Chapter IV

SELF-GOVERNMENT TO INDEPENDENCE

Although the aim of British colonial policy was to promote self-government and eventual independence within the Commonwealth, the Gold Coast and the Federation of Malaya were the only two British territories which achieved independence (in 1957) under the Conservative administration between 1951-57. Both the territories were free from White settler problem, unlike Kenya, and special factors existed in each case for their early independence. In fact, the Gold Coast was already enjoying a degree of self-government since February 1951 under the Coussey Constitution. But it had the longest warm up period -- of full six years -- of internal self-government before actual independence. Malaya's independence was a part of the process which had begun with the independence of India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon, although in the beginning, when the Conservatives took over, it appeared that Malaya might not get independence early and that the country might be lost to the Communists which claimed to be fighting then against the "British imperialists". In Malaya, Dato Onn, the Chinese leader, then went to the extent of saying that Churchill had an excellent opportunity in Malaya to preside over the unification of the Empire. However, the Conservatives were caught both in

1 The Times, 5 December 1951.
the Gold Coast and Malaya, under the circumstances, to leave the control of these two territories -- one on the West Coast of Africa and other in South-East Asia -- and retain goodwill and influence which was vital to British interests.

(A) FROM THE GOLD COAST TO GHANA

Background

The Legend that West Africa was the white man's grave saved the Gold Coast from the multi-racial problems that beset Kenya. In the Gold Coast, the British policy was to discourage white settlement as the region had always been dangerously unhealthy for whites. In 1901, after the last Ashanti war, Britain assumed full responsibility for the Government of the Gold Coast and its hinterland bringing into one unit the coastal region known as the Colony, Ashanti and the Northern Territories. British Togoland came under British administration as Trust territory after the Second World War. Thus, in technical terms, the Gold Coast was a "multiple dependency" of only 91,690 square miles on the West Coast of Africa, with total population 4,118,450 according the 1948 census.

There has been an ancient rivalry between the Ashanti of

2 British seafarers used to call it the Coast of Dead Ned.

3 F.M. Bourret, Ghana: The Road to Independence 1919-1957 (London, 1960), p. 2. In 1957, the estimated population was 4,763,000.
the interior and the Fanti peoples of the coast - the Colony. Historically, the Ashantis are a proud and cruel people who have always fended with the coastal tribes. They are virile and disciplined peoples, reared strictly in their traditions, bound together by loyalty to the Ashantehene as head of the Ashanti confederacy and by the mystic symbolism of the Golden Stool: the Ashanti's throne. Those who swear the oath, undertake to lay down their lives rather than admit defeat. Economically, Ashanti is the wealthiest section of the Gold Coast because it produces half of the country's cocoa, the export that makes the Gold Coast extremely wealthy, and therefore, after Malaya, the richest of all the British colonial territories.

Until 1946, the main regions - the Colony, Ashanti and the Protectorate of the Northern Territories - of the Gold Coast were being administered by a separate Chief Commissioner.

5 The Scotsman, 9 November 1954; also The Times, 16 February 1955.
7 Its other products include bauxite, diamonds, gold etc. However, the Northern Territories was poor and therefore not a viable unit on its own.
under the executive authority of the Governor. The Legislative Council had no jurisdiction beyond the Colony. It also did not contain the representatives of the other two regions. But with the spread of education and growth of political consciousness which received added impetus from the war and the Allied propaganda, the political elite in the Colony - the native rulers and the educated class of the coastal towns - were anxious and impatient to have a say in the affairs of the territories. In the light of this development, a re-examination of the Gold Coast Constitution was undertaken and new "reformed" Constitution introduced by the then Governor, Sir Alan Burns.

The "Burns' Constitution" of 1946 introduced unofficial majority for the first time into the Gold Coast Legislative Council which was now to consist of 30 members besides the Governor as President, viz., six official members (European), six nominated unofficial members (European or African), thirteen African elected by the Council of Chiefs and five directly elected by the Urban electorates. It, thus, effected the fusion of Ashanti and the Colony and anticipated eventual representation of the Northern Territories in a common Central Legislature.

---

8 Two from Accra, and one each from Cape Coast, Sekondi - Takoradi and Kumasi.
The "reformed" Constitution, however, did not satisfy the more vocal sections of the Colony, and two years later, there were serious political disturbances in the larger towns of the Colony. In its report, the Watson Commission which enquired into the disturbances, pointed out that the concession of African majority, in the absence of real political power, provided no outlet for a people eagerly emerging into political consciousness. On the other hand, it provided a powerful stimulant for political discontent. Also, there was no attempt to democratise the native authorities. The Commission, therefore, viewed the 1946 Constitution as "outmoded at birth" and recommended complete overhaul and reform of the Gold Coast constitutional set-up in which African of ability would be given an opportunity to help to govern the country.

This led to the appointment of another committee of Enquiry, composed entirely of local inhabitants, under Justice Coussey, an African Judge, to examine the proposals for constitutional reform contained in the Report of the Watson Commission and consider to the extent to which they could be accepted and manner in which they be implemented. In 1949, the Coussey Committee came out with a detailed study and recommended a new

Constitution to make the Gold Coast a self-governing colony. Their recommendations included the abolition of the existing Legislative and Executive Councils and their substitution by a Legislature, predominantly elected and chosen on the basis of geographical electoral constituencies and a new Executive Council, composed mainly of elected Africans and collectively responsible to the Assembly. The recommendations of the Coussey Committee were, on the whole, accepted by the British Government. But there were few important reservations. The Colonial Secretary observed that the recommendations about the collective responsibility of the Executive Council to the Legislature were both inexpedient and illogical. He also felt as premature and undesirable the proposal for a Leader of the House, elected by the Assembly, and the Executive Council to resign collectively on a two-thirds vote of no confidence in the Leader.

Later in January 1951, on the basis of recommendations of the "Coussey Committee" and the Colonial Secretary's comments, a new Constitution - known as the Coussey Constitution - was framed which put the Gold Coast on the road to

11 Col. No. 248/1949, Gold Coast: Report to His Excellency the Governor by the Committee on Constitutional Reform.

self-government and ahead of all British territories in Africa. It widened the electorate and established a Legislative Assembly, composed of three British officials who were ex-officio members of the Executive Council, six special members chosen viz., three each by the Chambers of Commerce and the Chambers of Mines (but only two had voting rights), 75 elected African members - 37 from the Gold Coast Colony, 19 from Ashanti, and 13 from the Northern Territories. The Executive Council consisted of three Englishmen (the Attorney General, Colonial Secretary and the Financial Secretary) and eight Africans. The Council was the main policy-making body in the Gold Coast and its members enjoyed the status of Ministers, appointed by the Governor subject to favourable resolution by the Assembly. These Ministers had a dual responsibility: they were directly responsible to the Governor for the day-to-day policy and administration of the departments under their charge; and also, they were answerable to the Legislative Assembly individually and not collectively. The Leader of the Government Business who was styled as Prime Minister, did not have authority over his colleagues and the most important departments were in the charge of the official members. Except in

13 The new Legislature represented, for the first time, the whole country. In earlier Constitutional Reform, there were no representatives from the Northern Territories.
cases of urgent necessity, the Governor was not supposed to use his powers without the consent of the Executive Council, or failing this, without reference to the Secretary of State in London.

The Conservative Approach

When the Conservatives came to power, the Gold Coast had the Convention People's Party's Government formed duly within the limits of Coussey Constitution. The leader of the CPP, Dr Nkrumah, after the February 1951 General Election, was released from the prison and had become the first Leader of the Government Business. He had stated that his party would give the "bogus and fraudulent" Constitution a trial. The Executive Council, then, included, besides the three ex-officio Members, Dr Nkrumah and five other CPP Ministers, with an Ashanti Minister of Local Government, and a Northern Territories Minister without Portfolio. In a House of 80, the CPP had 34 members and in the absence of other organized blocs, it was enough to dominate the business of the House.

The CPP leaders, however, were pledged to the promise of "Self-government Now", self-government being defined as Dominion status within the British Commonwealth, and clearly saw its greatest strength not in the "Cabinet" of the Legislative

---

14 The CPP was returned to power in February 1951 election on a programme of "Self-government Now".
Assembly but in the mass enthusiasm of crowds outside. The most important problem facing them in 1952 was one of tactics - to decide how and when to move forward to the goal they had set. They had stressed that they did not wish to indulge in the tactics of a smash-and-grab raid, but many in the rank and file talked impatiently of further action. As one of them wrote to a party newspaper: "The demos may not continue to wait patiently and indefinitely for the handing over of the self-government to which they pinned their faith as a panacea for their economic woes."

On 5 March 1952, the Colonial Secretary, Lyttelton, informed the Commons that in the light of the working of the Cousse Constitution and on the advice of the Governor, Her Majesty's Government had decided that the Leader of Government Business in the Legislative Assembly should disappear from the Constitution and that the office of the Prime Minister should be formally recognized. The effect of the new amendment would be that the Governor would consult the Prime Minister.

Asa Briggs, "Politics in the Gold Coast", Manchester Guardian, 20 February 1952. Briggs said: "It is certain that whatever tactics are employed in 1952 there will be no politics of stand-still in the Gold Coast. All issues, from housing to the price of cocoa, will be related to the central problem of constitutional advance."

before submitting to the Assembly the names of other Ministers for the inclusion in the Executive Council -- or Cabinet as it would apparently now be styled -- and before allocating them portfolios. The Prime Minister would rank in Cabinet immediately after the Governor or officer administering the Government as the case might be, and before any of the three ex-officio Ministers whose position in other respects would remain unchanged. The amendments to the constitutional instruments necessary to give effect to these changes were made on 10 March 1952 when Dr Nkrumah, the leader of the CPP, became the first Prime Minister of the Gold Coast.

According to the Ashanti Pioneer, although this was a step forward in the Gold Coast march towards self-government, in essence, it was seen as two steps backward as it brought "the Gold Coast Prime Minister nearer to the Colonial Office in London than to the suffering masses in the Gold Coast."

Also, by inserting him between the Governor and the three ex-officio Members whose position remained unchanged, the Prime Minister's position, it said, looked "like a shepherd separated from his flock by imperialist wolves", thereby making him helpless, especially at supreme crisis. But according to the New York Times the British Colonial Office was following "curious

---

17 Editorial, Ashanti Pioneer (Kumasi), 7 March 1952.
18 The New York Times (16 May 1952) said: "The essential picture is that self-government is being given to the (footnote contd....)
ad lib sort of policy" and decided "not only to give concessions to the African, but actually to fling concessions at him (Dr Nkrumah)." It further said that the policy in the Gold Coast was the very opposite of the British policy elsewhere, but there "are long reasons for it and the immense, seeming contradiction of it does not worry Britain."

Dr Nkrumah's appointment as Prime Minister did not carry with it any further measure of power, and the Gold Coast people in general and the CPP in particular were pressing for further reforms in the Constitution. And when Lyttelton visited the Gold Coast in June 1952, Dr Nkrumah took the opportunity to discuss the matter with him. Lyttelton also met the leaders of other principal political parties. Referring to the broad issue of self-government for the Gold Coast, Lyttelton, in a broadcast speech on his tour to West Africa, said: "Even in West Africa, there is a problem of timing which we and those Africans who are beginning to share our responsibilities with us in increasing measure must constantly weigh. Perhaps the biggest problem at the moment is to get this question of timing out of local politics so that those Africans who are

(previous footnote contd.)

Africans...simply because the British decided after the troubles of 1950 (rioting bloodshed in 1948 and again in 1950) that it was either a White retreat or civil war. They reckoned that they could not shoot, either morally or practically."
charged with some of the responsibilities and so prove the 19 fitness of Africans to undertake them." However, it was agreed, after the Prime Minister and other Representative Ministers had expressed their wish for self-government within the Commonwealth, by the Colonial Secretary that when proposals for constitutional change had been formulated by the Gold Coast Government after consultation with the chiefs and people of the Gold Coast, they would be examined and discussed between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of the Gold Coast.

On 16 October 1952, Dr Nkrumah made a statement in the Legislative Assembly on behalf of the Gold Coast Government in which he recalled Lyttelton's statement of the previous June and went on to draw attention to certain features of the then Constitution whose amendments might be considered and to set out the implications of each possible change. He referred to the position of the three ex-officio Ministers, the procedure for the appointment of the Prime Minister and other Representative Ministers and for the assignment of portfolios, and the constitution of the Legislature and wondered whether British constitutional practice could be followed in these

19 Ahaanti Pioneer, 9 August 1952.

matters. But he said it was for the chiefs and the people of the Gold Coast to consider, in the light of his statement, what changes were desirable and that the chiefs' councils and the political parties should submit their suggestions in writing to enable the Government to state its views in a White Paper for debate in the Assembly at its meeting in 21 July 1953.

The Gold Coast Government Proposals for Constitutional Reform

After studying the views submitted by political parties, chiefs' councils and other interested bodies in response to the request made by Dr Nkrumah in October 1952, the Gold Coast Government published on 19 June 1953 a White Paper containing its own proposals for constitutional reform together with those of the important groups which had submitted reports. These proposals were in respect of "the limited transitional period" so that necessary arrangements could be made for independence.

The main proposals were that the posts of the three ex-officio Ministers should be abolished, the portfolios of Finance and Justice being taken by the Representative Ministers.

21 Ibid., para. 72, pp. 13-14; see also The (Gold Coast) Government's Proposals for Constitutional Reform (Accra, 1953), Appendix "A" - Statement made by the Prime Minister in the Legislative Assembly on the 16th October 1952 on Constitutional Reforms.

22 The (Gold Coast) Government's Proposals for Constitutional Reform (Accra, 1953).
thus rounding off the Cabinet responsibility and the Governor, assisted by a Deputy, retaining responsibility for Defence, External Affairs and Togoland under United Kingdom Trusteeship. The Prime Minister would normally preside over the Cabinet, which would be wholly representative and the constitutional conventions of the United Kingdom would be followed in the appointment and resignation of the Prime Minister and the acceptance of his advice on other ministerial appointments.

It was proposed that the Legislative Assembly should be composed entirely of members chosen by direct election on the basis of universal adult suffrage but details to be worked out by a Commission of Inquiry. The Governor's reserved powers would be retained and he would remain responsible for the police in matters affecting internal security and the maintenance of public order, and share responsibilities for public services with an African Minister. The White Paper also contained requests for the transfer of Gold Coast affairs to the Commonwealth Relations Office and for a declaration by Her Majesty's Government recognizing the existence of a general demand in the Gold Coast for self-government within the Commonwealth and expressing readiness to introduce an Act of Independence into Parliament. The proposal put forward by the Territorial Councils for a second chamber found little support in the Government circle. And, in the following month, the White Paper was approved by the Legislative Assembly without
a division with a motion calling for full independence at an early date.

On 21 October 1953, Lyttelton informed the Commons that except for the suggestion that the affairs of the Gold Coast should be dealt with by the Commonwealth Relations Office, the proposals of the Gold Coast Government taken as a whole were, in broad principle, acceptable to Her Majesty's Government, although there were a few points which might not prove acceptable or required clarification.

As contemplated in the White Paper, a Commission of Enquiry into Representational and Electoral Reform, under Justice Van Lare, was appointed, on 1 August 1953, to make recommendations on the detailed arrangements for the proposed new Legislative Assembly. Its report, published in September 1953, recommended that the Assembly should consist of 104 members directly elected from single-member constituencies. In November 1953 its recommendations were approved by the Legislative Assembly and later embodied in the Electoral Provisions Ordinance.

On 28 April 1954, Henry Hopkinson, Minister of State for

23 518 H.C. Deb. 5s. cols. 1943–4, 21 October 1953, Oral Answer, Lyttelton.

Colonial Affairs, announced in the Commons that the exchanges of despatches on constitutional reform with the Gold Coast Government had been successfully completed and an agreement reached on a new constitution for the Gold Coast. The agreed draft of new constitutional instruments provided for an enlarged Legislative Assembly, chosen entirely by direct election, and a Cabinet composed of Ministers drawn from the Assembly, which, as the principal instrument of policy, would be responsible for the internal self-government of the country, and which would normally be presided over by the Prime Minister instead of the Governor. The Governor would act in the appointment and dismissal of Ministers, in accordance with the British constitutional convention, and allocation of portfolios be the sole responsibility of the Prime Minister. The Governor would retain reserve powers and remain responsible for external affairs, the trusteeship territory of Togoland, defence and certain matters concerning the police. In discharging these responsibilities, the Governor was to be advised by a special Committee of which the Prime Minister, the Minister of Interior, and other Minister would be members. The Gold Coast was to

25 526 H.C. Deb. 5s. cols. 1623-7, 28 April 1954, Henry Hopkinson.

26 These were published as Colonial No. 302/1954, Despatches on the Gold Coast Government's Proposals for Constitutional Reform exchanged between the Secretary of State for the Colonies and H.E. the Governor, 24 August 1953 to 15 April 1954.
continue to have only one chamber -- the Legislative Assembly -- which would now be wholly directly elected. The existing two-stage elections in the rural areas were abolished and the six special representatives of commerce and mining disappeared. A Judicial Service Commission would be appointed to advise on, and later be responsible for, judicial appointments other than that of Chief Justice. For the time being, the Governor would remain responsible for the Public Service, but later, the Public Service Commission was to assume responsibility. To preserve the confidence of overseas investors, the Gold Coast Government had proposed that, although they had no plans for nationalising industry, provision should be made in the constitution guaranteeing fair compensation, should a successor Government ever consider an act of nationalisation essential. All these changes, the Minister of State said, would be made in time for the elections to be held in June. Under these changes, the powers retained by Her Majesty's Government were the minimum which they must retain, so long as they had any responsibility for the Gold Coast. The changes must be regarded "as the last stage before the Gold Coast assumes full responsibility for its own affairs." He explained that the grant of such responsibility within the Commonwealth was a matter for the United Kingdom Government and Parliament; at the appropriate time the British Government would be prepared "to take such steps as may be necessary for that purpose." Full membership of the Commonwealth, however, was a different matter and, as had been made
clear by the Labour Government and the present Government, "would be a matter for consultation between all existing members of the Commonwealth." He confirmed that under the new Constitution, the Gold Coast affairs would still remain under the Colonial Office.

Later, on 29 April 1954, the Gold Coast (Constitution) Order-in-Council, 1954, was made and, after Parliament's approval, came into operation, other than Part II and Sections 56, 63 and 70, on 5 May 1954. Part II and Section 70 came into operation on 18 June 1954, and sections 56 and 63 were to come into effect on 31 July 1955.

The 1954 Gold Coast General Election

Elections, under the new Constitution, were held in the Northern Territories on 10 and 15 June, and elsewhere in the Gold Coast and in Togoland, under the United Kingdom administration, on 15 June 1954. This was the first time, under the Conservative administration, that the Gold Coast people elected all members of the Assembly directly, since the 1951 Constitution had provided for indirect election in the Northern Territories and in the rural areas of the Colony and Ashanti. The result was the victory of the CPP which won 71 seats out of 104 and Dr Nkrumah formed the first of all-African Cabinet of

the Gold Coast on 21 June 1954. The first session of the Legislative Assembly was opened by the Governor on 29 July 1954, when Sir Emmanuel Quist was elected Speaker. The Northern People's Party (the NPP) whose aim was to safeguard Northern culture and secure for the North "a progressively increasing share in the administrative and other services of the country", with 12 seats, was recognized as the official opposition party and S.D. Dombo, Leader of the NPP, became the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly.

The Birth of the National Liberation Movement

While the Gold Coast embarked, under the 1954 Constitution, on virtually full internal self-government which, in turn, was their gate to independence, there emerged the National Liberation Movement (the NLM), in September 1954, in the Ashanti Province, where a great part of the world's cocoa was then produced. It originated as a result of the CPP Government's decision to raise the export duty on cocoa, while at the same time to freeze the price paid to the farmer even

---

23 West Africa (London), 8 and 15 May 1954. One of the NPP members in the Assembly was reported as saying "we are proud of our Chiefs and these CPP boys show them no respect." Quoted by David E. Apter, in Gold Coast in Transition (Princeton, New Jersey, U.S.A., 1955), p. 228.

though the world price was sharply increasing. This created discontent among cocoa farmers in Ashanti who were unwilling to let a government controlled by Fanti people of the coast to regulate their economic policy. The movement, soon, came up with the demand of a federal form of government which, they thought, would give them autonomy and proper representation to the tribal-national aspirations of the different parts of the Gold Coast with a considerable control over their finances. It also demanded a bicameral legislature to represent the chiefs and more conservative members of the community so that they could exercise more influence in the national government. Ashantis, though they numbered only one-fifth of the people of the Gold Coast, were not alone in backing the NIM. It had some support in the Northern Territories and Togoland to whom the idea of regional autonomy was attractive.

30 F. M. Bourret, n. 3, p. 187.

31 The Observer (19 September 1954) reported the Federal movement being launched on 18 September 1954 with the beating of drums in Kumasi, the capital of Ashanti.

32 F. M. Bourret, n. 3, pp. 187-8; See also The Observer, 19 September 1954 and The Star (Johannesburg), 2 November 1954. The Scotsman (Edinburgh) (9 November 1954) said: "Not all the people of Ashanti are behind their chiefs in this struggle for federation. Many of them are bitter opponents of their chiefs -- especially the cocoa farmers. They remember how the chiefs treated them in the days before their powers were curbed by Dr Nkrumah's nationalist party. But the average Ashanti will be sorely divided, if he is ever forced to choose between traditional tribal authority and his new God, Dr Nkrumah."
Thus, with the birth of NLM the first period of administration lasting from 1961 to 1954 -- a period of honeymoon -- ended and second period from 1954 to 1957 -- a period of defections and opposition -- began.

In October 1954, the Ashantehene -- the Head of the Ashanti people -- who had then received wide support throughout Ashanti, fifty paramount and divisional chiefs of the Ashanteman Council signed a petition to the Queen of England asking for a Commission of enquiry into the question of a federal form of government for the Gold Coast. While the petition was under consideration of the British Government, Dr Nkrumah invited the NLM and the Ashanteman Council, in December 1954, to confer on the question and when this was rejected by them, he, in a broadcast later in the month, clarified his Government's attitude to the demand. He argued that federation was not suited to the needs of the Gold Coast and recalled that the existing Constitution was drawn up in accordance with the wishes of the Gold Coast people after exhaustive examination of views from all parts of the country, that its principles were unanimously

33 The Ashanteman Council, subject to certain powers vested in the Governor, was the highest authority in Ashanti on customary law, with the jurisdiction on matters relating to it and to the position of chiefs.

34 This claim was refuted by the NLM. In its memorandum to the Ashanteman Council on 19 October 1954, it observed: "The 'hush hush' attitude of the Government to the farmers' reaction to the Cocoa Duty and Development Fund

(footnote contd....)
supported in the Legislative Assembly, and that during all this
time, no mention was made of a federal form of government. He
left the way open, however, for discussions with the Ashanteman
Council and the NLM.

In his reply in January 1955, the new Colonial Secretary,
Lennox-Boyd, indicated that he was unable to advise Her Majesty
to grant the petition. He observed that the "use of an outside
body like a Royal Commission to weigh the various points of
view could only be taken to mean that the people of the Gold
Coast were unable to settle their own affairs" and that a
failure to resolve the question peacefully among themselves
would necessarily retard their progress towards independence.
However, he expressed the hope that discussions on the matter
could proceed peacefully within the Gold Coast.

Meanwhile, there were violent clashes in and around Kumasi

(previous footnote contd.)

Ordinance is only one out of the many instances of the
dictatorial tendencies of the present Government, which,
if not checked, will drive the new and sovereign Gold
Coast into a Communist State. The Ashanteman Council
would by no means have forgotten the strange manner in
which the present constitution was framed..."
Ashanti Pioneer, 4 March 1955.

35 The Making of Ghana (Central Office of Information,
36 Gold Coast Weekly Review (Accra), 12 January 1955.
between the supporters of the NLM and the CPP. In reply to Dr Nkrumah's earlier offer, the Ashanti leaders had stated that the setting up of a Regional Council was unacceptable to them and that they were prepared only to discuss with the Government what form of federal government would best suit a self-governing Gold Coast. They asked that the Government should call for a constituent assembly whose terms of reference should be to draw up a federal constitution to suit the needs of the Gold Coast in general, and the autonomous regions in particular. Dr Nkrumah wrote to the Ashanti leaders noting that the different views expressed were "not irreconcilable" and renewed the invitation to a discussion.

In April 1955 the Gold Coast Government made another attempt to settle the dispute between the NLM and the Government Party, the CPP by appointing a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly to consider the question of a federal system of government and of a second chamber. Opposition members refused to serve on the Committee. Nevertheless, it produced a report tabled in July and debated in August, which recommended that the then unitary system of government should be retained, that the Government should consider establishing

---

38 537 H.C. Deb. 5s. cols. 56-57, 16 February 1955, Written Answer, Lennox-Boyd; See also, Lennox-Boyd's correction in 538 H.C. Deb. 5s. col. 424, 9 March 1955, Oral Answer, Lennox-Boyd.
regional bodies to ensure full consultation and collaboration between itself and the regions in development planning, and that the question of a Second Chamber should be deferred. Opposition members took no part in the debate.

**Sir Frederick Bourne's Mission**

Following the Select Committee's report and at the request of the Gold Coast Government, Lennox-Boyd appointed Sir Frederick Bourne, a constitutional expert, to advise the Gold Coast Government and all parties on the devolution of powers. He arrived in the Gold Coast on 26 September 1955. The NLM and the Ashanteman Council did not take part in any of the consultations, as the NLM leaders felt that, in view of the passage of the Bill, shortly after Bourne's arrival, requiring lesser chiefs to appeal to the Governor-in-Council in traditional law disputes, rather than to the Ashanteman Council, the Government was not sincere in its offers to consider the NLM position.

---


41  F. M. Bourret, n. 3, p. 189. In a memorandum, the NLM explained that this was contrary to the purpose of Sir Frederick Bourne's mission (footnote contd....)
Meanwhile, in reply to Hester Hughes' question, on 7 December 1955, in the Commons on the constitutional position in the Gold Coast, Lennox-Boyd said that Her Majesty's Government would wish to be satisfied before full self-government could be granted to the Gold Coast, that the Constitution would be "generally acceptable throughout the country." Whatever the exact result of a general election or however a constituent assembly was composed, it seemed clear that there would still remain a substantial body of opinion behind each of the opposed views of the CPP and the NIM. It might well be "no easier then than now to reach agreement on a constitution acceptable to all." He, therefore, appealed to the Ashanti leaders to co-operate with Sir Frederick Bourne, whose whole objective was to help the people of the Gold Coast to work out a generally acceptable

(previous footnote contd.)

which was to advise on the devolution of powers. The memorandum said: "The absolute disregard of Sir Frederick's advice to the Government to withdraw the Bill convinces us that any recommendation Sir Frederick makes, which does not agree with the confused ideas of the Government, will equally be disregarded." In these circumstances, it said, the NIM stood by its proposal for a federal form of government and its view that only a constituent assembly was competent to decide on a constitution for an independent Gold Coast.

The Times, 30 November 1955.

42 547 H.C. Deb. 5s. cols. 378-9, 7 December 1955, Oral Answer, Lennox-Boyd.
plan. This policy was reaffirmed in the Commons, in reply to Fenner Brockway's question on 14 December 1955.

Commenting on this, the Evening News -- the CPP principal press organ -- said there was nothing in the statement which could be taken to imply that if a section of the people -- and, in this case, a small one -- deliberately refused to cooperate in arriving at a constitution generally acceptable to all, but rather resorted to violence and other obstructionist tactics, the British Government would refuse to grant self-government to the country. Surely, this would not be, because the British Government would not wish to see this country revolute or witness an anti-British outrage, such as had happened in some other places for which it had had responsibilities. The then position of the British Government which gave rise to this statement was understandable. In view of the fact that the issue -- whether there should be federal or unitary system of Government -- did not arise at the previous

---

43 In his reply Lennox-Boyd said that there had been no change of policy. It was still the intention of Her Majesty's Government that the Gold Coast should achieve full self-government at the earliest practicable date, but, they must first be satisfied that the form of constitution would be "generally acceptable throughout the Gold Coast." He, however, warned that the continued refusal of the Ashanti leaders to co-operate with the Bourne mission might "needlessly delay the achievement of full self-government." 

44 Evening News (Accra), 12 December 1955.
General Election, even though the CPP had the support of the majority in the country, the British Government thought that there should be an opportunity to test the opinion on this vexed question of a unitary or federal constitution for the country. When it had been possible to know what form of constitution the people wanted, the Act of Independence could be declared. And since the statement did not state that there must be a unanimous agreement on the constitution, it meant that as soon as the majority of the people had indicated their preference for a particular type of constitution, that constitution became "generally acceptable" to all within the context of the Secretary of State's statement.

On 17 December 1955 Frederick Bourne submitted his 46 Report in which he advised the Government against federation as being unsuitable for so small a country, but recommended the setting up of consultative Regional Assembly in any region where a majority of the district councils desired it. He said that the Accra region should be left as it was, and Regional Assemblies should be limited for the time being to Eastern, Western, Ashanti and Northern Territories. If Togoland joined the Gold Coast before the new Constitution was finally approved, it should be added as a region. The object of the Regional Assemblies would be to afford an effective

link between the Regions and the Central Government, removing the danger of excessive centralisation, and providing for the expression of local opinion on important matters. He made it clear that the supreme legislative power would remain at the Centre, but the Centre, in order to carry out the objects stated above, would transfer to Regions the powers and functions necessary for the purpose. The Central Ministers, thus, would have more time to consider broad issues of national policy. He did not suggest that the Regional Assemblies should have any power to raise money by taxation or other means. The proceeds of local government taxation would be entirely used in the local, urban, and district councils. On the positions of the chiefs, he suggested that no measure affecting their traditional functions or privileges should be introduced in the Legislative Assembly without first consulting them. He held that the chiefs still had an important part to play in local government and their experience should be utilised for the general good of the Regions.

Bourne’s report, however, as The Times said, did not “go nearly so far as the Opposition would like. But in a

---

46 This was the reverse of the system recommended in the NLM’s Federal Scheme, whereby the Centre’s powers were to be prescribed and all residuary powers were to rest with Units. Ibid., p. 5.

47 The Times, 28 December 1955.
field so united it may well be the proper solution" for meeting
the anxieties of the Region without burdening the Gold Coast
with an impossible federal constitution. This view was sup-
ported by the Manchester Guardian which said that, on the prac-
tical grounds of dispute, the Bourne's Report went "a good way
to meet the NLM's grievances without conceding its principle."
It further said if the CPP could modify its then stand on the
position of the chiefs, the NLM might very well emerge from its
protective shell of federalism. But it would not be easy for
Dr Nkrumah to reign in his supporters over a question on which
many of them felt strongly. Dr K. A. Busia, a prominent mem-
er of the Opposition, who then had visited Britain as their
representative, criticised the Report but in moderate manner.
He complained that the Regional Assemblies, which it recommended,
had only consultative and deliberative powers which did not meet
the case for regional autonomy. He also did not think that
the chiefs were sufficiently entrenched and blamed this on Sir
Frederick Bourne's circumscribed terms of reference which
ruled out recommendation of a Second Chamber. He called for a
"suitable national body" to determine a constitution, presum-
ably a constituent assembly.

48    Manchester Guardian, 3 January 1956.
49    Ibid.
50    The Times, 23 January 1956.
In February 1956 Dr Nkrumah invited the major political parties in the Gold Coast to discuss the Bourne's Report and related matters at the Achimota Conference. The NIM and the Ashanteman Council refused to attend the Conference on the grounds that the Government had invited bodies which did not exist and which had been created by the party in power and that no useful purpose would be served by joining the Conference where the Government had majority support. However, the Gold Coast Government went ahead with the proposed Conference which, after a month's session, adjourned on 16 March 1956. It discussed in detail the practical application of the Bourne's proposals to the Gold Coast situation and indicated its general acceptance of his report with minor modification.

The refusal of the NIM to co-operate with the Achimota Conference and continued deadlock on constitutional issues between the NIM and the Government Party, the CPP, made the Prime Minister's position more difficult. Also, this raised doubts in the people's mind whether the Conservative Government would hold back the Empire since they had then insisted that there must be "general agreement" in the Gold Coast.


before independence was granted. But, in fact, this condition was laid down almost ten years ago by a British Labour Government. It was then insisted that change in the Gold Coast should have the "substantial acceptance of the people." It was also laid down that an independent Gold Coast should "rest on the foundations of tradition and social usage that already exists." And the striking fact was that Nkrumah and his Government were in danger of being baulked at the very frontiers of freedom, because neither of these conditions, according to Cyril Dunn, then existed in the Gold Coast. Each side in the African struggle, he said, then accused Britain "of having secret objectives as perfidious as they are contradictory."

According to the CPP, London was anxious to retain its grip on this old colonial territory and was, therefore, planning a pact with Ashanti and the Northern Territories which would postpone self-government for at least ten years. On the other

---

53 Cyril Dunn, Special Correspondent, "Gold Coast Struggle for Power", The Statesman, 28 March 1956.

54 In a letter to Arthur Creech Jones, dated 9th March 1956, F. Kwaku Duah (Kumasi) pointed out that the deadlock between the CPP and the NLM could largely be attributed to the statement made by the Colonial Secretary to the effect that there must be general agreement on the constitution before an act of independence was passed. The Ashanteman Council and the NLM contended that as long as they would not meet the Government for settlement of the constitutional issues, the granting of self-government would be delayed indefinitely. He, therefore, urged that the Colonial Office should take initiative in resolving the crisis, despite the fact

(footnote contd...
hand, the NIM feared "a British scheme, not only to establish Nkrumah in power, but to keep him there, if necessary, by moving British troops into the country to quell any revolt after independence has been declared." They also felt that the Conservative Government was determined "to make Nkrumah head of an independent Guinea [sic] as quickly as possible in order to validate the arrangements they have made with him for putting Volta-River Project into operation, thus ensuring for Britain a steady supply of aluminium from sterling sources."

By this time many sections of public opinion including some of the followers of Dr Nkrumah felt that the period of preparation, based on interim constitution of 1954, should be brought to a close and that the Gold Coast ask the British for a definite date for independence. With this in view Dr Nkrumah decided to prepare a White Paper on his constitutional proposals and have it debated in the Assembly.

Accordingly, on 20 April 1956, the Gold Coast Government published a White Paper containing their own constitutional proposals.

(previous footnote contd.)

that the matter was internal affairs of the Gold Coast. Private Paper of Arthur Creech Jones, deposited in Rhodes House Library, Oxford.

55 Cyril Dunn, "Gold Coast Struggle for Power", The Shotsman, 28 March 1956.

56 Constitutional Proposals for Gold Coast Independence (Accra, 1956).
proposals for an early achievement of independence for the Gold Coast under the name 'Ghana'. The White Paper stated that the change in the status of Gold Coast could be made by certain modifications in the existing Constitution and the adoption of conventions which had come into use in the United Kingdom. It also broadly conformed with Sir Frederick Bourne's recommendations as modified by the Achimota Conference of 1956. But with the publication of these April proposals, the constitutional dispute entered a new phase. While the Ashanteman Council welcomed the independence which was no longer an issue for political strife or differences, they insisted that the form of government, whether unitary or federal, must be settled before, and not after the attainment of independence since they feared that the British departure might leave Ashanti and the Northern Territories under the control of southern politicians.

It was the Council's considered view that there should be an "agreement on the constitution followed by a general election before independence." According to The Times, it appeared then that the Council would be willing to abandon its former intransigent attitude and lift the boycott for which they were largely blamed, particularly for their boycott of the

57 The Times, 9 May 1956.
58 West Africa, 12 May 1956.
59 The Times, 9 May 1956.
Achimota Conference, and their failure to place their views before the constitutional adviser.

The Conservative Initiative

On 11 May 1956, in his statement in the Commons on the Gold Coast independence, Lennox-Boyd said that since the then Constitution was introduced, there arose the dispute within the Gold Coast about the form of Constitution which that country should have on achieving independence within the Commonwealth. Efforts had been made to bring about a reconciliation between the major parties but they had by then met with no success. It was the considered view of the Gold Coast Government that the time had then come for the Gold Coast to assume full responsibility within the Commonwealth for its own affairs. He, therefore, said that in view of the failure to resolve the constitutional dispute, the aim of the early independence of the Gold Coast within the Commonwealth could be achieved "in one way and in one way alone" and that was to demonstrate to the world that the peoples of the Gold Coast had had "a full and free opportunity to consider their Constitution and to express their views on it in a general election." He further said that if a General Election was held, Her Majesty's Government would be ready to accept a motion calling for

60 552 H.C. Deb. 5s. cols. 1557-60, 11 May 1956, Lennox-Boyd.
independence within the Commonwealth passed by a reasonable majority in a newly-elected Legislature and then to declare a firm date for this purpose.

Lennox-Boyd's announcement in the Commons of a general election in the Gold Coast as a prior condition of its independence was as "welcome" as it was "timely" as it marked a vital move to resolve a dangerous deadlock between Dr Nkrumah's Government and the opposing NLM.

The Togoland Plebiscite

A strip of Togoland bordering the Gold Coast was being administered by the United Kingdom Government as a part of the Gold Coast under the Trusteeship system of the United Nations. In 1952 the Joint Togoland Congress, a federation of six organizations, which had then been struggling for the unification of British and French Togoland and independence, sent a delegation headed by S. G. Antor to plead, before the United Nations General Assembly, the cause of Togoland unification. The result was a resolution instructing the British and French to convene a Joint Council for Togoland Affairs, representing the population of both sectors, to deliberate on the future of the divided nation. The British administering authorities did nothing to convene the Council in compliance with the

61 Daily Telegraph, 12 May 1956.
United Nations mandate. Instead, it embarked on a course "intrigue designed to buy off the Togoland independence movement and annex the territory to the Gold Coast." This charge was substantiated by the discovery of the "most secret" document, alleged to be inspired in the British Colonial Office, which was intended for the guidance of the Gold Coast politicians through whom the annexation of Togoland was to be effected. What prompted Britain to come out openly in support of the annexation of British Togoland to the Gold Coast was that by doing so, it was hoped that Britain would be able to extract the territory's mineral resources by using the port facilities in the Gold Coast territory for the purpose.

It was against this background, in June 1954, the British Government informed the United Nations that it would not be in a position to administer the Togoland Trusteeship after the Gold Coast had become independent. In response to this, the United Nations sent a special Mission which arrived in the Gold Coast on 10 August 1955 to study how best to discover the wishes of the inhabitants of Togoland under the United Kingdom administration for their political future when the Gold Coast


63 British zone of Togoland, which had promising deposits of bauxite and uranium, is cut off from sea. Ibid.
achieved full self-government. The Mission recommended the holding of a plebiscite posing two questions as to whether the inhabitants of British Togoland wished to integrate with an independent Gold Coast or continuance of the then status pending the ultimate determination of its political future. In December 1955, the General Assembly of the United Nations, at its tenth session accepted this recommendation. Accordingly, the British Government instructed the Governor to make regulations for the conduct of the plebiscite. The plebiscite was held on 9 May 1956 under the United Nations auspices and resulted in an overall majority of 53 per cent for the integration of Togoland, voting figures being 93,095 in favour of union, and 67,492 in favour of continuance of trusteeship. And when the British Government informed the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations, the results of the plebiscite recommending the annexation of British Togoland with the Gold Coast on the attainment of independence by the latter, the General Assembly of the United Nations endorsed this, and later,


65 In plebiscite, although there was a majority for the merger as a whole, there was a decided majority against it in the Southern district, where many of the large Ewe tribe would prefer to join their fellow-tribesmen in French Togoland. Manchester Guardian, 19 September 1956.
the necessary legal provisions were incorporated in the Ghana Independence Act.

The 1956 Gold Coast General Election

After the Togoland plebiscite was over, the Legislative Assembly was dissolved on 5 June 1956 and a General Election, as suggested by Lennox-Boyd, in his statement of 11 May 1956, was held in the Gold Coast on 12 and 17 July 1956. In the July election, the CPP won 71 seats in a House of 104 viz., all 44 seats in the Colony; 8 out of 21 in Ashanti; 8 out of 13 in Trans-Volta Togoland; 11 out of 26 in the Northern Territories. Of the opposition groups, the Northern People's Party won 15 seats; the National Liberation Movement 12; the Togoland Congress Party 2; the Federation of Youth Organization 1; the Moslem Association Party 1; and Independence 2. One independent later joined the CPP.

The Gold Coast Independence Claimed

With this majority, the CPP now was hopeful of meeting the British Government's requirement that a "reasonable majority" must agree on the form of Gold Coast's constitution before an actual independence date would be set. Accordingly,

66 This newly-elected Legislative Assembly had become the first Parliament of Ghana.

Dr Nkrumah introduced the necessary motion in the newly-elected Assembly, on 3 August 1956, asking the British Government to keep its pledge and declare the Gold Coast an independent State within the Commonwealth to be known as 'Ghana'. While moving the motion, Dr Nkrumah said: "There is nothing I detest more than colonialism. ...I am determined...to see that nothing stands between the people of this country and the attainment of independence.... The Secretary of State cannot go back on his word; and I do not think he would wish to do so."

The motion was passed by 72 votes in favour and no vote against it, since all 32 opposition members boycotted the debate to show their disappointment with the governing CPP's decision to introduce the motion before a constitution had been agreed.

After the boycott of the debate on Gold Coast independence, Dr K. A. Busia, Leader of the Opposition parties, announced his intention to send a delegation to London to see Lennox-Boyd. In a statement, Dr Busia claimed that the election results in Ashanti, the Northern territories, and the trust territory in Southern Togoland justified the case for a federal constitution, but that in view of the statement by

---

68 Gold Coast, Legislative Assembly, Debates, 1st Series, vol. 1, cols. 131-2, 3 August 1956, Dr Nkrumah, the Prime Minister (C.P.P. - Accra Central).

69 Newa Chronicle (London), 4 August 1956.
the Minister of Finance in the Assembly that "Federation can no longer be discussed inside or outside this House, the question of an agreed Constitution is ruled out", the Opposition decided to withdraw and consult their Regions to find ways and means of achieving their expressed aim of an agreed constitution before independence. The move to influence Lennox-Boyd, the Opposition decided to withdraw and consult their Regions to find ways and means of achieving their expressed aim of an agreed constitution before independence. The move to influence Lennox-Boyd, 70

The Times said, was seen in many quarters in the Gold Coast "to confirm the view that the Opposition, having been unable to gain their way or achieve any compromise from the CPP, may resort to unconstitutional and unorthodox methods." And if Lennox-Boyd granted the Opposition's request, it said, this would inevitably delay self-government and would be misrepresented in the Gold Coast and, indeed, in Nigeria, as another example of Britain clinging to her imperialist policies. Therefore, it would have been the bounden duty of Britain to grant the request and stomach the outcry if there had been any real doubt about the results of the elections. But the results, it said, had been much as before. The Opposition had crystalized, but not increased.

Dr. Busia's Mission to London

On 10 September 1956, delegates from the Opposition

---

70 The Times, 8 August 1956.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid., 9 August 1956.
parties, led by Dr K. A. Busia, met the Minister of State for Colonial Affairs in London and explained their case for a federal structure of government as the necessary pre-requisite of independence. The delegation in their representation to the Colonial Office produced every argument they could think in favour of a federal constitution which could safeguard the rights of minorities. They quoted the Jibowu Report, delays in holding of local elections, and other allegations of "totalitarian" behaviour by the Nkrumah Government. They stated that the Gold Coast independent Constitution had not been agreed to by all parties and that Her Majesty's Government were under treaty obligations not to hand over the local chiefs to the mercy of a unitary State dominated by one Region and one party. Commenting on Dr Busia's mission to London, the Manchester Guardian said that there was a good deal of force in Dr Busia's argument.

73 The Jibowu Commission which inquired into the activities of the Cocoa Purchasing Company, found that allegations against the Company of bribery, corruption, nepotism and inefficiency were fully justified and the CPP, Dr Nkrumah himself, and another Minister were involved in the Company. These allegations were freely bandied about by the Opposition during the election campaign, and the fact that this appeared to have no influence on the result, added to the fact that Dr Nkrumah's Government still remained firmly in the saddle, pointed to a somewhat different standard of values from that obtaining in a more politically mature community. The Times, 19 September 1956.

74 Ibid.

75 Manchester Guardian, 12 September 1956.
One of his main points was that "the Gold Coast is not really such an integrated country as it looks; the cadre of British civil servants directed from the Centre has given it an illusory appearance of unity, but the links are still weak and may snap if they have to carry the weight of a centralising policy. There are fears too that the aggressive spirit of the CPP may threaten the freedom of individuals as well as that of regions, if there is not some constitutional check on it. These are reasonable points, and deserve to find some expression in the new Constitution. Yet, one still cannot believe that a fully federal system -- in a country of less than five million people -- is the right answer to them."

In spite of Dr Busia's mission to London, Lennox-Boyd was prompt to announce on 18 September 1956 that the outcome of the general election and the vote on the motion of independence for the Gold Coast fulfilled the conditions of the British Government's statement on 11 May 1956 and that the British Government would, at the first available opportunity, introduce into the United Kingdom Parliament a Bill to accord independence to the Gold Coast and that subject to the Parliamentary approval, the United Kingdom Government intended that independence should come about on 6 March 1957. In view of this announcement of the exact date for independence, the

---

opposition leaders withdrew their petition for a federation and demanded only adequate safeguards to be written in the constitution before 6 March 1957. Dr Busia summed up the Opposition's aim as "an agreed Constitution that safeguards the minority rights of the Northern Territories, respects the identity of the Ashanti nation, provides for an independent judiciary, and secures the legal freedom of every citizen."

The Gold Coast Government's Revised Constitutional Proposals

After the announcement of the exact date for independence, there were a series of meetings in October 1956 between the Government representatives and the Opposition leaders in an attempt to solve the constitutional crisis and later the Gold Coast Government issued a White Paper, in November 1956, on revised constitutional proposals for an independent Gold Coast. It also contained points on which the two sides failed to agree to their being embodied in the future constitution.

According to the new proposals, the Government still maintained that on the attainment of independence, the Gold Coast should become a sovereign State within the Commonwealth, with the Queen as its head. The name of the country should be changed

---

77 Dr Busia in a letter to The Times, 22 September 1956.
78 The Government's Revised Constitutional Proposals for Gold Coast Independence (Acora, 1956).
to 'Ghana'. There should be a Governor-General, to be appointed for a period not exceeding five years by the Queen on the advice of the Ghana Government. The Governor-General would appoint all Ministers and would have powers on the advice of the Prime Minister to remove any Minister. Supreme legislative power would be vested in Parliament, consisting of the Queen and the National Assembly. On the question of amending the Constitution, the White Paper recommended that provision should be made for it, making it possible with a two-third majority of all members of the House. The White Paper reaffirmed the Government's earlier view that there should be a measure of devolution of powers from the Central Government to the Regions. The Regional Assemblies should have powers similar to those of the London County Council, but such powers should come into operation by a gradual process. An Opposition suggestion that a Council of State should be set up, was rejected by the Government. The Government also rejected an Opposition suggestion for a Second Chamber for the chiefs.

With one or two exceptions, the new proposals did not depart substantially from those contained in the White Paper published seven months ago, which the Opposition refused to debate in the Legislative Assembly. Commenting on the new proposals, The Times said that the Government had a good case

79 The Times, 12 November 1956.
in maintaining that there was no room in a democratic constitution for a Council of State to advise the Governor-General in the exercise of the prerogative powers of the Crown. The Second Chamber was considered unnecessary in view of the provision of time for discussion of all measures by the new Regional Assemblies before their introduction in the National Assembly. Having already agreed to the establishment of Regional Assemblies, the Government made a further concession to the Opposition in not specifying in the new proposals the number of Regions or the powers to be entrusted to them, leaving these details to be decided in later legislation.

The White Paper was later debated in the Legislative Assembly on 12 and 14 November and was approved (with an amendment in one small respect) by a vote of 70 to 25. The Gold Coast Government then requested the British Government to make an Order-in-Council, based on the Revised Constitutional Proposals as approved by the Assembly to come into effect on the date of Gold Coast's independence.

**The Partition Ruled Out**

But soon constitutional dispute reached its climax and the two main Opposition parties, the NIA and Northern People's Party, in a joint resolution forwarded to the Colonial Secretary, demanded "separate independence for Ashanti and the Northern Territories, and for a Partition Commission to divide
the assets and liabilities of the Gold Coast among its four component territories." As a result of this, the situation became confused. While the Opposition -- whose chief party was the NLM -- compromised on its extreme demands for a federal state at the last constitutional talks, the Gold Coast Government held to its original views. The Opposition was ready to drop its demands for a Council of State and a Second Chamber if it was satisfied on safeguards for the Constitution and the powers of the Regional Assemblies. The Government said that these safeguards were unnecessary, and argued that if the Opposition trusted it, it would not alter the Constitution or deprive the Regional Assemblies of funds. But it was precisely this, said the Financial Times, the crux of the then crisis. The Opposition suspected the motives and the intentions of the

---

80 The Times, 21 November 1956.
In a joint resolution, the Opposition parties said:
"We are pleased to note that the Secretary of State has reiterated the view we have always held that Britain has been the cement which has kept the peoples of the Gold Coast together, and that with the withdrawal of Britain from control, the bonds which Britain has fashioned will have to be replaced by other bonds which can only be fashioned by a wise statesmanship. We are satisfied that these other bonds can only be a constitution agreeable to and acceptable by the four component territories of the Gold Coast." Ibid.
The secession movement was supported by the Ashanteeman Council but not by Dr Busia.

81 Financial Times, 23 November 1956.
Government. And unless the Government changed its mind before
the March, it was feared that civil disobedience -- possibly
developing into rioting or worse -- would break out. Many
observers believed that the only chance of saving the situa-
tion would be direct interference by the Colonial Secretary.
This would mean setting aside the decision of the overwhelming
majority of the Legislative Assembly, and therefore, was un-
likely. But without it, it said that it was becoming increas-
ingly possible that civil strife, which followed British with-
drawal from India, would be repeated in the Gold Coast.

The Conservative Government, however, ruled out the
partition of the Gold Coast. In a reply to a joint resolution
sent by the NLM and the Northern People's Party calling for
separate independence for Ashanti and the Northern Territories,
Lennox-Boyd said: "Her Majesty's Government do not consider
that the partition of the Gold Coast is in the interests of
the Gold Coast as a whole or of any of its component parts,
and cannot abandon their established policy which is directed
towards the granting of independence to the Gold Coast as a
whole. The grant of independence to the Gold Coast is an act
of goodwill which Her Majesty's Government trust will be re-
ceived by the people of the Gold Coast in a spirit of res-
ponsibility which will command the respect of the world." This

---

82 Ibid.
reply was read out in the Commons on 11 December 1956 by Lord John Hope, Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, when Ghana Independence Bill was introduced for the Second Reading. During the past half-century, he said, the component parts of the Gold Coast, which were interdependent, both politically and economically, had grown steadily and strongly into a single nation. He, therefore, said: "To sever would be to cripple." The partition of the country "at this stage... would not only inhibit further development and progress, but would also mean a serious falling back in the standards of life." He explained why the name "Ghana" would be confirmed

83 562 H.C. Deb. 5s. col. 233, 11 December 1956, Lord John Hope.

84 The Bill did not deal with details of the Constitution of the Gold Coast. Its main purpose was to confer on the new State of Ghana the basic powers necessary to give it the status of an independent country within the Commonwealth. Ibid., cols. 231-2, 11 December 1956, Lord John Hope.

Addressing a Press Conference in London, Dr Busia warned of the possibilities of civil war in the Gold Coast if the Ghana Independence Bill was passed in its then form. He said that the strong nationalist feelings which prevailed among the Ashanti peoples made it impossible for them to accept any constitution in which their interests and personalities were not taken into account. Financial Times, 11 December 1956.

85 562 H.C. Deb. 5s. col. 233, 11 December 1956, Lord John Hope.

86 It was the name of an ancient kingdom, in what was then French territory, south of the Sahara, which had acquired great historic significance in the Gold Coast.
on the new country and the 6 March date had been selected for the Gold Coast independence. He said, these were in accordance with the local wishes.

While the total secession was "unthinkable as a practical proposition", The Times said, the differences between the disputants were really narrower than appeared on the surface. And therefore, there was nothing unreasonable, it said, in the suggestion that the Colonial Secretary should visit the Colony, and apply his mediating powers, provided that such a visit was at the invitation of both parties, and not just of the Opposition.

Lennox-Boyd's Visit to the Gold Coast

As expected, Lennox-Boyd who was then touring in Central Africa arrived in the Gold Coast on 24 January 1957 on a six-day visit to make a last attempt to solve the constitutional deadlock. Speaking to pressmen shortly after his arrival, he said that as long as the Conservative Party remained in power, the British Government would continue to honour its pledge to grant independence to colonial peoples as soon as practicable.

87 It was a date of local historical significance, being the anniversary of the signing of the Bond of 1844 from which British jurisdiction generally derived.

88 The Times, 29 December 1956.

He later held discussions with leaders of the Government, the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues, the Ashantehene and other chiefs and leaders and was surprised to find in the course of his discussions, "the underlying unity than the differences" among them. Their differences over the nature of the constitution, he said, spoke for the unanimity of purpose as to what they desired for Ghana. Before leaving for London, he, therefore, told a press conference that he had found "no widespread sign" of a desire to secede as "no part of the country can go it alone."

On his return, Lennox-Boyd announced on 8 February 1957 the final draft of the Constitution which was the result of his discussions during his visit to the Gold Coast. The draft Constitution, published as a White Paper, included far-reaching

Lennox-Boyd went straight to meet the Ashanteman Council, the highest traditional authority in the Region, which was then in session awaiting him. Welcoming him to the Region, the Ashantehene, the head of the nation, said: "We are not against the Convention People's Party as a party or as the Government. Myself and the other Chiefs of this region are not anxious for political power but want to preserve our tradition and institutions. That is why we have come together as a people against the dictatorial attitude of the present Gold Coast Government. Now that Britain is to withdraw, we wonder what future we have. We are not in a happy mood."

Manchester Guardian, 28 January 1957.

Glasgow Herald, 31 January 1957.

safeguards for regional rights and the traditional position of Chiefs and specified that the Ashantehene was to be Head of the Ashanti Region. The new safeguards included: setting up of Regional Assemblies within each of the existing five Regions, with effective powers in specified fields, and also Houses of Chiefs in each Region with limited powers in matters of local custom and tradition. The Head of each Region was to be chosen by the House of Chiefs. Amendments to the Constitution would require a vote of two-thirds of the total membership of the National Assembly, while the more important changes also needed the concurrence of four out of five of the Regional Assemblies. The Opposition demands for a Second Chamber and a Council of State, however, were not met.

Although the provisions of the final draft Constitution did not altogether meet the demands of either side, it appeared that it was generally satisfactory to the country and to make for its stability and unity. On balance, however, the feeling was that the gains of the Opposition parties in the White Paper outweighed those of the Government Party and these, the Opposition politicians concluded, had justified their insistent demands and political duel with Dr Nkrumah's Government.

93 The Times (13 February 1957) said: although the NIA, in Kumasi, immediately went into white, the colour symbolic of victory, the spirit of rejoicings was not that of triumph over a defeated enemy, but rather that of relief at the conclusion of a peace treaty under which both sides had maintained their status.
One safeguard in the White Paper over which there was country-wide approval, was the devolution of the Regions, which ensured that "Ghana shall not be turned into a republic." The Ashantis were particularly happy over the establishment of the Ashantehene's position as head of the Ashanti Region, a symbol of the survival of the chieftaincy in an independent Ghana. Later, both Dr Nkrumah, the Prime Minister, and Dr Busia, the Leader of the Opposition, stated in the Legislative Assembly their acceptance of the British Government's White Paper and Order-in Council as a basis for the working of Ghana's independent Constitution.

The compromise was widely felt in Accra to be a great personal success for Lennox-Boyd, whose stock in the Gold Coast, as The Times said, "probably stands higher now than that of any of his predecessors." Even otherwise, Britain's stock in the Gold Coast was equally high and it appeared that "the breaking of the colonial bond will be achieved with great

94 The Observer, 10 February 1957.

95 Although Dr Busia accepted the White Paper and the Order-in Council as "a workable compromise", he added: "It did not, indeed, provide all we asked for, but we are prepared to co-operate to make it a successful foundation for the democratic way of life, which we all desire to see established in this country.... As the first African country to achieve independence, we have a special responsibility and challenge." Manchester Guardian, 13 February 1957.

96 The Times, 13 February 1957.
goodwill remaining here (in the Gold Coast) for Britain."

Later, the Ghana (Constitution) Order-in-Council, 1957 was signed by the Queen-in-Council on 22 February 1957 for setting out in full the Constitution to come into effect on the date of independence. Also, all the Commonwealth Prime Ministers agreed that Ghana should be recognized on 6 March 1957, as a full member of the Commonwealth. After this announcement and the publication of the new Constitution, the Gold Coast was quiet and the Opposition leaders agreed to take part in independence celebration on 6 March 1957, when the Ghana Independence Act came into operation.

On the night of 5 March 1957, Dr. Nkrumah said: "When the day dawns, we shall have left behind us the chains of imperialism and colonialism which have hitherto bound us to Britain.... Within the space of minutes, our colonial association with Britain will disappear, and our new association with Commonwealth based on absolute equality and friendship will begin." In his Independence Day address, Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, who was sworn in as the first Governor-General

97 Ibid.
98 565 H.C. Deb. 5s. col. 605, 21 February 1957, Harold Macmillan, the Prime Minister.
100 Daily Telegraph, 6 March 1957.
of Ghana, said that it marked "the culminating point in a memor­able partnership between you and those of us who have come from the United Kingdom and other parts of the Commonwealth to help you create the new Ghana." Dr Busia, the Leader of the Opposition, recalled Ghana's debt to Great Britain and con­cluded: "We have also benefited from the British administration and law to which we owe our concepts of nationhood, democracy and individual freedom.... To the people of Britain and to the Queen, we would say again simply but with heartfelt sincerity, thank you; we are glad that our ties are to continue in the domain where human ties are most enduring -- in the devotion and goodwill of the human heart freely given and reciprocated."

Appraisal

The Gold Coast was the first British Colony in Africa to achieve independence as sovereign State within the Common­wealth, after the Second World War, under the Conservative administration. When the Conservatives took over, the Gold Coast had the Convention People's Party's Government, formed in February 1951, within the limits of the Coussely Constitution, drafted entirely by the local inhabitants, which gave

the Gold Coast, for the first time, an elected majority -- an African majority -- on the basis of adult franchise, similar to that of Waddington's Constitution in British Guiana. As a result, the Gold Coast was enjoying a degree of self-rule since then. Thus, it was the previous Labour Government which, after the troubles in 1948 and again in 1950, had set the wheel of self-government in motion, and after the General Election in February 1951 under the Coussey Constitution, had given Dr Nkrumah the chance to become the Leader of the Government Business -- the post equivalent to the Prime Minister -- a big decisive step. But later, so long Churchill was in charge of the administration, the Gold Coast did not advance further except that the Leader of the Government Business was designated as the Prime Minister. There continued the process of internal self-government which had begun in 1951. Churchill could not reverse the clock. But all that happened was that Dr Nkrumah became the Prime Minister and the Governor-in-charge continued to administer the Colony with no prospect of independence on any date at all.

What made the Conservatives not to reverse the clock was that the Gold Coast was free from white settler problem, unlike Kenya, and Dr Nkrumah who had earlier called the Coussey Constitution as 'bogus' and 'fraudulent' was ready to give a try till a new one was granted. He also showed moderation. He had a magnetic personality and for a while he had a
tremendous following. And it was sheer accident of history that personalities were involved in the Gold Coast's development. Besides this, it was a rich country and had more educated people than other British colonial territories. Also, in West Africa, it was accepted fairly early that the major African states -- the Gold Coast and Nigeria -- should move towards self-government and independence. Self-government fast, because it had already moved that way and then to delay independence until there had been reasonable opportunity to move from self-government to independence. But there was no kind of commitment that independence was to be resisted. What they were trying was to delay the final act until the transition -- from self-government to independence -- had been worked out.

So the argument really was about the timing. This was stated by Lyttelton in his broadcast on his tour to West Africa in 1952 -- he visited the Gold Coast in June 1952 --:

"Even in West Africa, there is a problem of timing which we and those Africans who are beginning to share our responsibilities with us in increasing measure must constantly weigh."

The only concession that the Conservatives made between October 1951 and June 1954 when the new transitional Constitution came:

103  _Interview with Colin Legum, Commonwealth Correspondent of The Observer, in London, on 6 May 1970._

104  _Ashanti Pioneer, 9 August 1952._
into force, was the dropping of Dr Nkrumah's title as the Leader of the Government Business and designating him as the Prime Minister of the Gold Coast. But all these years -- 1951-1964 -- the CPP leaders kept on reminding the British of their motto "Self-government Now" which was defined as Dominion status within the Commonwealth.

It was only in June 1954, as a result of dispatches exchanged between the Gold Coast Government and the Colonial office, a new Constitution came into force which provided for an enlarged Legislative Assembly, chosen entirely by a direct election, a Cabinet, composed entirely of Ministers drawn from the Assembly and the Governor remaining responsible for external affairs, the trusteeship territory of Togoland, defence and certain matters concerning the police. These changes were regarded "as the last stage before the Gold Coast assumes full responsibility for its own affairs." And under the 1954 Constitution, the Gold Coast began to enjoy full internal self-government, following the British practice in the Legislative Assembly and cabinet responsibility.

But there emerged, in September 1954, the National Liberation Movement in Ashanti, arising directly from the CPP Government's decision to fix a low price for cocoa, when the world price was sharply increasing. The movement soon came out with

105 526 H.C. Deb. 5s. col. 1625, 28 April 1954, Hopkinson.
a demand for a federal form of government, against unitary one under the Coussey Constitution. The conflict between the two -- the CPP favouring a unitary state and the NLM wanting a federal state -- was extremely bitter, involving prolonged violence and many political murders. The chief motive behind the NLM campaign for a federation was, oddly enough, much the same as the one behind Buganda's opposition to an East African Federation. Both Buganda and Ashanti had been historically the dominant powers in the regions. The Ashanti were totally devoted to the chiefdom system presided over by the Ashantehene and his Golden Stool - a symbol of quasi-religious significance for the people. This did not mean that the Ashanti political leaders were retrogressive or anti-intellectual, though they were presented in this light at the time. One of them was Professor Busia, till lately (1971) the Prime Minister of Ghana and himself an intellectual with a worldwide reputation. He argued that if old African states were to make real progress in freedom in the modern world, it was essential for them to start by going back to their own historical roots and to grow in accordance with their own real natures -- a point of view for which there was great deal to be said. But it was not an attitude which in those days commanded much respect in Britain, where it was dismissed as 'tribalism' and seen as a real threat to the viability of the new independent African countries.

106 Interview with Cyril Dunn, Correspondent of The Observer, in London, on 14 May 1970.
Dr Nkrumah, the Prime Minister, made many conciliatory moves to bring the NLM and its allies to come to the round table, but the latter did not pay any heed. The refusal of the NLM to cooperate with the Achimota Conference which discussed, among others, the Bourne's Report which contained recommendation for the devolution of powers and the continued deadlock on the constitution which the Gold Coast was to have after becoming independent, made the Prime Minister's position more awkward. Also, this raised doubts in the people's mind whether the Conservative Government would hold back the Empire since the British Government had insisted that there must be a "general agreement" in the Gold Coast on the constitution before independence was granted. As a result, each side in the African struggle then accused Britain of having secret objectives as pernicious as they were contradictory. According to the CPP, London was anxious to retain its grip on this old colonial territory and was, therefore, planning a pact with Ashanti and the Northern Territories which would postpone self-government for at least ten years. On the other hand, the NLM leaders said that the British Government was determined "to make Nkrumah head of an independent Guinea [sic] as quickly as possible in order to validate the arrangements they have made with him, for putting Volta River Project into operation, thus ensuring for Britain a steady supply of aluminium from sterling sources." Also, the NLM leaders kept on

107 Cyril Dunn, "Gold Coast Struggle for Power", The Scotsman, 28 March 1956.
saying that the British had completely the wrong idea about Nkrumah and predicted that, if he were given power over a unitary state, he would quickly emerge as a ruthless dictator - as in fact he did.

The British approach to the controversy was rather different. There had been enough excuses for the Conservatives to postpone the granting of independence, if they had so wished. But they had not. Lennox-Boyd's announcement on 11 May 1956 for a general election in the Gold Coast as a prior condition of its independence to resolve the deadlock between Dr Nkrumah's Government and the opposing NLA was as "welcome" as it was "timely". The election results brought the victory for Dr Nkrumah and his CPP, but Dr Busia, the Opposition leader, pleaded that the election results in Ashanti, the Northern Territories and the Trust Territory of Togoland justified the case for a federal constitution. However, the British Government took the view that the outcome of the General Election and vote on the motion of independence of the Gold Coast fulfilled the conditions of the British Government's statement on 11 May 1956, and that they were going ahead with the necessary formalities by introducing a bill to that effect. In view

108 Interview with Cyril Dunn, Correspondent of The Observer, in London, on 14 May 1970.

of this announcement of the exact date of independence the
Opposition leaders withdrew their petition for a federation
and demanded only adequate safeguards to be written in the
Constitution.

But it was not until Lennox-Boyd's visit, in January 1957,
to the Gold Coast which brought him much praise, the final
draft of the Constitution was agreed upon the compromise
brought about, providing a kind of safety valve by introducing
Regional Assemblies and Houses of Chiefs and making the Ashante-
hene as the Head of the Ashanti region. The British Government
quite rightly ruled out the partition of the Gold Coast as was
demanded earlier by the NLM and the Northern People's Party.

And The Times was right, when it said that in the Gold Coast,
Lennox-Boyd's stock probably stood higher than that of any of
his predecessor for his mediating efforts.

It was the British hope that after the British withdrawal
what was left behind would not be embittered India, but a
country that might willingly take its place in the Commonwealth
and look at Britain without any rancour. Indeed it did. The
speeches made by Dr Nkrumah and Dr Busia on the eve of Independ-
ence Day revealed that Britain had retained both, goodwill
and influence, which was vital to the British interests. And

110 The Times, 13 February 1957.
the *Christian Science Monitor* was right in calling the Gold Coast Independence as "an attractive advertisement for the British policy of converting colonies into free members of the Commonwealth." But it was the absence of White settlers in the Gold Coast that speeded its early independence. Shortly before Ghana became free, Nkrumah said to Cyril Dunn the statue, he ought to erect in the middle of Accra in celebration of Ghana's liberation, would be a huge golden mosquito, because this insect had done more than any politician to guarantee Ghana's early independence by discouraging White settlements.

(B) FEDERATION OF MALAYA

**Background**

When the Japanese invaded Malaya on 8 December 1941, it consisted of three administrative units - the Straits Settlements (Penang, Malacca and Singapore) which were Crown colonies, the Federated Malay States, and the unfederated Malay states - the latter both under British protection as a result of agreements concluded between the United Kingdom and the Rulers of the States. Malaya's problem had not been one simply of "colonialism". Like Kenya, Malaya is a "plural society" which

---


112 Interview with Cyril Dunn, Correspondent of *The Observer* in London on 14 May 1970.
consists of three main racial communities - Malays, Chinese and Indians. But the troublesome mixture of racial communities in the Federation of Malaya in which the Malays then retained numerical parity with the combined Chinese and Indian communities, posed peculiarly thorny problem of political advance for Malaya's inhabitants. The numerical distribution did not alone account for the complexity of Malaya's problem. There existed, and still exists, a considerable ill feeling among these communities.

The Malays were for the most part agriculturists and provided some of the labour for the cultivation and tapping of rubber. The Chinese, on the contrary, were engaged in all sorts

113 The Federation of Malaya then excluded Singapore.


115 In his study, L. S. Finkelstein pointed out that there existed "the widespread feeling of insecurity among the Malays, who feel their position in the country which they regard as their own to be threatened by the economically more capable and aggressive Chinese and by the politically more alert Indians, both better organised than the Malays." As a result, the Malays always depended on the British for security against the other communities. Similarly, the Chinese and the Indians had looked to the British for protection against the occasional reality and ever present threat of Malay violence. Ibid., pp. 9-10.

of activities. They were bankers, shippers, merchants, landlords, traders, smugglers, money lenders, pawnbrokers and generally held most of the financial power, second to that of the European interests only in certain cases. The rich Chinese were sophisticated, shrewd, urbane and politically wide awake. Their hold upon the business life of the community was great and pervasive and becoming greater as time went on. The Indians, mostly Tamils, had little cohesion and were politically neither mature nor vocal.

The political problem was further complicated by the nature of the British rule. Since the 1870s, the British position in the Peninsula was of a protector to the Malay States, a relationship defined by treaties with each of the Malay sultans or rulers. Before the Second World War, there were hardly any representative institutions worth the name in Malaya. Except for the Straits Settlements which were Crown colonies and governed directly, the British ruled the country through the native rulers. The British, also, recognized the Malays as the indigenous people of the country, whose comparative economic backwardness entitled them to get special treatment. This led the domiciled Chinese and Indians to feel that British


118 Lord Chandos, n. 116, p. 361.
policies were pro-Malay and unfair to them.

The British took an early opportunity, presented by the end of the Japanese occupation to make an important policy statement in the Commons, on 10 October 1945, on a constitutional union of Malaya. The statement which was later published as White Paper in January 1946 said that the British policy would call for a constitutional union of Malaya and for the institution of a Malayan citizenship which would give equal citizenship rights to those who could claim Malaya to be their homeland. For these purposes, fresh Agreements with the several Malay Rulers needed first to be arranged which would enable His Majesty to possess and exercise full jurisdiction in the Malay States. The statement was a revolutionary one, making a complete break with the past. It sought to reverse the pre-war pro-Malay policy. Accordingly, Sir Harold MacMichael who was appointed as a Special Representative of His Majesty's Government

119 Maurice Friedman said: "In a world where the reaction to colonialism often takes a republican turn, nationalists Malays appear to have clung to their rulers." Maurice Friedman, in the Times Review of the British Colonies, Summer 1955, p. 24.

120 From December 1941 to September 1945, Malaya was under Japanese occupation.

121 414 H.C. Deb. 5s. cols. 255-6, 10 October 1945, George Hall.

to arrange Agreements with the Rulers for this purpose, carried out his assignment in a record time. The Rulers were asked to sign away the last vestiges of their independent status and dignity. But there were complaints that the Sultans had signed under duress. They had now nothing to do with their own State Councils, and legislation became the function of the Legislative Council.

The Malayan Union which was constituted on 1 April 1946 was opposed by many young, educated and politically conscious Malays. While they had no love for the old feudal system, they were, nevertheless, unwilling to see it swept away by the constitutional reforms which had replaced native authority by British government control. Since the plan for Malayan Union included a liberal provision for acquiring Malayan citizenship, both for Malays and non-Malays, without distinction, their fears were quite justifiable. Many of the Chinese and Indians in Malaya were, then, indifferent or absorbed in the politics of their respective countries of origin -- China and India. The British authorities confronted by bitter opposition from the Malays had no alternative but to drop the Union Plan and replace it by a Federation of Malaya under the Federation of Malaya Agreement of 1948.

The Agreement of 1948 which brought the Federation of

123 The Federation of Malaya Agreement 1948 (Kuala Lumpur, 1952).
Malaya, in February 1948, into being, restored sovereignty to the Malay Rulers and re-established the old treaty — protectorate relationship between Britain and the States. The Constitution of Federation, under the Agreement, provided for a High Commissioner, a nominated Legislative Council of 75 members — composed of three ex-officio members, 11 representatives of the States and Settlements, 11 official and 50 unofficial members nominated by the High Commissioner — the allocation being 22 Malays, 14 Chinese, 7 Europeans, 7 Indians, Ceylonese and Eurasians — and a Federal Executive Council. The Constitution also declared that the "special position" of the Malays and "the legitimate interests of other communities" must be safeguarded. Citizenship qualifications now created more difficulties for the non-Malays. As a result, the Chinese and Indians now charged the British with having resumed their pro-Malay policy. They alleged that British imperialism and Malay feudalism were again united. Though the Sultans and the Malays were given a position and voice in the affairs of the peninsula, the Malays enjoyed mostly political privilege, and not political power.

124 Derrick Sington said that the Federal Constitution of 1948 was "a loose and ill-defined hybrid somewhere between unitary government and federation." Derrick Sington, Malayv Perspectives (Fabian Colonial Bureau, London, June 1953), p. 7.
It was against this background, the Communist terrorists movement came into existence in 1948. While it could be argued that the outbreak itself was partly a reaction to the Federation plans, the terrorists activities in Malaya was Chinese-inspired and got an impetus during the Second World War. After participating in the anti-Japanese campaigns they built up strength in the trade unions and were actively stirring up labour agitations. They had not returned their arms supplied to them by the government during the war. On the contrary, they began to use these arms against the British, and not only against the British but against the Indians and Malays and tried to intimidate them. Soon, the situation deteriorated and a State of Emergency was declared in areas of Perak and Johore on 16 June 1948 and two days later it was extended to the whole of Malaya.

Malaya is an almost ideal terrain for guerrilla warfare. Four-fifths of it are jungle, where the visibility is often reduced to a few feet. Besides this, the Communist terrorists who were almost all Chinese, then formed the nucleus of 6,000 odd Communist guerrillas and were getting help, in the form of food, money and recruits and information about the movements of

---

125 Lennox A. Mills said: "Air bombing is more miss than hit, and when a patrol ground troops try to ferret out of a band of terrorists, their success depends upon good luck as much as jungle craft."

government forces, from the 300,000 Chinese squatters who were scattered all over Malaya.

The Conservative Approach

When the Conservatives came to power in Britain, the situation in Malaya was "serious" and "unless swift and strong action is taken", they realized, "it could deteriorate rapidly."

In his Memoirs Lord Chandos even admits that they were on the way to losing control of Malaya, and soon, unless something was done. In a short talk, while handing over the charge of Colonial Office, James Griffiths - Lyttelton's predecessor - confessed to Lyttelton that the previous Government were baffled by Malaya. And sadly, it had become a military problem to which they had not been able to find the answer. In the month of October 1951 Sir Henry Gurney, then the High Commissioner for Malaya said: "Those Chinese, who either collaborate with the Communists or sit on the fence, are largely unassimilated aliens whose Chinese culture has been unmodified by residence in Malaya. As a consequence, they submit to the tyranny and extortion as small fish swim into the mouth of a big fish'. Owing to the deeply rooted tradition of banditry and secret societies both in China and Malaya, Chinese social structure is well adapted to the technique of terrorists."


126 Carnell said: "Those Chinese, who either collaborate with the Communists or sit on the fence, are largely unassimilated aliens whose Chinese culture has been unmodified by residence in Malaya. As a consequence, they submit to the tyranny and extortion as small fish swim into the mouth of a big fish'. Owing to the deeply rooted tradition of banditry and secret societies both in China and Malaya, Chinese social structure is well adapted to the technique of terrorists."

127 Lennox A. Mills, n. 125, p. 36.


129 Ibid., p. 362.
Malaya, was murdered by the Communist terrorists and the grip of the terrorists was tightening. But there was also an important announcement in the same month from the Central Committee of the Malayan Communist Party which called for a stop to indiscriminate killings and other violent activities and decided to establish an "anti-British front" embracing all classes and races in Malaya excepting the British. At the same time, it decided to continue the armed struggle, but to abandon former methods of indiscriminate terrorism, engaging instead in a more selective campaign of attacking strictly military and paramilitary objectives, in such a way as to cause the least possible suffering to the general public.

Within a month of his appointment, Lyttelton decided to go on three weeks' visit to Malaya to obtain first hand knowledge of the situation. In a statement issued by the Colonial Office, he hoped to study especially all aspects of the emergency and to meet as many as possible of those who were combating terrorism or maintaining the Government, trade, and services of the country. He felt that personal contacts and first-hand knowledge of this sort would almost rapidly enable him to deal with the complex issues involved and that his visit would give a practical indication of the Government's determination to lend all assistance and support in their power to the

Government in Malaya in the measures taken to put an end to terrorism.

On 29 November 1951, Lyttelton took off from London. On reaching Singapore, on his way to Kuala Lumpur, he told correspondents: "The restoration of law and order must have priority in Malaya. Nobody can govern if they are under the threat of having their throats cut." He did not mean, he added, that political development should be forgotten, but that law and order were necessary before any political reforms. But these remarks were ill-received in Malaya. And when he reached Kuala Lumpur on 2 December 1951, he corrected his earlier announcement that political progress in Malaya must be postponed until the end of the emergency and said that political and social advancement were essential parts of the war against militant Communism, but the military efforts had been lagging. It was really a matter of emphasis. Later, he talked to the

131 Manchester Guardian, 5 November 1951.
132 Daily Telegraph, 30 November 1951.
133 According to Lord Chandos the general tone of the Press was reflected in newspaper head lines such as 'Secretary of State denies constitutional changes', 'Continuance of police state forecast', and much in the same vein. A few letters arrived saying, 'At last first things first', 'A healthy tonic', and so forth. Lord Chandos, n. 116, p. 364.
134 The Times, 3 December 1951.
representatives of the three main racial communities who all urged him to initiate immediate political reforms as part of the struggle against militant Communism, and there appeared to be some measure of agreement. The United Malay Nationalist organisation which asked for reassurances of the sincerity of British intentions in Malaya, said that education had been neglected and promises to train Malays for higher administrative and police jobs left unfulfilled. Tungku Abdul Rahman, President of the Organization, said that an "interim independent Government" should be formed immediately with a British High Commissioner, and that Malaya should be formally admitted to the British Commonwealth, that a scheme of land grants to Malayan members of the security forces be prepared, and that those detained under emergency regulations should be investigated immediately and the innocent released. K. L. Devasar of the Malayan Indian Congress pressed for land reforms and the replacement of the nominated members of the Legislative Council by freely elected representatives. With the Malayan Chinese Association, the Malayan Indian Congress urged the modifications of the Federal Citizenship Act and the withdrawal of State nationality Bills. Equal rights and responsibilities, the two bodies declared, must be shared by all loyal Malayans. Dato Tan Cheng Lock of the Malayan Chinese Association probably spoke for all when he said that cooperation must be a mutual affair. It was useless for the administration to complain of
Chinese neutrality in the war against Communism when its officials followed an anti-Chinese policy. His community, he said, could and would cooperate with the administration to end the emergency if distrust and suspicion of Chinese intentions were removed. He also said that the Chinese community could defend itself if they were trusted with arms and suggested the formation of a Chinese Home Guard 20,000 strong, which could replace Malay policemen and assure better protection. Lyttelton, on his part, reaffirmed to the leaders that British policy objectives in Malaya were to work for self-government and the establishment of a united Malaya. This made a good impression on the Malayan leaders and allayed their fears, which, although without foundation, were nevertheless very real. It was a fact which the British Government could not ignore that the Conservative Party was regarded in Malaya as a reactionary body imbued with nineteenth-century colonial ideas. Lyttelton's assurance, as The Times said, went at least part of the way to prove that it was nothing of the kind. But Dato Onn's message—that in Malaya, Churchill had an excellent opportunity to

135 Ibid.
136 The Times, 5 December 1951.
137 Dato Onn was the former President of the UMNO. But after the split in the UMNO, Dato Onn became the President of the splinter—called Independence of Malay Party.
preside over the unification of the British Empire - which he (Dato Onn) asked Lyttelton to pass on to Churchill revealed that the feeling in Malaya was against Churchill's war-time stand.

In a statement shortly before leaving Singapore on his way back, Lyttelton told Correspondents that there were six points on which attention should be concentrated to end the emergency: overall direction of all forces, military and civil; reorganisation and training of the police; compulsory primary education; a higher measure of protection for settlement areas; the organisation of a Home Guard; and tackling the problem of the great strain under which the Civil Service was then suffering. While outlining these measures he remarked: "I cannot promise you speedy success", but added, "I can and I do promise you speedy action" to win the war in Malaya. He recognized that the war could be won without large military reinforcement, which could not be effectively deployed. Everything would depend upon the people of Malaya, acting with the British forces. He reassured those who doubted Britain's intentions and purpose, and said the British believed they had a mission in Malaya and it would not be laid aside until they were convinced that terrorism had been killed and buried, and a true partnership of all Malayan

138 The Times, 5 December 1951.
139 Financial Times, 12 December 1951.
communities, including the British, could lead to stable self-government. The road to this partnership would certainly be long, but "we will protect it. We will stay, we will never quit, until our aims - and they are common to all races - have been achieved." This was a war of ideals as well as of arms. They had to see, said Lyttelton, that their philosophy opened up to the peoples of Malaya the prospect of a finer and a freer life than that which their enemies were trying to instil. The ideal was a united Malayan nation, and when that was achieved that nation would enjoy the responsibilities and advantages of self-government. Then, he hoped, Malaya would add strength to the Commonwealth. He promised that on his return, he would address a document to the Prime Minister, seeking cabinet help and immediate action.

On his return to London (at the London Airport) Lyttelton summed up the situation in Malaya like this: "You cannot win the war without the help of the population, particularly the Chinese, and to get their confidence you have got to make a start at winning the war... It means intensifying efforts. That I think, we can do. It will be a quite a long job, and the situation may get worse before it gets better. It goes up and down a little bit, but generally it is the same."

141 The Times, 12 December 1951.
142 Financial Times, 12 December 1951.
143 The Times, 22 December 1951.
Earlier, he said Malaya's political situation was particularly complicated because of the Chinese apprehension of Malay political domination and the Malay fear of the economic strength of the Chinese. Ordinances would not bring the two together, and it might take a long time to bring about a change in public opinion. Whether the time for this could be afforded was doubtful. Apart from the dangers threatening the stability of the country, because of the wide gap between the two communities, suspicion was definitely prolonging the struggle.

Lyttelton's visit had a wholesome effect on the situation in Malaya. His decision to outline some of his conclusions on the spot had convinced everyone who doubted it that he meant to employ all methods at the Government's power to restore order and security in Malaya and they seemed wise and practical then. His stress on the importance of cooperation of the population in the suppression of the Communist terrorists and his recognition of the fact that war could be won without the deployment of large additional troops, showed that they would result in a change of policy in London. Hitherto, too little attention was paid to the psychological side of the picture—that of enhancing the confidence of the people. Finally, Lyttelton's pledge that Britain would not leave Malaya until a partnership on the lines of self-government became possible was

144 The Times, 19 December 1951.
welcomed by all, particularly by the business community which had begun to wonder whether its tremendous effort in keeping industry running under the prevailing war conditions, could be justified as a long-term investment.

On the following day, after his arrival in London from three weeks tour, Lyttelton met Churchill and told him that the key to Malaya's problem was that one man should be responsible for both civil and military sides. Politics and paramilitary and military operations were inextricably mixed. Two authorities, one political and one military with responsibilities ill-defined and each with overriding powers had been the main reason for the appalling state of the country. He summed up by saying that they could not win the war without the help of the population, the Chinese population in particular. And they would not get the support of the population, without at least beginning to win the war.

General Templer's Appointment

This led to the announcement, on 15 January 1952, of the appointment of General Sir Gerald Templer as High Commissioner for the Federation of Malaya, vesting in him not only the normal civil responsibilities of the Office, but also responsibilities of the operational control of all military and police
operations against the terrorists. Also, for the period of the emergency it was proposed to appoint a Deputy High Commissioner. The statement of British policy was contained in the directive given to General Sir Gerald Templer and read at the swearing-in-ceremony at Kuala Lumpur on 7 February 1952. The directive began: "The policy of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom is that Malaya should, in due course, become a fully self-governing nation. His Majesty's Government confidently hope that that nation will be within the British Commonwealth."

The directive went on to point out that to achieve a united Malayan nation, there must be a common form of citizenship for those who regard the Federation as their home. Whilst no community should have to sacrifice its traditional culture and customs, the Malays were to be encouraged to play a larger part in economic life of the country. "It will be your duty", the directive added, "to guide the peoples of Malaya towards the attainment of these objectives and to promote such political

147 The Times, 16 January 1952. While answering questions Lyttelton said that the political advance was being stopped by the Communists "at the moment." It was necessary to secure law and order because, he said, "it is very little good preaching the advantages of the free way of life when people are being held up by tommy-guns and ordered to hand over their bags of rice to the Communists." Ibid.

progress of the country as will, without prejudicing the cam-
paign against the terrorists, further our democratic aims in Malaya."

It was one of the dilemmas of the Malayan disturbances that a political solution could not be attained unless security was restored to an extent that would give people enough confidence to throw in their lot with the Government. There was in fact a dual mandate involved. Lyttelton's directive, therefore, while placing a political solution at the head of the preamble, in a later paragraph described the restoration of law and order as the "primary tasks". What was mainly needed then was the improvement of the police and it was encouraging to see that General Templer had immediately appreciated its importance. In the struggle against the bandits, the police occupied a halfway house between the Army and the civil administration. The Army had been doing all that it could in the hounding out of the bandits where indicated. Although the police had given them active help, that was not their proper role except in

149 A statement welcoming the terms of this directive was made in Washington on 6 March 1952 by the United States Secretary of State, Dean Acheson. "We are heartened" he said, "by the reiteration of Britain's determination to defeat Communist terrorism in Malaya, an alien move- ment which for nearly four years has conducted a deli- berate and vicious campaign to disrupt the life of the country and retard its political and economic development." Cmd. 8553/1952, The Colonial Territories 1951-52, para. 14, p. 3.
General Templer's first circular to government officers showed both the substance and the spirit of his plan. It said: "Any idea that the business of normal civil government and the business of the emergency are two separate entities must be killed for good and all. The two activities are completely and utterly interrelated." His realization of the root of the problem was clear from his statement: "I could win this war within three months if I could get two-thirds of the people on my side."

Within six months of his appointment, General Templer made his presence felt by showing willingness to introduce a number of changes in the political field. In his initial speech to the Legislative Council on 19 March 1952, General Sir Gerald Templer emphasized that "the only future of Malaya can lie in the direction of common citizenship and a common loyalty and a mutual respect and trust between the various communities." He said, there was to be a Common Citizenship Bill removing existing restrictions on the Chinese. Resettled Chinese squatters were to be given interim leasehold tenure of


161 "War in Malaya", British Survey (London), Main Series, N.S. no. 39, June 1952, p. 15.
State lands, and the Chinese community which already provided men for jungle companies in the police, were to have the right to bear arms in the new Federation Army. To balance these measures improving the political status of the Chinese, the Malays were to be helped economically, particularly by being given assistance in their most urgent need, the replanting of rubber small-holdings. General Templer also promised an educational system under which in due course every man, woman, and child would be able to have some contact with members of other communities; and extension of local government.

On these lines, General Templer proceeded. Lyttelton was, therefore, able to claim, on 17 July 1952, in the Commons that the 3 July was a day of landmark in the then history of Malaya. On that day, he said, no fewer than three Bills - the National Service Bill embodying the principle of two years' compulsory national service for all able bodied Malayan men; the Bill for setting up the Federation Regiment with recruitment from all races and the Bill for setting up elected local councils for villages which was designed to lay the foundations of democratic government in the Malayan villages were accepted by the Federal Legislative Council. But it was in the field of

153 503 H.C. Deb. 5s. cols. 2384-5, 17 July 1952, Lyttelton.
military operations themselves that the impact of General Templer's arrival had been mostly felt. The main methods had been the reorganization of police, the methodical study and circulation of new tactical methods for dealing with bandits, and the introduction of armoured carriers on a scale to meet essential needs.

General Templer brought with him a general's knowledge that "wars are not won by red tape and delayed decisions." He invigorated the administration from the day he arrived, and captured no less swiftly the imagination and confidence of the public. While the defeat of the terrorists gang had been his first task, it had always been a tenet of his faith that "Communism will not be beaten up by military measures alone." He fought the campaign on the social, economic and political fronts as well as in the jungle. The directive given him by the Secretary of State had already removed the fear that concentration on the Communist war would mean the deliberate retarding of political progress.

The Question of Federal Elections

When the situation showed some improvement, the Deputy


155 Straits Times (Singapore), 1 January 1954.

156 Han Suyin said that in the early months of 1953, the situation had changed considerably. The terrorists (footnote contd....)
High Commissioner announced on 7 May 1953 that the Government was to appoint a Select Committee of the Federal Council to examine the question of Federal Elections. The announcement apparently took the Council and the country by surprise. And in view of Lyttelton's earlier statement that there could be "no elections in Malaya until safety is assured", this was a subtle change in British policy. The move to start electoral machinery at the centre was no doubt to convince many sceptical Malaysians of all races that "self-government is really on the way." In its editorial, the Manchester Guardian wrote: "It should stimulate a heightened sense of political responsibility... There will be chances for the politically minded young to find an outlet for idealism in democratic politics. All this should lessen the appeal of Communist slogans and promises." The announcement had attracted the support in the first instance of

(continued)

seemed on the verge of defeat. This intensive food-control measures upon the villages seemed to have disrupted some, if not all, of their supply. The terrorists activities which included ambushes, killings, slashing of rubber trees etc., dropped from 6,100 in 1951 to 4,700 in 1952 and 1,000 in 1953. Han Suyin, "Malaya: The 'Emergency' in its Seventh Year", The Reporter (New York), vol. 11, no. 11 16 December 1954, p. 24.

158 Ibid., 8 May 1953.
159 Ibid.
the President of UMNO and the President of MCA. These two organizations were preparing their own political blueprint, yet Dato Sir Cheng-lock Tan of the MCA not only had welcomed the Government announcement, but had described its timing as "a master stroke". Tungku Abdul Rahman of the UMNO had said much the same thing. The news would be received by the UMNO with great joy, and had come "at just the right time", he added. The pleasurable mood for the moment was "unquestionably the right mood", although, as the Straits Times said "what is easy is not always best."

This change in British policy for going in for more political reform, as a result of the improvement in the situation, was largely because of General Templer's success in carrying out his forceful military policy against Communist terrorists. But it would be wrong to give the entire credit to him. Because it is difficult to separate the effects of the psychological impetus which he administered to the anti-terrorist campaign from the consequences of the new Communist directive, which came into operation about the time of Sir Henry Gurney's murder, deprecating violence as likely further to alienate public

160 Straits Times, 8 May 1953.

161 The Straits Times (8 May 1953) said: "It is easier at the moment to accept the announcement gladly than to mark the difficulties and problems which will come with an elected council...."
opinion from the Communist cause. But it was at least clear that his vigorous personality and his knack of viewing a situation in the simple black-white contrasts which military training inculcated, were of immense value in raising the morale of the civil administration and of the defence forces at a critical juncture.

On 15 July 1953, according to the promise in May 1953, General Templer appointed a Committee of 46, composed of representatives from each of the State and Settlement Governments, representatives of the political parties, of labour, of industrial and commercial interests and of the principal racial communities to examine the question of elections to the Federal Legislative Council and constitutional changes in the Federal Government arising therefrom. The Committee held its first meeting on 17 August 1953 and appointed a Working Party of 20, comprised of ten Malays, three Chinese, three Europeans, two Indians, one Ceylonese and one Eurasian, to study the problem in detail. The member of the public and representative bodies were invited to submit their views by 15 October 1953.

The Committee's report, published on 1 February 1954


163 Federation of Malaya: Report of the Committee appointed to examine the question of Elections to the Federal Legislative Council (Kuala Lumpur, 1954).
made detailed recommendations on the composition of the Legislative and Executive Councils, the franchise, the method of voting and other matters connected with elections. On the crucial issues of the elected element in the Council and the date for elections, there was a split in the Committee. The majority group of 29 which included the Rulers, favoured a Council of ninety-two with an elected minority of forty-four. Contrary to this, a minority group of thirteen, made up of the Alliance (UMNO and MCA) and labour leaders favoured a Council of one hundred members with a three-fifths elected majority of sixty. The Committee was of the opinion that the then wholly official or nominated Council should not be replaced immediately by an entirely elected Council. It thought that, as in similar circumstances elsewhere, the transition should be more gradual and though it had not been possible to reach complete agreement as to the precise number of nominated members who should remain during the first period of the transition towards an entirely elected Council, a considerable area of common ground had emerged and the Committee as a whole recommended the retention of a substantial nominated element, during this period, which it contemplated continuing for about four years, towards the

164 The majority group who favoured the greater number of nominated seats, considered it unwise to make the first step "too big". To them, proceeding step by step from one successful measure to the next was a right step. Ibid., p. 8.
close of which the position should be re-examined in the light of the experience gained. On the question of the date for elections, while the majority group considered that haste was undesirable and that "the proper date for the holding of elections will emerge at the appropriate time", the minority Alliance group hoped that a Constituency Delimitation Commission could complete its work in time to make Federal Elections possible by November 1954. The Committee also recommended that government officials should be debarred from standing as candidates for the Legislature; that the franchise should be limited to Federal citizens over twenty-one; that neither compulsory voting for registration of voters by the government was practicable; and that elections should be by simple majority vote in single member constituencies. Finally, the report recognized that the ultimate objective was a fully elected Council.

The Report which was considered to be conservative, as was to be expected from a Committee drawn largely from the then wholly-nominated Legislative Council, was not well received. The reaction of the Alliance group was violent to the Committee's recommendation. Tungku Abdul Rahman declared that the Alliance was not prepared to compromise on any of the main issues i.e., the three-fifths elected majority in the Council, election by November 1954 and the eligibility of government officials for the elections to the Legislature. He called the minority proposals as "half-baked democracy" and decided to oppose it
whatever might be the consequences. Sir Cheng-lock Tan condemned the proposals as "designed to prolong the colonial status quo." The Pan-Malayan Labour Party (the PMLP) described the report as a "farcical document" and "a speciality of those who seek to preserve their own favoured position under colonial patronage."

Commenting on the Report, Dr Victor Purcell said, although it might appear to those unacquainted with the facts that General Templer had taken an important step in expediting Malaya's political advance, the truth was very nearly the opposite. In 1953, the most important political coalition in the country, the UMNO-MCA Alliance, called for immediate elections to the Federal Legislative Council. This danger General Templer attempted to avert by the appointment of a Committee on Elections. If the Committee's report was adopted, he said, there would be no elected majority on the Council and the situation would virtually be no different than it existed then, when all members were nominated by General Templer.

It was against this background, General Templer in his dispatch of 10 April 1954 to the Colonial Secretary said that there would seem to be a advantage in taking some middle course

165 Malay Mail (Kuala Lumpur), 15 February 1954.
166 Straits Times, 16 February 1954.
167 Dr Victor Purcell (Cambridge University) in a letter to the Manchester Guardian, 4 February 1954.
between the two proposals — the majority group favouring a little less than one-half of the Council being elected members and the minority group favouring not less than three-fifths of the Council being elected. He emphasized that they should be mindful of the importance of creating conditions in which the elected members could feel fully conscious of their share in the responsibility for the government of the country. He said it was true that to proceed directly from a wholly-nominated Council to one with a majority of elected members might be "somewhat unusual step". But through the Federal Membership system and other constitutional features of government in Malaya, citizens of the Federation had already had considerable experience of the burdens and difficulties of government, and therefore, if a small majority of elected members could properly be introduced "now", there would seem to be merit in so doing. The status and sense of responsibility amongst the elected members would thereby be materially increased, whilst the nominated members, though outnumbered, would still have a vital role to play and could be expected from their experience and special knowledge to favour policies likely to reinforce the fundamental stability of the country. In the circumstances, much could be gained by creating a small majority of elected members and, in his discussions with the Rulers, he said, they concluded that, if the number of ex-officio and nominated seats was to be 46,

168 The 46 nominated members would be composed of three

(footnote contd....)
the number of elected members should be 52 so that the new Council would comprise 98 members, apart from the Speaker.

In his reply to General Templer's despatch, Lyttelton endorsed the proposal for an elected majority in the new Legislative Council from the beginning. In this, he said, he had been guided by the very satisfactory progress made during the previous few years by the people of the Federation in discharging through the "Membership system" and otherwise the responsibilities which had fallen to them in the conduct of public affairs. The moderation and good sense of the proposals of the Federal Election Committee were in themselves an indication of political understanding and maturity which justified making the first step towards a fully elected Legislature substantially greater than had been customary elsewhere. He believed that, by making the Federal Legislature more directly responsible to the country as a whole, the introduction of an elected majority to the Council would stimulate the growth of an effective party system, which, as experience had shown, was essential to the success of Parliamentary democracy. With

(Previous footnote contd.)

regard to the date of the elections, Lyttelton agreed with the majority view of the Committee, but added, it should be held as early as possible the next year.

The granting of an elected majority in the Legislative Council was, thus, not only a victory for the Alliance, but also an unusual step and notable departure from accepted British colonial constitutional precedent. Hitherto, the British policy had discouraged, at any time, a change from a wholly-nominated Legislative Council to one with an elected majority in British colonial territories.

The Alliance Mission to London

The Alliance was not, however, satisfied with what was offered and decided to take a delegation to London to press their claim for more. In their opinion, the proposed elected majority of six was too narrow to allow any single party in the Federal Council to obtain sufficient support to be able to control policy-making in the Executive Council, because no single party could be certain of 100 per cent success at the polls. Also, it would be impossible for one party to have a working majority with less. Furthermore, under the system of limited voting in multiple member constituencies, no single

170 The Times, 28 April 1954.
171 Straits Times, 29 April 1954.
party could put up the maximum number of candidates. This would further reduce the strength of the party or parties winning the largest number of elected seats and would make the formulation of policy impossible. Election on such a basis, Tungku Abdul Rahman said, would be a farce. The Alliance had asked for a clear majority of at least 20-60 elected to 40 nominated members - in order to establish a party system which, in the words of Lyttelton, was "essential to the success of Parliamentary democracy."

The UMNO-MCA mission to London was not entirely a failure. Tungku Abdul Rahman and his colleagues were received in the end by the Secretary of State, and in this Lord Ogmore's mediating effort bore fruits. In his letter of 18 May 1954 to the Alliance delegation, in reply to their representations,

---

172 Ibid.

173 Lord Ogmore who was legal adviser to the UMNO told me that he was in touch with Tungku who privately told him (Lord Ogmore) that "either you give us majority (elected) or we go back to the jungle. In this connection, Lord Ogmore received messages from Tungku and Sir Tan Chang-lock that the Alliance party were informed that Lyttelton would refuse to see their delegation. Anyway, they were coming to London. In his message Tungku wrote to Lord Ogmore the "situation is tense here and I fear, the worst should happen, will happen should the Colonial Secretary refuse to meet the delegation. By that time, the Alliance claimed that they had received the resignations of the personnels from the police, the Army and the Homeguard, with a consequent danger of losing the country to the terrorists."

Interview with Lord Ogmore in London on 13 April 1970.

174 528 H.C. Deb. 5s. cols. 10-11, 25 May 1954, Written Answer (Text of the Letter), Lyttelton.
Lyttelton met some of the demands of the Alliance. These were: that government servants would not be debarred from standing for election to the Legislative Council, without eroding the vital principle of the impartiality of the civil servant in relation to politics; that there would be a simple majority vote in all constituencies; that nominated members of the Legislative Council would be eligible for Ministerial Office. He also assured delegation that in case the majority party in the Legislative Council was prevented from functioning effectively in government by deliberate obstructiveness, he would at once ask the High Commissioner to consider with the Conference of the Rulers how the situation might be remedied, and that he would be prepared, if necessary, to agree to amendment of the Federation Agreement in order to apply a suitable remedy. It was a practical impossibility to hold the first Federal Elections before the end of 1954, but they would be held as early as possible in 1955. In his letter, Lyttelton, thus, was not prepared to vary the proposals agreed on between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers. This was reiterated in the Commons by Henry Hopkinson, who said that the agreed proposals were arrived at after very full and lengthy discussions with all concerned and the Secretary of State saw no useful purpose in upsetting them.

Lyttelton's letter, however, did not promise much. The demand for a fully elected Council and the threat to withdraw the UMNO and the MCA representatives from the Government and the Legislative Council suggested that the Alliance had not appreciated the extent of the change. But according to the 176 Straits Times the contention that an elected majority of six—fiftytwo elected and fortysix nominated—would produce an unrepresentative Council dominated by the "Government", as claimed by the Alliance, was untenable. It also said that the Alliance, and other much smaller political bodies which had supported the demand for a fully elected Council, had ignored entirely the certainty that a large proportion of the nominated members would come from the ranks of the Alliance, and that all of them—outside the three ex-officio members and the reserve of seven—would be elected or chosen by the interests they represented. Except in a technical sense, they would not owe their nomination to the mere pleasure of the High Commissioner.

On 25 May 1954, after the return of its London delegation to Malaya, the Alliance leaders put forward a demand for a Royal Commission, consisting entirely of members from outside Malaya to be sent immediately to the Federation with the concurrence of Her Majesty and the Rulers, to review immediately the whole election issue, failing which, they pledged themselves

176 Straits Times, 21 May 1954.
to boycott the Federal Elections.

On 30 July 1954, there was a debate in the Commons on the situation in Malaya in which, John Foster, Under-Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations, explained that the Alliance proposal for an independent Commission to review further constitutional change was submitted to the Rulers Conference which met in July 1954 and, while not expressing a firm and conclusive opinion, the Conference was of the preliminary opinion that perhaps the appointment of an outside Commission was not altogether the best means of deciding the question of constitutional change in Malaya. Later on, a compromise was reached in August 1954 when the High Commissioner agreed to consult the leader or leaders of the majority among elected members, before making appointments to the 'nominated reserve' seats in the Federal Legislative Council.

The 1955 Federal Election

In July 1955, the first Federal elections took place under the revised constitutional proposals. They were contested by nine political parties and 18 independent candidates, the largest being the Alliance, composed of the UMNO, the MCA

---

177 The Times, 26 May 1954; see also 523 H.C. Deb. 5s. col. 1941, 16 June 1954, Oral Answer, Lyttelton.

178 531 H.C. Deb. 5s. col. 938, 30 July 1954, John Foster.

179 The Alliance was originally composed of the UMNO-the MCA. But their leaders announcement that they would welcome (footnote contd....)
and the MIC - which won 51 out of the 52 popularly elected seats in a House of 98. The remaining seat went to a candidate of the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party. The voting, however, was non-communal; Malays voted for Chinese and Indian candidates, and vice versa. The triumph of the triple Alliance was a sign of better communal relations. But according to The Scotsman, it was predominantly a Malay organisation with the Chinese finance. About 90 per cent of electorale was Malay. The adult Chinese population was well over a million, but only about a half was eligible for registration as voters. And many Chinese who could do so, had not troubled to claim the franchise. The Indian community, too, was poorly represented on the electoral roll. Also, as Lord Lloyd, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, said, it was easy to combine in order

(Previous footnote contd.)

association with other parties of whatever race who wished to work with them, brought the MIC together. Malaya (Journal of the Association of British Malaya, London), vol. 4, March 1955, p. 23.

180 The total number of registered electors was just over 1,220,000; of these 84.2 per cent were Malays, 11.2 per cent were Chinese, and the balance of 4.6 per cent were mainly Indians. Cmd. 9769/1956, The Colonial Territories, 1955-56, para. 140, p. 21.

181 The Scotsman, 30 July 1955.

182 The Scotsman (30 July 1955) remarked: "Before a self-governing Malaya could come into existence, the question of who would be its citizens would have to be decided."

to win an election, but "less easy to stay together after you have won it." Nevertheless, he said that here (in Malaya) was something which was cutting right across communal strife by combining all the main races politically and that was an encouraging sign.

Following the Alliance victory, on 2 August 1955, Sir Donald MacGillivray, the new High Commissioner, invited the President of the Alliance, Tungku Abdul Rahman, to form the Cabinet; two days later, when the latter provided the list of his Cabinet colleagues, the Tungku was appointed as Chief Minister and the full list of the 15-man Federal Cabinet, which included nine members of the Alliance, was announced.

On 22 August 1955, Tungku Abdul Rahman presented a memorandum to Lennox-Boyd who was on a visit to Kuala Lumpur. The memorandum included the demand for amnesty for the Communists, the setting up of a fully elected Legislature within two years and the appointment of an independent Commission to recommend constitutional reforms. Since the election destroyed the Communist's argument that they were fighting the "British imperialists" and since the ending of the emergency would accord with the new Communist policy of coexistence, there was, 184 as the Manchester Guardian saw, some hope that an amnesty would be welcomed by the terrorists, whose situation anyhow was

184 Manchester Guardian, 1 August 1955.
worsening daily.

Later, at the inauguration of the new Legislative Council on 31 August 1955, Chief Minister, Tungku Abdul Rahman, put forward a time-table for self-government within two years and independence in four years. This was stated in the presence of Lennox-Boyd. He further said that the only alternative to Communism was nationalism and that the mandate of the people of Malaya was "to get independence or get out," It meant a warning to the British Government and nine Malay State Rulers that unless Malaya - an area of strategic importance to the West - achieved full self-government within the next four years, it might pass into Communist hands. According to Tungku Abdul Rahman, "Communism thrives on colonialism", and therefore, fulfilment of nationalist ambitions was the only alternative to further Communist domination.

It was against this background that Lennox-Boyd met the new Executive Council on 1 September 1955 and discussed with them a plan for a delegation to visit London early in 1956 to work out changes in the Malayan Constitution. He also discussed with the Conference of Rulers questions connected with further constitutional advance. As a result of this discussion, it was agreed that a Conference should be held in London early

---

185 Christian Science Monitor, 31 August 1955; see also Venture, vol. 7, no. 5, October 1955, pp. 6-7.
in 1956 to discuss the future relations which should exist between Her Majesty's Government, the Rulers and the Government of the Federation, and certain fundamental issues such as defence and internal security, finance and economic development and the future of the public service. It was also agreed that a Commission should be appointed to review the Constitution of the Federation, its terms of reference, composition and timing to be discussed at the Conference, and recommendation made thereon to the Queen and the Conference of Rulers. These decisions were conveyed to the Legislative Council by Sir Donald MacGillivray on 30 November 1955.

Since the High Commissioner's declaration at the opening session of the new Legislative Council that the continuation of the emergency would not hamper progress towards self-government, suspicion of British motives, according to the Manchester Guardian, had almost disappeared. The Communist demands at Baling -- that Chin Peng, the Communist leader, would call upon the Communists to lay down their arms as soon as responsibility for internal security had been transferred from the British to the Malayans -- therefore, were seen to be aimed at the destruction of the Malayan Government itself. And the


187  Manchester Guardian, 10 January 1956.
offer was shown to be a bluff when the Tungku pointed out that, even after this transfer, terrorists would have to be detained until they had proved their loyalty to the elected Government of the Federation. That, claimed Chin Peng, would inflict an impossible humiliation upon the Communists, which they would never accept. And so the Baling meeting ended in failure. Such an ending gave the Chief Minister a useful opportunity of explaining to the people of the Federation how three or four thousand Communist terrorists were at war against the nation. So straightforward an argument was one the masses could understand, and they were then much more likely than ever before to respond loyally to his mobilization of the nation against the terrorists, should it become necessary.

The 1956 London Constitutional Conference

This was the background of the London Conference on the independence and future constitutional status of Malaya which met at Lancaster House from 18 January to 6 February 1956, and was attended, among others, by a Delegation from the Federation of Malaya, consisting of four representatives of the Rulers and the Chief Minister and three other Alliance Ministers. In his opening speech, Lennox-Boyd said that it was the intention of the British Government to secure the early establishment of a

188 Ibid.
fully self-governing and independent Federation of Malaya within the Commonwealth on the basis of parliamentary institutions. This was not only a political problem, but also an administrative task of some magnitude and complexity. He assured the Federation delegation that in the constitutional and other development which lay ahead, it would always be the desire of Her Majesty's Government to co-operate with the Federation Government in building a stable country. In reply, Tungku Abdul Rahman, the Chief Minister of Malaya, said that Malaya was a bastion of the "free world" in South-East Asia, and it was also "capable of being the shop window for democracy in that vast area." The fight against the Communists could only be won if the Malayan people felt in their hearts that they were in control of the destiny of their country. "At the moment, they do not feel this; they feel they are being asked to fight other people's battles which, if victorious, would mean to them perpetual servitude." It was for that reason that they earnestly asked the Government to make the declaration of independence for Malaya within the Commonwealth, if possible during 1957. But in the meantime, he said that Malaya should be granted self-government with responsibility for their internal defence.

finance and public service, while the United Kingdom Government should be responsible in the interim period for external defence and external affairs. He assured that there was no intention on their part to leave the Commonwealth once they were in, but they wanted to be equal partners with full freedom to manage their own affairs.

Among the important decisions taken at the Conference was the promise of the British Government to make "every effort" to proclaim the independence of Malaya by August 1957. In the main body of the Conference Report, it was made clear that this promise stood whether or not the Emergency had been brought to an end by that date. The Conference agreed to appoint a Constitutional Commission composed of a United Kingdom Chairman, one other member from the United Kingdom and one member each from Canada, Australia, India and Pakistan to examine the then constitutional arrangement throughout the Federation of Malaya, taking into account the positions and dignities of the Queen and the Rulers and make recommendations for a federal form of constitution for the whole country as a single, independent, self-governing unit within the Commonwealth, based on parliamentary democracy with a bi-cameral legislature. The Conference further agreed that, in view of the Malayan delegation's

desire that full self-government and independence within the Commonwealth could be proclaimed by August 1967, if possible, a Constitution so providing should be introduced at the earliest possible date consistent with the importance of the task before the Constitutional Commission and that every effort would be made by Her Majesty's Government and the Federation Government to achieve this by the time proposed.

During the interim period i.e., before full self-government, it was agreed that the member of the Government responsible in the Executive and Legislative Council for matters of internal defense and security should, in the place of the Secretary for Defence, be a Malayan Minister who should be styled Minister for Internal Defence and Security. It was also agreed that the British Government, through the High Commissioner, should retain during the interim period full responsibility for external defence. But with regard to the remainder of the period of Emergency, it felt that it was consistent with the then stage of political development of the Federation that there should be some change in the arrangements for concerting the operations of the armed forces, the police and the civil departments and agencies involved. To this end, the Conference agreed that the then Committee of which the Director of Operations was Chairman should be replaced by an Emergency Operations

192 Ibid., p. 18; also 550 H.C. Deb. 5s. cols. 45-46, 14 March 1856, Written Answer, Lennox-Boyd.
Council with the Minister for Internal Defence and Security as Chairman and including the Director of Operations among its members. The Conference further recommended that in the final stage, a fully self-governing Federation of Malaya should be responsible for external defence as for all other functions of government. At that time, there should be a Defence Treaty concluded between Her Majesty's Government and the Government of a fully self-governing Federation making provision for defence requirements and mutual assistance: the details of this Treaty should be studied and worked out by a Working Party to be set up in the Federation as soon as possible.

The Conference recognized that the attainment of full self-government and independence within the Commonwealth implied the principle of financial self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, Her Majesty's Government agreed to consider with the Federation Government, if the Emergency had not been brought to an end by the time full self-government and independence was attained, the financial needs of the Federation towards meeting the cost of the Emergency over and above the substantial assistance which would continue to be given through the forces and services provided by the United Kingdom to sustain the fight against the

193 Cmd. 971A/1956, pp. 4-5.
194 Ibid., p. 8.
Communist terrorists.

The Conference further recommended that during the interim period, certain changes should be made in the position of the High Commissioner. The most important of these was that in future the High Commissioner would act on the advice of the Executive Council in all affairs, unless he considered it expedient in the interest of public order, public faith or good government that he should not. It was also agreed in principle that, subject to the concurrence of the Rulers, the British Advisers would be withdrawn from the Malay States in about a year.

Three weeks of negotiation, thus, ended in a complete agreement on the immediate grant of home-rule to the Federation of Malaya, leading to full independence within the Commonwealth by 31 August 1957, "if possible". This promise was to be fulfilled, whether or not the Emergency had been brought to an end by that date. The British Government's own desire for the early framing of a Malayan Constitution was implicit in the attitude it had taken on the Settlements of Penang and Malacca which were to lose their separate identity as British colonies. In London the two Federation delegations became one. Representatives of the plural communities and of the Rulers were united,

195 Ibid., p. 10.
196 Ibid., Appendix E and p. 12.
thereby meeting the single condition which the British Government had set before the final advance to self-government and independence could be considered. The target date of 31 August 1957 met the nationalists needs. For that matter, as the Straits Times said, "it buttresses also British policy. Time-tables for constitutional progress have never been liked in Whitehall, partly because events have a habit of overtaking dates." Independence within two years of taking office was no part of the Alliance calculations even the two months ago. But with the conclusion of the Conference it seemed a sober estimate of possibilities. The immense advantage of the target date, so happily agreed upon, was that it permitted the Alliance Government to grapple with the practical problems of governance and the building of a nation, distracted no longer by the "struggle" for independence.

Tungku Abdul Rahman could, thus, return to Malaya and demonstrate that constitutional processes were bringing peacefully to the country the independence for which the Communists claimed to be fighting. At the Baling Conference, Chin Peng had already agreed that Tungku Abdul Rahman was "the elected representative of the people and not a British puppet." The Tungku had now the additional prestige of being the representative

197 Straits Times, 9 February 1956.
198 Ibid.
who had negotiated the independence. But, as the Manchester Guardian pointed out, the Conference document would not satisfy all the radical young men, even those who were not Communists. It would be seen as a skilful British plan to continue, by means of advisers, to operate the Government machine by Ministers who responded to advice. There would no doubt be criticism of the undertaking by the Malayan delegation to negotiate a defence treaty with Britain, permitting the retention of British forces in the country after independence. Britain, however, might congratulate itself on having brought to an end a dangerous phase in its connection with Malaya. Otherwise, it might have been caught there as the French were caught in Indo-China and the Dutch in Indonesia.

The Reid Constitutional Commission

A Commission of five members was subsequently appointed under the chairmanship of Lord Reid of the United Kingdom to


The Manchester Guardian (9 February 1956), however, feared that the start of the new phase "will at once bring new problems. There is no certainty that Abdul Rahman, even with his prestige increased, will be able to end the Communist rebellion. Much will now depend upon what happens to the Alliance. It was created in order to obtain the independence now almost achieved, and with its end accomplished it may not hold together."

Its members were Sir Ivor Jennings from Britain, Sir William Mckell from Australia, B. Malik from India and Justice Abdul Hamid from Pakistan. A Canadian was also appointed but withdrew for reasons of health and was not replaced.
draft the new Constitution for the Federation of Malaya. The terms of reference of the Reid Commission determined much of the substance of its recommendation. It was to recommend a federal form of government for a "single, independent, self-governing unit within the Commonwealth based on Parliamentary democracy." The central government was to be strong enough, although the States and Settlements were to enjoy "a measure of autonomy". It was to safeguard the "special position of the Malays and the legitimate interests of other communities" and provide for a common nationality and a constitutional Head of State for the Federation to be chosen from among the Rulers.

The Commission's Report was released on 20 February 1957. Its main recommendations were: Malaya should be a federation of the nine Princely States (Johore, Kedah, Kelantan, Negri Sembilan, Pahang, Perak, Perlis, Selangor, Trengganu) together with the Settlements of Malacca and Penang, which should become States on independence. There should be a Head of State chosen by the Rulers of the nine States from amongst their number. In the first instance he should be elected for five years and thereafter the position should rotate amongst the Rulers, in order of seniority. The Parliament of the Federation should comprise of a House of Representatives numbering 100 elected members and a Senate consisting of 22 elected members (two from

each State) and II appointed by the Head of State. The divi-
sion of powers between the States and the Central Government
should be defined in separate lists of Federal subjects, State
subjects and Concurrent subjects. Any residual powers should
be vested in the States. The Federal Government should have
wide powers of taxation and there should be a system of sub-
sidies from the Centre to the States.

On the controversial issue of citizenship, the Commission
followed the Alliance memoranda. It recommended that Malayan
citizenship should be extended to all persons born in Malaya
after independence. Persons born in the Federation before in-
dependence day should be entitled to citizenship if they could
show five years residence in the previous seven years. Persons
not born in the Federation but resident there on independence
day should be entitled to citizenship by showing proof of eight
years' residence in the previous twelve years and other persons
on showing proofs of ten years' residence in a period of twelve
years. The Commission further recommended that all Federation
citizens be Commonwealth citizens.

The Commission proposed Malay to be the official national
language with English retained for ten years. The special
privileges of Malays, in respect of acquisition of land, admis-
sion to the public service, the issuing of licences and scho-
larships, bursaries and other aids for educational purposes
should remain in force for fifteen years and thereafter the
position be reviewed by Parliament. An Alliance's recommendations that Islam be official religion was, however, rejected.

Reactions to the Reid recommendations were primarily concerned with issues of citizenship particularly the suggestion of dual nationality, time limit on Malay privileges, the use of Chinese and Indian languages in State and Federal legislature and issue of State religion. The UMNO opposed the Commonwealth citizenship or any suggestion of dual nationality. They also rejected the time limit on Malay privileges and reaffirmed their demand that Islam be the State religion. The Chinese both within and without the MCA expressed resentment that the Chinese views had not been incorporated in the 203 recommendations.

The Revision of Reid Recommendations

Following the presentation of the Constitutional Commission's Report, a Working Party, composed of 11 members representing the Alliance Government, the Malay Rulers and the

203 The Observer Foreign News Service (London) (14 May 1957) reported that the UMNO, the MCA and the MIC had launched fierce attacks against the Alliance in Kuala Lumpur and against each other. "The Malay population has been incited to 'sharpen its knives' as Malaya is being 'thrown to the Chinese'. The Chinese have accused the Malays of wanting to set themselves up as a 'master race', and Indian political leaders have accused the Tungku of risking a racial explosion if he tried to 'hoodwink and blackmail' the British into agreeing to an unfair Constitution."
United Kingdom Government, was set up in Malaya to examine the Reid recommendations and seek agreement on their acceptance or modification. They held discussions in Kuala Lumpur on the Reid recommendations between February and April and further talks were held in London in May 1957. At these talks, agreement was reached between all parties on all points of principle. This was followed up by drafting a new federal constitution, the draft of which was published as White Paper on 3 July 1957 in the United Kingdom and in the Federation of Malaya.

The draft Constitution made some changes in regard to citizenship. Most important was that persons not born in the Federation but resident there on independence day were to be eligible for citizenship (Article 17) and citizenship was made the yardstick of loyalty to the new federation. It did not specify a review of Malay privileges and recommended that the Paramount Ruler and not the Parliament would be responsible for the Malay privileges and "the legitimate interests of other communities." (Article 153) Islam was declared the official religion although the Federation was to be a secular State (Article 3). The Reid recommendation of the use of Chinese and Indian languages in Parliament for ten years was rejected (Article 152). Amendment of the Constitution was made difficult with the requirement that it could be made only by a Parliament

204 Cmd. 210/1957, Constitutional Proposals for the Federation of Malaya.
elected under the new Constitution (Article 159). It also provided that no elections be held before 1 January 1959, the then Legislative Council being allowed to continue until 31 December 1959 (Article 164).

The Federation of Malaya Independence Bill

On 2 July 1957 the Federation of Malaya Independence Bill was introduced in the Commons and was read second time on 12 July 1957. The Bill was warmly welcomed by the Government and Opposition Members, but questions were raised on the future of economic aid, citizenship rights, language and the special position of Malays. While presenting the Bill, Lennox-Boyd said that the Bill did not itself grant self-government to Malaya, but it enabled Her Majesty to enter into an agreement to establish an independent sovereign Federation of Malaya within the Commonwealth and to provide by Order-in-Council for the implementation of that Agreement. But he said that the agreement would not be brought into force until the new Federation Constitution had been approved by the Federal Legislature and by the States. The Bill also provided for the relinquishment of Her Majesty's sovereignty over Penang and Malacca, and the Federal Constitution provided for their inclusion in the new Federation as the new States. With regard to the Reid Commission's recommendations, he said that the Commission had
to listen and take serious note of very many different views and it had discharged its tasks admirably. There were extreme views on the part of some sections of Malayan opinion which were opposed to any political advance of the Chinese people in Malaya. There were equally strong views held by some of the Chinese population demanding absolute *jus soli* citizenship for anybody born in the Federation and the complete abolition of any distinction between the races. The new Federation Constitution, he said, represented a genuine compromise worked out between differing sectors. The citizenship proposals were a triumph of good sense and tolerance, amidst widely conflicting views, and that the balance struck between Malays and Chinese had been found to be a wise balance. The Malay privileged clauses in the articles of the Constitution did not, in the main, introduce any precedent but gave recognition in the Constitution to the existing situation. He further said that economic viability was an essential prerequisite for political independence, and Malaya, with her up-to-date rubber and tin industry, would have little difficulty in standing on her own feet financially and economically. However, he announced that in the five years 1957-61, Malaya could get from the United Kingdom up to £20 million to help in the emergency in order to fight against the Communist terrorists and international Communism. As a member of the sterling area, he said, Malaya
intended to maintain her connection with this secure, stable and widely convertible currency in which the larger part of the world's business was done. During the debate James Griffiths, the Opposition spokesman, pointed out that the Constitution was a whole series of checks and balances and a compromise to try to reconcile one interest with another. But he said it was a great tragedy that Malaya had to begin her life as an independent State with an emergency still in existence.

Meanwhile, the draft Constitution was unanimously approved by the Federal Legislative Council on 11 July 1957. At the same time, it was also debated in the Settlement Councils of Penang and Malacca, and in all the State Legislatures and approved unanimously. In the same month, the Malaya Independent Bill was passed by the British Parliament through all stages and Royal Assent given on 31 July 1957. After signing the new agreement between the Queen and the Rulers, envisaged in the Federation of Malaya Independence Act, the Independence of the Federation of Malaya was proclaimed in Kuala Lumpur on 31 August 1957.

---

206 Ibid., cols. 648-56, 12 July 1957, James Griffiths.

207 Cmd. 451/1958, The Colonial Territories 1957-58, para. 142, pp. 19-20. The detailed text of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement under which, following independence, the United Kingdom forces should be stationed in the Federation to assist the Government of the Federation in the external defence of its territory and for the fulfilment of Commonwealth and international obligations was agreed shortly before the 31 August.
Thus, besides the Gold Coast, the Federation of Malaya was another British territory which achieved independence under the Conservative administration. When the Conservatives took over in 1951, the situation in Malaya was serious because of the Communist terrorists movement which claimed to be fighting against the "British imperialists". In his Memoirs Lord Chandos admits that they were on the way to losing control of Malaya to the Communists unless something was done. His predecessor had briefed him that the previous Labour Government were baffled by Malaya and it had sadly become a military problem to which they had not been able to find the answer.

The Communist terrorists movement was no doubt the Chinese inspired and got impetus from the Second World War. Also, Malaya is an almost ideal terrain for guerrilla warfare. The Chinese minority group was feeling isolated and was then struggling for its rights which was then linked with the Communist movement. So whatever the origin one might explore, it became the Communist type movement of insurgency against the British rule and the very passive people of Malaya.

Within a month of his appointment, Lyttelton decided to

---

208 Lord Chandos, n. 116, p. 362.

209 Interview with Colin Legum, Commonwealth Correspondent of The Observer in London on 6 May 1970.
go on a three weeks' visit to Malaya to obtain first hand knowledge of the situation. It was a fact that the British Government could not ignore that the Conservative Party was regarded in Malaya as a reactionary body imbued with nineteenth century colonial ideas. And Lyttelton's assurance during his visit that British policy in Malaya was to work for self-government and the establishment of a united Malaya, went at least a part of the way to prove that it was nothing of the kind. In a statement shortly before leaving Singapore on his way back, Lyttelton assured those who doubted Britain's intentions and purpose stating that Britain had a mission in Malaya and it would not be laid aside until they were convinced that terrorism had been killed and buried, and a true partnership of all Malayan communities, including the British, could lead to stable self-government. This being a war of ideals as well as of arms he realised that they could not win it without the help of the population, particularly of the Chinese.

Lyttelton's visit had a wholesome effect on the situation in Malaya. His decision to outline some of his conclusions on the spot had convinced everyone who doubted it that he meant to employ all methods at the Government's power to restore order and security and they seemed wise and practical then. His stress on the importance of cooperation of the population in the suppression of the Communist terrorists and his recognition of the fact that war could be won without the deployment
of large additional military forces, showed that they would result in a change of policy in London. Indeed it did. And on his return to London he was able to convince Churchill that the key to Malaya's problem was that one man should be responsible for both civil and military sides.

This led to the appointment of General Sir Gerald Templer as High Commissioner for Malaya, vesting in him not only the normal civil responsibilities of the office, but also the responsibilities of the operational control of all military and police operations against the terrorists. It was one of the dilemmas of the Malayan disturbances that a political solution could not be attained unless security was restored to an extent that would give people enough confidence to throw in their lot with the Government. There was, therefore, a dual mandate involved in Lyttelton's directive to General Templer. It, while placing a political solution which was to guide the people of Malaya for a fully self-governing nation preferably within the Commonwealth, at the head of the preamble, in a later paragraph, described the restoration of law and order as the "primary tasks". What was needed then was the improvement of the police and it was encouraging that Templer had immediately appreciated its importance. His realisation of the root of the problem was clear from his statement: "I could win this war within three months if I could get two-thirds of the people on my side." While the defeat of the terrorists gang had been his
first task, it had always been a tenet of his faith that
"Communism will not be beaten up by military measures alone." Within four months General Templer returned to London with a suggestion that Malaya needed a political solution. He understood the problem to be unlike that of Kenya and said that to ally the Malayan nationalism was the only way to defeat Communism - a straightforward calculated strategy and he succeeded.

When the situation improved, General Templer expressed his willingness to appoint a Committee of the Legislative Council to examine the question of Federal elections. And in view of Lyttelton's earlier statement that there could be "no elections in Malaya until safety is assured", this was a subtle change in British policy. This change in British policy for going in for more political reform, as a result of the improvement in the situation, was largely because of General Templer's success in carrying out his forceful military policy against Communist terrorists. But it would be wrong to give the entire credit to him because it is difficult to separate the effects of the psychological impetus which he administered to the anti-terrorist campaign from the consequences of the new Communist directive, which came into operation about the

210 Ibid.

211 Manchester Guardian, 13 February 1952.
time of Sir Gurney's murder deprecating violence as likely further to alienate public opinion from the Communist cause.

Also, in 1953, the most important political coalition, the UMNO-MCA Alliance, called for immediate elections to the Federal Legislative Council. This danger General Templer attempted to avert by the appointment of a Committee on elections.

Although the Committee's main recommendation was for nominated majority, Lyttelton, on the advice of General Templer, agreed to grant elected majority of six in the Legislative Council in 1954. This was not only a victory for the Alliance - of the UMNO and the MCA - which had then made considerable headway, but also an unusual step and notable departure from accepted British colonial constitutional precedent. What motivated Lyttelton to endorse the proposal for the elected majority was the very satisfactory progress made during the previous few years by the people of the Federation in discharging

212 John Lowe said although the Communist terrorists were able for some years to attract considerable support among Chinese peasants and workers, who had a grievance, and from Chinese students with radical urges, they immediately antagonised the Malays and then progressively lost support among Malayan, Indians and Chinese alike as a result of terrorist methods. But their emotional appeal remained effective even when the Communists had become unpopular and hated. This caused the Conservative Government to "see a red light" and to perform the neat political operation by going all out to give Malaya complete sovereign independence at the earliest possible date. John Lowe, The Malayan Experiment (Fabian International and Commonwealth Bureaux, Research Series 213, London, March 1960), p. 6.
through the "Membership system" and otherwise the responsibilities which had fallen to them in the conduct of public affairs.

However, the Alliance was not satisfied with what was offered and decided to take a delegation to London. But it was not until the Alliance victory - now triple Alliance of the UMNO, the MCA and the MIC - in July 1955 elections that the Chief Minister, Tungku Abdul Rahman, was able to put forward a time-table for self-government within two years and independence in four years for Malaya. This was stated in the presence of Lennox-Boyd who was then on a visit to Kuala Lumpur.

It was against this background that Lennox-Boyd invited the representatives of the plural communities and of the Rulers to visit London early in 1956 to work out changes in the Malayan Constitution. The London Conference ended in a complete agreement on the immediate grant of home-rule to the Federation of Malaya, leading to full independence within the Commonwealth, if possible, by August 1957. This promise was to be fulfilled whether or not the emergency had been brought to an end by that date. In London, the two federation delegations - representatives of the plural communities and of the Rulers - were united, thereby meeting the single condition which the British Government had set before the final advance to self-government and independence could be considered. The target date of 31 August 1957 met the nationalists needs and for that matter it buttressed also British policy. Britain was also to congratulate
itself on having brought to an end a dangerous phase in its connection with Malaya. Otherwise, it might have been caught there as the French were caught in Indo-China and the Dutch in Indonesia.

Britain had considerable economic interests in Malaya. The independence of Malaya was, therefore, a gamble for a stable and rational government. It was a gamble which had to be made. The emancipation of Malaya was a necessary part of the ending of Western rule in Asia and of the attempt to put the relations between Britain and the Asian peoples on a basis of cooperation and equality. The British Colonial Office realized that it could never achieve stability there, unless they had a political formula that was going to take this steam of Communist terrorists out. The emergency, of course, lasted there for many years after independence. But then the Malays were running the country politically. This struck at the very basis of the appeal of the Communist guerrilla force in the jungle whose position was worsening daily. Also, there was no White settler problem. And since the Alliance claimed that all the three major races were united and that they could run their own affairs, there was no reason to hold back the independence of Malaya. In fact, Britain was caught between the Alliance's demand for independence and the Communist terrorists' claim that they were fighting against the "British imperialists". And therefore, it was logical for Britain to concede the Alliance's
demand, rather than losing the country to the Communists. By doing so, Britain realized that she could preserve her economic interests and retain her influence in a strategic area by stationing her forces under defence treaty. Also, Malaya is a sophisticated society with large trained people who could run the Government. So, the examples of India, Burma, Ceylon were there, when Malaya's demand for independence was being considered. Also, Malaya is in Asia and Asians were several degrees ahead of Africans.

---