the Dutch set-up of *divide et impera*, and particularly in filling government positions these are as rigid as caste divisions could be.

I think there is not a trace of democracy in the Dutch colonial government. The Governor-General, appointed directly by the Queen, rules with the aid of a council of five, all trained bureaucrats whom he appoints with the consent of The Hague. There is one safe native in this quintet. The

Volksraad, consisting of about sixty members, the majority of whom are natives, has no power whatsoever; but even so the government has the right to appoint all the members, and, although in practice recognized political parties are allowed representatives, there are always enough official appointees to assure the government a majority.

No civil liberties exist for natives or foreigners; Dutch no less than non-Dutch may be deported for disagreement with the ruling oligarchy. The Governor-General has the right to ban any political organization or newspaper by executive order, and a complete ban on all communications may be similarly imposed.

By way of comparison, a Filipino gets about twice as much for a nine-hour day as a Javanese for a ten-hour day. Neither will work unduly hard.

Such is the Dutch colonial sway that many observers have viewed as a model of imperialism. For many decades, it probably was the most profitable venture in imperialism in all history.

Meanwhile Japan has been penetrating the Indies more and more through both trade and propaganda. And the natives have been more and more kicking over the traces, protesting against the tax on native-pro-

duced rubber, objecting to the import quotas whereby cheap Japanese goods, especially textiles, are restricted, and demanding a new deal politically and economically.

In vivid contrast, Japan's imperialistic rampage has strengthened the American hold on the Philippines—whether the United States wants to keep them or not. Now that the Filipinos are scheduled to become independent, they definitely don't want to be because of fear of Japan: that is the consensus of all Filipino opinion I obtained in a tour of the islands from Manila to Jolo. In public remarks, President Quezon may be cited to the contrary; but down in his heart he, too, would probably prefer an indefinite continuation of the present quasi-dominion status of the islands under the American flag.

British imperialists continue to think that the Tydings-McDuffie Act is not to be taken entirely seriously. At least they hope not, for besides British Malaya they are tacitly committed to defend the Netherlands Indies (in which they have had equal commercial rights with the Dutch since the beginning of Holland's rule), and American aid might be vital for this. The British have been exceedingly fortunate in Malaya. The greatest wealth

from the viewpoint of imperialistic exploitation is in tin, with rubber second.

To one who journeys from Batavia to Singapore, the differences between the Dutch and the British in empire-building show up glaringly. There is no "European status," "native status," "Chinese status," in Singapore. There is, of course, the usual British imperialistic snobbery, but this is a social and not a legal matter. And, however snobbish a British judge may be, he is usually quite impartial when he dons his wig—which is the most impressive aspect of British rule to "heathen breeds without the law."

After the Netherlands Indies, British Malaya seems a haven of liberty. There are, to be sure, more restrictions on civil liberties than in England—or the Philippines—but this is the imperialistic "middle way."

Unlike both the Dutch and the Americans, the British have never either discouraged or encouraged the Malays to become westernized. Considerable English educational facilities are provided, and the Malays can take them or let them alone. For the most part, at least compared to the Filipinos, they let them alone.

Unfortunately for the unity of Malaysia against the Jap-

anese, the Dutch hold the largest link, but there seems to be no doubt that both the Filipinos and British Malays stand firm and loyal under the flags that now fly over them.—
Wilbur Burton, condensed from Asia.

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The Stars Tell You

WOMEN will be interested in the following tips given by the screen's leading Glamour Girls:

BETTE DAVIS: *Develop a strong personality* by constant study and observation. Watch other girls who seem to be popular, and try to incorporate some of their qualities, without making it too apparent.

JOAN BENNETT: *Be a good listener.* This is an old rule, but it still holds true. Every man likes to talk, especially about himself. Encourage this, and you'll find yourself surrounded by swains.

GLENDA FARRELL: *Cultivate wisecracks.* Give as good as you receive. The majority of men enjoy swapping *bon mots*; so the more you're able to pass out, without becoming the objectionable life-of-the-party, the more popular you'll be.

JEANETTE MACDONALD: *Be natural.* Nothing is so revolting to a man as a girl who is constantly trying to put on an "act." If you're known as being sincere—always yourself—you won't want for friends of the opposite sex.

SONJA HENIE: *Smile, and be friendly.* A man always appreciates a girl who can be depended upon to cheer him up. One girl with a smile is worth a dozen with frowns.

CAROLE LOMBARD: *Be a good sport.* Be alive, and ready for the beach, the theatre, movies, dancing. Don't selfishly insist upon doing only what you prefer.—*Parade.*