This thesis is based on original research by the author while a Research Scholar in the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History of the Australian National University from 1973 to 1977.
ABSTRACT

The cession of Sarawak by the third Rajah to the British Crown finally resolved the ambiguous position of a European-ruled Malay state which remained within the British imperial system for 100 years without being a formal part of it. External pressures, principally the Japanese invasion, had made direct British control both necessary and irresistible. The problem of the succession also helped to ensure that the Rajah's agreement was not difficult to obtain. But it was already apparent in the 1930s that Brooke rule had come to the end of the road and could only look backwards. The Brooke administration's failure to re-define native interests in the light of economic and social developments had removed the rationale upon which the Raj was avowedly based. The legitimization of cession was a grubby affair undertaken more for the benefit of British domestic opinion than the people of Sarawak. Nevertheless, it provided an issue which fostered the political development of Sarawak from a loose group of communities linked only by a common acceptance of the Rajah's authority to a multi-racial state with its own nationalist tradition. Sarawak nationalism took the form of a movement to restore Brooke rule but it envisaged the establishment of an independent native state in which power would be shared between the Malays and the Ibans.
When I undertook my research on Sarawak history I hoped to make the anti-cession movement 1946-51 the focus of my study. However, a combination of circumstances caused me to concentrate instead on the cession proper, together with its background in Brooke rule and British colonial policy and its immediate consequences both in Sarawak and Britain. To summarize these circumstances briefly, I experienced difficulty in obtaining permission to conduct research in Sarawak and consequently was unable to carry out all the interviewing which I had envisaged. However, my investigations there showed that the history of the various anti-cession groups was sparsely documented. While I located some material on the Sarawak Dayak Association's origins in the United Sea Dayak Co-operative and the Japanese-sponsored Perimpun Dayak, no trace could be found of the records of the Malay National Union and the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak. One of the immediate consequences of the murder of Governor Duncan Stewart at Sibu in December 1949 was the confiscation of documents by the police in most towns and the destruction of material by Malays who wished to remove all traces of their connections with the anti-cession organizations.

By the time I began to examine the splendid collection of material deposited at Rhodes House, Oxford, by members of the Brooke family, Mrs Margaret Noble and a number of former Sarawak officers, I was also convinced that it was just as important to explain how cession came about. While a good deal has been written about the first two Rajahs, the end of Brooke rule has been passed over by historians. The Rhodes House material, together with the Colonial Office and War Office records and interviews, provided a good basis for reconstructing the story. The Rhodes House collection also contained a number of letters from members of the Malay National Union and the Sarawak Dayak Association during 1946 and early 1947. I have used these in my last chapter which describes the first phase of the anti-cession movement in the Kuching area. The shape of the thesis has been determined by my belief that the cession must be seen both as the product of factors arising from Brooke rule and British imperialism and as the well-spring of Sarawak's political development. I hope
that what I have written will help provide a starting-point for studies of the anti-cession movement itself, which must be regarded as the first expression of Sarawak nationalism.

Perhaps the most disappointing lacuna in the material (apart from the anticipated unavailability of key Colonial Office files for 1945 and 1946) is the paucity of records for Sarawak during the inter-war period, the Japanese occupation and the third Rajah himself. Unlike his father and great-uncle, Vyner Brooke does not seem to have been a prolific writer — or, if he was, pathetically little of his writing has survived. Consequently, I have been obliged to conjecture about his personality and his motivations and I am by no means confident of the picture which emerges of this central figure. There is much more material available on Anthony Brooke and I was fortunate enough to have several long interviews with him in London in 1974 and 1975. However, he raises yet another problem for the student of contemporary history. How is one to deal with the contradictions inevitably arising between what an individual remembers about events thirty years earlier in which he was closely involved, and documentary evidence dating from that time? There must also inevitably be some discrepancy between the historian's treatment of the living and the dead. I also realize that in the course of my work I have caused a number of people to re-live painful experiences which they would prefer to have forgotten.

G.T.M. MacBryan raises the separate problem of the eminence, the shadowy figure behind the scenes who nevertheless plays a crucial role in the drama. Many of the letters and documents signed by the Rajah must have been MacBryan's work, just as some of the letters signed by Sir Thomas Blamey were the work of A.A. Conlon and others signed by the Datu Patinggi were written by his young secretaries. There is no way of demonstrating conclusively that this is so, but everything we know about the relationship between the characters concerned points in that direction. As for the Colonial Office, we know for a fact that Edward Gent and his colleagues drafted important letters for the various Secretaries of State for Colonies. While personalities are expected to be important in dynastic history, their influence is often hidden behind modern bureaucratic structures and party systems.
'Sarawak', it should be noted, originally referred to a dependency of the sultanate of Brunei consisting of the Sarawak, Samarahan and Lundu river basins. Although the Sarawak to which I refer corresponds with the present political and geographical entity, most of the events which I describe took place in Kuching which was the focus of changes arising from urban growth as well as being the seat of Brooke and colonial rule. It is regretted if the rest of this huge but sparsely populated state seems to have a somewhat disembodied existence as 'the outstations'. I have used the term 'natives' to refer collectively to all the peoples of Sarawak except the Chinese and Indians. One of the lasting tributes to Brooke rule is its continued use in Sarawak without any suggestion of pejorative colonial connotations. The definition used in the Sarawak Constitution, which follows Brooke practice, lists Malays, Ibans, Land Dayaks, Kayans, Kenyahs, Klemantans, Melanaus and Muruts. I have also used 'Ibans' rather than 'Sea Dayaks', although the latter term occasionally appears in quotations and names of organizations. 'Dayak' was used during the period of this study to refer collectively to all non-Muslim natives. I have avoided the use of [sic] when it draws unnecessary attention to the occasionally faulty spelling and expression of people for whom English was a second language. Unless otherwise specified, the currency referred to is the Sarawak dollar which, like the Straits dollar, was worth stg. 2s.4d. during the inter-war period. Finally, in the belief that early Brooke history is familiar to most students of Southeast Asian history, I have avoided rehearsing it once more in my introduction.
First and foremost among the people who have assisted me is Mrs Margaret Noble. The collection of Brooke family and other Sarawak material which she managed to have deposited at Rhodes House, Oxford, proved invaluable. She also made it possible for me to meet a number of other orang dahulu and her conversation and tireless correspondence helped maintain my momentum as well as providing a wealth of information. I must also thank her for allowing me to reproduce her excellent portraits of Vyner and Bertram Brooke. Mr Anthony Brooke was most co-operative in interviews and correspondence and I very much appreciate his concern that the whole story should be told. His own memory proved to be prodigious and he displayed remarkable forebearance when commenting on the more provocative sections of my draft chapters. Mrs K.M. Brooke was also extremely kind and helpful, letting me see some very useful material. I regret that the limits of my study have not allowed full justice to be done to her courageous tour of Sarawak in 1947. Other orang dahulu who assisted me were Mrs M. Daubeney, Mr Bill Banks, Mr A.J.N. Richards, Mr E.H. Elam, Mrs B. Pitt Hardacre, Mr B.A. Trechman, Sir Dennis White, Mr A.R. Snelus, Mr J.G. Anderson, Mrs Gina Field, Archdeacon Peter Howes, Mr J.R. Combe, Mr B.J.C. Spurway and Mrs Averil Keevil. I particularly appreciate the information given to me by Mr K.H. Digby, Mr J.L. Noakes, Mrs Margaret Bowyer and Mr C. Pitt Hardacre through correspondence. Although Mrs Evelyn Hussey had never been to Sarawak, she was most helpful about the Rajah and G.T.M. MacBryan and the papers which she made available to me constituted a magnificent windfall. I am grateful, too, to Mrs Hilary Waddington for allowing me to see her brother's papers and to Mr J.C.W. MacBryan, Mrs Eva MacBryan and Mrs Frances Benn for further information about G.T.M. MacBryan, Lady Anne Gammans was kind enough to let me use her husband's papers, now deposited at Rhodes House. I also received valuable assistance from a number of orang bahru, principally Sir Thomas Eastick, Mr J.R. Black, Professor W.E.H. Stanner, Professor Derek Freeman, Alastair and Hedda Morrison, Mr Robert Nicholl, Alan Webb and Mr E.C.G. Barrett (who made a brief visit to Sarawak during the crucial part of 1946). Mr C.W. Dawson who was Chief Secretary of Sarawak 1946-50
kindly allowed me to read his diary for the early part of 1946. This work would be much the poorer without it. The Librarian at Rhodes House, Mr F.E. Leese, was most obliging in letting me work in his basement and I am particularly indebted to the Archivist, Miss Patience Empson, and her friendly colleagues for their tireless assistance with the Sarawak material. In London, Mrs Brenda Hough of the SPG archives was most obliging and in Canberra, Mr G. McEwen at the War Memorial and Mrs Joy Wheatley at Archives did their best to help me. Rather than risk possible embarrassment to the many people in Sarawak who gave me so much of their time and hospitality, I must express my deep appreciation and hope that there will be an opportunity of conveying it personally. I also wish to thank my supervisors, Dr A.J.S. Reid and Dr Michael Stenson, for their guidance and Dr David Marr and Dr Alphons van der Kraan who commented on the drafts. I am particularly indebted to Professor Nicholas Tarling for his encouragement and early guidance. K.C. Jong, C.P. Tang, Nuara Khir and B.B. Dzulkifli assisted with the translations and I am specially grateful to my colleague Akira Oki and Mr S. Suzuki for a correspondence from which I benefited greatly. The first draft was typed by Patricia Hutchison, Coral Coleman and Maureen Krascum and the final draft by Jacqui McKinnon and Rosamund Walsh. Chi Chi Beaton of Visual Aids was responsible for printing the photographs. I also wish to thank Elinor Parker and my friends at 'Stony Creek' for their moral support. My research was made possible by the award of an Australian National University Research Scholarship and I wish to express my gratitude to the Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History for its generosity and assistance.

Canberra, March 1977. 

R.H.W.R.
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<td>BBCAU</td>
<td>British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit</td>
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<td>BMA(BB)</td>
<td>British Military Administration (British Borneo)</td>
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<td>Sarawak Government Gazette</td>
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CHAPTER I

Introduction: The Brooke Tradition

THE 'WHITE RAJAHS' of Sarawak have stimulated the romantic imagination of generations of European readers. It is almost as if the Brookes succeeded in fulfilling the archetypal fantasy of isolated white men ruling over savages in a tropical setting. The story of how James Brooke established his kingdom in a corner of Borneo has been told so many times that it has almost become a legend.

The legend is at its best in boys' adventure stories of the early twentieth century when the European imperial system was at its zenith. In The Boy's Book of Pioneers, Eric Wood gave James Brooke pride of place among his Empire-building heroes:

... he had gone, an unknown Englishman, into Sarawak, had found it and its neighbouring States savage and unsettled, overriden by pirates, and he had by tact, and practically unaided, brought into existence wise government, had opened up possibilities of trade never dreamt of, had won the devotion of a people, and almost freed the country from the pirates, who had been grim barriers to trade along the coast ... What he bequeathed to his successor, ... was a prosperous country, justly ruled, where natives, and Europeans were fellow-citizens living at peace.

The essential elements are all there: the brave and high-minded European who brings peace and good government to warring and benighted savages, earning their eternal gratitude and at the same time enlarging the boundaries of Empire and the possibilities of trade. It is part of the mythology of how Europeans came to dominate so much of the world in the nineteenth century.

Although the legend hardly bears examination, it will doubtless endure as long as the dream of being king of a tropical island endures. It has certainly dominated Sarawak historiography until recent times. While I am interested in the Brooke legend and its relationship to fact, I shall be dealing primarily with the end of Brooke rule in the belief that this is as significant as its

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1 London n.d., p.100.
origins. I shall argue that whatever Brooke rule may have been in its first conception, by the 1930s the old rationale had almost disappeared and Sarawak was facing economic and administrative problems of a colonial nature. Until this time the state's geographical remoteness, tiny population and lack of valuable resources had allowed the Brookes and their European officers to think that Sarawak was 'different'.

Sarawak was within the British imperial system without being part of it. The Brookes could not have established their ascendancy in north-western Borneo without the assistance of the British navy and in 1888 they were guaranteed future protection. Their success in keeping economic exploitation to a minimum was assisted by the fact that there was very little to exploit, although they depended on Singapore and the structure of British mercantilism for survival. While Sarawak remained within the tradition of Borneo's Malay sultanates, it was also a surrogate British colony.

The Great Depression and preparations for another major world conflict spelled the end of Sarawak's comfortable isolation from outside pressures. Colonial Office dissatisfaction with the way Sarawak was being administered and inability to do anything about it meant that there were powerful bureaucrats awaiting the opportunity to tidy up an 'irregular' situation. They could argue that in the eyes of the world, Sarawak was to all intents and purposes a British colony and therefore a British responsibility. However, responsibility could be exercised only if there was power to intervene. Consequently there was increasing pressure on the Rajah to accept a Resident, completing the pattern of British domination which had begun in the Malay States seventy years earlier. It was also important that Sarawak should be brought within the network of Imperial defence strategy, a pressure which would render its sovereignty little more than a technicality.

At the same time, it was increasingly obvious that the momentum which had sustained Brooke rule was almost exhausted. While many of his European officers identified strongly with the state and its people, the last of the Brooke rulers had lost interest in the whole idea of Sarawak. Nor could he see the perpetuation of his line
through his nephew whom he was not disposed to trust. When the
Japanese had occupied Sarawak and the post-war situation seemed
highly uncertain, the Rajah was not inclined to stand on what little
remained of his sovereignty. Renewed pressure from the Colonial
Office to accept an Adviser and the ultimate legislative power of
the British government under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act persuaded
him to call it a day.

Together with North Borneo, Sarawak in 1946 became the last
colony to be acquired by Great Britain. Far from representing the
high-water mark of British imperialism, however, its acquisition
signalled the ebb of British influence in Southeast Asia. Whatever
the Colonial Office's reasons for appointing a Resident in Sarawak
may have been in 1941, the Japanese sweep south and the emergence of
post-war nationalism brought about a defensive strategy which
necessitated the consolidation of British imperial interests. This
factor, together with the long-standing need to rationalize Britain's
administrative control of its Far Eastern colonies, made it almost
inevitable that Sarawak should be drawn beneath the Imperial wing.
That this was brought about by a British Labour government committed
to the decolonization of India and Africa is one of the ironies of
history. Sarawak had to be colonized before it could be decolonized.

The Brooke Raj

James Brooke's 1841 defeat of the Sarawak rebellion against Brunei\(^1\)
created for him a position of power which he spent the rest of his
life consolidating and defending. With the Sultan of Brunei weak and
incompetent, and the Dutch anxious to extend their influence along the
north-west coast of Borneo, Sarawak was a bone of contention among the
Brunei pengirans (members of the Brunei royal family) who had settled
there. Having been offered Sarawak's government and revenues as
his reward for suppressing the rebellion, James decided that a foothold

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\(^1\) The conventional view has been that the rebellion of the
Sarawak datu (non-royal chiefs) against Brunei arose
from the harsh taxation levied by the pengirans. But
James Brooke at no time suggested this; he believed that
it had been instigated by the Sultan of Sambas on the
suggestion of the Dutch.
in Sarawak was preferable to his original notion of building a chain of British settlements through the Malay archipelago from Singapore to northern Australia. He believed that by extending his influence to Brunei he could reform the sultanate as a vehicle for British mercantile interests. Cloaked as they were by humanitarian sensibilities, James' fundamental instincts were those of an imperialist.

In accordance with his initial faith in the rehabilitation of the Malay kingdoms, and in response to the realities of his tenuous position, James Brooke took the line of least resistance to indigenous forms when establishing his state. The political structure of the Raj adhered closely to the established pattern of the west Borneo sultanates: an autocratic Rajah; delegation of authority to a Malay elite who maintained their position vis à vis the non-Muslim natives; pitting of 'loyal' Ibans against those who challenged the Rajah's authority; and reliance on Chinese to generate most of the trade and revenue.

The Raj of Sarawak developed in the west Borneo mould, substantially modified by the liberal humanitarian sensibilities of its English rulers, and depended initially on the protection of the British navy and later on the acceptance of the Rajah's authority by his subjects. Formal political authority, originally derived from Brunei, was embodied in the political wills of the first two Rajahs whose delineation of the succession provided Sarawak with its only constitutional basis until 1941. The Raj claimed sovereignty not in the form of taxation rights over particular communities, as had been the practice of Brunei, but in the ownership of clearly circumscribed territory. The Rajahs were sworn to uphold the Muslim faith and adat (customs) of the Malays, Ibans and other peoples under their authority but they also claimed the power to suppress customs such as forced trade, bondage and

1 Brooke outlined his scheme in the prospectus he wrote for his first voyage to the Malay Archipelago. It was published as an appendix to the first volume of his friend Henry Keppel's *The Expedition to Borneo of H.M.S. Dido ...*, 2 vols., London [1847].


3 See Appendix II.
headhunting. Replacing the Brunei pengirans as head of a Malay hierarchy, they transformed the Malay datus (chiefs) from feudal tax-collectors into salaried dignitaries (part of whose function was to legitimate their position) and second-level administrators.

As early as 1841 James Brooke issued a makeshift code of laws based on those of Brunei but reflecting his own notions of British justice and 'fair play'. He ruled with the assistance of Malay and European advisers who from 1855 constituted his 'Supreme Council'. The general Council or 'Council Negri' established by his nephew and successor Charles Brooke in 1867 was a means of extending recognition to and cementing support from Iban, Kayan and other native leaders. Brooke administration depended from the outset on a small group of Englishmen who remained in Sarawak more from their sense of adventure and 'service' than from any hope of making money, together with the perabangan or traditional Malay elite.

At the apex of the Malay traditional system, the Rajahs also claimed authority over the Ibans, a claim which was strenuously resisted and had to be enforced by bloody warfare. The Ibans of the Skrang and Saribas who had been 'pacified' during the first decades served as the Rajah's soldiers against 'rebel' Ibans well into the twentieth century. By then, however, they were also becoming increasingly involved in the cash economy through rubber smallholding and could afford to educate their children at mission schools which had been set up as part of the 'pacification' programme. The position of the Chinese was similar to the west Borneo states and in Malaya. Constituting the only force towards economic development, they were the agents of change. Not obliged to adopt a subordinate position as in Malaya and confident of protection when their economic interests were threatened, they provided Brooke government with most of its revenue, its trading community and the multiplicity of skills without which the state of Sarawak could not have survived.

1 The title 'Abang' was assumed by the sons of datus.
The economic basis of the Raj was similar to that of other west Borneo sultanates. The Ibans were subsistence farmers and hunters who exchanged jungle produce for salt, iron and cloth and remained on the periphery of the cash economy; the Malays were subsistence fishermen and padi-farmers; the Chinese were miners, pepper-farmers, craftsmen or traders. Government revenue was derived largely from taxes imposed on the predominantly Chinese vices of gambling and opium-smoking, supplemented by export duties on antimony and gold, a nominal head-tax on the Ibans and occasional fines for such offences as headhunting or defiance of government authority. Government expenditure was largely devoted to salaries, the maintenance of up-river forts and the water communication. Although James Brooke had hoped that minerals would provide the 'staple' to finance the cost of his administration, he was obliged to dig deeply into his own pocket and then to rely on private loans. Unable to obtain investment funds from European sources on his own terms, he was dependent on the economic productivity of the Chinese.

The nice question is whether there was a common source of Brooke authority among the widely-diverging ethnic and cultural groups which made up what might be called the Sarawak confederation. For the Malays, the Rajah was the titular head of a political system which had its origins in their own tradition and preserved their political hegemony over the other races. He was not a Muslim, but was sworn to protect the Muslim faith and Malay custom. It is much more difficult to generalize about the non-Muslim natives. For the Land Dayaks and other peoples more or less at the mercy of the Ibans in pre-Brooke times, he was a saviour and protector. For the Ibans of the lower reaches of the Batang Lupar and the Saribas he was their ally against the up-river Ibans and the Kayans. For the up-river Ibans, he was an intruder who thwarted their migration into new areas and forbade the practice of headhunting which constituted a dynamic element in their culture. The Chinese saw him as a protector against the Ibans and the guarantor of conditions conducive to trade and industry.

1 For Vyner Brooke's Accession Oath, see Appendix II.
2 An extremely useful study could be made of indigenous perceptions of the Brookes. I am well aware of the limitations of my analysis.
It is difficult to reduce these different perceptions to a simple analysis of Brooke authority, nor is it easy to assess the extent to which the Rajah's prestige was derived from his position as representative of the new European master-class of the Malay world. But an important part of his function was that of final arbiter, not only between different ethnic groups, but within them. Content to pursue a laissez-faire policy towards indigenous custom except when it contravened humanitarian standards, he constituted a court of appeal whose authority was generally accepted by all races. It is significant that the term used in Sarawak to describe Brooke government was *perentah*, denoting the preservation of civil order, rather than *kerajaan* with its more formal connotations of political authority.

**Sarawak's International Status**

It was partly by accident that Sarawak became and remained an independent state. From the beginning of his involvement in Borneo, James Brooke hoped that Britain would establish a protectorate there and although he always professed not to be disappointed if this could not be arranged, he expended a good deal of time and energy in the attempt. The need for protection had been there from the outset; indeed, he could never have succeeded without the assistance of the British navy. The Chinese rebellion caused him to renew his diplomatic efforts with the British government, but when the offer of a protectorate finally came from Lord Palmerston in early 1858, James imposed stiff conditions. He asked for compensation for what he had spent on the establishment and maintenance of Sarawak, nor would he accept the compromise of a naval base which he had earlier suggested.

The next effort to secure a protectorate followed an

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1 In 1857 members of the Chinese gold-mining *kongsi* (cooperative) from Bau rebelled against the imposition of taxes and took temporary control of Kuching. Their expulsion by Malays and Ibans supporting the Rajah established a tradition in race relations which was never forgotten. The rebellion is described in Runciman, *The White Rajahs*, pp.124-33. See also, Ludvig Helms, *Pioneering in the Far East*, London 1882, pp.164-92.
abortive Malay rebellion in 1861. That James was then prepared to approach Holland for protection indicates to what extent the instincts of the petty ruler had taken over from those of the Dutch-hating patriot of 1838. The Dutch, after all, had sent him belated assistance during the Chinese rebellion. However, Holland rejected the proposal out of hand and James had to call off negotiations with the French when both his elder nephew, Brooke Brooke, and his patron, Baroness Burdett-Coutts, expressed strong disapproval. James subsequently approached the Duke of Brabant (later King Leopold II of Belgium) but negotiations were terminated by Brooke Brooke’s unilateral intervention. Indeed, it was his nephew’s emotional reaction to these efforts which caused James to disinherit him and make over Sarawak temporarily to Baroness Burdett-Coutts whom he then advised to offer it first to the British government and then to the French.

Always anticipating that Britain would take over Sarawak, James had been forced to adopt an independent status towards which he was always somewhat ambivalent. He was gratified when his sovereignty was recognized by the United States government but did not negotiate a treaty of friendship in the belief that it might prejudice his chances of obtaining a British protectorate. Nor did Britain’s recognition of his sovereignty in 1863 and the appointment of a Consul provide a satisfactory substitute, although it removed the Foreign Office’s objection that he was technically subject to the sovereignty of Brunei. In retirement in Devon and with his younger nephew and nominated heir, Charles Brooke, in charge of the government, James decided that cession to Britain was the only solution for Sarawak. But his insistence that he be repaid all that he had spent and that Charles should be given compensation, proved to be unacceptable. Before he died in 1868

1 Generally referred to as 'The Malay Plot', this has been fully dealt with by Pringle, _Rajahs and Rebels_ ..., pp.97-134.

2 In a sad rehearsal of events which were to take place seventy-five years later, James took quite unnecessary precautions to prevent Brooke Brooke from returning to Sarawak and deprived him of all his rights.

3 He drew the line at her suggestion that it might go to Greece.
James was still negotiating for a protectorate with the Italian government which he hoped would at least provide the capital with which to develop Sarawak.

The Second Rajah

Under Charles Brooke, who ruled from 1868 until his death in 1917, Sarawak was extended to its present boundaries, government administration was formalized and some effort made towards economic development and technological adaptation. Inheriting the first Rajah's interest in securing the trade of neighbouring river systems and his latter-day belief that the Brunei sultanate was irredeemable, Charles wanted to annex the Baram river district in 1876 but was only given permission by the British government to do so after 1881 when the North Borneo Company received its charter. Charles also acquired the Trusan in 1885, Limbang in 1890 and Lawas in 1905, all by means of cash payments to the Sultan of Brunei and an undertaking to pay annual 'cession money'. Charles would have taken over Brunei itself had it not been for the intervention of the British government which signed a treaty of protection with him in 1888.¹ This finally clarified Sarawak's international status.

In place of the somewhat amateurish and unsystematic way in which James had run Sarawak, Charles developed an administration which he supervised in every detail. By 1890 Sarawak was divided into four Divisions, corresponding with the major river systems, which were in turn subdivided into Districts²:

- **First Division** - Sarawak and Sadong river systems
- **Second Division** - Batang Lupar, Saribas and Kalaka
- **Third Division** - Rejang, Matu, Oya, Mukah and Bintulu
- **Fourth Division** - Baram and Trusan.

Each Division was under the charge of a Resident who in turn supervised the work of District Officers, Assistant District Officers and Malay

¹ A full account of Sarawak's territorial acquisitions from Brunei can be found in Nicholas Tarling, *Britain, the Brookes and Brunei*. Kuala Lumpur 1971.

² These remained the basic administrative units until recent years.
Native Officers appointed by the Rajah but deriving much of their authority by virtue of their descent from the datus who had originally ruled in the name of the Sultan of Brunei. State-assisted education, such as it was, concentrated on providing this traditional Malay elite with elementary skills.

Native Officers assisted the District Officer in general administration. In addition, there was until 1932 the para-military Sarawak Rangers¹ (mostly Iban) and police (mostly Malay) and a number of Malay, Chinese and Iban clerks and other minor functionaries. In Kuching there was also a small group of European technical officers in such departments as the Treasury and Public Works who were regarded by the Rajah as decidedly inferior to his Residents and District Officers in close contact with the people. The government was organized on four separate levels:

- Senior Administrative Service (Residents, District Officers, Assistant District Officers, Administrative Cadets).
- Technical Service (Treasury, Public Works, Marine Department etc.)
- Native Officer Service (Malays serving directly under the Senior Administrative Service in outstation posts).
- Junior Administrative Service (Chinese, Malay and Iban clerks, etc.)

Recruitment for the Sarawak Service in Charles' reign was conducted largely on the basis of family connections and personal recommendations from retired officers. The scarcity of suitable men brought about by the First World War resulted in a dramatic lowering of standards for some years but by the late 1920s the government was recruiting cadets through the appointments boards of Oxford and Cambridge universities. In 1924 the Senior Administrative Service established its own system of examination in the Malay language, Sarawak history and administrative procedure as a means of improving standards and regulating promotion. Although the Administrative Service had not expanded significantly from 1870 until 1914, the creation of new departments requiring technical

¹ These were merged with the police in 1931 but were subsequently revived in other forms and still constitute a number of the battalions of the Malaysian Army. See Plate IX.
officers swelled the total number of Europeans employed by government from 37 in 1917 to 79 in 1925.

There was also a government-sponsored system of native administration beneath the district level. In coastal areas, every Malay or Melanau kampong (village) was under the charge of a tua kampong, an influential elder chosen by the Rajah on the advice of the District Officer. His official responsibility was limited to the collection of taxes and the settling of minor disputes but his position as an intermediary for government lent him a certain authority. In Iban areas the agent of indirect rule was the penghulu who collected the 'door' tax, tried minor civil and criminal cases and was responsible for the raising and leadership of armed men should they be needed by the Rajah. Among the Kenyahs and Kayans, the penghulu system was fairly successful but in more democratic Iban society it was always an artificial imposition. For the Chinese, indirect rule was exercised through the kapitan china (Chinese headman) of each major dialect group in every settlement. The principal kapitans also controlled gambling, pawnbroking and other monopolies on the government's behalf. Apart from the special Chinese Court set up in 1911 to deal with Chinese civil cases, there was no government intervention in Chinese affairs until a Chinese Secretariat was established in 1929.

During the first forty years of Charles Brooke's reign there was little modification of his autocratic power. Some Orders were issued 'in Council' but the Supreme Council was an essentially advisory body of datus which the Rajah consulted on questions of customary law. It ceased to have formal meetings in 1927 and from that time until its formal re-establishment under the 1941 Constitution its members performed a largely ceremonial role. The General Council, or Council Negri, which Charles had initiated in 1867 functioned as little more than a triennial assembly of outstation native leaders and European officers who came to pay homage to the Rajah and listen to his address. The Rajah was the source of legal as well as political authority and he legislated by means of Orders, some of which were submitted to the datus for advice.

Like his uncle, Charles Brooke encouraged Chinese immigration. In 1867 he wrote:
We are going to reduce the price of the cooked opium in the country and ... [it] will be the means of bringing many hundreds perhaps thousands of people into the country. We want population to turn our waste land into shape and create bustle and industry I never saw the country so ill as it is now and this does not agree with me ... [I want] to see the jungle falling right and left and people settled over what are now lonely wastes, and turning them into cultivated lands.

He wanted padi (rice) farmers whose efforts could then be imitated by the Iban but conditions for planting padi on the lower Rejang river were not favourable and the Cantonese and Foochows who arrived in 1900 found rubber a much more profitable crop. Although there was considerable tension between the Chinese and the Ibans at times over land, Chinese immigration continued until 1941, only abated by downward fluctuations in the price of rubber.

As early as the 1870s Charles encouraged coal mining and it was largely due to his efforts that a colliery was finally opened up at Sadong. He also purchased the Brooketon colliery on Muara island off Brunei with the idea of operating it in opposition to the Labuan coal field. He even considered building a railway from the Silantek coalfield to Lingga but the project proved too expensive. Transportation was essential to the development of Sarawak's natural resources and within the limits imposed by a tiny revenue Charles made considerable efforts to remedy the situation. In 1912 the Brooke Dockyard was opened and in 1915 ten miles of railway were brought into use. The Rajah was also anxious that factories should be set up by outside capital to process jungle produce. But he was not prepared to allow foreign capitalists to ride roughshod over the Chinese. When a company to whom he had given a monopoly interpreted the agreement in such a way as to work against the interests of the Chinese

1 'Extract from the Diary of Charles Brooke', cited by Pringle, Rajahs and Rebels ..., p.304n.
2 A kutch (wood oil) factory began operations in the late 1890s and another factory designed to process jelutong (wild rubber) was built just before the First World War.
middlemen who were the initial buyers, the Rajah pronounced that 'Congo rules cannot be supported in Sarawak to please anyone or company.' His intervention in support of Chinese traders and small capitalists against European interests contrasted sharply with the situation in Malaya where British bureaucrats actively fostered European investment and protected it from Chinese competition. The one European-owned industry which functioned freely was the Miri oilfield. Often described as an 'imperium in imperio', Sarawak Oilfields Ltd did not depend on the government in any significant way. More importantly, while not impinging on native interests it provided a welcome addition to the traditional sources of revenue.

Charles was repelled by naked commercialism and in a 1907 pamphlet spoke out strongly against the new form of exploitive imperialism which had developed in the latter years of the nineteenth century as the major European countries rushed to acquire colonies. Perhaps the strongest statement of his revulsion against the new imperialism was contained in his will of 1913 which railed against...

... these times when the white man comes to the fore and the dark coloured is thrust to the wall and when capital rules and justice ceases, whereas the main consideration should be an honest and upright protection afforded to all races alike and particularly to the weaker ones.

Adhering to attitudes which pre-dated the great colonial boom, he was highly sceptical about the rubber industry which was rapidly developed in Malaya and North Borneo during the first decade of the

1 Cited by Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels* ..., p.349n.
2 A trial shipment of oil was made in 1913 and in the year of the Rajah's death (1917) a small refinery and submarine offshore pipeline was completed at Lutong. In 1929 Miri achieved its peak production of 1,000,000 tons but ten years later the future of the field did not seem particularly bright.
3 *Queries; Past, Present and Future*, London 1907.
twentieth century. ¹

So concerned was he with the possibility of Sarawak being descended upon by European speculators that he issued an order expressly forbidding smallholders of all races from selling their land to foreign companies or to individuals. However, he had already established a government rubber estate outside Kuching and was encouraging its cultivation among the Malays and Ibans of the First, Second and Third Divisions in the hope that they would 'make a genuine concern out of its small profits ...'² He also expended a considerable amount of money on attempts to grow tobacco and tea and coffee in the hope that this would benefit smallholders, although he was worried that the scramble to plant rubber would be to the detriment of such traditional crops as padi, pepper and sago.

IN 1928 Charles Willes Johnson, the Rajah's nephew and Sarawak Government Agent in London, described what he saw as the elements of the Brooke

¹ When his youngest son Harry proposed a large-scale rubber-planting enterprise in 1910, the Rajah's reply was characteristic:

... I have had frequent applications of a similar kind from many others within the last month - but not believing in the permanence of the Rubber boom I don't wish Sarawak to be a great producer of this article - except it can be planted by natives who could afford to sell it a 20th part less than European Companies, and this is what it will come to another and not distant day. I can't look at this Matter in a private light and if I had listened to the luring proposals of rich merchants I should have been a millionaire 30 or 40 years ago - I feel sure the enterprise you propose would get a good hearing in British North Borneo, which is full of Mercantile Enterprises and achievements. I hate the name of Rubber and look on it as a very gigantic gamble, as is now turned to account in making the fortunes of many and another day will be the means of depriving the poor and ignorant shareholders of their hard earned savings.

Cited by Pringle, Rajahs and Rebels ..., p.360.

² 'Sale of Rubber Plantations', SG, 1 November 1910.
If we move away from the original and well-recognized Brooke policy, now of some 80 years' standing, the policy of working for the good of the inhabitants, if we countenance the extravagant ideas that have been so prevalent elsewhere since the war, so, surely as the sun rises, we shall fail in our trust. Simplicity has been the key-note to the success of Sarawak. Let us all... keep it so, and help to see that the resources of the country are devoted to the best interests of gradual progress, not wasted in unremunerative undertakings or in producing a false standard of comfort which is unsuitable to the circumstances... Let us not follow all western ideas and standards. We may and should base ourselves in principle upon British justice and British manners but let us adapt them to suit our surroundings and beware of importing quickly western methods which cannot be appreciated or even understood by eastern races. Do not let us think that only what happens in our own time matters. The life of a country is a very long one, we who serve it may best do so by curbing our impetuosity and by buildings slowly and surely.¹

Although Johnson had spent little time in Sarawak, it was not a difficult task to sum up the ideology which had sustained Brooke rule in the past but was now coming under increasing pressure.

The justifying myth of Brooke rule was the idea of trusteeship - that Sarawak belonged to the natives and that the Rajah exercised authority on their behalf and in their interests. However, it is highly unlikely that the Brookes and most of their officers ever seriously imagined that Europeans would one day be redundant and that the natives would rule themselves. Indeed, the pattern of Brooke rule had been progressively to entrench European authority at the expense of the traditional Malay leadership. The worst excesses of European exploitation were avoided, largely because there was little to exploit. Furthermore, the preservation of traditional ways of life was self-serving in that it perpetuated the European power-position. While the Brookes railed against 'vested interests', their own interest was to preserve their position by resisting change. They

¹ SG, 1 December 1928.
were not opposed to economic development but to the social and political changes which would inevitably accompany it.

Finally, the Brookes never became integrated as a ruling dynasty. While achieving extraordinary rapport with the peoples of Sarawak, the Rajahs retained their other role as English gentlemen with country houses and interests in literature and horseracing. When they were described as 'White Rajahs' by the rest of the world, they were Europeans who happened to be rulers of a native state rather than rulers of a native state who happened to be Europeans.¹

¹ This need not have been so. One idea which might well have changed the history of Sarawak had it been taken more seriously was Charles Brooke's belief that 'an infusion of native blood is essential to the continuance of the race (of white administrators)'. According to Margaret de Windt whom he married in 1869, Charles had a series of Malay gundek (consorts) while Resident at Simanggang in the 1860s, one of whom bore him a son in 1867. On her first visit to Sarawak, Ranee Margaret discovered the child who had been baptised Esca (Isaka) Brooke and, fearing that he might prove to be a 'bore in the country', arranged for him to be sent to England and adopted by the parson of Burrator where James Brooke had lived during his retirement. Esca was subsequently taken to Canada where he adopted the name of Daykin from his foster-parents and continued to receive a £100 annuity from the Brookes in spite of an ill-judged claim to the succession in 1927. Although he did not leave any further comment on the subject of miscegenation, Charles might well have wondered if it would not have been a good thing to have brought up Esca as his heir. To take an obvious parallel, the Clunies-Ross family's intermarriage with the Javanese women brought from Banjarmasin to the Cocos-Keeling Islands by Alexander Hare might well have accounted for their surviving the Brookes as the last of the 'White Rajahs'. Ranee Margaret to Charles Willes Johnson, 25 June 1927, 29 June 1927, 10 August 1927 (Hussey Papers); Toronto Star, 25 June 1928; South Wales News, 25 June 1927.
CHAPTER II

The Crisis of Brooke Government

BROOKE government in the 1920s and 1930s was marked by a number of contradictions. On the one hand there was the surviving nineteenth century structure of District Officers responsible to Divisional Residents who were in turn accountable to the Rajah. These men possessed substantially autonomous powers and considered themselves custodians of 'the interests of the natives', the official rationale of Brooke rule. Resisting change and committed to the preservation of indigenous custom, they corresponded to the pioneer generation of British officials in the Malay States. On the other hand, there was an emerging Kuching bureaucracy of technical officers who had little or no outstation experience and worshipped at the altar of efficiency and proper accounting. With access to the Rajah and the purse-strings, they assumed considerable power. As the business of government increased and there was a greater need for centralized administration, these bureaucrats inevitably came into conflict with the Residents and District Officers. There was also a fundamental divergence between notions of British justice and the pragmatic application of 'common sense justice'. The one serious attempt to re-think Brooke rule and to ask how the interests of the natives might best be served in a changing world fell victim to financial stringency and indifference. The few changes made were in the area of bureaucratic centralization rather than fundamental policy although they were still sufficient to bring about a trial of strength between the Administrative Service, represented temporarily by Anthony Brooke acting on the Rajah's authority, and the bureaucrats of the Committee of Administration.

Rajah Charles' Constitutional Changes

Between 1912 and 1915 Charles Brooke introduced far-reaching constitutional changes. By establishing a number of supervisory bodies he attempted to modify the autocratic system which he and his uncle had developed. And by dividing ultimate responsibility between his two sons Vyner and Bertram he laid the basis for a form of
tandem rule.

Only a month after the arrival of Vyner and his new bride in Sarawak in 1912 the Rajah drew up this Proclamation:

I, Charles Brooke, Rajah of Sarawak, do hereby decree that my second son Bertram Brooke, heir presumptive to the Raj of Sarawak in the event of my eldest son, Charles Vyner Brooke, Rajah Muda of Sarawak, failing to have male issue, shall be received on his arrival in the State of Sarawak with a Royal Salute and honours equivalent to his rank. I further decree that he shall be recognised in future by all the inhabitants of Sarawak as being part of the Government of the State and [that] such recognition shall be duly registered in the records of the Supreme Council of the Raj of Sarawak.¹

Later, at the triennial meeting of the Council Negri, he foreshadowed the establishment in London of a Sarawak State Advisory Council consisting of Charles Willes Johnson (his nephew and Legal Adviser to the Raj), two retired officers and Bertram as President. Its purpose was to supervise the financial affairs of the state,² to act as trustees in the investment of funds and to represent Sarawak's interests in any negotiations with the British government. The members were also appointed trustees of a £100,000 Sarawak State Advisory Council Trust Fund whose capital would revert to the reigning Rajah in the event of cession or annexation of Sarawak.³ At this point, Charles seems to have been contemplating abdication,⁴ in which event the members of the Council would have acted as virtual trustees of the state.

In his political will of 1913, Charles settled the

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¹ Brooke Papers, Box 9/2, Rhodes House MSS, Pac.s.83.
² The Council was required to consider the annual draft estimates of expenditure supplied by the Sarawak Treasurer, to supervise the revenue reports and inform the Rajah of any 'extravagance' in the disposal of land to non-natives, the remittance of large sums of money from the state and of over-spending within the state for private purposes.
⁴ Ibid., p. 59.
question of the succession by formally bequeathing sovereignty to Vyner. However, he also stipulated that Bertram's role in government was to be hardly less important. Believing that 'two heads are better than one' and that Vyner and his wife Sylvia would not be able to spend sufficient time in the country, he stipulated that Bertram should 'carry out the duties of Rajah and administer the Government of the State during such times as my son Vyner may be in England or absent from Sarawak ...' During these periods Bertram was to be Vice-President of the Supreme Council and Council Negri. He was to have free access to the Astana, and European and native officers were to 'pay him the same respect as is shown to his eldest brother'. On Charles' death, Bertram was to be known as Tuan Besar (although he in fact preferred to use his original title of Tuan Muda). When he was in Sarawak, Bertram's position as President of the Advisory Council was to be filled, not by Vyner, but by the member who possessed the longest record of service in Sarawak. Charles also insisted that Bertram should be consulted in all matters involving 'material developments' - public works, buildings, estates, railways, waterways and any other extensions of government activity. He concluded:

I raise my second son to this position hoping that he will by his extended experience be an additional safeguard against adventurers and speculators who would desire to make profits out of the country without regard to its real welfare. And I fervently hope that my two sons will see the necessity of acting together to keep intact and develop the resources of the country which has been brought to its present state by myself and my faithful followers after so many years of devotion to it.3

Another limitation to autocratic power was the institution

1 [Anthony Brooke], The Facts About Sarawak, Bombay [1947], p.31.
2 This followed the pattern established by the first Rajah who had appointed his elder nephew, Brooke Brooke, as Rajah Muda and his younger nephew, Charles Brooke, as Tuan Muda.
3 The Facts About Sarawak, pp. 31-2.
of an Orders Committee in 1914, consisting of the Residents and the Treasurer but with no native representation. All Orders (except those relating to conditions of service) were henceforth to be submitted to the Committee before they were finally issued on the Rajah's authority. Moreover, during the Rajah's absence the Committee was empowered to issue Orders as a matter of urgency in the Rajah's name. This was a development of some constitutional significance since the Committee was the first step towards the creation of a wider legislative authority than that of the Rajah's person.¹

Finally, in 1915 the Committee of Administration was formally reconstituted by Proclamation as a permanent body consisting of the three Residents and five other members. No datus were appointed, although those who were already members of the Supreme Council could be invited to attend when it was considered necessary.² The Committee, which effectively replaced the Orders Committee, was empowered to deal with all matters previously referred by the Residents to the Resident of the First Division or to the officer administering the government and 'if invited, advise upon any other questions referred to it'.³ More importantly, it was to deal with all requisitions and records for new expenditure and 'all official letters received ... from outside the State and all important letters concerning companies and commercial concerns operating or preparing to operate within the State'.⁴ Explaining his reasons for re-establishing the Committee on a permanent basis, the Rajah wrote that his 'great object' was 'to make more certain by more heads than one being consulted'.⁵

Without intending to deprecate the Supreme Council, whose prime function he saw as relating to native customary law, he regarded it as incapable of conducting important affairs of state:

² SGG, 4 October 1915.
⁴ Ibid., p.45.
⁵ Ibid., p.47.
... it can scarcely now stand as a full quantity to administer the requirement of such a population as Sarawak Territory possesses when educated European heads are required to solve and balance so many questions that more or less have to do with the outside world in correspondence and mutual interests or differences. The Edifice may stand but it requires substantial outside supports.\(^1\)

The Committee method was also preferable since it would mean permanency and a more businesslike system of operation which would call on the opinions of a number of men.\(^2\) Most significant of all, Charles then saw it as 'the means of altering ... [a] despotism into a [government of] mixed administrators'.\(^3\) However, the administrators were all to be Europeans.\(^4\)

The Committee of Administration had originated in 1873 as a temporary measure designed by Charles Brooke to look after the administration of the state during his absence. Consisting of three Europeans and the Datus Bandar and Imam who were empowered 'to sit and discuss any affairs of importance which may occur from time to time',\(^5\) the Committee's duties included responsibility for all foreign correspondence, arrangements for visiting officials, the checking of outstation cash reports and the supervision of public works. Each month it was required to draw up reports and forward them to the Rajah in England. When the Rajah returned he reconvened the Supreme Council and approved the actions of the Committee before dissolving it.

Similar arrangements were made in 1878 and 1883 and

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1 Ibid., p.47.
2 Ibid., p.48.
3 Ibid., p.48.
4 Only a short time beforehand, the Rajah had selected A.B. Ward, then a District Officer at Simanggang, to serve as Resident of the First Division - the most senior post in the administration. According to Ward's own account twenty years later, the Rajah, anticipating resentment from older officers at the promotion of a 34 year old over their heads, attempted to alleviate any bad feeling by setting up this permanent Committee and appointing them to it. Ward, however, served both as its chairman and secretary. A.B. Ward, Rajah's Servant, Ithaca 1966, p.168.
the practice continued until 1904 when the Rajah told the Supreme Council that his eldest son, Vyner, then thirty years of age, 'will henceforth take a portion of my duties and he will sit and do the requisite duties as I have heretofore done in the Government offices and will take my place in the Supreme and General Councils when I am not able to preside'. 1 Shortly afterwards, he issued a Proclamation declaring Vyner his successor and authorizing him 'to carry on my duties in the Government and Country during my absence'. 2 The Supreme Council was to remain in existence under the Rajah Muda's presidency and there appeared to be no further need for the Committee until it was revived in 1915.

The new Committee of Administration, together with the earlier establishment of the Advisory Council in London and the Orders Committee 3 to watch over the state's finances and prepare legislation, constituted a dramatic change in the structure of Brooke government. What it really meant was a substantial diminution of the autocratic power of the Rajah by the creation of three separate and formally constituted bodies possessing supervisory powers, a somewhat top-heavy administration for a state with such a small population. The important question is why Rajah Charles, after more than forty years of autocratic and highly personal rule carried out this governmental revolution during the last years of his reign.

The Dynastic Background

The first answer must be in terms of dynastic politics. Vyner Brooke had been born in 1874, two years after the tragic deaths of two brothers and a sister on a voyage home to England. In 1876 Ranee Margaret gave birth to another son, Bertram, who was to be known

1 Ibid., pp.42-3.
2 Ibid., pp.43.
3 The Committee of Administration took over the functions of the Orders Committee which ceased to exist.
familiarly by Vyner all his life as Adeh (younger brother). A third, Harry, was born in 1878. Although little is known about the relationship between Charles Brooke and his three sons and the few descriptions available are strongly biased,\(^1\) he seems to have been a cold and autocratic father against whose ascetic regime Vyner was inclined to rebel. Vyner's academic career at Winchester and Cambridge, where he failed to take a degree, was academically unimpressive although he was popular with his fellow students. His interests were in race horses, carousing and sport and Rajah Charles consequently 'seems always to have thought him a little easy-going and extravagant, and not quite serious enough'.\(^2\) Bertram, by contrast, was a serious youth who reflected many of his father's values. While not so shrewd and gregarious as Vyner, he was able to apply himself more successfully at school and university and this, together with his serious and responsible manner, endeared him to his parents.

In 1887 Ranee Margaret took Vyner, Bertram and Harry to Sarawak together for the first time. Vyner was then twelve years of age and Bertram ten. From their tutor, Gerard Fiennes, we have an interesting description of how young Vyner reacted to the deference automatically paid him by the Kuching Malays:

> It is very amusing to walk through the Malay Kampong with the boys. The natives turn out in swarms to see the "Rajah Muda" and we generally have a swarm of urchins, mostly in Nature's garb, following at a respectful distance and in wholesome awe. Vyner can't make it out at all. The last thing which occurs to his mind is that he is the object of their attention, and he has to be continually prodded to make him return their salutes. He always thinks they are salaaming to me. It is very nice of him to be so entirely unconscious and free from conceit.\(^3\)

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3 From a transcript in the possession of Mrs Margaret Noble. Anthony Brooke expressed similar embarrassment during his first visit to Sarawak in 1934. See below, p.49.
Vyner's ambivalent attitude towards his formal status was to remain with him for the rest of his life. However, he was enough of a Rajah not to tolerate familiarity.

Vyner's relations with his parents reached their lowest ebb in 1911 with his decision to marry Sylvia Brett, the second daughter of Lord Esher who was private secretary to George V. Vyner met Sylvia in about 1903 and there was to be a long and desultory courtship before they married in 1911. During this time, according to Sylvia, they attempted to elope and their families became estranged before 'the barrier of opposition' could be overcome.

Neither the Rajah nor the Ranee approved of their eldest son's choice. Indeed, Sylvia seems to have been regarded by the Rajah as final proof of Vyner's fecklessness. He 'suspected her of having a bad influence on the Rajah Muda, encouraging him to be extravagant and pleasure-seeking and insubordinate'. In Sylvia's words, the Rajah was 'dragged most unwillingly' to the wedding, 'and it was with more reluctance still that he attended the reception'. Although Charles did his best to prevent her from visiting Sarawak, Vyner took Sylvia and her brother, Oliver Brett, to Kuching in 1912, thus precipitating a quarrel which was to have far-reaching consequences.

From Sylvia's description, the atmosphere at the Astana during their visit was tense and Vyner's relations with his father were strained from the outset. When the Proclamation of Bertram's status was issued, Vyner 'could not see anything more in ... [it] than a direct indication of his own father's distrust in him, and a definite assumption that he was incapable of bringing into the world a future heir'. Ranee Margaret was later to describe it as

3 The Three White Rajahs, p.137.
'La pierre d'achoppement entre Vyner et moi', which suggests that he held his mother at least partly responsible.

The Proclamation, together with the establishment of the Advisory Council which clearly reflected his father's lack of trust in him, so enraged Vyner that he finally threatened public action. Responding to a letter from Charles accusing him of jealousy of Bertram, he wrote:

... if you choose to persist in giving my brother Royal Honours on arrival, and on issuing the Proclamation, and on proposing the new Bill, I shall be reluctantly obliged to make a public protest against your action, and on leaving this country until things are more satisfactorily arranged.²

More acrimonious correspondence followed with Vyner refusing to accept his father's scheme and the Rajah directing him to leave Sarawak 'as soon as convenient'.³ But before his departure he wrote a letter to Bertram (who by this time was on his way out, quite unaware of the drama that was taking place in Kuching) expressing his implacable opposition to any scheme which would limit his autocratic power on succeeding to the Raj:

I am to do the dirty work whilst you and your gang are to say what I am to do and what I am not to do ... No, thank you ... I do not return to Sarawak again unless with full power. By full power I mean absolute control over the country.⁴

The quarrel between Vyner and his father was eventually patched up but never forgotten.

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1 Ranee Margaret's handwritten comments on the 1912 proclamation, Brooke Papers, Box 9/2. Further light may be shed on the 1912 dispute when the embargo is lifted on a volume of Lord Esher's papers deposited at Churchill College, Cambridge. This includes correspondence between Vyner Brooke and Bertram Brooke, Vyner Brooke and Lord Esher, and Oliver Brett and Lord Esher. Communication from the Archivist, Churchill College, 24 November 1975.


3 Charles Brooke to Vyner Brooke, - June 1912, cited by Sylvia Brooke, Queen of the Headhunters ..., New York 1972, p.64.

4 Ibid., p.147.
Bertram had married Gladys Palmer, heiress to the biscuit-manufacturing firm of Huntley and Palmer, and in December 1912 they had their fourth child, a son, whom they named Anthoni after his delighted grandfather. But to the old Rajah's great disappointment Sylvia produced her third daughter and Anthoni's presence at his cousin Elizabeth's baptism may well have suggested to those present the possibility of a future dynastic conflict.

While the relationship between the two brothers continued to be as cordial as ever, there commenced a somewhat destructive rivalry between their wives. The Rajah approved of the Dayang Muda (Gladys) as much as he disapproved of the Ranee Muda (Sylvia).

In 1913 the Rajah asked Bertram to come to his country home in Gloucestershire as soon as he (Bertram) arrived from Sarawak. It was not until 1941 that Bertram told Vyner what took place at the meeting:

When I got there he told me he had an appointment to see the Secretary of State the following day, but that instead of making his usual formal "call" he intended this time to discuss with him a project for curtailing your absolute powers as Rajah on your accession, as he was apprehensive of the future. He asked me what I thought, and I told him that it would be very bad luck. He then said he supposed I would not consider over going out to Sarawak, as I had a family at home, but that if I would promise him that I would go out to Sarawak on his death to take a hand in the Government, should you ask me to do this, he would not take the step he contemplated. I promised.

In January 1917 Vyner wrote to Bertram expressing relief that their father had been shipped home after a serious bout of illness. At the same time he dreaded the prospect of the old Rajah carrying out his sworn object of returning to Sarawak to die:

I cannot go through another illness like the last one, so shall hurry back to England when I hear that

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1 Gladys Brooke gave an engaging account of her childhood in Relations and Complications ..., London 1929.

2 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 2 February 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 6/1.
he is approaching these shores. It is not good enough. After all, the old man can easily remain in England and die comfortably without coming all the way out here. He is getting very wandering in the mind and doddery and it is hard to transact business with him.

An equally unpleasant prospect for Vyner was Ranee Margaret's intention, as reported by Sylvia who had been staying with her, to come out to Sarawak. Vyner asked Bertram to assist him by helping to frustrate their mother's plan and by sharing the administration of the State on their father's death:

Ma fully intends coming out here to give instructions to all and sundry the way the place must be run. Needless to say I shall leave for England "instanter". If you back me up and we pull together we can frustrate her "knavish tricks" but if you don't I go under as I cannot cope with her. Ma as much as I admire her is full of schemes and plots and it is hard to know what she is working at. If the old man pops off I should love you to come out and take over while I am on leave, turn and turn about. You will have full powers and of course a very considerable salary. I find that my old liver is not the thing it was and I can't put in very long here at a time, perhaps 7 months in the year. If you could relieve me during these 5 months it would be of greatest benefit to all concerned. It would frustrate Ma. She is fully convinced that I wish to sell Sarawak, accumulate vast wealth for myself and endeavour to get a peerage. Far from it. My present title sickens me. Rajah Brooke is quite sufficient without all the high fallutin' nonsense of the H.H. part of it ...  

As it happened, however, Charles Brooke was never to return to Sarawak. On reaching England in May 1917 he suffered a relapse and died shortly before his eighty-eighth birthday. Vyner was subsequently installed as Rajah at a ceremony in 1918 with Bertram

1 Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 6 January 1917, Brooke Papers, Box 1/3.

2 Ibid.

3 For obituaries, see The Times, 18 May 1917; SG, 1 June 1917.
While Charles' lack of trust in his eldest son obviously influenced the administrative changes which he introduced during his last years, it can also be argued that he saw a need to adapt the traditional governmental framework to changing circumstances. Sarawak had undergone some important economic changes by the eve of the First World War: rubber and pepper were being exported in substantial quantities and there was the prospect of greatly increased revenue from the new oilfield being developed at Miri. Consequently, Sarawak now appeared to be a much more wealthy country than it had seemed. At the same time, the establishment of a Foochow Chinese agricultural colony in the Sibu area by the American Methodist Mission had prompted hopes that there might even be self-sufficiency in food.

All this called for a thorough re-assessment of the role of government. Clearly, there were now responsibilities beyond collecting taxes, adjudicating disputes and preserving civil order. Economic development meant the provision of specialized technical services and the improvement of communications and it is significant that in 1911 and 1912 Charles took serious account of this. New departments of forestry and agriculture were established, construction began on a railway linking Kuching with the interior and plans were set in motion for a network of wireless stations which would enable Kuching to have instant communication with the outstations. It seems likely that Charles recognized the increasing complexity of administration as being beyond the personal resources of one man and saw the Committee of Administration as an institution which could cope with the growing volume of government business with professional competence. He certainly regarded both the Committee and the Advisory Council as providing protection against the depredations of foreign capitalists.

Rajah Vyner

Not surprisingly, Vyner Brooke had no wish to perpetuate institutions

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1 For Vyner's Accession Oath, see Appendix II. See also, Plate II.
which so clearly symbolized his father's lack of trust in him. The Committee of Administration met once a month during 1916 and 1917 but on Charles' death it began to languish and from 1921 until 1934 its existence was fitful. As senior government officer 1915-23, A.B. Ward found the Committee a hindrance to decision-making. He regarded the arrangement as inefficient and resented its demands on his time. More importantly, he believed the Committee to be wholly unnecessary in an autocratic system:

... the Committee was conceived under a misapprehension, and it was superfluous because the Rajah was, and always should be, paramount; besides which, there was the Supreme Council of principal Officers of State, native and European, to support his policy.1

In 1924 Vyner revoked the 1915 Order which had established the Committee as a permanent body and resorted to the old ad hoc arrangement which his father had first used. But in the following year he reconstituted the Committee as a permanent body 'for the purpose of administering the Government of the State during my absence ... and of acting in an advisory capacity at all other times'.2 The Committee was to consist of six European members and three 'advisory members' - two datus and a Chinese. A number of meetings were held before August 1927 when another Order was passed empowering the Committee to administer the government in the simultaneous absence of the Rajah and the Tuan Muda and to act 'in an advisory capacity at all other times'.3 The Committee was required to meet once a month and its powers included authority over all matters of general administration and new expenditure. Nevertheless, no meetings were actually held until 1934 when the Committee was finally established as a permanent institution of government. From that time onwards it functioned as the executive decision-making body. The Sarawak State Advisory Council had been effectively abolished in 1929 although the Fund remained.

Vyner had thus managed to dispose of the devices

3 Ibid., p.51.
established by his father as a precaution against his failings and in response to the new problems of twentieth century government. Having done this, however, he proved incapable either of exercising power in the personal style of his father or of delegating power in a responsible way. The one hope for change was his appointment of J.C. Moulton to the newly-created post of Chief Secretary in 1923, replacing Ward as the most senior officer in the administration.

Unlike Ward, Moulton had no outstation experience. Curator of the Sarawak Museum 1909-15, he was appointed Director of the Raffles Museum in Singapore after the war. There he met the Rajah who asked him to come back to Sarawak and tackle the immensely more difficult task of re-organising the administration of the State. Under the old system, the Residents sent monthly reports to the Rajah who then replied personally in longhand. Moulton changed all this:

... there were secretaries, typewriters, typists, files, letters to be answered and reasons to be given. Outstation officers exploded, some even left the service, most of them came down to the Kuching races once or twice a year and attacked Moulton bitterly, it was a wonder they did not offer physical violence.¹

Not only did the outstation officers bitterly resent the introduction of a Secretariat between the Rajah and themselves, they were affronted that Moulton should not have been one of them.

However, those who felt they should have Moulton's job soon had a chance to show their mettle: Moulton died of an operation for appendicitis in 1926 and was succeeded by a series of Chief Secretaries with outstation backgrounds, none of whom lasted more than two years in office. Apart from their administrative inexperience, there was the added problem of jealousy aroused by

¹ Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 14 March 1975. A story which typifies the atmosphere of the time concerns a telegraph message which Moulton sent to the Resident of the Third Division inquiring if the landas (monsoon season) was over so that he could make arrangements for an outstation tour. Back came the reply: 'Don't know. Ask God'. 'God' is what they called Moulton. Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 7 August 1974.
these appointments among men of comparable seniority. The Rajah pensioned off a number of veteran officers in 1929 in order to keep the peace.\(^1\) Ward's appointment as Resident of the First Division in 1915 had aroused similar antagonisms but the personal authority of Rajah Charles had been sufficient to ensure its acceptance.\(^2\) Rajah Vyner did not possess the same authority, nor was he prepared to support his Chief Secretaries against the opposition of outstation officers. And when Chief Secretaries had to be sacrificed, the only recourse was to personal rule by proxy.

In 1928 G.T.M. MacBryan, whose career will be traced in the following chapter, was appointed Private Secretary to the Rajah and succeeded in persuading him that on H.B. Crocker's retirement as Chief Secretary late that year the post should not be filled and that the Rajah himself should take over Crocker's responsibilities 'temporarily'. What this meant in fact was that MacBryan, who exercised considerable influence over the Rajah, virtually ruled Sarawak until he left for England in early 1930. The post of Chief Secretary was then revived and occupied successively by F.F. Boult and J.C. Swayne until Bertram Brooke's appointment in September 1932 of another outsider, C.F.C. Macaskie, the Financial Secretary of British North Borneo.

Although Macaskie did not receive as much co-operation

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\(^1\) H.L. Owen, W.F. de V. Skrine, H.H. Kortright and J.R. Barnes all retired in 1929, as did the Sarawak Government Agent in London, C. Willes Johnson.


\(^3\) Charles Frederick Cunningham Macaskie (1888-1967) came from Yorkshire and travelled in Canada, Australia and New Zealand before being called to the Bar. In 1910 he joined the North Borneo Civil Service and held the posts of Chief Justice and Deputy Governor 1934-45. In 1942 he was appointed head of the Borneo Planning Unit in the Colonial Office and with the rank of Brigadier commanded the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit during the period of military administration. Declining an invitation to become Chief Secretary of the Crown Colony of North Borneo in 1946, he acted as Commissioner for War Damages Claims, Borneo Territories, before retiring to Australia. See Chapter VI.
from Vyner as he had from Bertram, the Rajah asked him to stay on for another term. He had no sooner obtained permission from the Chartered Company, however, than the Rajah changed his mind. Before leaving Sarawak, Macaskie advised the Rajah to appoint as Chief Secretary C.D. Le Gros Clark, the Secretary for Chinese Affairs, whom he regarded as 'the ablest officer in the Sarawak Service who had sufficient seniority for the post'.¹ Instead, he appointed as Financial Secretary Edward Parnell, 'a particular friend who was a diplomatic, pleasant companion and a courtier by instinct'.² The post of Chief Secretary remained in abeyance.

Vyner's disinclination to renew Macaskie's contract was only one of a number of instances in which the system of tandem rule foreshadowed in Rajah Charles' will showed itself to be a liability rather than a strength. What the system meant in effect was that each took a tour of duty of less than half a year, spending the remaining months in England. Consequently, not only was there a failure to delegate power to the Chief Secretary or to the Committee of Administration, there was not even a continuity of the Rajah's personal rule. Bertram was extremely discreet in his exercise of power, declining to live in the Astana and endeavouring not to contradict his brother's earlier actions or to institute new policies which might be interpreted as an assertion of rival authority. But he became too inhibited to take any initiative while Vyner was apparently incapable of doing so.³

² Ibid.
³ The contrast between the two brothers was most succinctly expressed by Mrs Margaret Noble who was friendly with both until cession cut her links with the Rajah:

... People often say how different the Tuan Muda and the Rajah are. But it's the difference, not of two separate organisms but of, so to speak, two branches of one tree. One has grown perilously and wildly, getting cankered and obstructive and dangerous, and bearing no fruit. The other, submitting his will to the discipline of a fine spirit, has grown to a strong and tense and fruitful shape so that no one can fail to be richer and a little greater for having known him. That deep and true humility of his makes him, I [contd over]
Depression and Reform

Macaskie's appointment had been made necessary by the need to cut government expenditure in the face of the drastic reduction in revenue brought about by falling prices for rubber and other primary exports in the wake of the Depression. Government revenue which had reached a peak of $6,670,000 in 1929 declined to $4,200,000 in 1932 and Macaskie's task was to restore the state's financial balances. This he did by pruning government departments, particularly the area of social services. The Education Department which had been established in 1928 was abolished and the Medical and Health departments were merged with reduced staff. The salaries of all government employees were also cut. The Rajah himself reduced his annual salary from $120,000 to $96,000 although an arrangement that he should be paid the interest on the State Advisory Council Trust Fund meant that he was no worse off.

The Depression demonstrated that government spending could not continue on the happy assumption that revenue would increase. There was a clear need for long-term planning and the drastic reduction in government staffing meant that there was now a relatively clean slate. This, together with the advice of senior bureaucrats, probably explains why the Rajah at last allowed the Committee of Administration to be re-established with a measure of

3 [contd from previous page]

think, the most loveable and the purest person I have ever known, and everyone who really knows him feels this. The two brothers are most oddly alike in some ways. They both know that their egos don't matter, but whereas the Rajah says to himself, as I'm sure he does, "What I am and do can only be of the most trivial significance so I may as well amuse myself as much as possible" the Tuan Muda says "What happens to me as an individual is completely unimportant. Suffering and pleasure are equally unimportant except in so far as they bring wisdom and understanding and create in me a power for service, in however humble a capacity". So all that "thwarted life" has increased the gentle power of his spirit, and it is through such as him - sadly few there are! - that God works ...

Margaret Noble to Jean Halsey, 2 December 1945, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1. See Plates XI and IV for her portraits of Vyner and Bertram.

1 See Tables I and II.
Table I: Sarawak Government Revenue and Expenditure, 1925-1938
(£ Sarawak)

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<tr>
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<th>1925</th>
<th>1926</th>
<th>1927</th>
<th>1928</th>
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<table>
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<th>1934</th>
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<tr>
<td>Surplus</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1,0240</td>
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Table II: Sarawak's Balance of Trade, 1928-1938
(£ Sarawak)

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<tr>
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<th>Imports</th>
<th>Exports and Re-Exports</th>
<th>Favourable Trade Balance</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1928</td>
<td>21,397,737</td>
<td>54,527,731*</td>
<td>33,129,994</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>22,726,657</td>
<td>34,689,890</td>
<td>11,963,233</td>
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<td>1930</td>
<td>16,421,592</td>
<td>24,894,762</td>
<td>8,473,170</td>
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<td>1931</td>
<td>10,385,056</td>
<td>17,414,672</td>
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<td>1932</td>
<td>9,698,808</td>
<td>13,573,872</td>
<td>3,875,064</td>
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<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>11,348,622</td>
<td>14,335,898</td>
<td>2,987,276</td>
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<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>14,078,768</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>16,661,079</td>
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<td>1936</td>
<td>18,261,685</td>
<td>24,557,351</td>
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<td>1937</td>
<td>22,916,202</td>
<td>32,715,532</td>
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<tr>
<td>1938</td>
<td>22,375,430</td>
<td>26,135,095</td>
<td>3,759,667</td>
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* This later proved to be a miscalculation.
real responsibility. Furthermore, the Iban unrest which arose to some extent from the effects of the Depression\(^1\) had called into question the assumption that Brooke government was premised on 'the interests of the natives'.

One of the first initiatives taken by the new Committee of Administration in 1934 was to ask the Colonial Office to suggest a suitable man who could make recommendations on the Sarawak Service and to commission Le Gros Clark\(^2\) to report on all aspects of the Sarawak administration. M.J. Breen, a senior administrator from Hong Kong, subsequently spent three months in Sarawak in early 1937 and made a report which led to certain changes in conditions of service and incidentally provided the Colonial Office with its first comprehensive idea of what was happening in Sarawak.\(^3\) While the Breen report had the effect of increasing external pressure for change, Le Gros Clark's recommendations suggested ways by which change could be achieved internally. A technical officer with no vested interest in preserving the status quo, Le Gros Clark's dispassionate intellect allowed him to cut through the accretions of time and custom and see the Sarawak administration not as something unique and sacred but as just another colonial administration in need of drastic overhaul.

The main burden of the Le Gros Clark Report was its

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1 See Chapter V, pp.199-200.

2 Possessing a distinguished war record with service on the Western Front and in Palestine, Cyril Le Gros Clark had been on the point of trying for the Sudan Political Service when he met the Rajah in London. His younger brother Wilfrid (later Professor of Palaeontology at Oxford) had signed up as Principal Medical Officer in Sarawak two years earlier in order to pursue his research. The Rajah suggested that Cyril should specialize in Chinese affairs and he spent two years in Amoy studying Chinese language, law and customs. In 1929 took up the new position of Secretary for Chinese Affairs which he was to hold until May 1941 when he became Chief Secretary. Interned during the war, he was killed by the Japanese at Keningau in North Borneo shortly before the surrender. His wife, Averil Mackenzie-Grieve, was a talented artist and writer.

3 See Chapter IV, p.144-5.
recommendations firstly on education and the Junior Administrative Service and secondly on the general policy towards the Ibans and other non-Muslim natives. 'Education, guided upon sane lines and co-ordinated with the life and livelihood of the people, should form ... the key-note of future administrative policy of Sarawak', he wrote. 'And the District Officer should continue to be regarded as the pivotal unit of the administrative framework'.\(^1\) His recommendations were made on the basis of wide consultations with other Sarawak officers and his own general knowledge of British colonial policy in Malaya, India and Africa. He suggested the appointment of a Director of Education and an educational board 'composed of representatives of the people and of the Missions'. They would have control over all except Chinese schools and the introduction of a system emphasizing agricultural and technical education at the village level and in the relevant indigenous language throughout the state. At the same time, he recommended that the Maderasah Melayu, Kuching's newly-established Malay-medium government school, be up-graded to provide for the education of village schoolteachers and Native Officers.\(^2\)

Underlying Le Gros Clark's remarks on Native Officers and indigenous headmen was the important assumption that the administration of the country would ultimately be transferred to them. Most administrative officers, he wrote hopefully, realized that they were there 'not only to administer the Government on behalf of the natives, but also to educate the natives up to a standard sufficiently high to enable them eventually to take over a greater share in the government of the country'. From his tour of the state, however, Le Gros Clark was not impressed with the members of the Junior Administrative Service, almost all of whom at that time were Malays:

I doubt whether, with few exceptions, we could trust these native officers to undertake these duties [i.e. the duties of European officers] without the closest supervision. Not only is their standard of education low, but many of them seem to suffer from an inferiority complex due, in great part, to

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1 C.D. Le Gros Clark, Blue Report, Kuching 1935, p.2. Subsequent quotations from this source.
2 See Chapter V, p.200.
psychological reasons. Their reluctance to undertake responsibilities, to make decisions, their apparent lack of initiative, all these may ... be traced largely to the fact that they are ignorant of the laws of the country, are unable to read the regulations, and as a result are entirely in the hands of the court writer. The fact, too, that a great majority of them have never left the State and, in some cases, not even their own district, must inevitably place them in a position wherein they feel inferior to the most junior member of the Junior Service.

Those few who were capable of assuming greater responsibility, he suggested, could perhaps take charge of constabulary work and prison labour and the issue of gunpowder and cartridges. They could be even more useful in the supervision of government works, upkeep of government stations, inspections of barracks, control of exemption tax register and issue of inland passes. Le Gros Clark believed that a concerted effort should be made to recruit Ibans and other natives into the Native Officer Service. He was convinced that there were already a number of Ibans in the Junior Service who were 'perfectly capable' of taking over such duties.

Another question which concerned Le Gros Clark was economic development. In the past there had been no real economic or social planning but new factors were now at work which rendered this unavoidable. Not only were there increasingly insistent noises from the Colonial Office about the need for improved social services, particularly in the areas of health and education, but the Committee of Administration recognized the need for planning. The Depression had shown that it was not possible to operate on a year-to-year basis on the assumption that revenue would gradually increase in concert with increased expenditure. Oil, the one long-term prospect for increased prosperity, had not fulfilled its earlier promise and Sarawak Oilfields Ltd. now estimated that economic production would probably cease by 1947 unless substantial new deposits were located. However, money had somehow to be found to finance the education programme which Le Gros Clark envisaged and he suggested a development expenditure for the period 1935-41 amounting to $5,000,000.

If Macaskie had remained as Chief Secretary, more of Le
Gros Clark's recommendations might have been heeded. But the Rajah's appointment of Edward Parnell as Financial Secretary in 1934 and Chief Secretary in 1937 meant that bureaucratic considerations became paramount. R.W. Hammond was subsequently asked to make more detailed recommendations on education but financial stringencies prevented their implementation and all that had been achieved by 1941 was the appointment of a Director of Education and the opening of a teachers' college for Malays. No changes were made to the Native Office Service and the Junior Administrative Service beyond the appointment of a few Ibans as probationary Native Officers and police officers. The idea of an administrative training college lapsed. Apart from financial considerations, there seems to have been no support for Le Gros Clark's vital assumption that policy should be directed towards the gradual transfer of the administration to the natives. As far as the Administrative Service was concerned, it was 'in the interests of the natives' that the status quo should be maintained. However, the government did take Le Gros Clark's advice that punitive expeditions against restive Ibans should be replaced by more government posts in remote areas.

The Parnell-Calvert Regime

Unlike previous Chief Secretaries (with the conspicuous exception of Moulton), Parnell was not an outstation man. Although he joined the Sarawak Service as a clerk in 1905 and later became Controller of Government Monopolies, he resigned in 1927 and joined the Sarawak Steamship Company as Managing Director. But in 1934 the Rajah brought him back into government service as Treasurer and three years later appointed him Chief Secretary. Succeeding him as Financial Secretary, was H.M. Calvert, a dour and ascetic man who knew the power of the purse-strings. Parnell and Calvert represented more efficient and business-like government from the centre. This was to be based on proper records, proper accounting procedures and adherence to set forms. Above all, it meant the direct accountability of outstation officers to the Kuching Secretariat. The semi-autonomous

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position of the Residents was consequently threatened. At the same
time, Calvert took steps to tighten up accounting procedures in the
outstations, including the detailed documentation of District
Officers' and Native Officers' travelling expenses. This aroused
tremendous resentment and probably sealed the fate of the two senior
bureaucrats.

It is clear that Parnell and Calvert wanted to abolish
the Residential system by stages and centralize power in Kuching
where all senior administrative officers would in future be stationed.
District Officers would thus operate independent of direct supervision
by Residents and would instead be responsible direct to Kuching.
The first step towards this reorganization was taken in 1934 when the
Fifth Division was abolished through incorporation with the Fourth
Division. This did not involve any dramatic change because there was
no Resident of the Fifth Division at the time. Nor did the merger,
for which there were some practical reasons, ever fully take place
because of the Japanese invasion. But in the words of a technical
officer of the time,

The significance of the decision lay in the fact
that the disposition of administration officers
and offices was on the orders of non-administrative
officers, and this became [Anthony] Brooke's
pretext to bring the confrontation [between
outstation officers and the Committee of
Administration] to a head.

While the official reason given by Parnell and Calvert was economy,
outstation officers were under no illusion as to what was happening.
It seemed that there would be no further promotions within the
Administrative Service to the position of Resident and that when the
existing Residents retired they would not be replaced.

By August 1937, the Chief Justice, Stirling Boyd, was
expressing dissatisfaction with the Parnell-Calvert regime in his
letters to Hammond:

1 Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 25 November 1975.
2 Personal communication from Mr J.L. Noakes, 3 August 1975.
3 See below, p.45.
Calvert is becoming more objectionable every day and his manners are often beyond belief and his methods of dialectic are those of the coster. Success has gone to his head and the sooner his successor is appointed the better. After months of Parnell I don't think he is really fit for the job. His outlook is too limited and he has no real grasp of administrative problems.¹

Boyd was also bitter about what he regarded as Parnell and Calvert's self-promotion at the expense of the State. While accepting the increases in cadets' pay, the abolition of distinctions between pensionable and non-pensionable officers and other changes based on the recommendations of the Breen report, he had serious doubts whether the 'large increases upstairs' were warranted.²

Boyd was thinking not only of the problem of the increased costs of administration, but the effects on the outstation officers in a situation where expenditure on essential services seemed to be so grudging. A request for a dresser at Kapit or Kanowit, for example, had been refused on the grounds that no money was available; and expenditure on mosquito control for the whole of the State was less than that for Labuan. Boyd was also concerned about the fate of Hammond's report on the education system which was awaiting consideration. It seemed to him that since money had been found for the salary increases, it could be found for social services. 'If not', he told Hammond. 'it will be a disgusting exhibition of the selfish abuse of power'.³

The reaction of outstation officers to the reforms, particularly the requirement to account for travelling expenses, was more dramatic. Many District Officers were in a state of open hostility towards Kuching and were supported by the Residents. However, there was no open conflict until late 1938 when William Dick, Resident of the Third Division, became involved in a personal dispute

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1 Boyd to Hammond, 22 August 1937, Boyd Papers, Rhodes House, MSS Pac.s.86.

2 In particular, there was the elevation of Parnell and Calvert to positions which gave them very substantial pay increases. Calvert, for example, was to receive a rise of $300 which brought his salary up to $1,200 per month. Ibid.

3 Ibid.
with Calvert. Dick resented Calvert's insistence on proper accounting procedures and used strong language in his official correspondence. When he refused to withdraw his most outspoken remarks, the Rajah supported Calvert and Dick had to resign. In Boyd's words, he 'made an ass of himself, chiefly because he called on an entirely inadequate hand, and having called, played it abominably'. But this victory of the Kuching bureaucracy caused something of a sensation among the outstation officers and a number of resignations were penned by junior officers as a result. Calvert was now 'universally hated' and Boyd thought that there could be no harmony until he left. 'If Calvert does trip,' he wrote to Noel Hudson, the former Bishop of Labuan, 'there won't be many hands willing to help him to get up ...'

In the meantime, Parnell was anxious to find out what reaction there had been to the gradual changes being made. In early 1939 he prepared a series of questions on the 'old' and 'new' systems of government which were circulated within the administrative service for comment. While the circular itself has not survived, the replies of two administrative officers - one newly arrived and attached to the Secretariat and the other a veteran District Officer - provide some indication of what was at stake. A.J.N. Richards examined James Brooke's writings for the original rationale of Brooke rule, taking as his theme the first Rajah's dictum: 'We must progress or retrograde'. He saw two major faults in the old Residential system: firstly, that it encouraged the growth of different policies, 'in so far as there were any at all', in different areas; secondly, that there was no means, short of a change of regime, of 'ensuring any kind of progression within those territories, distinct as they were, and jealous of each other and of "interference"'. Altogether, it was

1 Boyd to Wilson, 19 February 1939, ibid.
2 Interview with Sir Dennis White, 22 January 1975.
3 Boyd to Edward Boyd, 4 December 1938, Boyd Papers.
4 Boyd to Bishop Hudson, 6 December 1938, ibid.
5 A.J.N. Richards, memorandum of March 1939, Rhodes House MSS Ind. Ocn. s. 213. Subsequent quotations from this source.
static and inward-looking, 'outpaced in the course of progress', and therefore best 'left for dead'. Reversion to this system as it had operated was 'ridiculous'. The new system, on the other hand, lacked adequate staff, the delegation of power from Kuching and a definite plan of implementation so that while the old system was being destroyed there was created 'a hiatus of uncertainty and disbelief'. Contrasting the two, he described the old system as being forced into centralized execution but lacking centralized policy and control, while the new system wrongly attempted 'centralised execution of a scrappy and non-existent policy'. He hopefully proposed a centralized policy with strong centralized control but decentralized execution.

If the principle of trusteeship on behalf of the natives was still the basis of Brooke rule, he argued, the recommendations of the Le Gros Clark Report should be vigorously implemented. The spread of education would mean that responsibility could be increasingly borne by the natives and expansion could thus take place without further expenditure and dependence on European officers. 'It is time', he concluded, 'that Sarawak treated itself as one state among many, and not as an isolated Utopia: it is time that she began to look upon other states and gain by considering their experience'. He predicted that the absence of a strong policy would force Sarawak to follow Malaya and consequently to lose some of her internal independence.

The outstation view was predictably conservative. Responding to Parnell's first circular, the District Officer at Lubok Antu in the Second Division, H.E. Cutfield, wrote that he could not see how the new system would be an improvement on the old one:

In the old way, junior, sometimes very junior, officers were in charge of [a] district but they had their Divisional Resident above them who had both experience and a knowledge of his Division to check their work and see that they did not make too many blunders ...

Under the new scheme we would have independent district officers, some very junior indeed with no Divisional Resident to keep an eye on
their work. Senior officers (who would under the old scheme have been Divisional Residents) would be stationed in Kuching and be expected to do the same work of supervision ... This I think would be impossible ... they would very soon lose touch after being in Kuching for a short time and would become incapable of deciding sympathetically of the outstation ideas unless they were very exceptional men ...

In addition to these practical objections, there was a strong suspicion that the new scheme was entirely initiated by the Committee of Administration, '... a body of men ignorant of conditions in general throughout the country and who found the criticism of Senior Divisional Residents inconvenient', in order to monopolize power.\(^1\) Writing shortly after the departure of Dick and the confrontation between Anthony Brooke and the Committee of Administration, Cutfield no doubt thought that the new scheme would be abandoned.

What the Rajah himself thought about the revitalized and power-accumulating Committee of Administration is difficult to say but it seems clear that by the late 1930s his earlier unwillingness to delegate power beyond a Chief Secretary or a Private Secretary had been overtaken by weariness and even indifference. Nor did it seem likely that Bertram, only two years younger and in poor health, would be available in future to share or take over responsibility. Under these circumstances the transfer of a measure of power to the Committee must have appeared to Vyner as inevitable and perhaps even attractive, although it was anathema to Bertram. In a memorandum to Parnell penned in late 1936 before ending what was to be his last tour of duty in Sarawak, he left no doubt about his determination to uphold the autocratic principle against what he regarded as the Committee's arrogation of power to itself:

> I know there is an idea that once the Committee of Administration has discussed a matter and given its recommendation, it should be regarded as final. I quite see the members' point of view. It means a lot of time is wasted otherwise. But we are not a country with a court system

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1 Cutfield to Parnell, 26 April 1939, Bayang Papers.
2 Ibid.
like Great Britain. If we were, the Committee of Administration would not be a body of officials. So long as the Rajah has the actual powers of originating or vetoing anything he pleases he cannot screen himself behind any decision of [the] Committee of Administration. He must take the personal responsibility for the approval of any recommendation, and, being Rajah, cannot well refuse to listen to anyone who considers that any recommendation does not correspond with a decision which the Rajah himself would have made had he personally considered the facts without Committee of Administration's advice.1

Bertram gave as an example the Committee's involvement in the question of government doctors being authorized to conduct private practice in their own time. The majority of the Committee had recommended that this be discontinued and Bertram had decided to defer to the Rajah's personal decision on his return. Bertram was concerned not so much because he disapproved of the recommendation, but because the Chief Secretary 'was the only member who regarded the question from what he thought would be the Rajah's point of view had he handled it himself'. In Bertram's view the Committee's function was to anticipate the wishes of the Rajah. And it could be performed by a much smaller body: 'even a couple of people, with powers to summon advisers on various departmental and other matters would be quite sufficient in a Raj. "Quot homines tot sententiae"'. 2 The one weak link in Bertram's traditional view of Brooke government was the Rajah himself. Vyner had approved all the financial and administrative changes introduced by Calvert and Parnell but was unwilling to support them against the opposition of the Administrative Service.

The Administration of Justice

Another major problem which crystallized in the 1930s was the contradiction between the unsystematic and pragmatic mode of justice traditionally practised in Sarawak and the more conventional notions of British justice. In response to pressure from the British government the Rajah had in 1928 appointed Thomas Stirling Boyd, a Scots barrister formerly of Lincoln's Inn, to the post of Judicial

1 Undated memorandum [1936], Boyd Papers.
2 Ibid.
Commissioner. Promoted to Chief Justice in 1930, Boyd saw it as his great task to bring system and efficiency to the administration of justice in Sarawak. Consequently he was responsible for the first codification of the various Orders issued by the Rajahs which collectively constituted the state's body of formal law, and for the modification of the Indian Penal Code which had been introduced in 1922. At the same time, Boyd was concerned to establish a formal procedure for the hearings conducted by Residents and District Officers in the outstation. It was Boyd's reforming zeal, together with the administrative changes attempted by Parnell after 1935, which constituted the first real challenge to the authority of the Administrative Service since Moulton. Boyd also brought into focus what might be called the contradiction between the rule of man and the rule of law. Both issues were temporarily settled in favour of the traditionalists by Anthony Brooke in early 1939.

Boyd sympathized with Le Gros Clark's plan to reform methods of government but regarded the establishment of the rule of law as much more important. In a memorandum of May 1935 he raised an issue which was vitally relevant to the tradition of Brooke rule:

... there is an antecedent matter which requires examination and this is the fundamental question whether the country is or is not to be governed by law, i.e. whether it is to be governed on fixed principles which have been laid down beforehand or is to be subject merely to rough and ready empirical rules, called by some the rules of commonsense, and made up as and when

1 Thomas J.L. Stirling Boyd (1886-1973) was the grandson of the Lord Provost of Edinburgh and the Professor of Medicine at Edinburgh University. After taking a degree at Trinity College, Oxford, he served in the 1914-18 war and later worked for the Air Ministry. He was admitted to the Inner Temple as a barrister in 1919 and practised in London until taking up the position of Judicial Commissioner. After his resignation in March 1939 (see below) he returned to the Air Ministry for some years. Boyd was interested in drama and wrote a number of plays.

2 State Orders Issued by His Highness the Rajah of Sarawak or with His Sanction, Kuching 1933.
occasion requires.

He found it disquieting that not only was there inconsistency of policy in areas where Government Orders had not been formulated, but even Orders were ignored by the Rajah if and when it suited him. The Committee of Administration, for example, which was required under the 1927 Order to meet at least twice a month, had not met at all from the enactment of the Order until 1933.

The Chief Justice proceeded to question the whole basis of autocratic government:

Whatever may be the disadvantages of the rule of law ... the rule of caprice, which is the only alternative, cannot be considered as a substitute as the disasters which it brings in its train are incalculable. If the principle of the rule of caprice is admitted there must necessarily be an end of good government as the subject can rely on nothing ...

He saw good government as being necessarily based on the exercise of statutory authority. Without this there could be no discipline, no efficiency. And without the firm and consistent administration of the law, how could trade prosper? The first step towards the establishment of the rule of law was, in Boyd's view, the re-constitution of the Committee of Administration in such a way that all matters of importance would be referred to it for advice and 'certain matters, e.g., all proposed Orders and proposed expenditure, must have its consent before they became legal'. This could provide some protection against caprice, but 'full security could hardly be obtained unless at the same time steps were taken to provide for judicial independence ...'

Boyd was also anxious to reorganize the legal department and to place the entire administration of justice on a more secure and formal footing, the limitations of the 'common sense' system of legal administration practised by Residents and District Officers being increasingly obvious to him.

In 1930, a Eurasian schoolmaster was accused of

1 [T. Stirling Boyd], 'The Sarawak Crisis', typescript [1939], Appendix A. Subsequent quotations from this source.
carnal knowledge of the daughter of a Singhalese clerk but the case was dismissed by Boyd when he learnt that the girl had consented and was of age under the Indian Penal Code. When the mother complained about Boyd's decision another official, probably the Resident of the First Division, made this observation:

> I quite see that accused is rightly dismissed according to the section under which he was prosecuted - but I am afraid I am of the opinion that this is one of the cases which would have been far more effectively dealt with under the old non-technical system, where the actual item and the charge sheet didn't much matter.¹

He felt that since the accused was guilty of grossly immoral conduct and had precipitated a family break-up, he should not be let off scot-free. Boyd had some sympathy for this point of view and conceded that in a small and primitive society it could work, but he felt that it overlooked 'a vital and fundamental principle of liberty that a man can only be punished for conduct which the law has declared to be a crime ...'² The schoolmaster's conviction, he believed, would have meant the application of a vague moral standard impossible of definition.

Boyd's request for reports of all Resident's Court cases could be quietly ignored, but when he began overturning the judgments of these courts and upholding appeals there was a predictably hostile reaction. Particularly significant was Boyd's decision to uphold the appeal of Dunggaw and Unjar, two Ibans from Song who had been convicted for 'depredation on the Territories of a foreign power at peace with His Majesty': they had crossed the border to Kanto in Dutch Borneo in July 1932 and taken some heads. Dunggaw was arrested in Sarawak when news of his expedition became known and after he had been held illegally in prison for five months it was proposed to hand him over to the Dutch authorities for trial. However, there was a further proposal for a peace-making and Dunggaw continued to be held until the arrest of Unjar. In August 1933 the

2 Ibid., p.82.
Chief Secretary wrote to the Resident of the Third Division directing that the accused men were to be sentenced to seven years imprisonment and then released after serving six months. The trial was delayed because the peace-making was not held until November 1933. An Iban headman then came to Kuching and a definite offer was made to him on the basis of the Chief Secretary's letter. However, the trial when it was held was not in accordance with his instructions: a full board of Iban assessors was not used and the men were charged under Section 126 of the Indian Penal Code.

Boyd objected strongly to the letter which he described as prejudging the case and appointing a purely nominal sentence for what appeared to be murder. No doubt anticipating these objections, the Resident at first refused to provide records of the case on the grounds that 'it was considered unnecessary'. For the Chief Justice this was an extraordinary affront:

As the record was called for under a statutory power the Resident had clearly no authority to refuse to send it and his action besides being improper was also ill-advised as no good purpose can be served by concealing what was done. In any case the proceedings were, or ought to have been, held in public.

Boyd quashed the convictions on the grounds that although the Indian Penal Code had been instituted in Sarawak in 1922, the Interpretation Order of 1933 rendered inapplicable the section under which they had been charged. However, he directed the Resident's Court to try them for the common law offence of head-hunting and suggested that there should be a panel of assessors. Concluding his judgment, Boyd returned to his favourite theme:

They cannot be expected to understand the fundamental importance of the point involved, but this does not affect the issue. It is essential to establish the principle that a person can only be punished for conduct which is made criminal by the law, whether statute law or common law. On any other view rule by

law is replaced by caprice, and the fundamental right of the liberty of the subject is destroyed.¹

The Chief Secretary had not seen fit to have the convictions defended in court, but Boyd had publicly rapped some important knuckles and his action was seen by the Administrative Service as gross interference.

Anthony Brooke and the 'Sarawak Crisis' of 1939

As we have already seen, Anthony Walter Dayrell ('Peter') Brooke was born at the height of the dispute between Charles Brooke and Vyner Brooke. So sensitive was Bertram to the problem of the succession and so determined was Ranee Sylvia that he should be kept out of the way that it was not until 1934 that Anthony visited Sarawak. After Eton (1926-31) and a year at Trinity College, Cambridge, Anthony moved to the School of Oriental Studies in London to study the Malay language and Muslim law. Having become proficient in Malay, he arrived in Sarawak in June 1934 at the beginning of one of his father's tours of duty and spent the next few months travelling around the country with the Secretary for Native Affairs who introduced him to the members of the Service. In June he visited Santubong, a Malay village at the mouth of the Sarawak River, and it was here that he experienced for the first time the salutations appropriate to his position as likely heir to the Raj. Interestingly enough, his reactions were similar to those of his uncle fifty years earlier:

Everybody is bewilderingly embarrassing here - they will insist on showing me through doors first, and getting up when I come into the room and altogether seem to do all they can to make me feel different - and I'm not quite sure that I like feeling "different"! However, everybody is terribly nice and I dare say I'll get used to it, as with any luck I may be in this country for another 50 years or so! (If God and the Japanese are willing)²

¹ Ibid., p.40.
² Anthony Brooke to Jean Halsey, 28 June [1934], Brooke Papers, Box 10/2.
It had been decided earlier by Bertram Brooke, possibly on the advice of Sir Andrew Caldecott, a veteran of the MCS, that Anthony should be seconded to Malaya for two years before taking up a post in Sarawak. Accordingly, he spent the period from September 1934 to September 1936 attached to the Secretariats in Kuala Pilah, Alor Star, Kuala Trengganu and Kuala Lumpur and acted as a magistrate for minor offences. It is difficult to say to what extent Anthony was influenced by his Malayan experience. There is nothing in his private letters of the time to indicate that he was concerned about the political impotence of the Malay rulers and the possibility that the Malayan Resident system might be introduced in Sarawak through British pressure. In August 1935, however, when posted at Alor Star, he took charge of the Secretariat during the Assistant Adviser's absence and gained his first real taste of power. '... An "Adviser" in an unfederated State', he told his sister, Jean Halsey, 'corresponds with a "Resident" except that he is really only meant to Advise though in reality it means a great deal more than that'. Although he was only carrying out routine work, he evidently enjoyed the position. '... If the A.A. doesn't come back soon', he quipped, 'he'll regret that he ever went away'.

At the end of September 1936 he went back to Sarawak and joined Andrew Macpherson at the newly-established post of Meluan in the Third Division. After another short term with Donald Hudden, District Officer of the Baram, he served for some months in Kuching at the Secretariat and in May 1938 went to England on leave to take a course in colonial administration at Oxford under Margery Perham. It was also during this time that he met the sister of Donald Hudden, Kathleen, whom he was later to marry.

In March 1939 Anthony initiated an inquiry which brought about the resignation of five senior members of the Sarawak government. While the occasion of the inquiry - the dismissal of a young European officer - was in itself unimportant, the confrontation

1 Anthony Brooke to Jean Halsey, 23 August 1935, Brooke Papers, Box 10/2.

2 Ibid.
between the Rajah's nephew and the senior bureaucrats brought to a head some of the problems of Brooke government in the immediate pre-war period. While Sarawak remained an autocracy, the third Rajah's flagging interest in the business of government had resulted in a progressive assumption of executive power by the Kuching bureaucracy. The crisis of 1939 stemmed from Anthony Brooke's attempt to restore this power to the Administrative Service and to ensure that it was exercised in accordance with the traditions of Brooke rule. It also revealed the Rajah in a most unflattering light.

Among the junior officers alleged by Dick to have been 'persecuted' by Calvert was F.L. Crossley, whose career in Sarawak began in 1930 when he arrived as an administrative cadet. From most accounts he performed creditably enough and was regarded even by Stirling Boyd as a good magistrate. But like most of his fellow officers he got into debt. With liabilities amounting to about $2,600, Crossley applied to the government in 1938 for a loan to cover medical expenses. In so doing, however, he grossly understated his indebtedness and Parnell recommended after consultations with Boyd, Calvert and others that he should be dismissed from the service. The Rajah gave his approval and in late January 1939 Crossley, who was then serving as an Assistant District Officer at Oya in the Third Division, received a letter from Parnell conveying the decision.

Crossley's petition to the Rajah was unsuccessful and he could not even obtain details of the terms of his dismissal until 8 March when he was told that a passage had been booked for him from Singapore two weeks hence. In the meantime, Anthony Brooke had returned from leave to take up the post of District Officer, Mukah, of which Oya was a sub-district. Crossley told Anthony his story,

1 Boyd to Pollard, 12 March 1939, Boyd Papers.

2 Most of the details in this account have been taken from documentation provided by Boyd in 'The Sarawak Crisis', a typescript dossier which he completed on his return to England and circulated widely among M.P.s. and newspaper editors. Boyd Papers.
emphasizing that although he had been dismissed, the government expected him to continue his duties as a magistrate for two months before giving the terms of his dismissal and notice of his virtual deportation.

This provided the opportunity which Anthony might well have been waiting for. Filled with indignation at Crossley's treatment and determined to beard Calvert and Parnell, Anthony left immediately for Kuching. Soon after his arrival he called at the Astana and, in the Rajah's own words, 'shot in a sheaf of letters on me' concerning Crossley's dismissal. He told the Rajah that Crossley had been harshly treated and that there should be an investigation into the circumstances of the dismissal which was otherwise likely to bring the entire service into disrepute. Parnell and Calvert then received a note from the Rajah asking them to give Anthony all the files on Crossley and later that day, after another meeting with his nephew, Vyner informed Parnell that he had 'allowed' Anthony to hold an inquiry the following Monday. 'Peter is fully aware', the Rajah added, 'that if his enquiry is abortive and merely mischievous that he will have to resign the service'.

There followed a most extraordinary exchange of messages across the river between the Chief Secretary's office and the Astana. Parnell and his colleagues objected vigorously to the idea that a junior officer should conduct an inquiry into their actions. They pointed out that not only had there been no alternative to dismissing Crossley, and that the Rajah's approval had been given at every step, but that Anthony had left his official post without permission and had appointed Crossley, whose dismissal from the service was now effective, in his place. Vyner admitted that it was 'unusual for a junior officer to hold an enquiry regarding conduct of his seniors in service', but the inquiry was to go ahead.

1 Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 24 March 1939, Appendix I, ibid.
2 Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 24 March 1939, Appendix 6, ibid.
3 Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 24 March 1939, Appendix 4, ibid.
At about the same time there arrived from the Astana an official letter empowering Anthony to hold the inquiry, the procedure of which was to be 'laid down by Mr. Brooke, who has my full authority to conduct it as he thinks fit'.\(^1\) In a covering note, Anthony asked Parnell to inform all members of the Committee that he required them to attend. He also told Parnell that he was not disputing the decision that Crossley should go:

> I am, however, much concerned with the way in which he goes, and the terms he receives for his past services. And this is why I wish to hold an \(\text{enquiry} - \) and, I may add, I have every right to do so.\(^2\)

This 'right' stemmed not from his position in the Sarawak government service, it emerged, but from his status as Rajah Muda which had been conferred upon him by the Rajah that very day in order to facilitate the inquiry.\(^3\)

It had become increasingly obvious to members of the Committee of Administration that the real purpose of Anthony's inquiry was the removal of Parnell and Calvert. Parnell told a hurriedly-called meeting of the Committee that in his view the whole thing was nonsense and that the best solution was for him to see the Rajah and offer to go over the facts of the case with the Rajah Muda. There was full agreement on this, but before any action would be taken another note arrived from the Rajah saying that he would not see anyone about the inquiry until after it had taken place.\(^4\) According to Boyd, this finally convinced the meeting 'that there was definitely something behind the decision to hold the enquiry'.\(^5\) Parnell and the other members of the Committee — Calvert, Boyd, J.B. Archer, N.A. Middlemas and J.H. Bowyer — then produced a joint memorandum in which they pointed out that the real issue of the inquiry appeared to be not the dismissal of Crossley

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1 Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 24 March 1939, Appendix 3, ibid.
2 Anthony Brooke to Parnell, 25 March 1939, Appendix 8, ibid.
3 Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 25 March 1939, Appendix 2, ibid.
4 Vyner Brooke to Parnell, 25 March 1939, Appendix 5, 'The Sarawak Crisis'.
5 Ibid., p.4.
6 Appendix 9, ibid. This was probably drafted by Boyd himself.
but the 'propriety and otherwise of such of Your Highness' officers who were responsible for advising Your Highness what terms should be given to Mr. Crossley'. They felt that although no charges had been made, the position of the Chief Secretary was that of a defendant. Even if the inquiry were restricted to the grounds of dismissal (which seemed unlikely), the Rajah Muda's own position as advocate clearly rendered him ineligible to judge the case, particularly since a decision that there had been no impropriety would automatically bring about his resignation. The Committee finally requested that in the absence of any impartial person 'of the requisite standing' in Sarawak, the Rajah should ask Sir Shenton Thomas, the Governor of the Straits Settlements who was also the British Agent for Borneo, to appoint one or more judges or senior officers from his own service to conduct the investigation.

While their argument was unexceptionable from a legal point of view, the signatories had erred politically in reacting so strongly to the projected inquiry and in recommending the appointment of outside adjudicators. The Rajah told Parnell he regarded the minute as 'puerile and farcical' and declined to acknowledge it formally:

To think of six grown men - senior men - in the Government, who have sat and deliberated together for many years not having the courage to face a single boy who only three years ago was a junior officer, without asking help from judges from Singapore and other paraphernalia. The whole situation is too ridiculous. I don't quite see how Singapore judges - learned men though they may be - can adjudicate on the future policy of Sarawak.1

The Inquiry and its outcome

From the outset the inquiry was a confrontation between Anthony and the Committee. Having recited the facts of the case as he saw them, Anthony announced that Crossley had been 'savagely' treated.

1 Vyner Brooke to Parnell, undated, Appendix 10, ibid. This letter was received by Parnell on the morning of the inquiry.
He was to be permitted to retire and to receive six month's pay in lieu of notice as well as the leave to which he was normally entitled.

The rest of the inquiry consisted of speeches by members of the Committee of Administration and Anthony's replies. One of the most significant of these was Anthony's response to Dr Bowyer's point that the terms originally given to Crossley were the maximum permitted under General Orders:

I should like to say that so long as I have any influence over the way the laws of Sarawak are to be applied I shall never recommend the application of those laws literally where I consider that my own good judgment fits the circumstances better, and in speaking thus I know I express the unspoken policy of His Highness the Rajah in regard to the application of the laws of the State.¹

When it came to an end on the afternoon of the second day, Parnell resigned and was immediately replaced as Chief Secretary by J.B. Archer²

¹ Ibid., p.9.
² John Beville Archer (1893-1948) joined the Sarawak Service at 19 and spent his early years among the Melanau people in the coastal areas of the Third Division. A keen writer, he contributed numerous articles to the Sarawak Gazette under the sobriquet of 'Optimistic Fiddler' and was editor during the 1920s. In 1939 Archer was a member of the Committee of Administration and replaced Parnell as Chief Secretary when the latter resigned. Archer himself was forced to resign in May 1941, partly for his opposition to the new constitution's limitations on the Rajah's powers. Spending the war in Batu Lintang, he refused recuperation leave and was appointed Political Adviser to the military administration. Supporting cession as the Rajah's wish, Archer was instrumental in seeing that it went through the Council Negri of which, as Acting Chief Secretary, he was ex officio President. He was also Officer Administering the Government from the Rajah's departure until the formalization of cession in July. Greatly troubled by the cession affair, he took his own life at the age of 55. An ardent Brooke royalist who would not tolerate any diminution of the Rajah's authority, Archer had fallen out with the other members of the Committee of Administration in 1941. Cession was a highly traumatic experience for him. His first loyalty was to the Rajah, but the Rajah was committed to terminate Brooke rule. One of the fiercest opponents of British intervention before the war, Archer found himself in 1946 working to establish a colonial government. His manuscript autobiography has been published in part in the Sarawak Tribune.
who had retracted his earlier support for the memorandum. Calvert, Middlemas and Bowyer also resigned although Anthony tried to persuade the latter two to stay.

Boyd was told that although the Rajah wished him to resign as Chief Justice, he could stay on as Judicial Commissioner. Boyd was not prepared to accept such a demotion. Even if he had been able to remain Chief Justice, he wrote, there would still have been the formidable problem of maintaining the independence of the judiciary. Anthony's declaration that he proposed to substitute his own 'good judgment' for the written law when need be had been sufficient to persuade Boyd that his position would become impossible. Indeed, he saw the situation as resembling the dispute between James I and Sir Edward Coke in 1605 when the Lord Chief Justice was dismissed for challenging the King's claim to be above the Law. While this appeal to the rule of law was consistent with his earlier position, it was ironic that Boyd should have given equal emphasis to his fear that if he returned as Judicial Commissioner, 'the Asiatic population would undoubtedly conclude that the Rajah had lost confidence in me which would weaken the authority of the Court and make the administration of Justice extremely difficult'.

This appeal to the 'rule of man' was something to which the Rajah would have been more responsive.

At about the same time, the Rajah wrote to Parnell indicating his regret at what had happened:

No one is more sorry than I am for what has taken place as I am just as responsible as any member of the C. of A. - I attach no blame or stigma on anyone and as for yourself you have always been loyal and done your duty as a conscientious and high-minded officer ... in spite of all that has taken place, I am sure that we shall always be friends.

And later, in a brief note to Sir Shenton Thomas, he told the Governor that his nephew was fully authorized to give a resume of all that had happened and that he (the Rajah) accepted responsibility

1 Ibid., p.10A.
2 Vyner Brooke to Calvert, 30 March 1939, Appendix 19, ibid.
for the 'purge' of his most senior officers:

As far as organisation, redtape and office methods are concerned I have nothing against these three officials except that the Government so formed is drifting away from native interests and I think you will agree with me that a native state cannot be governed from an office table. Having the welfare of the native community so much at heart this gradual cleavage of interests has been very disturbing to me for some years past.

All native communities and the Chinese and also Government officials who live and work among the natives very warmly welcome this change ..."}

All he wanted now, he concluded, was some encouragement from the Governor and with this 'everything will go swimmingly and all Sarawak ... will heave a sigh of relief'. In another note, he added that he had appointed Anthony as Rajah Muda and Officer Administering the Government during his absence. Expressing full confidence in his nephew's ability to look after things, he then left for his annual holiday in England. The general significance of Anthony's discussions with Sir Shenton Thomas in Singapore will be dealt with below. It will suffice to say at this point that Anthony obtained the Governor's support.

On his way back to Kuching, Anthony wrote to his sister, Jean Halsey, that he was about to assume the responsibilities of Officer Administering the Government 'with the full powers of the Rajah'. It even seemed doubtful that his uncle would actually return to Sarawak. 'Oddly enough I don't feel a bit alarmed', he wrote. 'On the contrary I am glad the time has come when I can at last do something worthwhile ...' He later remarked on the favourable reaction there had been locally to his victory over Parnell and Calvert:

1 Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 28 March 1939, CO 531/29 [53011/1].
2 Ibid.
3 See Chapter IV.
4 Anthony Brooke to Jean Halsey [c.11 April 1939], Brooke Papers, Box 12/11.
... the general feeling is one of great relief at the departure of the two "Dictators". Parnell and Calvert were openly referred to as "Mussolini and Hitler" by the Chinese in the bazaar!! The Chinese wanted to give Parnell a "send-off" with crackers ... and all the rest, but we managed to dissuade them! What the Malays - and the old Datu Patinggi - thought of P. had best be left unsaid. Everyone is sincerely "relieved" - and let us pray most fervently that their departure see the beginning of a new and better era of administration for the country. The C.of. A. has used all the power that it had designated to itself during the past 20 years - and more especially the last 10. The whole business was very sudden and I do not think it would be an exaggeration to say that never since the days of the second Rajah has the country been so much in the power of one man. The C. of A. is a mere name and nothing else - and I think it should remain so!

But the feeling of relief was by no means general, particularly among the technical officers. Indeed, there were those who regarded the loss of Parnell, Calvert, and Middlemas as the end of any hope of administrative reform. There was a good deal of resentment towards Anthony and his outstation supporters 'for what had amounted to a coup with the consequential loss of three outstanding officers (no one worried about Boyd)'. A.J.N. Richards, a young cadet who had come straight from Oxford to the Secretariat in September 1938, was at the wharf for Parnell's departure and recorded his private feelings about the whole affair in a letter to his mother:

I saw Mr. Parnell suddenly go red as fire - it must have been a moving sight to see the wharf crowded with people, only a murmur of talk and all sorry to see him go - after 34 years in the place to be "forced" out by a commotion of royal prerogatives! And I think everyone was genuine - from old Ong Tiang Swee who had seen Parnell come out as a young man, to the 4 companions of the C. of A., sound men, down to myself who wonder how I shall fare in 20 or 30 years time!

1 Anthony Brooke to Jean Halsey, 24 April 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 12/11.
2 Personal communication from Mr J.L. Noakes, 3 August 1975.
3 Richards to Mrs Richards, 22 April 1939, Richards Papers.
Thinking of the three more farewells to come, he suggested that by June he and his fellow officers would have 'built up a very sorry feeling' and would be 'more "anti" than ever'. Anthony's intentions were the object of some suspicion and his suitability as the next Rajah was questioned.

Some months later, in response to the publicity which the dismissal of the officers had been given in the Singapore and London newspapers, Anthony sent the Defence Secretary, Nigel Hughes, to Singapore to meet newspaper editors and publicize his version of the event. While it was a somewhat idealized interpretation designed to win maximum support, *The Straits Times* editorial of 6 July 1939 also reflected Anthony's own views on Brooke government.

For his part, Boyd, emphasized that the 'new policy' to which Anthony was objecting 'had been approved by the Rajah at every step and was carried out by the Chief Secretary and the Financial Secretary at the Rajah's direction'. The inquiry, he said, had not been in any sense a 'meeting' of the Committee of Administration and at no point was the policy of the Government questioned, the proceedings being given over completely to discussion of the Crossley case. Boyd admitted, however, that the article had stated the real grounds of complaint - financial policy. In a letter to Calvert some months later he was rather more blunt:

I have little doubt that the finance business was the real reason for the row and of course H.H. should have taken the matter up and looked into it himself. I imagine that he did not do so because he knew if you and Parnell opposed any changes he would get the worst of any argument and wouldn't have the guts to overrule you if necessary, and secondly because he preferred the back door to the front.

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1 Ibid.  
2 Noakes, op. cit.  
3 See Appendix III.  
5 Boyd to Calvert, 26 October 1939, Boyd Papers.
Anthony Brooke as Rajah Muda

The period of Anthony Brooke's administration of Sarawak from April until September 1939 is of some importance. The problem, however, is that there are very few records and those which have survived consist largely of complaints made about him by his critics. Consequently it is only possible to provide the most general outline of his administrative policy.

A few days after the inquiry, Anthony called a meeting of all available administrative officers in Archer's office. He told them that four senior men were leaving but that there was no stigma attached and the service would be in no way impaired as long as everyone co-operated. After his departure, Archer addressed them on the subject of the 'new system' of centralized administration initiated by Parnell and Calvert, suggesting that it might not be feasible. Those supporting Archer's highly conservative views spoke up strongly and he concluded that 'the general opinion was that the new scheme would not work'. However, Richards noted, if Macpherson, Selous and others 'capable of thinking' had spoken frankly they would have been unpopular. '... We must be cleverly diplomatic', he wrote, 'or shut up and suffer gladly'.

One of Anthony's preoccupations which emerged from the inquiry was the administration of justice. On the last day he announced that the post of Chief Justice was to be reduced to Judicial Commissioner and that this was to take effect from 1 April. This may have seemed somewhat precipitate to the Rajah because Anthony subsequently told Boyd that the Rajah no longer intended fixing a date. However, the demotion was something on which uncle and nephew could agree. Boyd's fussy insistence on the letter of the law and his refusal to take account of Sarawak's 'special conditions' had made him something of a nuisance. Vyner seems to have come to

1 Minute by Archer addressed to Rajah Muda, 4 April 1939, Richards Papers.
2 Richards' note on Archer's minute, ibid.
4 Anthony Brooke to Boyd, 30 March 1939, Appendix 11, ibid.
an agreement with Anthony that Boyd's successor need not be of top
calibre and that it would be a short-term appointment on a salary
substantially less than Boyd's.¹

Although we have only Boyd's word for it, Anthony
also appears to have planned the abolition of the Committee of
Administration, only to find that 'owing to certain difficulties'
it could not be done. Nevertheless, the Committee's meetings during
Anthony's period of responsibility were little more than a
formality and he did not make any appointments to replace the five
members who had resigned. This, together with a number of other
changes, convinced Boyd that Anthony's policies were 'definitely
reactionary and attended with considerable danger to the country'.²

The initiatives subsequently taken by Anthony were not
so much changes as reversals of the tentative efforts which had been
made since 1934 to centralize the administration. One of his
first announcements was that the Fifth Division was to be restored
from 1 June with F.H. Pollard³ as Acting Resident and a number of
other administrative officers were also promoted, subject to
confirmation on the Rajah's return. The financial and other

¹ Archer to Sarawak Government Agent, 20 April 1939, ibid., p.25.
² Ibid., p.19.
³ Frederick Hubert Pollard (1903-55), one of the most active
supporters of Sarawak's independence, was persuaded to join
the Sarawak Service in 1923 by his uncle, Charles Willes Johnson,
who had been in charge of the Sarawak Government Office in
London since 1912. Pollard had served at various stations
before being appointed to Limbang and in late 1941 was promoted
to Secretary of Native Affairs. In Australia when the
Japanese invaded Sarawak, he joined the Australian Army and
served in the Allied Intelligence Bureau. Returning to England
in October 1943, he was appointed by the Rajah to head the
Sarawak section of the Borneo Planning Unit but resigned in
protest against the Colonial Office's plans for post-war
Sarawak. He was appointed a member of the Provisional
Government in early 1945 and was dismissed with Anthony Brooke
by the Rajah in October. In May 1946 he accompanied Bertram
Brooke on his visit to Sarawak. See Chapter VI, pp. 268-71
departmental controls introduced by Parnell and Calvert were relaxed, as were Boyd's stricures on magisterial procedure, so that Residents and District Officers could once more be free from the 'interference' of Kuching bureaucrats. Furthermore, they were encouraged by Anthony to give their frank views on government policy as part of what he saw as a move towards decentralization.¹

Andrew Macpherson, whom Anthony promoted to Secretary for Native Affairs, seemed to be the only person who could provide a reasoned defence of traditional Brooke policy. Macpherson's essential argument proceeded from the premise that Sarawak was an exception to the normal policy in British colonies of rapid development by means of foreign capital. Consequently, the social improvements possible in British colonies could only be paid for in Sarawak by means of loans, the exploitation of natural resources by foreign capital and the transfer of land from the natives for the benefit of foreign concessionaires who would then employ them as wage-labourers. In Macpherson's view, loans would create obligations threatening Sarawak's independence. Furthermore, natural resources should be conserved 'until they can be exploited for Sarawak's benefit and not for the benefit of shareholders sitting in England'. He believed that Sarawak's real strength lay with its smallholders. It could not be said that the industrialization of peasant populations had been sufficiently successful anywhere to justify the introduction of a similar system in Sarawak.²

during his six months as Rajah Muda and Officer Administering the Government, Anthony Brooke had an opportunity to demonstrate how he would go about solving the problems facing the Brooke Raj. On the whole, his solutions were backwards-looking. His intervention in the Crossley case had been an opportunity to re-assert the traditional supremacy of the Administrative Service over the new power-accumulating bureaucracy and this policy was further pursued in his reversal of the few changes which had been made towards

¹ Interview with Anthony Brooke, 25 February 1975.
² Macpherson's memorandum on Sir Shenton Thomas' notes, April 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
administrative centralization. Another important initiative was the reduction of the post of Chief Justice to Judicial Commissioner and the reaffirmation of pragmatic standards of justice. These changes were in accordance with an almost romantically traditional view of Brooke government. 'The interests of the natives' were invoked without any real attempt to take account of international pressures for colonial reform and the opportunities for economic development. In early 1939 Anthony had seemed likely to become the fourth Rajah but there were few signs that he represented anything more than a re-assertion of Brooke authority. Brooke rule had run its course.
CHAPTER III

MacBryan, the Brooke Succession and the 1941 Constitution

Not only were the Brookes unable to respond positively to the administrative problems of the 1930s, they could not even resolve the question of the succession. Like so many other dynasties possessing autocratic power, schemes to limit the power of a successor or to disinherit him constitute a major theme in Brooke history.

The first Rajah had disowned Brooke Brooke when his nephew objected to Sarawak being made the protectorate of a European power. The second Rajah had wanted to disinherit Vyner but instead introduced a number of constitutional changes designed to keep him in check. When Bertram, but not Vyner, fathered a male heir, dispute over the succession became almost inevitable. Vyner's own indecisiveness and unwillingness to do anything which would make enemies also helped to create a political vacuum within the autocratic system. Anthony Brooke had seemed certain to fill this vacuum eventually but his failure to win his uncle's confidence blighted his chances.

In a situation like this a rank outsider can often make a strong run. Such a dark horse was Gerard MacBryan, Vyner's talented Private Secretary, who vied with the senior bureaucrats of the Committee of Administration to manipulate the Rajah. While MacBryan and Sylvia Brooke conspired to alter the succession, the bureaucrats were anxious to trim the Rajah's powers and avoid a Colonial Office takeover. The Rajah himself wanted both to tie Anthony's hands should he succeed and to make long-term financial provision for himself and his family. The net result was the 1941 Constitution which established a limited monarchy.

'The Baron'

Gerard Truman Magill MacBryan was a key figure in the drama which brought an end to Brooke rule. The son of an eminent neurologist, MacBryan was born in 1901 and brought up at Kingsdown House, the private mental home which his father had purchased at Box, six miles outside
Bath. His mother died in childbirth and when the doctor remarried, Gerard formed a close relationship with his stepmother, a link which was to isolate him from his two elder brothers. His father, a gentle autocrat, allowed him free reign around the home. Educated at St Christopher's School (Bath) and Naish House (Burnham-on-Sea) he entered Dartmouth Naval College in 1918 as naval cadet. Discharged after deliberately failing his test in navigation, he worked for a shipping firm until the oppressive conditions of office life moved him to throw the manager's morning cup of tea in his face. He was then without any real career prospects and it was in these circumstances that an acquaintance of his father's suggested he should go to Sarawak.

Henry Deshon was a member of the Bath and Country Club to which Dr MacBryan also belonged and, like other retired Sarawak officers, was always on the look-out for likely young men who might do well in the Service. His sense of adventure aroused, Gerard travelled to London and succeeded in persuading an interviewing panel headed by Bertram Brooke that he would be 'good Sarawak material'. Thus it was that in July 1920 the nineteen year old MacBryan found himself on a tiny government steamer crawling around the Sarawak coast towards Limbang. One of his shipboard companions was Mrs Nellie Boult, the wife of District Officer F.F. Boult whom MacBryan had been appointed to assist at Limbang after a few days' initial familiarization in Kuching. She found him a charming and exquisitely mannered young man, but very highly-strung. Indeed, she believed he was quite unbalanced: he had told her of seeing 'an enormous ghost rise from the sea as he was taking his "watch" ...' Although he had expressed pleasure in being posted to a remote outstation and described himself as 'a bit of a naturalist',

1 Kingsdown House was one of the first privately licensed mental hospitals in England with fees which, in the first decade of this century, could not be afforded by the rich. It came into MacBryan's possession in 1937 and was closed before he sold it ten years later.

2 J.C.W. MacBryan to Margaret Noble, 2 March 1965, Brooke Papers, Box 12/9.

3 Interview with Mr J.C.W. MacBryan, November 1974.


5 Extracts from a diary kept by Mrs Boult, cited in her letter to Anne Bryant of 2 January 1938, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
MacBryan's nervous temperament found the loneliness and isolation difficult to bear. 'We are rather worried about him', Nellie Boult wrote in her diary, 'he is a mass of nerves, sleeps with with windows and doors hermetically sealed and jumps at insects etc....' Unable to sleep but afraid of missing his watches, he began taking bromide sedatives. The sympathetic Boult invited him to sleep in their own bungalow but were disillusioned to find later that he had said harsh things about them to the manager of the Brooketon colliery. By this time MacBryan had contracted both malaria and dysentery, necessitating visits to Labuan for treatment.

In March 1921 there occurred an event which was to have a profound influence on the young cadet. A Malay prison escapee called Junit bin Ongee murdered two Chinese at Lubok Pisang near Limbang and was duly captured, sentenced to death and executed by firing squad - the first execution which had taken place during Limbang's 31 years under Brooke rule. MacBryan was fearful of Junit escaping from the lock-up but at the same time he envied the peace of mind which the Islamic religion seemed to inspire in the murderer and the extraordinary influence which his claims to invulnerability and other superhuman powers gave him over the natives. He was also shocked by the crude nature of the public execution in which a chalk circle was described on the victim's chest for the benefit of the police marksmen.

Before the execution MacBryan announced that he could stand it no longer and asked Boult to have him transferred somewhere else. Mrs Boult noted in her diary:

... he is just a mass of nerves and full up with superstition. I believe he half believes the yarns of the 'spirits' and supernatural things the natives tell him. This land is the worst of places for such a temperament I fear, unless he grows out of it but most boys don't fear anything;

1 Ibid.

2 SG, 1 June 1921; 1 July 1921; 1 September 1921. Until 1889 all official executions in Sarawak had been performed with the kris (Malay dagger) which was thrust down behind the victim's collar bone into the heart. 'Pieces from the Brooke Past - I', SG, 31 May 1964.
it's men, after years, get nerves out here as a rule.\(^1\)

Afterwards he was 'very wild and mad in his talk and manner' and it was a considerable relief to the Boults when he was appointed in July to Sibu.

Although MacBryan's nervousness had made him a difficult subordinate, there was no doubt about his exceptional talents. A brilliant linguist, he picked up Malay and other languages very quickly and was to develop a wide knowledge of the customs of the various native peoples of Sarawak.\(^2\) However, the Junit affair caused him to identify more closely with the Malays with whom he spent much of his time. One of the accusations levelled against him by his fellow officers was that he preferred the company of Malays to that of Europeans and he would probably not have disputed this. In the late 1920s, moreover, he took up with Sa'erah, an extremely attractive young Melanau divorcee who had earlier been involved with another European officer.\(^3\)

In August 1922 MacBryan was appointed to Kapit and it was during his time there that the young cadet first came to the Rajah's notice. For a long time there had been bloody feuds between the Kayans, Kenyahs and Kajangs of the Apoi Kayan and Baloi Rivers and the Ibans of the Batang Rejang and Batang Ai. This trouble had broken out afresh in 1921 with the murder of 15 Ibans on the Iwan River and MacBryan conceived the ambitious notion of bringing the feud to an end by means of a peacemaking ceremony similar to the one held at Simanggang in 1920 between the Ibans of the upper Batang Lupar and those

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\(^1\) Mrs Boult's diary, op. cit.

\(^2\) MacBryan also displayed a keen interest in Borneo history, something that may have been sparked off by the discovery during his time at Limbang of a Hindu *ganesan* figure suggesting early Indian contacts with the area. In late 1940 MacBryan returned to Limbang to carry out further excavations and it was during this time that he also obtained from Brunei a number of historical Malay documents in Arabic script which were deposited in the Sarawak Museum.

\(^3\) MacBryan told Rutter that he first met Sa'erah when she was helping her father weed the Rajah's rubber garden, then under MacBryan's supervision. Rutter, *Triumphant Pilgrimage*, p.55. Sa'erah's mother was Melanau but there is some doubt as to whether her father was Iban or Malay.
of the Skrang, Lemanak and Saribas rivers. Accordingly, he made the
gruelling 350 mile journey by paddled canoe to Long Nawang in Dutch
Borneo where with Dutch assistance he brought about an agreement.
When this was later upset by arguments over the arrangements he was
obliged to make another journey to Long Nawang, this time accompanied
by a number of Iban leaders. A preliminary peacemaking was made there
and the impressive final ceremony was held at Kapit in November 1924
in the presence of the Rajah and Dutch officials. MacBryan's
diplomatic and linguistic skills had been largely responsible for the
peacemaking and the Rajah appears to have been greatly impressed.
The young officer was subsequently transferred as Acting District
Officer to Kuching where he acquired his first taste of court politics.

It may be useful at this point to provide some indication of
how people outside the Sarawak Service saw MacBryan. Owen Rutter, a
professional writer who later spent some time with him preparing a
book on his pilgrimage to Mecca in 1936, was not the keenest judge
of character but his descriptions reflect something of the man:

There is nothing particularly remarkable about him at
first sight. He is tall and lean and rather shabby.
Dark-haired and pale, with long fingers, and a nose I
always associate with King's Counsel: clear-cut and
pointed, not easy to deter. But those glittering blue
eyes of his are the features that hold you: narrow
but very bright, restless but resolute, and curiously
compelling. The eyes of a man who, once he knows what
he wants, goes on until he gets it, no matter how much
it costs him - or other people.

Like Nellie Boult, Rutter thought him 'an unsatisfied, jumpy creature'.
He had the irritating effect of someone 'rummaging about in the
drawers of a writing-table for a letter he had mislaid'. At the same

1 'The Peacemaking at Simanggang', SG, 1 September 1920.
2 G.T.M. MacBryan, 'Peacemaking at Kapit', SG, 1 December 1924. It
must be emphasized that these peacemaking ceremonies were a Brooke
invention with no basis in traditional Iban culture. Pringle,
Rajahs and Rebels, p.239. Penghulu Gerinang of the Balleh who
attended the 1924 Kapit ceremony told Pringle in 1965 that 'before
the Rajah came there were no peacemakings'. p.32n.
3 Col. C.M. Lane, 'Report on Mr. G.T. McBryan', Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
For MacBryan's first introduction to the Rajah and the Ranee, see
Sylvia Brooke, Queen of the Headhunters ..., pp.124-5.
4 Rutter, Triumphant Pilgrimage, p.11.
5 Ibid., pp.11-12.
time, however, he possessed an easy diffidence and a disarming laugh which many people found extremely charming.

MacBryan took his first leave in England in 1926 and it was during this time that he decided to resign and join the British and American Tobacco Company in their Singapore office. But the new job was not to his liking and in 1927 he was back in Kuching hoping to rejoin the Service. The Rajah agreed and MacBryan went to work in the Secretariat where one of his first tasks was to edit the Sarawak Gazette and the Sarawak Government Gazette. From this point, MacBryan's rise within the Administrative Service was meteoric. By August of that year he was Acting Assistant Secretary and a year later the Rajah appointed him Private Secretary and Secretary for Native Affairs.

As we have already seen, the period of MacBryan's rapid rise to power coincided with the 'purge' of a number of senior officers including the Chief Secretary, H.B. Crocker. When it was announced by the Rajah on Crocker's departure that he would himself assume the Chief Secretary's duties, the general belief within the Service was that the administration was now effectively in MacBryan's hands. There is no evidence to demonstrate that he had masterminded the 'purge' but in the light of his position of power and aptitude for intrigue it seems extremely likely that he did.

It was widely believed within the Administrative Service that MacBryan's enormous influence over the Rajah was the result of some kind of blackmail. Some spoke of him as if he were the Sarawak equivalent of Rasputin and others called him 'Jew Suss' after a character in a popular novel of the day. Certainly, the Rajah was reputed to have conducted affairs with two or three of his officers' wives. But he made no attempt to disguise this and to those who knew him well it was inconceivable that he could be blackmailed on such an account. He simply didn't care. The new Private Secretary's influence must rather be seen in terms of his exceptional qualities and the Rajah's fundamental weaknesses as a ruler.

MacBryan was a man of considerable talent with an intelligence

1 Chapter II, p.31.
superior to that of most other officers and he was bound to have been successful within any bureaucratic system. More importantly, he was a skilful politician and a shrewd judge of character. He seems to have had the knack of knowing how the Rajah's mind worked and of suggesting courses of action in such a way that the Rajah could think of them as stemming from his own initiative. Furthermore, he was decisive enough to act upon them. In other words, MacBryan was capable of doing the Rajah's thinking and decision making for him, a quality which Vyner Brooke found extremely useful at times. But there were other qualities which are important if we are to have any deeper understanding of the relationship between the two men. In her autobiography, Mrs Averil Le Gros Clark provided an important clue to the Rajah's character. In order to explain his sometimes 'baffling' behaviour she recalled Disraeli's Lord Monmouth who

... saw through everybody and everything; and when he had detected their purpose, discovered their weakness or their vileness, he calculated whether they could contribute to his pleasure or his convenience in a degree which counter-balanced the objections which might be urged against their intentions, or their less pleasing and profitable qualities. To be pleased was always a principal object with Lord Monmouth.1

MacBryan's devious cunning fascinated the Rajah. He was diverted by the effort of following the twists and turns of a man who was ultimately limited by the length of rope allowed him. Furthermore, promoting MacBryan to a high position in the Secretariat was like setting a cat among pigeons - an entertainment dear to the Rajah's heart. 'I know MacBryan is a complete crook', he once told a friend, 'but he amuses me. I enjoy watching him and trying to work out his next move'.2 A skilful raconteur and cruel wit, the Private Secretary also filled the role of court jester and was known to the Rajah and Ranee as 'The Baron' after the legendary German story-teller, Baron Von Munchausen. Altogether he was an entertaining companion for the


2 [Margaret Noble], 'Some Notes on Sarawak (for Mr Drewe, in confidence)', Brooke Papers, Box 12/13. This document was prepared under parliamentary privilege.
Rajah who was easily bored with Sarawak and the responsibilities of everyday administration.

MacBryan's whole style was that of the born intriguer: his instinct was to reach the desired objective by the most circuitous route possible. It was even said that at parties he would disappear through one door, walk around the house, and reappear at another door in order to create an effect. To the Tuan Muda, who could never forget that he had been on the interviewing panel which had originally accepted him as a cadet, MacBryan was a compulsive schemer. 'I hold no feelings of personal animosity towards MacBryan', he told the Rajah in 1943, 'who can't help indulging in scheming and meddling and political jugglery any more than people can help having a clubfoot or arthritis, or some other disability'.

MacBryan was a complex character who will inevitably interest the student of Sarawak history. The fundamental point, however, is that in an autocratic system someone more or less like MacBryan was bound to appear, particularly when the autocrat declined responsibility. In Malay courts there had been a well-established tradition of saudagar raja (King's merchants) of Armenian, Indian or Portuguese mestico origin and possessing linguistic and business skills.

It was during his years in Kuching that MacBryan became involved in a plan to alter the succession in favour of the female line. His malicious wit and exaggerated manner, together with his genius for conspiracy, endeared him to the Ranee who enlisted his assistance in her scheme to have her eldest daughter, Leonora, declared the Rajah's successor. MacBryan even hoped to marry into the Brooke family as a means of securing power for himself - not necessarily as Rajah but as the power behind the throne. At any rate, he made some effort to persuade the datus to agree to a female ruler. Female succession was not unknown in Brunei history. There

1 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 26 January 1943, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.

2 I am indebted to Dr Leonard Andaya for information on this point.

3 See below, p.78.
was a tradition that an Arab, Sharif Ali Bilfakih, had become the third Sultan of Brunei by marrying the second Sultan's daughter and that when another Sultan died in the late sixteenth century without a male heir, he was succeeded by his daughter. The problem for MacBryan was that Abang Haji Abdillah, the Datu Bandar and head of Sarawak's Malay community, was adamantly opposed to the idea and the only solution was to 'pack' the Supreme Council so that his influence could be overcome.

In 1928 MacBryan recommended that the Rajah should appoint a number of new datus, at the same time promoting the Datu Bandar to Datu Shahbandar and conferring some form of honour on Ong


2 Ming Shih, Book 325, in W.P. Groenveldt, Historical Notes on Indonesia and Malaya comp. from Chinese Sources, Jakarta 1960, p.114. However, Professor Hsu yun-ts'iao, the principal authority on Chinese texts on southeast Asia, believes that this is almost certainly a reference to Patani, mistakenly attributed to Brunei by the compilers of the Ming Shih. Personal communication from Mr Robert Nicholl, 29 September 1976. There were also precedents in Aceh (north Sumatra) where there had been four female rulers during the seventeenth century and in Perak where only a daughter was left to succeed and her husband became the ruler. I am grateful to Dr Leonard Andaya for information on this point.

3 Abang Haji Abdillah was the son of the Datu Bandar, Abang Mohd. Kassim, who died in 1921. Born in 1862, he was the first Malay to study English at St Thomas' School and later taught at his father's school at Kampong Jawa. He then worked as a surveyor for the Lands Department and as an overseer of the Public Works Department quarry before joining the police. Appointed Datu Bandar Muda in 1921, he was made Datu Bandar in 1924 at the age of 62 and Datu Shahbandar in 1968. In 1937 the title of Datu Patinggi was revived and conferred on him. After serving as a figurehead for the first phase of the anti-cession movement, he died on 21 November 1946 at the age of 83. See Chapters VII, VIII and Plates IV and XIII.
Tiang Swee, the head of the Hokkien community and senior kapitan china of Sarawak since 1889. Accordingly, on the Rajah's birthday that year Abang Haji Suleiman was appointed Datu Amar and Mohd. Zin became Datu Menteri. At the same time, Ong Tiang Swee became the first Companion of the Most Excellent Order of the Star of Sarawak (devised by Stirling Boyd) and Abang Haji Abdillah became Datu Shahbandar. In the following year, Haji Hashim was appointed to the new position of Datu Bentara.

All this spelled a radical departure from the Brooke practice of appointing Malay aristocrats descended from the datus whom James Brooke had rehabilitated after their rebellion against Brunei. Haji Hashim was not a member of the perabangan. In fact he belonged to the old nakhoda (merchant) class which had almost disappeared by the first decade of the century due to Chinese competition and the Brookes' policy of discouraging Malays from trade. His fleet of schooners shipped rubber and other produce to Singapore and his building company had won a number of government contracts. One of the wealthiest Malays in Kuching, he was

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1 Born in Kuching in 1864, Ong Tiang Swee entered his father's firm (Ong Ewe Hai and Co) in 1882. He became a director of the Sarawak and Singapore Steamship Co in 1887 and chairman in 1919. Ong was a member of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce from 1887 and was later elected chairman. From 1914 he was chairman of the Sarawak Farms Syndicate which held the monopoly of opium and gambling. He also headed the special Chinese Court established in 1911 and was a member of the Board of Trade. During the First World War he was a member of the Food Control Committee and collected money for various war charities. He died in 1950. See A.M. Cooper, Men of Sarawak, Kuala Lumpur 1968, pp.59-64.

2 Abang Suleiman bin Haji Taha became an apprentice in the Lands Office in 1891 and was later transferred to the Public Works Department and the Municipal Department, returning to the Lands Office in 1920. In 1924 he was made Assistant Land Officer and in 1933 retired on pension.

3 Boyd to Mrs Boyd, 24 September 1928, Boyd Papers, Box 2/1.

also illiterate and lacked the respectability traditionally associated with the office.\(^1\) Abang Suleiman had for many years been a clerk in the Lands Office and Enche Mohd. Zin was a commoner who would never have aspired to a datuship, although he had been a member of the Supreme Council since 1907.\(^2\)

It appears that MacBryan's real purpose in securing the new appointments was to get up a petition asking the Rajah to alter the succession in favour of Leonora and her descendants,\(^3\) thinking that he could count on the support of the new datus who owed their positions to his influence with the Rajah. But the Datu Shahbandar's opposition proved to be too powerful and the petition had to be dropped before it could even be put to the Rajah. The antagonisms which had been created were to divide the Kuching datus as long as the main protagonists remained alive, but while the Rajah later blamed MacBryan for this it seems quite likely that he was playing his own game. Abang Haji Abdillah's prestige and influence was substantial and it probably suited the Rajah to create new datus who could be played off against him. Abang Suleiman had eloped with Abang Haji Abdillah's sister some years earlier and to appoint him Datu Amar was, in the words of one officer, 'to divide and rule'.\(^4\)

MacBryan went to London with the Rajah in March 1930 and in June he attended the Colonial Office conference as Sarawak's official observer. It was at this meeting that he announced the Rajah's decision to give £25,000 towards the Imperial Forestry Institute and a further £75,000 towards a scheme which would provide scholarships for children of members of the Colonial Service, later to be known

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1 He was often referred to as 'Datu Babi' because of his liking for pork. Haji Hashim and Mohd. Zin were both tua kampong.

2 Mohd. Zin joined government service as a schoolteacher in 1890 and taught at the Kampong Gersik school until 1907 when he was made tua kampong and appointed to the Supreme Council. He also became a member of the Council Negri in 1909. His beautiful daughter, Dayang Haji Renayah, had found favour with MacBryan who was responsible for her receiving land and jewels. Mohd. Zin and Abang Suleiman were friendly with MacBryan.

3 Notes by Bertram Brooke on Vyner Brooke's letter to Shenton Thomas, 19 February 1937, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1; Interview with Sir Dennis White, 22 January 1975.

4 Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 7 July 1975.
as the Rajah of Sarawak Fund. In August MacBryan resigned from his position as Secretary for Native Affairs and was transferred to the staff of the Sarawak Government Office as Private Secretary to the Rajah. Shortly afterwards he left the Service.

Why he should have resigned after such a meteoric rise is not absolutely clear but there are three possible explanations. In the first place, he had aroused a great deal of resentment among other senior members of the Administrative Service who were also somewhat fearful of his influence over Vyner. There even appears to have been an informal petition to the Rajah not to allow him to return. Secondly, he had passionately courted the Tuan Muda's daughter, Anne, even threatening to commit suicide unless she agreed to marry him secretly. Bertram had no sooner learnt of this than he was approached by a deputation of datus, headed by the Datu Shahbandar, complaining about MacBryan's interference in native affairs and requesting that he should not be allowed to return. When the Rajah came to know about MacBryan's intrigues he decided not to allow him back. Such at least was his official explanation to the British Agent for deporting MacBryan in 1936.

1 Originally the Rajah had informed the Governor in Singapore that he wished to give £100,000 to Imperial Funds. When it was suggested that the money could be spent on the Singapore naval base, he was concerned about what the Labour government might think and asked the Governor for his advice. Stirling Boyd believed that the Rajah possessed ulterior motives and suspected that he was angling for an earldom. Given the Rajah's attitude to such honours, however, it seems unlikely. He probably saw the £100,000 as a guarantee of the British government's goodwill. Stirling Boyd to Mrs. Boyd, 3 October 1929, Boyd Papers, Box 2/1. For the subsequent history of the Fund, see Chapter VI, p.

2 'Report on Mr. G.T. McBryan'.

3 Mrs A.H. Noble, 'Some Notes on Sarawak ...' In a 1947 memorandum Eva MacBryan noted that MacBryan had imagined himself to be in love with Anne Brooke, but later decided that 'ambition was at all times at the root of his desire for that lady'.

4 Notes by Lady Anne Bryant, November 1976. Personal communication.

5 Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 19 February 1937, CO 531/27 [53034].
In early 1931 MacBryan arrived in Australia intent on making his fortune from mining in the Northern Territory. For about twelve months he prospected in the Alice Springs area but cannot have had much success because by early 1932 he was in Melbourne, destitute. However, in Adelaide in September 1931 he had met Eva Collins, the daughter of a wealthy squatting family, and he wrote asking her to marry him. Shortly afterwards she was informed that he was ill and arriving in Melbourne found him in 'a pitiable state'.

He had suffered a nervous breakdown. Eva took him back to South Australia to convalesce and they were married at Ballarat in Victoria in May 1932. Immediately afterwards they left for England where MacBryan worked for his stockbroker brother on a commission basis, at the same time keeping abreast of Sarawak affairs through letters.

In 1935 Eva had to visit Australia in connection with her father's estate and two weeks before her departure Gerard attended a party for the Rajah and Ranee who were about to leave for Sarawak. The Rajah declined his request to rejoin the Service but invited him to stay with them in Sarawak and he agreed to accompany the Ranee on her first journey to Singapore by air. According to the Rajah, no sooner had MacBryan arrived in Kuching than he renewed his request to rejoin the Service and when this was refused began reviving the intrigues in which he had been involved earlier. A few days before he was due to leave for Australia he announced to the surprised and disbeliefing guests at a Sarawak Club farewell that he was about to be converted to Islam and would make the haj (pilgrimage to Mecca) with Sa'erah whom he intended to marry in Singapore. Before leaving Sarawak he gave the Ranee a written promise that he would never return.

The story of MacBryan's haj is not the concern of this study, but it should be noted that in 1935 it was extremely unusual for a European to embrace Islam and the journey to Mecca was an enterprise fraught with difficulties and dangers. MacBryan's own

1 Eva MacBryan, op. cit.
2 SG, 1 August 1932.
3 Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 19 February 1937, CO 531/27 [53034].
4 Ibid.
account, as told to the author Owen Rutter in *Triumphant Pilgrimage*, is no doubt a romanticized and dramatized version of what happened and one eminent English Muslim scholar even suggested in a review that MacBryan did not reach Mecca.\(^1\) Beyond the genuine desire for adventure, however, there were more serious motives. MacBryan, as we have seen, had been interested in Islam ever since his arrival in Sarawak. And the idea that conversion to Islam might enable him to build up a political empire reaching out from Borneo seems always to have attracted him. The problem of the succession to the Raj was still unsolved and he seems to have envisaged the possibility of establishing himself as a Muslim Rajah with the support of the datus. In April 1936 MacBryan was back in Singapore announcing that he intended returning to Sarawak to organize a company for the promotion of pilgrimages.

Vyner refused to allow him into Sarawak and invoked the recently enacted Undesirable Persons Order to prevent him from landing.\(^2\) A warning was conveyed to MacBryan through Sir Shenton Thomas but on 4 May he arrived at Pending aboard the 'Rajah Brooke' and was immediately arrested and detained. Two days later when he was interviewed by the Assistant Chief Secretary, Nigel Hughes, MacBryan gave him a letter to the Rajah revealing that his reason for returning was to re-join the Service:

> If only I could get "back to the fold" I would willingly be prepared to accept a salary of $200 a month and would happily go to anywhere at all you might send me and do exactly and precisely what I am told.\(^3\)

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1 Personal communication from Mrs Margaret Noble, 22 September 1976. *Triumphant Pilgrimage* was also subjected to a caustic review in the *Sarawak Gazette* of 1 September 1937 and MacBryan for some time threatened to sue for libel. David Chale, the central character in Rutter's book, is clearly MacBryan, while his female companion Munirah is Sa'erah.

2 Order No. U-1 (Undesirable Persons), 1935. Anthony Brooke was banned from Sarawak by the colonial government in December 1946 under the same Order.

3 MacBryan to Vyner Brooke, 6 May 1936, CO 531/27 [53034].
But Vyner remained adamant, partly no doubt on the insistence of his senior officers, and when the two men met again in London a month later MacBryan promised once more that he would never attempt to return:

I enter into this solemn and binding obligation of my own freewill and accord and furthermore I undertake to refrain from conducting correspondence with everybody living in Sarawak, either Native or European, which relates to affairs of other than a strictly personal character. And further I also undertake to refrain from writing in books, journals or letter anything which is in any way detrimental to the interests of yourself or Sarawak and which is calculated to disturb or confound the public policy of the Raj of Sarawak. ¹

In return, Vyner undertook to clear MacBryan's name of any stigma in Sarawak and Singapore² and agreed that MacBryan could make arrangements for Sa'erah to leave Sarawak and join him wherever he happened to be. This concession was significant because MacBryan saw in Sa'erah his passport to Sarawak at some future time.

In a letter to MacBryan from Kuching in December 1936 the Ranee indicated very clearly that it was his extraordinary political ambition which had resulted in the Rajah's tough line:

If you had played your cards my way you might be here now living at Bedil. As it is, you trusted the Malays a little too much. You believed they wanted a leader other than the Rajah. You wanted a Mahommedan country with a Mahommedan ruler. The Malays might have followed you Baron had you been fabulously rich. As it is they sit on their hams and see what happens. Unfortunately for you they did not wait silently - they talked. And their talk hasn't helped you towards your ultimate desire. Besides, you yourself in all that you have written and signed have made it impossible for you to come out here again during the Rajah's lifetime.³

Unfortunately Sylvia did not reveal what her advice to him had been but presumably she had warned him earlier that he should postpone

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¹ MacBryan to Vyner Brooke, 24 June 1936, ibid.
² Vyner Brooke to MacBryan, 26 June 1936, ibid.
³ Sylvia Brooke to MacBryan, 29 December 1936, ibid. 'Bedil' was the fine house which MacBryan had built across the river not far from the Astana.
any plan until the Rajah was out of the way. She may have been thinking that it was still possible to set up Leonora as regent for her young grandson with MacBryan as a guiding **eminence** who would also have the support of the Malays.

Shortly after this, MacBryan wrote to the Colonial Office complaining about his banning and seeking an interview. He later forwarded a copy of the Ranee's letter as evidence of his claim that she was the source of his difficulty and asked that it be shown to the Secretary of State:

> My friends in Sarawak, including Government officials, and I myself cannot but feel that the underlying cause ... is the influence of the Ranee whose treatment of me has been most capricious, alternating between affection and abuse. Among her obsessions is that I am too intimate with the Malays and am in some way plotting against her interests. This idea is not only a fallacy but is quite fantastic to the knowledge of all responsible officials in Sarawak.  

The question was referred to Sir Shenton Thomas who in turn informed the Rajah and an official report was made by the Sarawak government. In a covering letter to the Governor, the Rajah stressed that he did not feel obliged to justify his action, but apart from all the other reasons

> ... it would be quite impossible in a small place like Kuching to have a European ex-Government officer recently converted to Islam cohabiting openly with a Malay woman of known bad character. In 1935 MacBryan was still married, and since both he and the Malay woman were Hajis, to have tolerated such a state of affairs would have been to run a grave risk of outraging local Mohammedan opinion.

Although the Colonial Office found the case intriguing, there was clearly no possibility of the Secretary of State intervening and in May 1937 MacBryan withdrew his complaint.

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1 MacBryan to Permanent Under-Secretary of State, 6 January 1937, ibid.
3 [W.F. Dick], 'Memorandum on Mr G.T.M. MacBryan's letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies dated January 6th, 1937', ibid.
4 Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 19 February 1937, ibid.
The problem of the succession had remained quietly in the background from MacBryan's departure in early 1930 until 1933 when Leonora Brooke married Kenneth Mackay, the second Earl of Inchcape. It was about this time that the Ranee told a London newspaper that the Rajah had disinherited the Tuan Muda in favour of Leonora and a reporter was sent to question Ranee Margaret who was then living in retirement in Cornwall. Although the grand old lady was able to brush off the story as so much nonsense at that time, it assumed a different complexion when Leonora became pregnant and there was a prospect of her producing a rival heir. A week before Leonora gave birth to Simon Brooke Mackay, Ranee Margaret became so concerned that she wrote to Sir Frederick Ponsonby, private secretary to Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. As well as the incident with the newspaper, she recalled a conversation between King George V and Vyner when the former conferred on him the GCMG in 1927. 'The King asked the Rajah if he had any heirs. "Only daughters, Sir", my son said. "Never mind", His Majesty replied, half in joke, I suppose, "I will make her Begum!"'\(^1\) Ranee Margaret told Ponsonby that this had raised Sylvia's ambitions to 'boiling point' and that she had become absolutely determined to influence the succession in favour of Leonora. For example, she had even succeeded in persuading Vyner not to allow Anthony, who was already 22, to go out to Sarawak.

It is not clear whether Ranee Margaret was offered any reassurance that the British government would insist on observance of the succession as laid down in the wills of the first two Rajahs, but the matter had been raised in the previous year at official level - no doubt in response to what Sylvia had told the newspaper. In a letter dated 1 March 1933 the Secretary of State for Colonies, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, told the Rajah that he had heard he was contemplating some changes in the succession. He pointed out that under the terms of the 1888 Treaty, 'the question as to the right of succession must be referred to H.M. Government for decision' and expressed the hope that the Rajah would consult him.

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1 Margaret Brooke to Ponsonby, 21 March 1934, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1.
fully before there was any public discussion on the subject. Although the Rajah replied through the Sarawak Government Office that the story was 'absolutely false', the Colonial Office no doubt remained suspicious.

The Demotion of Anthony Brooke

Ranee Sylvia's hopes of Leonora or her son succeeding the Rajah were raised to new heights by her nephew's dramatic demotion in January 1940 after six months as Rajah Muda and Officer Administering the Government. Ten days after the Rajah's return to Sarawak in October 1939 Anthony left for Singapore, and it was there, en route for his wedding in Rangoon, that he received a cable from the Rajah asking for information about the furniture which had been ordered for Pepys' residence. A second cable stated that neither the Chief Secretary nor the Committee of Administration knew anything about the furniture and that the order was to be cancelled. The importance which the Rajah attached to the matter can be seen from a letter which he wrote to Anthony shortly afterwards:

I have read your letter in the file to Pepys regarding furniture ... and again, I notice, you have been extraordinarily generous where Government money is concerned. This is the second time. As you have already given your assurance in writing that you will not meddle in Treasury matters again ... and that the furniture on order is now countermanded, I will say no more.

On 7 November he cabled Anthony that special leave had been granted for him to return to England for his honeymoon and although Bertram advised that this was undesirable, the Rajah was insistent. He evidently hoped that Anthony would take the opportunity while in England to enlist.

1 Copy of an anonymous, undated Colonial Office minute, ref. no. 53066/41, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
2 Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke 29 and 30 October 1939, Enclosures 1 and 2, Appendix, 'The Abolition of the Title of Rajah Muda ...', Brooke Papers, Box 2/2.
In a letter to Bertram written shortly after Anthony's departure, Vyner expressed his disappointment with what had happened. He had left Sarawak, he said, hoping that all the tensions of previous years had been ended and that Anthony had 'got the Service behind him to a man' through his courageous action against the Committee of Administration. 'No one could have started off under fairer auspices than Peter did', the Rajah wrote, 'but I come back to find everything changed.' He blamed himself for putting too much power in his nephew's inexperienced hands and later told Anthony that what he now envisaged was a takeover by the British government.

By 11 January the Rajah, after consultations with Archer, had decided to remove Anthony's title and it was probably Archer who drafted the Proclamation of 17 January which stated that Anthony was 'not yet fitted to exercise the responsibilities of this high position'. The 'yet' was apparently a face-saver insisted upon by H. Thackwell Lewis, who had succeeded Stirling Boyd as Judicial Commissioner, and was then sent to Singapore to explain to the Governor as best he could the reasons for the Rajah's action. In the meantime, Archer wrote to the five Residents informing them of the Proclamation and suggesting that they should dispell any misapprehension, especially among the Chinese, that Anthony's title had made him heir to the Raj.

Anthony had told his uncle in December that he would spend Christmas in Europe. On 29 January he and Kathleen arrived in Athens where Gladys Brooke had been living for some time and it was there that he learned from a bevy of awaiting newspaper reporters of the Proclamation of 17 January. His immediate response was

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1 Cited by Bertram Brooke in his letter to Gladys Brooke, 31 January 1940, Enclosure 7a, ibid.
3 Enclosure 10c, ibid; MacBryan to Bertram Brooke, 14 July 1943, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
4 Archer to Macpherson, Cutfield, Aikman, Daubeney and Pollard, 11 January 1940, Enclosure 10b, 'The Abolition of the Title of Rajah Muda ...'
to cable the Rajah for an official explanation, only to be told in reply that 'your Daddy will explain everything'. But in a later letter the Rajah repeated the judgement which he had made public in the Proclamation:

What it all comes down to, Peter, is that you are not fitted for the position. I don't say this from any feeling of jealousy, vindictiveness [sic], or anything of that kind, as I was quite ready to resign, at no distant date, and give over to you. But this would now be impossible. Rumours of my impending resignation have got about the place and I have stacks of petitions from everyone asking me to stay as long as I possibly can, to which I have consented.

He told Anthony that although Sir Shenton Thomas regarded the Proclamation as 'libellous', he had the support of the entire Service and the Chinese. He regretted the publicity caused by the Proclamation but felt that the phrase 'as yet unfitted to rule' to which Anthony had taken such strong exception 'exactly hits the nail on the head'. Finally, he hoped that Anthony would return to Sarawak, work his way up in the Service and 'regain the position of trust and honour you once held'.

Explaining the Rajah's action to Gladys Brooke, Bertram was inclined to sympathize with him:

... He hasn't done it just for fun. He is fearfully perturbed by the idea that Peter, with what amounts to a Dictator's powers, even temporarily, might suddenly see fit to use them as a Dictator in some way (with the best intentions) which might be injurious to the State, or antagonise those with whom he is working ...

Bertram's advice to his son was 'least said, best mended' but Anthony had been deeply wounded by the Proclamation and subsequent

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1 Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 2 February 1940, Enclosure 4, ibid.
2 Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 2 February 1940, Enclosure 15, ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Bertram Brooke to Gladys Brooke, 31 January 1940,
newspaper headlines and was determined to have the matter thrashed out, particularly in view of the fact that the Rajah was due to make his triennial speech to the Council Negri in late March. From his mother's apartment in Athens he poured out a veritable stream of letters to his father, the Rajah, the Chief Secretary and Sir Shenton Thomas. Since he could not return to Sarawak until the matter had been cleared up, he hoped that it would be possible to fly to Singapore to receive from Sir Shenton 'an authorised explanation for the Rajah's action'.

The Governor discouraged him from this, explaining that he regarded the matter as a personal one between Anthony and his uncle. But he had already taken the initiative of writing a strong letter to the Rajah protesting at the wording of the Proclamation and vigorously defending Anthony against the insubstantial charges which had been conveyed to him through Thackwell Lewis.

Eventually, however, Bertram was able to bring about a kind of truce between uncle and nephew. He apparently advised Anthony to write to Vyner asking about the conditions on which he would be allowed to return to Sarawak and Vyner expressed his willingness to meet him in England in June where they could discuss the whole question. Although they did not in fact meet, it was agreed that Anthony would return to Sarawak in early 1941 as a District Officer. While he was pleased with this arrangement, the Rajah made it clear in his own idiosyncratic way that Anthony would have to be more careful in future. 'There's an Indian proverb', he told Bertram, 'that says "when one lives in a tank it's just as well to keep on good terms with the crocodile". There's a good deal in this'.

For his part, Anthony still remained puzzled by

1 Anthony Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 24 February 1940, Enclosure 17, ibid.
2 Shenton Thomas to Anthony Brooke, 29 February 1940, Enclosure 19, ibid.
3 Sir Shenton Thomas to Vyner Brooke, 18 January 1940, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
4 Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 1 April 1940, Enclosure 30, 'The Abolition of the Title of Rajah Muda ...'
5 Cited by Bertram Brooke in his letter to Margaret Noble, 21 August 1940, Brooke Papers, Box 12/3.
Vyner's behaviour. '... There is no sense in rigidly maintaining an unconstructive attitude, even within myself', he wrote to Gent explaining why he was returning to Sarawak, 'towards an uncle who, contrary to all unwritten laws effecting [sic] 20th Century human relationships (except perhaps those propagated by M. Gandhi) invariably and consistently turns the other cheek'.

Just what it was that had turned some members of the Administrative Service and the Rajah against Anthony after such a promising beginning is difficult to say. Clearly, there was much more involved than the carte blanche which Anthony had given to Pepys in the furnishing of his house. Vyner Brooke's lack of confidence in his nephew was a crucial factor during the final years of Brooke rule and the events which led up to cession. However, it is a question which is best dealt with separately.

MacBryan's Return

The news of Anthony's demotion had been greeted with unconcealed delight by the Ranee who was visiting New York at the time. In her element amongst newspaper reporters, she made a number of extraordinary statements which were subsequently republished around the world. She felt 'pretty sure' that her daughter, Lady Inchcape, would now become Crown Princess of Sarawak and succeed to the Raj. And she expressed relief that in view of his dismissal and of his marriage with a person of no social consequence, Anthony would not become Rajah. 'My nephew married the sister of a government official', she told the Hearst reporters. 'I don't like to be snobbish, but the native is most particular about these things. It was rather an unfortunate marriage'.

At about the same time that the Rajah invited Anthony to return to Sarawak, he also gave permission for MacBryan to visit the state. In an attempt to allay the suspicions which the Tuan Muda must no doubt have felt about this and her own statements to

1 Anthony Brooke to Gent, 27 September 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/1].
2 See Appendix II.
3 Daily Express, 24 January 1940.
the press, the Ranee wrote to him that there were some officers in Sarawak who for selfish reasons of their own wanted Simon Mackay declared heir to the Raj. Unconvinced by this, Bertram sent her what must have been an extremely searching reply and it was in response to this that the Ranee made her final attempt to persuade him that she had not been plotting against him and Anthony. Since this letter constitutes about the most explicit documentation of the succession 'plot', it will be useful to quote from it at length:

I never imagined in my wildest dreams that you could believe such a thing of me. Now. I happen to know more about the MacBryan plot than anyone. It began with MacBryan making violent love to Didi [Elizabeth]. I don't think that Didi was more than fourteen at the time ... But as you know MacBryan was determined to get into the family somehow. Then ... [deleted passage] ... , and it was during this time that he started his petition which I may as well inform you NEVER got any further than his own crazy mind. MacBryan went to Inchcape and tried to get him to write to Vyner for permission to put Simon's name down as a possible successor. This Inchcape was tempted to do, but as far as I know he never actually wrote. I once wrote to Vyner and asked him if anything happened to Peter was Simon the next of kin, but I don't think he answered. The whole thing has really grown from the evil seeds in MacBryan's brain, and why I wrote to you was that Vyner has been foolish enough to allow MacBryan to return to Sarawak, and as Peter is supposedly on his way ther[e], I thought trouble might spring into the arena again ...

As the Ranee indicated, MacBryan's interest in the succession had not abated. After his return from the abortive visit to Sarawak in mid-1936 he advised the Earl of Inchcape 'on questions of succession and inheritance in Sarawak' and although he claimed that this was in response to Mackay's request, it is more than likely that the initiative was his own.²

In mid-1940 MacBryan had cabled the Rajah for permission to bring Sa'erah back to her family in Kuching, at the same time offering his services to the Sarawak government. He was given

1 Sylvia Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 8 July 1940, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
2 MacBryan to H.R. Cowell, 25 January 1937, CO 531/27 [53034].
approval to enter the State on the strict condition that he resided there as a private individual, not taking part in political affairs or holding any official post. But on his arrival in August he pleaded poverty and the sympathetic Rajah arranged a temporary post as Assistant Curator of the museum at $200 a month. This time, however, MacBryan was travelling on a British passport endorsed with the requirement that he should return to Britain before the end of the year in case he was needed for military service. Soon after his arrival he lost his passport (the rumour was that he did so deliberately) and was given a Sarawak passport without the inconvenient endorsement. However, by January 1941 the police were inquiring about MacBryan at the Sarawak Government Office in London and during a visit to Singapore with the Rajah in late February, Singapore immigration officials noted that 'trickery' had taken place over the passport. The military authorities insisted that he be arrested and deported to England and it was only on the Rajah's personal representations to Sir Shenton Thomas that MacBryan's services were indispensable for the completion of Sarawak's centenary arrangements that he was able to obtain permission to remain until the end of September 1941. The Colonial Office later acceded to the Rajah's request that the condition that MacBryan should return to England after the celebrations would be waived as long as he remained in the Rajah's service.

The Brunei Negotiations

MacBryan soon resumed his old grip on the affairs of State. In November 1940 he accompanied the Rajah on a tour of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions which took them to Brunei and it was during this

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1 'Report on Mr. G.T. McBryan'.
2 Bertram Brooke's notes on 'Report on Mr. G.T. McBryan'.
3 Ibid.
4 Bertram Brooke's notes on extract of letter from Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 19 February 1937, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.
time that MacBryan suggested to the Rajah that they should tidy up the problems still remaining from the annexation of Limbang in 1890\(^1\) and make some financial provision for the descendants of Rajah Muda Hassim about whom the Brookes always had an uneasy conscience. The Brunei sultans had previously refused to accept payment for Limbang, claiming that there had never been a cession, but a number of Brunei pengirans who claimed *tulun* rights\(^2\) in the area were made annual payments which were termed 'cession money' by the Sarawak government. The British Resident of Brunei, E.E. Pengilley, apparently indicated that he would have no objections to such a settlement.

In January 1941, by which time he had been appointed Political Adviser, MacBryan persuaded the Rajah to send him on a special mission to Brunei in order to negotiate a final settlement in keeping with the spirit of Sarawak's centenary year. Accompanied by Sa'erah and a number of metal trunks of documents, MacBryan took the royal yacht *Maimuna* to Brunei where in spite of the protests of the Resident he anchored upstream opposite the Astana.\(^3\) Within a matter of hours he had completed negotiations with the Sultan and immediately set out for Limbang where he came to an arrangement with the pengirans and the descendants of Raja Muda Hassim. During all these meetings he wore the Arab clothing brought back from the haj.

According to the agreements finally negotiated, and apparently approved by the Resident, a cash payment of $20,000 was to be made to the Sultan for Sarawak's enjoyment of sovereign rights over Limbang for the previous fifty years and $1,000 per annum in perpetuity. In addition, a lump payment of $60,000 and $6,000 per annum in perpetuity was to go to certain pengirans for


2 Under the Brunei sultanate, certain pengirans possessed rights of taxation over river systems.

3 Interview with Mrs Gina Field, 8-9 January 1975. Mrs Field was a passenger on board the *Maimuna* at the time.
their surrender of tulin rights, and pensions totalling about $4,000 per annum to the descendants of Raja Muda Hassim. Finally there was a wedding present for the Pangeran Muda Omar Ali, the Sultan's younger brother.¹

There was a more intriguing side to the Brunei negotiations which Anthony Brooke suggested to Gent eighteen months later without disclosing his source. Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin who was crowned in March 1940 after a long minority was without a male heir but was determined that his daughter and only legitimate child, Tuanku Ehsan, should succeed him rather than Omar Ali. Although he had been told by the British Resident that it was not possible to transfer the succession to the female line, he had pressured his wazir (ministers) to sign a document to this effect in about 1937.² According to Anthony's source, the Limbang discussions were really a 'cloak' for a secret agreement between MacBryan and the Sultan whereby the latter, in return for the payments, would emphasize to the British government that Sarawak originally belonged to Brunei, that under Brunei law the succession could pass to the eldest daughter if there was no male heir, and that therefore the Sarawak succession should pass to the Rajah's eldest daughter.³

Altogether, MacBryan paid out about $56,000 in cash and the payments were duly approved by the Committee of Administration after MacBryan had addressed them on his diplomatic victory.⁴ The Rajah was so pleased with MacBryan that he decided to take him into the Service again as a Class I Officer and to designate him 'Political Secretary'. Although the Brunei negotiations had at first seemed something of a coup for MacBryan, the Resident's report brought a stormy reaction when it reached Singapore. Sir Shenton Thomas apparently informed the Secretary of State, Lord Moyne, that in his opinion, by authorizing the negotiations the Rajah had infringed the 1888 Treaty. And in the ensuing exchanges Moyne told the Rajah

¹ 'Extract from Minutes of Committee of Administration concerning approved payments to Brunei in connection with the annexation of Limbang', CO 531/30 [53066].
² A.M. Grier, 'Funeral of the Sultan of Brunei', Rhodes House MSS Pac. s. 77. See Chapter VI, p.303.
³ Anthony Brooke to Gent, 4 August 1942, CO 531/30 [53066].
⁴ Ibid.
that Sarawak's response was 'what might be expected from an unfriendly Foreign Power', rather than one which was tied to Britain in a treaty of dependence. Sir Shenton Thomas insisted that all payments be deferred until Moyne had been consulted and he also charged that MacBryan had broken British military regulations by transmitting wireless messages from Brunei to Kuching. He demanded a full explanation of the whole incident and it was in response to this pressure that the Rajah visited Singapore with MacBryan in late February for personal discussions with the Governor. While there is no record of the talks, the Rajah's only defence was the somewhat feeble argument that it had been a personal matter between himself and the Sultan and he was obliged to agree to the cancellation of all the agreements. He also had to press the Governor to agree that MacBryan should be allowed to remain in Sarawak until the end of September so that he could assist with the centenary celebrations. However, the Singapore authorities remained intensely suspicious of the Political Secretary and an intelligence officer was sent to Brunei to prepare a full report on the whole affair. The fact that he was withdrawn before completing his investigations may have been fortunate for MacBryan, although the Sarawak government was later unable to find any incriminating evidence. In Sarawak, the Committee of Administration had been fearful that the British government might use the Brunei affair as an excuse to intervene and they naturally blamed MacBryan for bringing the state into such danger. Le Gros Clark had already threatened to resign over his appointment as Political Secretary and there was a general feeling among the senior bureaucrats

1 Note by Anthony Brooke on his cable to Le Gros Clark, 8 September 1941, Enclosure 51, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...

2 Minute by Gent, 18 March 1941, CO 531/30 [53066].

3 'Report on Mr G.T. MacBryan'.

4 Diary of Sir Shenton Thomas, 1 March 1941, Rhodes House uncat. MSS.

5 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 24 November 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.


7 Mackenzie-Grieve, Time and Chance, p.98.
that he would have to be ousted before any further damage was done. It was also rumoured that MacBryan had made a lot of money out of the Brunei negotiations: while it was well known that he had arrived penniless in August 1940, he was believed to be worth thousands by the end of the year.¹

The Turtle Islands

Another of MacBryan's exercises in diplomacy among the Malays was to have important repercussions. On 1 August 1941 the Sarawak Gazette announced that the Rajah had decided to repossess himself of the rights to collect turtle eggs at the Talang Talang and Satang islands (otherwise known as the Turtle Islands) to the west of Santubong and to entrust the collection in future to the Curator of the Sarawak Museum. Three months later it was revealed that a Turtle Trust had been established, consisting of R.G. Aikman, Abang Haji Mohidin (Datu Hakim), Abang Haji Mustapha (Datu Pahlawan), the mufti of the Kuching mosque and G.T.M. MacBryan.²

Although this was not made public, MacBryan had succeeded in persuading the Rajah that the three datus previously involved, Patinggi (promoted from Shahbandar in 1937), Amar and Menteri, should be given substantial cash payments in compensation for the surrender of their traditional rights.³ The origin of the arrangement is not clear, but when James Brooke called at Talang Talang Besar in August 1839 on his first voyage to Sarawak he found that the control of egg collection and export to Kuching was in the hands of the Datu Bandar Daud under the authority of Rajah Muda Hassim.⁴ He also discovered on a later visit that the Datu Bandar taxed fishing stakes and prawn nets in the area and that the turtle eggs were sent to

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¹ 'Report on Mr. G.T. McBryan'.
² SG, 15 November 1941.
³ Personal communication from Mr. E. Banks, 7 August 1974. Compensation was as follows: Datu Patinggi - $15,000; Datu Menteri - $10,000; Datu Amar - $10,000. Personal information.
Sambas, Pontianak and elsewhere in Borneo. A system was subsequently established whereby the profits from the trade were given to the Bait al Mal and the Bait al Ullah (Islamic institutions corresponding to 'charity' and 'piety') with a commission to each of the senior datu entrusted with the collection. This was a semi-feudal privilege which brought both prestige and profit and was particularly valued by the Datu Patinggi who claimed ownership of one of the islands, Satang Besar. More importantly, perhaps, the islands were the scene of the semah, an annual ceremony of pre-Islamic origin concerned with placating the spirits of the sea and ensuring good fishing. At Satang Besar the semah was conducted under the auspices of the datus and was more clearly Islamic in character than the similar ceremony practised at Talang Talang. A marked fluctuation in the number of eggs collected each year brought the datus under suspicion but when the Museum Curator, E. Banks, persuaded them to keep monthly records it became clear that these were natural variations. Consequently it was not on the grounds of mismanagement that the Rajah withdrew the privilege. Rather, it was a means of bringing to an end the quarrel which had been simmering for years between Patinggi and Amar and which focussed on the turtle egg profits as a point of dispute.

The Datu Patinggi later made a number of efforts to regain the rights but there is no indication that he objected to the 1941 settlement at the time. Indeed, it was even suggested at the time that the payment was really MacBryan's means of winning his support for yet another scheme concerning the succession. When Pepys visited Kuching in late June 1941, W.G. Tait the Postmaster

1 Mundy, Narrative of Events, Vol. II, pp.304-5.
2 Personal communication from Mr. E. Banks, 7 July 1975; 7 August 1974.
3 Ibid.
4 Tom Harrisson, 'The Sarawak Turtle Islands' "Semah", JMBRAS, Vol. XXIII, Pt.3 (1950), pp. 105-126. No semah or similar ritual has been conducted at the islands since 1965 but the occasion continues to be marked by a makam selamat or annual feast for members of the Turtle Trust and various dignitaries.
5 E. Banks, The Green Desert, Williton (Somerset) n.d., p. 36. See also, Harrison, op. cit., p.126.
General told him it was likely that MacBryan hoped to see Abang Haji Abdillah become Rajah with himself as *menteri* (chief adviser). It is certainly significant that in its final form the 1941 Constitution included a provision that a Malay could become Rajah.

**The 1941 Constitution**

One of the Rajah's main worries since the late 1930s had been the increasing financial demands on him from the Ranee and their daughters Elizabeth and Valerie. The two girls had made spectacularly unsuccessful marriages and the Rajah was faced with the prospect of having to provide for them on a permanent basis. As we shall see later, temptation to make a financial settlement with the British government was very strong indeed and it was only last-minute nervousness on the Rajah's part which prevented serious negotiations in 1938. Sylvia's initiative in arranging the abortive meeting with Gent is clear and it seems likely that she was influenced both by a concern for her own material future and by a certain boredom with Sarawak. In the following year the Rajah's inability to cope with the Ranee's financial entanglements led him to ask Jack Golden, a Miami Jew whom the Ranee had met on one of her visits to New York, to manage her financial affairs for a payment of £500 per annum. Golden agreed, but he was no more successful than the Rajah had been in curbing her spending. By 1942 the Ranee owed about US$7,000 in the United States, most of which had apparently been advanced by Golden.

There was thus a pressing need by the end of 1940 for the Rajah to make a financial settlement on his dependants and it was at this time that MacBryan was once again available to convert the Rajah's vague intentions into concrete plans. Furthermore, the repercussions of the Limbang affair apparently startled the Rajah and this, together with his earlier embarrassment over the Scott

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1 Pepys report, July 1941, CO 531/30 [53011/4].
3 R.A.B. Mynors (Treasury) to A.E. Forrest (Colonial Office), 11 March 1942, CO 531/30 [53006].
case and the scare of a Japanese invasion in February 1941 must have made it easy for MacBryan to persuade him to lay his hands on a substantial sum while there was still an opportunity to do so. MacBryan was probably convinced of the inevitability of a Japanese attack.

Another problem exercising the Rajah's mind was the succession. Now sixty-seven years of age, Vyner Brooke was tired of Sarawak and looked forward to spending his declining years in a more salubrious climate. The Ranee, who had become tired of Sarawak much earlier, was also putting pressure on him to give up. He had, after all, spent the greater part of his life there and did not share his father's ambition to 'die in harness'. Who could take his place? Bertram, who was only two years younger, had suffered a serious nervous breakdown in 1937 and it seemed highly unlikely that he would ever return to Sarawak.

Although Sylvia Brooke had long cherished the hope that their eldest daughter might act as regent until her son Simon came of age, and MacBryan had been prepared to assist in such a scheme, there is no evidence that the Rajah for one moment considered it as a real possibility. Indeed, from all that we know of him it seems likely that he would have seen it as nothing more than a good joke. The only serious prospect for the succession was his nephew, about whom he had serious doubts.

We have already seen that Anthony's brief career as Rajah Muda and Officer Administering the Government had, rightly or wrongly, persuaded the Rajah that he was 'as yet unfitted' to rule. The embarrassing proclamation of January 1940 and Anthony's subsequent fireworks had been smoothed over somewhat by Bertram's diplomacy. Vyner had agreed that his nephew should return to the Service as a District Officer and he no doubt hoped that with further experience Anthony would improve. But who would look after the country in the meantime? And could the Rajah be confident

1 See Chapter IV, pp.150-7.
2 Pepys' report, July 1941, CO 531/30 [53011/4].
3 Personal information.
that Anthony would turn out satisfactorily in the end?

The only alternative was to make King George VI his heir, to hand Sarawak over to the British government and a form of colonial rule which Vyner had always looked down upon. The idea of selling out their interests had long appealed to Sylvia and at one point in 1938 she had almost manoeuvred Vyner into serious negotiations. But when it came to the point, Vyner was not prepared to dispose of Sarawak and may still have been convinced that Brooke rule was the best thing for its people. He may not have felt it as a sacred duty but he cannot have been completely unresponsive to the Brooke tradition and its responsibilities.

As a solution to the financial problem, MacBryan evidently advised the Rajah to withdraw capital from the state reserves and to deposit it in England as a trust fund whose interest would be sufficient to provide generous allowances for the Ranee and their daughters. Thus it was that in January 1941 MacBryan went to the Treasury with a note from the Rajah authorizing the transfer of £200,000. However, the Acting Treasurer at the time, Cecil Pitt Hardacre, refused the request and when MacBryan then conveyed to him that he would be permitted to resign on full pension Hardacre replied that if he resigned or was dismissed, he would take the keys of the Treasury to Singapore with him. It was precisely the kind of thing that the senior bureaucrats had been fearing ever since MacBryan's reinstalment: and Pitt Hardacre was strongly supported by Le Gros Clark and other members of the Committee of Administration.

In a subsequent conversation with MacBryan, Pitt Hardacre agreed that some provision should be made for the Rajah and his family but that it should be done in a proper manner and not on the basis of ad hoc demands for large sums of money. When asked what kind of guarantee he required that no further demands would be made, Pitt Hardacre suggested a constitutional guarantee. MacBryan

1 See Chapter IV, p.148-9.
2 Note by Anthony Brooke, Enclosure 14, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...'
3 H. Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 27 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
then consulted the Rajah and returned the same day with a note 'saying something like "Dear Pitt, - you can have your Constitution"'. Such were the origins of constitutional monarchy in Sarawak.

In the middle of March 1941 Anthony Brooke, who was then District Officer at Sarakei, received an important memorandum signed by the Rajah but almost certainly drafted by MacBryan. In this document the Rajah explained that in view of the uncertainty surrounding his future intentions, he had made a number of decisions which would be revealed publicly at a meeting of the Supreme Council in April. Firstly, Anthony was to be appointed 'Heir, on probation' for a period of five years during which he would serve in various parts of Sarawak. If it seemed to the Rajah and a majority of the Supreme Council during this time that Anthony was 'unfitted, for some good reason' to succeed to the Raj, he would have the right to set him aside. However, if a title was conferred on Anthony during the probationary period, it could be assumed that he was 'irrevocably confirmed as Heir' from that moment. If the five years expired without any declaration, or the Rajah died, Anthony would be automatically proclaimed Rajah by the Supreme Council.

Secondly, the Rajah would appoint a commission to make recommendations on a constitution enabling a form of democratic government. The autocratic power of the Rajah would be eliminated by the creation of an Advisory Council or some similar body with whose majority opinion he would have to conform. Provision would also be made for the representation of different ethnic groups and for the preservation of the Rajah's personal rights and privileges for the rest of his lifetime. 'By voluntarily abrogating certain powers hitherto vested solely in the person of the Rajah', he stated, 'I am hopeful that I shall be making a worthy contribution in the public interest and for the future happiness

1 Personal communication from Mr C. Pitt Hardacre, 3 October 1976.
and well being of the people of Sarawak'. ¹

Thirdly, the Treasurer would be required to pay the Rajah $2,000,000 in cash from state reserves on 15 April in consideration of the Rajah's undertaking full financial responsibility for the Ranee and their daughters who could then make no future claim on the state. The Rajah's annual salary would be reduced from $120,000 to $84,000 but he would continue to receive the interest from the Sarawak State Advisory Council Trust Fund in London.

Finally, Anthony would be required to swear an oath of allegiance to the Rajah and to accept his position before the Supreme Council where he would also undertake to maintain on the Rajah's death all the allowances, pensions and other special payments authorized during the Rajah's lifetime. A copy of the memorandum had also been sent to the Chief Secretary with instructions that it should be circulated to members of the Committee of Administration whom the Rajah hoped would facilitate the measures 'with as little disturbance as possible'. The document was for their information and was not intended 'to invite discussion or criticism of a matter which is naturally somewhat painful to him'.²

Anthony might well have been tempted by the arrangement but loyalty to his father obliged him to suggest that the matter should be left 'in abeyance' unless the Tuan Muda had surrendered his rights as Heir Presumptive without Anthony's knowledge. He must also have seen that the entire arrangement was contingent on the Treasury paying the Rajah £200,000, a fact which would not impress anyone when it was inevitably made public. More importantly, the scheme bore MacBryan's stamp and in a separate letter to the Rajah, Anthony pointed out that the continued presence of his Political Adviser in Sarawak was 'certain to cause unrest throughout the whole State'.³ He emphasized that an example of the advice

¹ Enclosure 3, 16 March 1941, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...'
² MacBryan to Archer, 17 March 1941, Enclosure 2, ibid.
³ Anthony Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 19 March 1941, Enclosure 5, ibid.
which members of the projected Advisory Council were likely to
give the Rajah was that MacBryan should be removed as soon as
possible and arrangements made with the immigration authorities in
Singapore to receive him. As he explained to Archer to whom he sent
copies of his two letters, this was 'designed to bring things to a head
immediately ...'¹ He thought it was best that it should happen
while Sarawak was still at peace and better able to stand the
subsequent shock.

Anthony's stand had the support of the entire Committee
of Administration. R.G. Aikman, the Resident of his Division and
his immediate superior, supported Anthony's effort to force the
issue² and Archer wrote that he was in 'entire agreement'. The
Rajah, he said, was entirely in MacBryan's hands and all attempts
to prevent this had failed. When Archer had tried to prevent him
from re-entering the Service, the Rajah had 'simply kept him over
at the Astana and did all his business through him'.³ However, the
Rajah's memorandum had stirred the Committee to action and a
secret meeting had prepared papers which would be presented to the
Rajah on 25 March.

Indeed, the Committee of Administration had been meeting
almost constantly since receiving the Rajah's memorandum and there
was general concern about MacBryan's influence on the Rajah⁴ and the
need to introduce financial controls. The two most determined
advocates were Pitt Hardacre and Le Gros Clark who 'insisted that
if H.H.'s request was complied with there must be some guarantee to
prevent any further raids on the State funds'.⁵ The other cause
for concern was the authorship of the projected constitution. The
Committee feared that the Commission which the Rajah intended
making responsible for its drafting would be dominated by MacBryan
(who had just been appointed secretary to the Supreme Council)⁶

¹ Anthony Brooke to Archer, 19 March 1941, Enclosure 6, ibid.
² Aikman to Anthony Brooke, 21 March 1941, Enclosure 8, ibid.
³ Archer to Anthony Brooke, 22 March 1941, Enclosure 7, ibid.
⁴ Le Gros Clark to Anthony Brooke, 24 March 1941, Enclosure 9, ibid.
⁶ Straits Times, 29 March 1941. Archer and Ong Tiang Swee were also
appointed to the Supreme Council at this time.
and were anxious that it should be their task. Consequently, two documents were drawn up: a secret agreement between the Committee and the Rajah incorporating a financial settlement, and an official Order transferring most of the Rajah's powers to the Committee until the constitution was enacted.

In the secret agreement which was signed by the Rajah, Pitt Hardacre, Le Gros Clark, Thomas Corson and J.G. Anderson on 31 March¹ the Rajah undertook to issue an Order authorizing 'the transfer of certain legislative powers from Himself to the Chief Secretary, in the capacity of Officer Administering the Government, as advised from time to time by the Committee [of Administration]'. He also promised that neither he nor any other member of his family could make any further claim on State funds than those set out in the agreement. In return, the members of the Committee accepted the following conditions:

1. The Rajah was to receive a cash payment of $2,000,000 from Sarawak funds within two weeks and a loan of $32,000 towards his Cameron Highlands house was to be written off.

2. Provision was to be made in the new constitution for the payment to the Rajah of:
   (a) $60,000 per annum for the upkeep of the Astana
   (b) $21,000 per annum for charitable purposes
   (c) the interest on the Sarawak Advisory Council Trust Fund
   (d) $7,000 per month by way of salary

   and his right:
   (a) to the sole possession and use of the Astana and the yacht Maimuna
   (b) to dispose of all his personal lands in Sarawak
   (c) to confer or refuse titles on members of his own family and all other titles and decorations
   (d) to visit any part of Sarawak and 'to exercise his customary prerogatives in accordance with the advice of His responsible advisers'.
   (e) to maintain existing annual payments from Sarawak funds

¹ The Facts about Sarawak, pp.35-8. Subsequent quotations from this source.
to members of his family and to Datus then in office.

In the event of the Tuan Muda dying before the constitution was enacted, the Committee undertook to appoint, 'after due consideration and circumspection', an heir to the Raj.

Another unwritten condition insisted upon by the Committee of Administration was that MacBryan should no longer remain in the Sarawak Service. MacBryan's resignation was duly gazetted as being effective from 31 March but the Rajah simultaneously appointed him Private Secretary, a position which MacBryan had previously held (and been dismissed from) in 1929. There seemed to be no way of loosening his hold on the Rajah.

The constitutional Order signed by the Rajah on 31 March was designed largely to safeguard the Committee's position while the constitution was being drafted. For a period of twelve months the sole power of legislating by means of Orders was delegated to the Chief Secretary in his new position as Officer Administering the Government, 'acting by and with the advice of the Committee of Administration'. As a further insurance against MacBryan or the Colonial Office intervening to change the Rajah's mind, the Order provided that all appointments to and dismissals from the Committee should be made by the Office Administering the Government on the advice of the Committee and that all appointments, promotions and dismissals of officers in the Senior Service should be made by the Committee. The one concession to the Rajah was the right to disallow any Order which infringed his obligations to the British government under the terms of the 1888 Treaty.\(^1\)

A Proclamation was also issued announcing that Sarawak was to have a written constitution which would be enacted during the Brooke centenary celebrations planned for September that year. The effect of these constitutional reforms would be to 'replace

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\(^1\) Order No. C-18 (Constitutional Reform Provisional Measure) 1941, SGG, 31 March 1941. The Order also empowered the Rajah to disallow any legislation which repealed or amended the sections dealing with 1888 Treaty and altered the term of validity of the Order itself. There was thus a safeguard against the power of bureaucratic oligarchy being perpetuated.
Our Absolute Rule by a Form of Government on a Broader Basis and Facilitate the Gradual Development of Representative Government on Democratic Principles ...' and the Committee of Administration was charged with the responsibility of drawing up the necessary legislation. The constitution would provide for a representative legislature with whose advice the Rajah would henceforth rule and as a first step towards surrendering absolute power he had already signed an Order which vested legislative power in the Committee for a year. Reminding its members that they were temporarily in the position of 'Custodians of the Rights of the People of Sarawak', he directed them to devise 'a really liberal constitution which will have fair regard to the claims of Everybody ...'.

Turning to the question of the succession, he proclaimed the Tuan Muda as his heir to the Raj on his decease. But if the Tuan Muda should die first, the Rajah's advisers were charged with the task of deciding without reference to him who the heir should be. If there was any dispute, the advisers should refer the matter with their comments to the British government. In his Address Vyner also explained why he was changing the succession formula and setting in train a process which would lead to self-government:

I have always been positive, as was my Father, that it was never the intention of Sir James Brooke to establish a line of Absolute Rulers. What he set out to do was to protect the Natives of Sarawak, the real but backward owners of this land, from exploitation and oppression, until such time as they could govern themselves ... And now I am taking a step forward towards the ultimate aim, laid down by the Rajah as the basis of his Policy, that of a self-governing community and country.

It was assumed by the Committee that payment of the $2,000,000 would be made at the Treasury's convenience, and on the day after the agreement was signed and the Proclamation issued Pitt Hardacre left for Sibu on a short visit. However, the same afternoon Vyner sent Archer a request for cash and when the Chief

1 SG, 1 April 1941.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
Secretary told him that this would cause considerable financial embarrassment, the Rajah insisted that he order the officer temporarily in charge of the Treasury to make the payment. Since there were insufficient government funds and time would be needed to instruct the brokers in London to sell investments, Archer demanded that the money be paid from the Currency Fund deposited with the Chartered Bank in Kuching. When Pitt Hardacre returned, he 'protested in the most emphatic manner at this high handed action' but to no effect. In Thackwell Lewis' view, the Rajah's 'indecent haste' in obtaining the money was his fear that the terms of the secret agreement and the contents of his proclamation might 'prove disagreeable to the authorities in Singapore' who would prevent the scheme from going through. At the same time Vyner began hastily to dispose of most of his private property in Sarawak. The Sylvia cinema which he had built in 1934 was sold to a Chinese, even though a prior option at an agreed price had been earlier given to the Borneo Company. Subsequently a large sum of money was transferred in the Rajah's name to Singapore where an unsuccessful attempt was made to convert it into American dollars.

In the meantime the Committee was addressing itself to the novel and somewhat daunting task of devising a constitution. The bulk of the drafting seems to have been given over to the Legal

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1 H. Thackwell Lewis, 'A Short note on certain aspects of administration in the State of Sarawak between August 1939 and the outbreak of the war with Japan ... ', Brooke Papers, Box 6/1.
2 Personal communication from Mr C. Pitt Hardacre, 3 October 1976.
3 Thackwell Lewis, 'A Short note ...'.
4 Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 27 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
Adviser, K.H. Digby, but Thackwell Lewis was also consulted from time to time. Altogether, the document went through three drafts and although Vyner was unwilling to attend discussions with the Committee, he made a number of attempts to overrule their decisions by means of minutes sent through MacBryan. The nature of these objections is not altogether clear but from Vyner's later comments it seems that they were largely concerned with his wish to surrender all of his prerogative powers.

One casualty of the constitutional agreement was Archer. During the weeks prior to the Proclamation the Chief Secretary had played a double game by keeping the Rajah informed of the Committee of Administration's 'plot' against him. Much as he feared MacBryan's influence, Archer was an old-fashioned Brooke royalist whose personal loyalty to the Rajah outweighed all other considerations. The very idea of a constitution was anathema although his membership of the

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1 Kenelm Hubert Digby came from an old Catholic West Country family and achieved early distinction at Oxford where he seconded the famous Oxford Union motion on 'King and Country'. Qualifying as a barrister at Middle Temple in 1934, he defended socialists prosecuted under the vagrancy laws. In the same year he was appointed a Cadet in the Sarawak Service and served in the Fourth and First Divisions before becoming a magistrate in 1937. In August 1940 he was made Acting Legal Adviser and Registrar of the Supreme Court and in January 1941 was confirmed in these positions. After internment in Batu Lintang during the war, Digby continued as Legal Adviser and then Attorney-General when the position was renamed in February 1947. From 1948 until his retirement in December 1951 he was a Circuit Judge. Digby was editor of the Sarawak Gazette September 1946 - February 1948 during the height of the anticession campaign and was commissioned by the Malayan Union government to write a series of articles for the Sarawak Tribune answering the arguments put forward by Anthony Brooke through the Singapore press. For the subsequent libel suit, see Chapter VIII, p. . In a manuscript autobiography, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', which he wrote on his way back to England in late 1951, Digby explained that the Sarawak government's decision to send Iban trackers to assist in the Malayan 'Emergency' had precipitated his resignation. However, his frankly expressed socialist views had probably made him a marked man some time before this. Digby migrated to New Zealand in 1955 where he was admitted as a barrister and solicitor in 1956.
Committee obliged him to pay it lip service. It was his vanity that caught him out. As a somewhat wry piece of revenge on his opponents, MacBryan had persuaded Vyner to award the Star of Sarawak to Archer and to those members of the Committee of Administration who had been chiefly responsible for the secret agreement and the constitutional Order. This was duly arranged but at the last moment the Rajah and all of the designated recipients except Archer developed cold feet. In Digby's words, they 'unanimously agreed that acceptance of the honour would make them the laughing-stock of their colleagues in the service ...'1 When they asked Archer to intercede with the Rajah so that the whole affair could be called off, he told them angrily that it would be impossible - the Rajah would be insulted. When Vyner indicated his own misgivings, Archer told him that the Committee would be mortally offended if the proceedings were cancelled. The decoration meant a great deal to him personally. Thus it was that in a somewhat unceremonious ceremony on 31 March an embarrassed Rajah thrust the awards into the hands of the equally embarrassed recipients.2 The consequence was that Archer's duplicity was increasingly clear to both sides. However, it was the complaints to the Rajah from Le Gros Clark and Pitt Hardacre about his irresponsibility over the Currency Fund which obliged him to seek 'early retirement'.3 He was replaced in early May by Le Gros Clark, perhaps the most able officer in the government, who had been recommended by Macaskie for the post almost ten years earlier.

A first draft of the constitution was ready by the middle of June and was immediately distributed among the Residents, District Officers and heads of departments. Translations into jawi (Arabic script) and romanized Malay were later prepared so that

1 Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', pp.87-88 and personal communication of 2 September 1974.
2 SG, 1 April 1941; Interview with Mrs B. Pitt-Hardacre, 4 March 1975.
3 Personal communication from Mr C. Pitt Hardacre, 3 October 1976.
Native Officers could also submit their remarks through the Residents. Ong Tiang Swee gave his comments as Advisory Member of the Committee of Administration. A month later after the incorporation of amendments arising from these reactions and from discussions with Sir Shenton Thomas who had also been sent a copy, a second draft was circulated in like fashion and on 31 July a meeting of the Committee of Administration considered further changes. Three major criticisms of the second draft which were discussed were:

1. inclusion in the oaths of the two Councils of a section prohibiting fundamental amendments for 25 years
2. introduction of a self-perpetuating oligarchy by merging the Committee of Administration with the Supreme Council
3. failure of the Rajah to retain the power of veto.

The first of these was dealt with easily by expunging the relevant clause and it was also agreed to recommend to the Rajah that he retain the power of veto, subject to its finally being overruled by the Council Negri. The second objection raised more difficulties. Le Gros Clark pointed out that if the Rajah retained the right to appoint the members of the Supreme Council, there would have to be adequate safeguards against irresponsible appointments to the Council and wrongful dismissal from the Administrative Service.

The only member of the Committee to question the circumstances surrounding the origin of the constitution at this meeting was Thackwell Lewis who, as we have seen, was excluded from the consultations leading up to the secret agreement of 31 March. It appeared, he said, that the constitution was to be introduced 'not because the people of this country wanted it, but because the Ruler of this country was in need of money and could not obtain it by any other means'. Consequently it was important to clear up any doubt

1 Circular memorandum from Le Gros Clark, 18 June 1941, Enclosure 3, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...
3 Minutes of meeting of the Committee of Administration, 31 July 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 10/4.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
as to the 'pure motive' of the proposed fundamental change in government.

The secret agreement had already been the source of some embarrassment. A reference to it in the first draft had been deleted and replaced by a private requirement that each new member of the Supreme Council should sign an undertaking to observe the provisions of the document. However, Le Gros Clark now insisted that the secret agreement was an entirely separate matter between the Rajah and the government and had no bearing at all on the proposed constitution. The Rajah, he said, had offered the constitution of his own initiative 'solely because he ... considered that this would be in the best interests of the State and its peoples'. The Chief Secretary went on to give some further details about the circumstances leading to the Rajah's decision which were not recorded in the official minutes. Finally he stressed that if the meeting rejected the constitution, the British government would probably take over complete control of Sarawak since they could not tolerate a crisis during the current world situation. On the day that Hitler marched on Russia, he told the members, 'the independence of the State of Sarawak, despite the Treaty of 1888, virtually disappeared'. Sir Shenton Thomas' insistence on a modification of the 'Treaty' to allow the appointment of a 'British Representative' was a sign of the times. Thackwell Lewis was now prepared to admit that the government could not 'go back on what had already been done' but he thought that unless the draft constitution was properly amended there would be the difficulty of choosing between a 'puppet' Rajah and an oligarchy.

The other serious critic within the Committee was Archer who disagreed entirely with the draft, believing that the opinions of the people should first be obtained through the Residents and the Secretaries for Chinese and Native Affairs before any decision.

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1 Extract from minutes of Committee of Administration meeting, 3 June 1941, ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
was made. Le Gros Clark could only reply that the people would not have wanted any change and it was up to the meeting to decide on their behalf if a constitution should be introduced as requested by the Rajah. The constitutional Order had apparently been published without Archer's knowledge.

Another special meeting was held on 3 August to consider the native membership of the new Supreme Council. According to the Datu Pahlawan, the datus were pleased with the decision to maintain the native members of the two existing councils but they felt that the proportion of native members of the new Council Negri should be higher. However, he was obliged to accept that natives should not be represented only by Malays. In this major departure from Brooke tradition, suitability was to be the main criterion of representation. The other objection made by the datus concerned the Rajah's refusal to retain the right of veto but they were reassured when Le Gros Clark told them that the Rajah had since changed his mind. They were also prepared to accept that English should be the language of proceedings in both new councils, although less than half of them spoke the language well. With the amendments to the second draft completed, the constitution was now ready for submission to Sir Shenton Thomas for approval.

The invitation from Le Gros Clark for members of the Service to comment frankly and freely on the draft constitution seems to have been received rather sceptically in some quarters, particularly when the story of the secret agreement became known. The most explicit criticisms were made by a number of senior officers to Anthony Brooke in response to his own memoranda.

1 Ibid.
2 'A selection of recorded comments on the draft Constitution by certain Officers of the Service', Enclosure 47, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...'
3 Minutes of Committee of Administration meeting, 3 August 1941, ibid.
4 'A selection of recorded comments on the draft Constitution by certain Officers of the Service', Enclosure 47, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...' Subsequent quotations are from this source.
The general reaction was that the motives behind the constitution had very little to do with 'Democracy' and that the Committee of Administration had no right to assume that they were the 'chosen representatives of the people'. It was pointed out by one District Officer that outstation Residents would seldom be able to attend the Council Negri, that native members would say 'mana kata Tuan' (as Sir thinks best) to proposals put forward by the Treasurer, Chief Secretary and Resident of the First Division who would also dominate the Supreme Council. In short, it meant a return to the bad old days of Parnell and Calvert: 'both councils will be a mere farce and the Country will be ruled by two men, without even the Rajah's power of veto. The 1939 scandal all over again'.

The significance of 1939, in another District Officer's view, was that both the Service and the natives saw it as the restoration of the Rajah as 'supreme head of the Government' and 'a feeling of confidence was restored'. He believed that the natives could not understand the new adat and had always 'looked to the Rajah as their Supreme Chief'. Instead, they were going to have an irresponsible and frequently changing oligarchy which could never have their interests at heart. Thackwell Lewis' view was that talk of democracy and liberal institutions in Sarawak was 'the most dishonest humbug' and that there would be serious unrest among the people once it became known that the Rajah had become a 'mere puppet'. It would be impossible to govern, another District Officer added, without being able to play the trump card 'These are His Highness' Orders':

This authority has existed for 100 years, the Natives and Chinese are used to it, it has been used with complete equity and the State and people have thrived under it. Lastly, but primarily, the people themselves like it and have asked for no other kind of rule.

One head of department summed up their position this way:

We are, I think, in agreement over the essentials ... In my opinion, what the country needs is a Rajah who has the power of veto and, ideally, the power to appoint his ministers but who has no control over revenue and is not an absentee. In other words, we want a Rajah
literally in Council. This sounds simple enough, but when one tries to make rules to ensure the observance of all these conditions one finds that it is not so easy.

In its final form, the constitution consolidated the position of power which the Committee had assumed by means of the constitutional Order of 31 March. Under the new bi-cameral system, all of the Rajah's prerogative powers were henceforth to be exercised by 'the Rajah-in-Council' - the Rajah acting on the advice and consent of the Supreme Council - while the sole power of legislating (by the enactment of Orders) was vested in the Rajah acting with the advice and consent of the Council Negri. Membership of the two Councils was also arranged in such a way that European officers would have the decisive voice. Fourteen of the Council Negri's twenty-five members were to be appointed from the Sarawak Civil Service, nine of them ex officio and five by the Rajah-in-Council. Within the Council Negri, officers who were also members of the Council Negri were to constitute a majority, the Chief Secretary and the Treasurer being appointed ex officio and members of the old Supreme Council remaining members of the new Council during their lifetimes. The only significant prerogative now possessed by the Rajah was that which had been insisted upon by the Committee of Administration against his initial inclinations: the power of appointing other members of the Supreme Council. During his absence from the state, the Officer Administering the Government would assume all of his powers. In accordance with Anthony's recommendation based on the Johore system, he was empowered to refuse bills passed by the Council Negri but this could be overcome if the legislation were passed on three successive occasions.

Most importantly, perhaps, the power of the purse-strings was now firmly in the hands of the bureaucracy. As from 1 January 1941 no public money was to be expended without the authority of the Council Negri. One question which the constitution failed to clarify was the succession, providing only that if the Rajah died, 'the person who shall have been proclaimed Heir' would be proclaimed
Rajah by the Supreme Council, subject to the provision of the 1888 Treaty. However, the possibility of a Malay Rajah was anticipated in the stipulation that 'No person who is not a British subject or a native of Sarawak shall be competent to be or become Rajah ...'

Significantly enough, the Preamble, which had more impact ultimately than any other part of the constitution, received no attention during the deliberations. The nine 'Cardinal Principles' were supposed to embody the essence of Brooke rule and consequently deserve to be quoted at length:

1 That Sarawak is the heritage of Our Subjects and is held in trust by Ourselves for them.
2 That social and educational services shall be developed and improved and the standard of living of the people of Sarawak shall steadily be raised.
3 That never shall any person or persons be granted rights inconsistent with those of the people of this country or be in any way permitted to exploit Our Subjects or those who have sought Our protection and care.
4 That justice shall be easily obtainable and that the Rajah and every public servant shall be freely accessible to the public.
5 That freedom of expression both in speech and writing shall be permitted and encouraged and that everyone shall be entitled to worship as he pleases.
6 That public servants shall ever remember that they are but the servants of the people on whose goodwill and co-operation they are entirely dependent.
7 That so far as may be Our Subjects of whatever race or creed shall be freely and impartially admitted to offices in Our Service, the duties of which they may be qualified by their education, ability and integrity duly to discharge.
8 That the goal of self-government shall always be kept in mind, that the people of Sarawak shall be entrusted in due course with the governance of themselves, and that continuous efforts shall be made to hasten the reaching of this goal by educating them in the obligations, the responsibilities, and the privileges of citizenship.
9 That the general policy of Our predecessors and Ourselves whereby the various races of the State have been enabled to live in
happiness and harmony together shall be
adhered to by Our successors and Our
servants and all who may follow them
hereafter.

Although the promise of self-government implicit in (8) was probably
intended more as democratic 'window-dressing' for outside
consumption than anything else, it was to provide the more
politically conscious Malays and Ibans of the immediate post-war
years with a political charter.

The other irony, however, was that the constitution also
provided the British government in 1946 with a legal framework
which could be used almost indefinitely to facilitate colonial
bureaucratic rule. As one Australian lawyer practising in Singapore
observed in later years:

... this Constitution enabled power to be exercised
by the Colonial Administration clothed in
representation but so absolute in operation that
it could when desired be directed tyrannically ...
whilst in form it appeared to grant power to the
people its provisions were such as to enable the
executive to carry through any measures required
without opposition or to ignore whatever slight
opposition could arise ... \(^1\)

While the idea of a constitution appears to have
originated from Pitt Hardacre as a quid pro quo for the $2,000,000,
care about the future of the State and the way in which his
nephew was likely to conduct himself as Rajah may have led Vyner
Brooke or MacBryan to see it as a means of limiting Anthony's scope
for action. This was certainly the impression held by Digby who
told a friend in the Colonial Office in May 1941 that the Rajah,
'seeing death gradually approaching, decided to tie his nephew in
such a way that he could not avenge himself for the various slights
he had suffered from the Rajah's friends and relations!'\(^2\) If this
was indeed one of the main considerations influencing the Rajah,

\(^1\) Mark Morrison Papers, ML MSS 863, Item 3. Mark Morrison practised
in Malaya c.1928-42 and established the first legal firm in
Sarawak after the war.

\(^2\) Extract of a letter from Digby to A.R. Thomas, 14 May 1941,
CO 531/30 [53011/4].
his unwillingness to retain any prerogative rights may be more easily understood.

In many ways the Rajah's action had provided the Committee with the opportunity for which they had been waiting. The Rajah's advancing age and the uncertainty of the succession suggested to the Committee's members that they would become increasingly responsible for the affairs of State. The constitution, however, was only intended as a temporary measure. As Digby explained at the time, it 'merely handed over the Rajah's powers to the C. of A. until a more permanent arrangement could be agreed upon'. Many years later Digby was more specific:

It was a stop-gap arrangement, and by no means satisfactory as the permanent solution, because in the absence of any sort of elective system, its substantial effect was to convert the Committee of Administration into a self-perpetuating oligarchy.2

At the same time, the constitution was seen as a means of forestalling anticipated British pressure for governmental reform. Although there was no overt British pressure for constitutional change, the appointment of Pepys as General Adviser had been a sign of the times. The arrival of British Punjabi troops in early 1941 suggested to some senior bureaucrats that Sarawak's sovereignty was now only technical and that constitutional reforms should be made in order to pre-empt the otherwise inevitable British intervention in Sarawak's internal affairs. As far as these men were concerned, British intervention could only be for the worse. From the small pond of the Sarawak Service where they could be their own masters, they would be flung willy-nilly into the much larger, more competitive and altogether less comfortable pond of the British Colonial Service.

Reactions to the Constitution

It is difficult to gauge the reactions of the people of Sarawak to these radical constitutional changes. Due to the absence of documentary evidence we cannot discount the possibility that

1 Ibid.
2 Personal communication from Mr K.H. Digby, 11 August 1974.
3 See Chapter IV, p.192.
they went largely unnoticed, except by Ong Tiang Swee who had been present at the Committee of Administration discussions and by those Native Officers who were asked for their reactions to the draft. However, a number of penghulus from the Baram district were sufficiently concerned about the Proclamation to travel 500 miles to Kuching in order to obtain a reassurance from the Rajah that he and his successors would continue to maintain personal responsibility for their welfare. The District Officer at Marudi, Donald Hudden, would have been out of sympathy with the Rajah's announcement but the penghulus apparently consulted neither him nor the Resident before making their long journey.\(^1\) The only other recorded response was an official petition from Malays of the Bintulu district which was delivered at the height of Anthony Brooke's paper war with the Secretariat in August and may well have been inspired by him.\(^2\) The Committee of Administration certainly treated it with considerable scepticism, pointing out that nothing similar had issued from any other part of the state.\(^3\)

It must have seemed incredible that the Rajah should wish to surrender his powers to a committee of bureaucrats whose predecessors he had dismissed only two years earlier. European officers beyond the charmed circle of Committee of Administration members and their friends were roused to hostility by the 31 March announcement. G.E. Bettison, a newly-arrived customs officer, wrote in his diary that some of his colleagues had become 'violently anti-Sarawak as a result'. His own reactions were those of a man who had been attracted to Sarawak by its unique political system:

... "constitutional" my foot! I came out here because it was an autocracy - to me, romantic Sarawak is dead from now on - in fact, apart from it's not yet being run by the chaotic collection of idiots known as the Colonial Service, it has just about degenerated in one fatal step to the level of a colony

\(^1\) Anthony Brooke, 'Note on Political Reform in Sarawak', Enclosure 31, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...'

\(^2\) Anthony Brooke was at pains to discount this possibility at the time, and to emphasize that he had in fact opposed the idea of a petition. But in an interview in London on 21 February 1975 he admitted it was likely that he had had some influence.

\(^3\) Le Gros Clark to Resident, Miri, 8 September 1941, Enclosure 54, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...'
instead of being independent - I don't say that it may not lead to the State being governed in a better way, but it is nevertheless the end of a piece of history - it has just sunk to the common standard of the rest of the world ... 

The only public comment in Sarawak on the constitutional proposal was from the Sarawak Gazette whose editor applied a highly flattering gloss to what he must have known was an exceedingly grubby affair:

At this time, when Democracy is engaged in a life and death struggle with Dictatorship, this re-affirmation by His Highness of his belief in the Democratic ideal is of a great significance. Democracy is not, as Hitler would have the world believe, a state system. It is a living organism, subject to growth and change. Here, in Sarawak, we have seen its principles at work, the present moving from the past, the future implicit in the present.

Apart from the Colonial Office, whose reactions will be discussed in another chapter, the two most interested observers in Britain were Stirling Boyd and Bertram Brooke. Dismissing the provision for native representation as 'purely rhetorical', Boyd was much more interested in the Order which, instead of vesting legislative power in the Rajah with the advice and consent of the Committee of Administration, had entrusted it to the Officer Administering the Government. 'It would be interesting to know on what theory of government this proposal is based,' he wrote. 'It seems to partake of the nature of a partial and temporary abdication'.

Boyd doubted whether the Rajah could legally or ethically divest himself of his responsibility as ruler and still remain Rajah. He also thought it 'clearly anomalous' and 'indefensible in principle' that the Officer Administering the Government should have the duty of assenting to or disallowing Orders which had been discussed by a Committee in which he had already had a voice. Others like Parnell who had known him for a long time were highly sceptical of the Rajah actually surrendering administrative responsibility and were more concerned about the implications of Le Gros Clark, 'a Tuan

1 G.E. Bettison, 'Sarawak Diary 1939-41', Rhodes House MSS Pac.s.56.  
2 SG, 1 April 1941.  
3 Memorandum entitled 'Constitutional Changes', Boyd Papers, Box 5/2.
Muda-ite', being made Chief Secretary in Archer's place.¹

Bertram Brooke could not imagine for a moment that the constitution was the Rajah's own initiative. He believed that it was MacBryan's idea and that MacBryan had written the 31 March address with its important provisions relating to the succession. In a letter to the Rajah of 2 May he expressed this suspicion and insisted there was no basis for the Rajah's claim that he was carrying out the wishes of his predecessors. The address had been delivered without sufficient consideration of the issues involved and the projected constitution would be nothing more than 'a fertile field for political intrigue'.² In his first detailed critique completed shortly afterwards he was at some pains to emphasize that he was not motivated by any personal interest in the succession. He believed, however, that the scheme was not the Rajah's own and had been 'put before him in an attractive guise as a wonderful gesture which will put the crowning touch on his long and honourable career ...',³

As for the Preamble's statement that the Rajah was merely honouring the pledge of his predecessors, he believed it to be an historical fact that 'neither of them ever contemplated the day when Sarawak would become a self-governing community'. There was no evidence that the people themselves wanted a change and he regarded it as a 'dangerous experiment' which was almost certain to destroy the good relations between the races which had been successfully fostered by the Brookes. He believed that the loyalty shown towards the Brooke Raj grew from the people's faith in the Rajah's paternal capacity to right wrongs. If the Rajah divested himself of this power he would cease to be Rajah in their eyes. Indeed, he would be forced to abandon the state to chaos unless the constitution idea was scrapped:

¹ Parnell to Boyd, 16 August 1941, Boyd Papers, Box 5, unfoliated.
² Cited by Bertram Brooke in 'Events prior to and following inception of Constitution, especially bearing on the question of succession', Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
³ Bertram Brooke, 'Self-Government For Sarawak', 10 May 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2. Subsequent quotations from this source.
Because the present system has been carefully built up throughout the course of 100 years to suit a paternal autocratic regime, it would be inviting disaster to try and tinker with it and make it suit something radically different. The present machine would have to be scrapped, and a new one designed. Some of the present parts might be used after suitable reshaping and adjustment, but the mainspring, the Rajah himself, would be entirely out of place in any such structure. It is impossible to design an effective machine with a mainspring which has the power of altering its course, and going round in the opposite direction, as the whole thing would be wrecked should this take place, however unlikely it may be.

The whole notion of representative government in Sarawak, he argued, was quite impractical anyway. The Ibans would inevitably be represented by people like Kana and Asun who 'would have their own ways of assuring that they obtained a majority', and the Malays by those 'most capable of intrigue'. The datus would have to be scrapped and the Treasury fundamentally reorganized. This did not mean, he concluded, that the Committee of Administration was not capable of drawing up 'a sort of hotchpot [sic] of regulations, combining the old with the new, which might look alright in a blue-print', but there was no chance of creating a system of self-government which would make the people of Sarawak happier and more prosperous.

Referring to the constitutional structure of Tonga, he thought it would be tragic if the centenary of Brooke rule was marked by the inception of a scheme which future historians would refer to as 'a Protected State enjoying a sort of comic opera self-government'.

Anthony Brooke and the Constitution

The most dramatic reaction to the constitution in its various drafts came from Anthony Brooke who at the time of the 31 March proclamation was District Officer at Sarik ei. While we have seen that he did not express opposition to the idea of a constitution in his reply to the Rajah's memorandum of 17 March, he was alarmed at the latitude

1 See Chapter V, p.199-200.
which the proclamation gave to the Committee of Administration. Consequently he asked for the proclamation to be amended so that the Committee would be obliged to submit the 'required legislative measures' to the Rajah before any action was taken to put them into effect. Otherwise, he said, the Rajah's action would be open to misinterpretation not only in Sarawak but in the foreign press. The Rajah agreed to make this amendment although it was not incorporated in the subsequent Sarawak Government Gazette.

Anthony's attitude changed quickly when he talked to Pitt Hardacre who had been sent specially by the Committee of Administration to Sarakei to explain to him the circumstances of the secret agreement. Anthony was prepared to support the Committee's action on condition that there was a determined effort to get rid of MacBryan whom he believed to have 'engineered the whole arrangement' and volunteered to return with Hardacre to Kuching to address the Committee. Hardacre also had strong views about MacBryan. After long talks with Anthony and Native Officer Abang Openg, he wrote:

I have given this matter a lot of thought and I hate the idea of what might appear to be taking a hefty kick at a lame dog. But MacBryan is NOT lame - he is waiting for the crash, so we must strike first and HARD. It is in the best interests of the State and of the British Empire that he should be removed immediately (this week end) from Sarawak, as a Defence Measure.  

Anthony had also offered to cable Sir Shenton Thomas seeking his support and to accompany Le Gros Clark to Singapore if necessary to have discussions with him.

On 4 April Anthony addressed the Committee, obtaining unanimous support from them for his plan to tell the Rajah on their behalf that MacBryan 'constituted a danger to the internal security of the State and therefore to Imperial interests ...' and should be

1 Anthony Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 31 March 1941, Enclosure 11, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...'
2 'Notes by Mr C. Pitt Hardacre ... for the consideration of Committee of Administration', Enclosure 14, Ibid.
3 Ibid.
However, Vyner became extremely flustered at the suggestion. 'You can get rid of me but you can't get rid of MacBryan' he told an astonished Anthony. Having failed in this first attempt to get rid of MacBryan, Anthony obtained permission from the Committee and the Rajah to visit Singapore where he put his views to Sir Shenton Thomas on 7 April. However, the Governor had earlier that day received another account of events from Le Gros Clark whose opinion he seems to have been more prepared to trust.

Anthony's precipitate action had important repercussions. Not only was Vyner 'seriously displeased', insisting on a full explanation for Anthony's visit and suggesting to Archer that he should be disciplined, but MacBryan was threatening to sue him for libel. All this placed the Committee in a very awkward position. They had originally agreed to Anthony's plan to interview the Rajah but were now under pressure to take action against him for leaving his post without proper permission. Moreover, if MacBryan took his case to court, the details of the secret agreement would be publicly revealed with the consequent risk of British intervention. They succeeded in persuading MacBryan not to go ahead with his action but it was a more difficult task to reduce Anthony to quiescence. When Archer wrote on 12 April delivering an official reprimand on behalf of the Committee, Anthony suggested in stinging language that the Chief Secretary's inconsistent behaviour was 'indirectly the result of extreme pressure from an unofficial source ...', which it was his duty to resist. One result of Anthony's reply was that Vyner decided there would no longer be any relationship between them and would henceforth regard him as 'merely a junior Government Officer'.

1 Ibid.
2 Interview with Anthony Brooke, 6 November 1974.
3 Diary of Sir Shenton Thomas, 7 April 1941, Rhodes House uncat. MSS.
4 Vyner Brooke to Archer, 7 April 1941, Enclosure 18, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...'
5 Archer to Anthony Brooke, 12 April 1941, Enclosure 19, ibid.
6 Anthony Brooke to Archer, 17 April 1941, Enclosure 20, ibid.
7 Archer to Anthony Brooke, 21 April 1941, Enclosure 25, ibid.
decision to transfer him to Bintulu where he would not find it so
easy to make quick visits to Kuching or to meet other officers.

What had upset the Rajah and Archer perhaps more than
anything else was the tone of Anthony's replies which they regarded
as most inappropriate to a junior officer. But Anthony was completely
unrepentant and his letter to Archer of 23 April carried the full
weight of his conviction that history would justify him:

... it might help you to understand the tone of these
letters if I were to remind you that, apart from being
a 'junior District Officer', my name is Anthony Brooke,
and ... the outcome of this matter may have important
repercussions on the Sarawak history. It is therefore
essential that this affair should receive the
consideration it deserves, and that the true and complete
story of this matter should be placed on the files for
purposes of future record.¹

For several months peace reigned over Bintulu but receipt of the draft
constitution aroused Anthony to new heights of moral indignation.
Describing the document as an 'impersonal and revolutionary
monstrosity', he proclaimed his intention of opposing it by all
legitimate means.² He accordingly circulated two memoranda within
the Administrative Service in the hope of gaining support. These
were important not only because they had some influence on the
final form of the constitution but because they constituted one
of the rare efforts to see Sarawak in the wider context of British
colonies and their constitutional systems.

In his 'Note on Political Reform in Sarawak' written before
he had seen the first draft of the constitution, Anthony accepted
the principle that autocratic rule should be limited in some way
by political machinery which would eventually enable the people of
Sarawak to express their views and play an increasing part in the
administration of the country. The Rajah's power could be
'constitutionalized' or modified by the establishment of an advisory
council which would provide the best advice available, but it was
'imperative' that the Rajah should retain the legal right to reject
this advice:

¹ Anthony Brooke to Archer, 23 April 1941, Enclosure 26, ibid.
² Anthony Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 8 July 1941, Enclosure 29, ibid.
... it is only by the retention of this prerogative that he can keep the pledge which he has given to his people and shoulder the responsibilities of the Sacred Trust which no impersonal Council can fulfil. It is ... only thus that he can remain Rajah in the eyes of his people. 1

Furthermore, he added, the constitution should not be introduced in such a way as to suggest that a radical change was taking place. The people wanted and expected the Rajah to act as an autocrat and it was essential to avoid any impression that his position was being weakened. ' ... The Rajah's power and authority', he concluded hopefully, 'will presumably be upheld and strengthened by the Constitution'. 2

To support his comments, Anthony cited Archer's own reference to Iban conservatism in his Administration Report for 1940 and a number of statements from the Le Gros Clark Report of 1935 which, he emphasized, represented the views of most Administrative Officers at that time. The burden of all this was while the natives looked to the Rajah for everything, any system of government designed to fulfil the moral responsibilities of indirect rule still needed 'the sanction of traditional usage' and the acquiescence of the people.

In his second commentary, 3 Anthony was not so much concerned with the details of the draft constitution which were now known to him as with the fundamental principles of native administration which he believed it transgressed. In an oblique reference to the secret agreement, he described the constitution as an emergency measure introduced for a specific purpose as yet unknown to the public and that under these circumstances it was premature to prepare a permanent Order laying down Sarawak's constitutional structure. He also pointed to the irony of the situation in which the Rajah was 'being made to act ... far more autocratically than he has every done before'. The Rajah, he said, possessed the legal right to shelve his responsibility. The question, however, was whether it was

1 Enclosure 31, ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 'The Constitution of Sarawak', Enclosure 32, ibid. Subsequent quotations from this source.
morally right that he should be advised or allowed to do so. If the Rajah signed the constitution in its existing form he would be signing away to an ever-changing impersonal body the sacred trust which he and his forebears have held on behalf of the people since 1841; he will be vesting this trust in a small oligarchy comprising a majority of European Officials, to whom the people themselves have expressed no desire that the trust should be transferred, and who may lose confidence in their Rajah when they discover that this transfer has been effected.

He would appear to them as a 'guardian who has broken his sacred pledge', and their perception was much more important than that of Europeans in the state.

Anthony invoked three principles from the experience of British administrators in Africa to support his case against the constitution: the people themselves should be consulted and their consent obtained before any important change was undertaken; political institutions and methods should be deeply rooted in the traditions of the people; and successful democratic institutions could only develop through a process of gradual evolution as they had in Europe. Citing Sir Donald Cameron's dictum that the 'essence of true indirect administration is the allegiance of a people to a tribal head', Anthony believed that the allegiance accorded the Rajah was no different from that accorded tribal heads in East Africa. The fact that the Rajah was a white man, he added, was irrelevant to the maintenance of his prestige and authority, 'the cardinal principle is that his authority must on no account be weakened'. Under the proposed constitution, however, the Rajah and his successors would not retain the legal authority to exercise the responsibilities still expected of them by the people. 'This glaring fact', he commented, 'should be sufficient to condemn the present form of Constitution as wholly unpracticable'.

The constitutional model towards which Anthony turned for guidance was the Unfederated State of Johore where executive authority was vested in the Sultan in his Executive Council and legislative authority in the Sultan in his State Council. The Sultan appointed the Executive Council and could act against its advice as long as he
recorded in writing the grounds for his disagreement. Likewise he retained a veto power over legislation which could only be overcome by the passing of the same enactment in three successive State Council meetings and again after the lapse of a year, in which case the Sultan's moral responsibility for the legislation ceased. Sarawak's system of government was more autocratic than Johore's and was not limited by the effective power of the General Adviser. Consequently there was an even closer parallel with the position of colonial governors who exercised substantially autocratic power subject only to the advice of their councils. This advice could be rejected but in that event the case had to be reported to the Secretary of State in detail and council members were entitled to enter their opinions in the minutes.

Anthony agreed that there should be a brake on the autocratic authority of the Rajah but his solution was to adopt the same procedure followed by Sir Shenton Thomas in the event of his disagreeing with his own councils. This would only necessitate a slight modification of the 1888 Treaty and the internal independence of Sarawak 'would not, save in the case of the exceptional and probably theoretical circumstances provided for, be in the least affected'. On further consideration, he told his father, it would not even be necessary to amend the Treaty:

... the required limitation ... could ... be ensured by means of a separate unilateral agreement with His Majesty's Government, whereby the Rajah would undertake to record his reasons in writing in the event of his decision not to accept the advice of the Councils on any point, and would forward a full report, containing the views expressed by each member, to His Excellency the British Agent.¹

He also suggested that as in Johore there should be a provision in the new constitution allowing the Rajah to refuse a bill on three successive occasions so that it could only be passed after the lapse of a year. This would provide a 'double brake on autocratic action'.²

¹ Anthony Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 19 August 1941, Enclosure 46, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...'
² Ibid.
Copies of the two memoranda were sent by Le Gros Clark to Sir Shenton Thomas in Singapore who wrote to Anthony reproaching him for what he regarded as hasty and ill-considered action.¹ The Governor had already approved the second draft subject to certain amendments and was impatient with Anthony's criticisms. Sir Shenton's poor opinion of Vyner and his confidence in Le Gros Clark and the other members of the Committee of Administration, together with his belief that the constitution would facilitate British intervention, provided strong reasons for seeing that it was duly enacted. Anthony's response, however, was a determined effort to upset the constitution at all costs. He was furious with the Governor for approving the draft and tried to embarrass Le Gros Clark by asking him for a definite assurance that the 1888 Treaty had not been broken. In the absence of such an assurance, he added, 'it must be assumed that His Majesty's Government is already actively concerned in the internal administration of this State'.² When the Chief Secretary was loath to reply to this and other messages from Bintulu, Anthony sent a telegram designed to bring matters to a head:

I would like to be instructed by Government to negotiate with His Majesty's Government for an enduring peace on our terms, not an Armistice nor a compromise. I would take to Singapore an olive branch protruding in my left hand and a very heavy sledge hammer concealed in my right. I know exactly what I am talking about. These German methods are intolerable and are inconsistent with the dignity of His Majesty's Government. Strength must be shown now or never. If anyone gets tough remember that the will of the people and the law of God are more important than the whims of rulers and the law of man. If necessary rebel ...³

But the Committee of Administration was unwilling to allow Anthony to come to Kuching to present his views in spite of the recommendation

¹ Shenton Thomas to Anthony Brooke, 16 July 1941, Enclosure 38, ibid.
² Anthony Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 22 July 1941, Enclosure 43, ibid.
³ Anthony Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 8 September 1941, Enclosure 51, ibid.
of the Resident at Miri, R.L. Daubeney, who was told instead to suspend him from duty.\(^1\) At this point Anthony decided to burn all his bridges and go to Kuching to seek a hearing. Before leaving Miri he fired off a cable to Sir Shenton Thomas which he must have known was bound to secure his dismissal:

The proposed constitution has a background of intrigue, treachery, humbug and bad faith, sufficient to condemn the people of this stricken land to hang their heads in shame and misery for years to come. This background must be entirely forgotten before any form of Constitution can again be considered. It exceeds in sheer horror all the lowest depths to which Humanity can sink. I do not blame this Government which has been blackmailed for the past 6 months and once in the clutch of an unprincipled Atheist [MacBryan] holding a position of power there is no easy withdrawal. For the Constitution to be forced on the people of Sarawak in the present circumstances would rival the blackest political crime since the dawn of enlightened Government. The British Commonwealth is at war but the cause for which we are fighting means nothing if this outrageous measure is allowed to triumph.\(^2\)

When the ship on which Anthony was travelling reached Kuching he was handed a letter announcing his dismissal on the grounds of insubordination and advising him to go on to Singapore. On arriving there he declined Sir Shenton Thomas' suggestion that he should withdraw his most outspoken statements and consequently be allowed to resign instead.\(^3\) Before leaving, however, he wrote to Le Gros Clark that the telegrams which he had sent before leaving Sarawak and the decision itself were in his capacity as a member of the Brooke family, not as a District Officer. 'I would also like to say', he told him, 'how sorry I am for any confusion which may have arisen from any failure on my part to make it quite clear to Government when I was acting as a member of the Sarawak Civil Service and when as a member of the Brooke family.'\(^4\) To the Chief

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1 Note by Anthony Brooke on his cable to Jones, 11 September 1941, Enclosure 56, ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Note by Anthony Brooke, op. cit.
4 Anthony Brooke to Le Gros Clark, - September 1941, Enclosure 57, 'The First Constitution of Sarawak ...'
Secretary and the other members of the Committee of Administration it must by then have seemed a somewhat artificial distinction.

In the meantime, elaborate preparations were under way for the celebration of one hundred years of Brooke rule. But Vyner was profoundly uninterested in the Centenary celebrations. One or two brandies and a good deal of persuasion were needed to get him out of bed on the morning of 24 September and he declined to attend either the Centenary Memorial Service at St Thomas' Cathedral or the two race meetings where he was supposed to present the cups. Indeed, he left Kuching for Singapore and the Cameron Highlands as soon as it was decently possible, refusing in no uncertain terms to open the first meeting of the newly constituted Council Negri in November, in spite of Sir Shenton Thomas' pointed suggestion that he should be present. However, the Governor had also persuaded him of Singapore's invulnerability in the event of a Japanese attack and it was in this confidence that he sailed for Australia with MacBryan on 25 November 1941.

The Constitution and the Succession

As late as August, Bertram Brooke had still not received a copy of the draft constitution but he knew that the Colonial Office was 'interested' and wished to study it before final approval was given by the Rajah. Writing to Vyner, he recalled the Secretary of State's reaction in 1933 to rumours about the succession and warned that the section of his 31 March address dealing with the succession was probably causing similar concern:

Had this been worded so as to empower the C. of A. to consult the BG with a view to entering into a fresh Treaty if convinced that this would best serve the interests of the State, it would have been another matter, but the charge upon the C. of A. to actually select your successor and only consult them if their selection lies outside the line laid

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1 For an account of the centenary celebrations, see Sarawak Gazette Centenary Number, 20 October 1941.
2 Interview with Mr E.H. Elam, February 1975.
3 Thackwell Lewis, 'A short note ...'
4 Ibid.
down in the Treaty, and disputes arise in consequence  
... is all wrong.

Attempting to look at the situation as might an outsider, he was highly sceptical that the Committee would deliberate and choose a successor without considering the Rajah's views. 'If I had your standing in the country', he wrote, 'with rights of appointment to the Supreme Council and of veto, I would guarantee to get any successor I wanted appointed by them, as being the country's choice.'

A month later, having received a copy at last from the colonial office, Bertram cabled Vyner that he hoped to find in it something which would dispell his fear that formal acceptance of the provision that he should be Heir apparent during Vyner's lifetime would cause dispute and embarrassment. Two days later he received a cable from Vyner asking him to 'telegraph immediately do you wish to continue to be my heir or not'. Vyner pointed out that Bertram had never indicated acceptance of his position as heir and this was something that the Supreme Council wished to have clarified before the constitution, now approved by the British government, was finally enacted. Bertram replied, however, that no such declaration on his part was necessary since the line of succession was clearly laid down in the political wills of the first two Rajahs and confirmed in the 1888 Treaty.

On 23 September, Le Gros Clark asked the Rajah for a written expression of his views on the succession and this was included in the agenda of the first meeting of the newly-constituted Supreme Council two days later. Vyner thought that if he predeceased Bertram, his brother should succeed him - but only on condition

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1 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 16 August 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
2 Ibid.
3 Bertram Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 17 September 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
4 Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 19 September 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
5 Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 19 September 1941, 'Events ...', Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
6 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 22 September 1941, ibid.
that he publicly accepted the position of heir and agreed to the constitution. Moreover, an Act of Succession should be passed stipulating that in the event of his own and Bertram's death during the minority of Simon Brooke Mackay, Leonora should be proclaimed Regent until his grandson came of age and was proclaimed Rajah. If Simon came of age while either one of them was alive, he would still be proclaimed Rajah. By now Vyner was absolutely determined to exclude Anthony from any possibility of succeeding to the Raj:

I consider that these measures are necessary because of the opinion I have formed that my nephew Peter Brooke, given two great opportunities by my goodwill, has proved himself irresponsible and unfitted to become Rajah of Sarawak. And I feel it to be my foremost duty to Sarawak and its People to prevent the possibility of there ever being a Rajah who is unprepared and unwilling to defer to the opinion of a majority of his Advisers and to accept discipline.

Summing up the position, Le Gros Clark pointed out that under the new constitution the nomination of an heir was the responsibility of the Rajah in Council, unless the Council decided that the question should be left entirely to the Rajah's own discretion. Faced with this difficult task, the Council decided that its Malay members should examine the question in the light of Malay custom before any decision was made.

At the next meeting on 29 September, the Datu Pahlawan reported the Malay members' agreement with the proposal that Bertram should remain the heir on condition that he publicly accepted the position and that an Act of Succession be passed. Questioned on Malay custom, he said that the right of selecting an heir belonged only to the reigning Rajah, subject to the agreement of his ministers and the stipulation that he could not bind his heir in the nomination of future heirs. The reason for this, he added, was that it was not always possible to judge the suitability of future heirs, particularly if they were minors. The most important factor was the suitability of the nominee. The Malay members believed that unless the Tuan Muda declared his acceptance of the position of Heir

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1 'Minutes of Meeting of the Supreme Council ... 25th September 1941 ...', Brooke Papers, Box 10/4.
Presumptive in the light of the constitution he should be disinherited. There would be no opposition from the people to the nomination of another member of the Brooke family, including the Rajah's daughters, as heir. Once again, however, the Council could not agree on a course of action and the question was referred once more to the Malay members for further consideration.¹

On 1 October the Malay members submitted their final views, the only difference being their desire that legislation should be enacted empowering a reigning Rajah to nominate his heir subject to the agreement of his ministers. A letter from the Rajah was also read in which he expressed disinclination to 'dry-nurse' a successor in whom he had 'not the slightest interest'. 'As far as Anthony Brooke is concerned in the future of Sarawak', he added, 'this does not interest me at all except that he and I are perfect strangers [sic] and that he knows he cannot presume on his relationship with me'.² The Council then decided to embody the Malay members' findings in four formal resolutions, the last of which required the Tuan Muda to accept the position of Heir Presumptive under the constitution. It was also agreed that the succession bill should be forwarded to the British government for approval before it was introduced in the Council Negri. The letter calling upon the Tuan Muda to declare his acceptance was to be drawn up by the Supreme Council and signed by the Rajah.

The Rajah, however, was not content with this measured procedure:

I do not wish to have any more delay about this matter of the succession and accordingly I must ask that the fullest particulars of all that has occurred be immediately telegraphed to H.H. and that he be asked to indicate his intentions by telegraph forthwith. I want the question of the succession to be settled at once so that I may be able to leave the State for my holiday.

1 'Minutes of Meeting of the Supreme Council ... 29th September [1941] ...', Brooke Papers, Box 10/4.
2 'Minutes of Meeting of the Supreme Council ... 1st October, 1941 ...', Brooke Papers, Box 10/4.
without the feeling that yet another crisis may arise upon this subject ...¹

The next meeting of the Council on 10 October accordingly considered a draft telegram to Bertram incorporating the contents of the letter and although it was decided to despatch this in deference to the Rajah's wishes, the members recorded their feeling that a letter would have been preferable.² When Bertram was subsequently asked to indicate his formal acceptance of the position of heir, he replied that acceptance of the position of heir-apparent by the heir presumptive during the Rajah's reign might cause difficulties.³ Impatient to leave Sarawak and no doubt infuriated by his brother's stonewalling, the Rajah insisted that he should indicate immediately if he wanted to be heir, otherwise the Council would settle the matter themselves.⁴

At this point Bertram decided to make a stand. In a long cable to Vyner he spelled out his position in some detail:

I took an oath of loyalty to you when on your accession you swore to uphold the methods of Government laid down by your predecessors. My loyalty to you precludes me from criticising your own motives in rejecting this obligation or suggesting that it is done otherwise than in good faith or attempting to interfere in the course you are pursuing except by giving you my own candid views as instructed. You know that these views are that much might be said for closer collaboration [sic] with British Government to guard against possible abuse of his position by some future Rajah but that I consider innovation increases possibility of such abuse under guise of constitutional reform. I have struggled to keep out of it but as you now force me to choose between my own conception of loyalty to the dead as well as to the living, and actively participating in a measure which

¹ Cited in minutes of Supreme Council meeting, 10 October 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
² Ibid.
³ Bertram Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 17 October 1941, 'Events ... ', Brooke Papers Box 2/3.
⁴ Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 20 October 1941, ibid.
I am convinced can only lead to disaster sooner or later in order to preserve my own position I could only earn your contempt by taking the latter course. 1

He asked the Rajah to explain his attitude to the officers in the Service. For the datus, timpa daulat would suffice. This terse formula would convey to them his belief that if they agreed to the current proposal, their betrayal of trust would invite revenge from the spirits of the first two Rajahs. At the same time, he informed the Colonial Office that he could not comply with the new terms governing the succession and in a later interview he told Gent that the Rajah had broken his accession oath. If he, the Tuan Muda, predeceased the Rajah and the Rajah's advisers followed the Rajah's instruction in choosing a successor outside the line of succession laid down by the first Rajah, then the Colonial Office was bound to invoke Article II of the 1888 Treaty. 2

Unwilling to press his brother any further, Vyner indicated he would act on the basis that he had abandoned his title and claim to the succession. 3 The matter was not closed however. He still wanted Bertram to be his successor and to accept the Constitution. 4 Before leaving Sarawak, he placed the matter in the Council's hands and the Chief Secretary informed Bertram that the question of heirship would be held in abeyance 5 until legislation was prepared. A proposal, the details of which are unavailable, was subsequently produced but Bertram's attitude remained inflexible: the constitution, 'however well intended', was still a violation of the Rajah's accession oath and address of July 1918. 'I still feel bound in honour to respect my father's wishes', he replied on 20 November, 'whatever may be the present attitude of officers and others towards his Will, and feel certain that older generation Malays share this

1 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 22 October 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.
2 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 24 November 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
3 Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 24 and 29 October 1941, 'Events ... ', Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
4 Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 29 October 1941, ibid.
5 Le Gros Clark to Bertram Brooke, 29 October 1941, ibid.
view but dare not express feelings in the present circumstances'.

Four days later, he wrote a long letter to his brother giving his personal analysis of what had brought about 'this awful muddle':

I think I know pretty well what happened. It was put to you that the Constitution would be a splendid thing for the country, and it would be a wonderful gesture for you to end the autocratic powers of the Rajahs, but as you would be giving the country this immense benefit, there was every reason why you should get something out of it in return. You had a perfect right to the money, and it would be no business of anyone else's except you and the C. of A. And you, with the curious childlike strain in you that old age has been unable to eliminate, fell for this, just as you fell for the nonsensical explanation that the Brunei business was a matter between you and the Sultan ...

And what would the impartial critic say?

He would say that on the 31st March you told your people a lie in saying that you were voluntarily relinquishing autocratic powers for yourself and your successors.

Because on the same day you had entered into an agreement selling these powers as consideration for a very large sum of money out of the public purse. That the C of A for some reason, took it upon themselves to spend this public money in purchasing these rights on behalf of people who had never shown signs of wanting them, and would not know what to do with them. And so the C of A had to see that your Officers should be instructed to persuade the people whose money had been spent in this extraordinary transaction that they would derive immense benefit from it. And that the C of A was pledged by this agreement to push the Constitution through ...

What puzzled Bertram was the Committee of Administration's readiness to enter into such an agreement when no one really wanted a constitution. He could only conclude that there had been another alternative which had forced them to agree, and was naturally inclined to see MacBryan

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1 Bertram Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 20 November 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.

2 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 24 November 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2. It is significant that Bertram addressed his brother in this letter as 'Dear Rajah' instead of his customary 'Dear Vyner'.
as the author of the scheme. He also saw the constitution as inevitably bringing about British intervention:

... I have the conviction that personalities live on, and that we will all meet again in the hereafter, and I am certain I am right. That is one of the reasons why I can't just join in this general game of make-believe, even if it does mean me and my 'line' being ousted under the Constitution. The old man trusted me and would have preferred me to take this course. The Constitution can't go on with Sarawak continuing as an independent State. It merely means that it will blow up and the B.G. will have to intervene. Rather a pity that you couldn't have saved a lot of trouble and disorder by entering into a fresh agreement straight away ... ¹

In the meantime, the Ranee had got wind of the succession problem and there were persistent reports that she was about to leave America for England to break the news that Simon Mackay had been nominated by the Rajah as his successor. 'My daughter is unaware of the purpose of my trip', the Ranee was quoted as saying under the headline 'Nine Year-old Boy Heir to Sarawak', 'and I'm afraid it will be a great shock to her. It means that her son will soon have to prepare himself for the day when he will rule Sarawak'.² It was indeed a great shock to Lady Inchcape when she read the report and she behaved with extreme caution, waiting to hear from the Rajah and the Sarawak Government Office.³ This prompted Bertram to comment that the succession was not a matter of nomination. 'I am the next Rajah', he told newspaper reporters on 9 December, 'as indeed the present Rajah announced in the Supreme Council this year'.⁴ An official denial of the rumour was also authorized by the Chief Secretary and Supreme Council in the Rajah's absence.⁵

It is tempting to suggest that Bertram Brooke's stubborn

¹ Ibid.
² Daily Mirror, 3 December 1941.
³ The Star, 4 December 1941.
⁴ Straits Times, 8 December 1941.
⁵ Straits Times, 10 December 1941, quoting Reuter report datelined London, 9 December.
adherence to the succession formula laid down by the first two Rajahs was simply a means of sabotaging the constitution and safeguarding the rights of his son. He was adamantly opposed to the proposal from the outset, suspecting that its real purpose was to alter the succession. But from all that we know about him it is clear that he was not primarily motivated by personal interest. He regarded the succession as the most fundamental and immutable principle of Brooke rule and in retrospect it is difficult to dispute his stand.

Only one meeting of the newly constituted Council Negri was held before the Japanese invasion rendered the 1941 Constitution and the succession somewhat irrelevant. Nevertheless, the fact that the constitution was drafted and enacted was remarkable enough and the history of its origins provides an important comment on Brooke rule. Furthermore, its existence later provided both an embarrassing legal obstacle to cession and a convenient rallying point for the anti-cession movement which seized on the 'Nine Cardinal Principles' as its political charter.
SARAWAK owed its continued independence to a variety of factors. When, after a long period of resistance, the British government was finally ready to acquire the state as a colony, Rajah James lost the opportunity by insisting on full financial compensation for his personal expenditure. Another opportunity presented itself during Rajah Charles' last years when it seemed that Vyner Brooke might be prepared to sell out on his father's death. However, for twenty years he was as tenaciously proprietorial as his father had been. Nor was there any pressing need for the Colonial Office to resolve what was clearly an anachronistic situation. Apart from oil, Sarawak did not seem to possess valuable economic resources. Nor did its tiny population constitute a significant market. Had Sarawak possessed tin or other valuable minerals in large quantities, British intervention could not have been postponed.

As it was, the relationship between protected state and protecting power remained in a limbo of unresolved imperialism or pre-imperialism. The fact that the Brookes were an English family with some standing in English society was also very important in ensuring their survival as a Southeast Asian dynasty. The Colonial Office could not use the methods which it had employed with such states as Trengganu without causing a great deal of embarrassing publicity about the 'rights of Englishmen'. And the stakes were simply not high enough. The initiative for change had to be seen to come from the Brookes, and when it was not forthcoming the Colonial Office just had to wait until conditions changed. By the late 1930s change was on its way.

The Colonial Office Background

From 1888 until October 1941 Sarawak's relations with Britain were regulated by a formal treaty which gave the British government responsibility for Sarawak's foreign relations and defence while
allowing its government full internal sovereignty. A protected state rather than a protectorate, Sarawak possessed the further distinction of a wholly autonomous judicial system. Although the 1888 Treaty authorised the appointment of a Consul-General to represent British interests, the post remained vacant after the departure of the first Consul-General and the British government remained without official representation. Britain's responsibilities were exercised by the Governor of the Straits Settlements in Singapore who, as British Agent for Borneo, was supposed to keep an eye on Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo. In London, Borneo affairs were originally handled by the Foreign Office but in 1907 responsibility was passed to the Colonial Office in spite of Rajah Charles' belief that this signified a different view of Sarawak's international legal status.

British interest in Borneo had been somewhat quickened in the 1880s by the great race for colonies and the prospect that Charles Brooke and the Chartered Company would between them eat up what was left of Brunei. The appointment of a British Resident at Brunei in 1906 ensured its survival but the three Borneo territories continued to pose something of a dilemma. As early as the 1890s a senior official of the Foreign Office, C.P. Lucas, had recommended first the appointment of British Residents in Sarawak and North Borneo under a Resident-General in Labuan who would in turn be under the Governor of the Straits Settlements, and then their unification with Brunei as a Crown colony. The easiest course, however, was to do nothing. Britain's interest in the three territories was regarded as sufficient to dissuade any other power from becoming involved and there were no compelling economic reasons to undertake more direct control.

That Colonial Office officials were sceptical about the quality of the Sarawak administration is clear from R.E. Stubbs' 

1 'Agreement between Her Majesty's Government and Charles Brooke, Second Rajah of Sarawak'. See Appendix I.

scathing minute of 1906 and the 'general opinion' (as reported by Sir John Anderson, Governor of the Straits Settlements) that the only man who was any good as an administrator was the Rajah's illegitimate son. Nevertheless, it was recognized that Charles Brooke exercised considerable authority over his polyglot subjects and there was an unwillingness to resolve the situation until he died. His stature in English society and the romantic image of Sarawak inhibited intervention, nor was it clear how intervention could be arranged before he left the scene. It was fairly confidently anticipated that when Vyner Brooke succeeded to the Raj he would be willing to sell out his rights and the initiative could be seen to come from the Brookes rather than the British government.

However, the old Rajah did not die until 1917 and Vyner seemed determined not to part with his inheritance after all. Furthermore, partly out of shyness and partly out of natural cunning, he offered no opportunities for serious discussions. Consequently, from the Colonial Office's point of view the situation remained unresolved although there was still no great need to do anything about it. Nor was there sufficient public or commercial interest in Britain for the Colonial Office to use as an excuse for intervening. Two Labour M.P.s, Thomas Griffiths and T.W. Grundy, visited Kuching in 1920 and subsequently raised the need for appeal beyond the Sarawak judicial system. Griffiths also believed that Sarawak should be developed more rapidly and not simply be used to make the Brooke family rich. But their isolated criticisms failed to spark further comment in Parliament or the press and Sarawak continued to go its own isolated way. Although Kuching was accessible from Singapore by means of a weekly steamer service, there was no hotel accommodation. Casual visitors were not encouraged and the Singapore newspapers do not seem

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2 Tarling, 'Britain and Sarawak...', pp. 31-2, 34.
3 *Hansard*, 24 February 1921; *SG*, 1 March 1921.
The first serious initiative for change came in 1931 when the new Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir Cecil Clementi, revived Lucas' earlier idea of linking the three Borneo states in a Resident system controlled from Singapore. However, his ultimate plan seems to have been to form a Crown colony of British Borneo, and having reached a purchase agreement with the Chartered Company he was anxious to have talks with the Rajah. When Clementi visited Sarawak in August 1930 it was during one of Bertram Brooke's tours of duty and he seems to have made it very clear to the Governor that there could be no question of varying the relationship laid down in the 1888 Treaty. Undeterred, Clementi pursued his plan to purchase North Borneo, no doubt hoping that the Rajah would come around. However, Cabinet rejected his proposal in 1933 on grounds of cost and Sarawak weathered what amounted to the one serious attempt before 1941 to centralize Britain's control of its Southeast Asian dependencies.

Clementi's successor, Sir Shenton Thomas, adopted a comparatively laissez-faire attitude towards Borneo but Bertram Brooke still thought it necessary to remind him during his official visit in August 1935 of the treaty relationship between the two countries. After the Governor had been accorded a full 21 gun salute on his arrival, the Tuan Muda made a speech emphasising that this was not to be regarded as a signal that a Governor was visiting Sarawak in the course of an official tour 'but as His Highness the Rajah's welcome to Your Excellency as the personal representative throughout Malayan territories of the King-Emperor, and therefore as a living link between Sarawak and the protecting power'.

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2 Anthony Brooke to C.E.J. Gent, 24 July 1942, CO 531/30 [53011/4].


4 SG, 2 September 1935.
The only occasions when the Colonial Office applied pressure on the Sarawak government involved the rights of British citizens resident in Sarawak who were unable to seek legal redress outside the state. This eventually led to the Rajah appointing a Judicial Commissioner, Thomas Stirling Boyd, in 1928 but it was clear from the outset that the Rajah regarded this as a tactical concession to the Colonial Office and his relationship with Stirling Boyd seems to have reflected a certain amount of resentment. Otherwise, the only cause for concern was a letter written to the Colonial Office in 1927 by the anthropologist William McDougall. In one official's view, 'the composite picture' provided by McDougall was 'rather disquieting', but the absence of information from impartial sources made it very difficult to assess the Sarawak situation. The consequent tendency was to adopt the old position that it was in British interests that the state should remain under the control of Englishmen whose loyalty to the Crown was unquestioned and who guaranteed the loyalty of their subjects at no cost to the British government.

Nevertheless, the tide of international opinion was moving against the survival of the Brooke Raj by the late 1930s. Trouble in the West Indies and Lord Hailey's reports on the African colonies, together with increasing international interest in the social and economic condition of Britain's colonial subjects produced a greater degree of sensitivity within the Colonial Office. The passing of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act in 1940 (which replaced the Colonial Development Fund established by an Act of 1929) did little to improve the real situation but it was a measure of the British government's responsiveness to a new international awareness.

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1 Minute by W. Ellis, 14 August 1927, CO 531/20 [31728] cited by Tarling, 'Britain and Sarawak...', p. 43.
2 See W.M. MacMillan, Warning from the West Indies..., London [1936]. A West Indies Royal Commission was appointed in 1938 and reported in 1945.
3 ... Native Administration and Political Development in British Tropical Africa: Report, 1940-42. London 1942.
4 Under the 1940 Act, a colonial government could receive assistance of up to £5,000,000 a year for ten years. The 1945 Act which replaced this was more generous, allowing a maximum of £120,000,000 over ten years.
of 'the colonial problem'. Another source of British interest in Sarawak was the question of imperial defence and the strategic importance of the northern Borneo coast to the British navy. The Miri and Seria (Brunei) oilfields seemed an obvious target for an expansionist Japan and reports of Japanese activities in North Borneo began to worry the Admiralty.

During the years immediately prior to the Japanese invasion of Sarawak the responsibility for colonial affairs was in the hands of Malcolm MacDonald, Lord Lloyd and Lord Moyne successively. None of these men showed any particular interest in what was happening in Sarawak, although Lord Lloyd knew Bertram Brooke well (they had rowed in the same boat at Cambridge) and Lord Moyne had visited Sarawak briefly during a world cruise in the mid-1930s. Of the three, Lord Lloyd was the least inclined to make any change to the relationship between the two countries as laid down in the 1888 Treaty. Moyne, however, had been chairman of the West Indies Royal Commission of

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1 The following is a full list of the Secretaries of State for Colonies for the period covered in this study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9 November 1931</td>
<td>Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister (Viscount Swinton)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 June 1935</td>
<td>Malcolm MacDonald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 November 1935</td>
<td>J.H. Thomas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 May 1936</td>
<td>W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore (Lord Harlech)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 May 1938</td>
<td>Malcolm MacDonald</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 May 1940</td>
<td>G.A.L. Lloyd (Lord Lloyd)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 February 1941</td>
<td>W.E. Guinness (Lord Moyne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 February 1942</td>
<td>Robert Cecil (Viscount Cranborne)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 November 1942</td>
<td>Oliver Stanley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 August 1945</td>
<td>George Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 October 1946</td>
<td>Arthur Creech-Jones</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Lord Moyne, Walkabout: A Journey In Lands Between The Pacific And Indian Oceans, London 1936. At this time Lord Moyne was content to repeat the conventional wisdom about Brooke rule:

The small number of white population is explained by the fact that this State has been ruled by three generations of Brooke Rajahs whose policy has been to give the first place to native interests and to prevent any undue replacement of their ancient ways of life in the interest of commercial exploitation of the great natural resources of the country. In Sarawak, therefore, there is no clash between the interests of white and native, and the European population are mainly officials. p. 236.
1938 and was more alive to the need for colonial reform. Of the Parliamentary Under-Secretaries of State and Permanent Under-Secretaries of State who served during the period, only Sir Cosmo Parkinson and Lord Dufferin emerge as significant figures. The person who exercised the most important continuous influence on Borneo policy until early 1946 was C.E.J. Gent.

After a distinguished army career, Edward Gent joined the Colonial Office in 1920 as an Assistant Principal Secretary and after serving as Private Secretary to Lord Harlech, was made a Principal Secretary in 1926. By 1939 he had become Assistant Secretary and from 1942 until his appointment as Governor of the Malayan Union in early 1946 he was Permanent Under-Secretary of State. As head of the Colonial Office's Eastern Department, Gent was responsible for Malayan and Borneo affairs until 1946 when it was split into two sections, Sarawak then coming under N.L. Mayle and his assistant J.J. Paskin.

The absence of a biography of Gent is an unfortunate gap in the historiography for the period and it is not possible to throw very much light on his actions. There can be no doubt that he exercised a powerful and consistent influence on policy towards the Malay States and Borneo through the various Permanent Under-Secretaries and Secretaries of State who came and went during his time. He seems to have been more responsible than any other person for the important policy changes of 1944 which envisaged the Malayan Union and the annexation of Sarawak and North Borneo and for the decisions to send Sir Harold MacMichael and MacBryan on their respective missions to obtain the necessary legal authority. However, the only records of his thinking are his elegant minutes on Colonial Office files. Like so many bureaucrats in sensitive policy areas, a great deal of his work was done through conversation. He was a subtle diplomat, a consummate tactician and, if necessary, a ruthless politician.

Gent was also a bureaucratic imperialist. Convinced of the benefits which British rule brought the peoples of the Empire, but anxious that these should be improved in the areas of social services, his main preoccupation was with properly organized administrative
systems which ran cheaply and efficiently with a minimum of duplication. His criticism of any administration which did not satisfy his standards of bureaucratic efficiency was usually conveyed in such arch phrases as 'a lack of regular procedure here'. Needless to say, the situation in the Malay States and Borneo during the 1930s met with his disapproval. The proliferation of administrative structures within the Federated Malay States, the Unfederated Malay States, the Straits Settlements and the three separate Borneo governments must have been anathema to him. Visiting Malaya with Sir Samuel Wilson in 1932 he was unimpressed with the Malay rulers whose powers Sir Samuel was anxious to increase.\(^1\) Whatever Gent may have been, he was no romantic traditionalist and could see that the rulers were a major block to real progress in Malaya.

**The Popular Image of Sarawak**

The way in which Gent and his colleagues viewed Sarawak was inevitably influenced by the popular image of Sarawak in the 1930s. Strictly speaking, it was more the image of the Brookes than of the country itself which formed little more than a romantic backdrop for an eccentric English family. People knew of the headhunters of Borneo whom the Brookes had supposedly tamed and of course there was the *orang utan* or 'wild man of Borneo' of household fable. Beyond that, there was only the schoolboy's vision of 'white rajahs' ruling over black men under the swaying coconut palms. To do him justice, the Rajah was a socially retiring man who detested publicity and was dedicated to leading a quiet life. However, the Ranee and her two younger daughters more than compensated for his reticence. Mixing with the Mayfair set, Sylvia exploited to the utmost her exotic role as 'the Ranee of Sarawak'. She often wore Malay dress, although in a style which would have surprised the wives of the Kuching datus. She was also fond of wearing masses of jewellery and was once photographed with a snake skin headband. She was famous as a source

\(^1\) Allen, *The Malayan Union*, p. 5.
of scandalous stories about members of the aristocracy and other notables. She adored publicity and was entertaining in a sometimes malicious way.

Elizabeth and Valerie Brooke were exceptionally beautiful and photogenic young women. Liberated from schooling in their mid-teens, they joined their mother at the fashionable Mayfair nightclubs and were soon appearing in the social pages of the afternoon newspapers as 'Princess Pearl' and 'Princess Baba'. At one point the Rajah even wrote to a newspaper pointing out that his daughters were not entitled to the honorific of 'princess'. In 1935 Elizabeth married Harry Roy, a well-known dance-band leader at the Savoy who had composed 'The Sarawaki' foxtrot in the Ranee's honour. Two years later, Valerie married Bob Gregory, an all-in wrestler from Puerto Rico. However, both marriages were short-lived and dissolved in a flurry of publicity in the social columns. Elizabeth then revived her earlier idea of going into films and during the late 1930s she and the Ranee spent much time in Hollywood where the Ranee was engaged with a filmscript called 'The White Rajah'. For people like Gent, the Ranee epitomized the noxious American influence which was pervading English society.

Gladys Brooke had also received her share of newspaper publicity. Separated from Bertram at the end of the war, she established something of a salon for artists and writers as her mother had done in the 1890s, although not with the same success. She also went through a number of religious conversions, first to Christian Science, and then Roman Catholicism which involved a personal audience with the Pope at which she wore Malay dress. In 1932 she became a convert to Islam, the ceremony taking place on an aircraft between London and Paris. Although this well-publicized event produced an unfavourable reaction from the leaders of Britain's Islamic community, she went ahead with her project of displaying as a religious relic a robe said to have belonged to the Prophet Mohammed, and certainly of great antiquity. She had recently published

1 Straits Times, 19 February 1932; 9 March 1932.
Relations and Complications,\(^1\) an outspoken book about her childhood and was engaged on The Mystic Legends of Islam, based on the work of the painter Paltov.

Sylvia, who had already dabbled in popular journalism,\(^2\) was spurred by the appearance in 1934 of Ranee Margaret's charming memoir Good Morning and Good Night to write her own autobiography, Sylvia of Sarawak, which was published in 1936 and The Three White Rajahs in 1939.\(^3\) But while Sylvia was happy to exploit the exotic appeal of Sarawak in her social and literary activities, she was increasingly bored with the place. During the period from 1930 until 1936 her total time spent there was less than two years. And when she returned to Sarawak in September 1941 for the centenary celebrations, it was her first visit for two and a half years.

During the publicity following the Rajah's removal of Anthony Brooke's title of Rajah Muda in early 1940 the Ranee's remarks were noted by Gent, as were her later statements criticizing Sarawak's defences and the Children's Overseas Reception Scheme. '... Her tongue style is thoughtless and sensational', he noted in April 1942 when she offered to make a lecture tour of England explaining the Far East, 'and her inclination is towards an unruled and malicious form of snobbishness'.\(^4\) He was openly sarcastic about the Ranee's references to events of late 1941 in Sarawak:

Her extravagant misuse of language appears repeatedly... e.g. her "escape" from Sarawak - she visited the State in August last year for the Centenary celebrations and left at the beginning of October for Australia. The Rajah himself "escaped" in accordance with his longstanding plan for a holiday after these celebrations...\(^5\)

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1 London 1929.
2 Some examples were 'Why Did You Marry?', Daily Express, 22 March 1929; 'Why Shouldn't We Gossip?', Sunday Graphic, 7 April 1929.
3 Yet another autobiography, Queen of the Headhunters..., was published in 1970. Although Sylvia Brooke possessed a 'talent to amuse', the book is highly unreliable and virtually useless as an historical source. Sylvia was accustomed to writing for an audience which knew little or nothing about Sarawak.
4 Minute by Gent, 3 April 1942, CO 531 30 [53006].
5 Ibid.
Two further developments hardly improved the Eastern Department’s opinion of the Ranee. The first was a debt of US$7,000 run up in America and claimed by Jack Golden who had been appointed by the Rajah in October 1939 to manage her financial affairs. The second was the Ranee’s contact with Captain Roy Kendall’s Brisbane-based ‘cloak and dagger’ operation in 1942. It is difficult to say how much she knew about Kendall’s plan to land two Brooke officers by submarine to gather information about occupied Sarawak, but she saw herself master-minding a plan to foment a rebellion against the Japanese. While the ‘plan’ was kept from the Rajah and everyone in England, she wrote to Golden hinting that something momentous was afoot. Extracts from these letters eventually made their way to the Eastern Department and while the ‘cracked-brained exploit’ was not taken very seriously, it was regarded as yet another example of the Ranee’s irresponsibility. Her actions can only have helped persuade the Colonial Office of the undesirability of allowing the Brookes to remain as rulers in Sarawak.

The Breen Report and the Question of Secondment

The Colonial Office’s doubts about Sarawak were revived by the Breen reports which provided the Colonial Office with its first real information on the inside workings and standards of the administration. On returning from Sarawak, Breen told Gent that there was ‘only a crude form of administration’ and that the financial system was ‘rudimentary and uninformed’. The general picture of poor standards

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1 Secret Intelligence Australia (SIA) was one of a number of special intelligence units operating within the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB) in Australia and, like the better-known Survey and Reconnaissance Department (SRD), under ultimately British control. SIA was involved in long-range penetrations into Japanese-occupied territory using trained Indonesian agents. Personal communication from Mr H.P.K. Jacks, 5 June 1976.

2 Sylvia Brooke to Golden, 15 June 1942; 4 July 1942; CO 531/30 [53006].

3 Minutes by Monson and Gent, 21 July 1942, ibid.

4 See Chapter II, p.35.

5 Minute by Gent, 5 July 1937, CO 531/27 [53029].
which emerged from Breen's official report persuaded Gent that 'sooner or later we shall have to bring pressure on the Rajah to accept his responsibilities'.

Breen was subsequently asked to prepare a confidential memorandum spelling out his detailed criticisms of the Sarawak administration and although a copy of this is not available, it was clearly important in stiffening the Eastern Department's attitude towards intervention. To the bureaucrats of the Colonial Office the two reports provided concrete evidence supporting their earlier suspicions that the Sarawak administration was not up to the level of British colonial administration and it was inevitable that they should begin to seek to rectify this 'irregular' situation. However, Sarawak's internal sovereignty and the Rajah's elusiveness meant that there was no easy means available.

One possible means was the secondment of officers from the Colonial Service to the Sarawak government for limited periods. In February 1937 the Rajah had written to Sir Shenton Thomas asking for the extension of the Malayan Medical Service to Sarawak. The Committee of Administration had conducted an investigation into the private practice of government doctors which resulted in two resignations and the whole question of medical services was thereby thrown into the melting pot. Besides, the Medical and Health departments were drastically pruned by Macaskie as part of his economy campaign in 1931 and had never really recovered. The head of the Malayan Medical Service subsequently reported that public health standards in Sarawak were very bad and the proposal was then considered and approved by the Eastern Department. Apart from improving health standards in Sarawak, the arrangement was regarded as 'opening up the channels of information as to conditions in Sarawak generally'.

It was hoped that all Sarawak departments might eventually be staffed from Malaya and that Sarawak would be in a similar position to the Unfederated Malay States. Gent regarded Sarawak as 'sheltering under

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1 Ibid.
2 CO 531/27 [53029/2]. Closed until 2037.
3 Minute by E.B. Beetham, 4 May 1938, CO 531/28 [53045].
the skirts of the Straits Setts.', but he was agreeable as long as the Principal Medical Officer was from Malaya. The one problem was ultimate authority, particularly in view of Breen's findings that security of tenure in Sarawak largely depended on the personal wishes of the Rajah. Formally authorizing the arrangement, Malcolm MacDonald incorporated Gent's condition and specified that all matters of discipline would be in the hands of the Governor and not the Rajah. Subsequent to this Dr J.H. Bowyer took up his duties as Principal Medical Officer in Kuching in 1938.

When the Sarawak Government Agent raised the possibility of obtaining assistance from the Crown Agents in selecting administrative and technical officers, Gent told him that since the Secretary of State had no control over conditions of service in Sarawak, the Colonial Office could not participate formally in selection processes. Instead, names of applicants for the Colonial Service could be passed on to the Sarawak Government Office. Although it was suggested that even this limited assistance should only be given on condition that the Sarawak government undertook the reorganization proposed by Breen, Sir Henry Moore felt that in view of the low standards revealed in the confidential report, there was an overriding need to improve the quality of technical officers. The compromise he suggested was that the Crown Agents should select two or three provisional candidates for each appointment and the Sarawak Agent would be left to make the final selection from these. Nor did Sir John Shuckburgh and Sir Cosmo Parkinson see any difficulty in making it clear to candidates that Sarawak was 'not a Colony but an independent principality'. They probably regarded secondment not only as a means of improving Sarawak's standards of government but of providing a reliable source of information on internal affairs and a bargaining counter to be used when necessary with the Rajah.

In the meantime, Stirling Boyd renewed his bid to have his successor brought in from the Colonial Legal Service. In a letter to an acquaintance in the Colonial Office's Legal Department, which

1 Minute by Gent, 5 May 1938, ibid.
2 Malcolm MacDonald to Shenton Thomas, 19 May 1938, ibid.
he hoped would be handed on to the Legal Adviser, Sir Grattan Bushe, the Chief Justice pointed out that the Sarawak government would find it difficult to replace him and might even ask the Secretary of State for assistance. This would also create an opportunity to ensure that the judiciary would in future be independent, with a Chief Justice or equivalent who was not a member of the Committee of Administration and an Attorney-General responsible for legal policy and administration. There was even a precedent for the appointment of someone from the Colonial Legal Service in the earlier secondment of medical staff from Malaya. However, as Boyd acknowledged, there were difficulties:

The snag is that H.H. and the Powers-that-Be won't like it as the dangers, from their point of view, are obvious. E.g. if you came here as C.J. for 3 years and anything happened of which you didn't approve, you would only have to apply to the S. of S. with reasons, for a transfer. Your position in every way would be infinitely stronger than mine, and the S. of S. would be in a position to say what must and what must not be done.¹

Boyd's friend forwarded an extract from the letter to Bushe and it eventually reached the Eastern Department. One official supported Boyd's proposals as a 'step forward in the direction of bringing in Sarawak as a party to the Malayan Establishment' but was not at all sure how they could be implemented. There was a precedent in the virtual extension of the Malayan Medical Service to Sarawak but this had been done on the Rajah's own initiative. The Colonial Office's strict policy had been to refrain from offering any facilities unless they were explicitly requested by the Rajah and a direct approach to him was 'out of the question'.² All that Boyd could be told was that if the proposal was put forward by the Sarawak government it would be favourably considered: a good bureaucratic formula which made negotiations possible without compromising anyone. Sir Shenton Thomas was subsequently informed of the position but he could not provide any information about the Rajah's intentions.

¹ Extract from an undated letter from Boyd to Adrian Clark, CO 531/28 [53029/3].
² Minute by A.N. Galsworthy, 1 January 1939, CO 531/28 [53020].
regarding Boyd's successor. And as long as the Colonial Office adhered to its position of strict non-intervention there was very little that could be done. Furthermore, when Boyd and his three colleagues were 'purged' in March 1939 and Pepys' appointment as General Adviser was announced, the importance attached to the latter development diverted attention from Boyd's replacement by a Judicial Commissioner. Judicial reform was not seen at this point as being particularly pressing.1

Lunch at Leicester Square

The long-awaited initiative from the Rajah came at last in early 1938. When it became clear that the Tuan Muda was no longer physically able to bear his share of the responsibility of ruling Sarawak, the Rajah, and more particularly the Ranee, began to think very seriously of selling out to Britain. In July L.F. Burgis, a former private secretary to Lord Esher who was then working for Sir Maurice Sankey in the Cabinet Office, was asked by the Rajah and Ranee to make discreet inquiries as to whether the British government would be interested in such a proposal. Burgis saw Gent and explained to him that the Rajah was too shy to make an official approach but was 'desirous of divesting himself from the burden', subject to a satisfactory financial settlement.2 The Rajah, he added, would himself look after any question of compensating the Tuan Muda as heir presumptive while a place would hopefully be found for Anthony in the new colonial administration. According to Sir Shenton Thomas two years later, a figure of £5,000,000 had been mentioned.3 Gent must have found it difficult to suppress his excitement at this news but his response was suitably circumspect. He told Burgis that while the government had not hitherto considered taking over Sarawak, the Eastern Department believed that defence matters and standards of social welfare and general administration would sooner or later raise the question. He was not prepared to commit himself on what

1 Minute by ? Andrews, 22 September 1939, ibid.
2 Minute by Gent, 20 July 1938, CO 531/28 [53029/3].
3 Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 27 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
the government's attitude would be to such a proposal. But he suggested that a private meeting might be arranged at which the Rajah could unburden his feelings and that a conversation might subsequently take place with the Secretary of State, Malcolm MacDonald.

It soon emerged, however, that there was a significant difference of opinion between the Rajah and the Ranee. The Ranee apparently made no bones about her belief that the 'white rajah' system should be brought to an end and a satisfactory financial settlement made. But the Rajah was unable to decide between such a complete break and the 'far less revolutionary step' of entrusting the administration to a British Adviser while remaining in England as an absentee sovereign.\(^1\) According to Burgis, the Rajah had only the 'haziest ideas' of what this would involve and he doubted whether he could make any clear preference without considerable guidance: 'He is only set on making a change, either greater or lesser, which will relieve him of his burden of autocracy'.\(^2\) At the same time, the Rajah was anxious that the natives should not have the impression that he had 'cleared out under irresistible pressure from H.M.G.'.

With Lord Dufferin's approval, a lunch appointment was arranged for the Rajah, Burgis and Gent at a restaurant in Leicester Square but at the last moment the Rajah telephoned Burgis to say that he could not come. 'Even the prospect of such an informal beginning as this was too much for the Rajah...', noted a disappointed Gent.\(^3\) However, the Eastern Department was anxious to pursue the idea which, 'however watered down', could lead to some improvement in the Sarawak situation. Sir Shenton Thomas was accordingly told that the Rajah might still want to approach him when he passed through Singapore.\(^4\)

Sarawak's future was now an open question and the Rajah's position in relation to the Colonial Office had weakened considerably.

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1. Minute by Gent, 21 July 1938, CO 531/28 [53029/3].
2. Ibid.
3. Minute by Gent, 28 July 1938, ibid.
4. H.R. Cowell to Shenton Thomas, 15 August 1938, ibid; Shenton Thomas to Cowell, 28 February 1939, ibid.
The Scott Case

Stirling Boyd left Sarawak in July 1939 but there was another tenacious Scot who was more successful in bringing the judicial problem to London's notice. James Scott had come out to Sarawak as an engineer with the Borneo Company early in the century and after many vicissitudes had gone into business with a Chinese partner. The business was valued at $30,000 when the partner died but he was found to be indebted to the firm by more than $8,000 for goods and overdrawn profits. Appointed executor to the estate, Scott continued to manage the remaining capital with the consent of his partner's two sons but they were obliged to take him to court in 1938 to obtain their share of the interest.1 Subsequent to this, Scott was charged in the First Division Resident's Court with having made a false statement of the firm's accounts and was found guilty under a section of the penal code. Although he was fined $5,000, this was in fact illegal as the offence carried a mandatory prison term. Scott immediately lodged a petition through a firm of Singapore lawyers, claiming that there had been improper practice and requesting that an appeal be heard in the Supreme Court. His complaint was based on the fact that the Judicial Commissioner, H. Thackwell Lewis, had handed a note to the magistrate before the trial indicating the course that the prosecution should take, although a copy had also been given to Scott himself. When he refused to amend the unflattering language of his appeal, he was informed by the Registrar of the Supreme Court that since he had impugned the integrity of the Judicial Commissioner, the appeal could not be heard and his only recourse was to the Rajah. Asked by the Rajah to investigate the case, Pepys felt that although Thackwell Lewis' action had been taken in good faith, it prevented the Judicial Commissioner from hearing the appeal even if he had been prepared to do so. Furthermore, the Chief Secretary, Archer, had sat on the civil case in 1938 and was therefore ineligible. At the same time, however, Pepys had no doubt that Scott, whom he described as 'no ignorant bumpkin but a shrewd

1 Scott v. Ng Siak Ngee and Ng Siak Kong, 13 September 1938, Sarawak Supreme Court Reports 1928-1941, 1946-1951, Kuching 1955, pp. 70-72.
businessman', had indeed made a false declaration and been properly convicted. In a tactful appreciation of commercial practice in Sarawak, he observed that Scott had 'for so many years engaged in trading and business ventures with a not too scrupulous assortment of Chinese associates that his sense of moral values has become blunted and... he is not acting a part when he indignantly disclaims having done anything wrong'. Digby's comment, made some years after Scott's death on release from a Japanese prison camp, was even more pointed. 'He had all the qualities which are admired in the world of capitalist enterprise', observed the former Legal Adviser, 'and he was reputed to be the only European who had ever got the better of a Chinese at that particular game.' Pepys' advice to the Rajah was that Scott should be asked to withdraw his imputation against the courts, after which there might be a reduction of the fine which Thackwell Lewis privately admitted to have been excessive. But Scott was adamant: he demanded a complete vindication and reversal of the court's decision and when this was not forthcoming he gave the General Adviser a petition for despatch to the Secretary of State, Lord Lloyd. Pepys passed this on to Archer whose response summed up the prevailing attitude of the Sarawak Service to outside intervention. 'I have the honour to inform you', he told Scott loftily, 'that the

1 Pepys' report to Shenton Thomas, dated 3 May 1940, enclosed with the Governor's despatch to Lloyd, 28 August 1940, CO 531/29 [53063].

2 Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 89. According to Digby, Scott's agricultural and engineering skills were extremely valuable during internment. However, he was extremely jealous of the tools which he had acquired by various means and only those who 'adopted the proper obsequious approach and disclosed an intention to pursue solid industry' were able to borrow them. When two prisoners who had obtained a dartboard, nail and string required Scott's hammer to put it up on the wall, the following conversation ensued:

"Mr. S.", they said, cap metaphorically in hand, "could you lend us your hammer, please?"
"And wha' d'ye wan' ma wee hummer for", asked S.
They duly explained.
"Nae, nae, nae", exploded S., "ah niver len' a tule for the pairrposes of plaisir".

Ibid., p. 90.
State of Sarawak does not recognise any appellate jurisdiction outside of its boundaries...'. Scott was not prepared to let matters rest there, however, and the petition finally made its way to Sir Shenton Thomas in Singapore and from there to the Colonial Office. Enclosing a copy of Pepys' report on the case together with the petition, Sir Shenton did not make any comment. He only asked that if he was requested to call for an official report from the Sarawak government, he should be able to say that it was on the Secretary of State's explicit instructions. One Eastern Department official suggested that although the petition threw a 'disquieting' light on the administration of justice in Sarawak, under the strict terms of the 1888 Treaty there was no power of intervention: it was a case of \textit{non possumus}. The Colonial Office's legal advisers were not so temperate, however. 'It is seldom one meets a clear and unblushing violation of the express terms of Magna Carta', noted one, 'but here we have it...'. Rehearsing the essential elements of the case, he delivered some trenchant comments on the procedures that had been adopted, concluding that \textit{non possumus} could not possibly be accepted in this situation. The Treaty, he conceded, provided no explicit assistance but it might still be possible to use Article V which gave British subjects the same rights as those of Sarawak. 'Be that as it may', he added, 'the case is surely one which, if it had happened in a foreign country, H.M.G. would be prepared to make diplomatic representations, and \textit{a fortiori} the Secretary of State can do likewise to the Government of Sarawak...'.

Sir Grattan Bushe did not think that there was any need to invoke the Treaty when it was a clear case of a British subject being denied justice:

1 Archer to Scott, 11 July 1940, enclosed with Shenton Thomas' despatch to Lloyd of 28 August 1940, CO 531/29 [53063].
2 Shenton Thomas to Lloyd, 28 August 1940, ibid.
3 Minute by Monson, 17 October 1940, ibid.
4 Minute by F.W. Roberts-Wray, 20 October 1940, ibid.
5 Ibid.
Suppose that the Rajah, instead of refusing Mr. Scott access to the court and extracting a fine from him illegally, had had him boiled in oil. Should we then be discovered carefully studying the Treaty to see whether, in a State under H.M.'s protection, British subjects may be murdered without protest? 1

Now inclined to think that there was more truth in Boyd's 'appalling description' of affairs in Sarawak than he had first believed, he thought that the Secretary of State was bound to intervene 'formally and unequivocally', pressing for redress if there was no satisfactory explanation. Gent agreed that the Treaty did not restrict their right to take the matter up, but he pointed out that it did not give them jurisdiction in Sarawak or the power to instruct the Rajah. It was, he said, the kind of thing which came up from time to time and was important 'from every point of view' to pursue if there seemed to be a prima facie case to do so. 2 The Under-Secretary of State accordingly authorized a cable to Sir Shenton Thomas on 21 December 1939 asking him for a report from the Sarawak government on the Scott case:

As a British subject he is entitled to seek the protection of H.M. Government if he considers that he has suffered injustice and has exhausted the legal remedies provided in the local law, and it is no less than the duty of H.M. Government in such circumstances to make representations to the Government concerned with a view to ascertaining the facts and to considering any further steps which may appear to be justified. 3

On receipt of this, the Governor's secretary wrote to Archer passing on the request for a report and offering the services of a Malayan judge if the Rajah should decide to appoint a deputy.

There can be little doubt that the Rajah was extremely irritated by this reminder of the Colonial Office's earlier intervention in the appointment of a Judicial Commissioner. Archer told the secretary that in view of the 'independent and autonomous' position of Sarawak, the Rajah was unable to accept the offer of

1 Minute by Bushe, 1 November 1940, ibid.
2 Minute by Gent, 29 November 1940, ibid.
3 Lloyd to Shenton Thomas, 21 December 1940, ibid.
assistance; while Scott's petition did not provide all the facts, the Rajah did not feel under any obligation to defend the action of the Sarawak courts and he was 'fully satisfied' that Scott was guilty of the offence.¹ This prompted a personal letter from Sir Shenton Thomas carrying the polite threat that if the Secretary of State was unable to consider the petition because of the Sarawak government's failure to comment on it, then Scott might take his case to Parliament and the subsequent questions might not show the Sarawak government in too favourable a light. The issue, he insisted, was not the independent and autonomous position of Sarawak but whether a British subject with a grievance should receive proper consideration.² But the Rajah (or his adviser) was not prepared to give an inch. Writing from his bungalow in the Cameron Highlands, he told the Governor that he saw the issue not so much in terms of the rights of a British subject as the propriety of the Secretary of State considering an appeal:

I cannot agree that a British Subject who elects of his own freewill to live in Sarawak should be subjected to different treatment or have consideration, by reason of a grievance, other than what is accorded by the Law and Courts of the State to all dwellers in Sarawak of whatever nationality. Indeed, if I were to agree to a contrary interpretation of the position it would be tantamount to singling out the nationals of one group of countries for special and preferential treatment as compared with others...³

It was not a matter of whether the Sarawak government had a good case or a bad case, he emphasized, but whether the judgments of Sarawak courts should be subject to the consideration of the Secretary of State and consequently to his jurisdiction.

If the Governor detected a defiant note in this, he must have been even more sensitive to the second paragraph of the letter in which the Rajah asserted his status as an independent sovereign ruler:

¹ Archer to Ward, 16 January 1941, enclosed with Shenton Thomas' despatch to Moyne, 8 March 1941, ibid.
² Shenton Thomas to Vyner Brooke, 6 February 1941, ibid.
³ Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 24 February 1941, ibid.
Your assurance that the "independent and autonomous position of Sarawak" is not in question at all is particularly welcome and gratifying as it comes at a time when several circumstances and also the tenor of some letters that I have received have led me to wonder if this independent position was, in fact, being questioned. 1

When Sir Shenton later questioned the Rajah about how he had formed such an impression, neither he nor MacBryan could provide an answer. 2 But in view of the fact that MacBryan was the only Sarawak officer with the Rajah at the Cameron Highlands when the letter was written, the former's response was disingenuous. He had almost certainly used the letter as a means of expressing his pique at the Governor's frustration of his Brunei negotiations. 3

The Eastern Department regarded the Rajah's letter as a serious affront. 'Even from an unfriendly and strictly foreign Government such as Japan', Gent complained, 'we are accustomed to the courtesy of a report on the facts and an opinion on the merits of any case of a British subject which we may have to take up.' 4 With Lord Moyne's approval he sent a cable to the Governor instructing him to tell the Rajah that he was not satisfied with this response which amounted to no more than would be expected 'from even an unfriendly foreign government in a similar case...'. 5 The message was duly conveyed to the Rajah who, after advice from Digby that he should insist on the principle of Sarawak's internal autonomy, sent copies of the original civil judgment to Singapore with a letter expressing concern at the tone of the Governor's message. The Rajah stressed that he intended only to resist the principle implicit in the Colonial Office's cable of 21 December which seemed to claim the right to revise the case or to order a new

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1 Ibid.
2 Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 8 March 1941, ibid.
3 See Chapter III, pp. 89, 90.
4 Minute by Gent, 6 March 1941, CO 531/29 [53063].
5 Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 10 March 1941, ibid.
hearing. When the Governor again asked him if he would comply with the Secretary of State's request, the Rajah indicated that he would send Digby to Singapore to discuss the matter. In response to a protest that the delay would bring 'most unfavourable comment' and that Scott was about to petition the King, the Rajah replied that he could not understand the need for such haste.

From the Colonial Office's point of view the Governor's constant pressure had had the desired effect. It was noted that by agreeing to discuss the matter through his Legal Adviser, the Rajah was 'weakening ground'. But as far as Digby was concerned, no ground had been yielded:

My instructions were to tell Sir Shenton that we could not accept this proposal [that a Malayan judge be appointed], to emphasise that His Majesty's Government had overstepped all reasonable limits by poking its collective nose into the internal affairs of an independent State, but, if it appeared to me to be necessary, to agree that an appeal should be heard by two Sarawak officers appointed to be judges of the Supreme Court for this purpose only, and finally, to attempt to extract from Sir Shenton some kindly acknowledgement of the reasonable and accommodating spirit which we had shown.

The compromise suggested by Digby was eventually accepted by Sir Shenton Thomas, although he refused to acknowledge that the Rajah and his advisers had behaved at all reasonably.

Although the Rajah had made the only concession possible within Sarawak's own legal framework, the Eastern Department's blood was up. 'We cannot let the Rajah trifle with us in this way', protested Gent and the Governor was duly informed by the Secretary of State that the agreement to appoint two judges from Sarawak was

1 Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 17 March 1941, cited in Shenton Thomas' cable to Moyne, 31 March 1941, ibid.
2 Shenton Thomas to Vyner Brooke, 29 March 1941, cited in Shenton Thomas' cable to Moyne, 31 March 1941, ibid.
3 Vyner Brooke to Shenton Thomas, 30 March 1941, ibid.
4 Minute by Monson, 2 April 1941, ibid.
5 Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 92.
6 Minute by Gent, 10 April 1941, CO 531/29 [53063].
'unsatisfactory and unwise'. If Scott withdrew his petition, the matter would not be pursued, but otherwise the Rajah's action would be regarded as 'further trifling with matters of principle' and the Secretary of State would press for a proper procedure to be made available in this and all future cases involving British and foreign nationals. The officials of the Eastern Department were clearly nettled by the Rajah's stubbornness. One referred somewhat sarcastically to his Cameron Highlands letter as containing a 'certain amount of "official dignity" and a lack of comprehension of principles on which H.M.G. has taken its stand'. When Scott's conviction was conveniently reversed by a court consisting of Digby and Aikman, the outcome was greeted with considerable satisfaction in London. 'You see that our intervention has in fact resulted in a complete quashing of Mr. Scott's conviction - in spite of the views attributed to the Rajah...', commented the same official. The days of non possumus were fast coming to an end.

The Appointment of a General Adviser

The March 1939 'purge' of Sarawak's five senior bureaucrats had provided Sir Shenton Thomas and the Colonial Office with a long-awaited opportunity of obtaining access to Sarawak's internal affairs. The Rajah left to Anthony Brooke the whole task of explaining the background of what had happened and it was during his subsequent meeting with the Rajah Muda that the Governor raised a number of suggestions about future administrative arrangements. The Imperial government did not wish 'unduly to interfere' in Sarawak's domestic affairs, he told Anthony, but it still had 'necessarily [to] take into strict account the need for safeguarding native interests and defence'. While he felt that native interests had not been prejudiced by the resignations, there was a case for greater interchange between the Sarawak Service and the Colonial Service. He

1 Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 15 April 1941, ibid.
2 Minute by Monson, 8 May 1941, ibid.
3 Minute by Monson, 17 May 1941, ibid.
4 Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 19 April 1939, CO 531/29 [53011/1].
5 Shenton Thomas' notes of 12 April 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
recommended that in future the positions of Chief Secretary, Financial Secretary, Chief Justice and Legal Adviser might sometimes be filled by officers seconded from the Colonial Service to which they could return if they were found unsatisfactory. The Sarawak Service, on the other hand, provided no prospects of promotion or transfer and it was consequently necessary 'either to offer unduly high pay so as to attract good men or to be content with men who lack ambition or are unable to obtain a Colonial appointment'.¹ He was particularly anxious that the office of Legal Adviser should be quite separate from the judiciary so that government could receive independent advice. This would remove the existing anomaly of one officer serving as Registrar of the Supreme Court, Official Assignee and Legal Adviser. His most important suggestion, however, was that a 'General Adviser' should be appointed to the Sarawak government and he recommended the services of W.E. Pepys,² the retiring General Adviser to the government of Johore whose wide experience in administration would be extremely useful. The General Adviser's function does not seem to have been spelled out in any detail but Sir Shenton no doubt saw Pepys both as a source of information and as the thin end of a wedge of influence likely to open up Sarawak's internal affairs. Now that Sarawak had lost its most senior officers, Pepys might even fill the position of Chief Secretary and, during the Rajah's absence, Officer Administering the Government. Such, no doubt, were the Governor's hopes.

Anthony Brooke conceded that the offices of Chief Justice and Legal Adviser should be kept separate and expressed his intention of making this change. More importantly, he was prepared to accept the proposal that there should be a General Adviser, although it

¹ Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 19 April 1939, op. cit.
² Walter Pepys joined the MCS as a cadet in 1908 and after serving in Pahang and Perak was appointed District Officer at Jelebu. He spent the period 1914-18 in Kelantan and became Acting British Adviser, Trengganu, in 1919. Promoted to Class II in 1925, he served as Assistant Secretary to Government, FMS, Superintendent of Government Monopolies, SS, Commissioner for Trade and Customs, FMS, and Commissioner of Customs and Excise, SS and FMS. He was awarded the C.M.G. in 1930 when he was promoted to Class IA and took up his position as General Adviser, Johore, in 1935.
would be surprising if he did not have some private reservations about the authority to be wielded by Pepys. Indeed, he may well have agreed as a means of humouring the Governor after the latter had indicated his approval of the 'purge'. It seems doubtful that he seriously envisaged Pepys occupying the post of Chief Secretary, or any other position of real power. Nor can he have been particularly enthusiastic about Sir Shenton's scheme for seconding officers of the Colonial Service to senior positions in Sarawak, a question which was deferred after agreement that the position of General Adviser should first be settled. But he was happy that Pepys should assist with any arrangements concerning defence, the second area of British interest which the Governor had indicated.

On his return to Sarawak, Anthony passed on the Governor's suggestions on secondment to Andrew Macpherson, then Secretary for Native Affairs, whose views provide a valuable insight into the attitudes and values of the Sarawak service.

Macpherson's point was that the hardships and discomforts of service had been sufficient to weed out all except those 'who truly love Sarawak'. The Sarawak officer, he maintained, felt a special loyalty to the Rajah and the country which no seconded officer could ever feel, nor was he able to leave his mistakes behind by being transferred somewhere else: 'He is not an alien "jingo" but part of this country whether he likes it or not, and after some years he develops a sense of belonging which I think must be unique'. There was no place in Sarawak for the selfishly ambitious man who would not work for the people. The better the man, the more Sarawak needed him. Rather than secondment to Sarawak, Macpherson suggested that transfer was more desirable. '... There must be many men in other Services', he concluded, 'who are sufficiently idealistic to prefer Sarawak and a good conscience to high honours and a guilty one'.

No doubt there was some resistance from Macpherson and others to the idea of a General Adviser. However, Anthony had made

1 Memorandum by Macpherson, 19 April 1939, on Shenton Thomas' notes of 12 April 1939, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
a commitment to the Governor and the Rajah gave his approval after reaching London in late May. Accordingly, an agreement was made whereby Pepys would spend six months in Sarawak before going on leave, after which it would be decided whether he would return for further duty. Anthony hoped that the new General Adviser would be able to take up his appointment in October before the Rajah's return.

One important consequence of Anthony's discussions with Sir Shenton Thomas was that the Governor formed a very favourable impression of the Rajah Muda's capacity and enthusiasm to carry out his new responsibilities. Anthony had 'developed considerably', he told Malcolm MacDonald, partly as a result of attending Margery Perham's course in colonial administration at Oxford, and seemed determined to make Sarawak a 'model state'. Altogether, his prospects as the future Rajah seemed highly favourable both for Sarawak and the British government:

I feel that, whatever may happen, he starts well: the native population is of course very pleased at his appointment and his colleagues in the Service are, I suspect, by no means unappreciative of the manner in which he has taken up the cudgels on behalf of one of their number against officers much older and more senior than he. 1

Although both Anthony and the Rajah had been insistent that his appointment as Rajah Muda in no way affected the succession, the Governor had no 'misgivings' on the question. He clearly believed that Anthony would be the next in line and that his regime would be more amenable to British influence. It was also thought, no doubt, that his two years' secondment to the MCS had inculcated attitudes which were less parochial and more in line with modern developments in colonial administration than those of his uncle.

In London, Lord Dufferin expressed considerable pleasure that the Rajah had at last nominated Anthony as his successor but Gent quickly disabused him of this impression. 2 He also advised the Secretary of State that if the Rajah was pressed on this point it

1 Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 19 April 1939, CO 531/29 [53011/1].
2 Minutes by Dufferin and Gent, 15 May 1939, ibid.
'would stir up great opposition from the Ranee and might wreck the great opportunity now offered to us of getting a foothold in Sarawak'.¹ Lord Dufferin accepted this assessment. '... The Ranee is a dangerous woman', he noted, 'and I think that if we let matters take their course Peter Brooke will almost automatically step into his uncle's shoes'.² Together with the appointment of Pepys, this would provide the 'foothold' which the Colonial Office had been seeking for such a long time.

There was general approval in the Colonial Office for Anthony's 'resolute action' in securing the resignations of Parnell, Calvert and Boyd. In a memorandum based on Sir Shenton Thomas' report, one official suggested that the Crossley affair had been badly handled and that Anthony had 'acted firmly' in calling into question the procedure that had been adopted. Furthermore, the little that was known about the trio suggested that they would be no great loss. Sarawak would 'hardly feel the draught' when they left. It was pointed out that secondment of officers from the Colonial Service presented no problems, an arrangement for secondment from the Malayan Medical Service having already been concluded. Boyd's suggestion that his successor should be seconded from the Colonial Legal Service could also be taken up: 'The advantages would be to establish closer contact between H.M.G. and Sarawak, to open up fresh sources of information concerning the State, and generally to improve its administration.'³ Gent was even more frank in his comments:

Sarawak is a territory of very great economic possibilities and of defence importance and it is essential to keep this iron hot and not to lose the opportunity... to ensure an orderly introduction of modern ideas of progress (in its better sense) including progressive improvement of native society, which the Rajah himself has views on - but views which distrust any departure from the most conservative policy of protecting the natives against "progress" in its worse sense. ⁴

¹ Minute by Dufferin, 26 May 1939, ibid.
² Ibid.
³ Minute by A.N. Galsworthy, 22 May 1939, ibid.
⁴ Minute by Gent, 23 May 1939, ibid.
He had evidently become convinced that there were no prospects for social reform as long as Parnell and Boyd were in office but that there was much more hope with Anthony as Officer Administering the Government. He was disappointed, however, that more definite steps had not been taken to ensure the appointment of a General Adviser. Since the Rajah was now in England, there could be a case for offering him 'discreet assistance' in making up his mind on the issue.

Lord Dufferin agreed it was important that the Rajah should be persuaded to appoint an Adviser, but he was so 'shy and suspicious' that any approach would be a 'delicate matter'. The Secretary of State suggested that if he met the Rajah, the matter could be raised in an informal way. But if nothing had happened by July they would have to take the risk of opening more formal discussions. ¹ The Rajah was due to meet Sir Cosmo Parkinson to discuss defence matters and this would provide a suitable occasion. Sir Shenton was subsequently advised of the importance of taking the opportunity to influence the Sarawak administration. He was told that the first holder of the post of General Adviser should be the best man available – and that something should also be done about the appointment of a new Financial Secretary. Finally, the Secretary of State sought his advice on whether it would be a good idea to raise the subject privately with the Rajah when he came to London. ²

Sir Shenton did not feel that there would be any point in opening formal discussions with the Rajah who had already agreed to Pepys' appointment. Nor did he think that the appointment of a Financial Secretary from outside was justified at this stage. The Rajah, he told the Secretary of State, 'would not demur to any views that you might express, but I fear that he would promptly forget them or go back on them if he found them inconvenient'. ³ Besides, the Rajah would be spending less and less time in Sarawak and would probably be prepared to leave government in the hands of the Tuan

¹ Minute by Dufferin, 26 May 1939, ibid.
² Dufferin to Shenton Thomas, 30 May 1939, ibid.
³ Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 1 June 1939, ibid.
Muda and Rajah Muda as long as there was an experienced and sympathetic officer to advise them. The Governor believed that the British government would be in a strong position to influence the Sarawak government by emphasizing its genuine concern for native welfare. Finally, he attached no importance to the Rajah's insistence that Anthony's appointment had no bearing on the succession. He obviously believed that it did and that it was for the best.

The Governor's optimism was supported by Major W.F.N. Bridges at a meeting with Lord Dufferin. Bridges, who had seen a great deal of Sarawak while working on the rubber assessment scheme some years earlier, confirmed Gent's belief that Parnell, Calvert and Boyd had no experience of outstation conditions and knew very little about the country. When compared with the Straits Settlements where medical and agricultural services, education and public works had reached a high degree of development, Sarawak was certainly in a 'very primitive' state. Bridges found, however, that the people were contented and that their conditions of life were not inferior to the more remote Malay states such as Trengganu. He believed, furthermore, that with his 'current and valuable experience', Anthony Brooke would both maintain the Brooke family's traditional policy of protecting native interests and make useful reforms within the Kuching bureaucracy.

When the appointment of Pepys was first confirmed in early July 1939, it was interpreted in many quarters as signifying that the Colonial Office was at last intervening in Sarawak's internal affairs, an intervention thought to have been prompted by the 'resignation' of senior officers in March. However, the Rajah who was in London at the time went to some pains to emphasize that it did not constitute any alteration in Sarawak's relations with the British government. A statement issued by the Sarawak Government Office and authorized by the Rajah explained that the increasing

1 See Chapter V, pp.196, 198.
2 Minute by Gent, 6 July 1939 on Bridges' meeting with Dufferin, CO 531/29 [53011/1].
volume of administrative work had diverted senior officers from their principal task of caring for the interests of the natives. It was in order to avail himself once again of their advice on native affairs and to ensure that external matters were efficiently handled that the Rajah had 'received the sympathetic co-operation of the Colonial Office in making this appointment'. At the same time, it was denied that the appointment was connected in any way with the March resignations.

In Kuching, the news raised a flutter of anxiety within the Administrative Service. There was stern comment privately about 'interference', particularly from Archer who was concerned about the position of the Chief Secretaryship to which he had only recently been appointed. Pepys was seen as representing the long arm of the British government which had until then been successfully kept out of Sarawak affairs. An official circular was subsequently issued explaining that Pepys would not be coming to Sarawak in any official capacity but as 'Personal Adviser' to the Rajah and this had a palliative effect. However, during the six months from Pepys' appointment until his arrival in Kuching there was a great deal of discussion about how best to ensure that the General Adviser could be kept at arm's length.

The Colonial Office's Reaction to the Events of 1939

As might have been expected, Boyd visited the Colonial Office shortly after reaching London in July 1939. The former Chief Justice suggested to Sir John Shuckburgh that since he had been appointed on the recommendation of the Colonial Office, there might well be an inquiry into the circumstances of his forced resignation. He also felt that the Secretary of State should ask Sir Shenton Thomas for copies of all the documents relating to Anthony's 'inquiry', particularly the minutes which the Governor had not sent on to

1 Singapore Free Press, 6 July 1939, quoting a Reuter report datelined London, 5 July 1939.
2 Personal communication from Mrs M.E. Bowyer, 9 April 1976.
3 Ibid.
London at the time. But Shuckburgh had a somewhat jaundiced view of Boyd who had come to him on several earlier occasions with complaints about the Rajah and the whole system of administration in Sarawak. He did not think that the Chief Justice's complaints were unfounded but he could not be sympathetic towards a man whose 'one topic of conversation is complaint against the ruler whom he is serving'. In his view, Boyd was not only disloyal - he had become obsessive and was therefore 'almost impossible to deal with'. Nor did he approve of Boyd's desire to remain anonymous. 'If he really wants to make heavy weather over the whole business', he noted, 'we have a right to expect him to come out into the open and deliver his attack without any reservation'. But Boyd, as he correctly assessed, was not prepared to do anything which might risk his comfortable pension and Shuckburgh was not about to 'take the chestnuts out of the fire for him'. It was decided accordingly that no action would be taken over Boyd's dismissal.

At the same time, the dossier which Boyd brought with him to the Colonial Office and which was subsequently circulated among a number of M.P.s and newspaper editors provided further evidence of the 'irregularities' which Gent and his colleagues suspected were being practised in Sarawak. One official commented that the inquiry 'was not exactly a model of judicial procedure'. The Rajah's own behaviour had been inconsistent, he felt, while Anthony had opened the inquiry with the deliberate intention of forcing resignations and had been obliged to withdraw 'some of his most hot-headed statements'. Gent observed that there had been 'a lack of regular procedure on both sides', but that it had not resulted in serious unfairness, while Sir Cosmo Parkinson believed that the purge, 'however administered, will prove to have been for the benefit of Sarawak'. Boyd was consequently told that no action could be taken

1 Minute by Shuckburgh, 26 July 1939, ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 'The Sarawak Crisis'.
4 Minute by Andrews, 1 September 1939, CO 531/29 [53011/1].
5 Minute by Gent, 3 September 1939, ibid.
6 Minute by Parkinson, undated, ibid.
on the basis of his dossier and if he wished to pursue his complaints against the Sarawak government, he would have to make a formal approach to the Secretary of State. Under other circumstances, something might have been made of the Chief Justice's complaints but the prospects for effective influence through the General Adviser and a co-operative Rajah Muda now seemed extremely hopeful. Under these circumstances, the 'curious condition of affairs' in Sarawak could be tolerated.

When news was received in January 1940 of Anthony's demotion, Lord Dufferin was furious. 'This is intolerable', he exclaimed, 'where is the Rajah & more important the Ranee?' Nor was the information later supplied by Sir Shenton Thomas at all reassuring. The Governor reported that Anthony's misdeeds as described by Thackwell Lewis for the Rajah's action were 'trivial and none of them... dishonourable' and that the origins of the proclamation were clearly unsatisfactory. There was even the possibility that the Rajah had signed it 'as he signs most documents, without reading it'. Nevertheless, the proclamation was a 'scandalous document' and the Rajah had no right to brand an officer publicly on the grounds which had been volunteered. The Governor had sent a telegram protesting against its publication but this had not arrived in time. 'The Rajah gave and the Rajah hath taken away', commented J.J. Paskin, although the general reaction in the Colonial Office was not so philosophical. To Sir Arthur Burns and Lord Dufferin it was yet another example of the Rajah's capricious and unpredictable behaviour which also damaged the prospects of setting Sarawak's house in order. There was a good deal of hostility towards the Ranee whose excited comments to the Hearst press were faithfully reproduced by the London newspapers. '... The Ranee is still in the U.S.A. (her spiritual home)', Gent observed archly, '& generally her material place of lodging is at Hollywood'. In spite of its sympathy for

1 Gent to Stirling Boyd, 14 September 1939, ibid.
2 Minute by Dufferin, 19 January 1940, ibid.
3 Shenton Thomas to MacDonald, 19 January 1940, ibid.
4 Minute by Paskin, 20 January 1940, ibid.
5 Minute by Gent, 23 January 1940, ibid.
Anthony, however, the Colonial Office was determined to prevent the Sarawak affair from blowing up into an international incident which might bruise British prestige and create pressure for direct intervention. When it was reported from Athens that Gladys Brooke was intent on raising a clamour on her son's behalf and that the Greek government had nobly offered to suppress all mention in local publications and outgoing telegrams from foreign correspondents, the Foreign Office was not unappreciative. It was concerned that there should be no allegation of suppression arranged at the request of the British government, but publicity would be undesirable and embarrassing to the Rajah and his government. If there was any protest about the succession, it should be made to the Secretary of State for Colonies, a procedure 'more in keeping with British prestige which she [Gladys Brooke] professes to study'.

The Eastern Department's view of Anthony's demotion shifted significantly on receipt of his correspondence with the Rajah. Gent was particularly interested in a quotation taken from the Rajah's letter to Anthony of 19 December 1939:

> Being as old as I am I can't become a Methuselah out here and prefer to spend most of my remaining years in a more salubrious climate. Pepys will be a kind of stepping stone towards intervention by the British Government. Sarawak would be absolutely safe under the B.G. and I see no alternative. Nothing has been arranged yet, but I am letting the idea get about and I think it is being well received... I shall have to make a definite statement at Council Negri next year and want to have everything arranged before hand. 3

Gent conceded that this may have been nothing more than 'an expression of the Rajah's weariness of the flesh' consequent on his return from holiday to Sarawak and its problems, together with the outbreak of war. But he also noted the Rajah's hope that Anthony would regain his former position and the indication that he might still inherit the Raj. This was a less than pleasing prospect unless

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1 Sir M. Palairet (British Ambassador in Athens) to MacDonald, 29 January 1940, ibid.
2 MacDonald to Palairet, 30 January 1940, ibid.
3 Cited by Gent in his minute of 12 March 1940, ibid.
British influence was somehow strengthened:

We are all I think sympathetic with the Rajah's nephew in the treatment which he has received at the hands of His Highness, but I cannot think that it would be wise for His Majesty's Government to favour, or contribute towards, a complete restoration of a situation in which we would have to contemplate the lifetime of another Rajah with ourselves powerless to intervene in the administration of the State, beyond the very narrow limits contemplated in the 1888 Agreement.\(^1\)

Gent stressed that there was no real reason to think that the nephew would be any more progressive than the uncle, although Anthony had certainly raised such hopes earlier. In Gent's view, the first object of British policy should be to 'strengthen the effective influence of British authority in the Sarawak regime' by means of a new treaty which would make the Sarawak government amenable if need be to the British government's 'advice' on any issue. Sir Shenton Thomas was accordingly instructed to do all he could to strengthen Pepys' position, particularly in view of the report that the Rajah was considering the possibility of appointing the General Adviser as Officer Administering the Government during his next visit to England. 'Perhaps Rajah himself would not be averse to considering new agreement providing residential advisory system', the Secretary of State cabled the Governor, 'which would give effective authority to British Government representative, and which might give him satisfactory assurance of maintenance of policy of native interests ... whoever his successor may be.'\(^2\) The actual proposal was not to be put at this stage but the Governor's advice on a general policy towards Sarawak was requested.

In mid-April Anthony gave his own version of events to Gent and Sir Alan Burns, bringing with him a dossier of correspondence relating to his demotion.\(^3\) This did not alter the general attitude of the Eastern Department, however, and Gent hoped that after consultations with Sir Shenton Thomas it would be possible to conclude

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1 Minute by Gent, 12 March 1940, ibid.
2 MacDonald to Shenton Thomas, 15 March 1940, ibid.
3 'The abolition of the Title of Rajah Muda of Sarawak by Proclamation, Dated 17th January, 1940', Brooke Papers, Box 2/2.
a new treaty with the Rajah which would give the General Adviser 'effective advisory powers'. When, in spite of all his earlier demands for an 'explanation' from the Rajah, Anthony finally accepted his suggestion of returning to Sarawak, Gent was clearly disappointed. 'Well, well!', he wrote, 'I think there is a lack of resolution about him [Anthony] which will complicate his life rather than simplify it.'

Pepys took up his new post in Kuching in early 1940 and at first his reports were encouraging. Accompanying the Rajah on his outstation tours, the General Adviser was impressed with the genuinely warm welcome the former received everywhere he went. Sympathizing with the outlook of outstation officers from his own experience in Malaya, he also deprecated the earlier attempts to dismantle the Residential system and centralize all government in Kuching. With Archer and Macpherson now at the helm, however, he thought it unlikely that this would ever happen again. Pepys thought that the Administrative Service had exerted a beneficial influence out of all proportion to its size:

When one considers the number of European officials that have been employed in Sarawak relatively to its area, the wonder is that so much has been achieved. If little spectacular has been done in the way of material "progress" and "development", peace and security have been given to the inhabitants of huge tracts of country where within living memory anarchy prevailed and heads were cheap.

This was all the more impressive when viewed against conditions across the Dutch border where garrisons of native troops were maintained at all government posts. Pepys also noted the Rajah's interest in improving social conditions. In recent months he had instituted a scheme for travelling medical dispensaries to visit remote areas and was also concerning himself with education and the supply of water to larger centres of population.

At this stage, Pepys felt inclined to stay in Sarawak for a second term of service. The Rajah had been most hospitable and there was no indication of resentment or opposition to his being there.

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1 Minute by Gent, 2 July 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/1].
2 Pepys to Shenton Thomas, 2 April 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/4].
although he suspected that there would have been more towards a younger serving officer from Malaya. If the post were to become permanent he thought it should be always filled by a retired man like himself. But once the novelty of the outstation tours had faded and he was endeavouring to establish an office routine, the General Adviser encountered a wall of indifference. The Rajah's reforming zeal quickly evaporated and the senior Administrative officers began to ignore him. Although he did not vent his frustration in correspondence with the Governor, all the indications suggest that he was for the most part regarded as less than useful or was ignored. According to one senior officer, when Pepys' advice was sought on particular points he could only refer the questioner to certain of his former colleagues now in Trengganu, or Perlis, or Selangor. Boyd, who was himself somewhat isolated socially, befriended him but the General Adviser was almost ostracized by the other members of the Administrative Service.

Pepys was seen by most Sarawak officers as an alien interloper, the epitome of that bureaucratic bogey, the MCS. The general policy was to keep him as far as possible from the everyday business of government; indeed, if one can risk the metaphor in a tropical climate, he was frozen out. Nevertheless, he was able to gather sufficient information about the political situation to assist Sir Shenton Thomas and the Colonial Office in their plans for Sarawak's future. This represented a considerable improvement on the previous situation where the Governor was obliged to depend on intermittent reports of varying reliability.

The Crystallization of a Policy on Sarawak

Although Boyd's dossier had not aroused great interest within the Colonial Office, there was more response in political circles. In particular, R.H. Etherton, M.P. for Stretford in Lancashire, and Sir

1 Interview with Sir Dennis White, 22 January 1975.
2 Interview with Mr B.A. Trechman, 4 March 1975.
John Graham Kerr, M.P. for the Scottish universities, were concerned enough to make official inquiries as to the situation in Sarawak. Boyd had almost certainly met Kerr at the Athenaeum Club to which he had recently been nominated and may have known Etherton through his time at Inner Temple in the 1920s so that their inquiries were probably inspired by him. In early February 1940 Etherton wrote to Malcolm MacDonald asking for an explanation of Anthony Brooke's recent demotion and the earlier resignations of senior officers. 'It all sounds very ominous', he told the Secretary of State, 'and it appears that the administration of Sarawak is far from satisfactory.' He thought it 'extraordinary' that a young man of twenty six should have been left in a position of absolute autocratic power, particularly when he was deprived of the advice of senior officers and when the European situation was creating administrative problems. Nor, in view of Anthony's demotion, had his administration been very successful. Etherton was aware of the 1888 Treaty and its limitations on British action but he felt that 'for practical purposes' Sarawak was a British possession and any unfavourable criticism would involve Britain. The British government, therefore, had a responsibility to see that it was administered with 'reasonable efficiency', that the judicial system was 'reasonable', and that the rights of British subjects were protected. The oil field at Miri and Sarawak's membership of the International Rubber Agreement he regarded as further exemplifying British interests.

Gent suspected that Etherton had 'succumbed to a whispering (something really louder) campaign' by Boyd for whom he had no great regard. However, he was prepared to let Etherton read Sir Shenton Thomas' 19 April 1939 despatch reporting on the resignations and a subordinate, J.M. Martin, was moved enough to write a general memorandum on the future government of the Borneo territories. 'The

1 Kerr had an earlier introduction to Sarawak through Dr Charles Hose who had donated a number of rare specimens to the Department of Zoology at the University of Glasgow which he headed 1902-1936.

2 Etherton to MacDonald, 8 February 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/4].

3 Minute by Gent, 15 February 1940, ibid.
time seems to be approaching when this question should be brought to a head', he noted, while admitting that North Borneo should be tackled first. In the memorandum, Martin summarized the arguments which had been used to justify Sir Cecil Clementi's earlier proposal for the unification of the Borneo territories and the way in which it had been defeated. Clementi had also suggested that an Adviser should be brought in to Sarawak so that it could be run along the lines of an Unfederated Malay State, but there were now signs that the Rajah might be willing to transfer all his interests to the British government. There had even been some discussion of the compensation which might be paid and of the need to meet the Rajah's anxiety that he would be seen as 'throwing over' the natives. Martin believed that the 'purge' of senior officers should revive interest in the administration of the country which had been severely criticized in Breen's confidential report. The Brooke policy of protecting native interests had many things to say for it, but Sarawak's general backwardness was not in accordance with modern ideas. 'That so large an area of potentially rich tropical territory should be left undeveloped', he wrote, 'making a relatively negligible contribution to the world's wealth and enjoying few of the benefits of modern scientific progress, cannot be tolerated indefinitely.' The duty to provide for social welfare could not be ignored and Borneo seemed to be a classic case for the application of the new policy of 'planned development'. Too much depended on the Rajah, he argued. The increasing complexity of administration was too heavy for his shoulders while at the same time the prospects for the succession depended entirely on his whim. Martin admitted that the loyalty of the Sarawak natives to the Rajah was 'an asset of great value, which cannot be lightly sacrificed', but the main difficulty was money. This had led to Cabinet's decision against the proposal to purchase North Borneo in 1933 and in Sarawak there was the prospect not only of compensating the Rajah but of paying for more expensive standards of administration from an inadequate revenue. Nevertheless, he felt, something should be done before it was too late:

1 'The Future of the British Territories in Borneo', 14 February 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/4]. Subsequent quotations from this source.
The present time is particularly opportune. In the international atmosphere which we may expect after the peace settlement expansion of direct British control over new spheres may present considerable and perhaps insurmountable difficulties; to-day it still can be accomplished without objection.

Martin envisaged an administratively autonomous British Borneo running its own government but drawing on expert assistance from Malaya. The return of Sarawak and North Borneo to Brunei might even enable it to be administered as a protected state under the Sultan, although he recognized that the latter was not generally respected and that Borneo lacked even the racial homogeneity of the Malay states. He concluded:

It is hard to doubt that some day we shall build a great and prosperous territory in Borneo, making a rich contribution, comparable perhaps to that of Malaya, to the Empire and presenting a solid bastion against the southward thrust of Japan.

While there is no clear indication of how his seniors viewed Martin's arguments, it would seem most unlikely that they were dismissed out of hand. At any rate, the future of Sarawak had become a policy issue. Subsequent to the receipt of Pepys' first reports, Martin set out three 'lines of progress' in preparation for discussions which were to be held with Sir Shenton Thomas during his forthcoming visit to London:

1. Establishment of the Adviser system, involving a new treaty
2. Occasional secondment of or visits by professional officers from Malaya
3. Occasional secondment of Sarawak officers to Malaya.

In essence, the problem was how to reconcile the 1888 Treaty and native loyalty to the Rajah with Sarawak's isolation from the mainstream of colonial development. In Martin's view, the prestige of the Brookes, which Pepys had shown to be still very real, was 'an asset which should not be lightly destroyed'. He recalled Sir Gilbert Grindle's opinion, no doubt prompted by the Iban unrest of the early 1930s, that 'if H.M.G. took over Sarawak they would find

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1 'Relations of His Majesty's Government to Sarawak', ibid.
they had taken over a war'. 1

In the meantime, there was continued pressure from the two M.P.s. On 28 February 1940 Kerr asked Malcolm MacDonald in the Commons:

... whether, in view of the proximity of the independent protected state of Sarawak to British possessions in the East and its strategic importance, he will inform the House regarding the recent deposition of the Rajah Muda, and the resignation some months ago of five senior members of the Civil Service... 2

The Secretary of State replied, predictably enough, that under the terms of the 1888 Treaty the government possessed no authority to interfere and that it would be improper for him to make any comment. Private correspondence was more revealing. Kerr told MacDonald that he had read the documents relating to the March 1939 inquiry and believed that, if made public, the facts would

... give rise to a very real feeling of uneasiness, a feeling that the old-fashioned Rajah rule - an absolute monarchy as far as internal affairs are concerned - is no longer appropriate, and that the Sarawak government should be reinforced by a properly constituted civil service under the control of the Colonial Office, or, failing this, there should be at least an Agent of the British Government actually resident in the territory. 3

Echoing Boyd's feelings, Kerr described the March 1939 affair as 'a revolt against the tightening up of the previously sloppy administrative and judicial systems' and that the resignations clearly meant a return to sloppiness. The facts revealed by the inquiry, he suggested, were sufficient to show that it was time to investigate the feasibility of bringing Sarawak up to the level of efficiency of British colonies. MacDonald defended the Rajah's actions and his general policy, adding that the secondment of Colonial Service officers and the appointment of Pepys as General Adviser would be of great benefit to the Sarawak administration. At the same

1 Minute by Martin, 8 May 1940, ibid. Sir Gilbert Grindle, who joined the Colonial Office in 1898, was Assistant Under-Secretary of State 1916-25 and Deputy to the Permanent Under-Secretary of State 1925-31.

2 Hansard, 28 February 1940.

3 Kerr to MacDonald, 21 February 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/4].
time, he advised against public airing of the issue. '... The Rajah', he told Kerr, 'is... a shy person, and one whom it would be fatal to pillory in Parliament or in other public manner, even if he deserved it which I have no reason to believe.' The Rajah could be convinced of the need for progressive policy and methods by 'sympathetic persuasion' rather than by less diplomatic means.¹

However, the M.P.s were not easily put off. Kerr did not find Sir Shenton Thomas' despatch of 19 April 1939 in any way reassuring on the situation in Sarawak. Indeed, it gave 'entire corroboration of my belief that the ruling family of Sarawak are really not of the mentality or strength of character appropriate to their position'.² For his part, Etherton persisted in suggesting that the Secretary of State should call for the minutes of the inquiry, a document which he felt might lead to an assessment of Anthony Brooke markedly different from the one given by the Governor who was 'singularly uninformed as to the real state of affairs in Sarawak...'.³ He also suggested that a very strong recommendation be made to the Rajah that senior officers should in future be appointed from the Colonial Service as well as the Sarawak Service. MacDonald was again defensive. He could not control the conditions of service for officers in Sarawak, he told Etherton, and it would be beyond Sarawak's financial resources to have substantial numbers of seconded officers. He admitted there had been a lack of information about Sarawak affairs in the past but emphasized that this was something which Pepys would be able to remedy:

I pin my faith for the future in the appointment of the new Adviser... This marks, to my mind, an important stage in our relations with Sarawak and I hope that once instituted, I shall be successful in maintaining and improving on it, which will mean that new standards of criticism and advice on administrative affairs will be available to the Sarawak Government. ⁴

¹ MacDonald to Kerr, 26 February 1940, ibid.
² Kerr to Sir John Brocklebank, 13 March 1940, ibid.
³ Etherton to MacDonald, 14 March 1940, ibid.
⁴ MacDonald to Etherton, 20 March 1940, ibid.
In mid-April, Etherton had a private meeting with MacDonald where he expressed the hope that the attitude of the Colonial Office would be one of 'We shall help and intervene if we possibly can' rather than 'We shall not intervene unless we have got to'. He also hoped that Sir Shenton Thomas' recommendations on the recruitment of senior officers and the separation of the offices of Legal Adviser and Chief Justice should be pressed on the Rajah.¹

In late June, Sir Shenton Thomas, Sir Alan Burns, Sir Cosmo Parkinson and Gent discussed the whole question of Sarawak. The Governor told the group that Pepys had been getting on 'very well indeed' with the Rajah who was now probably ready to accept the Adviser system, particularly in view of his difficulties over the succession. He thought that the experiment should be allowed to continue a little longer before the Rajah was approached but Gent felt it was important to 'get something settled' before Anthony Brooke was restored to favour.² Consequently it was decided that the object of policy should be the 'firm establishment' of a British Adviser under the authority of a new treaty and that Pepys should be asked to find out what the Rajah's plans were and when he might best be approached on the introduction of the Adviser system.³ In a letter to Singapore's Colonial Secretary, S.W. Jones, Sir Shenton Thomas said that the Rajah was beginning to realize the advantages of a 'competent Adviser' and there was even the possibility that Pepys might be allocated further responsibilities during the Rajah's next absence. Pepys was to advise Jones when the subject might be broached with the Rajah and this was to be done before the General Adviser left Sarawak on leave.⁴ By the end of July, however, Pepys had made it clear to the Governor that he did not want to stay in Kuching. The Rajah had evidently told Pepys that he would appoint him Officer Administering the Government in his absence but at the last moment appointed Archer instead. However, in true Sarawak

¹ Etherton to MacDonald, 19 April 1940, ibid.
² 'Relations with Sarawak', ibid.
³ Sir Alan Burns to Shenton Thomas, 1 July 1940, ibid.
⁴ Shenton Thomas to Jones, 3 July 1940, ibid.
fashion there was a face-saver. Pepys was to act as 'Liaison Officer' in Singapore, representing the four Borneo territories in defence matters.¹

According to Jones, the Rajah's reversal resulted from an incident in which Pepys had 'warned [him] off little Sheila' (Pepys' pretty step-daughter).² The Rajah had apparently paid undue attention to her, but it seems likely that Pepys' dissatisfaction with what had turned out to be a largely nominal position caused him to look for reasons for leaving. He suggested to the Governor that a man of his seniority was not really needed and that the job could be done by a Class II MCS officer. Returning to Singapore in September he went so far as to tell Jones that there was little point in perpetuating the post.³ Viewed generally, it seems likely that the Rajah had only agreed to the appointment of Pepys as a temporary sop to the Colonial Office. As Digby put it later, 'once the boar had ceased to rush, there was no longer any need for this temporary support'.⁴

Faced with the failure of the experiment, Gent's attitude hardened considerably. There had been no indication that the Rajah was willing to replace Pepys and Gent now had less faith in Anthony's capacity as the Rajah's eventual successor. He believed that the time had come when Sir Shenton Thomas should ask the Rajah about his intentions concerning Pepys' successor and tell him that the British government recommended the appointment of a 'British Resident Adviser' to hold office subject to His Majesty's pleasure.⁵ A new treaty would be needed and one official suggested that it should also provide for the appointment of a Chief Justice along the same lines as the Adviser. His comments also reflected what was now a less inhibited attitude towards intervention:

¹ SG, 1 October 1940.
² Shenton Thomas to Gent, 27 July 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/4].
³ Jones to Gent, 16 September 1940, ibid.
⁴ Personal communication from Mr K.H. Digby, 2 September 1974.
⁵ Minute by Gent, 13 August 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/4].
1888 and 1940 are two different dates, and an Agreement which was good enough then may very well not be good enough now. And surely we need not be too apologetic; the protecting Power, I should have thought, must have the right at least to see that there is a reasonably decent form of government.  

Gent hoped that in the Governor's absence Jones would broach the subject with the Rajah when he returned through Singapore from the Cameron Highlands and he prepared a draft despatch to Sir Shenton Thomas for the Secretary of State reflecting the new 'hard line'.

In this document, Gent rehearsed the arguments which had been discussed in the Eastern Department: that Pepys should be replaced; that there was a need for sufficient access to Sarawak to answer Britain's responsibilities as the protecting power; and that the 1888 Treaty was 'unduly restrictive', preventing the flow of information about Sarawak and the assistance which might be given to its government. The second argument was a novel one but it was to be used extensively in subsequent years. Although Gent could only have pointed to Kerr and Etherton as examples, he complained that there had been 'substantial criticisms' of Sarawak's administrative standards and that under the existing circumstances the British government was in no position to answer these, or to 'bring influence to bear to effect any reforms which His Majesty's Government may believe to be desirable'. Finally, Gent spelled out the formula which he believed would meet the situation:

What I should desire most is the consent of His Highness to a supplementary formal Agreement... under which provision should be made for the acceptance by the Rajah of a British Resident Adviser appointed with the approval of His Majesty's Government by the British Agent in Singapore who would not only concern himself with such matters as foreign relations and defence... but also would have authority to be consulted at least, if not vested with the reserve power of "advice" on the model of the Malay States Treaties, on all matters affecting the administrative system and standards in Sarawak. It would be important that such an officer should expressly hold his appointment at the pleasure of His Majesty and that he should not be subject to dismissal by the State Ruler.  

1 Minute by H.T. Bourdillon, 14 August 1940, ibid.
2 Draft despatch to Shenton Thomas, August 1940, ibid.
He hoped that the Rajah would appreciate the importance of the appointment both from the need to ensure the continuity of a 'progressive' policy in Sarawak and from the uncertainty surrounding the succession.  

Sir Shenton Thomas approved the draft although he saw no point in having Jones meet the Rajah. '... Verbal conversations with him are apt to be quite useless', he told Sir Cosmo Parkinson, 'however accommodating he may seem at the time'.

Lord Lloyd, however, was not prepared to authorize the despatch. 'I am not quite clear how this draft proposal [will] comply with [the] treaty of 1888', he commented. His long friendship with Bertram Brooke and an innately conservative attitude to such treaties inclined him to look for a more diplomatic means of pursuing the subject than direct communication with the Governor. For the time being, then, Gent's plan was shelved and Sir Shenton Thomas had to be warned that no initiative was intended for the present.

The Supplementary Agreement

In early March 1941, at the height of the Scott case, Gent decided to dust off the draft despatch. Lord Lloyd's death a month earlier and his replacement by Lord Moyne meant that the Brookes were now without an ally in the Colonial Office. Gent pointed out that the problems of the Sarawak situation had not been remedied and that Sarawak's strategic importance suggested there should be no further delay in persuading the Rajah of the need for a 'responsible British Resident'. Sir Cosmo Parkinson noted Lord Lloyd's earlier reluctance to accept the draft but felt that they should now go ahead. The situation in Sarawak, he noted, was 'far from satisfactory' and there had been a negative response from the Rajah to Lloyd's earlier representations on the Scott case. The despatch was duly authorized by Moyne on 13 March but before it could reach Singapore news arrived

1 Personal communication from Mr K.H. Digby, 2 September 1974.
2 Shenton Thomas to Parkinson, 30 August 1940, CO 531/29 [53011/4].
3 Minute by Lloyd, 13 September 1940, ibid.
4 Minute by Gent, 4 March 1941, ibid.
5 Minute by Parkinson, 6 March 1941, ibid.
of the Rajah's 31 March proclamation regarding the constitution.

Sir Shenton's only objection to this development was in relation to the provision governing the succession: he believed that the Rajah did not possess the right to nominate his successor or to transfer it to anyone else. Lord Moyne recognized that the 13 March despatch had been overtaken by events and that the most important thing now was to ensure that the British government be consulted on the constitution before it reached final form. Sir Shenton Thomas was accordingly instructed to advise the Rajah to this effect and to remind him that the rights of the British government under the 1888 Treaty should not be infringed. As far as the succession was concerned, Moyne felt that there was no objection at this stage, provided he was consulted if any problem arose.¹

In a later despatch the Governor provided more details of the background of the March proclamation, including the secret agreement between the Rajah and the Committee of Administration² and the influence of MacBryan. On the whole, Sir Shenton still approved of the idea of a constitution. '... There can be much more effective administration', he told the Secretary of State, 'as the Government will no longer be at the whim of an irresponsible ruler under the influence of a crook'.³ The Governor had formed a favourable impression of Le Gros Clark who had visited him on 7 April to deliver the documents connected with the Rajah's announcement and explain the background of events on behalf of the Committee of Administration. He was pleased, too, when Le Gros Clark replaced Archer as Officer Administering the Government a month later. His only worry was that the Rajah and MacBryan intended remaining in the state until the end of September, thus raising the prospect of 'perpetual intrigue' and a clash of authority between the Rajah and the Committee of Administration. He consequently recommended that the Rajah should be persuaded to visit England or America, at the same time recognizing that MacBryan would exert all his influence against any such proposal.

¹ Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 13 March 1941, ibid.
³ Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 1 April 1941, ibid.
This new information alarmed Moyne who feared that in the event of any conflict of interest between the Rajah and the Committee, there might well be 'pro-Rajah factional unrest' among the natives. Consequently the proposal for a British Adviser was revived; the Rajah and the Committee were to be urged to request from Sir Shenton the immediate services of a senior officer to assist in the framing of the new constitution.\(^1\) Realizing that his despatch had brought about an over-reaction in London, the Governor went to some pains to emphasize that the situation presented no dangers of 'pro-Rajah unrest'. He emphasized that the constitution had been made necessary by the need to protect Sarawak's finances and that the authority of the Committee was purely temporary. Both he and Pepys believed the appointment of a British Representative to be unnecessary at this stage.\(^2\)

The subsequent arrangement was that the Rajah agreed to avail himself of the assistance offered by the Governor in framing the constitution. But the Colonial Office was loath to abandon the plan to replace Pepys and in May the Governor had to reiterate to the Secretary of State that it was 'inopportune' to press the matter of a British Representative. The Sarawak government, he said, would want to know the reasons and consequent negotiations might not only delay the framing of the new constitution but could lead to 'fresh intrigues' by MacBryan. 'It would be much better to await [the] draft...', he advised, 'and then to consider whether as a condition of approval Sarawak should be asked to agree to a new Treaty including provision for [a] British Adviser'.\(^3\) Lord Moyne still thought that it would be difficult to introduce a major proposal such as this at a later stage without having first sounded out the Rajah but he accepted the Governor's counsel, suggesting at the same time that more information might be obtained on the political situation in Sarawak.\(^4\)

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1 Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 10 April 1941, ibid.
2 Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 21 April 1941, ibid.
3 Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 20 May 1941, ibid.
4 Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 2 June 1941, ibid.
Sir Shenton Thomas subsequently arranged for Pepys to visit Sarawak and instructed him to sound out Le Gros Clark on the idea of a 'British Representative' with authority to be consulted on all administrative matters. The term 'Adviser' was studiously avoided, no doubt because of its Malayan connotations. Le Gros Clark seemed agreeable to this, on condition that the Representative did not arrive until after the constitution was enacted. Otherwise there would be the suspicion that it was the Committee of Administration's doing and that it was a further effort to oust the Rajah. Pitt Hardacre, the only other person with whom Pepys discussed the idea, suggested that while it was not strictly necessary to consult the Rajah under the existing constitutional arrangements, it would nevertheless be desirable to do so. Other officers with whom Pepys spoke said that it would be a good thing if the British government 'took over' and appointed an Adviser. MacBryan himself told Pepys in Singapore after the latter's return from Sarawak that he had advised the Rajah that a British Representative would be the best thing for the country. Indeed, he claimed that the Rajah would have asked for one had it not been for Archer's objections. Pepys also reported, however, that the Rajah's reputation within the Service had been 'rather shattered' by the news of the secret agreement and there was some doubt as to whether he would ever sit as Rajah in Council. There were even rumours among the Chinese that he would not be attending the centenary celebrations.¹

In late July Le Gros Clark received from Sir Shenton Thomas a draft 'Supplementary Agreement' which had been prepared by his Attorney General subsequent to a visit to Singapore by Pitt Hardacre. This was discussed at a meeting of the Committee of Administration on 31 July, together with the second draft of the constitution, and was matched against an alternative agreement prepared by Digby. Naturally enough, the main focus of interest was the definition of powers. According to the Singapore Attorney-General's draft, the British Representative would be entitled to be consulted 'on all

¹ 'Reports by Mr W.E. Pepys, Liaison Officer, Sarawak and North Borneo, who visited Sarawak on the 28th June 1941. B. - The Proposal for a British Representative', ibid.
matters touching the general administration of the State as well as foreign relations and defence, to have access to all State documents and records and to attend all meetings of the Supreme Council and Council Negri where he could take part in discussions if invited but not vote. It was generally agreed by the Committee that this exceeded the terms which had been settled between Sir Shenton Thomas and Pitt Hardacre and that the proposal should only be accepted on three conditions: firstly, that the person appointed should be acceptable to the Rajah; secondly, that the representative's terms of reference should be restricted to foreign relations and defence; and finally that the government was not bound to accept any advice given outside these terms of reference. The Committee agreed that there was to be no further 'bargaining' with the Governor 'since it was considered that by offering this Agreement Sarawak had already made a great concession.'

Digby's definition of the British Representative's status was unanimously accepted. His advice was to be asked and acted upon in all matters affecting the foreign relations and defence of Sarawak and he could be consulted on matters of general administration, the relevant documents being provided; attendance at Supreme Council and Council meetings was also permitted. The last clause was a timely one, reminding the Colonial Office of Sarawak's extremely vulnerable position:

H.M. Government will at all times to the utmost of its power take whatever steps may be necessary to protect the territory of Sarawak from external attacks and will bear the cost of such protection.

Forwarding the Sarawak government's draft to Lord Moyne, the Governor noted that it was not prepared to accept an Adviser with powers similar to those of Advisers in the Malay States and that the title 'Representative' had been adjudged more fitting. However, he felt that the draft marked a 'considerable advance' and if the British

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1 Minutes of meeting of Committee of Administration, 31 July 1941, Brooke Papers, Box 10/4.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
Representative was a capable and experienced man he would be brought more and more into consultation with the Sarawak government.¹

Lord Moyne was not too disappointed with the outcome, believing that the arrangement would ensure reliable information about Sarawak and that the Representative might gradually increase his influence as he became more useful to the Sarawak government. However, he felt that the Representative ought to be consulted on social services and all vital financial and economic questions. After some further exchanges, Sir Shenton recommended that the Secretary of State should accept the formula proposed by Sarawak whereby the Representative would be entitled to offer his opinion 'on matters touching the general administration of the State'. The Sarawak government had earlier expressed the view it would be an infringement of sovereignty if the Representative were to call for State papers concerning matters on which he was not actually consulted. A final meeting was held with Le Gros Clark and Digby in Singapore on 23 October and the Supplementary Agreement was subsequently signed in Kuala Lumpur by Sir Shenton Thomas and the Rajah on 22 November shortly before the latter departed for Australia.² Lord Moyne had agreed that it should not be published, nor the British Representative appointed, until after the Rajah returned in early 1942.³

The Colonial Office and the 1941 Constitution

It was not until August that the Colonial Office received a copy of the draft constitution. In the meantime, however, Anthony Brooke had offered his own outspoken comments, together with the two memoranda which he had circulated within Sarawak. 'Unless the present draft of the proposed constitution is fundamentally changed', Anthony told Gent in early July, 'the internal situation in this country may

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¹ Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 28 August 1941, CO 531/30 [53011/4].
² The text of the Supplementary Agreement can be found in Appendix I.
³ Lord Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 10 November 1941, cited in the Governor's cable of 16 December 1941, CO 531/30 [53011/4].
soon become such as to embarrass Imperial Interests'.  

While he had 'utter confidence' in the members of the Committee of Administration as individuals, he shared Lord Lugard's poor opinion of this kind of government. A similar protest against government by 'oligarchy' was made to Gent by one of the directors of Sarawak Rubber Estates who said that there had been 'alarming reports' from their people in Sarawak. T.C. Martine, the manager of the Borneo Company which owned Sarawak Rubber Estates, was a friend of the Rajah and seems to have shared the view of some officers that the constitutional Order amounted to a coup d'état and that British intervention was needed.

Lord Moyne took these representations very seriously and he subsequently told the Governor that according to his information, the constitution had been 'severely criticized' by local interests for the effect it might have on British commerce as well as native opinion. Emphasizing that the British government should not be presented with a fait accompli, he asked the Governor to investigate these reports. Sir Shenton was highly sceptical, telling Moyne that the Borneo Company did not have full knowledge of the facts and that Anthony Brooke was trying to enlist Margery Perham's sympathy. When Sir Adam Ritchie of the Borneo Company sought an interview with Lord Moyne and Gent in late August he was reassured to some extent when told of the plan for a British Representative. However, he was anxious that the Representative should be appointed by the Governor and thus be responsible to the Colonial Office.

Lord Moyne's first official reaction to the draft constitution was that the Committee of Administration had indeed aggregated far too much power to themselves and that some provision should be made for the retention of sufficient prerogative powers, such as the right to choose the Supreme Council, to ensure that the

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1 Anthony Brooke to Gent, 7 July 1941, CO 531/30 [53011/4].
2 Minute by Monson, 7 August 1941, ibid.
3 Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 8 August 1941, ibid.
4 Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 15 August 1941, ibid.
5 Ritchie to Gent, 25 August 1941, ibid.
Rajah remained a constitutional monarch. Under the existing draft, Moyne commented, 'it would be conceivable for a group in the Civil Service to create [a] narrow oligarchy with absolute control of affairs'. In a subsequent cable to Sir Shenton Thomas he expressed further concern that the Supreme Council might come under the control of a 'vested official interest' and that the government might fall into the hands of a 'close cabal'. Consequently, one of the points which he suggested should be brought to the attention of the Sarawak authorities was the appointment of members to the Supreme Council. Lord Moyne wanted provision to be made for the succession within the constitution and hoped there would be a 'clear requirement' that the Rajah would always be a British subject. He also felt that there should be a clause providing for the revocation or amendment of the constitution, 'presumably with the consent of the Council Negri', and that the appointment of an Officer Administering the Government seemed unnecessary during the Rajah's temporary absences outstation.

After consultations with Digby and Thackwell Lewis, Sir Shenton Thomas told Moyne he was recommending that the right of appointments to the Supreme Council should be exercised personally by the Rajah and not by the Rajah in Council. On the provision that the Rajah should be a British subject, however, he pointed out that this would exclude 'any Malayan resident in Sarawak including descendants of the Chiefs who invited [the] first Rajah to take over the Government...'. Nor did he think there was any need for a provision for repeal or amendment and he advised strongly against any insistence that the British government should be consulted on amendments after the constitution was enacted. Moyne agreed that the Rajah could also be a native of Sarawak but he was still anxious that there should be a provision for the proclamation of an heir. Although the Tuan Muda had already been proclaimed heir in the 31 March address, the question was by no means clear and the Governor

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1 Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 9 September 1941, ibid.
2 Moyne to Shenton Thomas, 11 September 1941, ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 14 September 1941, ibid.
proposed to raise the matter again. He told the Secretary of State that Anthony Brooke who had recently arrived in Singapore was 'incapable of a balanced view in regard to the new constitution' and that he was trying to persuade him to enlist.¹

We have already seen that in October the Tuan Muda declined to accept the Rajah's nomination of him as Heir Apparent and that concern over the succession caused him to visit the Colonial Office for consultations with Gent.² Subsequent to this he wrote to Gent about the secret agreement between the Rajah and the Committee of Administration³ and later addressed an official letter to the Under-Secretary of State providing a detailed account of the constitution's origins.⁴ In early February 1942 Bertram Brooke wrote to the Under-Secretary of State once more, claiming that even before their exchange of telegrams in October about his willingness or otherwise to inherit through nomination, the Rajah had announced to the Supreme Council his desire that his grandson should be brought into the succession. '... The Rajah has finally succumbed', he concluded, 'in assenting to a project which others have been trying... to force him into, by some method or other, over a period of years'.⁵ Nevertheless, he felt that a detailed examination of the question would serve no useful purpose at this time. The Secretary of State was inclined to agree.⁶

Sarawak and Defence Planning

Vyner Brooke’s defiance of the Secretary of State over the Scott case had revived some of Gent's doubts about him. In May 1941 he wrote:

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¹ Shenton Thomas to Moyne, 16 September 1941, ibid.
² See Chapter III, p.130.
³ Bertram Brooke to Gent, 11 November 1941, CO 531/30 [53011/4].
⁴ Bertram Brooke to Under-Secretary of State, 13 November 1941, ibid.
⁵ Bertram Brooke to Under-Secretary of State, 2 February 1942, ibid.
⁶ Under-Secretary of State (?) to Bertram Brooke, 20 February 1942, ibid.
The Rajah shows signs of being attracted by theories of "neutrality" of a sort which has proved so fatal to other small nations. It will be realised that on other occasions he has actually suggested that Sarawak shd. conduct itself as a neutral towards one of our enemies in this war. 1

Gent was probably referring here to comments made by the Rajah in the course of earlier negotiations concerning Sarawak's defence arrangements. While there is no evidence that the Rajah resisted the principle that the defence of Sarawak should be linked with that of Brunei and North Borneo, he seems at some point to have at least considered the possibility of adopting a neutral position vis à vis Japan. Whether this was on MacBryan's advice is not clear, but it would seem to have been consistent with his Political Adviser's sense of Realpolitik and his possible connections with Japanese intelligence. 2

The whole question of Sarawak's international status had been raised by the outbreak of war and one of Anthony Brooke's last public acts as Rajah Muda was to issue a Proclamation on 3 September supporting Britain. 3 In the mid 1930s the Sarawak government had sought clarification from the Singapore authorities on Sarawak's position as a protected state in the event of war, only to be fobbed off in a way which Digby found somewhat patronizing: "Don't worry, little boy", said His Majesty's representative in effect, "your foreign relations are controlled by His Majesty's Government by virtue of the Treaty of 1888, and so we will say when you are at war". 4 But it was later brought to Sir Shenton Thomas' attention by Singapore's legal authorities that Sarawak had not been covered by Britain's declarations of war and the Sarawak government was consequently informed that it should declare war on Germany and Italy. According to Digby's account, the Sarawak government was disinclined to conform with these instructions:

1 Minute by Gent, 9 May 1941, ibid.
2 See Chapter VI, pp. 253-4.
3 SG, 1 September 1939.
4 Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 83.
In our opinion Sarawak was enough of a joke in the eyes of the world already without our going out of our way to provide further fodder for the war-time music halls, and we firmly decided to leave Germany and Italy alone. 1

Enemy aliens were thus detained in Sarawak by means of formal orders under Sarawak's own Defence Regulations rather than under the Royal Prerogative. When a regiment of Punjabi troops under British officers arrived from Singapore in January 1941, strenuous efforts were made to assert Sarawak sovereignty. There were problems involving the trial of Punjabi soldiers in Sarawak courts for civil offences, the legal potentialities of gunnery practice and other weighty matters which Digby unsuccessfully attempted to settle in an interview with a military legal authority at Fort Canning in Singapore:

I remember little... except that he answered, "You know? You've got me there", to my first question, and "Bai jove! You've got me there too", to my second, the last reply being repeated in response to every other question which I put to him. 2

Legally speaking, some doubt remained about whether or not Sarawak was at war 'until the Japanese arrived and resolved the issue'. 3

Nevertheless, Sarawak's inclusion in Imperial defence planning after 1937 had drawn it closer to direct British influence. Naturally enough, the focus of British interest was the oil field at Miri which Sarawak's only defence force, the 700 man Sarawak Constabulary, could hardly be expected to defend. Consequently the Overseas Defence Committee in London suggested the creation of a joint Brunei-Sarawak Defence Force consisting mainly of the oil company's European employees whose task would be to hinder enemy landings. However, the Rajah was concerned about the cost and may also have been apprehensive about the possibility of MCS interference in Sarawak affairs consequent on such a link with Brunei. He reminded the British government of its defence obligations under the 1888 Treaty, emphasizing that any defence force for the oil field

1 Ibid., p. 83.
2 Ibid., p. 84.
should be a Brunei force but that the Sarawak government would provide the necessary facilities to allow it to operate across the border in Sarawak. At the same time, he offered a single contribution of £50,000 towards the cost of defence measures, providing that half went towards the establishment of one or more landing grounds in Sarawak by the R.A.F.¹

From the mid-1930s there had been increasing interest within the British defence departments, particularly the Admiralty, in the strategic importance of northern Borneo. The Admiralty was alarmed by the degree of Japanese 'penetration' of North Borneo which it saw as increasing a wartime threat to the Miri oil field and to Singapore itself.² Consequently there was a good deal of concern when it seemed that the Sarawak government was about to grant a Japanese company, Nissa Shokai, a concession to mine coal in the Kapit district. Nissa Shokai, which also owned a small rubber plantation on the Samarahan river near Kuching, had first been granted permission to prospect for coal in 1929 and after discovering seams along the Pila river they had been granted a further licence to prospect throughout the headwaters of the Rejang river. A five year extension was granted in 1932 and in May 1937 Nissa Shokai applied to the Sarawak government for yet another extension to December 1939. At this point the Chief Secretary, Parnell, wrote to the Sarawak Government Agent in London asking him to seek the Rajah's approval for a proposal that the government's legal advisers should consult the Colonial Office on the drafting of a standard lease.³ The Agent subsequently wrote to Gent who immediately sought the opinions of the three service departments. When their replies left no doubt about the undesirability of granting a concession,⁴ the Secretary of State,

¹ Memorandum by Gent, 14 September 1937, CO 531/27 [53038].
² Ibid.
³ Parnell to Sarawak Government Agent, 21 May 1937, cited by Shenton Thomas in his despatch to Lord Harlech of 5 November 1937, ibid.
⁴ Replies by Wing Commander S.C. Strafford, E.N. Syfret (Admiralty) and Col. R.B. Pargiter cited in minute by Cowell, 27 August 1937, ibid.
Lord Harlech, wrote to Sir Shenton Thomas informing him of the defence view and asking him to make some inquiries with the Sarawak government, at the same time emphasizing the British government's 'special interest' in the issuing of important concessions to foreign nationals. When the Rajah was subsequently invited to the Colonial Office for discussions, he said that there was no intention of granting a lease to the Japanese. Furthermore, he undertook to consult the British government first if consideration was being given to any kind of Japanese concession. This was more than the Colonial Office had hoped for, particularly since its case was weakened by the Japanese mining concessions in Malaya, but there was still some concern in Gent’s mind that prospecting had been going on since 1929 without the Colonial Office’s knowledge. It was yet another illustration of the need for good information on what was happening in Sarawak.

The first tangible evidence of British interest in Sarawak's strategic importance had been seen in 1933 when an R.A.F. reconnaissance party selected sites for airfields at Kuching, Miri and Bintulu. Construction of the Kuching strip actually began in April 1936 and it was opened in September 1938 while the first landing was made at Miri in September 1939. Work also commenced on the Bintulu field in 1936 but was abandoned in late 1939 almost completed. In early 1941 extensions to the Kuching field commenced with a view to its accommodating all but the heaviest aircraft. By this time, however, the Rajah had become concerned that the two completed airfields were not only not being used by the R.A.F. except on occasional visits, but were completely unprotected. Indeed, they constituted a danger to Sarawak's security in that they could be very useful to any Japanese thrust towards Singapore. Prior to this, particularly after

1 Harlech to Shenton Thomas, 4 August 1937, ibid.
2 Minute by Gent, 15 September 1937, ibid.
3 Minute by Gent, 2 December 1937, ibid.
4 Personal communication from Mr J.L. Noakes, 8 October 1976.
5 This account is based largely on J.L. Noakes, 'Report Upon Defence Measures Adopted in Sarawak from June 1941 to the Occupation in December 1941 of Imperial Japanese Forces...'. Noakes, who was Secretary for Defence at the time of the invasion, wrote most of the report in Batu Lintang camp during the first half of 1942.
the Munich scare in September 1938, the Rajah had reminded the British authorities through Sir Shenton Thomas of Britain's defence obligations under the 1888 Treaty. And when there was a Japanese invasion scare in February 1941 he must have been more concerned than ever.

In addition to the £25,000 given in 1937 towards the cost of airfields, the Rajah had also contributed generously from state reserves towards the British war effort. In late 1939 Sarawak gave $1,000,000 and this was followed by $500,000 in June 1940 and a further $1,000,000 in February 1941. Money was also being collected under government sponsorship by the Sarawak branch of the Malaya Patriotic Fund which operated jointly with the China Relief Fund Committee in fund-raising activities throughout the state. In December 1940 the Rajah introduced a scheme whereby the salaries of all European officers were taxed as a means of financing the state's own defence force. Consequently, he felt that Sarawak had made a reasonable contribution and he expected that the problem of the airfields would be given attention. In March 1941 he wrote to Sir Shenton Thomas promising that Sarawak would continue to assist the British war effort to the best of its ability but expecting in return that the British government would shoulder full responsibility for the defence of the state and its cost, except for the raising and maintaining of local forces. The Governor agreed to this arrangement and a senior officer was sent to Kuching to report on defence measures. It was on his recommendation that the first detachment of the 2/15th Punjab Regiment arrived in Sarawak in April 1941 to protect the sabotage teams organized to destroy the Lutong refinery and the Miri oil wells in case of Japanese attack. The principle had been established that the denial scheme was a British responsibility and that all claims for compensation would be an Imperial liability.

1 SG, 2 January 1941.

However, the defences of Sarawak continued to be totally inadequate and in October the state's Secretary for Defence, J.L. Noakes, wrote a memorandum for Le Gros Clark pointing out that the tiny British garrison of 600 men invited attack without being able to offer any determined opposition to an invading force. Indeed, he emphasized, there was a danger of the people of Sarawak 'suffering out of all proportion to the damage inflicted on the enemy'. A copy of the memorandum was sent to Lt. General A.E. Percival, General Officer Commanding Malaya, and the Committee of Administration subsequently sent Noakes to Singapore to voice their dissatisfaction. But Percival, while admitting the position, told Noakes that he was incapable of doing anything more than sending two anti-aircraft guns within the next six months. On Noakes' invitation, Percival visited Kuching on 27 November (the day when an official warning of war with Japan was received) but the only result was a decision that the Punjabi force should concentrate on the defence of the Kuching airfield, even if it meant neglecting coastal and river defences against a seaborne landing. The airfield was only to be conceded if enemy strength made the position untenable. 'There have been too many retreats', the general told the Supreme Council. 'You in Kuching must stand and fight'.

By October 1941 the Colonial Office was well on the way to asserting its authority over Sarawak's internal affairs. The British Representative provided for in the Supplementary Agreement was no doubt expected progressively to assume the powers of a Malayan Resident, thus completing a pattern of British domination which had been initiated in the Malay states in the 1870s. Until this time Sarawak had been an anomaly, but an anomaly which there had been no pressing need to resolve. However, the clear indication from 1938 that the Rajah was on the point of giving up his responsibilities, together with serious doubts about his government's administrative standards and the state's strategic position, made British inter-

1 Ibid., p. 23.
2 Ibid.
vention almost inevitable. While the Rajah had been able to resist the replacement of Pepys, the secret agreement with the Committee of Administration and the 1941 Constitution had increased his vulnerability. What remained uncertain was the future of the Brooke dynasty. Unlike the Malay sultans, they could not be moved sideways to a position of political impotence. It was left to the Japanese to solve the problem by moving them out altogether.
DURING the decade prior to the Second World War, politics in Sarawak was limited to dynastic and bureaucratic questions involving the Brooke family and the seventy or eighty Europeans who constituted the highest echelons of the Sarawak Service. Representation of native and Chinese interests was still the monopoly of the traditional Malay and Chinese elites. However, the pressures set up by Malay education and Chinese nationalism during the late 1930s resulted in new forms of communal organization which threatened to bypass the traditional leadership. The growing economic strength of the Ibans was also being expressed in the establishment of communally-based co-operatives designed to compete with Chinese traders. During this period, moreover, Brooke government was clearly demonstrating its inability either to protect the economic interests of its people or to satisfy the expectations of the new educated elites. The Persatuan Melayu Sarawak, the China Distress Relief Fund committees and the United Sea Dayak Co-operative constituted the nuclei of political parties which were to emerge at the beginning of the cession controversy in early 1946. While it is difficult to demonstrate any expression of heightened political consciousness during the Japanese occupation, it seems likely that the experience of those years broke the spell of European political and cultural supremacy even if it did not discredit Brooke rule. The Ibans of the Second Division were also given the opportunity of throwing off Malay hegemony and participating in the administration as they had never done before. By the time cession was announced in February 1946 there was both a potential for organized political action in Sarawak along lines similar to the Malayan situation and a significant number of Ibans who could not have been easily reconciled to a restoration of their former status under Brooke rule.

Economic Change

There is so little surviving documentary material for the 1930s in Sarawak that it is only possible to provide the barest sketch of socio-
economic conditions. However, broad economic and educational developments were gradually changing the face of Sarawak society and creating a situation full of challenge for Brooke rule.

The boom in rubber prices after 1918 further stimulated rubber planting in Sarawak, particularly by the Ibans of the Second and Third Divisions who quickly discovered the attractions of the cash economy. By 1934 the area of planted rubber was in the vicinity of 210,000 acres, of which all but about three per cent was in the hands of smallholders. While about one-fifth of the estimated 50,000 smallholders were Chinese, the remainder were Malays and Ibans who planted the narrow strips of fertile alluvial soil along the river banks. Most of these holdings were no more than an acre and a half but surprisingly high yields and good prices meant that many Ibans were able to employ Chinese rubber tappers on a bagi dua (50/50 share) basis. During the 1920's, rewards from rubber were such that there was a significant movement away from the traditional slash-and-burn and hunting economy of the Second and Third Division Ibans. Vast new areas were planted with rubber. Consequently there was considerable dislocation when the price of rubber dived in 1931.

Although Sarawak's interests as a smallholder producer were totally opposed to participation in the International Rubber Restriction Scheme designed to protect European investment in commercial estates, it was one of the signatories of the May 1934 agreement which established the International Rubber Regulation Committee. The Sarawak government supported the interests of English, Dutch and French investors in the plantation industry, even though such investment was negligible in Sarawak. Under the subsequent five-year programme which allocated to each signatory country a quota based on total planted area and the percentage of the quota which could actually be exported each year, Sarawak's quota for 1934 was 24,000 tons with a graduated rise to 32,000 tons by 1938. New

planting was forbidden and only such replanting as would balance depreciation of mature trees was allowed.

Although exports fell short of the quota in 1934, production in that year was 60 per cent above the 1933 figure. The maturation of young rubber trees and the slump in pepper prices from $42 per pikul in 1934 to $24 per pikul in 1935 made it clear that this rate of increase would continue unless there was substantial restriction of output.

Two successive measures were introduced in Sarawak to limit production - a 'tapping holiday' scheme which restricted the number of days when rubber could be tapped and a coupon system which limited the quantity of rubber which could be sold by an individual smallholder. The first scheme aroused a great deal of ill feeling since Sarawak's high rainfall meant that tapping was often not possible during the stipulated periods. Wherever it was possible to police the regulations there were arrests for contravention and the Sarawak Gazette for the years 1934-38 is studded with reports of convictions. On one occasion a patrol near Sibu was attacked by irate Chinese tappers. Restriction of Chinese male immigration intended as a further limit to rubber output had created a shortage of tappers and enabled them to demand 60 per cent from smallholders.

The scheme also involved a four-year assessment of all smallholdings which inevitably created the impression among the Ibans that the government was planning a new tax. In October 1935 the Gazette reported that in spite of extensive publicity work carried out in the Ulu Oya area, the Ibans there were 'still uneasy' and inclined to believe that the government proposed to levy a quit-rent on their rubber land. Two years later the problem still existed in the Nanga Meluan area and the Resident was sympathetic. 'In the past', he wrote, 'Government inspection and survey of rubber has generally meant some new form of taxation, and it is not surprising therefore that the Dayaks regard assessment with some misgiving'.

1 SG, 2 August 1937.
From the administrative side, the scheme posed problems. All the smallholdings had to be surveyed, registered and issued with individual identification and in the process there arose the enormous task of sorting out land claims. From the point of view of the smallholders, the scheme was highly objectionable since their natural reaction was to plant more rubber trees in order to compensate for the loss of income from existing smallholdings brought about by low prices and the increased cost of tapping. There were numerous reports from the Second and Third Divisions after 1934 of prosecution of Ibans and Chinese for new planting. In May 1937, for example, Ibans from most of the longhouses in Penghulu Ringgit's district at Lubok Antu were fined and imprisoned and the penghulu himself and five of his tuai rumah were subsequently fined. Under the 1934 regulations, offenders could be sentenced to up to six months imprisonment and there were liberal rewards for informers. In addition to these difficulties, it also became clear that the reduction in tapping time by more than 30 per cent reduced output by less than 18 per cent. Consequently it was decided in 1938 to abandon the 'tapping holiday' scheme and to issue coupons to all smallholders limiting the amount of rubber which they could sell to dealers. The problem, however, was that Ibans often sold their coupons to Chinese traders at a discount, thus undermining the effort to preserve equitability. Some smallholders were also much worse off than before. In one instance a smallholder whose rubber garden was capable of producing 27 pikuls a month and had been able to sell 18 pikuls under the tapping holiday scheme received coupons for only 6 pikuls.

Dissatisfaction with the limitations inherent in the coupon scheme even sparked off a demonstration by more than 400 Chinese smallholders and tappers at Batu Kawa, about ten miles south-west of Kuching, in February 1938 and they would have marched in protest

1 SG, 1 June 1937.

2 The new scheme was based on Bridges' recommendations and was gazetted as Order R-9 (Rubber Regulation) 1937, SGG, 16 December 1937.

3 One pikul = 113-1/3 lbs.
to the town had it not been for the intervention of a Chinese-speaking officer who persuaded them to be content with sending a deputation to the government. Unaccustomed to such behaviour, senior government officers had reacted dramatically to the demonstration. The Chief Secretary, Parnell, told Ong Tiang Swee that if the demonstrators did march, force would be used to disperse them. He planned to station police with batons to drive back the crowd and to have others armed with rifles posted around the corner. Parnell even appears to have used the word 'shoot'.

The gradual recovery of rubber prices and the increased export quota made possible by renewed demand after the outbreak of war in 1939 eased the situation of the smallholders but rubber restriction had constituted a significant instance of Brooke government's contravention of native and Chinese economic interests. It also provided the first immediate issue which had the potential of uniting smallholders of all races against the authority of the Raj. If the war in Europe had not heightened the demand for Sarawak rubber, the contradiction between smallholders and government might well have taken on an important political dimension. Furthermore, the government's response to Batu Kawa was no different from that of a colonial regime.

Rubber restriction had also served to sustain the Iban 'troubles' which began in 1929 after the resignation of Penghulu Asun of the upper Kanowit district in the Third Division. The more systematic imposition of taxes, together with the drastically reduced price of rubber and the prohibition on new planting and a shortage of virgin land, provided fuel for Iban discontent which lingered on until shortly before the Japanese occupation when Kendawang, the last of the 'rebels', surrendered. 'Asun's rebellion' was in the tradition of resistance to Brooke efforts to curb Iban expansion. But at the same time it reflected the gradual centralization and bureaucratization of the government inevitably affecting the traditionally close personal relationship between Ibans and European

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1 Boyd to Bishop Hudson, 24 February 1938, Boyd Papers.
The government adopted the suggestion made in the Le Gros Clark Report that there should be a more effective presence in the disaffected areas but by 1941 little had been done to extend social services. In spite of Le Gros Clark's recommendations, little thought was given to the changes inevitably arising from their involvement in the cash economy and their access to education. Brooke policy towards the Ibans hardly advanced beyond the notion of maintaining control.

**Education**

The clearest example of Brooke conservatism was education which had been opposed by Charles Brooke and neglected by Vyner Brooke. Apart from the SPG and Roman Catholic mission schools and the schools set up privately by the Chinese, there had only been sporadic attempts by the government to provide education for young Malays destined for the Native Officer and Junior Administrative Service. Government assistance to Iban education was negligible.

The early 1930s saw something of a revolution in the educational opportunities available to the Kuching Malays. The Merpati Jepang School opened in 1930 and the Enche Boyong School in 1931. In the same year, two existing schools were merged to form the government-sponsored *Maderasah Melayu* (Malay College) which was designed to train Malays as Native Officers and teachers. By 1933 enrolment had reached 400, bringing the number of students in Malay schools in Kuching to between 500 and 600 or three times the 1921 enrolment. Most importantly, Malay-language education was no longer restricted to the children of elite families. The first Malay girls' school, the *Sekolah Permaisuri*, also opened in 1930 and by the late

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1930s a handful of Malays had attended the Sultan Idris Training College in Malaya. During the 1920s the two English-medium mission schools in Kuching, St Thomas' (Church of England) and St Joseph's (Roman Catholic) had become popular institutions with the Chinese because of the growing importance of English. Clerkships in government departments required proficiency in English and were normally filled by mission school graduates. A number of private Chinese-medium schools also appeared in the 1920s and 1930s. Their China-born teachers sowed the seeds of the Chinese nationalism which was to have its first expression after the Japanese invasion of China in 1937.

Iban prosperity in the Second and Third Divisions had also brought about something of a social revolution. St Augustine's School had been opened at Betong, St Luke's at Simanggang and St Andrew's on the Paku and other schools were later opened by the SPG at Saratok, Debak (Saribas) and Ruban (Kalaka) in response to Iban requests. Although reduced income from rubber in the early 1930s meant that it was more difficult for parents to send their children to school, the Iban demand for education was insatiable. When Father Jack Sparrow of the SPG arrived at Ruban in January 1934 he found 300 Ibans waiting to build the school there and it was completed in a few months. Two more elementary schools were provided by the SPG on the Batang Lupar on the understanding that they would be completely self-supporting. In 1938 the schools at Betong, Ruban, Saratok and Debak had more than 200 pupils and 13 teachers although the government grant was less than it had been in 1932 when the enrolment was less than half.

While educational opportunities expanded for all communities, particularly in the urban areas, employment opportunities did not. The pruning of government departments by Macaskie in 1932 reduced the size of the Junior Administrative Service and it was not until the late 1930s that financial restraints were relaxed and recruitment increased. The Native Officer Service remained the monopoly of the

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2 Reports of the Bishop of Labuan for 1930-38, SPG Archives.
perabangan in spite of the growing number of educated Malays who were much better qualified. It was not until 1941 that the government appointed the first Malay Native Officer who was not an abang. Educated Malays and Chinese were often obliged to become medical dressers in the outstations and a number of educated Ibans went to Brunei or Malaya in search of work. While there is no evidence of open discontent, it is clear that by 1941 there was a substantial number of young educated people of all races whose job expectations could not be satisfied under the existing system of recruitment and whose interests could not be adequately represented by the traditional Malay and Chinese leadership.

Participation in Government

Apart from the major role played by the perabangan in administration, actual representation in government was limited to the datus who, together with Ong Tiang Swee, constituted the Supreme Council. The Council's formal meetings had ceased in 1927 and by the 1930s the bi-weekly meeting with the Rajah at his office was little more than a

1 A good example is the career of Haji Su'aut Tahir. Born in Kuching in 1909, the son of a government servant who later became a building contractor, he was educated at the Maderasah Melayu and St Thomas' School. For want of other opportunities, he joined the Medical Department as a dresser in 1929 and during the Australian and British military administration was posted to Simanggang as Divisional Medical Officer. He established the Persekutuan Melayu Simanggang in 1946 before returning to Kuching where he became an active member of the Malay National Union and later the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak of which he was secretary-general. In 1961 he was one of the founding members of the Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak and acted as its publicity officer. In addition to participating in municipal politics, he was a member of the Council Negri and the Malaysian Parliament. Like so many former dressers, he became a superb linguist, achieving fluency in Iban and several Chinese dialects.

2 This pattern continued into the 1950s when two Ibans who were later to achieve political prominence, Stephen Kalong Ningkan and Thomas Kana, worked as dressers for Shell in Brunei. It should not be thought, however, that the Ibans left Sarawak unwillingly. There was a strong Iban tradition that young men should berjalai, or seek adventure and fortune outside their own territory.
social occasion. According to one account, the conversation which took place was of this order: 'Apa khabar, datu datu?' 'Khabar baik, Tuan Rajah'. (What news, datus? Good news, Rajah). Nevertheless, the datus still derived a certain amount of power from their social prestige and their ability to place their own relatives and friends in government departments, such as Police, Customs and Lands and Surveys. Nor was it insignificant that with their substantial allowances they were among the wealthiest members of the Malay community. Furthermore, as the acknowledged authorities on Malay adat they constituted a Datus' Court which had jurisdiction over certain classes of Malay civil offences until its abolition in the 1950s.

During the 1930s the Council Negri was a triennial assembly of notables from all the Divisions which did little more than confirm the authority of the Rajah and foster some general idea of unity under the Raj. Even so, there was no Chinese representation until Ong Tiang Swee and Wee Kheng Chiang were appointed in 1937. Moreover, as we have already seen, the 1941 Constitution whose Preamble explicitly re-stated the Brooke principle of trusteeship and even anticipated eventual self-government was in no way the result of an indigenous initiative. As the only non-European member of the Committee of Administration which had totally eclipsed the Supreme Council in importance, Ong Tiang Swee took part in the early discussions of the draft and the datus gave their advice on Malay adat regarding the succession. But there was no serious attempt to consult 'the people' for whose benefit the entire exercise was avowedly designed. The selection of non-European members to the new Council Negri in October 1941 was still heavily biased in favour of the Malays and one of the two additional Chinese representatives appointed was a son of Ong Tiang Swee.

1 Interview with Haji Su'aut Tahir, May 1975.
2 As members of the Supreme Council, the datus were given a monthly allowance of $100 which was 'big money in those days'. Abang Haji Mustapha, 'Supreme Council Reminiscences', SMJ, Vol. VII, No.7 (New Series), June 1956, pp.109-10.
3 The other was Tam Sum Guan, a Chaoann.
The first indication of the Sarawak government's recognition of the need to involve more than just a handful of datus and kapitan china in the business of government was the establishment in 1919 of a Kuching Assessment Committee with Malay, Chinese and Indian representation as a means of reorganizing the collection of town rates. This was succeeded in 1922 by the Kuching Sanitary and Municipal Advisory Board which operated as a municipal authority and not just an advisory body after 1934. Consisting of five Europeans, four Chinese and one Indian, it was headed by a European Municipal Commissioner who was in charge of the daily operation of town services. The Chinese members were required to represent the Hokkien, Teochiew, Cantonese and Hakka dialect groups and were elected by their own dialect associations but the Malay member was always chosen by the government from the perabangan, usually a civil servant. Although the Board's decisions could be vetoed by the Rajah and the Committee of Administration, its achievements were considerable: the building of a bazaar drainage system, introduction of birth and death registration, improvement of health facilities, rent-control for the bazaar and a Board of Visitors with the responsibility of checking conditions at the jail, lunatic asylum, hospital and leper camp. It was also responsible for the building permits, hawker licensing, the fixing of rates and assessments and zoning policy. Although the Municipal Board reflected the principle of indirect rule, it also constituted a representative structure whose decision-making was in some ways more important than that of the datus and the kapitans.1

The Board's success probably accounts for the government's decision in 1938 to conduct experiments in local government outside Kuching. In that year village councils were set up in the Land Dayak settlements of Quop and Mambong in the First Division where members were made responsible for the collection of taxes, rates and fines and for the general management of local affairs. The councillors possessed the authority to decide criminal and quasi-criminal cases according to their own adat as well as

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1 This summary is based on the invaluable account given by Lockard, *The Southeast Asian Town* ..., pp.326-32.
supervising trading and general living conditions including sanitation. Subject to the discretion of the District Officer, revenues were to be placed at their disposal for the construction and maintenance of roads and public buildings and the purchase of implements for more effective cultivation.

It was hoped that the councils would in time be able to frame their own estimates of revenue and expenditure and the 1938 Annual Report expressed satisfaction with what had already been achieved. 'These Councils have taken their responsibilities seriously', it concluded, 'and there is every indication that the experiment will succeed'. However, the process of establishing further councils was very slow and the only one outside the First Division before the war seems to have been at Sarikei.

Fajar Sarawak and the Persatuan Melayu

The first stirrings of Malay political awareness came to the surface in 1930 when a small group of educated Malays of non-aristocratic origin founded Sarawak's first Malay-language newspaper, Fajar Sarawak (Sarawak Dawn). The driving force was 'Master' Rakawi bin Yusoff, a former schoolteacher and customs officers who used his retirement bonus to launch the venture. Little is known about Rakawi, who died in 1936, but he was one of the few Sarawak Malays who had any links with developments in Malaya. A member from 1934 of the Sahabat Pena, a writers' guild which was one of the first vehicles of Malay cultural nationalism, he had probably also been in contact with members of the Kesatuan Melayu Singapore (Singapore Malay Union) established in 1926 which was the first of a number of proto-political organizations in the peninsula. Rakawi's two-volume

1 Sarawak Administration Report, 1938.
3 Fajar's masthead bore the motto: 'The dawn has broken. Arise my nation'. It appeared fortnightly.
5 Ibid., pp.191-7. Rakawi was Malay representative on the Kuching Municipal Board, 1934-35.
Hikayat Sarawak (Story of Sarawak) and his novel Bunga Sarawak (Flower of Sarawak) published in Kuching in the early 1930s also constituted the most significant literary achievement of pre-war Sarawak.¹

Rakawi's publisher and chief collaborator with Fajar Sarawak was Haji Abdul Rahman,² a Malay of Minangkabau (west Sumatra) ancestry who owned Kuching's only bookstore and Malay-language printing press. Respected like other Minangkabaus in Sarawak for his religious knowledge, he seems to have been accepted as an equal by the perabangan and he was later to lead the traditional elite in their post-war conflict with younger educated Malays. Before the war, however, he was probably regarded as something of a radical. Other members of the Fajar group who later achieved political distinction were Haji Mohd. Daud bin Abdul Gani, Mohd. Johari bin Anang and a number of young Malays including Mohd. Ma'amun bin Nor who wrote occasional articles.

Fajar Sarawak soon died for want of support from the Malay community of Kuching and there are only a few surviving copies.³ However, it is possible to infer from these what the Fajar group was trying to achieve. Briefly, they were concerned with 'uplifting' the social and economic condition of the Malays which was unimpressive by contrast with the enormous progress made by the urban Chinese and even the Second Division Ibans since 1918. They also aimed at inculcating an awareness of Malayness among Malays who were often more conscious of their Brunei or Sumatran origins than of belonging to a unified community distinct from the Chinese and the Ibans. While there was no criticism of Chinese immigration (which had peaked in the mid-1920s) Fajar remarked on the increasing number of Chinese taking over Malay shops and urged the Malays not to be left behind. At the same time, it directed veiled criticism towards the datus for being more concerned with improving their own material position than with helping

¹ There is only one known copy of Hikayat Sarawak, which has been xeroxed by the Sarawak Museum. Unfortunately I was unable to have access to it. More copies of Bunga Sarawak have survived.

² I have been able to obtain very little further biographical information about Haji Abdul Rahman bin Haji Kassim who was one of the most important of Sarawak's early Malay leaders.

³ No.1 (1 February 1930); No.4 (1 March 1930); No.9 (1 June 1930); No.10 (16 June 1930).
poor Malays. There was a strong hint that the perabangan were doing very little to justify the position of prestige and authority which they had traditionally enjoyed. Fajar also called on the government to spend more money on Malay education, including the provision of scholarships for the Sultan Idris Training College. A proper knowledge of the Islamic religion was regarded as the only means by which the Malays could achieve regeneration and they were urged to reject fatalistic attitudes. However, there was no reflection of the *kuam muda - kaum tua* conflict which dominated the intellectual life of peninsula Malays from early in the century, largely because there was no class of orthodox ulamas (religious teachers) and no tradition of village Koran schools as in Malaya. There were few references to developments in Malaya but the inclusion of reports on Turkish politics indicated an effort to widen the horizons of the Sarawak Malays who had been isolated from the Malay and Islamic worlds by Brooke rule.

With the demise of *Fajar Sarawak*, the Malays lost what might otherwise have been an important catalyst of social and economic change. However, the idea of a pan-Malay organization which had also been suggested by Rakawi was to have more success. Although the *Persatuan Melayu Sarawak* (Sarawak Malay Association) was not formally registered as a social club until 1939, it had existed in an informal way for at least two years before this. In May 1937 a circular was sent out calling for the establishment of a Malay association with branches in all major towns whose members would subscribe funds for co-operative enterprises. There had been an earlier attempt in December 1936 to form a *Bumiputra* (Natives) Club similar to the Malay social clubs already existing in Sibu and Miri. The *Persatuan Muslim

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1 This conflict between Islamic reformists and conservatives has been fully dealt with by W.R. Roff, 'Kuam Muda - Kuam Tua: Innovation and Reaction Amongst the Malays 1900-1941', in K.G. Tregonning, ed., *Papers on Malayan History*, Singapore 1962, pp.162-92, and *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*.


3 SG, 1 May 1939; 1 June 1939; 1 July 1939.

4 The name was probably designed to attract Muslim native (Melanau) membership as well as Malays. Ibans and other non-Muslim natives were not involved.
Miri, for example, had 400 members in 1937 including Arabs and Muslim Indians.\(^1\) The main reason for the delay in registering the Persatuan Melayu Sarawak seems to have been that the Datu Patinggi had been angered by criticism in Fajar and it was not until the Persatuan's founders agreed that his eldest grandson, Abang Ibrahim, should be made a datu that he was prepared to extend his patronage. Without this the Registrar of Societies had not been prepared to consider any application for government recognition.\(^2\) From the outset, the Persatuan's committee was dominated by the perabangan, the Datu Amar being president and the Datu Pahlawan one of the vice-presidents.\(^3\)

The Persatuan's aims were similar to those of the peninsula persatuan: to unite the Malays and work together for their advancement; to promote business, education, culture and the Malay language; to protect the Islamic faith; and to act as liaison between the Malays and government.\(^4\) The latter aim was significant since it was yet another sign of dissatisfaction with the traditional form of representation through the datus. There was a strong feeling that Malays would have to bypass the datus if there was to be any improvement in their social and economic condition. The Persatuan's concrete achievements before the war consisted of little more than a fund-raising effort which collected about $4,000 towards the formation of a co-operative and the establishment of links with Malay social clubs in Sibu, Miri and other centres. However, it sent representatives to attend the second annual congress of persatuan in Singapore in December 1940\(^5\) and it would be surprising if this did not develop a more political orientation in the organization as well as helping it to gather popularity in Sarawak. At its annual general meeting in June 1941 the Persatuan was able to attract 700 Malays, including a number from other towns, wearing Malay dress. Abang Suleiman, the Datu Amar, who had been president since the Persatuan's inception in 1939, chaired the meeting

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1 Interview with Temenggong Datuk Muif, July 1974.
2 Interview with Haji Su'au Tahir, May 1975.
3 For a full list of committee members 1939-50, see McKay, 'The Kuching Communities ...', Appendix VII.
4 Interview with Haji Su'au Tahir, May 1975.
5 Roff, Origins of Malay Nationalism, p.246.
with Haji Taha's assistance and the gathering was entertained by schoolchildren singing religious songs. During the Brooke centenary celebrations in September the Persatuan played an important part in organizing Malay cultural activities and sports events. In spite of a complete moratorium on its activities during the Japanese occupation, there was still sufficient cohesion among its members and branches immediately after the war for it to be easily revived and later used by the anti-cessionists as a ready-made organization with the potential of mobilizing Malay support.

The only other Malay organization which constituted any parallel with cultural and proto-political life in the peninsula was the Sarawak branch of the Persaudara'an Sahabat Pena Malaya. This was presided over first by the Datu Amar and then by Abang Haji Mustapha who had attended school in Singapore and was one of the best-educated Malays in the state. The Sarawak branch does not seem to have been particularly active but some of its members attended conferences in Malaya and no doubt brought back news of developments

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1 SG, 1 July 1941.
2 SG, 2 May 1938.
3 Abang Haji Mustapha (d.1965) was the son of the Datu Hakim, Abang Haji Moasili, and the grandson of Abang Haji Abdul Rahman who had been appointed Datu Hakim by James Brooke. Educated at St Thomas' and St Joseph's schools, he was later sent to Mecca to study Muslim law. After four years, during which he travelled in the Middle East and India, he returned to Sarawak and took up a clerical position at Limbang. In 1930 he was transferred to the police and was one of the first non-Europeans to be commissioned as an officer. In 1941 he was appointed by the Rajah to the new position of Datu Pahlawan and in June 1946 he was promoted to Datu Bandar. The leader of the pro-cession faction in Sarawak, he aroused a great deal of ill-feeling within the Malay community and did not receive strong support in 1960 when he founded the Parti Negara Sarawak (PANAS). A strong proponent of Sarawak's inclusion in the Malaysian Federation, he was one of the major obstacles in winning over the anti-cessionists who had formed the rival Parti Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak (Sarawak Natives' Front - Barjasa). His polarization of the perabangan over the cession issue substantially modified the pattern of Sarawak politics. A political realist, his instinct was to be on the winning side and to take the rest of the traditional elite with him. For an interesting obituary, see Adenan Haji Satem, 'Dato Mustapha - A Belated Appreciation', SG, 28 February 1965.
there. Abang Haji Mustapha was also involved in a co-operative whose aims were similar to those of the Persatuan. The Sarawak Malay Savings and Investment Society was registered in October 1940 with the Datu Patinggi, Datu Haji Mohidin and Abang Haji Mustapha dominating the committee. Subscriptions from 69 members amounted to almost $9,000\textsuperscript{1} but there was no public announcement about how these funds were to be used.

The movement to establish the Persatuan Melayu seems to have provided some stimulus to the Indian and Eurasian communities who began to organize themselves in tentative fashion in the late 1930s. The Indian Association of Sarawak was inaugurated in September 1937 with Dr K.V. Krishna as President and S.C.S. Chakraverty as Secretary and chose to hold its first anniversary on 18 September 1938, marking the day when James Brooke received the government of Sarawak from the Sultan of Brunei.\textsuperscript{2} A Eurasian Association was formed in 1940, reflecting the growing importance of this small but comparatively well educated minority. Its president, Edwin Howell, was the son of the Anglo-Indian SPG missionary, the Rev William Howell, who married an Iban woman from the Second Division and became an authority on Iban language and lore.\textsuperscript{3} Edwin was appointed Assistant Executive Engineer in the Public Works Department in 1941, one of the first non-Europeans to be promoted from the Junior Service, he was also the first

\textsuperscript{1} SG, 2 December 1940.

\textsuperscript{2} SG, 1 October 1938. Dr Krishna's speech on this occasion is a fascinating example of the way in which Brooke history had been mythologized. 'This day is pre-eminently suitable to us', he told the meeting, 'for the installation of Sir James Brooke tantamounts to installing Justice, and banishing Pangeran Mahkota means dispelling ignorance and evil'. Ibid. Although there had been practically nothing written by Sarawak natives about their history, apart from Rakawin bin Yusoff's \textit{Hikayat Sarawak}, there were strong oral traditions of the Brooke and earlier periods. The Datu Patinggi, for example, had an amazingly detailed account of the Chinese rebellion of 1857. Unfortunately, few of these traditions have been recorded.

\textsuperscript{3} Howell, together with D.J.S. Bailey, produced \textit{A Sea Dyak Dictionary}, Singapore 1900-02, and contributed numerous articles to the \textit{Sarawak Gazette} which were collected in 1963.
Eurasian to be awarded the Star of Sarawak. As the second Rajah had hoped, miscegenation had produced a small group of men who were easily capable of assuming administrative responsibility. However, the Europeans of the Sarawak Service were not prepared to countenance this and it was not until 1940 that Eurasians were allowed to join the Sarawak Club. Consequently, the first preoccupation of Kuching's Eurasian community was with social and political recognition.

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1 SGG, 29 June 1946. Howell had volunteered to work as an engineer in the Middle East during the 1914-18 war. He was in Australia at the time of the Japanese invasion and in July 1945 joined the Australian Army where he was given the rank of Captain. Returning to Sarawak with the BBCAU, he was cashiered for allegedly selling army stores in co-operation with an Australian officer. In 1946 he was appointed Assistant Executive Engineer, Kuching, and later became a Divisional Engineer for the Second Division. For his post-war involvement with the Sarawak Dayak Association, see Chapter VIII, pp.

2 Other prominent Eurasian families were the Geikies, the Attenboroughs, the Owens, the Ricketts and the Brodies. The only non-European who was allowed entry until then was Charles Mason. Although nothing has been written about the Sarawak Club and the Island Club at Sibu, their function seems to have been very similar to that of the Malayan clubs as described by John Butcher, 'A Social History of the British in Malaya, 1880-1941 ...', Ph.D. thesis, University of Hull, 1975.
The late 1930s also saw the first signs of Iban communal organization. Rapid expansion of rubber smallholding in the Second Division had brought many Ibans into the cash economy in the 1920s, only to have their fingers burnt in the early 1930s. Low prices, together with resentment towards Chinese traders, suggested to some of the more enterprising Saribas Ibans the possibility of a co-operative. In October 1939 the Resident of the Second Division reported that the Paku and Rimbas Ibans had commenced purchasing supplies direct from Kuching 'since they are tired of paying the Chinese the highest possible price for everything, and receiving the lowest possible price for their rubber.'\(^1\) A group of Paku people had even taken out a hawking licence and intended operating their own boat to supply Iban longhouses along the two rivers. This initiative was greeted enthusiastically by government officers who suggested that the group should take out a rubber dealer's licence.

Although no further details were given, it is likely that the Resident was referring to the activities of J.H. Chambai, Manggai and Langi Boudyne who toured the Ulu Paku, Rimbas and Krian rivers in 1938 hoping to raise support and capital for an Iban trading company. After three years of canvassing they had obtained sufficient pledges to float a company and in early 1941 there was an assembly at Stambak Ulu, Langi Boudyne's longhouse on the Layar, where more than $20,000 of the share money was collected.\(^2\) Assistance was obtained from the District Officer and the local Anglican missionary in drafting the articles of association which were later taken to the Legal Adviser in Kuching for correction.

The first investment of the newly-registered United Sea Dayak Co-operative was in a number of shophouses at Spaoh on the Paku and Betong on the Batang Layar. It was also hoped that an arrangement

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1 *SG*, 1 December 1939.

2 Eliab Bayang to District Officer, Betong, 23 March 1949, Bayang Papers. Stambak Ulu was probably the most prosperous Iban community in Sarawak. For a photograph of their unusual longhouse, see Pringle, *Rajahs and Rebels*, opp.p.171.
could be made to charter a Chinese-owned motor vessel for trade with Kuching. Since the Paku and Rimbas rivers gave access to some of the richest rubber areas in Sarawak, competition from Chinese traders was inevitable and their reluctance to demolish the old bazaar at Spaoh was seen by one officer as a means of preventing the co-operative from coming into operation. However, the instigators of the scheme had realised the communal solidarity was vital to its success and before the co-operative was registered an oath was sworn by all shareholders that they would trade exclusively with it. Nor were other Iban companies to be floated without first obtaining the Co-operative's approval.

In addition to the people of the Paku, Rimbas and Layar there were also a number of Ibans who were mostly mission school graduates employed in government service. Notable among these were 'Dr' Charles Mason, a Balau Iban who had studied at the King Edward Medical College in Singapore. Mason worked as a dresser on Kimanis estate in North Borneo 1918-26 before joining Sarawak's Medical Department and finally taking charge of the leper settlement outside Kuching. By virtue of his education and his position as the senior Iban government employee, Mason was the unofficial leader of Kuching's Iban community and maintained close contacts with the Ibans of the Banting and Krian districts. Through his work as a dresser he was also well known among the Malays.

Other prominent Kuching shareholders were Eliab Bayang, his brother Henry Satab Bayang and his sister Barbara Bayang who was the first Iban trained nurse. Related to the Bayangs were Philip and Robert Jitam, the sons of a government timekeeper whose ancestors had come from Lundu. An employee of the Water Supply Department, Philip Jitam occupied a responsible position and was second only to Charles Mason in status within Kuching's small Iban community.

1 SG, 1 March 1941.

2 Mason was the son of an Iban tuai rumah and manang (shaman) from Banting who converted to Christianity. The SPG missionary at Banting, whose wife was a doctor, made him his ward and sent him to Singapore. During his time in Sibu, Mason acquired considerable property and later became involved in gold mining at Bau as well as buying shophouses in Kuching.
Robert worked for Sarawak Steamships Ltd and then the Rubber Fund, a quasi-governmental body which later allowed him greater freedom of political activity than his brother.¹

The Kuching Ibans shared a similar background and most were related to each other. Their ancestors had migrated from the Second to the First Division three or four generations previously and were closely associated with the Brookes. Many had fought on the first Rajah's side against Iban and Chinese 'rebels' and constituted a para-military caste. By the 1930s many had been educated at St Thomas' School and were looking for employment in government service. However, there were few opportunities and they were obliged to become medical dressers or petty clerks and to go to North Borneo or Malaya looking for work. Henry Bayang, for example, spent most of his life in Malaya as a government dresser. In spite of the recommendations of the Le Gros Clark Report, virtually nothing was done to recruit Ibans for the Native Officer Service and in 1941 there were still only three Iban Native Officers: Francis Ansin, Bennett Jarrow and Michael Sadin, although half a dozen had been taken into the constabulary. Among these were Juang Insol, Edward Brandah Saban, his brother Andrew Jika Saban, Arthur Muda and Robert Nicholl Kasim, all of whom were to assume positions of considerable responsibility under the Japanese and the British colonial administration after the war.

Ibans in the Junior Service

The frustrations experienced by Ibans and other non-Malay natives employed in the Junior Administrative Service can be seen in the career of Eliab Bayang. The youngest son of the tua kampong of the Tabuan area just outside Kuching, Bayang was a direct descendant of the Orang Kaya Ijau of Banting, Lingga, whose family had been firm supporters of James Brooke during his most difficult years. Eliab's grandfather was Jangun, a Balau Iban from Munggut Lalang near Banting in the Second Division who first came to Kuching as part of a war expedition in the early 1800s. He gave valuable assistance to James Brooke during the Chinese rebellion in 1857 by taking a message to Brooke Brooke,

¹ Robert Jitam became the first Iban representative on the Kuching Municipal Board in 1948.
who was then at Lingga. Subsequently the Rajah persuaded Jangun to stay on and then brought his people to live in a longhouse called Munggut Bringgin which he built on the hill overlooking the bazaar and this grew into a village of about sixty families. When more Balau Ibans arrived, a move was made to an area four miles outside the town where there was land suitable for padi-planting. Jangun's son, Bayang, married Jumpit, a Sebuyau woman from Merdang Limo near Kuching whose family had migrated much earlier from Sadong, and inherited the leadership of Kampong Tabuan Dayak from his father. He became a sergeant in the Sarawak Rangers and was famous for his skill in the martial arts which he learned in Pontianak, the Celebes and Java during visits there. Eliab Bayang was also linked with James Brooke's enemies. His wife Chela was the great grand-niece of the Orang Kaya Dana Bayang of Padeh, Saribas, one of the first Rajah's most formidable opponents.

Educated first at the SPG mission school at Merdang and then at St Thomas' School in Kuching to standard VII, Eliab first obtained employment as a junior clerk in the Posts and Telegraphs Department and worked in the Second Division. Declining Bishop Hose's suggestion that he should train for the Anglican priesthood, he went to Miri in 1921 and worked for five years in the accounts department of Sarawak Oilfields Ltd. He later returned to the Second Division and served as a kunsil (court writer) at Engkelili, Sebuyau, Lingga and Lubok Antu with a short spell at Simanggang between times as Treasury clerk and store keeper. Possessing some instinct for business, Eliab for many years studied accountancy with an English correspondence college. He owned a share in a rubber estate at Merdang Limo and was one of the prime movers of the United Sea Dayak Co-operative and had links with the Paku Ibans through his wife's relatives at Stambak Ulu.

At Lubok Antu in March 1938 Bayang wrote to H.E. Cutfield, Resident of the Second Division in his best mission school style:

It has been my intention for a long time to seek for a transfer to the native officers' service, but since I was always in doubt as to the advisibility of approaching you thereon, I have refrained from doing so till now when I think the season is opportune enough for me.
to carry my desire into materialisation. ¹

Employed as a court writer in the Junior Service, Bayang's responsibilities were considerable. Not only was he required to act as an interpreter for the District Officer's court and to record all the hearings, he was also involved in most of the clerical responsibilities of the post. At Simanggang, where he was posted later, his responsibilities were even greater: the Native Officer there, Datu Abang Zin Galau, was not literate in either romanized Malay or English and consequently a great deal of the work fell on Bayang's shoulders. In his report on Bayang to the Promotions Board for 1940, however, Cutfield was less than enthusiastic. He had not been able to recommend Bayang's promotion while Government Clerk at Lubok Antu and his work as cashier at Simanggang was 'satisfactory only'. Although the most senior Iban clerk in the Division, Cutfield continued, he was not necessarily the most efficient. He had been engaged on too generous terms in the first instance and was now disgruntled at not having received further promotion. However, the Resident regarded Bayang as capable of undertaking substation work and felt that he should be given the opportunity of proving himself as chief clerk at a district headquarters.²

In the same month, Bayang had the temerity to write to the Chief Secretary himself on the question of leave for members of the Junior Service. 'We Asiatic', he told Parnell, 'have been badly treated in all thing and all the orders now in force are good for European Nations only.'³ He pointed out that although members of the Junior Service were entitled to take annual leave, this often had to be postponed for some months because of the shortage of staff. It was 'very wrong and cruel on the part of the Government to have treated the Junior Officers this way ...'⁴ Bayang recommended a new system of three weeks annual leave for those with less than ten years' service and four weeks for those with more than ten, provision being

¹ Bayang to Cutfield, 9 March 1938, Bayang Papers.
² Cutfield to Parnell, 20 May 1940, Bayang Papers.
³ Bayang to Parnell, 18 March 1938, Bayang Papers.
⁴ Ibid.
made so that if leave had to be accumulated, the Junior Officer concerned should be given his travelling expenses by way of compensation. A year earlier, Parnell had written to the Resident refusing to refund Bayang's passage money: 'The regulations governing ... the granting of passages to members of the Junior Service on annual leave must be rigidly adhered to'.\(^1\) Bayang concluded his letter in a tone which Parnell might have found vaguely threatening:

> It would be fair to treat everybody the same and not to European nations only. Sarawak is a poor country and it is lucky to have owned calm subjects who are always loyal to their Government in everything, but as they have been good we hope the Government will not overpress them.

Eliab Bayang's expressions of discontent and his unprecedented complaint to the Chief Secretary seem to have won him a reputation among European officers as a malcontent and even a security risk, although there is no evidence that before the war with Japan he could have been justifiably described as 'pro-Japanese'. Indeed, in 1941 he was the first Iban to broadcast on Radio Sarawak which was given over almost entirely to defence propaganda. What is important about his experience is that it mirrors the difficulties experienced by mission-educated Ibans capable of assuming responsibility in a system where members of the traditional Malay elite, whatever their qualifications, were favoured as the second level of government administration.

**The China Relief Distress Fund**

As with other Southeast Asian Chinese communities, it was the Japanese invasion of China in 1937 which politicized the Sarawak Chinese. Although the focus was not on Sarawak itself, patriotic feelings were expressed in such a way as to provide an organizational framework which transcended dialect group associations. Local committees of the Singapore-based China Distress Relief Fund were established in Kuching and Sibu in 1937, apparently on the initiative of Wee Kheng Chiang, a Hokkien banker with interests both in Singapore

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1 Parnell to Cutfield, 15 January 1937, Bayang Papers.
2 Bayang to Parnell, 18 March 1938, Bayang Papers.
and Sarawak. Money for the Fund was raised through donations and the proceeds of concerts and other events organized in conjunction with the Sarawak branch of the Malaya Patriotic Fund. By late 1941 some millions of dollars had been remitted to China through Singapore. From 1932 there was an organized boycott of Japanese goods in the bazaars which the government tried hard to suppress and Sarawak's only Japanese company, Nissa Shokai, was subjected to minor harassment such as the cutting of telephone wires.

The organization of both the collection of funds and of the boycott seems to have depended to some extent on the links provided by the Chinese Chambers of Commerce and dialect group associations and was supported by Ong Tiang Swee and Tan Sum Guan. However, it offered opportunities for leadership outside the old kapitan china dialect group structure. Khan Ah Chong, one of the most active members of the Kuching committee, was a Malayan Chinese who had come to Sarawak in the mid-1930s to manage rubber estates. A member of the Municipal Board and founder of the Kuching Rotary Club, he enjoyed a prestige which rivalled that of the dialect group leaders. In Sibu, a handful of China-born schoolteachers seem to have taken most of the initiative in the local committee. Concerts, exhibitions and stalls were held to raise money and there was a voluntary tax on Chinese businesses. A number of Chinese youths went to enlist in Chiang Kai Shek's army and Chinese National Day (10 October) was celebrated with nationalist songs, marching school students and speeches. Such activities, together with the Kuching Municipal Board, prompted a pan-Chinese awareness which cut across dialect group differences. Nevertheless, this was still insufficient to prompt any form of political organization. A branch of the Kuomintang which had withered shortly after its establishment in the 1920s was not revived until after the war, nor is there any clear evidence of communist organization.

3 Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p.74.
before then.

One of the most significant political facts, however, was that Kuching, which had been a predominantly Malay town until the first decade of the twentieth century, was now very much a Chinese town. While the population of Kuching grew from about 8,000 in 1876 to about 35,000 in 1939, the Malay percentage fell from 70 per cent to 40 per cent while the Chinese grew from 30 per cent to 55 per cent. Another 8,000 Chinese farmers and market-gardeners lived within a ten-mile radius of the town and were well entrenched along Sarawak's only significant pre-war road which led eastward from Kuching towards Serian. The 1939 census also showed that the other significant urban communities were Indians (1,258), Eurasians (140), Europeans (124) and Japanese (133).<sup>1</sup> Sarawak's total population was 490,806: Sarawak natives (361,955), Chinese (123,626), Indians (2,323), Javanese (1,855), Europeans (427), Eurasians (277), Japanese (155) and others (158).

Kuching's rapid growth after 1910 was induced by the rubber booms of 1910-20, the late 1920s and the late 1930s for which it served as the marketing centre and the doorway to immigrant Chinese workers. Although there was a net outflow of Chinese during the early 1930s, improved rubber prices revived the flow and by 1937 there were twice as many immigrants as emigrants. The proportion of Chinese women immigrants also increased. Consequently, the Chinese population of Kuching rose from 45,000 in 1909 to 124,000 in 1939.<sup>2</sup> While it is difficult to find much evidence of Malay reactions to this situation, it would be surprising if the numerical and economic dominance of the Chinese in pre-war Kuching did not arouse anxieties and fears among the Malays similar to those being felt in the peninsula. Kuching remained the seat of a fundamentally Malayophile government, but the economic productivity of the Chinese which had been so much admired by James and Charles Brooke was now threatening to upset the traditional hegemony of the Malays.

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1 Ibid., p.273.
2 Ibid., p.266.
The Japanese Period

The Japanese administration of Sarawak from January 1942 until August 1945 is sparsely documented, posing forbidding problems for the historian.¹ For the purposes of this study, however, it will be sufficient to provide a general sketch of the Japanese administration and to suggest its most important social and political effects.

The military phase was completed in March 1942 when the last of the European officers were rounded up.² Generally speaking the Japanese were content to control coastal areas and riverine settlements. Apart from occasional patrols they made no attempt to bring the whole of the interior under their close influence. In some areas, such as the remote Kelabit plateau

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¹ Most of the documents of the Japanese administration were destroyed before the Allied re-occupation in September 1945. The most important document available is the 37th Army Group's 'Status of the Military Administration in North Borneo' for 1943, Nishijima Collection, Waseda University. There are no Sarawak newspapers surviving from the period and to the best of my knowledge no published reminiscences have appeared in Japan. Nor has it been possible to obtain very much oral information. The only Japanese official with whom I have been able to establish contact is S. Suzuki who was deputy superintendent of police, Simanggang, 1943-45, and the following account has relied heavily on information kindly supplied by Mr Suzuki. The most useful local source is a history of the Japanese occupation of Sibu by Liu Yung Tzu, Tieh-t'i hsia ti hui-i: Jih-ch'un lin-chan sha-pa sha-lao-yueh shih-ch'i ti hsueh-lei-shih (History of Blood and Tears under the Japanese army in Sabah and Sarawak), 2nd edn., Hong Kong 1969.

² Most Europeans who crossed into Dutch Borneo after the invasion managed to escape the Japanese. However, one party led by G.R.H. Arundell, Resident of the Second Division, was betrayed by some Iban ex-prisoners and massacred by the Japanese at Ulu Mujang in the upper Batang Ai. Macpherson, who was by that time Resident of the Third Division, was among those killed. European civilians who surrendered to the Japanese were interned at Batu Lintang, just outside Kuching. For descriptions of life there, see J.B. Archer, Lintang Camp ..., Kuching [1946]; Agnes Keith, Three Came Home, Boston 1947; Michael O'Connor, Vile Repose, London 1950; Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', pp.102-59. Donald Hudden, the most popular District Officer in the history of the Baram, was killed by Iban ex-prisoners despatched by the Japanese to find him in the jungle.
selected for Allied paratroop landings in early 1945, they were hardly seen during the entire course of the war. While the rest of Borneo was the responsibility of the Japanese navy, Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo were controlled as one military region by the 37th Army whose headquarters were first located at Kuching and then moved to North Borneo in late 1943 when it seemed clear to the Japanese that they would have to face an Allied counter-attack. For administrative purposes, the British Borneo states were divided into five prefectures: Kuching-shu, Sibu-shu, Miri-shu, Seikai-shu (Jesselton) and Tokai-shu (Sandakan).

The Japanese civil affairs administration of Sarawak suffered a serious setback at the outset when four transports carrying the civil affairs staff were sunk by Dutch aircraft at Santubong near the mouth of the Sarawak River. This served to heighten the administration's emphasis on military priorities: tight control of coastal and more densely populated areas, economic self-sufficiency and the supply of labour and resources to assist the Japanese war effort. The focus of Japanese economic interest was, of course, the oil field at Miri where a great deal of energy was expended in rehabilitating the wells which had been wrecked before the invasion. However, for want of geological records and technical expertise the field had not been brought back to significant production by the time of the surrender. The conquest of Indo-China and Malaya meant that Japan was over-supplied with rubber and there was consequently little demand for this or for pepper, Sarawak's other major pre-war export. The one area of the economy on which the Japanese had an important impact was padi cultivation, principally because self-sufficiency was a matter of absolute necessity after 1943.

The most influential figure in civil affairs administration was S. Yamada, an Oxford graduate who had been seconded from the Department of the Interior and sent to Sarawak in 1943 as head of the

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2 Personal communication from Mr A.J.N. Richards, 17 June 1976.
37th Army's research section. In 1944 he was made head of the General Affairs section in Kuching and became responsible for the work of the *Ken Sanjikai*, or Prefectural Advisory Council, which had been authorized by a military decree of 1 October 1943. While the decree stressed 'the political participation of natives in the administration of North Borneo,' Chinese, Indians and other immigrants were entitled to act as extraordinary members.

Possessing fluent English, which was the language used by the Council, Yamada became extremely popular with all community leaders and did a great deal to further relations between the Japanese and the local population. The *Ken Sanji* (Councillors), who were probably chosen by him, came from the old elite structure. The Datus Amar and Pahlawan and Native Officers Abang Openg and Tuanku Bujang represented the perabangan of Kuching and Sibu while Haji Abdul Rahman could speak for other Malays. As with the Datu Patinggi, Ong Tiang Swee may have declined membership on the grounds of advanced age but his son, Ong Kuan Hin, served as did Lee Wing Thoong who headed the main Cantonese association. The two Iban representatives were Charles Mason and Philip Jitam. It is not clear to what extent, if at all, the Ken Sanji advised the Japanese administration on political and social questions. Their principal purpose, as far as the Japanese were concerned, was to assist with the various economic projects which had been planned including a shipyard to make wooden hulls from local timber and a factory to extract oil from rubber latex. As in Malaya and Indonesia, Japanese policy was to co-opt the local elite to assist in promoting self-sufficiency and mobilizing labour for the construction of airfields and other projects.

1 Yamada, who would have been by far the best informant on the Japanese administration, died a few years ago and does not appear to have written his memoirs. However, Manaki's 'Reminiscences of Shiseikan Yamada' is a useful source. The title of Manaki's book (he was a staff colonel in the 37th Army) is not known. Yamada revisited Sarawak a number of times after the war.

2 Extract of Tokyo broadcast, 1 October 1943, Sarawak Government Agency Sydney, Circular No.5/43, 12 October 1943. According to the broadcast, similar councils were to be set up in each of the five provinces but it is not clear if this was done.
The Japanese also promoted the formation of communally-based associations similar to those which came into being in Malaya. While the local branch of the Indian Independence League became the natural body representing Sarawak's tiny Indian community, the Overseas Chinese Association and the Perimpun Dayak (Dayak Association) were useful means of dealing with the different racial groups. While their leaders were responsible for the actions of their respective communities, they could also be used to organize the demonstrations of loyalty and cultural events which were required on such occasions as the Emperor's birthday and War Heroes Day. The Overseas Chinese Association,¹ as in Malaya, had the initial task of collecting almost $2,000,000 as sook ching (purification through suffering) from the Chinese as punishment for their earlier assistance to the Chiang Kai-Shek government against Japan. Kuching was allocated $900,000, Sibu $700,000 and Miri $300,000 while the Chinese of North Borneo were expected to contribute $1,200,000.

Although the Japanese might easily have made use of the Persatuan Melayu Sarawak, they banned its activities in the apparent belief that it was 'political' and therefore potentially dangerous. Instead they preferred to do what the Brookes had done - to work through the traditional elite in the belief that the authority of the datus could further Japanese interests more than could a group of educated Malays whose social influence was an unknown quantity. While it is said by pre-war members of the Persatuan that the organization and all its branches remained intact throughout the war, it seems unlikely that there were any 'underground' activities. Malay affairs seem to have been the responsibility of a department in which Tuanku Bujang and Abang Openg occupied the senior positions.

By far the most significant of the associations was the Perimpun Dayak whose membership seems to have been drawn in the first instance from the pre-war United Sea Dayak Co-operative whose origins have already been mentioned. Charles Mason became president

¹ Its equivalent in Sibu was the Tung Tiao Hui (joint peace-keeping association).
of the Perimpun and Philip Jitam its secretary. Branches were
established throughout the First and Second Divisions and there
were some large meetings in Kuching. At the same time the Co-
operative, renamed the Gerempong Dayak, was maintained not as a
trading company but as an Iban community welfare organization
responsible for such things as pocket money to militia recruits and
students brought to Kuching for training.¹

The Perimpun Dayak held its first meeting in Kuching on
17 February 1944 at which it was announced that the Japanese
administration had given $4,000 towards its funds. The programme
indicates very clearly that the Perimpun was designed to promote
the loyalty of the Ibans to the Japanese administration:

i Fall-in in the play-ground at the back of the
school [Maderasah Melayu]

ii Give respect due to H.I.M. The Emperor of
Japan. Facing east: Kiojo yo hai "SAIKEREI"
body bending 45 degrees, silence for ½
minute - Naure -

iii Give respect due to the noble and brave
heroes of the Nipponese soldiers who
sacrificed their lives for the sake of Dai
Toa at the fronts:- "Nippon Gun ni tai
suru Kansha no Mokuto - Mokuto hajime - 1
minute silence head bending, eyes shut."²

Although there are very few records of the Perimpun's activities, it
was evidently responsible for conducting a census of all Ibans
and Land Dayaks in the First and Second Divisions and for the
organization of Iban dances and other cultural items for ceremonial
occasions, such as the anniversary of the Japanese invasion of Malaya
in December 1941.

The Japanese also sponsored the establishment in Kuching
of a kaum ibu or women's association with representatives of each of
the four major races. Lily Eberwein,³ the first headmistress of the
Permaisuri Melayu, was secretary of the Malay section while Mary Ong,

¹ Some records of the Gerempong Dayak are among the papers
left by Philip Jitam.

² Programme of inaugural meeting of Perimpun Dayak, Jitam
Papers.

³ See Chapter VIII, p.417n.
Barbara Bayang and Mrs Gopal headed the Chinese, Iban and Indian sections respectively. All had been carefully chosen by Yamada both for their status within their own communities and for their ability. Lily Eberwein was the best educated Malay woman in Sarawak; Mary Ong was the grand-daughter of Ong Tiang Swee and had trained as a nursing sister; Barbara Bayang was also a nurse and an active member of the Sea Dayak Co-operative; and Mrs Gopal was the wife of an Indian doctor. The kaum ibu's main duty was to collect waste metal and hold jumble sales to raise money for gifts to Japanese soldiers. However, its members were also required to organize singing and dancing for concerts held on special occasions and to plant and tend plots of tapioca.

It would be easy to exaggerate the importance of the kaum ibu and its connection with post-war political developments. The organization was imposed by the Japanese and its monthly meetings, from all accounts, were slightly comic affairs. It would even be possible to argue that the most important change affecting women during the Japanese occupation was the chronic shortage of cloth which prevented upper-class Malay women from maintaining their previous custom of concealing themselves in yards of cloth whenever they left their houses. Nevertheless, the Japanese insistence that Asians were perfectly capable of doing anything that Europeans could do (and doing it better) seems to have left its mark. Barbara Bayang later recalled that it was the self-confidence she developed through contact with the Japanese that made possible her subsequent involvement in politics.

The basic means of social control was the jikeidan or vigilante structure established in March 1943 which divided all areas

1 Unlike Lily Eberwein, Barbara Bayang avoided involvement in the anti-cession movement. However, she later participated actively in municipal politics and was one of the founding members of Sarawak's first formally recognized party, the Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP) in 1959.

2 Interview with Lily Eberwein, April 1974. The tapioca root was used as a substitute for rice.

3 Personal information.
of concentrated population into units of approximately thirty households with leaders who were responsible to the police for what happened in their division. In the interior, longhouses constituted the jikeidan unit. To some extent the system worked as an informal spy network which allowed the Japanese to detect malcontents and pro-British elements, but it did provide a structure of social organization and responsibility previously unknown in Sarawak. The Japanese also organized a kyodohei (militia) recruited mainly from the Balau Ibans of the Second Division, although the senior officers were Malays.\(^1\) After receiving elementary military training, some were posted for guard duty in the principal towns while others formed garrisons in the interior. In the Second Division, for example, Iban garrisons were posted under Japanese supervision at Betong and Saratok, and were at times unsupervised at Pusa, Lingga and Engkelili.\(^2\) When the 37th Army headquarters were moved to Sapong rubber estate south of Jesselton in October 1943 a number of kyodohei were sent there as well. All kyodohei units in the interior had been disbanded and sent back to Simanggang by the time of the Allied landing and there appears to have been no attempt to get them to resist the re-occupation. But one Balau Iban who had been promoted to the rank of captain in the Japanese army was killed during the Allied landing at Jesselton.\(^3\)

There was also extensive recruitment of Ibans for the police. In 1943, 28 Ibans were put through a six month course at the newly established police training school at Kuching and were distributed through all the Divisions.\(^4\) The handful of Ibans already in the police were promoted and the Japanese found them much more useful than was at first expected. Unlike the Brookes, the Japanese were sensitive to the numerical preponderance of the Ibans and to the frustrations arising from the virtual Malay monopoly of the police and the Native Officer Service. In their report for 1943

\(^1\) Wan Abdul Rahman (the son of Tuanku Bujang), Abang Hadi bin Abang Sulai and Haji Bohari. McKay, 'The Kuching Communities ...', p.57.

\(^2\) S. Suzuki, MS memoir, 1976.

\(^3\) Personal communication from Sumping Bayang, 29 May 1976.

\(^4\) 'Status of the Military Administration in North Borneo', op.cit. p.55.
the Japanese administration expressed great satisfaction with
the Dusuns of North Borneo and the Ibans whom they found particularly
hard-working, honest and loyal by contrast with the Malays who were
'lazy' and only useful as motor mechanics.¹

One of the most interesting and significant aspects of
the Japanese administration was the establishment of a measure of
indirect rule in the Second Division through the educated Iban elite.
Whether this arose in the first instance from a shortage of Japanese
personnel or from a deliberate policy of involving Ibans in government
is not clear but there can be little doubt about its success. In
January 1942 Eliab Bayang was appointed Liaison Officer on Iban
affairs to the Japanese military administration at Simanggang.²
Other Ibans such as Empenit Adam were also appointed gunoho
(district officer) on his recommendation and were responsible to
him to some extent.³ One of Bayang's main tasks was to increase padi
production by supervising Iban and Chinese padi-planting teams and
facilitating the transportation of padi, salt and other goods. But
he enjoyed a position of political influence which was of the order
of a pre-war Resident and he made a number of reports to the
Japanese administration on Iban customs and the qualities required
for Iban leadership.⁴ The handful of Ibans who had been taken into
the police just before the war were promoted to positions of
considerable responsibility, the most prominent being Juing Insol⁵
who recruited Balau Ibans for the kyodoheï and was extremely valuable
to the Japanese in many other ways.

An outcome of all this was that the educated Ibans
employed by the Japanese were persuaded that they were fully capable

¹ Ibid., p.79.
² K. Itoh to Datu Abang Zin Gapor, 9 January 1942, Bayang Papers.
³ Bayang to Japanese Military Administration Board, Kuching,
21 March 1942, ibid.
⁴ See, e.g., his report of 10 February 1943, ibid.
⁵ Juing Insol came from a well-known Saribas (Buloh Antu) family.
One of his ancestors was a famous rebel against the Brookes.
A man of exceptional ability, he could well have become
Commissioner for Police had it not been for his reputation as
an anti-British collaborator. See below, p.239.
of taking a responsible part in the administration of the country. A good example was Inspector Edward Brandah who was promoted by the Japanese to Deputy Superintendent of Police at Miri but joined the Allied advance parties before the end of the war. In October 1946 he wrote to Anthony Brooke:

If ever I am given the opportunity of administering the welfare of the people of Sarawak I would say that the future prosperity and social status of the people should not all be governed and guided by all the 100 per cent of the western brains. Technicians, lawyers, doctors etc. really require 100 per cent western brains but Native administration ... only requires 30 per cent ... and the rest should be native. The idea came to me as far back as when I was in the interior of Sarawak during the Jap occupation. A sentimentalist or a fanatic patriot I may be, but ... all during the Japanese occupation my wife and I resolved not to bow our heads to them because they were the enemies of Christianity and civilization ... We planned and dreamed that when the enemies were driven away we would unflinchingly offer ourselves to assist in the reconstruction of Sarawak ...

While the Japanese propaganda machine did not operate to the extent that it did in Indonesia and Malaya, an effort was made to inculcate anti-European feeling. Slogans were also posted around Kuching and the other major towns lauding the Japanese armed forces, the East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere and Asian brotherhood; rallies were organized to swear allegiance and support the Japanese as the 'light of Asia'. When Prime Minister Tojo visited Kuching a huge welcome was arranged. Chandra Bose, whose Indian Independence

1 Brandah to Anthony Brooke, 26 October 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
2 For example, all photographs of Europeans and many English books were confiscated.
3 See Plate X.
4 A Japanese broadcast of early March 1943 reported that 100 Ibans, Indian and Chinese representatives from Kuching had recently pledged allegiance to Japan. SG (Sydney), 13 March 1943.
5 Ho Cheah Min, 'Jih-chih shih-ch'i ti hui-i' (Memoirs of the Japanese Occupation), MS prepared for Sarawak History Week, 1975.
League was based in Singapore, was also given a well-orchestrated reception. On occasions such as the Emperor's birthday and the anniversary of the Pacific war there were public meetings and concerts featuring cultural items from all communities. The only newspaper available in Kuching during the occupation was one published by the Japanese army but radio and public address systems were used extensively for propaganda purposes. One of the themes, naturally enough, was the Brookes' failure to develop the economy and to improve the people's general welfare. When the March 1941 secret agreement between the Rajah and the Committee of Administration was discovered, it was used as proof that the Rajah had sold the country to Britain before fleeing to Australia.¹

Although all mission schools remained closed, Malay and Chinese schools were reopend after some months. Some effort was made to teach the Japanese language, particularly in Sibu where teachers were given special courses. At least one Malay student was sent to Indonesia for training in veterinary science² and about ten others were selected to study in Japan. A senior group, including the Datu Pahlawan, was also chosen to visit Japan but these plans were made too late.

Although there was quiet antagonism on the part of many Chinese from the outset, the Japanese remained reasonably popular with the Malays and Ibans until early 1944. By that time the destruction of most of Japan's merchant shipping by the Allies had cut off incoming supplies and consumer goods such as cloth were unobtainable. Japanese demands on local padi became more onerous and basic commodities such as salt and sugar were increasingly scarce. In spite of propaganda to the contrary, the Japanese position was seen

¹ Suzuki made use of this propaganda among the Ibans in the Simanggang district. Personal communication.

² Ahmad Zaidie bin Wan Adruce studied at Bogor during the war where he became a close friend of A.M. Azahari. After the war he joined the Indonesian republican navy, serving in Kalimantan. The colonial government later sent him to Scotland where he took an M.A. and on his return he became a senior education officer and vice-chairman of the Kuching Municipal Council. He also became president of the BPS and opposed Sarawak's integration in Malaysia.
to be very weak. They were unable to counter Allied air raids and when they began cutting routes of retreat from the coast into the interior it was plain that their days were numbered. While the requisitioning of padi and forced labour had irritated the Ibans, the main source of antagonism was an attempt to take away their hunting guns. After a Chinese-led rebellion in the Jesselton area was brutally suppressed in October 1943, the Japanese commander issued a proclamation which severely restricted movement and ordered the confiscation of all firearms. Wherever this was done the Iban reaction was extremely hostile. S. Suzuki, a Japanese police officer who was friendly with Eliab Bayang, managed to prevent confiscation in the Simanggang district, thus preserving good relations with the local Ibans, but he was under threat of repatriation and court-martial for defying orders when the surrender came.

Suzuki was also involved in dealing with Ibans of the Lubok Antu area who had been told by a detachment of the Australian Services Reconnaissance Department (SRD) that large rewards would be paid for the taking of Japanese heads. Excited by this and by the prospect of looting Japanese stores of rice and other goods, about 500 Iban warriors armed with guns and traditional weapons attacked the 14-man Japanese garrison at Engkelili one night in April 1945, only to suffer a number of dead and injured from retaliatory machine gun fire. Suzuki was sent to investigate the incident and by means of

1 According to Mr H.P. Buxton, a Eurasian who had the task to supervising construction of the Bintulu airfield, the system was that Ibans would work for two weeks at a time. They had to provide their own rice but were paid in kerosene and sugar.

2 For the history of the 'Kwok Rebellion', see J. Maxwell-Hall, *Kinabalu Guerillas ...*, Kuching 1965. This would make a fascinating subject for study, as would the abortive rebellion against the Japanese in the Pontianak area in late 1943. A Japanese account of the plot in *Borneo Shimbun*, 1 July 1944, was translated as Exhibit 1697-A, IMTFE Proceedings, AWM.

3 S. Suzuki, MS memoir.

4 This raid was led by Penghulu Ulin anak Penghulu Unji of Spak. Ulin's warriors, reinforced by Ibans from Ulu Layar, Skrang, Lemanak, Engkari, Batang Ai, Delok, Mepi and Lubang Baya later attacked Lubok Antu. Benedict Sandin, unpublished MS.
some skilful diplomacy restored good relations. But up-country Ibans throughout the Second and Third divisions were now out after heads and loot and it was only a matter of weeks before there was a similar attack on Lubok Antu. In the Third Division, a series of attacks on Japanese military personnel and civilians moving between Sibu and Miri caused seventy casualties and in May the second most senior officer of the Miri garrison was killed at Suai where he had retreated to avoid the bombing raids. Nevertheless, there had been no armed opposition to the Japanese until after the first SRD landings.

There can be little doubt that the Japanese invasion of Sarawak damaged European prestige but the rapid deterioration of economic conditions during the last 18 months of the war created a situation in which the Australian Army was enthusiastically received. The ability of the Australians to provide relief supplies in large quantities contrasted markedly with the Japanese failure to deliver the goods and there were some who believed that 'Bikau' (British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit) was the best government that Sarawak could have. Although the Japanese did not introduce many radical changes, the occupation at least fostered the idea that there could be changes: that Brooke government was not the only kind of government. Generally speaking, the Japanese presence and the responses of the different communities created a new pattern of political delineation which soon became obvious during the Australian-British military administration.

More immediately, the activities of the SRD in their re-occupation of Sarawak from the interior led to a heightening of racial tension seldom seen in Sarawak since the Chinese rebellion of 1857. Assisted initially by the Kayans and Kenyahs, the SRD units with some difficulty won over the Ibans of the Rejang. According to W.L.P. Sochon who headed the first party reaching the Rejang, it was

1 According to Suzuki's own account, he compared what had happened with a child cutting itself on a razor. The Japanese army, he told the Ibans, was the razor. Whose fault was it, then, that Ibans had been 'cut'? MS memoir.

2 See Appendix III.
'touch and go for a while' and the decisive factor was the loyalty of Sundai and Penghulu Pusu, together with the support of the Kayans and Kenyaths. In the last weeks before the Japanese surrender the SRD was substantially assisted both by irregular Iban forces and individual Chinese volunteers. However, the licence given Ibans to take Japanese heads got out of control and a number of Chinese in the Song and Kanowit area were killed and the Kapit bazaar burnt before SRD officers and Iban leaders such as Native Officer Bennett Jarrow and Penghulu Jugah could intervene.

Collaboration

One of the factors in Sarawak's post-war political situation which has never been properly assessed is collaboration with the Japanese and its consequences. Initially it was a problem with which the Australian military administration was not really prepared to deal. The only instructions on the subject from Divisional headquarters in Labuan were that all civilian collaborators were to be taken into custody but there was no clear policy on what should be done with them subsequently. While there were some preliminary police investigations, there were no formal court inquiries until late December 1945. Far more important at the time was the seeking out and interrogation of suspected Japanese war criminals.

Unlike Malaya, there was no significant interregnum from the Japanese surrender until the re-imposition of Allied control. In Kuching and the other coastal towns of Sarawak, Japanese authorities maintained tight control of the population until the day before the official handover to the Australians took place (12 September). The arriving Australians found Kuching 'largely unscathed' but a number of collaborators were brought in by the

1 Personal communications from Mr W.L.P. Sochon, 9 September 1974; 12 October 1974.

2 Kuching was occupied by a task force of the Australian 9th Division (Kuching Force) then based at Labuan. Commanded by Brigadier T.C. Eastick, it remained there until the handover to SEAC in early January 1946. Separate commands were set up at Sibu, Miri and Brunei which were also responsible to Labuan. After the handover, a number of Australian officers stayed on and eventually joined the colonial administration.
populace and others placed in custody for their own safety.\(^1\) There were a number of assemblies in the streets which had to be dispersed and Chinese leaders were called in to calm their people and assure them that justice would be done to alleged collaborators.\(^2\) The vendetta continued during the following days and on 15 September the 9th Division news sheet reported that the main activity of the previous day had been the rounding up of collaborators by the rest of the population:

Every hour or so the comparative quiet of the town is broken by wild yellings and shouts in different tongues as packs of Chinese and natives smoke a collaborator out of his lair and chase him pell mell down one of the main streets. Only the fortunate can evade the sticks and fists by gaining the protection of Australians.\(^3\)

By the end of the week the Kuching police station and jail were crowded with people who had begged to be held for their own protection. According to one Australian observer, however, 'few of these were in fact collaborators and many were merely the victims of communal feeling.'\(^4\) The seriousness of the recriminations in Kuching is difficult to estimate. There are suggestions that a few people quietly 'disappeared', presumably murdered, and that many Indians were severely beaten by groups of Chinese.\(^5\) This may have been due to the fact that the Indians as a community gave the most explicit public support to the Japanese through the Indian Independence League, although there were a number of Indian kempeitai informers. Certainly, most of those who were denounced as collaborators and sought protection from the Australians were Indians.

The Australian authorities were deluged with complaints against people who, in the words of the same observer, 'had merely

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2 Police weekly report for week ending 18 September 1945 by Capt J. Marlow, Kuching Force diary, op. cit.


4 R.H. Morris, MS memoir.

5 Interview with Mr R.H. Morris, May 1976.
tried to live under the Japanese occupation. Some of the most bitter but least well founded allegations were made against the Ken Sanji. Furthermore, some of its members made accusations against each other, including those of the same race. From the initial police investigations however, only one Ken Sanji, S.C.S. Chakraverty of the Indian Independence League, was thought to have a case to answer and was finally tried and deported. Opposition by the Indian government to any efforts to punish members of the League ensured that with the exception of the handful who were beaten up by the crowd during the first few days, Sarawak's Indian collaborators emerged unscathed. According to one observer, 'it was felt that action against the Indians would produce more trouble than it was worth.' Even if the military administration and the new colonial government had wished to pursue the collaboration issue there would have been immense difficulties in obtaining witnesses. By the beginning of April 1946 dossiers had been prepared by the police on a number of suspects but prosecution was made difficult by what one officer described as the 'very definite reluctance' of people to come forward and give evidence. However, his suggestion that the government should appoint an independent commissioner to whom people could make their complaints direct and without fear of repercussions seems to have been shelved.

For the most part, collaboration crossed racial lines but there was one incident reminiscent of the clashes which took place in Malaya during this period. During the war the Japanese had brought in some hundreds of Chinese from Shanghai and Canton to build wooden-hulled ships and to work on other projects. Ill-treatment, together with memories of the Japanese invasion of China, had filled them with a fierce spirit of revenge which was shared by many local Chinese. But with the speedy removal of the Japanese troops, Kuching's Malay community seemed the obvious target. The Malays had not fared at all badly under the Japanese. While their diet and dress suffered towards the end of the war, there was no

1 Morris, MS memoir.
2 Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p.172.
3 Interview with Mr R.H. Morris, May 1976.
serious interference with their everyday lives. Their community leaders were recognized by the Japanese and they retained their positions in government; they were seldom used as forced labour. Not surprisingly, the Chinese saw them as a privileged group and were anxious to 'teach them a lesson'.

The precipitating factor, however, seems to have been a rumour that 2,000 Ibans, had gathered in the Serian district and were advancing on Kuching. A military patrol sent to investigate found that some Ibans had indeed crossed over from Dutch Borneo and with local Iban support had instituted a three-day reign of terror during which a Malay policeman who had been over-zealous in assisting the Japanese was tied up and shot and parts of his corpse eaten. However, the situation was quickly brought under control and the Ibans were sent back across the border like so many naughty school-boys. On 22 September there were further reports of more Ibans massing in the Serian district but investigation showed that none had crossed the Dutch border into Sarawak again. Nevertheless, the military authorities failed to dispell Chinese fears of an Iban attack on Kuching and all that that would mean. Stories of the Chinese rebellion of 1857 when Chinese heads were smoked by Ibans in the Kuching bazaar were still current within the Chinese community and news that Chinese heads had been taken a few months earlier at Song and Kanowit aroused fears that it could easily happen again. At the same time, opportunist elements may have seen an attack on the Malays as a means of achieving status and the possibility of looting gold jewellery from the kampongs must also have been a motive.

On 25 September there was fighting between Chinese and Malays in the main bazaar area in the early morning and by 9.30 more than 1,000 Chinese had assembled on the road outside the Brooke dockyard in readiness for an attack on the mosque and the Malay...

1 Kuching Force diary, AWM A2663, 1/5/62.
2 Ibid.; Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p.175.
3 Kuching Force diary, op. cit.
4 Benedict Sandin states that 'it was for this reason that the Chinese started riots in many towns in Sarawak including Kuching ...', Unpublished MS.
kampungs behind it. However, some Australian officers noticed the crowd and after a passing truckload of troops had disarmed the would-be rioters a 24-hour curfew was imposed on the town.\(^1\) While it seems likely that there were no more than ten fatalities in the earlier fighting, it is still commonly believed in Kuching that as many as 100 Chinese were killed and that the whole affair was hushed up by the military administration for fear of further trouble.\(^2\) There is even an unsubstantiated story that the trouble was only settled when Ong Tiang Swee came to an agreement with the Datu Pahlawan that the Chinese should stay out of politics, and that this explains why Chinese leaders kept out of the cession controversy some months later.\(^3\)

The significance of collaboration in other parts of Sarawak is even more difficult to assess although it is clear that there was antagonism towards collaborators among the Sibu and Simanggang Chinese. Feelings ran particularly high in Miri where the Australian authorities had to intervene to prevent a group of Chinese women lynching a well-known Chinese collaborator.\(^4\) There was a great deal of antagonism towards Miri's Chinese businessmen from working-class Chinese who were already demonstrating leftist attitudes. An estimated 3,000 Chinese and Javanese had died of starvation during the final months of the occupation.\(^5\)

This discussion begs the whole question of 'collaboration' and the moral judgments associated with it. From a neutral standpoint, co-operation with the Japanese might be seen to have taken a number of forms. First, there were government servants (mostly Malays), who retained their positions under the Japanese administration. Some, particularly those in the police who had links with the kempeitai, took advantage of their position but for the most part

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1 Interview with Mr R.H. Morris, May 1976.
2 Interview with Senawi bin Suleiman, July 1974.
3 Ibid. This is highly unlikely, but it is significant that it was believed.
4 J.R. Black, 'Rough Notes on Service in British Borneo with BBCAU'.
5 AWM A2663, 619/7/68.
they continued their former work. Secondly, there were the businessmen, Chinese and Muslim Indians, who continued to operate their shops and businesses. Of these a number went out of their way to befriend the Japanese in order to secure business with the trading corporations who monopolized the purchase of local produce. Thirdly, there were the various community leaders whose status was recognized by the Japanese and who were in turn required to make public demonstrations of support on important occasions such as the Emperor's birthday. Fourthly, there were the educated Ibans of the First and Second Divisions who co-operated with the Japanese in a unique system of indirect rule and seized the opportunity of throwing off Malay domination. Fifthly, a number of Indians supported the Indian Independence League and provided the Japanese with a good deal of public support. And finally, there were the various kempeitai informers of all races who found profitable employment in spying on their fellows.

The question of collaboration was a source of tension between some pre-war Sarawak officers who had been in Batu Lintang and members of the military administration. Archer, the pre-war Chief Secretary who had been appointed civilian adviser to the military administration, held that a number of arch-collaborators should be tried on capital charges and executed and all others jailed or deported. The Australian authorities, however, were not authorized to do anything more than detain such people as Chakraverty, Eliab Bayang and Juing Insol and institute police inquiries into the more serious allegations. In the meantime, Archer took a great deal of placating. In February 1946 he told Macaskie that in files left behind by the Japanese there was 'clear evidence' that the Datu Patinggi had tried to persuade the Japanese authorities to return the Turtle Islands to him, in spite of the full settlement that had been made in 1941. Even more annoying to Archer was the venerable datu's expressions of support for the Japanese, something which he ought to have recognized as a mandatory formula:

1 Interview with Mr R.H. Morris, May 1976.
In his letter to the Jap G.O.C. he not only says that he will help the new regime in every way because "they have the interests of the Asiatic people at heart" but ends up with "I should like to assure you of my loyalty towards the new regime, and to express my good wishes for the success of the new Government". And that is one of the men who represented "the whole community of Sarawak" the other day. It makes me almost sick.¹

He also told Eastick that 'all the Datus except one were as near collaborators as doesn't matter.'²

If the restored Brooke government can be said to have possessed a policy on collaboration during its brief span of office from April until July 1946, it amounted to no more than 'turning a blind eye'. The first occasion when the question was raised was the tea party for the King's birthday, an occasion to which all of Kuching's notables had been traditionally invited. When presented with the guest list, the de facto Chief Secretary, C.W. Dawson, noticed the names of a number of well known collaborators and posed the question to himself:

Either forget all about it or what? If we start discriminating it means an investigation into perhaps dozens of cases (including such people like Datu Patinggi etc., when we would immediately be accused of discrimination on "cession" grounds).³

It seemed to him very wrong that Haji Sa'erah, 'a well known Jap collaborator', should be invited but she had already been accepted by the Ranee at a number of public occasions and it would be impossible to omit her name without causing 'a pretty good scandal'.

That there was no consistency in the official attitude to collaborators can best be seen in the experiences of Eliab Bayang and Abang Haji Mustapha. On the reoccupation of Simanggang by SRD forces, Bayang had been placed in jail at the instigation of Datu

¹ Archer to Macaskie, 11 February 1946, Macaskie Papers, File 5.
² Archer to Eastick, 11 March 1948. Letter in the possession of Sir Thomas Eastick.
³ Dawson Diary, 5 June 1946.
Zin Gapor in the belief that he had been associated with the murder of Europeans during the early days of the Japanese invasion. There was also a need to protect Bayang from the Lubok Antu Ibans who were rumoured to be after his head. On 31 December 1945 he was brought before Major A.C. Waine, one of the two magistrates acting under the authority of the British military administration and because of the lack of evidence against him his case was dismissed. However, someone (probably a pre-war Sarawak officer) made sure that Bayang was not rehabilitated. A fortnight after his case was heard, he received a letter from the Chairman of the Promotions Board informing him that he was dismissed from government service and was not entitled to receive the government's contribution to his superannuation. In a letter appealing against his dismissal, Bayang claimed that he had been forced to join the Japanese administration, but that during his time as Resident 'the citizens were well treated and nothing eventful happened'. His main responsibility, he added, had been supervision of the padi planting group at Bijat in the Second Division where farmers had had the best harvest since the opening of the irrigated area. He then suggested that the reasons for his dismissal were ill-founded and partisan; originating principally from the Ibans of Lubok Antu and the Ulu Ai:

If Government thinks that my dismissal came through the various reports submitted by the Iban, I strongly beg the Government to re-investigate the matter fully through a reliable officer ... I doubt that the report received by Government causing my dismissal had not, in any case, [been] done by the Iban themselves, but they were backed-up by the other races (Malays) through ... jealousy in order to overthrow all the Iban officers from [government positions] ... hence it will

1 Personal communication from Mr Sumping Bayang, 1 August 1976.

2 'Report by Capt D. Kearney, OC, SRD Party, 2nd Division, on occupation of Simanggang. 21 Sept. 1945', AWM 376/5/19. Juing Insol who was District Officer, Betong, at the time of the reoccupation, was also brought to Simanggang for the same reason. Insol was later jailed for a wartime assault on a Eurasiam.

3 Undated letter, Bayang Papers.
be an easy matter for the other party [the Malays] to handle illiterate Ibans as that of one hundred years ago.¹ But Bayang's appeal apparently went unheeded. All his subsequent applications for government positions were rejected and when he formed a fishing company he found that he could not obtain a licence to sell his catch.² Bayang's real offence, it might be suggested, was that by becoming de facto Resident of the Second Division he had usurped one of the most senior positions of European authority in Sarawak. Nor had he gone through the motions of apologizing for his involvement with the Japanese.

Abang Haji Mustapha had co-operated with the Japanese administration in a different way. The youngest of the datus, he spoke at Japanese-organized kampong 'loyalty' meetings where he vigorously denounced the British and the Americans until only months before the surrender.³ He was also the leader of a group which was to have been sent on a tour of Japan. Consequently he ought to have been one of the prime subjects for investigation by the military administration but there appears to have been an informal direction, emanating from the Rajah, that he be left alone. And in accordance with a secret agreement apparently made with MacBryan in early January, he was even promoted to the position of Datu Bandar⁴ and given an O.B.E. This indicated in very clear terms to the Malays that he had been chosen to succeed the Datu Patinggi as their leader. Abang Haji Mustapha's position within the Malay community and his police connections meant that his support was as important to the new colonial government as it had been to the Japanese. Indeed, it was more important because he had made his support for cession clear at a very early stage. And he was prepared to be an activist in a situation where the majority of his own community was clearly on the other side of the fence. The failure to prosecute Abang Haji Mustapha

¹ Ibid.
² Brangking Fishing Industry to Deputy Chief Secretary, 20 September 1947, Bayang Papers.
³ Joseph Law to Bertram Brooke, 31 May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3; Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p.173.
⁴ See Chapter VIII, p.388.
virtually determined the effective policy to prosecute only those who had been clearly involved in acts of violence during the occupation. Writing about the situation some years later, Digby described the problem which the Datu Pahlawan posed for the civil administration:

The restored government could not afford to dismiss him and his like, since there were no friendlier people with equal authority to put in their places. It could not, on the other hand, afford to prosecute the lesser fry and leave the big fish untouched. Too many rude comparisons would have been drawn for anybody's comfort. The only course was to let them all go on swimming safely together.¹

It has been suggested that the collaboration question was used in Sarawak to obtain agreement to cession just as it was by Sir Harold MacMichael with the Malay sultans to make possible the Malayan Union.² Although there is no hard evidence that it was deliberately exploited, the question certainly assumed importance in the minds of many people during the nine months leading up to the Council Negri vote in May 1946. The Datu Pahlawan, for example, was probably anxious about the prospect of any thorough-going investigation of collaboration and during his visit to Kuching in December 1945 MacBryan may have suggested to him and the other datus that support for cession would be one way of winning immunity.³

It is also possible that other Council Negri members were self-conscious about their activities during the occupation and saw support for cession as being something in the nature of an insurance policy. Khoo Peng Loong, for example, did a lot of business with the Japanese in Sibu and had amassed such a quantity of pepper by the end of the war that it was almost confiscated by the Custodian of Enemy Property. Abang Abdulrahim, brother of Abang Haji Mustapha and Native Officer at Sibu during the war, was also regarded as a collaborator and might well have felt apprehensive

¹ Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p.173.
³ See Chapter VII, p.310.
about official investigations. Bennett Jarrow, the Iban Native Officer who later supported cession in the Council Negri, was supposed to be in the same category.

It was only within the Chinese community of Sarawak that collaboration was a real issue with significant consequences. As we have seen, Chinese community leaders in Kuching and Sibu were active before the war in collecting funds to support the Kuomintang government in its struggle against the invading Japanese. When the Japanese arrived in Sarawak they immediately rounded up all the committee members they could find and placed them in detention. Many were brutally treated, particularly Chien Chang Poa, the Kuching committee chairman. Khan Ah Chong also earned special punishment by refusing to apologize for his pre-war activities. There was even a faction within the Japanese administration which wanted the execution of all the China Distress Relief Fund committee members and was only placated by the substitution of five other Chinese who had been caught stealing petrol at Kuching's airfield.

Many middle class Kuching and Sibu Chinese who wanted nothing to do with the Japanese remained at home and lived off their savings and the sale of property. Poorer Chinese took themselves to villages and coastal areas of the First Division such as the Nonok peninsula where they lived on fish and home-grown vegetables and fruit. Others made a living by manufacturing salt from the roots of the nipah palm. Those traders who remained were obliged to co-operate to some extent with the Japanese administration and with the trading corporations who came in to conduct monopolies over padi, pepper, timber and rubber. However, as Japan's position weakened, the scarcity of all kinds of goods provided unprecedented opportunities for profit and much of this was used to purchase land and other property. Accordingly, at the end of the war there were

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1 Ho Cheah Min, 'Memoirs ...'.
2 Interview with Mr Dennis Law, July 1974.
3 Ibid. For a description what happened to the Sibu committee members, see Liu, History ...
in Kuching and Sibu a number of Chinese businessmen who had not only managed to survive the occupation without discomfort but had in fact substantially improved their material position through judicious purchases of property and produce, such as pepper, on a buyers' market. It was upon these men, who were seen to have waxed fat on the misfortunes of others, that resentment focussed. Among them were dialect group leaders who could now no longer command the same respect that they had received before the war. The result was a leadership vacuum which was never entirely filled and a split within the Chinese community whose traces can still be seen.

T'ien Ju-K'ang, who conducted research on the Sarawak Chinese during 1947 and 1948, was in a good position to assess the significance of collaboration and while his observations were no doubt coloured by the political polarization brought about by contemporary events in China, there can be little doubt about the general pattern which he described:

Under the present political system the Chinese community undoubtedly needs leaders who can bridge the gap between their community and the Colonial Government, but such leaders must be people who can command respect. Before the occupation the Chinese public regarded their leaders as leaders, despite their faults. Now the long-years established authority of the leadership has collapsed. Although it would be quite unjust to say that all the present holders of power were collaborators, yet a few of them undoubtedly were, and as long as any of these people still appear on the platforms of public meetings all their colleagues will be tarred with the same brush. At the present time, therefore, the gap between the so-called Chinese "leaders" and the Chinese public ... is made even wider by emotional antagonism. Each side acts in its own way without considering the existence of the other. The "leaders" have only their cliques to support them, the community is without leadership.¹

Before the war the institution acting as a general intermediary between the Chinese community of Kuching and the

government was the Chinese Chambers of Commerce whose members were traditionally the leaders of the various dialect associations and saw themselves as representing different sectional interests. But the problem of collaboration made it impossible for the Chamber to re-organize itself until 1948, by which time there had been a contest for power involving several factions. The most vocal of these were the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien (Overseas Chinese Youth Associations) which were established in Kuching and other centres in early 1946.\(^1\)

Consisting largely of young Chinese middle-school graduates who represented the left-wing of Chinese nationalism, the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien wanted a more democratic system of Chinese representation than had existed under the Raj and supported the integration of the Chinese community 'unhampered by speech group particularism'.\(^2\) They were also concerned with such questions as citizenship and the status of Chinese schools which immediately affected its members' interests. The Hua Kheow Tshin Nien accordingly believed that there was more hope of achieving these aims under a colonial government unhindered by past traditions and were therefore disposed to support cession.

The other major political grouping of the time in Kuching was the Chung Hua Association.\(^3\) Like the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien, it was influenced by a generally felt need for a pan-Chinese body 'capable of transcending the traditional divisions within the community'.\(^4\) However, its political orientation was right-wing and there appear to have been early links with the Kuomintang.\(^5\) The Chung Hua Association assumed responsibility for organizing the celebration of China's national day and acted as an intermediary with government for Chinese groups or individuals possessing grievances. Although not so outspoken, it later shared the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien's favourable attitude to cession. Both groups had rejected the pre-war kapitan

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1 Associations were registered for Kuching (25 May), Binatang (20 March), Bau (3 May), Penrissen Road 10th mile (11 June). SGG, 16 May 1946, 1 June 1946, 17 June 1946.
3 Registered on 21 May 1946. SGG, 1 June 1946.
5 Ibid.
system and were anxious to see it replaced with something which
would not emphasize dialect-group differences. Unlike the pre-war
Chambers of Commerce, their membership was not dominated by
wealthy businessmen and they had been politicized to some extent by
China's apparent emergence as a world power.

Chinese Nationalism

The defeat of Japan and the massive publicity accorded Chiang Kai
Shek's Nationalist government by his American and British allies
had a dramatic effect on the overseas Chinese. Victor Purcell has
described the reactions of the Malayan Chinese, and those of the
Sarawak Chinese appear to have been very similar. When Australian
troops entered Kuching in September 1945 they found the streets
lined with Chinese rather than British or Sarawak flags. In isolated
places such as Saratok where the Chinese flag was raised immediately
after the lowering of the Japanese flag 'in expectation of a Chinese
landing and take-over', the local Ibans insisted that it be taken
down and replaced by the Sarawak flag.¹ There were similar native
reactions to unrestrained Chinese enthusiasm in Simanggang and Betong.

After more than three years of silence about the progress
of the war, the sudden capitulation of Japan and the blaze of
publicity lauding Chiang Kai Shek for helping to bring this about
fired the patriotism of the Sarawak Chinese. From Singapore and
Hong Kong came lurid posters depicting Chiang leading his forces
to victory over the cowering Japanese. Chinese radio broadcasts
from a mysterious source in Singapore also proclaimed that Britain
was a spent force. Not surprisingly, there were many Chinese in
Sarawak who believed that China had defeated Japan and that the
atomic bomb amounted to no more than a coup de grace. All this
encouraged the idea, which may already have been latent in the minds
of some, that China would move to incorporate the Nan Yang
(South Seas), including the whole of Borneo, Malaya and the Dutch
East Indies, as her territory.² The occupation of northern Viet

¹ Personal communication from Mr Robert Nicholl, 20 October 1975.
² Morris, MS memoir.
Nam by Nationalist armies in August 1945 prompted rumours in Malaya and Sumatra that Chinese armies would land there and in Sarawak members of the military administration were frequently asked 'when the Chinese forces would arrive'. Nationalist China's power and potential had been so grossly over-stated by Allied propaganda that the response of patriotic Chinese can well be understood and to such people the question of cession must at first have seemed absurd. The Australian military authorities in Kuching and Sibu found that while the Chinese were friendly and co-operative, they were also very anxious to have their say in questions of policy. As one of the 'Big Four', they also saw themselves as participating in the Allied victory. Consequently, 10 October was celebrated in Kuching as 'Joint Allied Victory & Chinese National Day'. The ceremonial dais was draped with Kuomintang as well as British and Australian flags and a number of Chinese leaders including Ong Tiang Swee gave speeches to the assembled crowd. In addition to a long and spectacular parade, the organizing committee arranged various sporting fixtures, a dinner at Ong Tiang Swee's house, a concert and other events over a three-day period. There had been similar celebrations at Miri on 21 September where official proceedings opened with the singing of the Kuomintang anthem.

All this may have seemed natural enough to Australian officers who had recently arrived in Sarawak, but for pre-war Brooke officers the altered demeanour of the Chinese community was quite staggering. C.D. Adams, a veteran officer who had been brought back from retirement by the Colonial Office to assist the military administration in Sibu, could not get used to the changes which had taken place. 'The Chinese', he told Macaskie in November, 'got on their hind legs and tried to dictate the policy as regards collaborators and refused to be ruled by Malay magistrates in future'.

2 Interview with Mr R.H. Morris, May 1976.
3 See Plate XII.
5 Adams to Macaskie, 15 November 1945, Macaskie Papers. The metaphor is illuminating.
Later that month he complained that the Chinese were hoarding rice, of which they had a great deal due to the Japanese success in encouraging padi-cultivation, and were trying to keep the re-introduced Straits and Sarawak currency at the same level as Japanese occupation currency. 'They have the idea that China is one of the Four Powers', he complained '[and that] they have the power to dictate'.

Some months later when two British M.P.s visited Sibu to consult local opinion on cession, they were met with requests for compensation not only for the damage caused by bombing but for the $750,000 collected by the Japanese as sook ching and the $6 head tax levied later. A direct hit on the Sibu bazaar by Allied bombers had caused the deaths of 150 people. But while this could be accepted philosophically enough, compensation and damage to property was the subject of earnest representations by the kapitan china, Teo Chong Lo, and a director of one of the local banks. There were also continued appeals to the government to buy back at par Japanese dollars which had been pronounced worthless.

The other pre-war organizations were not so quick to re-establish themselves although the Persatuan Melayu was evidently spurred on by the initiative taken by the Chinese. Its committee members made themselves known to the Australian commander, Brigadier T.C. Eastick, and on 11 November they organized a Sarawak Malay Regatta and Malay cultural show as if in answer to the Chinese demonstration of 10 October. The Perimpun Dayak was under investigation by the military administration as a collaborationist organization and its members were probably happy to remain out of sight. It was not until the news of cession was received in early February that the Persatuan and the Perimpun received the final stimulus which transformed

1 Adams to Macaskie, 27 November 1945, Macaskie Papers.
2 See Chapter VII.
3 Barrett Diary, 10 May 1946.
4 Ibid.
5 Programme in the possession of Sir Thomas Eastick.
6 Personal information.
them from co-operative and uplift societies into political parties. However, the anxiety aroused among the Malays and the educated Ibans by the new assertiveness of the Chinese had already provided a common cause since the Japanese surrender.
CHAPTER VI
The Closing of Sarawak's Options, 1942-45

THE Japanese invasion of Sarawak in December 1941 was an externally imposed moratorium on the apparently insoluble problems of Brooke rule. At the same time, it stimulated competition among a number of contenders interested in determining the nature of post-war Sarawak. The Rajah's scheme, after an unsuccessful attempt to return to the state, was to establish a government-in-exile in Australia which would authorize him to take over the remaining reserve funds and wind up the administration, leaving Sarawak to the victors. This was a course of action perfectly in keeping with his earlier interest in giving up his responsibilities and making financial provision for his immediate family.

Anthony Brooke anticipated that the British government would insist upon a greater say in Sarawak's internal affairs after the war and was prepared to compromise to some extent. He now accepted the need for some form of constitutional limitation which would preserve the character of the Raj and satisfy the demands of the Colonial Office. When the Rajah appointed him head of the Provisional Government in early 1945 to take over negotiations instituted by the Colonial Office, he probably had high hopes of returning to Sarawak as Rajah. But the Colonial Office insisted upon the application of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act which would reduce Brooke sovereignty to the same status as the Malay rulers. Anthony's refusal to accept this cost the Brooke dynasty the opportunity of surviving as a constitutional monarchy.

As early as January 1944 the Colonial Office had decided that North Borneo should be annexed and a new treaty negotiated with the Rajah of Sarawak empowering the British government to legislate for the state and establishing an Adviser system like that of the Unfederated Malay States. The War Cabinet was persuaded to adopt this policy which was inherited by the Labour government in July 1945. The arrangement had initially assumed that the Brookes would remain on as figureheads, like the Malay rulers,
but the Labour government was disinclined to countenance the survival of white rajahs in the post-war Empire.

One of the assumptions of the Colonial Office was that the post-war military administration of Borneo would be in British hands and that this would assist their bargaining position with the Rajah. When it became clear that Borneo was to be reoccupied by Australian troops and that the Australians were determined to dominate the military administration, there was some anxiety about Australian intentions. This, together with the unexpectedly early Japanese surrender, made it vital to break the deadlock which had developed in negotiations with the Provisional Government. Although little is known about the subsequent talks between the Rajah and the Colonial Office, it seems doubtful that he saw any option other than that of ceding his sovereignty.

While cession was probably more than the Colonial Office had originally envisaged in 1944, it was the logical outcome of their concern that Sarawak should be brought up to the level of British colonial administration in other territories and that Britain's Southeast Asian dependencies should be brought under tighter control. At the same time, it was the final expression of Vyner Booke's lack of faith in his nephew as Rajah.

The Rajah in Australia

When news came of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, the Rajah and MacBryan were approaching Brisbane. The Rajah immediately sought the assistance of the Australian government to return to Sarawak and on 16 December cabled Le Gros Clark:

I deeply regret not being with you in Sarawak to share this time of anxiety and trial through which you are now passing. I send you this message of good wishes and encouragement coupled with an expression of my full confidence that notwithstanding these days the tide will soon turn. I am hastening to return to Kuching to join you with
the utmost speed possible and you may expect me to arrive in the near future.\footnote{Vyner Brooke to Le Gros Clark, 16 December 1941, CA A981 [Sarawak 2: Visit of Rajah].}

At the same time Pitt Hardacre, who was then visiting the Sarawak Government Office in Sydney, asked the Chief Secretary to inform the District Officer of Upper Sarawak that the Rajah would be returning via Dutch Borneo and that appropriate arrangements were to be made accordingly.\footnote{Ibid. Upper Sarawak consisted of the Bau-Lundu district, south-west of Kuching.} On 22 December the Rajah and MacBryan left Brisbane by air.

Reaching Surabaya on 25 December, they found that Kuching was already out of wireless contact and decided to go on to Bandoeng where Major General H. ter Poorten, Commander-in-Chief of the Dutch East Indies, had his headquarters. On 29 December ter Poorten told them that Kuching had fallen three days earlier but the Rajah was unwilling to believe that the Japanese had gained control of anything more than a few places on the coast. It was agreed that MacBryan should travel to the Dutch Borneo-Sarawak frontier with Colonel Gortman, a Dutch guerilla warfare expert, and make contact with native leaders with a view to organizing anti-Japanese resistance.

What happened subsequently is difficult to piece together accurately since the only account is in a letter from the Rajah to the British High Commissioner in Canberra, Sir Ronald Cross, which was almost certainly written by MacBryan on his return to Sydney in late January. However, it appears that the Rajah gave MacBryan a commission appointing him as his personal representative, together with secret verbal instructions to encourage those Sarawak officers who had escaped to accept Gortman's command of a guerilla resistance against the Japanese. As the Rajah told Cross:

... it was evident to me and to the General [ter Poorten] that the attitude of my Dayak subjects who comprise the backbone of the fighting population was one of vital importance to the
future because the time would come when we should take the offensive and their presence in the interior of Borneo as the most skilled jungle men in the world might well be invaluable as a strong pro British asset.¹

When MacBryan arrived in Pontianak on 31 December he found some of the escaped officers extremely sceptical of the chances of enlisting Iban assistance. Those who had reached Dutch Borneo through Iban areas had received the impression that the Ibans had made a fairly realistic assessment of the military position and were not prepared to throw away their lives against superior arms. MacBryan was also the target for a good deal of hostility when it was revealed that the Treasurer, B.A. Trechman, had barely succeeded in preventing him from obtaining the authority to draw on Sarawak state funds which had been brought from Kuching and deposited in the bank at Pontianak.²

Undeterred by all this, MacBryan joined Gortman at Sanggau Lidau, an airfield on the Dutch border of the First Division, and it was there that he met up with the remnants of the 2/15th Punjabis, commanded by Colonel C.M. Lane and a handful of Sarawak officers. However, Lane had already been warned by a Sarawak officer in Pontianak not to allow MacBryan through the Punjabi lines under any circumstances.³ Lane promptly arranged an intelligence report on MacBryan⁴ and informed the Dutch that he was a suspected spy who was probably hoping to re-enter Sarawak for the purpose of cooperating with the Japanese. Singapore was informed and MacBryan was subsequently arrested on the request of Sir Shenton Thomas and sent back to Batavia under military guard. Although the Rajah was still in the capital, MacBryan was not permitted to communicate with him and after some days of fruitless questioning it was decided to send him on to Singapore for examination by the British authorities.

¹ Vyner Brooke to Sir Ronald Cross, 31 January 1942, CO 531/30, [53079].
² Interview with Mr B.A. Trechman, 4 March 1975.
³ Personal communication from Mr E.H. Elam, 6 July 1976.
⁴ 'Report on Mr G.T. MacBryan', Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
Lodged incommunicado in Changi prison, MacBryan had a piece of extraordinarily good fortune. Sir Roland Braddell, the prominent Singapore lawyer who had previously represented the Rajah, happened to be visiting Changi to interview a client and immediately took up MacBryan's case with the Colonial Secretary and Sir Shenton Thomas. Braddell appealed to the Governor to produce the evidence against MacBryan or release him and some days later the Rajah's Private Secretary found himself on a ship carrying civilian evacuees to Perth. From there he travelled to Sydney where the Rajah had temporarily installed himself.

The principal accusation levelled against MacBryan was that he had advised Japanese residents on the purchase of land adjacent to military posts and had extensive contacts with Japanese suspects. This prompted the suggestion in Lane's report that he was a Quisling on his way back to form a puppet Japanese state in Sarawak with himself as the head. However, Le Gros Clark and J.L. Noakes went into the matter of MacBryan's Japanese contacts in late 1941 and could find no evidence to support the suspicions held about him. In the atmosphere of the time it would not be surprising if the antagonism towards him within the Sarawak Service took on a somewhat hysterical character. Nevertheless, we cannot rule out the possibility that MacBryan was indeed hatching such a plan. The idea of linking all the Southeast Asian Muslim states in some pan-Islamic confederation had always interested him and he may have seen the Japanese as providing the opportunity.

Whether such a plan was practical is another question. It seems highly unlikely that the Japanese military authorities would have been eager to accept MacBryan's offer of assistance in organizing a new government, but if he did in fact make contact with Japanese espionage before the invasion then there may have been some basis for encouragement.

1 Ibid.
2 Personal communication from Mr J.L. Noakes, 8 October 1976. Col. Lane's report on MacBryan was largely the work of B.J.C. Spurway, the Rajah's former Private Secretary who had been replaced by MacBryan in early 1941. Spurway later had to make a formal retraction when MacBryan threatened legal action. MacBryan to Secretary of State (Creech-Jones) 9 August 1949. Letter in the possession of Mrs Frances Benn, MacBryan's third wife.
MacBryan was certainly not the man to organize an indigenous resistance movement against the Japanese. He was by no means a military type and his real strength lay in political intrigue, principally among the Malays who were the least likely people to take part in a resistance movement. MacBryan would also have been made aware by those officers who had escaped from Sarawak that the Ibans were disinclined to take up arms against the Japanese.

Another possibility is that after the news of Pearl Harbour, MacBryan persuaded the Rajah to return to Sarawak and intervene with the Japanese when they arrived on behalf of the Sarawak people. This would appear to fit the Rajah's earlier flirtation with the idea of neutrality and his later attempt in Australia to contact the Japanese authorities in Sarawak by means of the Argentinian Consul in Sydney.

The Sarawak government had already established an office in Sydney with Pitt Hardacre in charge and it seemed to be the most obvious place for the government to re-group in exile, particularly since more than stg. £300,000 had been deposited there to the government's credit. The presence of four senior Sarawak officers (B.A. Trechman, T. Corson, C.E. Gascoigne and F.H. Pollard) in Australia also meant that the quorum of three members required by the 1941 Constitution for a sitting of the Supreme Council was available and it only remained to obtain permission from the Australian authorities and the Colonial Office. The establishment of the Council was of vital importance to the Rajah as under the 1941 Constitution he needed its permission in order to draw on State funds.

In late January 1942 Corson wrote to the Minister for External Affairs, Dr H.V. Evatt, asking if there was any objection to the Rajah-in-Council sitting in Australia and continuing the functions of the Sarawak government. He claimed that this would not involve any change to existing relations between the Sarawak and British governments and the normal channel of communication through the British Agent.

1 Personal communication from Mr C. Pitt Hardacre, 3 October 1976.
2 H.E. Jones (Controller of Commonwealth Investigation Branch) to Secretary, Dept. of External Affairs, 12 March 1942, 'Sarawak: Visit of the Rajah... to Australia', CA A981.
would continue. A cable to this effect was sent to Sir Shenton Thomas for transmission to the Secretary of State. The Australian authorities indicated that they had no objection, provided that the British government was agreeable, but in the meantime the Colonial Office had learnt of the proposal from the Sarawak Government Agent together with the appointment of Pitt Hardacre as Sarawak's representative in the Netherlands East Indies 'for purpose of liaison with headquarters of Allied Command'. Britain's High Commissioner in Canberra, Sir Ronald Cross, was accordingly instructed to ask the Rajah for details of these proposals and to inform him that under the terms of the 1888 Treaty, the British government should be consulted on any plan to establish constitutional government outside Sarawak territory. In the view of Gent and his colleagues there were grave dangers in allowing the Rajah to operate freely from Australia. The primary consideration, of course, was Sarawak's reserves in the United Kingdom, amounting to about $11,000,000, which the Rajah might wish to transfer to Australia. They were also apprehensive of the influence of MacBryan, now with the Rajah in Sydney, particularly in the light of the intelligence reports about him. Bertram Brooke opposed the scheme from the outset and urged the Rajah to return to England instead. Even more fearful of MacBryan's influence, he may have suspected that the latter would persuade the Rajah to wash his hands of Sarawak once and for all. It is not clear whether Bertram cooperated with the Colonial Office in a joint effort to sabotage the Supreme Council proposal, but they certainly possessed a common interest in getting the Rajah back to England.

Cross wrote to the Rajah seeking full details of his plans but it was almost two months before he could obtain a reply.

1 Corson to Evatt, 21 January 1942, CO 531/30 [53001/4].
2 Colonial Office to Cross, 17 February 1942, ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Cross to Vyner Brooke, 12 March 1942, ibid.
In the meantime the Rajah, who was now living in Melbourne, was becoming weary of the whole business of trying to set up an administration in Australia. In a letter to Bertram he told of his frustration:

All news of Sarawak shut up like a dam (and wireless news bottled) days before the Japs made an appearance. Our people didn't make much of a show but it is difficult to get facts till we hear more ...
I don't know what you think about the Council in Sydney. For all the good they do an agency would act just as well. Personally I think the Council or some such body should carry on in London not in Sydney. Sarawak is non est at present and I very much doubt if we ever get it back [sic] but if conditions return some time to anything like normal all the negotiations, carving up, parleying will be done in London and not in Sydney ...

Also a strong, Head Office might get a move on in London to try and get in touch with the unfortunate people in Sarawak either through Geneve [sic] or some neutral country. I am doing nothing here except mark time and boost the council. If you think I would be better employed in England I should be happy to move and tell the Council, as present constituted, to go to hell - a wire from you would be welcomed - if we get back to Sarawak, and if the people wish me back (wishful thinking!) I should only do so on my own terms and with complete powers. All red tape, Councils, bureaucracy, etc. etc. to be completely eliminated. I am sure you will agree on this.1

Towards the end of April the Rajah told Sir Ronald Cross that the decision to establish the Council in Australia was 'ill-conceived' and had been made under conditions of great anxiety.2 He had consequently decided to disband the Council and enclosed a copy of a cable to Bertram in which he set out a new proposal to appoint a Sarawak Commission in London as from 1 May 1942 consisting of A.A. Rennie, H.D. Aplin, J.C. Swayne and J.A. Smith under the Tuan Muda's presidency. The new Commission, which was to function at the Sarawak Government Office at Millbank until the re-establishment of government in Sarawak, had as its principal responsibility the custody

1 Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 24 March 1942, ibid.
2 Vyner Brooke to Cross, 27 April 1942, ibid.
of Sarawak's reserve funds and the currency fund. The Rajah himself was to remain in Australia until the situation in the Pacific improved and would look after Sarawak's interests in the area through the instrumentality of Pitt Hardacre. Stg.£100,000 was to be transferred to London but the remaining A£200,000 of Sarawak funds in Australia was to be retained under Pitt Hardacre's supervision.¹

Not surprisingly, the Secretary of State approved this new scheme but Anthony Brooke urged Gent not to take too optimistic a view of the Rajah's apparent amenability:

I hope that this gift horse hasn't got faulty teeth. My impression is that either MacBryan's power is broken at last, in which case things are looking up and my father's letters to his brother have made a deep impression. Or - and I think this just as likely - MacBryan's influence can still make itself felt, and he has prevailed upon the Rajah to make this gesture to put those concerned in a good humour and to prepare the ground for a final appeal to my father for a sum of money which would enable the Rajah (and MacBryan) to retire gracefully from the Sarawak scene for ever.²

There were already grounds for scepticism, although Bertram Brooke did not become aware of these until later. In early April the Rajah wrote to Pitt Hardacre suggesting that since Bertram would probably accept any proposals 'provided Mac. [Bryan] had no fingers in the pie', MacBryan should cease to be Private Secretary but be kept on the payroll. In order to allay his fears, Bertram was to be told that the Rajah was 'fed up' with MacBryan and that the demise of the Supreme Council meant that there was no further need for him.³

The Rajah's impatience with the Supreme Council can be more clearly understood if it is recognized that during the first few months of his stay in Australia he was endeavouring, no doubt with MacBryan's encouragement, to get his hands on Sarawak's reserve funds. Although there are no surviving records of the deliberations of the

¹ Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 20 April 1942, ibid.
² Anthony Brooke to Gent, 28 April 1942, ibid.
³ Vyner Brooke to Pitt Hardacre, 3 April 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.
Supreme Council in Sydney during that period, the evidence of Thackwell Lewis is quite clear on this point. Shortly after arriving in Sydney the Judicial Commissioner was shown a document which had been sent to the Council by the Rajah:

It was quite short and speaking from the memory the gist of it was ... that the Rajah had decided to abandon the State which could be taken by either the British or the Dutch after the war. He proposed in effect to wind up the existing machinery of State and after making arrangements for the payment of pensions to assume control of the Sarawak Funds in England. When the Council declined to consider this suggestion the Rajah wired for this paper to be returned to him in original. This was done but not until a copy had been taken ... This made it clear to me that the Rajah. (1) Had no further interest in Sarawak. (2) Was still anxious to get even more money out of the State.

The Council was successful in blocking this move although the Rajah's reaction was to dissolve it. He continued to ponder over a means of giving up his responsibilities and in a number of letters to Bertram expressed the belief that the post-war status of Sarawak should be decided as soon as possible. In June 1942 he gave the clear impression that he was looking for a way out. 'Taking it by and large', he told his brother, 'I would rather remain "put" in England if I can do this unostentatiously and honourably. Anyhow ... do what you can for me'. Bertram felt sure that if he had cabled asking for authority to commence negotiations with the Colonial Office on the future of Sarawak, the Rajah would have agreed immediately.

For some months the Rajah cooled his heels in Melbourne but in September he despatched Pitt Hardacre to London with authority to conduct important negotiations with the Colonial Office. No further details of the mission are available but it appears that it was concerned with Sarawak finances and the Rajah's desire to have

1 Thackwell Lewis to Anthony Brooke, 27 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.

2 Vyner Brooke to Bertram Brooke, 20 June 1942, cited by Bertram Brooke in his letter to Paskin, December 1943, Brooke Papers, Box 10/5.

3 Ibid.
MacBryan's name cleared\(^1\) and that Pitt Hardacre was persuaded by Bertram Brooke and the other members of the Commission not to carry out the Rajah's instructions. On his way back to Australia, Pitt Hardacre spent some weeks in Cairo and Jeddah in connection with an Allied intelligence plan to use Indonesians stranded in the Middle East as agents in the archipelago.\(^2\) Frustrated in his second attempt to reach a financial settlement and irritated by what he regarded as Pitt Hardacre's disobedience, the Rajah dismissed him as Government Agent in Sydney, appointing Gascoigne in his place and MacBryan as 'Confidential Agent for the South-West Pacific'.

Although the Supreme Council in Sydney and the Colonial Office and Sarawak Commission in London had thwarted the Rajah's plans to gain control of Sarawak's assets, there were still considerable difficulties under the new arrangement. While being responsible for the administration of Sarawak funds in England, the Commission was obliged to transmit substantial sums to the Rajah without having any information about their use. Angered by the vagueness of Vyner's reports on expenditure and by the news of MacBryan's re-installation, Bertram Brooke wrote to him in November 1942 pointing out that with regard to Sarawak's finances he had a responsibility to the British government as well as to the Rajah and Sarawak, and if these proved incompatible he would have to resign as head of the Commission.\(^3\) Subsequently he went to see Paskin at the Colonial Office and discussed the possibility of writing an official letter to the Secretary of State. Now that MacBryan had been appointed as the Rajah's 'Confidential Agent for the South-West Pacific', he feared that as with the 1941 constitution the Rajah would make some vital decisions without consulting him. However, Vyner had indicated that he would return to England in February and Bertram no doubt hoped that it would still be possible to undo any damage.

\(^1\) Personal communication from Mr C. Pitt Hardacre, 27 October 1976.
\(^2\) See Chapter IV, p.144n.
\(^3\) Bertram Brooke to Aplin - July 1943, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
The Colonial Office was also concerned about Sarawak finances since all available funds would be needed to defray the cost of the Borneo Planning Unit, the military administration and post-war reconstruction in the State. Consequently, Aplin was given a sympathetic hearing by Paskin when he came to the Colonial Office in May 1943 to seek its views on the situation. However, the Rajah was due to return in July and it was apparently decided that nothing could be resolved until then. In the meantime, Bertram and the members of the Commission prepared a letter to the Rajah criticizing a number of charges on Sarawak's reserves which the Rajah had authorized in Australia and the Colonial Office was given the clear impression that the Commission was heading for a final 'showdown' with him. Shortly after the Rajah's arrival, Bertram spent some time with him discussing the vexed question of finances and it was agreed that the Commission would be authorized to review all expenditure for the war period, making retrenchments wherever necessary.\(^1\) The Colonial Office was happy with this arrangement which it saw as reducing the chances of the Rajah 'frittering away the resources of his Government ...'.\(^2\)

*Anthony Brooke's Early Talks with the Colonial Office*

Anthony Brooke arrived in England in mid-January 1942 and volunteered for active service but it was more than two months before he was called up. In the meantime, it seemed a good opportunity to consider Sarawak's future relationship with Britain and, with his father's permission, to make his views known to the Colonial Office. 'Once in the army', he wrote to Margery Perham, 'it is unlikely that I shall be able to take part in any discussions regarding the position of Sarawak in the post-war world, until after the war, by which time the matter will probably have been settled'.\(^3\) He was also conscious of the possibility that his outspoken letters about the

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1 Aplin to Paskin, 8 July 1943, CO 531/31/1 [53077].
2 Monson to G.H.B. Chance [Treasury], 28 July 1943, ibid.
3 Anthony Brooke to Margery Perham, 7 April 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1.
constitution might have created an unfavourable impression in the Colonial Office.

In early March he visited Gent for an exchange of personal views. Anthony told him that he recognized the need to protect the people of Sarawak from autocratic and undesirable actions by their rulers, but that the responsibility should remain vested in the Brookes as their subjects expected. While a new agreement between Sarawak and Britain could provide an improved basis for cooperation, the Rajahs of the future should be left with 'the fullest measure of freedom to act in internal affairs short of the power to abuse it with impunity'. He then suggested that a new agreement could be based on the following principles:

1. The agreement to be supplementary to the Treaty of Protection, 1888.

2. The recruitment of officers to serve under the Government of Sarawak to be effected by the Rajah in cooperation with, or with the approval of, His Majesty's Government. (This would not, however, limit the right of the Rajah to appoint non-Europeans residing in his State to duties under the Government of Sarawak).

3. The chief administrative post under the Rajah to be filled by an officer appointed by the Rajah subject to the approval of His Majesty's Government. Any such officer appointed with the cooperation of His Majesty's Government from the Colonial Service would be deemed to be seconded to the Sarawak Government for the period of his appointment, which would normally be of not less than two years duration. (It is suggested that this provision be worded so as to meet the possibility of His Majesty's Government agreeing at some future date to the appointment of an officer of the Sarawak Civil Service in whom it might have confidence).

4. In the event of the Rajah exercising his right under the Constitution of Sarawak to act contrary to the

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1 Anthony Brooke to Gent, 6 April 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
advice of his Executive Council (known under the present Constitution as the Supreme Council), he must forthwith inform the Secretary of State for the Colonies of the action taken, at the same time transmitting a detailed report giving full reasons for his decision.¹

While acknowledging that political developments in Sarawak during 1941 had made the Supplementary Agreement 'both desirable and inevitable', he felt that it might eventually have led to an undesirable duality in administrative control. He now conceded that there should be a constitution, although not one which 'vests responsibility in the hands of a continually changing oligarchy, as is the position at present'.² The fourth provision would ensure that future Rajahs would act reasonably and responsibly and there would be an arrangement for reports to be made on any matter about which the British government required information. He could not guarantee that these 'tentative proposals' would necessarily have the support of the Rajah or of his father but hoped that they might still form the basis for post-war discussions.

Bertram Brooke regarded his son's views as 'in the main as generally sound as any others might be', but in a letter to Anthony he expressed strong opposition to any explicit delimitation of relations between the two countries:

My view ... is that this cannot be achieved with any satisfaction to either party, and unless an agreement is a very loose one, with both parties determined to carry out much of what is left to the imagination in the spirit of mutual cooperation there's going to be trouble anyhow, and the more details there are, the more wrangling there is likely to be as to whether different interpretations are 'legally' sound or not.³

Conveying this to Gent, Anthony emphasized that a great deal depended on the goodwill of the Ruler. Some kind of new agreement was

¹ Ibid.
² Ibid.
³ Cited by Anthony Brooke in his letter to Gent, 23 April 1942, CO 531/30 [53011/4].
necessary, he acknowledged, 'though no Ruler in his senses, who conscientiously wishes to do the best for his State, would wish to relinquish more freedom than he must.' ¹

Gent was sympathetic to the proposals and agreed that it was preferable to have one government in Sarawak, 'provided that ... [it] was inspired in its task by British ideals, was prepared to avail itself of the best material [men] to carry them out, and was prepared to learn continually from developments in other British Colonies and Protectorates'. He told Anthony that Sarawak's outstation officers were highly regarded by the Colonial Service and that there was 'no intention to propose a total amalgamation'. ²

For all his show of confidence, however, Anthony was well aware that the events of 1941 had brought down the stocks of the Raj and that it might not survive the war. While he had always regarded Sarawak's system of government as superior to that of North Borneo, he told Margery Perham, he had to admit that the business of the Rajah's $2,000,000 suggested there was something very seriously wrong. If the Rajah by this means had lost the people's confidence to the point that the Brooke family was no longer wanted, 'more harm than good would clearly be done by the return to Sarawak of either my father or myself (one can safely assume that my uncle will retire—or abdicate—on his rather prickly laurels'). ³ Although amalgamation with Brunei and North Borneo had been suggested in the past, he thought it neither necessary nor desirable. Defence and economic cooperation were important, he conceded, but any attempt at amalgamation would not conform with the principles of the Atlantic Charter and the Anglo-Soviet Agreement unless it were on the basis of discussions between Sarawak, Brunei and North Borneo.

Taking up the same theme in a letter to Gent, he repeated the arguments put forward by his father in 1931 against Clementi's scheme for a 'British Borneo' federation, an idea which he thought

¹ Ibid.
² Cited by Anthony Brooke in his letter to Margery Perham, 7 April 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1.
³ Anthony Brooke to Margery Perham, 8 July 1942, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
might be resurrected now that the future of the three territories was in question. The essence of Brooke rule, as he saw it, was the status of the Rajah in the eyes of the natives. 'So long as there is a white Rajah in Sarawak', he wrote, 'he must shoulder his inherent responsibility to the people of being supreme within the State and there is yet to be put forward any argument which can shake this view ...'.1 As for the argument that a federation under the Governor of the Straits Settlements would have the advantage of 'administrative convenience', he believed that it was Singapore's very distance from Sarawak which had preserved the Rajah's position as 'the actual, and not merely titular, Rule of the State'.

The Colonial Office and Borneo Planning

Planning for the post-war military administration of Britain's Far Eastern Colonies and dependencies was under way by early 1942 and in February 1943 the Colonial Office initiated talks which led to the creation of a Colonial Office - War Office Malayan Planning Committee, formally constituted in July as the Malayan Planning Unit under the direction of Major-General H.R. Hone. Since it was clear that the Unit's authority would only be effective within the limits of Britain's South-East Asia Command (SEAC), it was necessary to establish another organization for the Borneo territories which were within the American South-West Pacific Area (SWPA) command. It was assumed that a suitable arrangement would be duly made with the Americans under the charter of the Anglo-American Combined Civil Affairs Committee set up in Washington in July 1943. This provided that when an enemy-occupied territory was to be recovered by an Allied operation, the directives given to the force commander should include 'the policies to be followed in the handling of Civil Affairs as formulated by the government which exercised authority over the territory before enemy occupation'.2 The fact that the Sarawak government had previously exercised authority over Sarawak was apparently regarded as immaterial.

1 Anthony Brooke to Gent, 24 July 1942, CO 531/30 [53011/4].
The Borneo Planning Unit was established within the Colonial Office and was staffed with civilians. C.F.C. Macaskie, who had been on leave at the time of the Japanese invasion of North Borneo, was appointed as head of the Unit and Chief Civil Affairs Officer designate for Borneo in October 1943 with instructions to build up its staff to a strength of about fifteen. Since the disposal of the reserve funds of North Borneo and Sarawak was not within the authority of the British government, the cost of the Unit was borne by the British Treasury on the assumption that a claim for reimbursement could later be made on both the Chartered Company and the Rajah. Policy from the outset envisaged a single civil affairs administration bringing Sarawak, Brunei, Labuan and North Borneo under centralized control.

For Gent and his colleagues the war provided the long-awaited opportunity to overhaul the administrative structure of Britain's Far East dependencies. On 22 January 1944, probably on Gent's instigation, the Secretary of State for Colonies in the National Government, Colonel Oliver Stanley, persuaded a meeting of the War Cabinet to appoint a committee on the constitutional future of Malay and the Borneo territories. In a memorandum which he presented on the occasion, again almost certainly the work of Gent and his colleagues, Stanley suggested the guidelines which the British government should follow. As far as Malaya was concerned, 'the interests of efficiency and security' required 'the closer integration of both ... legislative and administrative arrangements ...'. And in the 'novel conditions' which would exist on Britain's liberation of Malaya this integration could be achieved without the 'lengthy process' which the earlier supporters of decentralization

1 Ibid, p.145.
2 Stanley had an impressive career before going to the Colonial Office. Becoming an M.P. in 1924, he was Minister of Transport, 1933-34; Minister of Labour, 1934-35; President of Board of Education 1935-37 and Secretary of State of War, 1940-42.
3 'Future Constitutional Policy For British Colonial Territories In South-East Asia', 14 January 1944, C.M.B. (44) 3, War Cabinet Records, PRO CAB 98. Subsequent quotations from this source.
and recentralization had envisaged. Finally, the responsibility for coordination of political, economic and social development and the representation of British government interests in any regional council to be set up by the United Nations for the area was to be entrusted to a British 'Governor-General' for Malaya and Borneo.

As for the Borneo territories, the main object of policy was to ensure that in future 'their machinery of government is of such a character as will conduce to their social and political development in conformity with our general Colonial policy'. Consequently it was envisaged that Britain would acquire from the Chartered Company the sovereignty of North Borneo which would then be united with Labuan under a single governor with 'a local Executive and Legislative Council'. The Sultan of Brunei was to be 'invited' to cede sufficient jurisdiction to the Crown to allow for the application of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act. A similar 'invitation' was to be issued to the Rajah of Sarawak since it was 'most desirable that His Majesty's Government should be placed in a position to exercise effective control over the administration'. It was felt that at this point there was no basis for a closer union of the Borneo territories but that a 'community of policy' could be assured by the responsibility of the Governor of North Borneo and Labuan and the British Advisers in Brunei and Sarawak to the Governor-General in Singapore.

In a draft directive on policy for Borneo which he presented at the same time, Stanley was more specific about the treaty which was to be negotiated with the Rajah 'at the earliest possible opportunity'. As well as enabling the British Crown to legislate for Sarawak under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, the treaty was to provide for a resident British Adviser 'whose advice must be sought and acted upon in all substantial matters of policy and administration'. Commenting on the directive, Stanley said that he did not expect either the Rajah or the Sultan to 'raise

any difficulties' over the cession of their jurisdiction to the
Crown.¹

The Committee on Policy in Malaya and Borneo which was
subsequently appointed held two meetings and in its final report
to the War Cabinet in May it supported the policy as outlined in
Stanley's draft directive for Borneo of January. When Cabinet
endorsed the report at the end of month, it became official policy.

This blueprint for the post-war future of Britain's
Southeast Asian dependencies was drawn up at a time when the Japanese
still had complete control of the area and when plans were being
made for the daunting task of liberation. Consequently it would be
surprising if strategic considerations did not loom large in the
minds of the Colonial Office planners. It was important that the
Malay States, the Straits Settlements and British Borneo should
come within a single defence framework in case of any future external
attack and that their peoples should possess more of a stake in
resisting such an attack than they had in late 1941. At this point
the potential of Malay and Indonesian nationalism in resisting the
re-imposition of British and Dutch control does not seem to have
been seriously considered. Far more important to Gent and his
colleagues was the possibility of American disapproval and the need
to pre-empt any international action which might make the restoration
of imperial control more difficult. The idea of a regional council
for Southeast Asia had itself been the British government's sole
concession to American (and possibly Australian) interest in the
area post-war.

At the same time, the Japanese invasion had created a
long-awaited opportunity for the bureaucratic reorganization and
recentralization which had been in the air since Clementi's
proposals. The question of negotiating new treaties with the Malay
rulers had been somewhat problematical in the early 1930's. But
with a British military administration taking over control after a
glorious British defeat of the Japanese invaders, the climate would

¹ Minutes of the first meeting of War Cabinet Committee on
Malaya and Borneo, 22 March 1944, C.M.B. (44), ibid.
be more favourable. If there was any resistance from the rulers, the question of collaboration with the Japanese would be sufficient to reduce them to acquiescence. No problems were envisaged with the Borneo states. Both the Chartered Company and the Rajah had earlier indicated their willingness to sell out and the Sultan of Brunei would agree to whatever the British Resident 'advised'.

As Conservative Secretary of State in the coalition government, Oliver Stanley was no doubt of Churchill's view that the war was not being fought so that Britain could preside over the dissolution of the Empire. Beyond this, however, it is difficult to detect his personal influence in the proposal which was finally accepted by the War Cabinet. Consequently it seems reasonable to suggest that the 1944 blueprint was essentially the product of strategic and bureaucratic considerations as viewed by the Colonial Office and the War Office and possessed little relation to British party politics beyond the general desire to preserve the British Empire. This was the policy which was inherited by the Labour government in July 1945.

When F.W. Pollard, a senior administrative officer and the Rajah's cousin, arrived from Australia in October 1943 he discovered that the Rajah had nominated him for the Unit whose Sarawak section he was supposed to head. ¹ But on learning that the plan was to administer Sarawak, Brunei, Labuan and North Borneo jointly, he immediately suspected that this was a product of political rather than military considerations. He told Macaskie that from a military point of view there would be much more contact between Sarawak and Dutch Borneo, particularly in the Kuching-Pontianak area, than between Sarawak and North Borneo. He also expressed surprise that there was to be no liaison with the Dutch with whom he had had a good deal of contact during his time with SWPA Intelligence in Australia. Macaskie could only plead 'military necessity' and Gent told him the same story. Pollard was obliged to accept this, but he indicated that he would prefer to remain on the Sarawak government payroll while working with the Unit. When Paskin told him that it was not possible

¹ The subsequent account is based on a memorandum by Pollard of 5 November 1944, now in the possession of his sister, Mrs Hilary Waddington.
for him to continue as a member of the Sarawak Government Commission since his work with the Unit would involve access to 'documents affecting the political position of Sarawak', Pollard replied that he would not accept any appointment which would prevent him from expressing his views on the future of Sarawak. Consequently it was agreed that no decisions involving Sarawak would be made by the Colonial Office until his views were obtained. But Pollard was still worried and it was only after an assurance from Bertram Brooke that nothing was being contemplated by the Colonial Office to which he could take exception that he finally agreed to accept the post. Other Sarawak officers recruited by Macaskie were C.F. Birt, D.L. Leach, C.E. Gascoigne and R.G. Talbot.

Only six weeks later, however, Macaskie showed Pollard the Colonial Office proposal on the future of British Borneo which were about to be submitted to the War Cabinet for approval. When Pollard said that he proposed to write a memorandum setting out the 'obvious objections' to the proposal, Macaskie went into reverse. He told Pollard that he had not really possessed the authority to show him the document and that there could be no comment from Pollard until his opinion was sought officially. Pollard's suspicions were further increased when he saw a minute by Paskin suggesting that the military administration should be maintained, even if the American SWPA commander thought it no longer necessary, until the proposed new treaty had been signed. In such a case, the military administration would continue under the Malayan Commander-in-Chief and it would be justified by the need to maintain a unified administration due to shortage of staff and greater access to supplies through Service channels. Pollard immediately wrote an angry minute in which he described the plan as 'remarkably like extortion', but this apparently was not forwarded by Macaskie to the Colonial Office. In June 1944 the Colonial Office proposal reached Pollard officially but by this time it had been approved by the War Cabinet Committee and was now to constitute the basis for the Borneo Planning Unit's work. Pollard protested to Macaskie and sought a meeting with Paskin who was under the impression that Pollard had already seen the document and found it unobjectionable.
The question of a military commission once again raised the problem in Pollard's mind of conflicting loyalties. What was he to do if the policy of the military administration contravened his notion of Sarawak's interests? Gent reassured Pollard that there was no intention of placing him in a position where he would have to act in any way contrary to Sarawak's interests. He also outlined the Colonial Office's strategy:

He [Gent] explained to me that there was no intention of getting the Rajah to sign an amendment to the treaty now as he had replied to the Secretary of State that he had no power to do so without reference to the people. The intention now was to get the Rajah to agree in principle, if necessary under pressure, and then, during the period of Military Administration, to send someone out to obtain the consent of the people.¹

In the ensuing discussion, which foreshadowed the talks between the Provisional Government and the Colonial Office of early 1945, Pollard told Gent that he could not possibly stand aside and 'leave some unnamed person to go through the motions of ascertaining public opinion on the subject ...' He regarded the proposal to negotiate a new treaty while Sarawak was still under military control as 'a proceeding more in keeping with Nazi ideas than the ideals for which this war was allegedly being fought.'² When Gent indicated that the first British Adviser under the new treaty would be selected from the Sarawak Service, Pollard said that he could not imagine any Sarawak officer 'worth his salt' accepting a post in such a situation. Nor, under the circumstances, could he remain with the Borneo Planning Unit which he now saw as 'an instrument for carrying out the policy of H.M.G. regardless of the interest or the wishes of the people of Sarawak and without any reference to the Sarawak Government Commission.'³ On 2 October 1944 Pollard told Bertram Brooke what had happened and obtained his permission to resign and return to the Sarawak Commission.

¹ Pollard memorandum, 5 November 1944.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid.
Gent's strategy seems to have been to neutralize the Sarawak Commission by recruiting its outstanding members into the Unit where they would be bound to secrecy. However, he did not count on Pollard's fierce determination and his willingness to sacrifice a substantially higher salary for his principles. Macaskie's opinion, as expressed in his autobiography twenty years later, was that Pollard had been an unfortunate choice as head of the Sarawak section of the Unit. His outlook, Macaskie believed, was far too 'insular' for him to be really useful. In other words, Pollard had put the interests of the Brooke Raj before those of Empire.

The Borneo Planning Unit continued its work in the belief that the military administration of the three Borneo states would be under British control. Between May and July 1944 the Colonial Office and the War Office prepared a joint memorandum on the administration of Borneo and Hong Kong which was then submitted to the Combined Civil Affairs Committee in Washington and accepted as a statement of policy under clause 6 of the July 1943 charter. The essence of this policy was that Borneo and Hong Kong should be the responsibility of a civil affairs staff consisting mainly of British officers and that instructions issued to Force Commanders should take account of this. Under a further arrangement drawn up in March 1945, known as the Cranborne Agreement, the Combined Civil Affairs Committee approved the principle that the Chief Civil Affairs Officer for Borneo should be responsible to the War Office in London as well as to the Allied Commander of SWPA:

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

1 Macaskie, 'End of an Era ...', p.126.
in-Chief's responsibilities for the military administration of British Borneo.¹

There is no indication that the question of Sarawak's future was raised at an official level between London and Canberra. The Australian government's reluctance to become involved in civil affairs administration of the four Borneo territories had been clear from the outset. But Gent and his colleagues in the Colonial Office through their contacts with Macaskie and other British officers were keenly aware of efforts to keep the administration in Australian hands. Nor could they afford to ignore the disturbing rumour reported to them from Ingleburn and elsewhere that Australia intended to have the Borneo territories. British control of the civil affairs apparatus was absolutely vital to the Colonial Office's planned takeover of Sarawak and North Borneo. And while this cannot yet be documented, it seems highly likely that anxiety about Australian intentions, together with some expectation of American disapproval, influenced the speed with which negotiations were concluded with the Rajah and MacBryan's mission arranged.²

The Initiation of Formal Negotiations on Sarawak's Future
In June 1944 the Secretary of State for Colonies, Colonel Oliver Stanley, had written to the Rajah that in view of the progress of the war it was time to discuss the relationship between the British government and Sarawak. Explaining that public opinion in Britain and Allied countries would hold Britain responsible for the policies followed in the future development of the State, he expressed a desire to meet the Rajah and any members of the Sarawak Government Commission for discussions on the terms of a new relationship more in keeping with future circumstances. '... The existing agreements ...', Stanley told the Rajah, 'do not sufficiently provide His Majesty's Government with the means to discharge fully the responsibilities which will thus be placed upon them ...'³

¹ Cited by Donnison, *British Military Administration* ..., p.146.
² See Appendix III.
³ *The Facts About Sarawak*, p.76.
Rather than reply directly, the Rajah sent the Sarawak Government Agent, H.D. Aplin, to meet Gent at the Colonial Office. After questioning Aplin's authority to represent the Rajah, Gent explained that the Secretary of State's intention was to appoint a British Representative in Sarawak to advise on political, social and economic affairs. This meant that the King would have jurisdiction in Sarawak's internal affairs and it was therefore necessary to alter the 1888 Treaty or make a new one. The Supplementary Agreement reached in September 1941 had not gone far enough to accommodate the planned extension of British authority. At the same time, Gent told Aplin that the King would not exercise his new authority by issuing Orders-In-Council 'unless as an extreme measure'. The position would be as in North Borneo where the King possessed the same power but had not exercised it beyond an Order-In-Council establishing an Admiralty Prize Court. When Aplin asked if Sarawak would be reduced to the position of a 'Native State', Gent reassured him that this would not be so. Sarawak, he said, possessed competent European officers who were capable of running its government properly.¹

After reading Aplin's reports on the meeting with Gent, the Rajah wrote to Stanley telling him that while 'nothing but good' could come from a closer liaison between the two governments, he thought that there could be no change in their mutual relationship as long as Sarawak, 'owing to the unavoidable inability of the Protecting Power to preserve them from invasion', was under alien rule. If he entered into a new agreement at this time, he emphasized, his right to do so would 'almost certainly be challenged in the future with embarrassing results to myself and possibly to His Majesty's Government'. He would also be in the position of binding his successor to a form of government which, due to age, he would have no chance of putting personally into effect. He was willing to return to Sarawak for a short time after the reoccupation if it was thought desirable, but regarded his rule as effectively coming to an end:

¹ Aplin's official and personal reports to Vyner Brooke, 25 July 1944, Hussey papers [66735].
... I feel that the future must be with those who have the physical vigour not only to make a fresh start, but to continue firmly along such lines as will ensure internal peace within the State.¹

It took Stanley a month to reply to this polite rebuff but he was determined to persist. While appreciating the Rajah's reluctance to make a fresh agreement in the existing circumstances, he felt that it was still possible 'to consider the lines on which it would be desirable for the relations between His Majesty's Government and Sarawak to be developed'.² He therefore asked the Rajah for the names of representatives who would take part in initial discussions and the Rajah in turn indicated that the Tuan Muda would best fulfil this role:

He is an old friend both of Major Gent and Mr Paskin. I think these gentlemen would be able to assure anyone you nominate that he is in the habit of always saying exactly what is in his mind.

I can also say that I feel sure the family position of his son, A.W.D. Brooke, would not in any way bias his views as to steps for the future that should be taken in the interests of the people of the State.³

Agreeing to this arrangement, Stanley used a phrase which Anthony Brooke later regarded as epitomizing the Colonial Office's intentions and methods. 'I feel sure', the Secretary of State told the Rajah, 'that this will put us on the path of an understanding as to how we shall march together in the future'.⁴

When Bertram Brooke met Gent in early October he conceded that there would have to be changes after the war and that the Secretary of State's responsibility for Sarawak in Parliament necessitated some influence in the state's administration. However,

¹ Vyner Brooke to Stanley, 3 August 1944, The Facts About Sarawak, p.78.
² Stanley to Vyner Brooke, 4 September 1944, Hussey Papers [66735].
³ Vyner Brooke to Stanley, 21 September 1944, ibid.
⁴ Stanley to Vyner Brooke, 27 September 1944, ibid. (My emphasis).
he added, the Rajah was anxious to avoid any suggestion that he had entered into a secret treaty whose legality might later be challenged. This was particularly important in view of the likelihood that he would not be returning to Sarawak for any length of time. He was unwilling to sign anything which might be binding on his advisers and successors. Gent said that there was no intention of rushing the Rajah into any agreement which he and his advisers thought inappropriate to his powers. Nevertheless, it would be extremely useful if they could 'discuss and come to an understanding on the terms of an agreement which the Rajah in due course would be prepared to recommend in accordance with the appropriate procedure of the Government of Sarawak'.

They agreed that the Colonial Office would prepare detailed suggestions as a basis for formal talks with the Rajah's representatives.

In late October, Paskin told Bertram that a paper was being prepared for submission to the Rajah, but during the next few months Bertram's health deteriorated and he asked the Rajah to relieve him of his position as head of the Sarawak Government Commission. At the same time, he knew that Anthony would probably be returning to England and seems to have decided that this was a good opportunity to bow out and allow his son to exercise his rightful responsibilities.

Meanwhile, in Karachi, ...

Anthony Brooke had been trying for some months to get back to England. Having served first as a private in the infantry and then in the Officers Training Corps, he was despatched in early 1944 as a lieutenant to the Intelligence School in Karachi. While he found service life arduous and demanding, the future of Sarawak was never very far from his mind. He had had further discussions with his father before leaving England and they apparently agreed upon a compromise arrangement which could be put to the Colonial Office in the likely event of the latter's desire to amend the Treaty. On board ship to India in March 1944 he wrote to his wife, Kathleen:

1 'Notes of a discussion ... on the 6th October between the Tuan Muda and Mr Gent ...', Brooke papers, Box 10/1.
... I still feel perfectly confident about the outcome of any talks which may eventually take place, and intend to hold my ground to the bitter end: and I don't think the British government can put up any argument which they can expect one to accept on purely logical grounds which would deprive Sarawak of her Independence. The alternative we suggest provides all the safeguards they could desire, and more, and the position is very different from what it would be if we had no alternative constructive proposals to put forward ... 1

When it was clear from Kathleen's letters that his father was concerned about the future status of British dependencies in the Far East, including Sarawak, he told her that he was not worried. If the Allies had any say in the matter, he wrote from Karachi in April, it would hardly be in relation to the internal administration of Sarawak:

After all, American policy ... is in favour of granting independence wherever possible, an attitude which would favour us. Of course they might want to grab the place altogether, but I don't think this is very likely, and we would kick up quite a useful shindy if there was any sign of that happening. No, we may have a lot of things to worry about, but somehow I can't bring myself to worry about that. 2

In early June Anthony received a letter from his father which was to have an important influence on his subsequent actions. Bertram made it clear he was not prepared to take on the title and responsibilities of Rajah at his age. He also said that he had advised Vyner to retire from active participation in government and not go out to Sarawak again. The Colonial Office were aware of his views and he hinted very broadly that the responsibility should now be Anthony's:

It's time someone in the family made up his mind and stuck to his decisions. It puts me in a much stronger position to urge that the present arrangement should not be departed from and that it is for those who have the future in their hands to thrash out a long term policy to suit the vastly altered conditions that will obtain after the war. It's

1 Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, March 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K.M. Brooke.

2 Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 24 April 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K.M. Brooke.
no septuagenarian's job, and no septuagenarian who suggested that he was the chap to carry it out would be entitled to much confidence. 1

Later that month Anthony was able to reassure Kathleen that the succession was no cause for worry, although he doubted that the Ranee had given up entirely. Reporting the contents of his father's letter, he expressed great optimism about the future. 'However', he added soberly, 'I suppose the old boy will hang on as long as possible ...' 2

The clear indication from his father that he would now be assuming the Rajah's responsibilities, together with the news of Oliver Stanley's approach to the Rajah, persuaded Anthony that it was time to return home. But it suited the Colonial Office that he should remain out of the picture for the time being and it was only through an extremely vigorous campaign that the young lieutenant managed to have a cable sent by Mountbatten to the Colonial Office on 29 October. Mountbatten told Stanley that Anthony was anxious to return immediately to England for discussions with his uncle, his father, and if possible the government, on the future of Sarawak. He appreciated Anthony's position and was prepared to release him if Stanley approved. 3

Mountbatten was aware that both the Colonial Office and the War Office were interested in Anthony's future. 'We have been informed', he told Anthony's brother-in-law, Captain Tom Halsey, 'that as a potential Rajah it is undesirable that he should return to Sarawak as a comparatively junior member of the Civil Administration ...' 4 Mountbatten promised to 'keep an eye out for him', an undertaking which later proved useful to Anthony.

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1 Extract of a letter from Bertram Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 21 May 1944, WO 203/3973.

2 Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 29 June 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K.M. Brooke.

3 Mountbatten to Stanley, 29 October 1944, WO 273/3973.

4 Mountbatten to Halsey, 7 July 1944, Brooke Papers, Box 12/1.
Once the cable had been sent, Anthony felt more relaxed and offered an apology to his commanding officer for the trouble he had caused:

I feel I owe some kind of explanation to General Lamplough and to yourself for assuming all the characteristics of an unruly volcano at the present time. The crux of the matter is that there is work to be done in connection with Sarawak during the next 6 to 9 months which should have been done during the past three years. I regard it as vital war work.1

A few days later he wrote to Gent enclosing a letter concerning Sarawak's future which he proposed to send to The Times but Gent replied by cable that it 'would be inadvisable at this stage in view of your prospective official position here'.2 He had conferred with Bertram Brooke who may have mentioned the likelihood of Anthony being appointed head of the Sarawak Government Commission in his place. While accepting Gent's advice, Anthony emphasized the need to publicize the future policy of the Sarawak government and asked for an indication of the British government's attitude to the suggestions which he had put to Gent in April 1942. At this point he was not yet aware of the plan to make him head of the Sarawak Government Commission, but news of the imminent restoration of his title of Rajah Muda had reached him in a cable from his father in the first week of November.3

Meanwhile, however, there was no reply to Mountbatten's cable of 29 October and mounting frustration led Anthony to seek an interview with the Chief Civil Affairs Staff Officer. Events in the Pacific and the absence of any understanding through which British Borneo might come under Mountbatten's South East Asia Command (SEAC), he believed, meant that his proper place was in SWPA where he would be in close contact with General Macarthur's staff and the Borneo Planning Unit. This would mean taking part in the liberation

1 Anthony Brooke to Colonel Chapman, 31 October 1944, WO 203 [5033].
2 Gent to Anthony Brooke, - November 1944, WO 203/3973. A copy of Anthony's letter to The Times is not available.
3 Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 7 November 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K.M. Brooke.
of Sarawak and the subsequent military administration in which he would hold full civil powers in the absence of his uncle and his father. Such a scheme had always been his personal preference but his strained relations with the Rajah had not made it possible. Instead, he had accepted the alternative offered by the Colonial Office and General Hone of making himself useful in SEAC, taking part in the liberation of Malaya and returning to Sarawak on the termination of the military administration there. But the restoration of his title had cleared the air and he now felt it his duty to press for the fulfilment of his original plan. 'It is repugnant to me to wait for the "difficulties" to be smoothed from my path ...', he added impatiently.\(^1\)

A few days later he saw the Director of Intelligence and requested an interview with Mountbatten so that he could raise the proposal he wished to make to the Chief Civil Affairs Staff Officer. This time he spelled out more emphatically his desire to be involved in the reoccupation of Sarawak and the military administration:

Owing to a combination of unhappy circumstances, not a single member of the Brooke family was at the helm of affairs in Sarawak in the hour of the people's greatest need. This makes it imperative, if the Raj is to continue, that a member of the family should land and be with the people at the hour of their liberation from the Japanese ... If I cannot have from HMG from the moment of Sarawak's liberation the confidence and support to which by qualification and right I feel myself to be entitled, I shall be unable to give to Sarawak the service expected of me by the people, and there will be no object in my returning to that country ... \(^2\)

He finally decided to write to Mountbatten. 'It would not be possible for me to face the people of Sarawak in the future', he told the 'Supremo', 'neither would I deserve their trust as representing them at this time, if I did not regard their affairs as being of paramount importance'.\(^3\)

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1 Anthony Brooke to CCASO, 21 November 1944, WO 273/3973.
2 Anthony Brooke to Director of Intelligence, 26 November 1944, WO273/3973.
3 Anthony Brooke to Mountbatten, 1 December 1944, WO 203/5033.
Meanwhile, however, the news of Anthony's probable appointment by the Rajah as head of the Sarawak Government Commission meant that he could no longer be kept out of the way. On 2 December, just a day after Anthony wrote to him, Mountbatten was authorized by the War Office to release Anthony from war duties and it was agreed that this should be made effective in Delhi where Anthony was due to arrive on 15 December.\(^1\) By this time Anthony had told Mountbatten's Chief of Staff, Brigadier E.J. Gibbons, of his wish to meet the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, and of his desire to be involved in the military administration of Sarawak.

Mountbatten was willing to assist Anthony in obtaining an interview with the Viceroy but he could not be very helpful on the more important question of the military administration since Borneo was outside the area of his command. All that Mountbatten knew about the situation was that he had approved a proposal that the Borneo Planning Unit should keep in close touch with Major-General Hone's Malayan Planning Unit and he could only suggest that Anthony should make his views known in London.

Before leaving for Delhi, Anthony hoped to make a broadcast on Sarawak with the aim of putting it respectably back on the map. Permission for this appears to have been refused but he was able to make contact with a number of American journalists 'with the object of re-educating the American people away from dance band and all-in-wrestling associations with Sarawak and inculcating the spirit of Sarawak which really matters.'\(^2\) Anthony was acutely aware of the unfortunate 'image' which the Ranee and her two younger daughters had created for Sarawak before the war in the American as well as the British press and was anxious that this would be dispelled once and for all. However, he was strictly limited to talking about the history of Sarawak and the Brooke family and was not

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1 War Office to Mountbatten, 2 December 1944, WO 273/3973; Mountbatten to War Office, 4 December 1944, ibid.

2 Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 27 November 1944. Letter in the possession of Mrs K.M. Brooke. See Chapter IV for a discussion of the Brookes' 'image'.

allowed to publish any views outside these subjects.¹

His other method of publicizing Sarawak was to insist upon his title as Rajah Muda which was formally proclaimed in London on 8 November 1944.² While this emphasis on his formal status aroused the antagonism of some people, just as it had in Sarawak in 1939 and 1941, it was not ineffective in the corridors of power. After meeting Anthony, Mountbatten wrote to Wavell suggesting that he should grant an interview and that it would be useful to realize that the application had been made 'in his capacity as the future Rajah of Sarawak, and not as a Subaltern in the Army'.³ Wavell listened sympathetically to Anthony and suggested that he should see Churchill, for which purpose he gave him a letter of introduction.⁴ By 27 December Anthony was back in London eager to take an active part in the decisions on Sarawak's future.

The Provisional Government

Anthony Brooke's return significantly altered the situation in London. After long talks with Anthony, Bertram Brooke contacted the Rajah. He told him that Anthony regarded the financial arrangements which the Rajah had been attempting to make as 'perfectly reasonable' and agreed that Sarawak finances for the remainder of the occupation should continue to be handled by the Commission. Bertram then also recommended to the Rajah that in view of the need for some recognized body to deal with the Colonial Office, and the fact that most members of the Sarawak Government Commission would not be involved in the future government, it was desirable to appoint some kind of negotiating committee. Now that the financial question was no longer a bone of contention, the Rajah agreed. On 29 December 1944 he appointed a committee consisting of Anthony, Pollard and Thomas Corson, which

² SG, 15 November 1944.
³ Mountbatten to Wavell, 8 December 1944, WO 203/5033.
⁴ Interview with Anthony Brooke, 21 February 1975. Anthony later regretted that instead of seeing Churchill personally he had been content to give the letter to his private secretary.
... may well be charged with the responsibility of dealing direct with His Majesty's Government on behalf of and as representing the Sarawak Government, in connection with all matters concerning State policy, whilst the Commission remains responsible for the handling of the finances, as hitherto.¹

Three weeks later, the Rajah told Stanley of his decision to appoint Anthony to administer the government of Sarawak with the advice of the Commission, 'thus constituting a Provisional Government of Sarawak with full powers'.² He explained that he had reached this decision in view of Bertram's wish to be relieved of his position as chairman of the Commission and on the unanimous advice of its members. 'In this way', he wrote, 'I hope to provide the means whereby a stable and full[y] responsible body may plan thoughtfully and effectively for the future of Sarawak, and at the same time to clarify the position of the Commission in its relations with His Majesty's Government'.³ The other members of the Provisional Government were to be Pollard and Corson. To all intents and purposes, the Provisional Government became interchangeable with the Sarawak Commission. But its legal status, particularly in relation to the 1941 Constitution and the prerogative powers of the Rajah, was never clarified. This suited the Colonial Office which was later able to bypass the Provisional Government when negotiations reached an impasse and deal directly with the Rajah.

While Anthony was no doubt pleased to have been charged with the responsibility of conducting negotiations with the Colonial Office, he was still determined to take part in the military reoccupation and administration of the state. No doubt he believed that this would not only assist Brooke prestige and the subsequent re-establishment of Brooke government but would strengthen his own

¹ Vyner Brooke to Aplin, 29 December 1944, Hussey Papers [53].
² Vyner Brooke to Stanley, 18 January 1945, Hussey papers [66735].
political position. The Colonial Office and the War Office, on the other hand, were equally determined that he should not become involved. Consequently, when Anthony proposed that there should be a separate civil affairs unit for Sarawak with himself as head, he found the Colonial Office extremely discouraging. Macaskie's response was a diplomatic suggestion that it would damage Anthony's prestige if he returned to Sarawak as an officer of the Military Commander's staff, while Gent thought that there would be 'almost insurmountable difficulties'.

Anthony then suggested to both the War Office and the Colonial Office that he be appointed liaison officer between the Chief Civil Affairs Officer, Borneo, and the Allied Military Commander while repeating his original proposal that the military administration of Sarawak should be separate. Eventually he managed to interview Major General A.V. Anderson, Director of Civil Affairs at the War Office, who told him that while civil affairs was a military responsibility, the possibility of his being engaged in any military activity would have to be taken up with the Secretary of State for Colonies. Writing to Gent after the meeting, Anderson indicated their mutual objection to Anthony's involvement in the projected civil affairs unit:

In that military organization I could see no place for the Rajah Muda, whose political stakes (from which he could not divest himself) could only be a source of embarrassment to the Commander ...

Nor was there any need, he added, for the creation of a position linking the Allied Commander and the head of the Borneo civil affairs unit. No doubt sensing that there was something of a conspiracy to deny him any role in the liberation and immediate post-war administration of Sarawak, Anthony seems at this point to have abandoned his campaign, concentrating his energies on the Provisional Government.

Stanley subsequently sought to arrange talks with the

1 Macaskie to Gent, 29 December 1944, CO 531/31 [2344].
2 Minute by Paskin, 3 January 1945, ibid.
3 Anderson to Gent, 2 February 1945, ibid.
Provisional Government and on 13 February Anthony submitted to him a set of proposals 'for strengthening relations with His Majesty's Government which he hoped would be the subject of personal discussions:

1 The British government should second to Sarawak an officer as Chief Secretary for External Affairs who would be responsible for foreign relations and defence. He would also be head of the Civil Service and a member of the Supreme Council. A new post of Secretary for Internal Affairs would be filled by an experienced Sarawak officer and would be the executive officer under the Rajah-in-Council.

2 The British government would continue to provide facilities for the secondment of officers of the Colonial Service to Sarawak.

3 The government of Sarawak would normally recruit only British and Sarawak nationals, but if it were necessary to recruit technical officers of other nationalities the Secretary of State would be consulted.

4 The government of Sarawak would encourage officers to take special leave in other parts of the Empire and would welcome visits by members of the British government, M.P.'s etc.

5 Sarawak's Head of State would provide the Secretary of State unofficially with any information required on internal affairs.¹

A day or two later Anthony met Stanley who told him that the conclusion of a new agreement was a matter of some urgency since the implementation of the Borneo Planning Unit's scheme for civil affairs administration depended entirely upon it. Anthony must have been optimistic that this could be arranged without too much difficulty. 'I shall be exceedingly grateful if you will let me know ... when you would like this formality to be completed', he told Stanley. '... In so far as the Government of Sarawak is concerned, no date is too early for the terms of the agreement to be discussed and the necessary formalities completed ...'²

¹ Anthony Brooke to Stanley, 13 February 1945, CO 531/31/3.
² Anthony Brooke to Stanley, 16 February 1945, Hussey Papers [66735].
In something of an understatement, Stanley pointed out that the proposals which he had received from Anthony were 'not altogether in accordance' with the proposed plans for discussion which he had set out in his letter to the Rajah of 19 June 1944. Indeed they were not, and in his reply Anthony interpreted that letter as envisaging a 'fundamental change' in the relationship between the two governments. Referring to the Rajah's original reply of 4 August 1944, he indicated his determination not to enter into substantive discussions until after Sarawak's liberation and the restoration of the status quo ante:

Whilst I and my advisers will at all times be very glad, as representing the people of Sarawak, to discuss with you any matters of common interest to our two Governments, we are of the opinion that it would be morally indefensible for the Provisional Government of Sarawak to prejudice the post-war relations of the Government of Sarawak with His Majesty's Government by entering at this time into discussions inconsistent with the existing treaty relationship ... Pending liberation, which would make possible the discussion of any changes to 'the independent and sovereign status of the Raj of Sarawak', he hoped that it would be possible for them to discuss his own proposals.

The first formal meeting took place on 13 March when Anthony Brooke, together with Pollard and Corson, faced Stanley, Gent and four subordinates across a long table in the conference room of the Colonial Office. From the outset it seemed to Anthony that Stanley's manner was appropriate not so much to an opening of discussions as to an announcement of what the British government intended to do about Sarawak. Although Stanley might have anticipated Anthony's response from their earlier correspondence, both he and Gent were somewhat taken aback by the challenge that his speech elicited. No doubt they expected that the strength of the British government's position and the Secretary of State's considerable authority would carry all before them.

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1 Stanley to Anthony Brooke, 22 February 1945. This letter is not available.

2 Anthony Brooke to Stanley, 27 February 1945, _The Facts About Sarawak_, p.79.

3 Interview with Anthony Brooke, 6 November 1974.
The 'proposals' put forward by Stanley were simple enough but their implications went far beyond anything that Anthony could accept. The Sarawak government was to agree

1 to accord to the Crown such jurisdiction as would enable the British Government to legislate for Sarawak under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act.

2 to accept the extension of the authority of the Resident British Representative so as to give him an effective voice in all substantial matters of policy and administration.¹

Once again it was emphasized that the power of legislating through Orders-in-Council under the Foreign Jurisdiction Act would not normally be used and that the powers of the British Representative were only being extended 'for the purpose of ... representing HMG's views in respect of administrative policy in Sarawak'.²

Stanley also took issue with Anthony's claim that it was 'morally indefensible' to enter into negotiations at this point and suggested that they could surely undertake the preparatory work for a new agreement. Anthony defended the phrase with the extraordinarly disingenuous argument that personal and autocratic rule had never prevailed in Sarawak and that the country had possessed a constitution since 1856. Consequently, he claimed, the government of Sarawak could not enter into discussions with the British government until they first consulted the people.

Stanley's manner and his approach to the question had upset Anthony to the point that he would no longer admit the need for preparatory discussions. He told the Secretary of State that he and his colleagues had come to the meeting to represent the interests of an independent sovereign state and they were not going to have any unilateral decision dictated to them. His patience now exhausted, Stanley replied that if they were not ready to enter into discussions, then the government 'would have to decide on their

¹ 'Brief note of the proposals of His Majesty's Government in regard to their future relations with the Government of Sarawak, for discussion with the Sarawak representatives,' CO 531/31/3 [53117/5].

² Ibid.
own course'. This veiled threat did not go unnoticed and further talks were arranged after Stanley's departure from the room.

At the three subsequent meetings, which were not attended by Anthony or Stanley, discussion ranged again and again over familiar territory and it was increasingly clear that an impasse would soon be reached. Perhaps as a means of avoiding this, and of reducing the argument to manageable dimensions, Gent produced at the fourth meeting on 10 May a statement on the international legal status of Sarawak which had been prepared by the Colonial Office's legal advisers and approved by the Foreign Office. This warrants quotation since it constitutes the official rationale of the bureaucratic approach to the Sarawak question:


In turn, Anthony announced that he would submit the question to his own legal advisers and for this purpose he called upon the services of two distinguished international jurists, H. Wynn Parry and Arnold D. McNair. However, the long delay involved in obtaining their considered opinion was evidently regarded by the Colonial Office as a delaying tactic and in mid-July Stanley wrote to the Rajah complaining that 'the Sarawak representatives have so far shown themselves personally unresponsive to the

1 'Sarawak Discussions. Record of the opening meeting held at the Colonial Office ... 13th March, 1945 ...', ibid.
2 Minutes of these meetings can also be found at CO 531/31/3 [53117/5].
3 Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
proposals of his Majesty's Government'. He made it clear that he wished the Rajah to exert pressure on the three Sarawak representatives 'to give active consideration to those measures which are necessary on their side for the resumption of discussions ...' Stanley was evidently unwilling to wait any longer for the legal opinion and saw no possibility of any compromise from his side. Whether out of loyalty to Anthony or from an instinctive unwillingness to become involved in the negotiations himself, the Rajah was not prepared to cooperate. 'Dear Peter', he wrote on Stanley's letter, 'Please deal with this'. It must have become increasingly obvious to Gent that the Provisional Government had to be isolated from the Rajah's support, although the means of achieving this were not so apparent.

The Colonial Office was still awaiting the legal opinion a month later when the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the subsequent Japanese capitulation dramatically altered the circumstances in which the earlier discussions had taken place. There was now to be no protracted military liberation of Borneo by Australian troops and Sarawak could be expected to come under SWPA control by September. The need to obtain the Rajah's agreement to the application of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act thus became acute and pressure was evidently brought to bear on the Rajah during the following weeks.

The Final Phase: Direct Negotiations

It seems unlikely that when the Labour government took office in July 1945 their policy towards British possessions in Southeast Asia was significantly different from that of the National government. While recognizing that Burma would have to be granted independence together with India, they were determined to hold on to Malaya whatever the American critics might say. They were happy to continue with the policy on the constitutional future of

2 Ibid.
3 Minute by Vyner Brooke, 19 July 1945, ibid.
Malaya and Borneo which had been adopted by the War Cabinet in June 1944, although there seems to have been a feeling that the Brooke Raj should not be restored.

George Hall was 63 when appointed Secretary of State for Colonies and was already in poor health. As Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State between 1940 and 1942 he had visited the West Indies but was not particularly interested in colonial affairs. As one writer has pointed out, that he was a Welsh ex-coalminer and trade unionist and a friend of Attlee's was the main consideration in his appointment. Nevertheless, it would be surprising if he did not regard the Brookes in the same light as the big landowners of Wales and England whose wealth he and his party were intent on re-distributing.

The Labour party possessed no clear policy on Britain's Far East colonies when it came into power. The Colonial Bureau of the Fabian Society, which acted as the Labour party's unofficial policy body on the colonies, limited its interests to Africa and India and was seldom prepared to look further east. However, the Labour party was disinclined to countenance the perpetuation of the Brooke Raj. While the 'white rajahs' had seemed a somewhat romantic if anachronistic idea between the wars, they could only be a source of embarrassment to Britain in the post-war world.

In mid-August 1945, Cabinet directed Hall 'that consideration should now be given to the question of whether the present opportunity should be taken of bringing to an end the rule of the Rajah of Sarawak'. Unfortunately the records relating to the Colonial Office's subsequent action are not yet available. However, in an undated minute written shortly after the Cabinet directive a senior Colonial Office official (probably Gent) suggested that there were two major questions for consideration: whether the Rajah and Anthony Brooke would be prepared to cooperate


2 I.C.M.45(47) Conclusions, cited in an anonymous minute, - August 1945, CO 531/31/3 [53117/5]. Subsequent quotations from this source.
within the framework of the projected new agreement, and the extent to which there was a genuine demand among the people of Sarawak for the restoration of the Brookes. Both questions raised difficulties:

... while there has been in the past much criticism of the administration of Sarawak, there has also been a general consensus [sic] of opinion that the personal rule of the Brooke dynasty has been a valuable asset although its undoubted popularity with the natives may well have rested largely on the tradition established by the first Rajah. During the past three and a half years, however, the people of Sarawak have been denied the advantages of personal rule and in present circumstances it would be difficult to tell to what extent attachment to it still persists since it would be natural for the relief of the population at their liberation ... to express itself in welcoming the restoration of the old regime.

He pointed out that the termination of Brooke rule had been mooted on a number of occasions, once by the Rajah himself, but that even if the Rajah were now prepared to consider it he would have to put the question to the Provisional Government, 'and they undoubtedly will strenuously oppose such a scheme'. Likewise, the Rajah and the Provisional Government might not be willing to accept the agreement now being proposed and the only recourse in that situation would be outright annexation. That this was being seriously considered is clear from the fact that a legal officer was already investigating how it might be arranged. However, there was still a way out:

... if the Rajah is told that HMG looks to him to ensure that a satisfactory agreement is reached and that failing this HMG must consider the course they will take to ensure that they will have the necessary authority in Sarawak; and if the Rajah (and the Rajah Muda) accept this virtual ultimatum with a good grace and show themselves willing to cooperate wholeheartedly in the new circumstances which would arise on the conclusion [of an agreement] ...

In all probability, 'this virtual ultimatum' which had been already implicit in the negotiations with the Provisional Government during the previous six months, was put to the Rajah shortly after the Cabinet directive.

In late August the Rajah wrote to MacBryan asking him to go to Sarawak the following March as his Private Secretary. He
also said that he intended writing to the Secretary of State about the charges against MacBryan and the protest over his arrest in Dutch Borneo in January 1942. MacBryan told the Rajah that he had arranged to meet Gent within the next two weeks. He suggested that the best means of dealing with the problem was for the Rajah to ask Gent for an official letter stating that there were no objections to MacBryan's accompanying him to Sarawak. 'Such a letter,' he wrote, 'would answer your protest, clear me with the British Government and vindicate my honour without the necessity of a lot of additional unpleasantness'. Although the relevant Colonial Office file is not yet available, it seems likely that the Rajah took MacBryan's advice. The circumstances of MacBryan's approach to Gent are less clear. They were no doubt related to the question of his reputation but MacBryan must also have been aware of Gent's difficulties with the Provisional Government and may well have offered some suggestions.

Relations between the Rajah and Anthony had once again become strained. In early August the Sarawak Government Commission had decided to purchase a £20,000 house in the Regent's Park area for use as the Provisional Government's headquarters. The Rajah seems to have regarded this as an unnecessary extravagance but Anthony was supported by his father who probably saw it as a good investment. More importantly, some time in June or July the Rajah made a request to the Commission for a large sum of money.

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1 MacBryan to Vyner Brooke, 31 August 1945, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3. The Rajah's earlier letter to MacBryan is not available.

2 Extract from Minutes of Sarawak Government Commission meeting, 3 August 1945, CO 531/32 [53185].

3 Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 12 August 1945. Letter in the possession of Mrs K.M. Brooke.

4 In July 1945 Vyner Brooke established a £40,000 trust for the benefit of his daughters Elizabeth and Valerie, MacBryan and Smith being appointed trustees. In September 1947 the Rajah was under pressure from his daughters for advances on their allowances and the Ranee then suggested that the capital sum be made over to them. However, MacBryan balked at this for some time. See, e.g., Ranee to MacBryan, 2 November 1947, Hussey Papers.
The request was refused on the grounds that it would be illegal,\(^1\) a decision which was perfectly within the Commission's powers and in accordance with the Colonial Office's concern to conserve Sarawak's reserve funds. However, it can hardly have endeared Anthony to his uncle who was now under pressure to ensure that the Provisional Government became more accommodating in its relationship with the Colonial Office.

Rather than speak directly to Anthony, however, the Rajah asked the Ranee to convey his feelings. It is difficult to separate the Ranee's own views from those of the Rajah which she was evidently reporting in her letter to Anthony of 8 September, but a number of points are clear. First of all, the Rajah insisted that the Provisional Government should keep on good terms with the Colonial Office. He had every intention of appointing a British Representative for Sarawak, without whom there would be no security in future. Secondly, he emphasized that there was 'NO SUCH THING at the present moment as a "SARAWAK GOVERNMENT"' and that when he resumed his full authority he would appoint anyone he wished:

\[\ldots\text{what the Raja wants you to understand is that as long as he is alive and capable, he wants to Rule Sarawak in his own way, there will be plenty of time for you to Rule it AFTER he's passed out. He believes in the cooperation of the British Government, and on being on the friendliest terms with the Colonial Office.}\]\(^2\)

Thirdly, the Rajah wished Anthony to know that he intended taking MacBryan out to Sarawak with him once he was cleared by the Colonial Office of all suspicion. Accordingly, he wanted Anthony and the Provisional Government to allow MacBryan to answer in person the accusations which had been made against him in early 1942. However, the Ranee was at some pains to emphasize that the Rajah was not being unduly influenced by MacBryan:

\(^1\) Anonymous memorandum marked 'Confidential', 13 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/2. In an accompanying note, Bertram Brooke vouched for its accuracy.

\(^2\) Sylvia Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 8 September 1945, Hussey Papers [53].
I can positively assure you that MacBryan has NO HOLD over the Raja more than that the Raja finds that Mac's particular form of genius is extremely useful to him, and there are certain things that MacBryan can do for the Raja no one else could possibly accomplish. The Raja is perfectly aware of Mac's failings and faults and has him well in hand.¹

On 10 September, by which time MacBryan had probably met Gent, the Rajah wrote to the members of the Provisional Government announcing that in view of the end of hostilities in the Far East and the recovery of Sarawak he was resuming his powers, subject to the provisions of the 1941 Constitution. This necessitated terminating the appointment of Officer Administering the Government and he requested the Provisional Government to arrange a special issue of the Gazette to announce this and to prepare a suitable letter to the Secretary of State for Colonies which he would sign. He was only prepared to meet Anthony when this had been done.² The reaction of Anthony and his colleagues was to question the Rajah's right to reassert his authority in such a fashion. A meeting of the Provisional Government was held on 12 September and a telegram was sent to the Rajah congratulating him on the surrender of the Japanese and expressing the hope that he would soon be back in Sarawak. On the same day, however, Anthony wrote to the Rajah telling him that the Provisional Government could not respond to his request until Pollard returned from leave.

When a meeting was finally held on 18 September, the problem of the undefined status of the Provisional Government became painfully apparent. While there was a unanimous desire to see the Rajah resume an active part in Sarawak affairs, the members believed that he was 'exceeding his powers under the Constitution in demanding that measures be taken to implement a decision made by him without references to his Government.'³ However, the only point at issue was the method of implementing the proposal and this, they believed, was the method of implementing the proposal and this, they believed,

¹ Ibid.
² Vyner Brooke to Provisional Government, 10 September 1945, ibid.
³ 'Minutes of the Sixty-Third Meeting of the Sarawak Commission ... September 18th, 1945 ...', ibid.
could be settled by means of a frank discussion with the Rajah. Strenuous efforts were made to arrange an interview and an appointment was made for Anthony and two other members of the Commission to see him at 5 p.m. on 19 September. But at 4 p.m. that day the Ranee telephoned to say that the Rajah would not be able to talk to them after all. And when Swayne tried again in the belief that he and Aplin might have more influence on the Rajah, he was told by the Ranee that the Rajah would not meet any of the Commission's members until his instructions on the special issue of the Gazette had been obeyed. Why the Rajah changed his mind is not known but it seems likely that after making the appointment he was informed by J.A. Smith, chief clerk at the Sarawak Government Office, of what had been said at the meeting. At any rate, the next day (20 September) the Rajah wrote a formal letter to Anthony announcing that he had told Hall of his decision to dissolve the Provisional Government and to appoint a new Supreme Council under the 1941 Constitution as soon as possible 'with a view to forming a legal Government'. He had also made a formal application for travel facilities for himself and his party to visit Sarawak in October. He thus requested all the members of the Provisional Government to submit their resignations at once.

Another meeting of the Provisional Government was held on 22 September to discuss the Rajah's letter. It was decided that the position had not altered materially and that it was still desirable to seek a personal interview with the Rajah. A reply to the Rajah was also drafted setting out the members' view that constitutional procedure should be strictly adhered to and repeating the request for an interview:

We feel bound to express ... our keenest disappointment and regret at Your Highness' inability to meet members of the Provisional Government, and that Your Highness has seen fit to disregard constitutional procedure and to communicate direct with ... [the] Secretary of

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1 'Minutes of the Sixty-Fourth Meeting of the Sarawak Commission ... September 22nd 1945 ...', ibid.
2 Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 20 September 1945, ibid. Similar letters were addressed to the other members.
State for Colonies on an official subject. It was hoped that Your Highness would be persuaded in conversation, and without resort to a formal interchange of correspondence, that your proposal to reassume your powers and prerogatives could properly be implemented by simple constitutional procedure, since unilateral action on Your Highness' part might not, in view of your position in relation to the Constitution, be effective in facilitating recognition by His Majesty's Government of the authority which Your Highness wishes to reassume. It will, we feel sure, be readily appreciated by Your Highness that no change affecting the present constitution of the Provisional Government of Sarawak, duly recognised as such by His Majesty's Government, can be effected except by constitutional means, and that such plans as Your Highness has in mind can only be considered after Your Highness has properly reassumed the powers of Rajah-in-Council and Head of the Provisional Government of Sarawak.

If the Provisional Government's earlier letter had irritated the Rajah, this one must have enraged him. Writing to Anthony on 4 October he announced that he was dismissing him as head of the Provisional Government with retrospective effect from 10 September:

"This failure to act upon my instruction and the subsequent receipt of a letter purporting to be signed by an Officer Administering the Government and Members of a Provisional Government which no longer existed seems to me to be a direct affront to myself, and I can only regard your action as an act of insubordination without parallel in my experience of State affairs."

The same evening, the Rajah visited Hall at the Colonial Office and informed him of the action he had taken. Late that night MacBryan telephoned Smith to tell him that he had been appointed Acting Government Agent in Aplin's place. Smith had informed the Rajah on 14 September that he was resigning from the Provisional Government and this was his reward - a doubling in salary. In a letter to Smith confirming the appointment the Rajah instructed him to produce a special issue of the Gazette conveying his decisions.

1 'Minutes of the Sixty-Fourth Meeting of the Sarawak Commission ... September 22nd 1945 ...', ibid.
2 Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 4 October 1945, ibid.
'... I am deeply shocked that you should have adopted such an intransigent attitude in negotiations,' Vyner told Anthony on 12 October. 'The proposals made by His Majesty's Government were eminently reasonable, having regard to the War and that Sarawak was overrun ...' He also expressed his annoyance that Anthony had spent £20,000 on a house and £5,000 on fittings. '... You may neither use in future the style and title of Rajah Muda,' he concluded, 'nor consider you have any right of succession to the Raj of Sarawak; ...'¹

During August and September a series of events was in train which, given Anthony's inflexible position on the application of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, could hardly have been varied. However, it is important to take account of the fact that the Rajah wrote his letter dismissing Anthony on the same day (4 October) that Hall finally received Wynn Parry and McNair's joint opinion on the international legal status of Sarawak.² As this opinion upheld Sarawak's sovereignty and consequently could only strengthen Anthony Brooke in his determination to resist Colonial Office pressure, it seems reasonable to suggest that it was closely connected with his dismissal and the Rajah's meeting the same evening with Hall. It is likely that the Colonial Office had prior knowledge of the opinion and, believing that there was no future in negotiations with Anthony, approached the Rajah direct.

No doubt realizing that Anthony was unlikely to remain silent about what had happened, the Rajah made two attempts to ensure that he did not cause too much trouble. On 7 November Anthony was called in to the Sarawak Government Office and told by Smith on the Rajah's instructions that the deeds of the house bought by the Sarawak Commission would be transferred to him and his allowance of £2,800 continued for life if he agreed to two conditions: that he should 'not in future interfere with any public affairs affecting Sarawak, His Highness the Rajah or any members of His Highness' family, or 'indulge in any public or private talk whatsoever, malicious or otherwise, concerning Sarawak, His Highness the Rajah

¹ Vyner Brooke to Anthony Brooke, 12 October 1945, cited by Sylvia Brooke, Queen of the Headhunters ..., p.149-50.
² Personal communication from Anthony Brooke, 13 December 1976. For the opinion, see Appendix I.
or His Highness' family'. Anthony apparently rejected this out of hand although it was more than year before he made any public reference to the attempt to buy him off. The Rajah's next move was in late January 1946 when Anthony had commenced an energetic campaign to attract publicity to what was happening about Sarawak. Anthony's monthly allowance was delayed, as if to suggest that it might be discontinued altogether if he insisted on talking to the newspapers. However, a letter from Bertram to the Rajah probably put an end to this strategy.

Boyd soon got wind of the story that a new agreement would be negotiated between the Rajah and the Secretary of State. Accordingly he wrote a memorandum for Hall advising him that any such agreement should be submitted to the Council Negri, as required by the 1941 Constitution. Boyd was not altogether happy about this body, believing that in a country where more than 90 per cent of the people were illiterate it would have been sensible to have gone more slowly, in the first instance upgrading the Committee of Administration's legislative authority, subject to certain safeguards. But it was too late for this. Due to the deaths of several European and Asian members, the Council Negri would probably be less representative than it had been before the war and the European vote would be dominant even if its numbers were not. However, he warned, the opposition mustered by Anthony in Sarawak was likely to be strong and it would be unfortunate if, 'through a misunderstanding of the facts', the Council was split. As a precaution, he suggested, the cession proposal should be explained to all local leaders by a person who was well known and trusted and could answer any questions. He thought that the Rajah might be intending to do this but he may also have had in mind the possibility that Hall might honour him with the responsibility.

1 Anthony Brooke to Crown Agents, 19 October 1946, CO 531/32 [53185].
2 Manchester Guardian, 3 January 1947.
3 Note by Bertram Brooke, 22 March 1946, Hussey Papers, [66735].
4 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 29 January 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
5 Undated memorandum [October 1945?] Boyd Papers.
Boyd told Hall that the vote of the Council Negri might not give an accurate indication of opinion because most people in Sarawak 'do not care by whom and how they are governed as long as they are allowed to live their lives in their own way'. But it would nevertheless amount to an expression of the opinion of the local legislature and could therefore be used in Britain to refute any suggestion that public opinion in Sarawak had not been consulted. 'This is ... an obvious point on which to direct any attack', he added, 'and it ... would be wise to prepare in advance an impregnable defence ...' Finally, the task of re-establishing civil government was quite beyond the resources of any member of the Sarawak service and a suitable man would have to be appointed by the Secretary of State. Even if cession did not go through, such a man should still be appointed as Adviser to the Sarawak government. Boyd's advice was probably set aside in favour of the arrangements made with the Rajah and MacBryan, but in late January 1946 when it became necessary for the Colonial Office to adopt a new strategy his suggestions appear to have been influential. Concern about British domestic reactions always outweighed any consideration of what the response might be in Sarawak.

The Cession Negotiations

Very little is known about the subsequent negotiations between the Rajah and the Colonial Office. Even when the Colonial Office files on the subject are made available it is unlikely that they will contain the whole story, much of which seems to have taken place at private meetings and through telephone calls. What we do know is that the Rajah obtained a verbal assurance from Hall before signing the cession Agreement at the Colonial Office on 24 October that 'no one would be worse off as a result of cession'. The Agreement apparently committed the Rajah and the Colonial Office to conclude

1 The relevant files are probably CO 531/250/31/3 [53117/1, Pt.II); CO 531/31/3 [53117/1, Pt.I]; CO 531/248/31/3 [53117]; CO 531/253/31/3 [53117/2]. All are closed until 1996.

2 Vyner Brooke to Secretary of State (James Griffiths), 12 December 1950, Hussey Papers.
negotiations on the cession of Sarawak to the Crown subject to MacBryan's obtaining the necessary authority from the Council Negri and the Supreme Council.\(^1\) The Rajah also agreed that in the event of cession the assets of the 1912 Sarawak State Advisory Council Fund would be paid to the Sarawak government and not to himself as provided in the terms of the Fund and on 31 October he signed a document which solved the problem of the succession by proclaiming the King as his heir.\(^2\) MacBryan clearly played an important part in the negotiations and at a meeting with Hall at Bath the Secretary of State even indicated that he would receive a knighthood.\(^3\) This was particularly gratifying to MacBryan who had for some time been trying to dispell the suspicions which had been created by his actions in 1941-42.

The Agreement of 24 October did not concern itself with any form of financial settlement, something which the Colonial Office wished to postpone until after the completion of MacBryan's mission. However, it was interested in getting the Sarawak government to accept responsibility for the cost of relief and rehabilitation supplies and equipment for the state\(^4\) and to keep a close check on Sarawak's funds now that the Sarawak Commission was no longer in existence. A sharp rise in withdrawals in late 1945 caused Gent to ask Smith if the Rajah could be persuaded to provide detailed monthly estimates of the succeeding month's withdrawals.\(^5\) In Paskin's words, what was required was 'an understanding with the Rajah that these funds should be expended only on objects acceptable to the Secretary of State ...'\(^6\) The Colonial Office clearly expected

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1 Minute by Galsworthy, 18 December 1945, CO 531/31/1 [53077]. The Agreement is also referred to in a letter from Vyner Brooke to Hall, 1 October 1945, Hussey Papers.

2 Hussey Papers.

3 MacBryan to Smith, 4 December 1947, ibid. Smith was also given to understand that he would receive an honour.

4 The net cost of rehabilitation for the three Borneo territories was estimated by the Colonial Office in late 1945 at £3,412,000. Sarawak's share of this is not known but probably accounted for half. Colonial Office to Acting Sarawak Government Agent, J.A. Smith, 14 December 1945, CO 531/31/1 [53077].

5 Minute by Galsworthy, 8 December 1945, CO 531/31/1 [53077].

6 Minute by Paskin, 28 November 1945, ibid.
to take over all of Sarawak's remaining reserves.

Instead, however, MacBryan arranged a meeting with Gent at which he stressed the Rajah's wish that there should be an early and overall financial settlement. He proposed the establishment of a Sarawak State Trust Fund to be financed with £1,000,000 from Sarawak government funds to be administered by three trustees, two appointed by the Sarawak government and the other by the British government. The Fund, which MacBryan saw as the Rajah's quid pro quo forcession, would earn £30,000 annually from which allowances would be paid to the Rajah and his dependants. The remainder would be used for educational purposes and after an agreed time the Fund would pass from the Brooke family and he held 'for the benefit of the people of Sarawak'.

MacBryan proposed to obtain the agreement of the datus to the Fund during his forthcoming visit. Gent did not commit the Colonial Office to accepting the Fund although he was prepared to give it consideration. In the meantime he wrote to the Rajah seeking agreement on responsibility for relief and rehabilitation supplies and equipment. Nor was he prepared to accept MacBryan's claim the Sarawak government had no power to dispose of funds without the consent of the Council Negri.

Smith and MacBryan met Gent again on 18 December to reiterate the Rajah's wish that there should be one overall financial settlement rather than a number of separate agreements. After discussion it was finally agreed that MacBryan's commission for his projected visit to Sarawak should allow him to attempt to secure 'general financial powers for the Rajah' on the understanding that he should not seek agreement on any specific proposal, such as the Sarawak State Trust Fund. When MacBryan subsequently obtained the agreement to the Fund in the form of an Order issued by the Council on 5 January 1946, the Colonial Office was presented with a fait accompli.

1 MacBryan to Perceval Lloyd, 24 October 1947, Hussey Papers. The Rajah was to receive £10,000 a year, the Ranee £3,000, Elizabeth and Valerie £2,000 each, Bertram £5,000 and Anthony £3,000.

2 Minute by Galsworthy, 8 December 1945, CO 531/31/1[53077].

3 Gent to Vyner Brooke, 13 December 1945, ibid.

4 Minute by Galsworthy, 18 December 1945, ibid.

When he announced the cession in February 1946, Hall revealed that the Rajah would hand over Sarawak together with its accumulated reserves of £2,750,000 and Post Office Savings Bank account of £77,000 on the understanding that £1,000,000 should be set aside for a trust fund. This would provide for the Rajah and his dependants and 'certain local functionaries' on a scale similar to that which existed before the Japanese invasion. The beneficiaries would be named and the benefits limited to their lifetimes, after which the income 'would be devoted to social and other measures designed for the progress and benefit of the people of the territory, thus providing a permanent memorial to the rule of the Brooke family in Sarawak.'

However, at two meetings in March 1946 attended by MacBryan the Colonial Office apparently decided that the proposal for a £1,000,000 Fund should be dropped because of income tax difficulties and that instead £30,000 should be paid annually out of Sarawak's revenues to the trustees from which the pensions would then be paid, the remainder being allocated to 'social and other measures'. These might still be subject to income tax and Gent was probably attracted to Smith's suggestion (made while MacBryan was in Sarawak) that there was really no need for the Fund and that the pensions could be paid direct from Sarawak revenues.

Although the Rajah does not seem to have understood or even followed the discussions over the Fund, he assumed that it would be established and informed the Singapore press to this effect on his way out to Sarawak in April. But on 9 May he received a cable from Hall informing him that any pension would still be liable to income tax and suggesting that he retain £50,000 of the proceeds of the 1912 Sarawak State Advisory Council Trust Fund.

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1 *Hansard*, 6 February 1946.
2 Creech-Jones to Vyner Brooke, 20 September 1948, Hussey Papers.
3 Ibid.
4 *Sarawak Tribune*, 16 April 1946.
instead. Responding to this, the Rajah indicated that he would retain £100,000, the balance of the Fund's assets, estimated at £50,000, to be placed in trust for educational purposes. The £100,000 would be for himself and his immediate family 'in lieu of any other claim for Trust Fund or Sarawak revenues' and he would ask the Council Negri to pass a bill granting annual pensions to Betram, Anthony and the datus. This was the basis of the Rajah's Dependents' Ordinance enacted by the Council Negri on 17 May 1946 under which Bertram was granted a pension of £5,000 p.a. and Anthony £2,800 while the datus were to receive from $12,000 p.a. (Datu Patinggi) to $1,800 (Datu Pahlawan) in order of seniority. It also said that the Order of 5 January 1946 setting up the Sarawak State Trust Fund was deemed to have had no effect. In

1 Hall to Vyner Brooke, 9 May 1946, Hussey Papers.

2 Vyner Brooke to Hall, 11 May 1946, ibid. When the balance was found to amount to £70,000, the Rajah agreed that £50,000 should be spent on buildings for a teachers' college in Kuching to be known as the Rajah Brooke Training Centre, and that the remaining £20,000 should go to the Rajah of Sarawak Fund (see Chapter III, pp. 74-5) which had been established in 1930. Creech-Jones to Vyner Brooke, 20 September 1948, Brooke Papers, Box 6/1. The Rajah of Sarawak Fund was administered by the Colonial Office for the benefit of sons of daughters of British colonial officers until a few years ago when Lord Tanlaw (Simon Brooke Mackay, the Rajah's grandson) succeeded in having the remaining capital transferred to a new trust known as the Sarawak Foundation which now offers a limited number of scholarships for study in Britain to Sarawak students.

3 Order No.R.17 (Rajah's Dependents) 1946, SGG, 25 May 1946. In a document dated 30 June 1946 the Rajah specified further dependants, CO 531/32 [33185]. MacBryan and Smith were both granted pensions of £500 p.a. as the Rajah's trustees. Among the other beneficiaries was Esca Daykin's widow. (See Chapter I, p.16).
spite of all MacBryan's subsequent efforts to revive it, based on the contention that the 5 January Order had never been formally repealed, the Sarawak State Trust Fund remained a dead letter.

The Reasons for Cession

Two explanations have been offered for the Rajah's decision to cede Sarawak: the Rajah's and the popular view of the time, neither of which is particularly illuminating as it stands. Not the least of the historian's problems is that the Rajah left pathetically little of his own writing on this or any other subject. Apart from what may eventually be revealed in the Colonial Office files, his only surviving comment is in a letter to his former Private Secretary, B.J.C. Spurway, 14 years after cession, à propos of

1 Having failed to interest the Rajah in reviving the question of the Trust Fund, MacBryan visited Kuching in May 1950 where he had talks with the Chief Secretary and the Attorney-General. However, the colonial government took the view (shared by Sir Roland Braddell whom MacBryan had consulted) that legally speaking there was no Trust. MacBryan to Mrs Evelyn Hussey, 10 May 1950, Hussey Papers; [Digby?] to Mark Morrison, n.d., Mark Morrison Papers, Item 4; Sarawak Tribune, 23 June 1950. This reverse, together with his subsequent failure to prevent the proclamation of Pangeran Muda Omar Ali as successor to Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin of Brunei on the latter's death brought about a nervous breakdown which led to his certification and forcible deportation to Singapore for treatment. Sarawak Tribune, 23 June 1950. Before Tajuddin died he had appointed MacBryan Political Adviser for his planned visit to England (where he proposed to ask for increased oil royalties) and trustee of the political rights of his daughter, Tuanku Ehsan, whom he wished to succeed him. MacBryan to Mrs Hussey, 27 October 1950, Hussey Papers; see also, Chapter III, p.89. When the Colonial Office refused to recognize Tuanku Ehsan as heir to the throne, MacBryan claimed that the coronation of Omar Ali would be invalid without an item of the royal regalia (the tongkat ular or snake-headed staff of office) with which Tajuddin had entrusted him. After release in Singapore, MacBryan went to Hong Kong where he died in highly mysterious circumstances c.1951. The tongkat ular disappeared (as did most of his papers) and is still the subject of controversy in Brunei. MacBryan would make a fascinating subject for a biography.
Robert Payne's book *The White Rajahs of Sarawak*¹ which had recently appeared:

... I am glad you liked Payne's book. I think it was very fair. I was very criticized when I gave up Sarawak in '46, but I did it for the best, as I had no trust in Peter, and I saw too much of my father, when in his dotage. Sarawak is no place for aged or aging Rajah's ...

It is also the explanation favoured by Sir Steven Runciman.³ However, the Rajah's remarks must be assessed in the light of the fact that he had indeed been 'very criticized' and in attempting to defend himself may have produced his own mythology of what happened. Even when all the surviving records for the period are made public, the basis for assessing the Rajah's personal motivation may be no more substantial than it is today.

First of all, it is fairly clear that the Rajah never had any intention of returning to Sarawak after the war to resume the reins of office. Then aged 72 and with his energies failing, his main wish seems to have been for a quiet life in England where he could pursue his old love of gardening and attend the occasional race-meeting. The prospect of financing and supervising the reconstruction made necessary by the war, the extent of which was as yet unknown, must have been daunting to say the least. Then there was the question of Anthony. It may have been that his nephew's inflexibility in the negotiations with the Colonial Office finally persuaded the Rajah that he should not succeed him and that Sarawak should instead become a colony of the Crown. As we have seen, Vyner had become exasperated with Anthony on a number of previous occasions and had

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1 London 1960. Payne does not mention negotiations with the Colonial Office and makes the superficial judgement that 'alone, on his own responsibility, Vyner decided the time was soon coming when Sarawak would have to take its place among the possessions of the British Commonwealth'. p.176.

2 Vyner Brooke to Spurway, 7 October 1960. Letter in the possession of Mr B.J.C. Spurway.

3 '[The Rajah] himself seems to have been moved by distrust of his heir, and his own age and poor health. But he could give more valid reasons ...' *The White Rajahs* ..., p.259.
very serious doubts about his nephew's suitability to become Rajah.

More importantly, it may have seemed to him by late 1945 that there was something inevitable about a Colonial Office takeover. Pressure for Colonial Office intervention in Sarawak's internal affairs had mounted in the immediate pre-war years and a Labour government could only be expected to behave less sympathetically. In October 1941 the Rajah had signed a Supplementary Agreement allowing for the appointment of a British Representative and must have known which way this arrangement was pointing. He may well have taken the view that there could be no practical compromise between autocratic Brooke rule and rule by the Colonial Office through an MCS-type administration.¹

Announcing the cession in the House of Commons on 6 February 1946, Hall was at some pains to emphasize that the Rajah had not been forced into making the decision. Indeed, he added, the initiative had come from the Rajah himself when he found that the terms suggested by the Colonial Office did not go far enough.² This may be true, but there may also have been a careful effort to prepare the ground for such a suggestion. There were a number of problems which could easily have been introduced as a subtle means of persuading the Rajah that there was no point in retaining his sovereignty. The most important of these was probably the cost of the military administration (part of which the Sarawak Commission in 1944 had agreed to bear)³ and the cost of relief and rehabilitation supplies and equipment, which together would eat up all of Sarawak's remaining reserve funds. This would have provided effective leverage on the Rajah who was already known to be unenthusiastic about resuming his responsibilities and concerned to make a financial settlement providing for the Ranee and their daughters. Hall's statement may have been true as far as it went, but it tells us nothing of the

¹ Personal communication from Mr K.H. Digby, 8 September 1974.
² Hansard, 6 February 1946.
³ Paskin to Sarawak Government Agent, 7 December 1944, ref.no. 55104/10/A/44, cited in a letter from the Colonial Office to Smith, 14 December 1945, CO 531/31/1 [53077].
Rajah's motives and the pressures which may have been brought to bear on him in a diplomatic way by the Colonial Office.

The popular view was that the Rajah sold Sarawak to the British government, thereby stirring up a family row. Newspaper reports at the time certainly gave this impression and there are some former Sarawak officers and their wives who still believe it to have been the case.\(^1\) Certainly, the Rajah's preoccupation from the late 1930s with making financial provision for his family supports this interpretation. The Rajah's 'sale' of his autocratic powers to the Committee of Administration for $2,000,000 in 1941 and his later attempt in Australia to take over Sarawak's assets strongly suggest a willingness to dispose of Sarawak for cash, regardless of his brother's and nephew's rights or 'the interests of the natives'.

Instead of the £1,000,000 which the Rajah received according to popular rumour, however, what he in fact received as a consequence of his agreement to cede Sarawak to the British Crown was the £100,000 capital of the Fund established by his father in 1912 against just such a contingency. Clearly, Vyner Brooke did not agree to cession for financial gain. His understanding was, very simply, that he and his family would be no worse off as a result of cession. In fact, with a capital sum of £100,000 which was subject to income tax and with a wife and two daughters to maintain in the style to which they were accustomed, he was quite definitely

\(^1\) The Rajah himself made reference to this in a 1956 petition to the Queen, emphasizing that 'in fact no financial compensation, pecuniary profit, nor recompense of any kind was received ... in consideration of the ... Cession ...' and asking that everything be done to make it plain that the rumour was 'untrue and defamatory'. He also complained that Hall had not honoured his 6 February 1946 undertaking to establish the Sarawak State Trust Fund. The formal purpose of the petition, however, was to request that the Nine Cardinal Principles should be incorporated in the new constitution which was to be granted to Sarawak. Petition dated 10 February 1956, Brooke Papers, Box 12/2.
worse off. Unlike the directors of the Chartered Company whose interest in obtaining the best possible financial settlement for their shareholders and more realistic attitude towards the Colonial Office kept negotiations on the annexation of North Borneo going until mid-1946, the Rajah had been prepared to place his trust in a gentlemen's agreement. Even if he had been prepared to drive a harder bargain, there was no big business interest to lobby in his support.

The Rajah's willingness to give up his responsibilities and his lack of confidence in Anthony were vital factors in making cession possible. However, in July or August 1945 the Labour government seems to have decided that Brooke rule should come to an end. Once the decision had been made, it was politically important that the initiative should be seen to come from the Rajah. There was also a need to obtain at least token approval from the people of Sarawak, hence the Colonial Office's agreement that MacBryan should be despatched to Sarawak as soon as the Australian military administration was effectively at an end in late December 1945. Concern about possible Australian reactions was still sufficient for the purpose of MacBryan's visit to be kept secret and for a special Colonial Office emissary (J.J. Paskin) to be sent specially to inform Macaskie.

Before the war a Colonial Office memorandum indicated strong interest in Sarawak's resources and the belief that in spite

1 Of the £100,000, MacBryan was apparently given £10,000 by the Rajah. From August 1948 the Rajah became involved in correspondence with the Colonial Office over the financial settlement. He continued to refer to Hall's verbal assurance of 24 October 1945 that he and his family and other dependants would be 'no worse off' as a result of cession. See, e.g., Creech-Jones to Vyner Brooke, 20 September 1948, Brooke Papers, Box 6/1; Vyner Brooke to Secretary of State (James Griffiths) 12 December 1950, Hussey Papers. It was suggested to Creech-Jones in 1949 that the Rajah should be made a peer. However, the Labour party declined to confer this honour, probably in the belief that it would look too much like a pay-off.

2 No account is available of these negotiations.

3 Macaskie to W.P.N.L. Ditmas, 24 December 1945, Macaskie Papers, File 2.
of the doubtful future of oil the state would ultimately prove to possess enormous economic potential.\textsuperscript{1} The only arguments which could be used at that time to justify a British takeover were (i) that exploitation of Sarawak's resources was essential in order to finance the provision of social services on a par with those available in British colonies; (ii) that Sarawak could be used in resisting any southwards sweep by Japan; and (iii) that the longer a takeover was postponed, the more difficult international opinion would make it.\textsuperscript{2} However, the Japanese invasion and the dangers which nationalism and international opinion posed for British interests suggested the new argument that in the post-war 'reconstruction' of Southeast Asia, small states like Sarawak could not be allowed to survive.

\textsuperscript{1} See Chapter IV, pp.172-3.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid.
CHAPTER VII

The Legitimization of Cession

ONCE Sarawak's future had been decided by the Rajah and the Colonial Office, all that remained was the problem of how to legitimize the transfer of sovereignty. Confident of MacBryan's ability to persuade the Malay and Chinese leaders to give their approval, the Rajah assured the Colonial Office that this would suffice. The repercussions of MacBryan's visit and the unexpected opposition of the Malay National Union overturned the original plan. However, in its subsequent arrangements designed to make cession legally defensible the Colonial Office was primarily concerned with British domestic opposition. The two-man parliamentary mission to 'ascertain native views' was itself no more than a sop to parliamentary and press opinion. Although the Rajah had originally felt that European officers should not vote on the cession issue and that there should be a secret ballot, cession was passed by a European majority on a show of hands. The Colonial Office representative and a handful of Brooke officers had played a key role in ensuring that cession went through and when the Colonial Office displayed a last-minute attack of nerves, Chance itself made a decisive entrance. Altogether the cession was a grubby affair, but if it was to go through it could hardly have been otherwise.

MacBryan's Visit

The Colonial Office was loath to have MacBryan further involved in the cession arrangements but the Rajah insisted that he was the only person who could secure the agreement of the Sarawak leaders. MacBryan's dubious record raised some important eyebrows in the War Office and the question was debated at the highest level before permission could finally be obtained for him to visit Sarawak. Even then it was only on the strict condition that he was accompanied by an officer of the MCS, W.C.S. Corry. Approval was obtained from the

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1 The original choice, J.G. Black, had fallen ill.
Australian Army Department for the two men to visit the war zone but the War Office continued to express its doubts to SEAC headquarters. Informing Mountbatten's Chief of Staff, Brigadier E.C. Gibbons, of the projected visit and its importance for the constitutional future of Borneo, the War Office expressed its serious reservations about MacBryan:

However much we may deplore the instrument chosen for this mission [the] choice has been made by the S[ecretary] of S[tafe] for Colonies with his eyes open and War Office at Army Council level has agreed to the individual in question being sent out for the purpose. Corry has been fully instructed and told not to let him out of his sight. 2

Hall had himself informed Mountbatten of the situation.3 MacBryan's mission was the price which had to be paid for the 24 October agreement.

From what is known of MacBryan's visit there are some obvious parallels with Sir Harold MacMichael's mission to the Malay rulers in late 1945.4 Both men were determined to obtain approval for a course of action which had already been decided and were not too particular about the methods they used. While there is no evidence that MacBryan actually used the threat of prosecution for collaboration in order to pressure the datus,5 it is likely that he exploited their very real fears by promising immunity. There had been talk among some of the Brooke officers released from prison camp of investigating the actions of Tuanku Bujang and Abang Openg,6 two Native Officers who had served as Ken Sanji. And in September there was 'an atmosphere of considerable uneasiness as to what attitude the Authorities would take vis-à-vis those who had worked

1 War Office to Mountbatten, 21 December 1945, WO 203/5535.
2 War Office to Gibbons, 19 December 1945, WO 203/3973.
3 Hall to Mountbatten, 15 December 1945, ibid.
5 This is suggested by Elaine McKay, 'The Kuching Communities...', pp. 94-7.
for the Japanese...'. There is no way of verifying later accusations that MacBryan used trickery and even force to obtain the signatures he wanted but it is clear that he deliberately misrepresented Bertram and Anthony Brooke as having given their consent to the cession.

MacBryan and Corry arrived at Labuan in late December and after a meeting with Macaskie and Paskin they went on to Kuching. There are three versions of what happened during the following week, the first being MacBryan's own account to the Rajah two years after the event:

... When you sent me to Sarawak to obtain agreement to the cession I explained to the native members of the Councils (and to old Tiang Swee too) that if they conceded your wish for cession in their interests and allowed the establishment of the Sarawak State Trust Fund... the natives would be the real beneficiaries... because the interest on the fund, as each member of your "family" died, would become available for scholarships on the lines of Rhodes scholarships. By this arrangement, as time went on, there would be in Sarawak a number of highly educated natives who would perpetuate the Brooke tradition in the East to the lasting advantage of the natives and the British. When they understood this all the members of the Councils, including the Datu Patinggi, were only too glad to sign the instruments providing for cession which I brought back with me....

The two other versions are contained in letters written by the Datu Patinggi at the time and an account given by Ong Tiang Swee and Tuanku Bujang to Pollard in May. While there are some gaps and inconsistencies, it is possible to piece together a reasonably accurate picture of what took place. MacBryan's first step was to visit each of the datus and Ong Tiang Swee separately, seeking their signatures to a 'letter' which would give the Rajah authority to go ahead with the cession. He also told them not to discuss the matter

1 Ibid.
2 MacBryan to Vyner Brooke, 3 December 1947, Hussey Papers.
3 Datu Patinggi to Gascoigne, 4 January 1946, The Facts About Sarawak, pp. 89-90; Datu Patinggi to Archer, 8 January 1946, ibid., p. 90.
4 'Report on Visit to Sarawak by Mr. F.H. Pollard', Hussey Papers, pp. 4, 11.
with any tuan (European) and promised cash payments of $12,000 to the Datu Patinggi, $10,000 each to the Datus Menteri, Hakim, Amar and Pahlawan and $2,000 to the mufti Haji Nawawi, who was to witness the signatures. The Datu Pahlawan and Ong Tiang Swee also agreed to accept $42,500 each for the relief of Malays and Chinese affected by the war.

Only the Datu Patinggi refused to sign and the next day he was visited by the Datus Amar and Menteri, together with Abang Mohd. Daim, who told him that they feared for his safety if he did not conform with MacBryan's wishes. On 4 January the Datu Patinggi wrote to Col. C.E. Gascoigne, Treasurer in the military administration, describing what had happened and asking for an inquiry into the circumstances of MacBryan's visit. He also asked Gascoigne to advise him as quickly as possible on what he should do because the document was due to be signed at his house on 7 January. Gascoigne, however, does not seem to have replied. The military administration was turning a blind eye on the whole affair, almost certainly on the instructions of the Colonial Office as conveyed by Paskin.

However, MacBryan had to move faster than he had originally intended. A meeting of the Supreme Council was called for 5 January and was attended by the Datus Patinggi, Pahlawan, Amar, Menteri and Ong Tiang Swee, providing the quorum of five required under the 1941 Constitution. Corry appears to have been present throughout the proceedings. Having displayed his power of attorney from the Rajah which requested the Datu Patinggi to receive MacBryan as his 'envoy and representative' and to 'carry out his orders as if they were my own', MacBryan retired with the old datu to an inside room. Shortly afterwards, MacBryan emerged and told the others that the Datu Patinggi had refused to sign unless, in addition to the $12,000 which had been mentioned, he was given sole rights to the eggs of the Turtle Islands and the title of Datu Patinggi was made hereditary in

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1 The father-in-law of the Datu Patinggi's eldest grandson, Abang Ibrahim.
2 Brooke Papers, Box 11/2. The document is dated November 1945 and has the Rajah's seal.
3 See Chapter III, pp. 91-2.
his family. When this was conceded after considerable discussion, MacBryan signed an agreement with the Datu Patinggi and all five members then signed two Orders-in-Council.

The first of the Orders simply empowered MacBryan to act as Chief Secretary until 8 January for the purpose of convening a meeting of the Council Negri. The second, which was probably the 'letter' MacBryan had originally mentioned, provided that notwithstanding the 1941 Constitution, as from 1 January 1946 'all the prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercised by the Rajah and not otherwise'. It stated the Rajah's intention of concluding an agreement with the British government for the cession of the state to the Crown 'so that exercise of any other authority in the State except that of His Majesty will thereupon be determined', and that the members of the Supreme Council had intimated their 'unanimous advice and consent that now an agreement should be concluded by the Rajah'. Abang Haji Mustapha read out a Malay translation of this document and a version in jawi script was signed by all the datus present.

Following this, Ong Tiang Swee was asked to withdraw and MacBryan then proceeded to convene a meeting of the Council Negri of which, as Chief Secretary, he was ex officio President. The business of the Council that day consisted of two Orders which were despatched with similar speed. The first of these was an indemnification Order protecting the Rajah retrospectively from all actions taken from 25 December 1941 until 31 December 1945 which lacked validity under the 1941 Constitution. What this meant in effect was that the Council Negri was giving a rubber stamp to all of those actions which the Rajah had taken in his old autocratic way: the exercise of prerogative powers; the issue of proclamations; the appointment and dismissal of officers; financial disbursements, charges and commitments; all were now legally presumed to have been carried out by the Rajah 'with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council and the Council Negri in joint session assembled'.

1 For this document see Appendix IV.

2 These Orders and the three others mentioned below (together with Malay translations) were discovered by me among the papers now deposited by Mrs Evelyn Hussey at Rhodes House.

3 For this Order and Order No. C-22 of the Council Negri, see Appendix IV.
The second Order authorized the setting aside of £1,000,000 from the state's reserve funds for the Sarawak State Trust Fund. Interest on the sum was to be paid out according to the Rajah's absolute discretion and upon his death a number of trustees would assume this responsibility. Needless to say, the Rajah also possessed absolute discretion over the formulation of the Trust Deed and the selection of Trustees. 'In establishing this Fund', the Order concluded, 'it is the purpose of the Council Negri to assure [sic] that the establishments of His Highness the Rajah and of his Ministers shall be independently maintained in view of His Highness' decision to provide for the cession of the State of Sarawak to His Majesty the King.' The next day at the Datu Patinggi's house this truly extraordinary four-man assembly authorized Order No. C-22 (Constitutional Repeal) 1946 which repealed the 1941 Constitution in its entirety, thus relegating the Supreme Council and the Council Negri to limbo until the constitution was revived by the Rajah after civil government had been resumed. All the documents having been signed, MacBryan then distributed the money explaining (probably for Corry's benefit) that it was back payment of salary for the war period.

MacBryan also persuaded Ong Tiang Swee and the principal Chinese association leaders to sign a statement of support for a new agreement with the British government:

We understand that the individual members of the Supreme Council have accorded their unanimous advice and consent that such an Agreement should be negotiated, and we hereby affirm and declare our complete confidence in the judgment and sagacity of Your Highness and our unreserved support for whatever measures Your Highness determines to pursue, since we know full well that the paramount interest of Your Highness is the welfare of all the people of all the races dwelling in Sarawak. 1

1 Hussey Papers. The following also signed the document:

Wee Kheng Chiang (Hokkien Association)
Lee Wing Thoong (Kwong Hui Seow Association)
Tan Bak Lim (Teochew Association)
Yong Pong Chiang (Hakka Association)
Wong Cheng Guan (Foochow Association)
Chan Qui Chong (Chawan Hui Kuan)
Sia Lai Hin (Lui Chew Association)
Woon Siang Kwang (Kheng Chew Association)
(unsigned) (Heng Ann Association)
Later that month, Ong Tiang Swee sent a cable to the Rajah expressing the appreciation of the Sarawak Chinese for the $42,500 which he had given. The cable also stressed the loyalty of the Chinese community to the Rajah and expressed the hope that he would return to Sarawak shortly. Neither action was publicly known in Sarawak until the end of January.

Returning to Singapore on 7 January, MacBryan and Corry reported by cable to the Rajah and the Colonial Office before meeting Mountbatten. 'The agreements reached are unanimous', MacBryan told the Rajah, 'and fulfil in every sense Your Highness' expectations.'¹ Corry cabled the Colonial Office that the mission had been 'successfully completed'.² He also wrote to Gent that as far as he could see it would be 'perfectly fair to go ahead with the change of status'.³ No sooner had MacBryan and Corry left Kuching, however, than the Datu Temenggong who was the Datu Patinggi's nephew⁴ prevailed upon his uncle to hand the $12,000 to Gascoigne with the explanation that it was a bribe.⁵ However, the story remained a closely-guarded secret in Kuching for another month and was not known to the anti-cession faction in London until the end of March.

Once the Orders which MacBryan had brought back for the Rajah's ratification were in the hands of the Colonial Office's legal advisers, it soon became apparent that they were of dubious legal validity. There were a number of possible objections, not the least

¹ MacBryan to Vyner Brooke, 7 January 1946, WO 203/3974.
² Corry to Galsworthy, 7 January 1946, WO 203/3974.
³ 'Transcript of a tape recorded interview with W.C.S. Corry...', undated, Rhodes House MSS. Ind.Ocn. s.215. Corry later felt some embarrassment that he had been duped by MacBryan. 'I undertook this mission rather too soon after being released from wartime internment', he confessed later, 'My mental reactions were not back to normal and I have subsequently regretted having agreed to go to Sarawak so soon'. 'Transcript...', op. cit.; interview with Sir Dennis White, 22 January 1975.
⁴ Abang Kipali had been appointed Datu Temenggong in March 1941. He was not a member of the Supreme Council until April 1946. He is the only surviving Brooke datu.
⁵ 'Report on Visit to Sarawak by Mr F.H. Pollard', Hussey Papers, p. 11.
being that the state was under a military administration which did not recognize the legal authority of any previously constituted civil body. Furthermore, the ad hoc meetings of a handful of members called by MacBryan did not even begin to satisfy the formal requirements laid down by the 1941 Constitution. Finally, there was the nice legal point of whether the Rajah-in-Council, as established by the 1941 Constitution, possessed the authority to repeal that constitution in its entirety and return to the status quo ante in which the Rajah's prerogative powers were absolute. If presented as formal proof that the Rajah had been authorized by the two councils to proceed with cession, the documents would have been laughed out of court.

The interest already being displayed by such eminent authorities as Margery Perham, and Anthony Brooke's unfavourable publicity of MacBryan's background, meant that the Colonial Office was doubly defensive about the special emissary's mission. In late January, according to one source, the Colonial Office had been 'brought to a halt' on Sarawak and did not know what to do. The possibility of reconvening the Provisional Government was even being considered, although this would have upset the Rajah considerably. The problem was to find some alternative means of legitimization which would not present too many difficulties in execution and which would withstand the attacks bound to be made by the anti-cession faction in England and the Conservative Party.

It was quickly decided that the cession would have to be put in the form of enabling legislation at properly constituted meetings of the Council Negri and Supreme Council and that the Rajah should visit Sarawak for that purpose. This proposal was put by Hall on 1 February and was immediately accepted, the Rajah no doubt assuming that his authority would be sufficient to guarantee that cession would go through without any trouble. However, the Colonial Office was determined that this time the matter should be properly settled. Enclosing drafts of the bills which were to be put to the

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1 Professor Wilfrid Le Gros Clark to Margaret Noble, 28 January 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/4.
Council Negri and the Supreme Council, Creech Jones told the Rajah in mid-March that 'every possible step should be taken to ensure that the proceedings of the Councils comply with the Constitution so that there may be no room for doubts and possible criticisms'.

The Colonial Office believed that the Councils could not be regarded as being properly constituted unless there was the full number of appointed or non-ex officio members, although this did not apply to ex officio members. Respecting the Rajah's feeling that it was an issue of particular concern to non-European members and one on which European members should not vote, it was suggested that in the absence of standing orders the Rajah should publicly express this view.

The Announcement of Cession

On 6 February a message from the Rajah to the people of Sarawak was released in London and Kuching. In this the Rajah revealed that the King had agreed to the proposal that Sarawak should be ceded to him. 'We believe', he said, 'that there lies, in the future, hope for my people in the prospect of an era of awakening, enlightenment, stability and social progress, such as they have never had before.' The acceptance of the cession, he added, was the consummation of the hopes of the first Rajah. Denying press reports that the British government had sought to impose a new political order on Sarawak, he insisted that the initiative had come from him alone. His intention was that they should 'enjoy the more direct protection of His Majesty, and those inestimable rights of freedom which His Majesty's citizens enjoy'. In conclusion, the statement made an uncharacteristically crude assertion of the Rajah's authority in language which strongly suggested MacBryan:

1 Creech Jones to Vyner Brooke, 12 March 1946, CO ref. no 53117/1/9/46, Brooke Papers, Box 6/1.
2 Ibid.
3 Sarawak Tribune, 8 February 1946. Subsequent quotations from this source.
4 Bertram Brooke believed that the message had been devised by the Ranee and MacBryan. 'Its egotistic and flamboyant vulgarity', he wrote, 'is entirely inconsistent with his [Vyner's] character, which has many aspects - but vulgarity is not one of them!' Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
It is the case in Sarawak that all authority derives from the Rajah. The people trust the Rajah and what the Rajah advises for the people is the will of the people. I am the spokesman of the people's will. No other than myself has [the] right to speak on your behalf. No one of you will question whatso'er I do in his high interest. No power nor personal interest shall subvert my peoples' happiness and future. The happiness of your future lies within another realm. There shall be no Rajah of Sarawak after me. My people will become the subjects of The King. Now draws near the time when I will come to you. Expect me soon.

THIS IS FOR YOUR GOOD MY ROYAL COMMAND.

Announcing the Rajah's decision in the House of Commons the same day, Hall explained that during the negotiations subsequent to the dismissal of the Provisional Government, the Rajah himself indicated that the Colonial Office's proposals did not go far enough and offered to cede Sarawak to the Crown subject to the agreement of the 'Supreme State Council'. The Rajah, he continued, then sent his personal emissary to Sarawak 'to consult leading representatives of the people' and as a consequence of the 'very favourable reaction' of those representatives recorded in letters from leaders of the Malay and Chinese communities, now felt able to proceed.

The necessary document was in the process of being drawn up and would be 'presented to the representatives of the people for their agreement' on the Rajah's return to Sarawak, probably in March. When pressed by Oliver Stanley and other Conservatives about MacBryan, the necessity of going beyond the original constitutional requirements and other aspects of the affair, Hall put up a spirited defence. The Rajah himself, he insisted, had come to the Colonial Office and 'volunteered the cession'; MacBryan was accompanied by 'a very high official from the Colonial Office'; and the majority of members of the 'Council' had been approached. In the next exchange, Stanley pointed out that the negotiations to give the British government legislative power in Sarawak were initiated with the Provisional Government in early 1945 on the assumption that the Rajah was never going to return to Sarawak. It consequently seemed wrong, he said,

1 *Hansard*, 6 February 1946. Subsequent quotations from this source.
that 'something which might appear as annexation' should be dependent on the opinion of the Rajah who had no personal interest in the state's future and on the activities of MacBryan with whom he did not think Hall should be associated.

Hall reminded Stanley that he had opened negotiations on the imposition of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act, and then proceeded to misrepresent the 1941 Constitution as not depriving the Rajah of his powers and still enabling him to 'interfere with any legislation on any financial matter'. Cession, he concluded, would only take place after 'full consultation with a properly constituted Supreme State Council in Sarawak'. The Labour leader in the House, Herbert Morrison, refused to give any undertaking that the question would be fully debated later. 'I am bound to say', he told Anthony Eden who had expressed concern about the international implications, 'there is something curious about the indignation of the Conservative Party over a little bit being added to the British Empire'. Nor would Hall respond to a final request for assurance that no decision would be made until a referendum had been taken of the people of Sarawak.

One factor which assisted the anti-cession faction in Britain and placed the government and the Rajah on the defensive from the outset was the general impression that the Rajah had 'sold out' for £1,000,000. 'Britain Buys Sarawak. Rajah Hands It Over: £1,000,000 Fund', ran the Evening Standard headline that afternoon, but the significance of the Fund was lost on most readers. 'It is not a deal in any sense of the word', protested MacBryan in the Daily Herald on 7 February. 'It is a manifestation of the progressive viewpoint of Sir Charles.' But the same day the Daily Express reported a party which the Rajah and Ranee had given at Ciro's Club to celebrate what it called the '£1,000,000 compensation' paid to the Brookes. It also reported the Ranee's rather distorted view of Brooke history. 'I think the Rajah deserves it after all his years in that country', she said in response to a toast in 'stingers'.¹ 'He has been striving for incorporation in the Empire all his life, just as the first and second rajas fought for it all their lives.'

¹ A corruption of stengah (half) which was pidgin Malay for half whiskey and soda.
Evidently anticipating something of the kind ever since the dismissal of the Provisional Government in October, and particularly after the Malayan Union White Paper on 22 January, Anthony was quick to issue a statement:

> It is for the British Government and the Rajah of Sarawak to convince the world that this transaction amounts to anything more than crude Imperialism. Such a transaction, if allowed to stand, would defile the pages of British and Sarawak history. Whatever the Rajah and the British Government may say, sovereignty resides in the people of Sarawak and the rights of the people are not for sale. I shall personally oppose the measure by every means in my power. 2

However, the British press took a generally complacent view of the affair. There were predictable regrets that 'the most romantic kingdom in Asia will cease to exist' but most British newspapers accepted the argument that there was no place for weak states in the post-war 'reconstruction' of East Asia. Admitting that the cession was 'a rather queer business' and sceptical as to the means by which consent had been obtained, the *Manchester Guardian* editorial of 8 February nevertheless felt that there was nothing to be done. '... To go back on the Rajah's decision would be to create instability and the very evils everybody is trying to avoid'.

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1 See, e.g., the *Yorkshire Post*, 21 January 1946; *The Times*, 23 January 1946; *The Daily Telegraph*, 26 January 1946; *New Statesman and Nation*, 26 January 1946.

2 *Manchester Guardian*, 7 February 1946. See also Bertram Brooke's letter to *The Times*, 9 February 1946.

3 *The Times*, 7 February 1946.

4 *Manchester Guardian*, 8 February 1946. The only strongly critical views were expressed in *The Observer* and the *Sunday Times* of 10 February 1946. The editor of the *Sunday Times*, H.V. Hodson, was sympathetic to Bertram and Anthony Brooke.
Reactions in Sarawak

Although the British press had been speculating about the future of Sarawak since October 1945 and there had been echoes in Singapore, little information had reached Sarawak itself. MacBryan had caused a ripple within a small section of Kuching's Malay community but the significance of his visit was not widely understood. The first indication of Sarawak's future came when Singapore Radio broadcast a London *Times* editorial on the Malayan Union White Paper of 22 January, suggesting that Sarawak, Brunei, North Borneo and Labuan might be included. Initially, of course, the news was confined to those who possessed radio sets (no more than 500 in the whole state before the war) and had access to the Chinese-owned and operated *Sarawak Tribune* or the Chinese language newspapers. Consequently the first recorded reactions to a change of status were those of the Kuching and Sibu Chinese who were generally favourable towards incorporation.

Immediately after the Singapore Radio broadcast the Hua Kheow Tshin Nieh called a three-day meeting in Kuching which was attended by more than forty delegates from various Chinese associations. However, interest focussed more on Ong Tiang Swee and the question of Chinese political representation than the future of Sarawak. On the first day (27 January) the meeting passed four important resolutions:

(i) to choose five delegates who would interview Ong Tiang Swee about the letter to the Rajah which he and the other Chinese leaders had signed for MacBryan;

(ii) to request all those who had signed to send telegrams to the Colonial Office stating that the letter 'did not represent the aspirations and wishes of the Chinese community';

1 *The Times*, 23 January 1946.
2 Interview with Mr H.P. Buxton, Bintulu, July 1974.
3 The Rajah's 6 February message was published in the *Sarawak Tribune* of 8 February 1946 and Hall's statement on 11 February.
(iii) to establish an 'Overseas Chinese Committee for the Promotion of Democratic Politics';

(iv) to organize a supreme authority for the Sarawak Chinese.¹

Indignation at Ong Tiang Swee's actions ran high during the meeting and on the first day the delegates decided that a telegram should be sent to the Colonial Secretary 'stating that Mr Ong Tiang Swee and others who signed the document... were acting on their own initiative: their actions were against the public opinion of the Chinese community; and requesting the practice of democratic politics in Sarawak'.² Meanwhile in Sibu a meeting of delegates from similar associations which had originally been intended to organize a reception for the Rajah's home-coming, cancelled its plans after hearing Singapore Radio. Interestingly enough, its leading lights were under the impression that if the people of Sarawak wanted self-government, the Rajah would return to resume his old position. Otherwise the Colonial Office would consider handing it over to the United Nations as a trust territory.³ Writing to the Sibu Hua Kias Jit Pau (Overseas Chinese Daily News), Yao Ken Swee said that in view of the victory of democratic countries, it was clear that Sarawak should also follow the trend which was developing in Malaya towards democracy. The Atlantic Charter and the San Francisco meeting, he continued, required the power of government to be handed back to the people. Fundamental human rights and the rights of all communities could then be protected. Calling on the Chinese of Sibu not to wash their hands of Sarawak's political future, he advocated the establishment of a 'committee for the promotion of democracy'. 'We should not be treated as guests or foreigners in Sarawak;' he concluded, 'we are the people of Sarawak. Whether Sarawak is to be self-governing or to come under the trustee-

1 Hua Kias Jit Pau (Overseas Chinese Daily News) (Sibu), 6 February 1946.
2 Ibid.
3 Hua Kias Jit Pau, 29 January 1946; see also the letter by Yao Ken Swee to the same newspaper published on 8 February 1946.
ship of the United Nations in future, our "committee for the promotion of democracy" should be formed.\(^1\)

In self defence, Ong Tiang Swee wrote to the *Sarawak Tribune* in late February regretting that his cable of thanks to the Rajah had given rise to 'misinterpretation' and 'misunderstandings'. He explained that the action had been taken in the belief that the Rajah was returning and that there was no possibility of a change in Sarawak's future status. 'The need for consultation with regard to the despatch of the message therefore did not arise at that time', he wrote, 'as it was considered a mere formality.'\(^2\) He added that since the Rajah had apparently made his decision before the cable was sent, it could hardly be regarded as having affected the situation in any way.

It was not until after the Rajah's message of 6 February that there was general Chinese comment, the assumption still being that Sarawak would form part of the Malayan Union and that the Sarawak Chinese would enjoy the substantially improved rights of Malayan Union citizenship. Lim Kong Ngan, for example, saw incorporation as enabling Sarawak people to take part in politics. People of all races, he said, would have equal rights and a democratic system should be adopted.\(^3\) Lo Fey Sian would have preferred Sarawak to be handed over to the United Nations but was prepared to settle for the Malayan Union: 'All we want', he said, 'is to have our status raised so that we can enjoy equal rights with the natives.'\(^4\) Ong Tiang Swee and Kueh Choo Seng, the diocesan registrar, both thought that colonial status would mean economic and commercial development with more opportunities for the working classes and the natives. While the old system was most suitable to people's needs, Kueh continued, autocratic rule now was 'decidedly out'. Ong also favoured incorporation in the Malayan Union in the belief that not only would

\(^{1}\) Ibid. Since the issues of the *Hua Kiao Jit Pau* for March and April 1946 are missing, it is not possible to trace the response to Yao Ken Swee's proposal.

\(^{2}\) *Sarawak Tribune*, 26 February 1946.

\(^{3}\) *Sarawak Tribune*, 15 February 1946.

\(^{4}\) Ibid.
the Chinese have equal rights but kapitan status would be abolished and the powers of the datus limited. He also thought that the Chinese government would come to an agreement with the British government for the protection of the rights of the Sarawak Chinese. In Ngui Ah Shin's view 'what is good for the Malayan should be good enough for the Sarawakian'. Khan Ah Chong was the only Chinese interviewed who greatly regretted the loss of the Rajah and suggested that while cession might bring material developments, taxation would also increase.

The Chinese language press was non-committal and editorial comment was limited to the Sarawak Tribune, a young newspaper whose editor trod a careful path between sentimental regret at the passing of Brooke rule and approval of the developments which colonial status would bring about. Like the Chinese whose opinions the newspaper quoted, he emphasized that times had changed and that Sarawak must 'go forward with the tide'. Unless there was material progress, the people of Sarawak would be 'living in a state of blissful backwardness untouched by the 20th Century human progress and civilization...'. At the same time, he added, happiness could not be measured in miles of roads and railways and the volume of trade. And if progress created needs which could not be satisfied, 'like Esau we would have sold our birthright for a cup of pottage'. This was the hopeless dilemma which had always faced the Brookes: how to bring about development and at the same time avoid exploitation and social disruption. The editor, Dennis Law, was representative of a group of mission-educated Chinese who had a stake in economic progress and modernization but appreciated some of the features of personal rule

1 Ibid.
2 Sarawak Tribune, 22 February 1946.
3 Sarawak Tribune, 15 February 1946.
4 The Sarawak Tribune was the successor of the Sarawak Times which had a brief life in 1941. There are no copies surviving.
and were somewhat dubious as to what would replace it.¹ No doubt there was an undercurrent of anxiety that another kind of government might not be able to exercise the same control over the Ibans whose recent exploits on the Rejang were well known. A good deal was seen to depend on the Rajah's visit and the assurances that he could give.

On 10 February the Datu Patinggi wrote to the MNU expressing his shock at the Rajah's message and explaining, somewhat ingenuously, that he had thought the document which he and the other Supreme Council members had signed for MacBryan no more than a request that the Rajah should return to Sarawak.² Two days later he wrote again, this time providing details of the payments which MacBryan had made,³ a transaction which had been kept fairly secret. The response was electric. At a special general meeting of the MNU that evening, Haji Abdul Rahman told the members present that the cession proposal was a 'vital problem of our history [which] is left to you to discuss fully'. After some further speeches it was unanimously decided to send a message to the Secretary of State and Parliament pointing out that the people had not been consulted and expressing their wish that the 1888 Treaty and the 1941 Constitution should be upheld.⁴ While it was reported by Radio Singapore and The Times,⁵ the meeting aroused some local scepticism. A letter to the Sarawak Tribune signed 'Loyal Citizens' expressed amusement that the Union which had been silent since its inception in 1939 was now attempting 'a Big move' - in the wrong direction. The MNU's action, it continued,

¹ The Sarawak Tribune of 25 March 1946 reported the formation of the Badgers Club. Named after the badger which graced the coat of arms of the Raj, the club consisted of a number of English-educated Chinese including Ong Tiang Swee, Wee Kheng Chiang, William Tan, Ong Kee Hui, Dennis Law and others who were born in Sarawak and were sentimentally attached to the Brookes. In some ways this group invites comparison with 'the Queen's Chinese' of Singapore and Penang.

² Datu Patinggi to MNU President, 10 February 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.

³ Datu Patinggi to MNU President, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.

⁴ Sarawak Tribune, 13 February 1946.

⁵ Sarawak Tribune, 20 February 1946; The Times, 18 February 1946.
should not be taken as representing the Malays and the native population in general but its own 2,000 members.¹

However, the Rajah took their action much more seriously, replying to the MNU by cable that he would consult the two councils and had 'only the interests of the people at heart'.² Archer also received a cable from the Rajah that he would pay annual visits to Sarawak in order to pilot the people through the difficult period of transition.³ Both messages were published in the Sarawak Tribune. However, this was insufficient reassurance for those who did not want to see the Brooke Raj come to an end. On 12 March the Datu Patinggi received a letter signed by Abang Haji Zaini, his four vice-presidents and four Kuching tua kampong asking him to convey this message to the Rajah:

It is the will of the indigenous people of Sarawak that His Highness the Rajah... should be urged to render secure the Government of the country. If His Highness considers himself to be too old or ailing in health, he should hand over the Government to His Highness the Tuan Muda, who should become Rajah; and if His Highness the Tuan Muda cannot shoulder the responsibilities on account of his health, then the title of Rajah should be conferred on his son Anthony Brooke... in order that the Brooke line should be unbroken.... ⁴

Outside the major urban centres of Kuching, Sibu and Miri the only news for some time was the Rajah's message of 6 February which had been telegraphed to all government posts. However, there was no further explanation and when Archer telegraphed instructions that meetings were to be held to ascertain people's reactions, there was very little to report. At Bintulu, for example, where Harry Buxton, a Eurasian forestry officer, was Acting District Officer, a meeting of all races was held but the people were so overwhelmed that they could say nothing. In a confidential letter to Archer later,

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¹ Sarawak Tribune, 16 February 1946.
² Sarawak Tribune, 23 February 1946.
³ Sarawak Tribune, 22 February 1946.
⁴ MNU to Datu Patinggi, 12 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
Buxton explained that the first reaction was one of puzzlement, followed in time by opposition to cession. But when he went to Kuching later he discovered that his letter had been destroyed.1

Iban reactions to the cession announcement are difficult to gauge but from a number of reports it is clear that illiterate upriver people continued to think for some time that the Rajah was still in the country and that nothing had changed. It was only the mission-educated Ibans of the First and Second Divisions who were aware of what had happened and reacted accordingly. The principal focus was Kuching where there was a small group of Ibans in government service. The most articulate of these was Inspector Edward Brandah, who told the Sarawak Tribune that it would take the Ibans years to realize that there was no longer a Rajah:

The Ibans have respected the Rajah more as a father than as a ruler, and one of the instances of his intimate and personal interests and cares for the Iban welfare is that he personally informs some newly engaged Government Officers that the Ibans are not an inferior race but just different. The Ibans will lose a great and kind protector in the person of... the Rajah. But what can we do? We can sharpen our spears and parangs and adorn our shields when he informs us that there are troubles at Ulu Kapit or Lubok Antu; but this time we cannot help him and I do not think he needs our help. Our fears are like that of a small boy who is sent to boarding school. He knows that he is in safe hands but he is not very sure whether he will receive the same treatment as his parents have given him at home; more over he is always afraid of being bullied by his seniors if he does not pick up the school rule in an approved method and in a specific period. We may forget the Rajah only in words but not in heart and mind, for what he has done, it was done for our future happiness and prosperity which lies in another realm under the protection of His Majesty the King. 2

1 Interview with Mr H.P. Buxton, July 1974.

2 Sarawak Tribune, 23 February 1946. Brandah went to London in May 1946 as a member of Sarawak's contingent to the victory celebrations and while there was asked by the SDA to represent its opposition to cession to Attlee. However, Brandah was clearly unenthusiastic about pressing the anti-cession case and was politely fobbed off by Gent and Mayle. Lt. Col. B. Langran to Macaskie, 13 May 1946, Macaskie Papers, File 6; Dawson to Mayle, 19 October 1946, CO 531/32 [53183].
On 24 February there was a meeting of Kuching's Iban community at the house of Philip Jitam where it was decided to establish a Sarawak Dayak Association (SDA) with membership from all Divisions. While the presence of Abang Haji Zaini suggests that the MNU was anxious for the SDA to take a firmly anti-cession line from the outset, the meeting adopted a cautious attitude and it was felt that the Rajah should be allowed to explain the situation before they could make up their minds.¹ No doubt this was partly due to the influence of Edwin Howell who had been appointed 'Honorary Adviser'.²

The SDA was subsequently registered as a social organization on 1 March with Charles Mason as President, Edward Brandah as Vice President, Philip Jitam and Andrew Jika as Joint Secretaries and Robert Jitam as Treasurer. Like the MNU, the SDA was not an avowedly political organization and its stated aims were broadly similar - the promotion of unity among the various Iban and Land Dayak groups (hence the Sarawak Dayak Association); their social, moral, educational and intellectual advancement; the introduction of modern methods of agriculture and the provision of accommodation for up-country visitors to Kuching.³ While there was no mention of providing representation for Iban views to government, there can be little doubt that this was one important aim.

Although cables were sent off to London signed jointly by Abang Haji Zaini and Philip Jitam, it was not until early June that the MNU and the SDA reached any firm co-operative understanding.⁴ While no details are available, it seems that the MNU leadership had to concede that in the event of the restoration of Brooke rule, political representation through the Council Negri, the Supreme

¹ Sarawak Tribune, 26 February 1946.
² For a biographical note on Howell, see Chapter V, pp. 210-11.
³ Rules and By-Laws of The Dayak Association of Sarawak. Established 1st March 1946, Kuching [1946]. Other members of the SDA Committee of Management were: Satap Henry Bay, A.L. Reggie, Awan Rekan, S. Gawing, G. Jamuh, Johnathan Saban. Of these, only Awan Rekan was a Land Dayak.
⁴ Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 4 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
Council or whatever other organ of government came into being, would be on the basis of the relative numerical strength of the Malays and the Ibans. This was an extremely significant concession on the part of the conservative Malay leadership, marking an important break with traditional Malay hegemony. However, it proved to be only a temporary departure. Nor were the possible political ambitions of the Chinese and their numerical strength taken into account.

The Sarawak Issue

In the meantime, unfavourable publicity in the British press fostered by the anti-cession faction had begun to reap results. On 13 February Hall was subjected to a barrage of searching questions in Parliament, revealing that the meetings of the Council Negri and Supreme Council which MacBryan had arranged were being regarded 'only as exploratory discussions' and that their proceedings would not be gazetted or published. While he did not think it necessary to propose to the Rajah that there should be an independent commission of inquiry, he was prepared to consider Stanley's request for an independent observer to report on the situation in Sarawak. However, he avoided the question of the Trust Fund and the suggestion that the government had a moral responsibility for the way in which it was used. The Sarawak question had blown up far beyond Hall's expectations and Gammans even believed that the debate seriously affected his health.

Margery Perham took up the idea of a commission the next day in a letter to The Times. Characterizing the cession as a somewhat casual and private affair, she asked whether it was morally or constitutionally proper for the Rajah to give his country and for the British government to receive it in such a way. She was concerned both with the interpretations which would be made internationally and the significance for the Empire which she described as being held

1 Interview with Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor, May 1975.
2 Hansard, 13 February 1946.
3 L.D. Gammans, 'Parliamentary Mission to Sarawak', Gammans Papers, Item 8, pp. 4-5.
together by treaties and agreements and 'faith in the justice and dignity of the British Government'. In her conclusion she summarized very nicely the alternatives:

It may well be that annexation is in the interests and accords with the wishes of the Sarawak people, though since the administration of our smaller and more remote territories sometimes suffers from periods of neglect and stagnation, the improvement cannot be taken as automatic. On the other hand, it may be that, under some improved method of British surveillance, the dynasty, becoming no doubt increasingly constitutional in function, might for some time prove the best focus for the unity of a racially mixed people and the best expression of its sense of historical identity. 1

One outcome of all this was Hall's decision to send some kind of 'independent person of standing' to observe the proceedings in Sarawak and defuse the critics. When such a person proved difficult to find, the compromise was a two-man parliamentary mission representing both parties and Hall subsequently issued invitations to the Labour member for South Croydon, D.R. Rees-Williams, and the Conservative member for Hornsey, L.D. Gammans. 2 Gammans had been in charge of co-operatives in Malaya before the war and spoke fluent Malay. In 1944 he had published a pamphlet outlining his views on post-war British policy in Malaya and Borneo. Primarily concerned with the question of economic development, he saw both the Chartered Company and the Brooke regime as anachronisms. 'The ideal arrangement', he wrote, 'would be that the whole of these territories should come under some much more direct form of British control so that they could be developed with the resources of the Colonial Office.' 3 At the same time, however, he advocated strict control of immigration (in order to avoid what had happened in Malaya) and careful control of outside capital 'so that the economic and social balance of the indigenous inhabitants was not disturbed either too rapidly or too

1 *The Times*, 14 February 1946.
2 Hall had hoped that the Conservatives would agree to send Lord Soulbury, a former High Commissioner to Ceylon, but Stanley insisted on Gammans and the Secretary of State was obliged to agree. Interview with Lord Ogmore, March 1975.
3 *Singapore Sequel*, London 1944, p. 23.
completely. This was the impossible task which the Brookes themselves had undertaken. Elected to the House of Commons in July 1945, Gammans became Conservative spokesman on Far Eastern affairs and quickly proved to be a thorn in the side of the new Secretary of State for Colonies. During the debate on the Malayan Union in January 1946 he was particularly troublesome, representing what he saw as the interests of the Malays against alien interlopers and misguided British policy.

Rees-Williams was not specially qualified for the task. He had been a lawyer in private practice in Penang before the war and spoke a little Malay but had not demonstrated any particular interest in Far Eastern affairs during Commons debates. Like most of his middle-class socialist colleagues he accepted the idea of Indian independence but otherwise supported the continuation of Britain's imperial role in Africa and Asia. The casual way in which Hall recruited him for the Sarawak mission suggests that the Secretary of State saw him essentially as someone who was unlikely to rock the political boat.

The terms of the inquiry indicated by Hall were deliberately vague and precluded the preparation of a formal report whose tabling might have created political problems. In his first official approach to Gammans on 12 March, the Permanent Under-Secretary for Colonies, Arthur Creech-Jones, wrote that in view of Hall's interest in the matter and the 'public concern' which had already been expressed there was a need for an 'independent opinion'. He thus suggested that the two M.P.s should visit Sarawak 'for the purposes of satisfying themselves after due inquiry that, so far as the wishes of the people of the territory can be ascertained, there is no reasonable doubt that the Rajah's proposals are acceptable to his subjects'. Their conclusions were to be reported by cable and cession would not be finalized until it had been received and studied. Accepting the invitation, Gammans suggested that there should be an

1 Ibid.
2 Interview with Lord Ogmore, March 1975.
3 Creech-Jones to Gammans, 12 March 1946, Gammans Papers, Item I.
interval of from two to three weeks from the formal proposal of the cession bill in the Council Negri to the actual vote, thus enabling them to contact all the members individually and avoiding any later accusation that they were 'stampeded into a hasty decision'. He also believed that there was another alternative to cession or the continuation of Brooke rule — the appointment of an adviser to a government headed by Anthony Brooke. Most importantly, he had doubts about the method of communicating their findings. If the result was clear-cut there would be no problem but otherwise complications might arise. 'I imagine too', he concluded, 'that there must be some measure laid before Parliament in a form which is debatable, and I should have thought that the House might have insisted on hearing from us before coming to any decision in the matter.'

This was the last thing that Hall wanted, however, and the question was tactfully avoided by him and Creech-Jones. It was announced by Hall in the House on 27 March that the M.P.s were being asked 'to confirm by independent inquiry whether or not the Rajah's proposal for the cession of the territory to His Majesty is broadly acceptable to the native communities of Sarawak'. And in a conversation with Gammans and Rees-Williams at about this time, Hall once again stressed the informality of their mission. He also wished to adhere to the earlier suggestion that they should cable their report to him. However, he intended confirming that the Rajah would not summon the two Councils to vote on the issue until he (Hall) had communicated with him subsequent to receiving their report. Gammans remained dubious that it would be possible to cable their conclusions unless the issue was 'so clear and free from ambiguity that there can be no possible doubt as to the attitude of the people of the country'. He also repeated to Hall his belief that the issue would come up for discussion in the House and that at least

1 Gammans to Creech-Jones, 14 March 1946, ibid.
2 Hansard, 27 March 1946.
3 Gammans to Hall, 10 April 1946, Gammans Papers, Item 1.
a verbal report would be made of their findings when they returned. However, his mind was already turning to Malaya which he was planning to visit after Sarawak and by the time he reached Kuching his official mission was probably of subordinate interest.

Since Rees-Williams' correspondence with Hall and Creech-Jones is unavailable it is not possible to say whether the Labour M.P. was at all apprehensive of the Secretary of State's real purpose. In retrospect, however, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the mission was manipulated by Hall for his own narrow ends. While not constituting an official parliamentary commission of inquiry, the nominal consultation of native opinion was useful in defusing parliamentary and press criticism and in lending cession some semblance of international respectability. Only sixteen years later, Lord Cobbold was to lead another mission to Sarawak to place the seal of approval on the state's inclusion in the proposed Federation of Malaysia.¹

Long before the M.P.s' mission was officially announced, there was energetic lobbying by the anti-cession and pro-cession factions in Britain. On one side, Bertram Brooke, Anthony Brooke, F.F. Boult, Pollard and other Sarawak officers and friends attempted to inform the M.P.s of the background of the situation and to persuade them that Sarawak was indeed a sovereign state whose independence should be respected.² On the other, Stirling Boyd circulated a memorandum criticizing Brooke rule and suggesting that British control of Sarawak was a long-overdue necessity.³ A number of M.P.s had already seen his dossier on the 1939 crisis and were unsympathetic to the continuation of Brooke rule. Furthermore, the Bishop of Newcastle, Noel Hudson, who had been Bishop of Labuan 1931-37 seems

2 See, for example, Boult to Gammans, 10 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/5.
3 'Administration of Sarawak', Gammans Papers, Item 6.
to have lent his considerable authority to the pro-cession side. Gammans and Rees-Williams also met the Rajah and MacBryan.

Not the least of the problems encountered by the anti-cession faction in trying to stimulate public interest was the public image of the Rajah's family in Britain. For many people the Brookes were primarily a source of scandal and there was little interest in their remote and exotic kingdom beyond such sensational subjects as head-hunting and the orang utan. Margaret Noble, the wife of the general manager of Sarawak Oilfields Ltd and a friend of both the Rajah and the Tuan Muda lent her support to the anti-cession faction but found that she could make little headway. Thirty years later she described how difficult it was to get anyone to think seriously about the cession problem: 'They all said vaguely "Oh yes... those peculiar girls and their extraordinary marriages.... Why did she fall for the Leader of the Band? Sarawak and all that!..."' 3

In the meantime, the Rajah had become a little disconcerted by the tenor of the cables and letters he had received from the MNU and the SDA. As he put it himself, he did not wish to be 'spat on' and was anxious to get some indication of attitudes to cession before finally committing himself to visit Sarawak. Accordingly he asked the Colonial Office to allow two Sarawak officers to conduct a quick survey of opinion in the state. E. Banks, who had been Curator of the Sarawak Museum since 1925, was given the task of surveying the First, Fourth and Fifth Divisions while J.C.H. Barcroft, pre-war Resident of the Second Division, was made responsible for the rest of the state. Both had been interned at Batu Lintang during the war and were still recuperating in England when MacBryan contacted them and explained their mission.

1 Bishop Hudson to Margaret Noble, 19 February 1946, 2 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/4.
2 See Chapter IV, pp.141-4.
3 Personal communication from Mrs Margaret Noble, 5 August 1976.
4 Personal information.
Banks subsequently reported in late March that there was a two-thirds majority in favour of cession in the First and Fourth Divisions and that the Fifth Division was sharply divided owing to fears of a return to Brunei rule. Barcroft appears to have agreed that there was an overall two-thirds majority in favour of obeying the Rajah's wishes on cession and this was the message which, as instructed by MacBryan, was finally cabled from Kuching in the Chartered Bank's own code. The Rajah was reassured by these indications. 'Barkis is willun', he replied. At the same time, however, Banks believed that cession 'was understood by none', himself included. 'Sarawak is divided', he wrote to Macaskie from Kuching after cabling his report, 'some for Brooke, some for Bevin, very hard to estimate the proportions and impossible to say who will win, dependant [sic] on the powers-that-may-be at home and let us hope soon!' The Datu Pahlawan, too, was doubtful enough about cession to write to MacBryan for advice on whether it was what the Rajah truly wanted. MacBryan cabled him that in the native interest it must go through, but that it should be dependent on the establishment of the Sarawak State Trust Fund. He advised him to collect as many votes as possible for the Council Negri meeting.

1 Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 21 October 1975.
2 Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 25 November 1975.
3 Banks to Macaskie, 23 March 1946, Macaskie Papers, File 3. In view of the repercussions of MacBryan's visit just two months earlier, it is not surprising that Banks and Barcroft should have encountered a great deal of suspicion from other Brooke officers already in Sarawak. Banks' friendship with MacBryan before the war was well known. Nor were the military authorities pleased when they learnt of the coded messages sent through the Chartered Bank. Colonel Goss called Banks in for questioning and there had to be consultations with Macaskie before the matter was smoothed over. '... It only remains for them to regard me as a journalist...', Banks told Macaskie, 'and not as a spy to make for peace, perfect peace'. Ibid.
4 MacBryan to Smith, 4 December 1946, Hussey Papers; MacBryan to Vyner Brooke, 3 December 1946, ibid.
Arrangements for Cession

The evidence suggests that there was a deliberate effort on the part of the Colonial Office and the military administration to suppress the fact that Bertram and Anthony had not been consulted by the Rajah on the cession and to prevent them from going out to Sarawak. On 8 February the Tuan Muda addressed a cable to 'Secretary Provisional Government Kuching' requesting him to inform European and native officers that 'neither my son nor myself has been consulted concerning proposed cession and were unaware until yesterday that any such action was contemplated'. When this was not acknowledged he inquired of the Colonial Office what had happened and was eventually informed on 21 February that since there was no 'Provisional Government' the cable could not be delivered. Faced with this clear prevarication, Bertram then addressed a similar cable to Archer, adding that all he wanted was to go to Sarawak 'to ascertain and to submit to the real wishes of the people'. 'In the interests of all', Archer replied, '[I] feel [I] cannot comply with [your] request until Rajah returns.'

In the meantime the Tuan Muda had received a cable from the Datu Patinggi begging him and Anthony to visit Sarawak together with the Rajah. '... We all have an exceedingly longing desire to meet you and I hope to get an answer', the Patinggi concluded. Bertram replied through Archer that they would spare no effort to comply with the request but Archer's earlier response suggested to him that once again the message might not reach its destination. Consequently he wrote to Hall requesting him to instruct the head of the military administration to pass on his cable without delay. 'I cannot believe', he told the Secretary of State, 'that it would be the desire of His Majesty's Government to employ the existing conditions to prevent me from answering the Datu Patinggi, who might

1 Bertram Brooke to Secretary, Provisional Government, 8 February 1946, Hussey Papers [66735].
2 Note by Bertram Brooke, ibid.
3 Bertram Brooke to Archer, 28 February 1946, ibid.
4 Archer to Bertram Brooke, 5 March 1946, ibid.
well misinterpret my silence'. Then on 25 March he received a cable from the MNU saying that they did not accept as valid the documents signed by the members of the Supreme Council and did not agree with cession. If the Rajah was unable to rule, Abang Haji Zaini continued, the Raj should be handed over to the Tuan Muda or Anthony who were once again invited to visit Sarawak.

It was shortly after this that the President of the MNU revealed to Bertram for the first time the story of MacBryan's payments to the datus. Confirming this came a cable from the Datu Patinggi and another from Barcroft, who was in Sarawak assessing local reactions for the Rajah, to the effect that although the natives and Chinese were against cession, 'uncle's generous present' (the bribes) had ensured that a majority of the Council Negri and Supreme Council members would vote for it. Bertram immediately cabled the MNU to ask W.P.N.L. Ditmas or one of the other Brooke officers to obtain supporting evidence of the payments and make a report, only to be told that there was no official they could contact. At their suggestion he then sent a message to the datus concerned asking for an explanation and informing them that he and Pollard but not MacBryan would be coming out to Sarawak before the Council Negri meeting. He also cabled the President of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce asking for a frank statement whether or not the Chinese of Sarawak wished the state to be ceded. In reply, the datus told him that the money which they had accepted was 'assistance from the Rajah on account of

1 Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
2 MNU President to Bertram Brooke, 25 March 1946, Hussey Papers [66735].
3 MNU President to Bertram Brooke, 31 March 1946, ibid.
4 Datu Patinggi to Bertram Brooke, 3 April 1946, ibid.
5 Barcroft to Bertram Brooke, 3 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
6 Bertram Brooke to MNU President, 1 April 1946, ibid.; MNU President to Bertram Brooke, 6 April 1946, ibid.
7 Bertram Brooke to Datus Menteri, Hakim, Pahlawan and Amar, 8 April 1946, Hussey Papers [66735].
8 Bertram Brooke to President, Chinese Chambers of Commerce, undated, ibid.
the tribulations we suffered under the Japanese occupation'. Confirming the amounts of the payments, they said that they had not been compelled to sign anything and had agreed to the Rajah's proposal 'in order that there should be greater prosperity, freedom and happiness ... for the country and the people'. The Chinese Chambers of Commerce said that they were awaiting the Rajah's arrival before coming to any decision but considered the matter as 'one for Sarawak nationals and not we Chinese'. Bertram had to be content with telling the datus that they possessed an 'immense moral responsibility' to vote as the people they represented really wished and not commit themselves until he had met them face to face.

That Archer was not happy with these proceedings is clear from his correspondence with Macaskie. On 2 March he wrote asking why the Tuan Muda's second cable, which had been addressed to him personally, had been divulged to the military authorities at Labuan when this was against regulations. He had not wanted to do anything to embarrass Macaskie, he stressed, and had composed his reply to the Tuan Muda after consultation with Goss. 'It was always quite plain to me', he told Macaskie, 'that if I had done as the Tuan Muda wished I should not have been able to remain in the BMA (British Military Administration). This, however, would not have stopped me if I thought the message should have gone out willy nilly: however, I did not so think.' He expected repercussions from the Tuan Muda but seemed more concerned that Macaskie had not trusted his judgement. In reply, Macaskie told him that the cable's address had been 'ambiguous' and had not necessarily been sent to him in his private capacity. 'However', he added mysteriously, 'that side of it is rather a curious story, which I will tell you about when we meet.'

1 Datus Menteri, Hakim, Amar and Pahlawan to Bertram Brooke, 11 April 1946, Hussey Papers [66735].
2 Ibid.
3 Chinese Chambers of Commerce to Bertram Brooke, 6 April 1946, ibid.
4 Bertram Brooke to Datus Menteri, Hakim, Amar and Pahlawan, 12 April 1946, ibid.
5 Archer to Macaskie, 6 March 1946, Macaskie Papers.
6 Macaskie to Archer, 9 March 1946, ibid.
The important thing, Macaskie told Goss, was that although the Tuan Muda's cable had finally been published in the Sarawak Tribune, there should be no official backing of any kind for the message.\footnote{1} The Chief Civil Affairs Officer was no doubt under strict orders from the Colonial Office not to allow anything which might prejudice the prospects of cession.

In the meantime the Tuan Muda had been experiencing great difficulty in making arrangements to visit Sarawak. In early March he wrote to the Rajah asking that he and Anthony should be allowed to accompany the Rajah's party to Sarawak\footnote{2} and when the Rajah refused he asked the Colonial Office to facilitate transportation. However, there had to be a good deal of lobbying done with M.P.s before Hall would even consider the question. For his part, Bertram realized that it might be less difficult if Pollard accompanied him rather than Anthony. Besides, as he told a friend, 'they're so anxious to "fix him up" that if anything happened when we were there, he'd be accused of stirring it up'.\footnote{3} On 2 April Hall finally informed Bertram that permission had been obtained from the Rajah for him and Pollard to visit Sarawak, subject to the condition that he accepted the decision of the two councils on cession.\footnote{4} The Tuan Muda agreed to this but also requested permission to take two more companions and Hall then told him that this was a matter which would have to be raised personally with the Rajah who was then on the point of leaving.\footnote{5}

When the Rajah indicated that he was agreeable, Bertram then gave the

\footnotesize{\begin{itemize}
\item \footnote{1} Macaskie to Goss, 2 March 1946, ibid.
\item \footnote{2} Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 5 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
\item \footnote{3} Bertram Brooke to Margaret Noble, 5 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/3.
\item \footnote{4} Bertram Brooke to Hall, 5 April 1946, The Facts About Sarawak, pp. 99-100.
\item \footnote{5} Hall to Bertram Brooke, 5 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
\end{itemize}
names of Sir Theodore Adams\(^1\) and J.R. Combe\(^2\) to the Colonial Office. But the Rajah subsequently objected that both were 'completely out of touch' with Sarawak and Bertram once again had to ask the Colonial Office to exert pressure on the Rajah. Permission for Adams and Combe did not come through from the Rajah until 23 April\(^3\) and the Tuan Muda promptly cabled an assurance that his sole purpose was to obtain the 'true reactions' of the majority of the people to cession and to assure those who approached him that he and Anthony were prepared to continue the old adat but would submit to the wishes of the people. If cession did not go through, he presumed that the government would continue along pre-war lines pending fresh negotiations with the British government.\(^4\)

The Colonial Office's own arrangements for the cession exercise were rather hurried. Christopher Dawson,\(^5\) a Class II officer of the Malayan Civil Service who had been British Adviser to

\(^1\) Sir Theodore Adams, 1885-1961, was a veteran of the MCS which he joined in 1908. As Resident of Selangor in the early 1930s he had intervened in the royal succession there, much to the annoyance of the Sultan. He then served as Chief Commissioner, Northern Provinces of Nigeria, 1937-43, and in the War Cabinet Office, 1943-45. It is difficult to see why Bertram Brooke would have chosen him, unless he thought that he might be a useful influence on the Colonial Office. However, Adams seems to have left Sarawak supporting cession and he probably wrote a memorandum for the Colonial Office to that effect.

\(^2\) Combe was a Sarawak officer who had joined the Administrative Service in 1928 and had retired in 1934. Bertram Brooke seems to have thought of him at one point as an adviser to Anthony should he have become Rajah.

\(^3\) Vyner Brooke to Sarawak Government Office, 23 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.

\(^4\) Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, ibid.

\(^5\) Born on 31 May 1896, C.W. Dawson was educated at Dulwich College which he left in 1915 to join the East Surrey Regiment. After seeing active service on the North West Frontier and in Mesopotamia, he was demobilized at the rank of captain and then took up a scholarship at Brasenose College, Oxford. After a year he decided to apply for the MCS and in 1920 went out as a cadet. His first years were spent in Singapore and Johore and [contd over]
the state of Perlis before the war, was selected to act as Chief Secretary to the new colonial government if cession went through. For the time being he was to be styled 'British Representative' under the terms of the Supplementary Agreement of October 1941, but he was also given a commission with plenipotentiary powers to negotiate with the Rajah on the Secretary of State's behalf. His verbal instructions from Hall were 'to be neutral in the matter of cession, taking no action to help or hinder its coming into being, to observe and report to the Sec. of State the reactions of the people to the Rajah's proposal, and, in the event of cession being agreed and approved by H.M.G., to accept it on behalf of the Crown'. However, Dawson later admitted that although he was supposed to be neutral, 'a pretty broad hint was dropped that cession would be in line with H.M.G.'s policy'.

W.L. Dale, a Colonial Office legal adviser who had not been involved in the earlier negotiations, was given just ten days' notice to join the Rajah's party and there was only one opportunity to discuss the draft legislation with Smith and Digby who was on leave after release from prison camp. The Rajah had not yet supplied a list of life members of both councils and Digby emphasized that there would be 'great difficulty' in reconstituting them.

5 [contd from previous page]

after serving as District Officer at Alor Gajah he returned to the Secretariat in Singapore. In 1929 he was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn and from 1933 until 1936 was Legal Adviser and then a judge in Kedah. In c.1938 he was appointed British Adviser, Perlis, and at the outbreak of war was recalled to the Defence Secretariat (Malaya) in Singapore. In 1941 he was made Secretary of Defence, Malaya, and was interned for the duration of the war. After four years' service in Sarawak he retired in early 1950 and then served with distinction as Deputy Chief Secretary of the British Administration of Eritrea 1951-52. He was awarded the C.M.G. in 1947.

1 Document in the possession of Mr C.W. Dawson.
2 Preface to Dawson's 1946 diary, Rhodes House. This is an invaluable source for the history of cession.
3 Ibid.
4 Interview with Sir William Dale, 4 April 1975.
5 'Note on meeting held in Mr. Dale's room at the Colonial Office on the 5th April [1946]', Digby Papers, Rhodes House, uncat. MSS.
In preparation for the Council Negri meeting, the Rajah took care that the officers whom he selected to accompany him to Sarawak and those whom he called from Australia to resume duty were supporters of cession. Of the six officers who went to Sarawak in the Rajah's party, three were subsequently appointed official members of the Council Negri and voted for cession. Furthermore, R.G. Aikman, the Resident-elect of the Third Division and therefore an ex officio member of the Council Negri, who was recuperating in Australia after release from internment was instructed by cable not to report for duty until the end of May (i.e. until after the Council Negri meeting) while G.A.C. Field who was also in Australia but was not a member was told to report by April. The explanation for this inconsistency seems to have been that Aikman had written to the Sarawak Government Office in London in October 1945 advising strongly against any concessions to the Colonial Office. As for the natives, when Dawson met the Rajah in early April the latter gave him the impression that 'it was only necessary for him to appear in Sarawak and to tell the people of his opinion that cession was for the ultimate good of the State for the whole weight of popular opinion to come to his side of the scale'. The Rajah repeated this optimistic view several times on their way out to Sarawak.

The Rajah's Return

Although MacBryan had been expected to accompany the Rajah to Sarawak, at the last moment it became clear that he was not going after all. On 28 March he wrote an 'hysterical' letter to the Rajah and three days later told J.A. Smith that he was resigning from his position as Private Secretary on a matter of principle which he was not prepared to discuss. On the following day, the Rajah told Smith that MacBryan had 'ratted'. What probably happened was that MacBryan,

2 Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946.
3 Notes by Bertram Brooke, 6 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2. MacBryan's resignation was effective from 31 March 1946. SGG, 16 May 1946.
who anticipated great embarrassment if the Tuan Muda visited Sarawak, failed to persuade the Rajah that he should not be allowed there for the Council Negri meeting.\(^1\) Pollard was disappointed because he had hoped to implicate both the Rajah and the Colonial Office when the evidence against MacBryan was produced, although he recognized the possibility that they would make a scapegoat of him.\(^2\) Both Bertram Brooke and F.F. Boult suspected that it was all a ruse and that MacBryan would join the Rajah's party later,\(^3\) while Anthony believed from the outset that the Colonial Office would not risk the possible embarrassment arising from MacBryan's presence there.\(^4\)

Reaching Singapore on 13 April, the Rajah had to finalize arrangements with Mountbatten for the resumption of civil government.\(^5\) He also took the opportunity to make a formal statement to the press which he hoped would dispel some of the 'misconceptions' about his action, particularly the story that he was 'selling' Sarawak for £1,000,000.\(^6\)

The arrival of the royal party in Kuching the next day was a memorable occasion. All the way from Pending to the Astana there were groups of people waving flags and streamers. At the Astana itself there was a guard of honour consisting of Punjabi soldiers and British sailors. The next morning the Rajah visited the Supreme Council Chambers where the proclamation agreed upon with Mountbatten in Singapore two days earlier was read by the commander of the 32nd Brigade. The Rajah then read his own proclamation resuming civil government and the Datu Patinggi presented him with the sword of state to symbolize the restoration of Brooke rule.\(^7\) He did not raise

\(^1\) Pollard to Margaret Noble, 28 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/4.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Bertram Brooke to Margaret Noble, 5 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/3.
\(^4\) Anthony Brooke to Arthur Bryant, 10 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/3.
\(^5\) 'Notes of Agreement between the Supreme Allied Commander, South East Asia and the Rajah of Sarawak', WO 203/4294.
\(^6\) Sarawak Tribune, 16 April 1946.
\(^7\) See Plate XII.
the question of Sarawak's future with the surviving members of the 1941 Supreme Council. However, the Datu Patinggi had earlier handed in a letter to the Rajah opposing cession, together with the 12 March memorandum from MNU leaders and tua kampong pleading that if the Rajah felt unable to continue in charge of the government, he should hand over to the Tuan Muda or Anthony. When the old man then announced his intention of revealing details of the bribes to the parliamentary mission, the Rajah described the money as allowances due to the datus since the outbreak of war. 'We have not had an opportunity yet of explaining the true position to the chieftains', he said, 'who are under a misapprehension if they think the money was a bribe.'

In the early evening there was a royal tour of Kuching which provided the Rajah with the first opportunity of personally observing reactions to the proposed cession. The welcome was enthusiastic: schoolchildren singing the Sarawak anthem; decorated arches; Sarawak and Chinese flags; and handfuls of yellow rice thrown over the official cars. The Rajah and Ranee were received everywhere with smiles and gaiety, leading a sceptical Dawson to conclude that there must have been something in the past to account for their enormous popularity. But throughout the Malay kampong area there were placards denouncing cession and interference with independence and demanding the continuation of Brooke rule. Dawson noticed that they were numbered and were actually shown at two places along the route. 'I wonder if the placards signify anything more than an effort by a vocal handful spread along a good stretch of road (and twice over!)' he wrote in his diary. A British intelligence officer was even more suspicious, reporting to the Labuan authorities that the posters 'appeared with the concurrence of the B.M.A.' and implying

1 Malay Mail, 17 April 1946.
2 Malay Mail, 29 April 1946. See above, p.327.
3 Malay Mail, 20 April 1946.
4 Dawson Diary, 15 April 1946. The welcome was organized to some extent by Brooke officers serving in the military administration.
5 Dawson Diary, 15 April 1946.
that the Malays had been put up to it by those Brooke officers who were opposed to cession.\(^1\) Macaskie's inquiries revealed that neither the military administration nor the police expected placards to be displayed and were taken completely by surprise.\(^2\)

One of the Rajah's first tasks was to assist the Colonial Office in straightening out the constitutional tangle created by MacBryan so that the Council Negri and Supreme Council could be summoned to approve the cession legislation. On 17 April, therefore, the Rajah on his own authority issued *Order No. C-23 (Constitution Re-Enactment) 1946* purporting to declare null and void the Council Negri's 6 January Order (which restored the Rajah's prerogative powers and repealed the 1941 Constitution) and upholding the legality of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941 which had originally authorized the Constitution.\(^3\) However, since the Rajah's authority to issue Order No. C-23 itself probably depended on the legality of the 6 January Order, the constitutional tangle only became worse. Indeed, according to Digby who had framed the 1941 Constitution, Order No. C-23 'amounted to a usurpation and was so irregular as to be clearly invalid'.\(^4\)

Assuming that the 1941 Constitution was once more in force, the Rajah proceeded to fill the vacancies in the Supreme Council brought about by the deaths of various members since November 1941.\(^5\) Having done this, he then called a meeting of the Council on 24 April whose principal business was to approve yet another Order (issued this time on the authority of the Rajah-in-Council) stating that since doubts existed as to the validity of the Supreme Council Order of 5 January restoring the Rajah's prerogative powers, it was 'expedient' that it be revoked forthwith.\(^6\) Dale evidently had second thoughts about Order No. C-23 and designed the second Order to strengthen the

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2. Ibid.
3. *SGG*, 24 April 1946. See Appendix IV.
6. *SGG*, 1 May 1946. See Appendix IV.
constitutional position. The new official and unofficial members of
the Council Negri were appointed on the authority of the Rajah-in-
Council.¹

At the meeting the Rajah also made his first statement
concerning cession to the people of Sarawak since the 6 February
announcement. Guaranteeing that adat lama (established custom) and
the principles of the 1941 Constitution would be observed, he
emphasized that he was not abandoning Sarawak and would continue to
make his customary visits. Trusting the British government more
than anyone else, he said that it would mean greater progress and
stable government 'whereas otherwise there would be uncertainty and
a confused future for Sarawak'.² He had no confidence that Anthony
would be a good ruler. 'I have given him three chances to prove his
worth', he concluded, 'and he has failed. My Heir must be the King.'³
Archer, who had been appointed Political Adviser to the military
administration, was to act as Chief Secretary until cession was
finalized, although in fact Dawson shouldered most of the responsi-
bility.

By 20 April the Rajah had become exasperated. There had
been difficulties in arranging representation in the Council Negri
and fixing a date for the meeting which would give the M.P.s time
to conduct their investigation. A delay in the M.P.s' visit was
the last straw. Fixing the date of the Council Negri meeting for
15 May, he flatly refused to remain in Sarawak after 22 May. In
another outburst of irritation, the Rajah told Dawson that he had
changed his mind about the Astana. Although the Instrument of
Cession specified that it was to be handed over,⁴ he now wished to
retain it as his own property. A great deal of diplomacy had to be
used by Dawson to placate the Rajah, but the matter was satisfactorily
settled, the Rajah agreeing to transfer the Astana and his private
land and houses to the Crown. He retained the right to occupy the

¹ Ibid.
² Sarawak Tribune, 26 April 1946.
³ Ibid.
⁴ See Appendix IV.
Astana during his visits to Sarawak and at other times it was to be used by the colonial government which would meet the cost of maintenance and staffing. However, this was only confirmed in writing on the day the Rajah left Sarawak.¹

On 26 April the Rajah and Ranee, accompanied by Dale and Dawson, began their official outstation tour by visiting Sibu where they walked through the streets and drove around the kampong to a warm reception. The next day the Rajah held open court where he listened to a variety of petitions and cursorily explained why he had decided to cede the state. Dawson felt that the need to maintain neutrality on the cession issue prohibited his attendance at this occasion but he remarked on the Rajah's apparent diffidence towards such an important matter. 'Either HH has lost interest (which would be fatal)', he wrote, 'or he is supremely confident of the outcome.... I wonder if the old boy is really trying.'² He was sceptical, too, of the Ranee who had been busy making indifferent sketches of Malay girls: '... Ranee affects to be so attached to them but I wonder how much is genuine.' It seemed to him at times that they both regarded the tour as 'a trial and a bore'.³ Nevertheless the Rajah's impact, particularly in the Second Division where he had spent so much time as a District Officer, was very considerable. Rantai, an Iban from the Ulu Ai who had been imprisoned by the Japanese for sheltering Arundell's party in early 1942,⁴ told the Tuan Muda in Kuching in May that the Rajah had persuaded the people of the Second Division that cession would not entail any change, that he would still visit them and that 'everything would continue exactly as before'.⁵

While the Rajah and Ranee visited Marudi and Miri, Dawson returned to Kuching but he was at Simanggang when they arrived there

¹ Dawson to Vyner Brooke, 21 May 1946. Letter in the possession of Miss Angela Brooke.
² Dawson Diary, 27 April 1946.
³ Ibid.
⁴ See Chapter V, p. 220.
on 1 May. Again there were numerous petitions and cases to be heard, including a reasonable request from some Ibans that they be given four Japanese heads to replace those of four Chinese which they had been forced to return to the victims' families. The Rajah stated his views on cession and the response of some Ibans was: 'Which son of the King will come to rule us?' Dawson felt that as long as there was an undertaking that the Rajah's replacement would visit them periodically, 'simple Dayaks' would accept cession. 1

The Expedition of H.M.S. Pickle

Arriving in Singapore on 28 April, Rees-Williams and the delegation's secretary, E.C.G. Barrett 2 were officially briefed on the proposed functions of the new British Special Commissioner for Southeast Asia, Malcolm MacDonald, due to arrive shortly. It had been proposed that he should co-ordinate the policies of the Malayan, Borneo, Ceylon and Hong Kong governments and their relations with such neighbouring countries as Siam and the Netherlands East Indies. On 30 April Rees-Williams lunched with Mountbatten whom he found preoccupied with the strategic importance of Southeast Asia, particularly with developments in the Netherlands East Indies. 3 The Labour M.P. had earlier told the press that the British government 'had no imperialistic designs on Sarawak'. 4

Gammans reached Singapore on the morning of 2 May and on the same day the two M.P.s flew to Kuching where they were immediately

1 Dawson Diary, 1 May 1946.

2 E.C.G. Barrett joined the MCS as a cadet in 1931 and served in various states until 1942. After his visit to Sarawak he resumed duty with the MCS and became Chief Registration Officer for the Federation of Malaya in 1949 and the first President of the Kuala Lumpur Municipal Council in 1951. In 1953 he was Acting British Adviser, Perak, and British Adviser, Kedah, from then until his retirement in 1957. An excellent linguist, he was a lecturer in Malay at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1957-71. Barrett's diary of the M.P.s' tour, now deposited at Rhodes House, is an invaluable source.

3 Lord Ogmore, MS memoir, p. 33.

4 The Times, 29 April 1946.
transferred to H.M.S. Pickle, a minesweeper which Mountbatten had provided in response to their representations that a proper consultation of the people's views would be impossible without sea transport. Most of Sarawak's own shipping had been sunk or was out of action and they had realized that without naval assistance they would be stranded in Kuching. The Colonial Office's failure to consider such questions was symptomatic of its lack of interest in obtaining a genuine indication of Sarawak opinion. At this point Dawson thought Gammans was insisting that even if cession was approved in the Council Negri, the issue would still have to be decided by Parliament. And the reputation which Gammans had already made through his opposition to the Malayan Union suggested that he would probably adopt an anti-cession stance. This was also Rees-Williams' impression.

The itinerary which the two M.P.s presented to Dawson on 3 May was quite impractical since it involved their returning to Kuching on 14 May, only a day before the Council Negri meeting. Visits to Marudi and Simanggang, the administrative centres of the Fourth and Second Divisions, were cancelled because the two M.P.s (much to Dawson's disgust) refused to go to any place where it would be necessary to spend a night ashore. There also had to be time for the Secretary of State to consider their report before giving the go-ahead and it was later decided that they would cable the result of each meeting and make a 'comprehensive report' after the Sibu meeting which was now scheduled for 10 May. The M.P.s issued invitations to various groups to a public meeting that evening and let it be known that they would also welcome representations from anyone beforehand. However, they remained on board ship at Pending, about five miles from Kuching town, and only the more enterprising spirits made the journey. In the meantime, an application by some Sarawak officers to accompany them on the tour was refused.

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1 An earlier namesake had brought the news of Lord Nelson's death to England.
2 Dawson Diary, 18 May 1946.
In the afternoon they were visited by representatives of the two local Chinese-language newspapers, the *Chung Hua Journal* and the *Chinese Daily News*, who gave the impression that the Sarawak Chinese had no right to take sides in the controversy. Gammans, who later became one of the main critics of the Malayan Union citizenship provisions, suggested to them the advantages which full citizenship rights would entail. The M.P.s later called on the Datu Patinggi whose compound was crowded with more than one hundred young Malays with banners bearing such English slogans as 'No Cession' and 'We Want Brooke Rule'. More surprisingly, there were other slogans saying: 'Let Judas Get His Desserts' and 'A Daniel Come to Judgement'. As the car entered the drive there was a shout in English of 'No Cession!' According to Rees-Williams, the old datu seemed 'a bit confused as to the issue', but the letter which one of his secretaries read out made it very clear that he opposed cession. At the same time, he was anxious to talk about the Turtle Islands, a question which, as we have seen, he had mentioned to MacBryan as part of the price for his agreement to cession.

Most of the talking was done by three young men: his secretary, Sharkawi bin Haji Osman, and Mohd. Nor and Edham bin Bojeng of the MNU who also presented a formal letter of protest against cession signed by Abang Haji Zaini. They told the M.P.s that 99 per cent of Sarawak's Malays wanted independence, fearing that their voice as a community would be lost if they became part of the colonial empire. Not only that, Sarawak would be swamped by immigrants and Malay culture extinguished. They said that there were only two Malay members of the Council Negri, Abang Haji Mustapha and his brother, Abang Haji Abdulrahim, and both were the Rajah's 'yes-men'. Blind obedience to the Rajah on the part of Council members

1 Lord Ogmore, MS memoir, p. 35.
2 Datu Patinggi to Gammans and Rees-Williams, 3 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
3 For biographical notes on Sharkawi and Mohd. Nor, see Chapter VIII, pp. 380-2.
4 Abang Haji Zaini to Gammans and Rees-Williams, 3 May 1946, Gammans Papers. See Appendix V.
would cause them to agree to cession. Referring to the MacBryan visit, they claimed that the document concerning cession was in English and was not explained. The Datu Patinggi, they said, had signed thinking that he was merely asking the Rajah to return, nor was any copy of the letter left behind. Once the signatures had been given, MacBryan had handed out the money and it was only a month later that the Datu Patinggi discovered that he had agreed to cession. They also felt that the Datu Patinggi's opinion should carry more weight than that of anyone else in either the Council Negri or the Supreme Council because his ancestors were themselves rulers of Sarawak. If the Rajah did not want to rule, they concluded, he should hand over to his brother until such time as Anthony Brooke became Rajah.\(^1\) By this time the MNU had succeeded in erecting Abang Haji Abdillah as the figurehead of the anti-cession cause, a position in which he cannot have been particularly happy. But he had been told that as head of Sarawak's Malay community his responsibility was to protect their general interest as well as those of the abang class.

The public meeting the same evening rehearsed most of the themes and arguments which the two M.P.s were to hear during their forthcoming tour.\(^2\) Opposing cession were the Datu Patinggi, whose afternoon speech was again read by his secretary, and Abang Haji Zaini and Mohd. Ma'amom Nor who spoke as principal delegates of the MNU. Giving unqualified support for cession were Abang Haji Mustapha, the Datu Amar, Hong Guan Lim, and Ong Kwan Hin (representing his father, Ong Tiang Swee) who argued that the state's royalties were insufficient to meet the cost of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Revenue in the past had been derived from opium, spirits and gambling, duties on rubber, pepper, sago, copra and jungle produce, and royalties on oil and gold. However, Ong Kwan Hin believed, it was desirable that taxes on opium and gambling should be abolished and while rubber, sago and copra would bring in some revenue, the future

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1 Barrett Diary, 3 May 1946.

2 The following account is based on the Barrett and Dawson diaries for 3 May 1946 and the Sarawak Tribune of 6 May 1946.
of rubber was uncertain. Furthermore, the oil and gold industries had been destroyed during the war and it would be some time before they could be re-established. Sarawak was not bankrupt, he concluded, but only Britain could provide the vast capital resources needed for recovery and progress. Representing the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien, Lim Kong Ngan was more interested in political questions. Describing Brooke rule as autocratic and anachronistic, he criticized the concentration of executive, legislative and legal powers in the hands of one man. Culture, education, economic development and transport had also been backward. He agreed to cession if it would mean some improvement, although he pointed out that the British government had not indicated what its policy would be and whether Sarawak would be a Crown Colony or part of the Malayan Union. Both of the Iban speakers, Philip Jitam and the Rev. Basil Temenggong, expressed qualified support for cession, insisting that the Nine Cardinal Principles of the 1941 Constitution be upheld and that indigenous customs be respected. The Rev. Temenggong, who had spent the war in India and was the best educated Iban in the state, added that the Ibans were not ready for sudden changes and were afraid of exploitation. He also called for a clear expression of British policy for Sarawak. The only European to make a significant speech was Monsignor Hopfgartner who denied that no economic progress had been made during the 45 years he had spent in Sarawak and claimed that the principal Chinese had not been adequately represented at the meeting. He believed that the Chinese and Ibans would accept cession as long as the scales were not weighted in favour of one community and Sarawak was administered as a separate colony. Otherwise its interests would be neglected. The Eurasian community was not officially represented but its unofficial spokesman, Edwin Howell, told the two M.P.s privately that the Rajah, the Tuan Muda and Anthony Brooke were

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1 See Chapter V, p. 244.
2 Bishop of Kuching, 1968-.
3 An Austrian citizen from the Tyrol, Hopfgartner had not been incarcerated by the Japanese. A superb linguist, he had worked mostly among the Chinese and after the war supported the faction led by Tan Bak Lim who was a Roman Catholic convert.
inadequate administrators and that cession was the only solution for Sarawak. D.M. Deen of the All India Muslim League also supported cession. 'Our interest lies in the ruling principle', he observed enigmatically, 'and we accept what is good for our future.'

Summing up the results in his diary, Dawson was jubilant: the Malays were divided but the Chinese and Indian merchants supported cession; the young Chinese were in favour if it meant a more progressive government; and the Ibans were agreeable as long as the Nine Cardinal Principles were respected. However, the meeting had only been called that same morning and was mostly by invitation. The audience of about 75 people was considerably less than might have been expected if more notice had been given and it had been a proper public meeting.

Regarding Kuching as representing the major part of intelligent opinion in the state, Gammans was favourably impressed by the meeting and its general support for cession. Indeed, he told Dawson, unless there was 'violent expression of contrary opinion' elsewhere, the question would be duly passed by the Council Negri. In view of the Rajah's assurance to the Supreme Council on 24 April that adat lama and the principles of the constitution would be observed and the concern expressed at the meeting about this, the two M.P.s advised Hall to make a statement of the British government's own policy post-cession. Gammans, at least, must have been aware that a blanket commitment to preserve adat lama might seriously embarrass a future colonial government. However, when the Pickle broke down on the way to Miri and it seemed that the tour might not be completed, Gammans was not disappointed. He was already confident of the outcome and, according to Dawson, was preoccupied with developments in Malaya. Telegrams from the Malay sultans and Dato

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1 Dawson Diary, 3 May 1946.
2 Dawson Diary, 5 May 1946.
3 Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, [4 May 1946], Gammans Papers.
4 Ibid.
Onn bin Jaafar, founder of the United Malays National Organization, had been reaching the two M.P.s ever since their arrival in Kuching.

During the next ten days, Gammons and Rees-Williams, accompanied by Barrett and Dawson, visited Limbang, Lawas, Miri, Bintulu, Sibu, Sarakei and Lingga. Although they hoped to hear the widest possible range of opinion, the short notice of their visit and difficulties in communications meant that urban Chinese and Malays were well represented while up-river people for the most part were not. The Muruts of Lawas and the Upper Limbang, for example, could not be contacted in time. It also seems that the First Division Resident's message inviting outstation representatives to meet the M.P.s in Kuching was somewhat vague and that no provision was made for transport and accommodation. Furthermore, there is some evidence to suggest that individual government officers stage-managed meetings to some extent by choosing the representatives (many of whom were in the government's pay) and emphasizing that cession was the Rajah's will. Prior to the crucial Sibu meeting, a letter supporting cession was drawn up by Native Officer Jarrow for Temenggong Koh to present on behalf of thirteen penghulus as the expression of Third Division Iban opinion. Barrett, who seems to have been an unbiased observer, felt that the Acting Resident, C.D. Adams, had set up the meeting to support cession. And a number of Malays later claimed that they had not spoken out against it for fear of Abang Razak, a customs officer in Sibu who seems to have exercised considerable influence.

Dawson (on the invitation of the M.P.s) acted as chairman and, with Barrett, interpreter at all the meetings. While there is

1 Barrett Diary, 7 May 1946.
2 Barrett Diary, 14 May 1946.
3 Interview with Mr E.C.G. Barrett, April 1975. Adams had joined the Sarawak Service in 1909 and retired in 1937 as Resident of the Third Division, an area where he had spent most of his career and was extremely influential with the Ibans. It seems likely that the Rajah arranged for him to return under the military administration to ensure that the Third Division accepted cession.
4 Barrett Diary, 13 May 1946.
no evidence to suggest that Dawson consciously directed proceedings to favour the expression of pro-cession opinions, he cannot have been completely neutral. As he told Hall later, the opportunity of making introductory remarks before each session meant that it was possible to 'establish a suitable atmosphere'.\(^1\) Moreover, as the representative of the British government his presence may have quietened many of those who, while opposing cession, felt that the expression of such opinions might be held against them later. Another factor which emerged from the meetings was that cession was not understood.\(^2\) This is hardly surprising in view of the fact that almost no effort had been made to explain the issue and that the responsibility rested with European officers, most of whom supported cession. The Rajah's support for cession meant that pre-war officers who would otherwise have fought tooth and nail against it now accepted the inevitability of a British takeover. The handful who continued to oppose it seem to have done so partly out of loyalty to Bertram Brooke and partly out of disgust at the way cession was being put through.

There was some evidence of anti-cession 'rigging' but this seems to have been exceptional. At Bintulu, where Anthony Brooke had been stationed before the war and was well regarded, Harry Buxton, a Eurasian forestry officer who had been acting District Officer during the military administration, may have persuaded the local Malays and Melanaus to present a united front against cession.\(^3\) The unanimity of their opposition certainly impressed the M.P.s although it raised Dawson's suspicions.\(^4\) He also felt that the Resident at Miri, John Gilbert, who was known to oppose cession, had tried to 'bias the meeting slightly, against cession'.\(^5\)

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1 Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946.
2 Ibid.
3 Interview with Mr H.P. Buxton, July 1974.
4 Dawson Diary, 9 May 1946.
5 Dawson Diary, 8 May 1946.
The meetings at Limbang and Miri did not significantly alter the impression created by the Kuching meeting and it was only after Bintulu that Dawson began to fear that the M.P.s might be too impressed by the strength of anti-cession feeling. The Bintulu meeting provided an interesting range of Malay/Melanau, Iban and Chinese anti-cession opinion. 'It may be enough to upset the whole thing by giving an anti-cession twist to the M.P.s' report', Dawson wrote afterwards, 'thus inducing the S. of S. to stop proceedings; much will depend on what happens at Sibu tomorrow.' When Gammans told him that the cession bill should go before the Council Negri whatever happened, Dawson suspected that the M.P. was being mischievous. 'I wonder if Gammans is trying to get things in a jam by encouraging the vote of Council to go on', he reflected, 'while knowing that he intends their report to be adverse to cession.' As a safeguard he cabled the Secretary of State warning him that the M.P.s' report might not be favourable after all. However, the Sibu meeting was to tip the balance decisively, not only because the M.P.s regarded the Sibu district as containing about one-third of Sarawak's total population but because they also saw it as the best opportunity to test Iban opinion. As Dawson acknowledged, a substantial proportion of the Iban population had to be seen to be in favour before the cession proposal could be said to possess any popular support.

Dawson must therefore have been delighted when Temenggong Koh presented the M.P.s with his letter which he described as having the assent not only of thirteen penghulus and the Iban government servants present but all the Ibans of the Third Division! His only concern was that adat lama should remain unchanged. When asked by Gammans if he was just following the Rajah or if he wanted cession for its own sake, he replied that they trusted the Rajah. Inspector Arthur Muda, however, said that he supported cession for its own sake because he wanted education for the Ibans to be promoted as quickly as possible. Another English-speaking Iban told the M.P.s

1 Dawson Diary, 9 May 1946.
2 Ibid.
3 For a biographical note, see Cooper, Men of Sarawak, pp. 49-57; obituary, SG, 30 November, 1956.
that his people had not had a fair deal under the Brookes and that cession would mean better education and general development. Of the Malays, only one speaker mentioned the possibility of Brooke rule continuing through one of the Rajah's relatives. According to Native Officer Abang Ahmad, if the adat was preserved it was all the same to the people whether they were ruled by the King or the Rajah - just as long as it was not the Japanese. Others said that the Rajah knew what was best and that cession would lead to greater progress, including the provision of religious teachers from Egypt or Malaya.

The kapitan china, Teo Chong Low, who had been in Sarawak for 56 years and claimed to speak on behalf of all the Sibu Chinese, supported cession as being desirable in itself but was more interested in pressing claims for war compensation. A show of hands was taken and the M.P.s cabled the results to London before compiling their 'comprehensive' and decisive report. In the former they emphasized that Sibu was more significant for native as opposed to Chinese opinion and was the most important meeting to date. At the same time, they added that Sibu was the first place which the Rajah had visited and the feeling of the meeting was consequently very different from the previous ones. They also conceded that the thirteen Iban penghulus had agreed to cession because they trusted the Rajah, not because they supported cession in its own right.

In their 'comprehensive report', the two M.P.s distinguished three general reactions to the cession proposal:

1. the opinion of Malays and Ibans who did not themselves see any advantages in cession but were prepared to trust the Rajah's judgement;

2. the opinion of young Malays in Sibu, Chinese and educated Ibans who supported cession for its own sake - the Chinese because it promised better commercial prospects, and the Malays and Ibans because they were dissatisfied with education and general progress;

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1 Dawson Diary, 10 May 1946.
2 Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, 10 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
3 Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, 10 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
3. the opinion of the MNU and Malays in small towns who supported the continuance of Brooke rule under the Rajah.

Gammans and Rees-Williams were prepared to conclude that there was 'sufficient acquiescent or favourable opinion in the country' to justify the matter going before the Council Negri on 15 May and to 'strongly urge' that there should be no postponement. They also explained that much of what they described as the 'hesitation' of Malays and Ibans was due to the absence of any clearly-defined postcession policy and the subsequent fear that their customs would be encroached upon and their culture swamped by immigrant races.

The implication that most of the opposition to cession arose from anxieties about an uncertain future rather than from any positive attachment to Brooke rule was misleading but it provided the verbal formula which Hall needed to use as his justification in the House. The hasty and premature compilation of the report also meant that while support for cession at Sarikei was regarded as confirming the Sibu verdict, adamant Iban and Malay opposition at Lingga\(^1\) in the heart of the Second Division was discounted. The M.P.s told Hall that the Lingga meeting did not affect their earlier 'comprehensive report'.\(^2\)

The range of opinions expressed at the various meetings can more accurately be characterized as follows:

1. Chinese traders and nationalists who supported cession because it meant greater economic opportunities and the strengthening of their political status and representation;

2. educated Malays and some Ibans who supported cession because it meant greater educational and employment opportunities than had been available under the Brookes;

3. Ibans and Malays who agreed to cession because their loyalty to the Rajah prevailed over their serious misgivings about what cession would mean;

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1 Barrett Diary, 12 May 1946.
2 Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, 12 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
(d) Ibans and Malays whose loyalty to the Raj prevailed over their loyalty and obedience to Vyner Brooke;
(e) Malays of the abang class whose interests lay with the perpetuation of Brooke rule;
(f) Malay commoners who saw the continuation of Brooke rule as a means of securing genuine self-government and independence for Sarawak within the foreseeable future.

The last two categories, together with a small number of educated Kuching Ibans whose traditional association with the Malays was relatively strong, constituted the base of the anti-cession movement which was to develop during the forthcoming months.

While the two M.P.s made more of an effort to test native opinion than the Colonial Office had probably envisaged, they were swayed by other factors which could hardly have found a place in their cabled reports. Gammans in particular was not at all impressed with the Brooke family and some of the senior officers. The Rajah, he wrote later in a private memorandum to Hall, was 'lazy and rather stupid and for many years has preferred the fleshpots of Europe to the austerities of Sarawak'. Gammans believed that one of the Rajah's main reasons for insisting that the Council Negri should meet on 15 May was his anxiety to be home in time for the Derby. The Tuan Muda he described as 'completely brainless' and too old to be considered as a ruler even if he had been physically fit. Like many other people, Gammans was scandalized by the Ranee's conduct, seeing her as 'a bad influence in all this rather sordid Brooke family row'. She had, he said, visited a 'low down cabaret' three times and not only danced the conga with professional dancing partners who were also prostitutes but took them back to the Astana to paint their pictures. 'A more undignified woman it would be difficult to find', he concluded, neglecting to mention that both he and Rees-Williams had prevailed on Dawson to take them to that same 'low down cabaret' on at least two occasions.

2 Dawson Diary, 13 and 16 May 1946.
Anthony had seemed to Gammans 'a most unsatisfactory young man' who would never have been a good ruler under the new constitution. He had met him a number of times in London and was disposed to accept all the stories he heard in Sarawak about his 'ego-mania' and eccentricities, including astrology. Noting the second Rajah's anxiety that the attractions of Europe might prove too tempting for his successors, he regarded the end of the Brooke dynasty as 'yet another example of the truth that institutions seldom perish from external causes but rot from within'. Gammans was appalled by the behaviour of some of the Sarawak officers, particularly Archer who had resorted to the bottle not long after being released from Batu Lintang where he had conducted himself admirably in spite of beatings and serious illness. But the Conservative M.P. was intolerant of human frailty and was content with superficial impressions:

I went one night to the Cathay Cabaret and found there most of the Sarawak Government, very drunk, dancing with the professional partners, who were far more sober than the Chief Secretary or any of the Residents of the districts.

On his return to England, Gammans made much of what he regarded as the unsatisfactory character of some of the Brooke officers and it is reasonable to suggest that this, together with his low opinion of the Brooke family, weighed at least as heavily as his impressions of native opinion in his final assessment. Gammans probably saw the issue not so much in terms of native opinion as whether the British government should allow the Brooke regime to continue.

Rees-Williams did not take such a disapproving view of the Brookes. In his eyes, the Ranee was '... a bright and vivacious lady who brought the charm of Mayfair to the Tropics and some of the exotic perfume of the Tropics to Mayfair'. MacBryan, too, was a

2 Ibid., p. 25.
3 Ibid., p. 23.
4 Personal information from Mrs Margaret Noble.
5 Lord Ogmore MS, p. 25.
'colourful character, belonging to a former age in our association with the East rather than to the present when circumspect delegates of Government and big business move in a deprecating way about their business'.¹ He was impressed with the outstation officers but did not think that there were people who could run a Secretariat properly.² He also felt that the Brookes had done very little for the Ibans, particularly in the area of education. At one place he was told by Ibans that the only means of obtaining education was to serve a prison term.³ But it was an ironical twist that the Labour member whose government was now committed to replacing the Brookes should have taken a more romantic and sympathetic attitude than the Conservative member who was soon to become the champion of the Malay sultans.

The Council Negri Meeting

On 8 May, just one week before the Council Negri was due to be opened, Bertram Brooke arrived in Kuching accompanied by Adams, Pollard and Combe. 'It is no exaggeration to say that the difference of opinion between us is... vital', he wrote to Vyner the previous day, 'but you need have no fear that I have any intention of allowing the matter... to become the subject of a family dog-fight..."⁴ Although Vyner was determined to offset the impact of his brother's presence as much as possible, Bertram did not go out of his way to use his influence against cession. Installed at 'The Residency' (the house of the First Division Resident which was second only to the Astana in importance), one of his few forays was to Ong Tiang Swee's house where he learnt for the first time the details of MacBryan's visit. However, the Datu Patinggi and members of the MNU soon came to pay their respects, as did most of the pre-war European officers and Native Officers, and there was a good deal of discussion about cession.

¹ Ibid., p. 28.
² Interview with Lord Ogmore, March 1975.
³ Lord Ogmore MS, p. 35.
⁴ Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 7 May 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.
When it became clear for the first time that Bertram had not only not consented to cession but had not even been consulted by the Rajah, there was a dramatic change in many people's attitudes. For example, Philip Jitam who had given qualified support for cession at the public meeting on 3 May and was scheduled to second a Council Negri motion by the Datu Pahlawan authorizing cession, was now adamantly opposed, as was his brother Robert. Dawson was convinced that Philip had been 'nobbled' by the Tuan Muda's party and was apprehensive for the first time about the outcome of the vote. Visiting Bertram on 14 May he found him in discussion with a large group of people, including Philip Jitam, remarking in his diary later that Bertram's 'Pretence of "not come to fuss or fight" is camouflage for a studied campaign to nobble the council (while "honest men" are sailing up rivers in an endeavour to sound the feelings of the people)...' It is very likely that Pollard indulged in some quiet lobbying, but Bertram appears to have preserved appropriate decorum in spite of the fact that the only official information he received about the Council Negri meeting was the date on which it was to be held.

According to Combe, the Tuan Muda could have prevented cession from going through if he had chosen to campaign vigorously against it. However, this was anything but Bertram's style. His only communication with Vyner before the meeting was a letter complaining that MacBryan had completely misled the datus and Ong Tiang Swee as to his attitude on cession and that the majority of the people had no idea what cession really meant. He sought permission to make the situation clear to the members of the Council Negri, insisting nevertheless that it was 'no representative body assembled to express the real wishes of the people'. He also protested strongly against the 'secrecy and unnecessary speed with

1 Dawson Diary, 16 May 1946.
2 Dawson Diary, 14 May 1946.
3 Ibid.; interview with Mr J.R. Combe, November 1974.
4 Interview with Mr J.R. Combe, November 1974.
5 Bertram Brooke to Vyner Brooke, 13 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
which this whole question has been handled' and suggested that it should be deferred so that there could be further consultations with the British government.

Dawson was not prepared to countenance the request to address the Council Negri and Archer subsequently replied on the Rajah's behalf suggesting that he should issue a written statement as the Rajah had done. While Dawson was concerned that there should not be a public slanging-match between the Rajah and his brother, he was probably more worried about the impact that a speech by the Tuan Muda might have on the voting. However, Bertram was not to be put off so easily and he was finally invited to make his speech from a place next to the President's chair.

Gammans and Rees-Williams had initially insisted on a secret ballot and the Rajah had agreed to this, but it was finally decided with the M.P.s' approval that this vital question should be resolved at the meeting itself by a show of hands. At the last moment Gammans, much to Dawson's annoyance, advised European members of the Council Negri not to vote but neither of the M.P.s took a sustained interest in the actual arrangements for the meeting, including the appointment of members. Rees-Williams was already describing the whole affair to a *Daily Mail* reporter as 'opera bouffe' (an expression which Dawson himself had used), and seems to have been cynically complacent about the outcome.

Another last-minute development was the arrival of the long-awaited official statement from the Colonial Office of the British government's policy in Sarawak should cession be accepted by the Council Negri. Published on the morning of the first reading of the cession bill, the statement was deliberately vague and non-committal except that Sarawak was not to become part of the Malayan Union.

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1 Archer to Bertram Brooke, 14 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
2 Dawson Diary, 14 May 1946.
3 Dawson Diary, 3 May 1946; Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946, CO 938/1 [58501].
4 Dawson Diary, 14 May 1946.
5 Dawson Diary, 15 May 1946.
Its administration as a colony would be 'generally on the same lines as other colonies within the British Empire' and 'in general in accord' with the nine Cardinal Principles of the 1941 Constitution.\footnote{Sarawak Tribune, 15 May 1946. Subsequent quotations from this source.}

The constitution would have to be altered to allow for amendments necessitated by cession including provision for the Royal Assent but as part of the preparation for this the Governor would be required to discuss the whole constitutional question with community representatives and other concerned persons 'with a view to recommending what steps should be taken at the time when these changes are made to associate the people of Sarawak with its Government and administration on a basis as broadly representative as conditions permit'. It was hoped that in this way the 'maximum progressive constitutional development' would be achieved. The 'fullest regard' would be given to the rights and customs of all communities and there was no intention of exploiting the people or the resources of the country. Among the most important objectives would be the rehabilitation and improvement of medical services and communications and 'controlled development of trade and resources with a view to raising the standard of living of the inhabitants'.

The statement's impact at this vital stage is difficult to assess. However, it was carefully studied by people like Philip Jitam who had expressed doubts about future policy and Dawson conceded that its reservations, while being necessary, 'were taken to be subtle methods by which any guarantee could later be avoided'.\footnote{Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946.} It seemed that the simple natives were capable of some degree of scepticism.

For his part, the Rajah called to the Astana all the European official members including Gilbert, Ditmas and Barcroft whose support for cession was in doubt while Archer attempted to use his influence with Native Officers Tuanku Mohammed of the Baram district, Abang Mustapha of Limbang and Edward Jerah of Simanggang, telling them it was their duty to vote for cession. Jerah told Archer that not only
was the whole thing wrong since the Tuan Muda had not been consulted, but the people of the Second Division opposed cession. When Temenggong Koh, who accompanied Jerah at this interview, learnt for the first time that the Tuan Muda had not given his approval, he exclaimed: 'In that case the Rajah has cheated us.'

In the meantime, a bitter struggle had been going on between the MNU and the Datu Pahlawan and his supporters for the votes of native members of the Council Negri. Lending her assistance to the Datu Pahlawan's camp was Haji Sa'erah who was well placed to pick up the political gossip of the day. Pollard believed that the failure of any of the Third Division native members to call on the Tuan Muda was probably due to their having been warned of the consequences of such an action. It is clear that the acting Resident, C.D. Adams, was quite capable of taking such precautions and that these would have been supported by Archer.

Chinese members of the Council were also subjected to pressure. Tan Bak Lim, a fourth generation Sarawak Chinese and head of the Teochiew community told Pollard that the Hua Kheow Tshin Nien had threatened to kill him if he voted against cession. However, he was refused police protection and this may have accounted for his pro-cession vote. It is likely that the illness which prevented Ong Hap Leong from attending the Council Negri meeting was of a political kind. Khoo Peng Loong, as representative of the Sibu Foochow community, seems to have been genuinely in favour of cession.

When the Council Negri meeting was opened by the Rajah on

2 Her house was conveniently located and 'was not only a listening post, it was almost an operations room for the collection of and processing of intelligence and the issue of sitreps [sic]'. Personal communication from Mr R.H. Morris, 28 November 1976. Haji Sa'erah was also connected with a cabaret which was patronized by many of the leading figures including Archer, Dale, Dawson and the two M.P.s.
4 Pollard, 'Report...', p. 5. Tan's claim was confirmed by Monsignor Hopfgartner.
14 May the situation was extremely tense. Having made his outstation tour and done his best to ensure that the European members would vote for cession, the Rajah adopted a low posture during the formal proceedings of the Council Negri. After a brief speech on the morning of 15 May in which he suggested that Hall's statement published that day should have resolved any doubts that 'the future happiness and prosperity of Sarawak' lay with cession,¹ he left the Council Negri chambers and the formal business was conducted in his absence.

The Council Negri meeting was conducted under conditions which were biased in favour of a pro-cession vote. The Council President, Archer, was a staunch supporter of cession and had already done his utmost to influence individual members. During the debate on the second reading he spoke three times and his behaviour was so extraordinary that Dawson and others suspected that he was drunk.² Members spoke in their own language and there were no translations.³ Temenggong Koh who spoke no English and hardly any Malay cannot have understood very much. According to one description, he spent the entire meeting dozing or scratching the horny sole of his foot.⁴ And yet, of all the Iban members he was by far the most influential with his own people. Since the voting was by show of hands, it is possible that a number of native members (and perhaps some European members) declined to vote against cession for fear of repercussions. If cession were defeated, they would have to reckon with the Rajah and the possibility of losing their government positions. If it went through, they would have to face an equally uncertain future under the new colonial government.

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¹ Rajah's speech at opening of Council Negri, 15 May 1946, Jitam Papers.
² Dawson Diary, entry for 16 May 1946; interview with Mr E.C.G. Barrett, April 1975.
⁴ R.H. Morris, MS memoir.
The case for cession was opened by the Datu Pahlawan who moved the second reading of the bill and was supported by Abang Abdulrahim (his brother), Archer, Native Officer Jarrow, L.D. Kennedy, Khoo Peng Loong and B.J.C. Spurway. Their main emphasis was on the greater progress which would take place under a colonial government, particularly in education, agriculture and health services. In the Datu Pahlawan's view, the people of Sarawak had ambitions that their children should become doctors, engineers and lawyers but because of the low standard of education 'all these magnificent ideas only remain frozen in their hearts'. Spurway added that one of the benefits of cession would be an infusion of highly qualified technical officers and the strengthening of the Administrative Service. Khoo Peng Loong was also enthusiastic about improved educational opportunities but spent as much time advocating the abolition of revenue from gambling and opium. The second argument, which was used quite forcefully by Archer and Kennedy, was that the state could not continue to operate without British financial assistance. 'It is a very serious thing for Sarawak', Archer told the members from the chair. 'We either exist or do not exist.' After a number of speeches opposing cession had been delivered, Archer began to fear that the tide was running in the wrong direction. Sarawak could not afford to remain independent, he insisted. Revenue was less than before the war and would probably decline still further and unless Sarawak came together with other countries into 'some sort of amalgamation', it would be 'sunk'. Unless there was more money for agriculture to increase the food supply, people would starve. Kennedy, too, argued that Sarawak could not in its present form survive the difficulties ahead; it could not fulfil its financial obligations without the assistance of the British government.

Other European members criticized the haste with which

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1 This account of the Council Negri debate is based on the official minutes, the Barrett and Dawson diaries, Dawson's official report to Hall, accounts in the Sarawak Tribune, Daily Mail and Malay Mail and interviews with Mr E.C.G. Barrett, Archdeacon P.P.H. Howes, Mr C.W. Dawson and Sir Dennis White. Quotations are from the official minutes unless otherwise specified.
cession was being put through and the argument that Sarawak could not survive without financial assistance. The Resident of the Fourth and Fifth Divisions, John Gilbert, pointed out that it was an inopportune moment to decide Sarawak's future and that while people in Kuching had debated the question there were thousands in other parts of Sarawak who had not had a chance. 'I am unable to believe', he added, 'if we have to go anywhere else for money or loan from the British Government, they will point a pistol to us and say, "No cession, no money".' The Rev. Peter Howes wished that cession could be postponed until the people knew more about the issues involved:

When they ask whether they will be happy under British rule, are they to be told nothing about Jamaica? When they ask whether their lands will be secured to them under British Rule, are they to be told only of Uganda and not of Kenya? They ought to know about both. They do not yet know about such things and this should be taken into consideration.

While it had been said that existing rights and customs were to be observed, he added, the statement was no guarantee of good faith—particularly in view of the fact that the Tuan Muda's rights had not been observed.

The three principal native speakers against cession were Philip Jitam (who had seconded the Datu Pahlawan's motion as earlier arranged), the Datu Patinggi and Abang Mustapha. Philip Jitam thought that Hall's statement did not provide a sufficient guarantee that the Nine Cardinal Principles would be 'upheld wholly and unreservedly'. Nor had the cession proposed been mutually agreed upon, and until there was mutual consent the question should not be decided.¹

¹ In the draft of his Council Negri speech, Jitam had provided a homely view of the cession dispute which he might well have used to some effect:

A certain property was left as a legacy to be held in trust for two brothers. The eldest brother was given the trusteeship. Consequently the trustee, without prior consultation tries [sic] to dispose of the property. Does [sic] this act considered as binding and proper? And would you, acting in the best of faith, knowing all the facts, condemn or condone such an act?

Jitam Papers.
The Datu Patinggi saw the question in terms of his loyalty as leader of the Malay community both to the Rajah and to the Brooke succession. To support cession would be to deprive the Rajah of his throne and to spurn both the good services rendered by the Brookes and the independence of Sarawak. If cession was agreed to, he concluded tearfully,

... my good service extending to 62 years will be in vain and it is also a great sin against the Almighty God which will give me no peace in this world and hereafter, and also my act of injustice will all be written by historians in different parts of the world. Because I am an old man, I do not want, therefore [a] bad name in the world and hereafter.

Abang Mustapha emphasized the accessibility of the Rajah as one of the principal virtues of Brooke rule which would not be possible under a British colonial government. Nor was he impressed with the argument that Sarawak's indebtedness made cession necessary. 'Our father the Rajah and our grandfather the King did not lose the war against Japan and Germany', he pointed out. 'We won. There is nothing in the history of the world to show the victor giving up his country....' The question of war debts could be arranged between the Rajah and his people. Abang Mustapha's final appeal provided a prophetic view of what the Rajah's threatened departure would mean to the people of Sarawak:

The father cannot and must not leave his house if his family cries because they love him. I regret very much if the father does not care for the appeal of his children and his family. I am afraid, later, it will become a matter not to be so nice in the house and also it will become a question which is harder and heavier for the father and the grandfather. Because of this we most earnestly beseech that Sarawak should not be ceded as long as the Rajah and his line of succession and the people of this country still has breath.

Although it had been earlier suggested that Archer would read the Tuan Muda's prepared speech, he was at the last moment invited to read it himself. While its content was moderate enough, it was delivered with tremendous vehemence which sometimes almost reached the level of shouting.  

1 Daily Mail, 17 May 1946.
to represent the line of succession of the Raj and to assure the people of its willingness to submit to their wishes as to whether it should continue or come to an end. He agreed that the war had made necessary a new relationship between Sarawak and Britain but that the matter had been handled 'with unnecessary haste' and there was no reason why a solution could not be found by means of consultations with the British government. However, he did not want the vote to cause animosity and ill-feeling. 'I would rather see this line of succession come to an end', he concluded, 'than that any family differences of opinion should be the cause of quarrelling or ill-feeling among the people of Sarawak.'

The force of the debate had gone so much against cession that the already agitated Archer was in a highly nervous state when he stammered his last appeal before the vote was taken:

There seems to be a sort of feeling here... that it is a ramp.¹ The British government is not bad. I can assure you that we will get a fair and absolutely good deal. I do not know how long I will be here, but you will be here anyway. You have got to vote on it. I can see the feeling of the house is rather tense now. There is no idea of suborning by the British Government. I can assure you of that. I am not lying about it.

So strong was the feeling of the meeting, however, that when Edward Jerah proposed immediately after the debate that there be a secret ballot, the motion was not put clearly and the native members voted against it in the belief that they were voting against cession!²

The motion on the second reading was then put (but had to be put again when the first show of hands was indecisive) and was carried by 19 votes to 16, there being a native majority against cession of 13 votes to 12. It was the votes of seven European officials which carried the day, although the Residents of the First and Fourth Divisions (Ditmas and Gilbert) and Howes voted against the motion.

¹ A put-up job.
Table III: Voting on the Cession Bill in the Council Negri, 15 May 1946

For:
J.B. Archer (Acting Chief Secretary)
G.E. Cascoigne (Treasurer)
L.D. Kennedy (Trade and Customs)
B.J.C. Spurway (Forests)
C.D. Adams (Acting Resident, Third Division)
R.E. Edwards
Datu Pahlawan
Datu Amar
Datu Menteri
Haji Nawawi (Mufti)
Tan Bak Lim
Father A. Mulder
Temenggong Koh
Bennett Jarrow (Native Officer, Third Division)
J. Owen (Eurasian representative)
Khoo Peng Loong (Sibu Chinese representative)
Abang Ahmat (Sibu)
Abang Haji Abdulrahim (Native Officer, Third Division)

Against:
J.O. Gilbert (Resident, Fourth and Fifth Divisions)
W.P.N.L. Ditmas (Resident, First Division)
Abang Openg (Native Officer, First Division)
Abang Kiprawi (Native Officer, First Division)
Abang Samsuddin
Datu Patinggi
Abang Abu Talip (Native Officer, Second Division)
Datu Zin (Native Officer, Second Division)
Abang Haji Draup (Native Officer, Second Division)
Abang Ali (Miri)
Datu Tuanku Mohd. (Native Officer, Fourth Division)
Abang Mustapha (Native Officer, Fifth Division)
Rev P.P.H. Howes
Philip Jitam
D.M. Deen (Indian Muslim representative)
Edward Jerah (Native Officer, Second Division)

Abstained:
J.C.H. Barcroft (Resident, Second Division)
Datu Hakim

Absent:
Ong Hap Leong
Tze Shuen Sung
Following the vote, the Council was adjourned by Archer on the tacit understanding that the only further formality required was the Rajah's assent. Gammans and Rees-Williams reported the proceedings to the Secretary of State as 'sloppy and unbusinesslike', complaining that there had been no translations or secret ballot and that the President had taken a partisan role. It all confirmed their 'former poor opinion of many Sarawakian civil servants...'. And discovering that standing orders required a committee report and a third reading, they insisted to Archer (who was enjoying himself at a victory party) that the full procedure was essential. When Archer launched into a diatribe against 'lawyers' and refused to chair another session, it took Dawson and Dale all their powers of persuasion to bring him around. The Tuan Muda had angrily accused him of having been bribed and he was in a state of high nervous excitement. The bewildered members then had to assemble again the next day and were told that the bill would come into force 'forthwith'.

Abang Mustapha protested against this and was supported by Abang Openg who said that at least two years were necessary to give the matter proper consideration. When this was regarded by Archer as an amendment it was seconded by Gilbert and then defeated by 18 votes to 15. After a further categorical assurance from Archer that adat lama of all races would be followed, Howes asked him if any attempt had been made to obtain loan funds for Sarawak before cession was offered by the Rajah. However, the question was not translated and Archer's reply was inaudible. The cession bill was then put and was passed by 19 votes to 16, the only difference being that Barcroft and the Datu Hakim who had earlier abstained now voted for cession while Adams was absent ill. The only other business was the Rajah's Dependants Ordinance which went through all stages after standing orders had been suspended.

Gammans and Rees-Williams thought that the day's conduct of

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1 Gammans and Rees-Williams to Hall, 16 May 1946, Gammans Papers.
2 Dawson Diary, 16 May 1946; Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946.
3 Pollard, 'Report...', Appendix A.
proceedings was 'more businesslike' and informed the Secretary of State that the voting represented the 'fair view' of the Council as it was constituted. However, the MNU quickly issued a protest pointing out that passing of the cession bill had depended on a European majority (a 'foreign vote') and that the Malays who could be regarded as in any way representative had voted against cession while those who supported it had only represented themselves.\(^1\) When Pollard visited the Datu Patinggi's house that evening he found about thirty Malays in a high state of excitement about the day's events. There was strong criticism of Archer's statement that Sarawak was in dire straits financially, particularly since no facts and figures had been given. Cession, they felt, could only be considered as the last way out if taxes and internal loans failed to meet the estimated deficit for 1946 of $2,000,000.\(^2\)

Informing N.L. Mayle (who had inherited Gent's responsibility for Sarawak in January) of the first day's voting, Dawson anticipated a complaint to London from the M.P.s about the European majority, pointing out that the official members had not voted \textit{en bloc} and knew 'as well as anybody... what is good for the country'.\(^3\) Given the narrow majority in favour of cession, Dawson experienced some mental torment before deciding to advise Mayle that the exercise should be completed. 'Let us face the consequences (street-fighting some say but I don't believe them, and anyhow the troops... have finally gone)', he wrote in his diary, 'and we will soon find that it will sort itself out'.\(^4\) Mayle expressed concern at the closeness of the vote, telling Dawson that unless there was a majority of at least four in the second vote he should mark time until receiving further instructions. When voting on the third reading only increased the previous day's majority to three, Dawson felt that he would not be given the final authorization to put the cession bill to the Supreme Council for approval and then to sign the Instrument of Cession with the Rajah on

\(^{1}\) 'Record of the Visit of Lt. Col. Rees-Williams, M.P., and Captain Gammans, M.P., to Sarawak', Gammans Papers, Item 9, p. 15.


\(^{3}\) Dawson Diary, 16 May 1946.

\(^{4}\) Dawson Diary, 17 May 1946.
21 May as planned. But on the morning of 18 May he was relieved to have a cable from Mayle empowering him to go ahead. 'A dramatic moment in history; a bit added to H.M.'s dominions', he remarked in his diary, anticipating nevertheless that the Tuan Muda (who had left that day) had not 'shot his bolt' and that there would be debate, press activity and 'general fuss' for some time to come.\(^1\)

The Supreme Council duly approved the bill by a majority of six votes to two on 20 May and the signing of the Instrument of Cession took place at the Astana beneath the portraits of the first two Rajahs the following morning.\(^2\) 'The result, narrow though it is', Dawson told Hall in his official report, 'represents a victory of common-sense over sentiment; and that in a country where sentiment (towards the Brookes) is a very important factor. Everybody, and not the least myself, will feel a tinge of regret at the ending of a romantic historical episode which had lasted for a century; but... had become anachronistic.'\(^3\)

Returning to his office after the signing, Dawson found a cable which had not been decoded because of the sudden illness of the cipher clerk. Decoding it himself, he was startled to find that it was an instruction from Hall not to go ahead with the signing. 'Cold feet at the last moment', Dawson told himself, 'not I hope a plot to fix the blame on executive officers (me) in order to sidestep political bother.'\(^4\) Consulting Dale, he sent off a reply explaining that the message had arrived too late and that it was now impossible to reverse what had been done. The Rajah was leaving the same afternoon.

Dawson's suspicions about Gammans also came to the surface again with reports of the latter's remark in Singapore that 'few people in Sarawak want cession'. 'He is probably doing as I supposed he might do', Dawson wrote in his diary, 'deliberately leading us to

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1 Dawson Diary, 18 May 1946.
2 For a description of the ceremony, see the *Sarawak Tribune*, 22 May 1946. The document itself can be found in Appendix IV.
3 Dawson's report to Hall, 20 May 1946.
4 Dawson Diary, 21 May 1946.
the voting stage (knowing it would be narrow) in order to bust it sky-high later. But altogether he thought that it was a good thing that the message had been received too late. 'A last minute wind-up with everything laid on would have been the final blow to the Rajah and the whole project', he decided. 'The Colonial Office have in fact been prevented from making fools of themselves. They wanted to go on and must now go on.' And his hopes that they would be ashamed of their last-minute 'windiness' were gratified by a cable arriving on 25 May which admitted that the 'stop' message would have made nonsense of the whole proceedings. It also revealed, no doubt to Dawson's surprise, that the Conservatives had decided not to oppose cession.

Privately, Dawson was prepared to concede that the majority of Malay and Iban opinion was probably against cession but he had no doubt that what had been done was in their best interests. Reports that MacBryan was suing Anthony Brooke for libel only confirmed his belief that cession had been a good thing. 'The Brookes may be romantic', he wrote, 'but what a clotted mass of intrigue surrounds them.' Dawson recognized, too, that he had played a crucial part in ensuring that cession went through:

... the way in was so narrow that I can really claim that it was because I managed to become 'persona grata' both with the Europeans (by drinking them under the table) and with the Malays (by talking their language and dancing their dances) that the very narrow margin was in favour of cession. They could see (by looking at me) that the alternative to the Rajah was not entirely non-human; and this (it seems proud to say) may well have turned the trick....

D.C. White, who had acted as clerk to the Council Negri, had assured Dawson that if instead of himself and Dale the Colonial Office had

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Dawson Diary, 25 May 1946.
4 Dawson Diary, 8 June 1946.
5 Dawson Diary, 2 June 1946.
6 Dawson Diary, 31 May 1946.
sent out 'two ordinary stuffy "officials''' who could not win the sympathy and enthusiasm of the European officers or anyone else, cession would have failed.¹

Although there had been controversy in Britain about Sarawak's future by the time of the Council Negri meeting, a great deal depended on whether the Conservative Party wanted to make an issue out of cession. There were many M.P.s including Stanley, Fletcher and Donner who had already questioned Hall in the House and were anxious to press home the attack. When the Council Negri voting figures were posted and it was known that Hall's 'stop' telegram had been too late, it seemed to William Teeling the perfect opportunity.² However, the pre-arranged cable which Stanley received from Gammans did not contain what was expected. Gammans told Stanley that only the Chinese wanted cession for its own sake, that there was strong opposition from some responsible Malays and Ibans and that cession had only been put through with a European majority. However, he thought that the majority were prepared to accept the Rajah's assurances and he was personally convinced that 'on balance' cession was best for the people. Consequently he advised the party 'not to oppose Sarawak cession and not to give unqualified support'.³

As Teeling explained to Anthony Brooke later, Gammans' cable took them completely by surprise. On past form he had been expected to lead an angry attack on the government and his cable left some members shaking their heads in disbelief. Even Stanley, who had been 'luke warm' about the Sarawak affair from the outset because of his earlier involvement in the negotiations, expressed disappointment that Gammans had not sent 'something stronger'.⁴ Consequently, when Hall gave the House details of the voting on 22 May there was hardly a whisper of criticism from the Conservatives. Admitting that the close result had caused the government to review its commitment to

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¹ Dawson Diary, 26 May 1946.
² Teeling to Anthony Brooke, 3 June 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/4.
⁴ Teeling to Anthony Brooke, 3 June 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/4.
accept cession, Hall said it had finally been decided that the narrow majority of European members did not provide sufficient grounds for rejecting it. In support of this he quoted the M.P.'s findings and pointed out that they had not insisted that the vote should be limited to non-European members. The disproportionate representation of the Malays by comparison with the Ibans and the Chinese he also suggested as a reason why the native vote should not be regarded as superseding the M.P.'s report on the people's views. Besides, he concluded, it would have been wrong to have ignored the European members 'who voted as individuals with knowledge of Sarawak and not as an official bloc'.

Referring to Gammans' cable, which he had already shown to Hall, Stanley said that while he regretted some of the earlier steps, 'the only thing is to hope that this Act of Cession will prove to be of benefit to the people'. There was not even a call for formal reports from Gammans and Rees-Williams and Sarawak did not become a subject of controversy in the House again until December when Anthony Brooke was banned by the colonial government from making a visit there.

The British press accepted the Council Negri decision without much criticism, although the anti-cession faction attacked the vote in the letter columns. A typical response was from The Times. 'On the whole', observed its special editorial of 16 May before the final vote was known, 'incorporation of Sarawak... seems likely... to promote the best interests of the people, even though the disappearance of a unique polity may cause some sentimental regret.' At the same time, however, it issued a warning that cession should not be pursued 'if the people primarily affected show themselves unwilling to accept it'.

1 Hansard, 22 May 1946.
2 Ibid.
3 However, in addition to the informal report which Gammans wrote in June ('Parliamentary Mission to Sarawak') there was an official report which was not tabled: 'Record of the Visit of Lt.-Col. Rees-Williams, M.P., and Captain Gammans, M.P., to Sarawak', Gammans Papers, Item 9. This was largely based on Barrett's diary.
4 See, e.g., letters to The Times, 18 and 22 May 1946; The Daily Telegraph, 22 May 1946; Manchester Guardian, 24 May 1946.
CHAPTER VIII
The Anti-Cession Movement

BEFORE the Japanese invasion, there were already signs within the urban Malay and Chinese communities that the traditional leadership was failing to meet the expectations of new educated groups. While the Japanese occupation did not provide opportunities for political activity, it did inspire the self-confidence required to adopt a political stance and to organize what amounted to political parties. Although the MNU and the SDA saw themselves initially as defending a threatened moral order, and while there are few signs of outside influence during the first phase of their campaign against cession, internal conflicts soon made it clear that some of their members would not be content with a mere return to the status quo ante. The tensions within the MNU demonstrated that in addition to the predictable anxiety of the traditional Malay elite to preserve the position of privilege which it had enjoyed under Brooke rule, there were some young Malays who saw the restoration of Brooke rule as a means of achieving a form of national independence in which political power would be shared with the Ibans.

The Anti-Cession Parties

The early months of 1946 had seen the emergence of the MNU and the SDA as Sarawak's first political parties. While their organizational background was rooted in the pre-war years, the impetus for their renewed activity had been provided by the political awakening of the Chinese and the announcement of cession. By the time of the Rajah's visit in April, the MNU had revived its pre-war branches throughout the state and its registered membership was estimated by the military administration at 2,417 of whom about half were from the First Division.¹ By June the SDA was claiming 400 members, almost all of whom were from the First Division.

¹ Macaskie to Colonial Office, 23 March 1946, WO 203/5535.
Figures for the other Divisions were: Second Division, 280; Third Division, 395; Fourth Division, 26; Fifth Division, 6.
The 12 February meeting of the MNU which had been called to discuss the Datu Patinggi's letters about the bribes inevitably brought about a polarization between those who opposed cession and those who supported it. At a subsequent extraordinary meeting on 27 February the Datu Amar, who had been President since the MNU's registration in 1939, resigned from what had rapidly become an impossible position, taking with him a number of supporters. Abang Haji Zaini, the son of the Datu Bentara, took over as president and Abang Openg became vice-president. The supporters of cession were challenged to debate the question but no one seems to have responded. Nor were the columns of the *Sarawak Tribune* generally available for correspondence after 5 March.

From the outset the younger members of the MNU took the lead in organizing activities. A political committee was formed, instruction was given in public-speaking and there was also an attempt to widen the intellectual horizons of members. On 3 March a Malay and English Literary Section was formed and its chairman, Johari Bojeng, emphasized that 'he who has not been "presented to the freedom" of literature had not wakened up out of his prenatal sleep'. At the next meeting there were lectures on 'Malay Culture', 'How to Become a Good Speaker' and speeches by fourteen other members on a host of subjects. The MNU was clearly providing the new educated elite with practically its first real outlet for intellectual as well as political expression since the short-lived *Fajar Sarawak* and the Persaudara'an Sahabat Pena of pre-war days. However, there were no signs that this cultural and political awakening was linked in any way with Islamic reformism. Unlike their cousins in Malaya, the Sarawak Malays did not possess a strong tradition of Islamic education and there were no echoes of the kaum muda - kaum tua debate which had absorbed so much energy in the peninsula during the 1920s.

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1 *Sarawak Tribune*, 1 March 1946.
2 *Sarawak Tribune*, 5 March 1946.
3 Ibid.
4 *Sarawak Tribune*, 12 March 1946.
Educated Ibans like Robert Jitam seem to have been influenced in their opposition to cession by a number of considerations. Inculcated with the ideals of British justice, Jitam was inclined to project his own feelings about cession on to the uneducated Ibans of the Second and Third Divisions. "... To see a deed actually done beneath one's nose, so to speak", he told Anthony Brooke's sister, Anne Bryant, in August 1946, 'against that principle of fair play and by one who is set up as the fountain head of all virtues, simply upset one's feelings and the natural sequence is that one sees red.' More importantly, he was fearful of how the Ibans would fare as a race under colonial rule and the anticipated influx of Chinese and other aliens:

The Dayaks especially are quite unprepared to meet such an onslaught and coupled with the fact that most of our kiths and kins in the villages are still living in the "Stone Age" era, I fear very much that in time we will be submerged beneath the avalanche of immigration and development that the name of "Dayak" will be just a mere namesake and no more. Of course, it could not happen in one day but to quote a few examples, one is apt to ask - Where are the Sakais in Malaya and the aborigines of Australia now? Apparently, we are earmarked for the next extinction. That is the sole reason why we protested vehemently....

This fear of Chinese domination was one of the principal bonds between the MNU and the SDA.

The major weakness of the SDA was that its appeal was limited to the First Division and those areas of the Second Division whose people had been trading in rubber and pepper for some years and were comparatively westernized. The committee members of the SDA came from families who had migrated to the First Division three or four generations earlier. Having allied themselves with the Brookes and the Malays against the Ibans of the Skrang and Saribas, they identified with the Raj. Their close contact and common interest with the Malays had broken down the strong historical antipathy which still existed among the Ibans of the Third Division, thus enabling a

1 Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 10 August 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
2 Ibid.
degree of political co-operation. However, it also isolated them from the Ibans of the Second and Third Divisions and prevented them from gathering political support in traditional Iban areas. The Ibans of the Third Division also seem to have been quick to accept the transfer of political authority from the Brookes to the British Rajah. There were some good historical reasons why they should not have identified so closely with the Raj as their cousins of the First Division.

Nor was there unanimity on cession among the Kuching Ibans. As we have already noted, Edwin Howell the SDA adviser supported cession and exercised considerable influence over the other members. An educated Anglo-Iban (some would have called him and Edward Brandah 'British Ibans'), he identified to some extent with the Eurasian community's desire for career advancement and social status which cession promised. It was only after Bertram Brooke's visit that Philip Jitam and other members of the SDA began to oppose cession. Howell's failure to be selected as Eurasian representative in the Council Negri may also have cooled his earlier support for cession.

No doubt it was these contradictions which prevented close co-operation between the SDA and the MNU for some months after the former came into existence. It was not until early June that negotiations took place, resulting in an agreement on future co-operation. Nor would these have been successful had it not been for the close personal friendship between Robert Jitam and Mohd. Nor and the efforts of Suhaily bin Matlayeir who knew most of the Ibans

1 Chapter VII, p. 328.

2 The Eurasian appointed by the Rajah was Tommy Owen, the son of a former Resident, H.L. Owen, who had been retired in 1929. Owen voted for cession in May 1946.

3 Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anthony Brooke, 4 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.

4 For a biographical note on Robert Jitam, see Chapter V, p. Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor was educated at St Joseph's School, Kuching, and was the first Sarawak Malay to pass the Senior Cambridge examination. His father was a businessman and his grandfather, Ghafor, had taken a prominent part in putting down the Chinese rebellion in 1857. He won a scholarship to Serdang Agricultural College in Malaya but when this was

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in Kuching and was able to speak their language. The earlier 'stubbornness' of the SDA members which Suhaily complained about stemmed partly from the suspicion that the Malays were simply using them for their own ends, a feeling which was no doubt strengthened by the patronizing attitude of the MNU's conservatives. Before final agreement could be reached the MNU had to concede that in any future system of government, political representation would reflect the numerical ratio of Ibans to Malays. This was a significant concession on the part of the MNU conservatives and it is not surprising that they thought better of it later.

From July until October the MNU was in the throes of an internal conflict and the SDA was wavering on whether to continue opposing cession. Within the MNU, tension had quickly developed between the representatives of the traditional Malay elite and the younger activists. The conservatives were satisfied with sending cables and petitions and were not really interested in a broadly based political movement with close Iban co-operation. The younger activists, who described themselves as the 'inner circle' of the MNU,

4 [contd. from previous page]
cancelled found it difficult to obtain a job and ran a restaurant at the MNU headquarters. The youngest of the 
Fajar Sarawak group, he contributed articles to the newspapers and visited the kampongs encouraging the Malays to improve their economic situation. One of the leading activists of the MNU, he later helped form the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak in June 1947. Having spent all his money on the anti-cession campaign, he went to Brunei in 1948 to work for Shell and remained there for some years. Consequently he did not join any political party in the early 1960s. His son, Bujang Mohd. Nor, became Sarawak's Financial Secretary in 1971.

1 Interview with Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor, May 1975.
2 Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anthony Brooke, op. cit.
3 Interview with Mohd. Ma'amon bin Nor, May 1975.
4 Ibid.
included Mohd. Nor, Sharkawi bin Haji Osman, Mohd. Suhaily bin Matleyir, Edham bin Bojeng and other young educated Malays not of abang origin who were disinclined to defer automatically to those who had traditionally been their social betters. They rebelled against the undemocratic way in which the MNU was run and found they had more in common politically with such people as Robert Jitam of the SDA.

The conflict was significant because it mirrored the wide difference in interests and attitudes which existed within the MNU. All wished to see a restoration of the Raj, but not necessarily for the same reasons. The motivation of the traditional elite was clear enough. The restoration of Brooke rule meant for them a return to the status quo ante in which they had occupied the top position of power and prestige within Malay society and, by extension, within Sarawak's confederation of ethnic groups. On the other hand, if the Datu Patinggi had agreed to cession (as we have seen he did at one point) they would almost certainly have gone with him in order to enjoy the rewards which the colonial government would have given them. There must have been many an envious eye cast on Abang Haji Mustapha who had jumped at the right time.

People like Abang Haji Zaini and Abang Bol Hassan seem to have taken the view (which was well established in Sarawak history) that the perabangan provided leadership which was to be accepted without question by the Malays and Ibans. They were also conservative in their notions of what constituted political effectiveness. Always a little embarrassed about such things as public speeches, demonstrations and posters, they adopted a fundamentally constitutionalist approach, invoking the political wills of the first two Rajahs and Vyner Brooke's accession oath, the Atlantic Charter and the San Francisco Conference on the rights of small nations.

The motivation of the younger Malays who constituted the most active force within the MNU was more complex. While some wanted

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1 Sharkawi was one of the few Sarawak Malays educated abroad. He had been taught in Singapore by the Malay nationalist, Dr Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, who later formed the Pan Malayan Islamic Party.
the restoration of Brooke rule per se, others wanted self-government and independence as suggested in the 1941 Constitution. The return of the Brookes under the limitations of the constitution they saw as providing an interim period which would allow for the development of a multi-racial political organization. They were prepared to cooperate with members of the traditional elite and would probably have supported the idea of the Datu Patinggi or one of his grandsons becoming Rajah in place of the Brookes. But in the meantime the restoration of Brooke rule was their only means of retaining political independence.

The first signs of a rift within the ranks of the MNU emerged in July when a handful of the younger activists proposed the formation of a 'United Sarawak National Organization', which was conceived as an indigenous anti-cession front. While its proposers tactfully emphasized its usefulness in fund-raising and creating a greater sense of anti-cession solidarity, its real aims were those of a political party committed not just to the restoration of the Brookes but to educational and social change. However, the more conservative members of the MNU, notably Haji Abdul Rahman and Abang Haji Zaini, resented this initiative from their social inferiors. Nor were they prepared to co-operate with the SDA to this extent and the scheme was subsequently dropped although by no means forgotten.

It is a difficult task to discover the ideological influences on the young activists of the MNU. During the first phase of the MNU campaign, they seem to have accepted the strictly constitutionalist frame of reference supplied by Haji Abdul Rahman. From Singapore's Malay-language Utusan Melayu there was information about what was happening in Malaya and the British government's cave-in over the Malayan Union was to have an important effect in Sarawak. There were few publicized references to developments in Indonesia by MNU members.

1 The 1941 Constitution accommodated the possibility of a Malay Rajah and there was at least a rumour that MacBryan had considered setting up the Datu Patinggi.

2 Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 4 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
until the appearance of Sarawak's first post-war newspaper, *Utusan Sarawak*, in 1949 but many Sarawak Malays must have been aware of what was happening there. Photographs of Sukarno and other Indonesian nationalist leaders were pinned side by side with those of the Rajah and Ranee in some of Kuching's Malay houses in 1946 and many First Division families had links with Sambas and other places further afield. There were even some nationalists among the Javanese brought in as labourers by the Japanese and one, Mujono, was repatriated to Pontianak by the Australian military authorities on suspicion of being an 'agitator'. However, the handful of Javanese who remained in Kuching and Miri did not play any significant part in the anti-cession movement and there is only one report of Indonesian nationalist agitation during the period 1946-47. By early 1947 the colonial government was reporting that the increasing Indonesian influence was coming from Singapore and not Pontianak.

Members of the MNU began to make visits to Singapore in February 1947 but there is no clear evidence that the anti-cessionists were associated with the Singapore-based Indonesian Association or Gerakan Angkatan Muda (GERAM). The latter was interested in the anti-cession movement and sent representatives including Abdullah Zawawi Hamzah and Abdul Samad bin Ismail (editor of *Utusan Melayu*) to contact its leaders in Singapore. When the United Sarawak National Association

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1 *Utusan Sarawak* was edited and largely owned by Abang (now Datu) Ekhwan Zaini, the son of Abang Haji Zaini.
2 Morris, MS memoir.
3 Morris, op. cit. Mujono was active in the Sambas area during Indonesian Confrontation.
4 Ibid.
5 'Summary of Comments received from Governor of Sarawak on the aide memoire in relation to Sarawak Affairs prepared by direction of His Highness Rajah Brooke', Hussey Papers.
7 Malayan Security Service: Fortnightly Intelligence Journals together with Occasional Supplements (1946-1948), report for 15 August 1947. I am indebted to Dr Anthony Stockwell for this reference.
(USNA) was formed by expatriate Sarawak Malays in April 1947, Tahu Kalu, President of the Singapore branch of the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP), advised it to affiliate with the MNP. However, this advice was rejected (possibly due to Anthony Brooke's influence) and USNA remained isolated.¹ Nor was there any link with the Singapore branch of Ahmad Boestamam's Angkatan Pemuda Insaf which grew out of the MNP.² Indeed, the anti-cession movement remained pretty much separate from the mainstream of Malay nationalism until 1948. The main point of contact was Utusan Melayu which was widely read by the Malays of Kuching, Sibu and Miri. Utusan Melayu naturally gave wide coverage to Malay opposition to the Malayan Union and was warmly sympathetic to Anthony Brooke and the anti-cession cause. One of its reporters, Mahfuz Hamid, spent the early part of 1947 in Sarawak³ where he wrote a number of articles. Perhaps the first clear sign of an Indonesian or Malayan influence was the use of the slogan Merdeka Brooke (Brooke independence) by mid-1947⁴ and the naming of the MNU's splinter group, the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak⁵ (Sarawak Youth Front), which had clear Indonesian overtones. It is significant that up to this point the Kuching Malays preferred to use English names for their organizations (Malay National Union, United Sarawak National Organization) rather than the Malay versions.

There was a curiously 'anti-political' strain running through the thinking of the young MNU activists. Mohd. Nor, for example, told Anthony Brooke shortly after cession was formalized in July that 'politics' was something alien to Sarawak and had been introduced by MacBryan and the British government:

¹ Ibid.
² Interview with Ahmad Boestamam, July 1974.
³ Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anne Bryant, 17 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1. Unfortunately, the only Utusan Melayu files for 1945 and 1946 were destroyed by the Kuala Lumpur floods of 1971 and those for 1947 were being restored at the time of this study.
⁴ Jean Halsey to Margaret Noble, 28 April 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 12/8.
⁵ See below, p. 416.
The Sarawak people do not want to be politicians as politics only make people cheat, and this cheating caused the world war. Sarawak is a peaceful and independent State with a surplus of food; no paupers, no starvation, no unemployment and no civil war. The people lived in peace and happiness, and no politicians should be allowed to come into the country; but now MacBryan and George Hall wish to introduce politics into Sarawak so in the future there will be no happiness and no prosperity; there will be civil war, famine, strikes, demonstrations etc. 1

Given this pejorative connotation of 'politics', Mohd. Nor did not at this point recognize his own efforts in helping to restore the Raj as bearing any relation to political activity. However, the 'inner circle's' struggle with the MNU leadership was to provide an object lesson in politics.

Official Reactions

The colonial government's reaction to the activities of the anti-cession parties was to encourage the formation of a pro-cession Young Malay Association (YMA) headed by the Datu Pahlawan. Registered on 4 June, its official aim was that of 'stimulating social relations among the young Malays of the country, promoting sports and recreations, and encouraging education'. 2 But the YMA was really designed to help Malays who had supported cession and were consequently coming under considerable social pressure, including the boycott of weddings, funerals and other social occasions. One of the YMA's principal functions was to provide moral support for the families of 'pro-cessionists' who were suffering from this social ostracism. The parent body in Kuching consisted, predictably enough, of Malay policemen, firemen and government clerks who were dependent to some extent on Abang Haji Mustapha's patronage. Indeed, it was almost compulsory for Malay policemen to join. 3 YMAs were also formed in Sibu (where Abang Abdulrahim was President) and other towns to perform similar tasks in response to the MNU's activities. In July the Rajah

1 Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 4 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
2 Sarawak Tribune, 11 June 1946.
3 Interview with Senawi bin Suleiman, July 1974.
himself donated $2,000 towards the YMA's 'welfare'.

Some members of the colonial administration did their best to intimidate the membership of the MNU and the SDA, most of whom were government servants. Annoyed by the constant interchange of cables between the Brookes and the two anti-cession parties, Dawson thought that banning them would do more harm than good and that the situation could be kept under control:

... when you get rabid telegrams going on about "independence", "annexation", "U.N.O.", "Atlantic Charter", "Brooke for Sarawak and St. George for England" etc. it makes you wonder how much potential trouble is on hand. Not much in fact, I think. It is still the vocals; so long as they don't foment and deliberately promote trouble among the others - the neutral or placid majority. Then there is real trouble potential.

However, not all of Dawson's subordinates were so patient. When yet another cable from Anthony Brooke arrived on 22 June, D.C. White, Government Under-Secretary and Registrar of Societies, called in Philip Jitam and emphasized that it was contrary to the required conduct of an association not to have kept full minutes of the meeting which had been held to discuss their response to Anthony Brooke's cable of 5 June. 'To draft your reply as representing the whole you have to call a general meeting', White told Jitam, 'but since cession would be through in a matter of days, I do not think... that you need exert yourselves - it is all over bar the shouting.'

Most SDA members were living at some distance from Kuching and White must have known very well that it was impossible to have a general meeting each time to decide such matters. Nevertheless, the harassment was not ineffective and the SDA's committee hesitated for some days before replying to the 22 June cable. Practically all the committee members were government servants and there was great concern that continued activity in the face of strong government disapproval might bring about not only their dismissal but confiscation of the

1 Sarawak Tribune, 30 September 1946.
2 Dawson Diary, 8 June 1946.
3 Robert Jitam to Anthony Brooke, 10 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/3.
government's contribution to their superannuation. No doubt it was as a result of such anxiety that Dr Charles Mason effectively resigned from the presidency of the SDA in July while Philip Jitam hesitated for some time before agreeing (as a member of the Council Negri) to take the oath of allegiance to the King and resigning his position as joint secretary.1 As an employee of the Sarawak Rubber Fund which was not under direct government control, Robert Jitam felt comparatively free from pressure and it was largely due to his activity that the SDA was kept alive after July and contact maintained with the MNU.

Dawson's tact in dealing with the Malays assisted the new colonial administration in establishing itself with the minimum of difficulty. However, there was one major event before the formalization of cession on 1 July which hardened the division between those Malays who had decided to support cession and those who opposed it. As promised by the Rajah, the Datu Pahlawan was rewarded for his assistance with the Council Negri vote by being promoted to Datu Bandar in June2 while Ong Tiang Swee was released from a $100,000 mortgage repayment to the government.3 The reaction of the Datu Patinggi and his kinsmen was predictable enough. They regarded Abang Haji Mustapha not only as MacBryan's creature and a traitor both to the Brookes and the Malays, but a usurper to the highest honour. Abang Haji Mustapha could claim descent from Datu Patinggi Ali but his line was not as direct. The senior datuship had been given to a member of Abang Haji Abdillah's family since James Brooke's time and, as we have seen, he had even agreed to support cession if his eldest grandson, Abang Ibrahim, succeeded him and the title of Datu Patinggi was made hereditary.

As far as the non-Malays were concerned, the appointment was a jockeying for position within the Malay elite. More importantly, however, it was also seen to constitute the highest official

1 Philip Jitam to Clerk of Council Negri, 15 July 1946, Jitam Papers; Philip Jitam to Joint Secretary of Sarawak Dayak Association, 15 July 1946, ibid.
2 SGG, 29 June 1946.
3 Dawson to Mayle, 19 October 1946, CO 531/32 [53185].
approbation of a man regarded as one of the most vocal supporters of the Japanese and a prime target for prosecution as a collaborator. Robert Jitam, who had refused to work under the Japanese administration, was particularly bitter about this 'paradox'. In October 1946 he wrote to Anne Bryant:

Take for instance... Datu Pahlawan and Abang Openg, both of whom were working for the Japs in high posts. The way they preened themselves off owing to their high positions at that time has to be seen to be believed. I was thinking that in due course they would meet "justice", but instead of which they are now elevated. So would you, if you are in my shoes, have any faith in those people to guide and administer to their own kind? 1

People like himself who had expected recognition from the government for their self-denial found instead that they were 'awarded the heavy boot...'. 2 Ironically enough, the anti-cessionists were later to be regarded by Sarawak's first Governor as a collection of collaborators and malcontents. 3

Although Dawson's initial impressions of the senior members of the Sarawak Service had not been particularly favourable, he grew to appreciate why Brooke rule had retained its unique popularity. Furthermore, he could see that the transition to colonial rule should be as inconspicuous as possible in order to avoid problems. Consequently, when it became clear that Malcolm MacDonald wished to make a grand occasion of the 1 July ceremony he became extremely irritated. 'God Save the King', he complained to his diary, 'I can't! This place will be a riot if they push the thing too far. Let it riot!' 4 Nor was it a very impressive beginning for the much-vaunted British colonial government. The flags, printing blocks and other items promised by Singapore had not arrived and the Letters Patent and Royal Instructions were not received until 29 June.

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1 Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 14 October 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
2 Ibid.
3 See below, p.407.
4 Dawson Diary, 27 June 1946.
The official ceremony confirming the British Crown's acceptance of cession and annexing Sarawak as a Crown possession took place in a subdued and somewhat resentful atmosphere. There were no Iban representatives present and the Datu Patinggi excused himself, even declining to receive Malcolm MacDonald at his house.1 Ironically enough, very few Union Jacks were available for the day2 and most of the decorations were in fact Sarawak flags, the Chinese being tactful enough not to display the Chinese national flag. The Special Commissioner, Malcolm MacDonald, read cables from the Rajah and the King expressing their best wishes for Sarawak's future and then confirmed Dawson's appointment as Chief Secretary and Acting Governor, the Datu Bandar reading Malay translations. In the late afternoon MacDonald insisted on making a tour of the kampongs in spite of the boycott, acknowledging non-existent salutes and waving cheerily to unresponsive Malays. 'Rather undignified I thought', commented Dawson who accompanied him, 'but I suppose he knows his stuff?'.3 It seemed to him that empty roads were almost worse than anti-cession demonstrations.

In the evening there was a garden party at the Astana where most of the guests were government officials and Chinese and the next day MacDonald addressed schoolchildren before returning to Singapore. He had hoped to make a tour of Iban areas but this was postponed until August. Nevertheless, it was already clear that the Special Commissioner appreciated the importance of personal rule to the Ibans and the Malays. He was only too happy to step into the White Rajah's shoes on what became increasingly frequent visits to the Third Division and adopt what he conceived to be the appropriate style. Indeed, Temenggong Koh's longhouse on the Baleh became his weekender.4 More importantly, he saw the usefulness of cultivating 'loyal' Ibans as a useful ally against anti-cession Malays.

1 Anon. to Bertram Brooke, 1 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
2 Dawson Diary, 27 June 1946.
3 Dawson Diary, 2 July 1946.
4 For the Special Commissioner's own sentimental memoir of his time in Sarawak, see Borneo People, London 1956.
A few days after the ceremony, the Datu Patinggi received a letter from Dawson telling him that unless he made an oath of loyalty to the new government he would forfeit his membership of the Council Negri and the Supreme Council. However, the old man refused to bow to such pressure. 'This new affirmation', he told Anthony Brooke on 8 July when the Supreme Council sat without him, 'is only a tool to confuse members of the Council and the world so that it can be said that there has been recognition of Sarawak as a colony.' In making this stand, the Patinggi probably stemmed what might otherwise have been a gradual flow of support from the anticession camp towards accepting cession as a fait accompli.

While Dawson was careful to avoid any open breach with the Datu Patinggi, he was not so tolerant of the angry speeches made by Abang Haji Zaini in the aftermath of 1 July. When he learnt that the MNU President had talked about the 'blood-sucking British' and threatened to boycott the Union Jack at school sports meetings, Dawson thought that he would not be able to stand much more of this. 'There are limits to the everlasting kindness of the British', he wrote in his diary. Nevertheless, he would not allow the Datu Bandar's supporters in the police to 'break up' the MNU. He also became less concerned about Abang Haji Zaini's activities when told that the latter was only interested in self-advancement and 'would fold up and come to heel if offered a Datuship (D. Bentara) by Govt.' Dawson was attracted by this idea but does not appear to have pursued it.

When it was announced in mid-July that the first Governor of Sarawak was to be Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, Resident Commissioner of Basutoland, Dawson found it difficult to contain his bitterness at being passed over for a job for which he was eminently suited.

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1 Datu Patinggi to Anthony Brooke, 8 July 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 10/1.
2 Dawson Diary, 28 July 1946.
3 Dawson Diary, - August 1946.
4 Dawson Diary, - August 1946.
5 The Times, 18 July 1946. Charles Noble Arden-Clarke (1898-1962) served in the Machine Gun Corps during the 1914-18 war and joined [contd. over]
This is pretty hard [Dawson wrote in his diary]. Do I want to stay on as no. 2 to an 'African'. Not me. And yet I hate pushing this place over having had such a hand in bringing it in... It is bad policy. What this country wants is to be left alone. They begin to know me. They have to have M. MacD (twice). Now another new face. I suspect it is done so suddenly in order to prevent me from becoming too much a persona grata and so more difficult for the next man. But what chicanery after all I have done. Feathers in the hat from Nigeria! (Not even knowing Malay or the local dancing and other 'adat' which has brought this place to hand.) They use all that, my personality, my natural influence with Malays etc. to get the place, and then hand it over to an African....

The Rajah also clearly expected that Dawson would be made Governor and Malcolm MacDonald had even recommended him for the post. 'What is needed', the Special Commissioner told the Colonial Office a few days after the 1 July ceremony, 'is an uninterrupted period in which the govt. can play itself in. Dawson seems to me a wholly admirable man with the right sympathy and wisdom for his difficult task.'

Dawson's policy was to make the transition from Brooke rule to colonial rule as gentle as possible but this was not in accord with Colonial Office thinking. Arden-Clarke, who was considered by many people as over-qualified for the job, seems to have been chosen

5 [contd. from previous page]

the Colonial Administrative Service in 1920. From then until 1933 he was an Administrative Officer in Northern Nigeria and was promoted to Acting Principal Assistant Secretary in the Nigerian Secretariat in 1934. He was made Assistant Resident Commissioner and Government Secretary, Bechuanaland Protectorate, in 1936 and Resident Commissioner in 1937 before going to Basutoland in 1942. After leaving Sarawak in 1949, he served as Governor of the Gold Coast (Ghana) until 1957 and made a name for himself as an astute and tactful administrator. Assessing Kwame Nkrumah as possessing great potential as a post-colonial leader, Arden-Clarke defied the Colonial Office and gave Nkrumah a fairly free hand. However, Sarawak was 'different' and his lack of sensitivity to the situation created problems during his time there.

1 Dawson Diary, 17 July 1946.
2 Dawson Diary, 25 July 1946.
3 MacDonald to Colonial Office, 4 July 1946, cited by Dawson in his Diary, 19 July 1946.
with the intention of making a clean break with the Brooke past. Possessing no knowledge of the area, he was no doubt considered less prone to the 'sentimentality' which the Colonial Office had always been at pains to avoid within the Colonial Administrative Service. He was probably also chosen as a disciplinarian capable of handling the problems of a belated transition to colonial status. It would be surprising if the Colonial Office had not been somewhat apprehensive about the situation in Sarawak, particularly in view of the native vote in the Council Negri and the publicity being created by the MNU and SDA and the anti-cession faction in England.

The Anti-Cession Campaign

During the six months following the Council Negri meeting a somewhat desultory campaign was conducted by the MNU and SDA in concert with the anti-cession faction in England. Three weeks after the Council Negri vote William Charles Crocker, a celebrated barrister who had been introduced to Bertram by his son-in-law, Arthur Bryant, told the latter that in his view Bertram and Anthony should do two things: give guidance and support to the two anti-cession groups in their demand for a restoration of independence, and make the Labour government realize that 'the permanent Civil Servants had used this somewhat inexperienced Government as a tool in a dishonourable piece of imperial aggrandizement'. It seemed to him 'hopeless' to place any reliance on the Conservatives who had remained unmoved by this and other breaches of the Atlantic Charter.

In the meantime, it was necessary to go through the motions of petitioning the Crown in the vain hope that the Order-in-Council would not be issued. However, Bertram's letter to the King was passed on to Hall who reminded him, predictably enough, that he had agreed to abide by the decision of the two councils. Once the Order-in-Council had been issued in late June, Bertram began to wonder if there was any point in continuing the fight for what was now the restoration of Brooke rule rather than its continuation. He was

1 Crocker to Bryant, 12 June 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/3.
concerned about the moral propriety of encouraging people in Sarawak to resist cession when he was not at all sure that there was any possibility of securing its repeal. Furthermore, he had mixed feelings from the outset about the political activity which seemed to be developing in Sarawak. Indeed, he told H.V. Hodson, editor of the *Sunday Times*, that he was almost embarrassed by the support he was receiving from the MNU and some of the pre-war officers:

This "Union" is something quite new. I am afraid that the fact that it has come into being shows that there is a good deal of unrest out there, and that what used to be an easy-going and politically homogeneous populace is now divided into "camps". I fear also that such is the case with Sarawak officers. I hear of "So-and-so" alluded to as "for the Rajah" or "for Peter", as the case may be. 1

The old Sarawak which he had known had not possessed such divisions and his instinct was to heal them at all costs. But a great deal had happened since 1936 when he last visited the state, not the least being the Japanese occupation. There was no returning to the harmonious and happy world of the pre-war Raj which he remembered.

All that Bertram Brooke was now prepared to do was to test the Rajah's action in the courts and with this intention he had discussions with both Crocker and Theodore Page, a barrister who had some knowledge of Islamic law as well as a strong interest in constitutional issues. However, the questions involved were extremely complicated, as was the actual procedure, and it was not until 1950 that the case was decided by the Privy Council effectively in the Rajah's favour. 2

1 Bertram Brooke to Hodson, 26 March 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2. Bertram became even more ill at ease when he saw the antcession *Utusan Sarawak* three years later.

2 The first step was in July 1948 when a plaint was filed on Bertram's behalf in the Resident's Court at Brunei with the intention of recalling the line of succession as set out by James Brooke in his political will and Vyner's extraction of $2,000,000 from state funds in 1941. It was hoped eventually to petition the Crown to repeal the Order-in-Council of 26 June 1946 and to receive an account of the Rajah's transfer of funds. When the Resident's court refused to summons the Rajah and the descendants [contd. over]
It was Anthony and his sister, Anne Bryant, who kept in touch with the MNU and SDA and helped to boost their sagging morale. On 5 June 1946, for example, Anthony cabled their Presidents seeking responses to a comment by Gammans in the *Evening Standard* that 'the people of Sarawak do not care whether or not the Raj is brought to an end'.¹ This brought vehement denials from the Datu Patinggi and the Presidents of the MNU and SDA and a call to the Tuan Muda to assume the prerogatives of the Raj.² The Patinggi also sent a separate message to Anthony expressing his feelings in more poetic terms:

Harimau mati meninggal belang gajah mati meninggal tulong manusia mati meninggalkan nama.

[When a tiger dies, his striped skin remains; when an elephant dies, his bones remain; a dead man leaves his reputation behind.]

The exchanges of cables became more frequent as 1 July approached, culminating in another cable that day from the Datu Patinggi and Abang Haji Zaini to Prime Minister Attlee protesting that cession did not have the lawful assent of the representatives of the indigenous people and that five of the native members who had

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² [contd. from previous page]

of James Brooke's trustees on the grounds that this was beyond its jurisdiction and the decision was upheld by the Judge of Appeal in the State of Brunei, it was then possible to apply for special leave to appeal to the Privy Council. This was granted after long argument but on 30 March 1950 the judgment delivered by Lord Normand finally upheld the Brunei court's decision. Ironically enough, the substantive question of the legality of cession was not discussed, most of the argument turning on the interpretation of the amended *Courts Enactment 1908* of the State of Brunei and the *Civil Procedure Code* of the Federated Malay States. However, the judgment did determine that the original grant made to James Brooke by the Sultan of Brunei was a unilateral deed and that the Sultan did not retain any measure of authority over Sarawak. Besides, it added, '... the principles of international law or comity would exclude from the jurisdiction of the Courts of Brunei any question relating to the sovereignty or the land of Sarawak'.


¹ Anthony Brooke to MNU and SDA Presidents, 5 June 1946, Hussey Papers, File 66735; *Evening Standard*, 5 June 1946.


³ Datu Patinggi to Anthony Brooke, 19 June 1946, Hussey Papers.
voted for cession were 'under monetary influence'. Since the Rajah had violated his accession oath and had relinquished the Raj, they said, he had committed a 'breach of faith [towards] the people of Sarawak' and should be replaced by his brother. They called on Attlee to uphold justice and the political will of the second Rajah.\(^1\) On the following day the Patinggi, referring to himself as 'the fourteenth hereditary chieftain and representative of the people of Sarawak [since] before Brooke rule', invited Bertram and Anthony to return to Sarawak to initiate fresh discussions on the question of cession. 'I completely trust his Majesty the King', he concluded, 'and the British Government, which is supremely just, to take my request into consideration in order to satisfy the people's wish.'\(^2\)

Irritated by this and by Bertram's accusation that he had used his European officers to outvote the indigenous opponents of cession, the Rajah made an uncharacteristically bitter attack on the Patinggi's 'impertinence' in claiming to be the fourteenth hereditary chieftain of Sarawak. Emphasizing that there had been no hereditary chieftains and no state of Sarawak before James Brooke, he concluded: 'The Patinggi's influence in the Colony is utterly unimportant...'.\(^3\)

In its first post-war issue on 1 September 1946 the *Sarawak Gazette* published the minutes of the Council Negri meeting as a service to future historians rather than as a reminder to the people of Sarawak of what had happened. 'This controversy is now thoroughly dead', its editor, K.H. Digby, hopefully proclaimed, 'and possibly would never have flared in such splendour if the flames had not been fanned, outside Sarawak, by ignorant adherents of the contending parties. Ignorance can seldom have flaunted itself with so much brazen courage and so little shame'. While it was true that since July the cables and letters from Anthony Brooke and others had helped

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1 Datu Patinggi and MNU President to Attlee, 1 July 1946, Hussey Papers, File 66735.
2 Datu Patinggi to Bertram Brooke, 2 July 1946, ibid.
3 *The Times*, 13 July 1946; for Anthony Brooke's reply, see *The Times*, 16 July 1946.
to keep alive the spirits of the two anti-cession parties, the British and colonial governments themselves provided much of the stimulus which revived enthusiasm towards the end of the year and hardened the lines of political confrontation for the next three years.

When it was revealed in London in the first week of October that the Malayan Union constitution was to be radically altered and perhaps even abolished, the anti-cession faction took new heart. Together with its report of this development *The Observer* of 6 October quoted Anthony Brooke as saying that he intended seeking a judicial decree declaring the cession of Sarawak illegal. Although the exact legal procedure was not yet clear, he anticipated that it would eventually lead to a judgment by the Privy Council. When this news was published a few days later in the *Sarawak Tribune* it provided a badly-needed stimulus to the MNU and the SDA whose morale had been teetering since July. The British government's cave-in on the Malayan Union had provided the first concrete indication that cession might be reversed.

The first opportunity to demonstrate this new spirit was the installation of the Governor on 28 October. There was some encouragement from outside. The Rev. Howes, for example, wrote to Philip Jitam from England saying that if the people of Sarawak did not protest, 'then the people of this country will certainly believe that everybody in Sarawak wants Cession'. If sufficient people kept on speaking the truth, he added hopefully, 'then people in this country will support them, and make the Government give up the Cession...'. However, the anti-cession parties were well aware of the importance of marking the occasion with a protest and their arrangements soon came to Dawson's ears.

... the Datu Patinggi [he told Mayle] is again making efforts to organize a boycott of the Malays when the new Governor arrives. He had the effrontery to call a meeting of the village elders (who are paid by the Government) for the purpose. I shall put in some counter propaganda but, of course, if I take too strong a line, I shall be immediately accused in the English papers of

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1 Howes to Philip Jitam, 22 October 1946, Jitam Papers.
attempting to victimize people for having the courage to express their opinions. 1

There were even suggestions in the British press that the installation would be the scene of violent clashes. 2

On his arrival in Kuching, Arden-Clarke was not presented with an address by the Iban community and the Malay address was presented by the Datu Bandar 'on behalf of the Malay community' instead of the Datu Patinggi. The latter and Abang Haji Zaini signed a letter to the Governor protesting against cession 3 and the MNU the next day sent another letter challenging Abang Haji Mustapha's claim to speak for the Malays. This in turn developed into a controversy between the MNU and the YMA in the columns of the Sarawak Tribune. 4

If Arden-Clarke was irritated to find anti-cession posters marking his arrival in Kuching, he cannot have been much happier about his reception a week later in Sibu where the Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu (Malay Youth Movement) arranged a similar show. He had been led to believe that while there was some anti-cession feeling, it was limited to one or two Malay kampongs in Kuching and that up-country areas were solidly in favour of the new government. Orders were subsequently given for anti-cession posters in Sibu to be torn down.

From the outset, the PPM was a more radical organization than the MNU. One of the reasons, no doubt, was that Sibu Malay society lacked the traditional elite which exercised such a conservative influence through the leadership of the MNU. Although Haji Abdul Rahman made a number of efforts to strengthen the PPM's links with the MNU, many of its members rejected his constitutionalist approach. All its early activities showed that the PPM was much more inclined to take direct action in the name of the anti-cession cause. Some of

1 Dawson to Mayle, 19 October 1946, CO 53/32 [53185].
2 Daily Mail, 29 October 1946.
3 Datu Patinggi and Abang Haji Zaini to Arden-Clarke, 29 October 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
4 Sarawak Tribune, 1, 6, 7, 8 November, 1946.
5 SG, 1 January 1947.
its members also seem to have been more open to outside influence. Awang Rambli, its effective leader, was well-read and in August 1947 during her visit to Sarawak Kathleen Brooke was alarmed to discover that one of her PPM guides, Abang Han, was carrying a copy of one of Karl Marx's works with him around the country. However, it was only after Anthony Brooke advised them to give up the struggle in 1951 that some PPM members decided to throw in their lot with Indonesia. 'Indonesian-style feelings' had existed before 1949 and there was some contact with the prominent Malay nationalist, Dr Burhanuddin, but the movement was fundamentally pro-Anthony Brooke and the restoration of the Brooke Raj.

By the time Arden-Clarke reached Miri, London newspaper accounts of the Kuching boycott had been published in the Sarawak Tribune, together with reports of Anthony's reiterated determination to fight annexation 'as long as there is breath in our bodies'. More importantly, it was revealed that he proposed to visit Sarawak and had asked the Colonial Office to assist with arrangements for air travel.

1 Awang Rambli bin Mohd. Deli was born at Muara (Brunei) in c.1912 and was adopted at an early age by the mandor (labour supervisor) of Brooketon colliery. Both his natural parents were Brunei Malays, hence the title awang. Rambli lived for some years in Kuching as a child and attended English school to Standard 3. He joined the Customs Department in July 1929 and was one of the resigners in early 1946. He had earlier joined the YMA in Sibu but after resigning became an active member of the PPM and was the leading spirit of the Rukun Tigabelas (Thirteen Precepts) which organized the assassination of Arden-Clarke's successor, Duncan Stewart, in December 1949. Found guilty of conspiracy to murder, he was hanged at Kuching prison on 23 March 1950 at the age of 38.

2 Interview with Mrs K.M. Brooke, 21 October 1974. Abang Han bin Abang Ahmad was born in Sibu in c.1925 and worked for some years as an oil-tester in the Shell Oil Laboratories at Seria (Brunei). The librarian for the PPM, he also joined the Rukun Tigabelas and was found guilty on a charge of conspiracy to murder Duncan Stewart. His sentence was commuted to 15 years imprisonment after a recommendation of mercy.

3 Interview with Ainnie bin Dobhie conducted by Dr A.J.S. Reid, 1969.

4 Sarawak Tribune, 8 November 1946.
to Singapore since all passages were still under military control.¹ His stated reasons for making the visit were the invitations which had been issued to him by the anti-cession leaders and the need to collect information in connection with the libel action which MacBryan was bringing against him. He evidently saw the action as a means of keeping the Sarawak issue bubbling in Britain. The collection of documents relating to cession which he and Crocker had been working on for some months had also just been privately published as The Facts About Sarawak and was being distributed overseas as well as to M.P.s and newspaper editors in Britain.²

The news of Anthony Brooke's imminent return spread quickly through the state and many of the anti-cession banners told Arden-Clarke: 'We want Anthony Brooke to be Rajah of Sarawak'. At Miri there was a complete boycott by the Malays and when he summoned the local headmen the next day to tell them that cession was settled, he was told by Native Officer Datu Tuanku Mohammed (who had voted against cession in the Council Negri) that the Malays, Ibans and Kedayans all objected to cession and would not be silenced. A meeting was subsequently held on 14 November to arrange for delegates to be sent to Kuching for Anthony Brooke's arrival and a reception for him when he came to Miri. Petitions to the Governor were also sent through the MNU and the PPM by Malay and Kayan headmen of Belaga, the Kapit branch of the PPM, Penghulu Janting, who claimed to represent 2,421 Malays and Ibans of Song, and Penghulu Hang Nyipa who claimed to represent 2,000 Ibans of Kapit.³

¹ Personal communication from Anthony Brooke, 13 December 1976.
² The Facts About Sarawak was first published in England in a limited quantity and was later reprinted in Bombay for distribution in Malaya and Sarawak. Interestingly enough, it was not so very different in style and purpose from the pamphlet A Statement Regarding Sarawak which was privately published by Brooke Brooke in 1862? after his dispute with his uncle.
³ All these messages are contained in 'Translation from letters and telegrams received by Anthony Brooke from Sarawak', Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.
The Colonial Office had no intention of giving way on Sarawak as they had on Malaya. Besides, the anti-cession faction in Britain could not match the powerful lobbying machine assembled by the Malayan veterans with the assistance of wealthy commercial interests. Nor did it seek to make common cause with the agitation against the Malayan Union although the 'Malays' were sympathetic. Writing to Sir Frank Swettenham in February 1946 about the Sultan of Johore's backsliding, Sir George Maxwell remarked that the Rajah looked like 'another renegade'. Sir Andrew Caldecott also had a poor opinion of the Rajah. 'I understand him to have been a great manufacturer [of cheese] during his latter residence in the Astana', he told Bertram, 'so that he may have become assimilated to his own creations.' Unlike the Sultan of Johore, however, the Rajah could not be chivvied into reasserting his responsibilities. Nor was he responsive to appeals from Sarawak's educated elite. Ironically enough, it was the absence of British investors with a stake in restoring the status quo ante in Sarawak which prevented the anti-cession faction from applying any real leverage on the government and the bureaucrats. Indeed, the handful of British commercial interests in Sarawak had been in favour of greater British control. Anxious to put an end to further speculation in Britain and Sarawak about cession, the new Secretary of State for the Colonies, Arthur Creech-Jones, quickly issued a statement emphasizing that cession was 'no longer a matter for discussion or negotiations'. But expectations had been raised which could not be brought to earth so easily. The anti-cession parties pulsed with new optimism and ambitious arrangements were soon in hand for Anthony Brooke's reception.

The MNU now found it much easier to strengthen their existing branches and to form new ones. Haji Abdul Rahman even took the initiative of calling for the formation of a *kaum ibu* (women's section), a step which suggests that he was not entirely the hide-bound conservative which the 'inner circle' sometimes portrayed him to be. The MNU was also making some headway in its efforts to

1 Swettenham to Maxwell, 22 February 1946, Maxwell Papers.  
2 Caldecott to Bertram Brooke, 4 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 2/3.  
3 *Sarawak Tribune*, 13 November 1946.
demolish the YMA. In mid-November 27 Malay firemen who had been 'tricked' into joining the YMA resigned their membership and promptly joined the MNU. More importantly, there were signs that the leadership of the YMA in Sibu might be won over.

The Banning of Anthony Brooke

On 17 November Abang Haji Abdillah sent a cable to Bertram Brooke saying that he wished to see him urgently. 'I now have the feeling that my end is approaching', he said, 'and on that account I have a longing to meet you again while I am still in this world...'. Four days later the old man died and the large crowds which gathered at his funeral attested to the political importance of his passing.

While some members of the MNU could recall the difficulty there had been in securing his patronage for their movement, they saw his death as enhancing its moral strength. Indeed, the Datu Patinggi who had been such an important rallying point for members of the SDA as well as for the Malays, was to become something of a political martyr. His house, Darul Kornia (abode of peace), had already been used by the MNU for some of its meetings and was later to serve as the first headquarters of the Barisan Pemuda Sarawak.

It was only a week after the Datu Patinggi's death that his family and the MNU invited all Malay members of the Council Negri together with representatives of the SDA and headmen from the Kuching district to discuss future strategy. At this meeting it was decided that the first tactic should be to work through the Malay councillors and consequently when the Council Negri met the next morning the Datus Hakim and Menteri and two other members who had not been present

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1 Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 18 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
2 Before the resignations the Kuching YMA was estimated to have 173 members and the Sibu YMA about 30 members.
3 Datu Patinggi to Bertram Brooke, 17 November 1946, Hussey Brooke Papers, File 66735.
4 For obituaries, see Sarawak Tribune, 23 November 1946; The Times, 23 November 1946.
at the May meeting refused to confirm the official minutes.\footnote{Mohd. Nor to Anthony Brooke, 4 December 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 12/14.} However, no other members of either Council had followed the Datu Patinggi in refusing to take the oath of allegiance to the King and in his speech at the opening of the Council Negri on 2 December, Arden-Clarke reiterated that the decision on cession was final and irreversible.

A month earlier, Anthony Brooke had decided to visit Sarawak. On 6 November he wrote to the Colonial Office requesting assistance in obtaining a priority passage so that he could collect material for the libel suit which MacBryan had brought against him. On 13 November the Colonial Office replied that it could not arrange a priority passage but said nothing to indicate that Anthony would be refused entry. Consequently he made his own way, leaving London for New York on 6 December with the intention of crossing the Pacific. Before leaving, he cabled the MNU asking for an office to be put at his disposal and for a house which would be accessible to the public. 'I am not proposing to incite the native chiefs', he told newspaper reporters. 'I want to consult my friends in Sarawak about legally regaining independence.'\footnote{Sarawak Tribune, 9 December 1946.} Subsequent statements to the press in New York and San Francisco, which received wide publicity, emphasized that he had been invited to Sarawak by the MNU 'to consult the wishes of the native communities in relation to the restoration of Sarawak independence'.\footnote{Scottish Daily Mail, 9 December 1946.} He also indicated that the Privy Council might take two or three years to decide whether cession was legal, but that if in the meantime it became clear that the people did not want colonial status, the Crown could still use its powers under the Order-in-Council to revoke cession.\footnote{New York Herald Tribune, 8 December 1946.}

However, Arden-Clarke was not prepared to allow Anthony into Sarawak and after consultations with Malcolm MacDonald he was authorized by the Colonial Office to issue a prohibition order under
the same legislation which had been invoked to expel MacBryan in 1936. In its official statement, the colonial government accused Anthony of wanting to restore Brooke rule with himself as Rajah. His presence in Sarawak, it was argued, 'would influence popular feeling by exploiting the affection and prestige attached to the Brooke name'.

In a country where false reports and fears were easily engendered among the largely illiterate population, it continued, there was a risk of violence. Consequently, the government's duty was 'to ensure that the present peaceful state of the country is not unnecessarily disturbed and to protect the people against the danger of disorder which might perhaps be of a grave character'. Whether there was in fact such a danger is now impossible to establish, but it was an effective argument.

Reaching Manila in mid-December, Anthony learnt of the prohibition order and was refused a visa for Singapore when he rejected the condition that he should refrain from political activity there concerning Sarawak. He then flew to Hong Kong where the British authorities warned him not to communicate with the press. However, subsequent publicity in the British press and in Parliament forced Hall to agree a week later that his passport should be endorsed for Singapore and the Malayan Union. By early January he was in Singapore expressing determination to stay until the ban was lifted. Gladys Brooke had been there for some weeks and later took a house called Rumah Sarawak (Sarawak House) which was to serve as the headquarters of the anti-cession movement in Singapore.

In the meantime the ban had sparked off a spirited debate in the House of Commons where the Conservatives, led by William Teeling

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1 The ban on Anthony Brooke was not removed until 1963 when Sarawak became part of Malaysia. The Sarawak government then invited Anthony Brooke to visit the state, which he did in 1965. Johari Anang, the mainstay of the MNU who had been hoping to meet Anthony, died the night before his arrival.

2 Malay Mail, 19 December 1946.

3 Ibid.

4 The Times, 19 December 1946.

5 The Times, 24 December 1946.
and Oliver Stanley, pressed Creech-Jones on the reasons for the decision. Accusing Anthony of attempting to 'subvert existing authority', the Secretary of State insisted that 'the people should not be confused at this moment with another constitutional problem'. When Churchill described this as '... phrase by phrase, and line by line... the very perfect declaration of tyranny',¹ Creech-Jones was unable to answer. Nor could he produce any evidence to suggest that Anthony was intent on setting himself up as Rajah. However, he did say that in view of his demotion on three occasions, Anthony was a 'completely irresponsible person'. Most importantly, he revealed that the Colonial Office had earlier decided to take a tough line on Sarawak:

A decision was taken during this year that it would be fatal at this moment to confuse the Sarawak public again, when the great work of rehabilitating the country, of restoring order, of getting social services running, must at once be taken in hand. ²

Anthony Brooke's projected visit had resulted in feverish activity not only within the MNU and the SDA in Kuching but within anti-cession groups throughout the state. A massive rally of 20,000 to 30,000 Malays and Ibans from all districts was planned for his arrival and it was intended that this should contrast dramatically with the virtual boycott of Arden-Clarke. Invitations for Anthony to visit Sibu, Miri and other centres were sent to the MNU and the PPM from their branches and Mohd. Nor was appointed as his personal aide-de-camp. On 24 November several thousand Malays gathered before the main mosque in Kuching to 'pray for a return of Sarawak's freedom and a restoration of the throne'. ³ Consequently there was great dismay when the news of Anthony's banning was revealed. It did not seem possible that a member of the Brooke family could be refused entry to Sarawak. However, petitions were quickly drawn up ⁴ and on

¹ Hansard, 19 December 1946.
² Ibid.
³ Abang Haji Zaini and six tua kampong to Arden-Clarke, 27 November 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
⁴ General Secretary MNU to Arden-Clarke, 19 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1. Sarawak Tribune, 24 February 1947 (message to Attlee).
18 January there was another demonstration with placards around the mosque. Inside, Abang Bol Hassan prayed for the lifting of the ban and at the same time called for the observance of law and order during the campaign. He and Abang Haji Zaini later went to Singapore to seek Malcolm MacDonald's assistance.

Circular No. 9

While the MNU and the SDA expressed bitter disappointment at the banning, it was of some use as a political issue. In the meantime, however, the colonial government had provided a much more effective rallying point. On 11 December Suhaily bin Matlayeir received advance notice of a government circular explicitly aimed at discouraging anti-cession activity. 'Any government servant', ran its final paragraph, 'who associates himself with any activity designed to keep open the question of cession or commits any act of disloyalty to government will render himself liable to instant dismissal'. Anyone who felt unable to comply with this instruction was required to inform his head of department by 31 December.

Suhaily and the other members of the 'inner circle' immediately organized a meeting of Malay government servants at Darul Kornia, advising them not to sign any such circular 'as every signature of yours will have great value to them'. At this point Sharkawi bin Haji Osman was confident that 80 per cent of all Malay government servants would resign 'rather than to give up their Birth-rights and Independence...'. However, he was thankful that the government had not taken such a step earlier as many would have then given in 'not fully realizing the "Truth" which they have at heart today'. Although the 'inner circle' had provided some advance

1 General Secretary MNU to Crocker, 19 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
3 Malay Mail, 2 January 1947.
4 Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anne Bryant, 17 January 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
5 Sharkawi bin Haji Osman to Anne Bryant, 16 December 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
6 Ibid.
warning, the official release of the circular on 20 December still came as a tremendous shock to most Malays. As the MNU cabled Crocker the next day, it was 'just like an atomic bomb dropped on them'.

They now felt that the government would use any means to crush the anti-cession movement.

There can be little doubt that it was Arden-Clarke's impatience with the anti-cessionists and his penchant for African-style colonial discipline which prompted Circular No. 9. According to Digby, the Governor had arrived in Sarawak in a 'belligerent mood' and 'was resolved to strangle the anti-cession movement... as soon as possible'. In his own words, he was determined 'to make it clear to the people that cession was not likely to be revoked in as sudden and abrupt a fashion as, by their way of thinking, it had been brought about'. Arden-Clarke was also under the impression from the outset that the Council Negri debate in May had aroused little interest locally and that most of the anti-cession leaders were Japanese collaborators. '... It was only when it became apparent that there was not to be an orgy of witch-hunting', he told Stirling Boyd, 'that their confidence returned and they started to organize opposition...'. Furthermore, in view of Creech-Jones' uncompromising statement of 13 November he knew that he would have the support of the British government.

The MNU's strategy, no doubt influenced by the threatened boycott which had been so effective in Malaya some months earlier, was to persuade people to refuse acknowledgement of the circular and to bring the administration to a standstill until it was withdrawn. Special forms were printed protesting against the government's action and these were signed by 353 government employees. The MNU campaigned to obtain as many signatures as possible to the protests in Kuching and similar work was done by the PPM in Sibu. As Haji Su'au Tahir quickly found, however, it was not an easy task to win over most

1 MNU to Crocker, 21 December 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 13/1.
2 Digby, 'Lawyer in the Wilderness', p. 213.
3 Arden-Clarke to Boyd, 6 April 1948, Boyd Papers.
4 Ibid.
Malays. 'There have been a lot of obstacles and difficulties in bringing these people into one', he told Anne Bryant, 'and make them realise how much their independence would mean to them...'. Nor was there a Malay newspaper to help arouse political consciousness and mobilize opinion as Utusan Melayu and Warta Negara were doing in Malaya. The MNU had to rely very much on its members' family and other links in order to extend its base and the campaign was consequently a highly personal one.

During the three months from late December 1946 until April 1947 there was a bitter struggle between the anti-cession activists and the colonial government for the loyalties of the Malay government servants. At least two propagandists, one of them a Malay, were sent to Sarawak by the Malayan Union government's public relations department. And Digby, who had resumed his position as Legal Adviser and was also editing the Sarawak Gazette, was commissioned to write a series of articles answering Anthony Brooke. These were inserted anonymously in the Sarawak Tribune with the aim of countering the publicity which the anti-cession case was receiving in the Singapore press. (They later formed the basis of a lawsuit which Anthony brought against Digby and the Tribune.) Sarawak newspaper editors were also quietly told that 'undue' publicity given to the anti-cession parties would be considered an unfriendly act by the government, although the effectively pro-cession Tribune had refused to publish letters relating to the anti-cession campaign since March 1946 except for those already published in the Singapore and British press.

In the meantime, departmental heads were instructed to dissuade resigners and it was strongly hinted that the latter would lose their bonus payments and the government's contribution to their

1 Haji Su'aut Tahir to Anne Bryant, 11 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
2 Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anne Bryant, 17 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
4 9 November 1946; 3 January 1947; 7 January 1947.
5 Personal communication from Mr K.H. Digby, 2 September 1974.
superannuation. The government also brought pressure to bear on European officers, particularly those who had served before the war in Sarawak and were known to be sympathetic to the anti-cession cause. Soon after Arden-Clarke's arrival he made it clear that they must either give their entire support to the government or leave. 1 Kenneth Whale, the manager of Sarawak Steamships Ltd who was strongly opposed to cession, found that some officers who had continued to express their views after the Council Negri began to show 'a marked reluctance ... to discuss the cession at all'. 2 Furthermore, there were strong rumours that outgoing mail was being censored. On the positive side, the government in late December instituted an inquiry into pay and conditions in the Junior Administrative Service. A month earlier it had been announced that £5,000,000 had been allocated to Sarawak from the Colonial Development Fund. 3

The MNU did not possess anything like the government's resources and was obliged to depend very much on appeals to Malay solidarity and individual persuasion. There were strong hints that the religious and social boycott of pro-cession families would be extended to those who did not resign and this was quickly seized upon by the government as 'intimidation', in spite of its own highly compromised position. 4 Anxious for advice and moral support, the MNU sent representatives to Singapore to meet Anthony Brooke in February, while Mohd. Nor and Robert Jitam went unofficially. In a letter to his sister, Anne Bryant, Anthony indicated that he had encouraged them to withdraw their resignations. 5 However, it is clear that the

1 Personal information.
2 Anonymous memorandum, probably by Kenneth Whale, 29 January 1948, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2. Whale appears to have given encouragement and assistance to the anti-cessionists. One of the most prominent activists, Suahily bin Matleyir, was employed in his office.
3 Sarawak Tribune, 29 November 1946.
4 According to a government statement issued in Singapore on 12 January 1947, many of the resigners had privately informed their departmental heads that their action was due to pressure brought to bear on them by their families or fear of a social and religious boycott. The Times, 13 January 1947. This was repeated by Creech-Jones in the Commons on 22 January. Anthony Brooke subsequently received a refutation of this allegation signed by representatives of 22 departments. Sarawak Tribune, 3 February 1947.
5 Anthony Brooke to Anne Bryant, 12 March 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/3.
unofficial delegates' visit to Singapore decisively strengthened their resolve to pursue the campaign. As soon as Robert Jitam and Mohd. Nor returned to Kuching, there was a four-hour meeting with more than 50 of the resigners where it was decided:

(1) that the resigners should not take back their notices;
(2) that government schools should be boycotted after 1 April;
(3) that the religious and social boycott of pro-cessionists should continue until they surrendered; and
(4) that non-establishment government staff should cease work on 1 April in protest against the circular.¹

Subsequent to this, 28 of the 353 who had refused to conform with the circular's direction withdrew their resignations but 23 more Malay teachers from outstation schools resigned on 31 March.²

The Kuching anti-cessionists also took heart from the decision of the committee of the Sibu YMA to switch their support to the anti-cession cause. Its secretary, Abang Kipli bin Haji Othman,³ who had been a customs officer, seems to have felt that the political tide was now running in favour of the restoration of the Brookes. Consequently he made his way to Singapore to be with Anthony Brooke and later formed the United Sarawak National Association (USNA) whose members were Sarawak Malays and Ibans working in Singapore and Malaya.

One complication which caused the colonial government and the British authorities in Singapore some embarrassment at this point was Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin's statement to the Singapore press in late February 1947 that if Sarawak was to be ceded to anyone, it should have been to him.⁴ All this came as a surprise to Anthony Brooke who had previously thought of the Sultan as 'a British Government stooge'.

¹ Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 21 March 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
² Ibid.
³ Ibid. Kipli's subsequent career was quite colourful. He became strongly pro-Indonesia and during Confrontation emerged as 'Djenderal Abang Kipli' of the Indonesian-sponsored Tentera Nasional Kalimantan Utara (North Kalimantan National Army). He is now living in Jakarta but still has relatives in Kuching.
⁴ Straits Times, 28 February 1947.
He suspected at first that it was connected with some Colonial Office plan to reconstitute Sarawak under the nominal suzerainty of Brunei, a device which might defuse the problem of Sarawak's colonial status. However, the Sultan was doing no more than repeating what he had said in response to cables from the Datu Patinggi and the MNU in early 1946 - that Sarawak was not a *kebun getah* (rubber garden) to be sold off and that if the Rajah wanted to cede the state, then it should be ceded to him. The Sultan had made similar remarks to Gammans and Rees-Williams when they met him in May 1946. '... If the Rajah wants to give the country away', he told the M.P.s, 'why does he not give it back to me?...'. Interestingly enough, the anti-cessionists seem never to have considered inviting the Sultan of Brunei to re-assert sovereignty over Sarawak. However, it was rumoured in June 1947 that the British government intended to annex Brunei and administer Sarawak and Brunei as a single territory.

On 2 April 1947, 338 government servants of whom only three were not Malays completed the three months notice which they had given when refusing to comply with Circular No. 9. While later resignations

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1 Anthony Brooke to Kathleen Brooke, 1 March 1947. Letter in the possession of Mrs K. Brooke.
2 Interview with Datu Ekhwan Zaini, April 1974.
3 Lord Ogmore MS, p. 37.
4 Interview with Datu Ekhwan Zaini, April 1974.
5 *Sunday Times* (Singapore), 28 June 1947.
6 The breakdown by department as given by the *Sarawak Tribune* of 3 April 1947 was:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Department</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lands and Surveys</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posts and Telegraphs</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fire Brigade</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Museum</td>
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<td>Marine</td>
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<td>Forestry</td>
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<td>Customs</td>
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<td>Public Works</td>
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<td>Medical and Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treasury</td>
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<tr>
<td>Printing</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Affairs</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Resident's and District Court</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese Secretariat</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Astana</td>
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<td>Constabulary</td>
<td>13</td>
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<td>Depot</td>
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<td>Legal Adviser</td>
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Most of these were from the First Division.
probably brought the number to over 400, all the resigners referred to themselves as belonging to the 'tiga tiga lapan' (338). On the previous day, all 56 students of the Sarawak Malay Teachers Training College had terminated their studies in protest against the circular and a further 500 Malays from schools and non-government occupations also obtained permission to take leave that day. In the morning there was a mass meeting at Darul Kornia. An address was given by Chegu Johari bin Bojeng and a group photograph was then taken with the resigners forming the figures C9 and NO 9 to symbolize their protest against the circular. There was also some discussion of pooling one-third of their bonus payments and superannuation for a $50,000 co-operative company but it was decided not to have any demonstrations until the money had been actually paid by the government.

Although the resignations had not amounted to an effective boycott, they nevertheless demonstrated to many observers that the anti-cession movement was more than just the handful of Japanese collaborators and malcontents of Arden-Clarke's imagination. For the resigners, it was a momentous personal decision as well as an act of political commitment because there was almost no prospect of obtaining employment of any kind outside government service.

To take one example, in January 1947 two Native Officers (Abang Kiprawi who had voted against cession in the Council Negri and Abang Zainorrin, son of the late Datu Imam) and four other Malay government employees with more than a hundred years of service to their credit told Bertram Brooke of the personal cost which their action would mean. 'By taking this step...', they wrote, 'we sacrifice our means of livings and worldly happiness in order to show that we are determined to protest the cession of our country as a Crown Colony and

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1 Interview with Mohd. Ma'amom bin Nor,
2 Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 2 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
3 Sarawak Tribune, 3 April 1946; Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 21 March 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
4 Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 2 April 1946, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1. The co-operative was subsequently formed but all its records were lost in floods. McKay, 'The Kuching Communities...', p. iii.
to defend its Independence under [the] Rajah Brooke dynasty.\(^1\) Writing to Anne Bryant on 29 March, Haji Su'au't Tahir also admitted that it marked the beginning of hard times for some people. However, he added, it meant 'wider and unrestricted facilities and more time to be devoted to our present struggle'.\(^2\) This was something which Arden-Clarke and Dawson had not considered. They no doubt imagined that within a few weeks most of the resigners would be knocking on the government's door asking for their jobs back. And of course there were many who did. But there was also a core of young MNU members who were determined to keep alive the spirit of the 'pergerakan 338' (338 movement) and were to provide the backbone of a political movement which might never have developed had it not been for the political commitment brought about by Circular No. 9.

The largest single group among the resigners consisted of Malay school-teachers so that of the 60 employed by the government in the Kuching district, only two remained in service after February 1947.\(^3\) Like their counterparts in Malaya who formed much of the support for the United Malays National Organization, they saw themselves as the guardians of Malay-Muslim culture against a tide of alien influence. Their subsequent establishment of sekolah ra'ayat (people's schools) in Kuching and Sibu marked their determination to keep the anti-cession cause alive among the young and to uplift the Malays socially and economically. They were the latest expression of the movement towards social change which had first made its presence felt through Rakawi bin Yusoff and Fajar Sarawak in the early 1930s.

Although Robert Jitam had worked hard to persuade Iban government servants to resign, none of the committee members of the SDA had defied the prohibition on politics. 'Hence we have no intellectuals to guide us anymore', he told Anne Bryant, 'but... [must]

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1 Letter to Bertram Brooke of 11 January 1947 signed by Abang Kiprawi, Abang Zainorrin, Aman bin Haji Jenal, Thani bin Sanyuk, Appu bin Bodek and Samsudin bin Noor, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.

2 Haji Mohd. Su'au't bin Haji Mohd. Tahir to Anne Bryant, 29 March 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1. For a biographical note on Haji Su'au't, see Chapter V, p. 202.

3 *Singapore Free Press*, 17 January 1947. See Plate XIV.
rely on whatever material we can gather.' Recognizing that the SDA would never again have a voice unless the committee was purged of all its government servants, he arranged a general meeting on 23 December at which Alfred Jamuh was elected President, Eliab Bayang as joint secretary and himself as joint secretary and treasurer. Suhaily bin Matlayeir expressed relief at this development. Throughout October and November he had been trying to counter the influence of Edwin Howell and to persuade Philip Jitam that he and Charles Mason should not 'hold up' their positions anymore but clearly resign. '... I am very glad that my labour is not in vain', Suhaily wrote of his efforts with the SDA. 'Prior to this we have always to use the name of the late Datu Patinggi to sway them but now it is not necessary.'

The MNU Split

Ironically enough, one of the effects of the anti-cession movement's new optimism in late 1946 was to make the conservative leaders of the MNU even less accommodating towards their young activists and the SDA. It seemed to people like Mohd. Nor that now there was some chance of restoring Brooke rule, the conservatives were showing all the signs of unwillingness to share the fruits of victory. One of the first political effects of this tendency was the collapse of what had been fairly close co-operation with the SDA since June. '... The leaders of the Union seem to disvalue the Dayaks', Mohd. Nor told Anne Bryant, '... and besides that [the] S.D.A. had noticed... [they] were and still are not acting democratically and justly even to the members who had sacrificed most for the benefits of their names'. Within the MNU itself there were further disagreements as to the

1 Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 3 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
2 Sarawak Tribune, 1 January 1947.
3 Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anne Bryant, 17 January 1947, ibid. Jitam and Mason had announced their resignations in June, probably as the result of government pressure.
4 Ibid.
5 Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 12 February 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
tactics to be used and the establishment of a subsidiary youth organization for both Malays and Ibans.

By early January 1947 the conservative leadership had replaced the 'inner circle' with a number of more moderate Malays, including one of Haji Abdul Rahman's relatives. 'We are entirely deprived of any active part in the Union', Suhaily bin Matlayeir told Anne Bryant, 'for the conservative felt confident that cession must be revoked and they would reap all the harvest.' However, their names had been retained on the MNU's official list of office-bearers because of their influence and popularity with the MNU membership. When a meeting of the MNU on 22 January elected Mohd. Nor to act as one of the MNU's delegates to discuss the anti-cession movement's tactics with Anthony Brooke in Singapore, Haji Abdul Rahman overruled the vote and insisted that his own nephew, Edham bin Bojeng, should go instead. Consequently, those who were dissatisfied with the decision asked Mohd. Nor and Robert Jitam to go to Singapore separately.

Another result of this dissatisfaction was a general meeting at Darul Kornia on 29 January to foster co-operation between the MNU and the SDA. Attended by 83 school-teachers, students and government servants representing about 1,500 young Malays and Ibans in the Kuching district, the meeting decided to form the Jasa P.M.S. (MNU Action Group) which was to be a 'well and real democratic body' under the MNU's aegis. Its objects were broader than those of the MNU, resembling those of the United Sarawak National Organization which had been mooted earlier, and its office-bearers (with the exception of one SDA member) were all from the MNU's 'inner circle'. 'We really do not wish to be separated from the Union', Mohd. Nor told Anne Bryant, 'as I know there is a danger in the separation - Govt. policy of divide and rule will be easily worked on.' But short of depriving the conservatives of their leadership he could not see how permission for

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1 Suhaily bin Matlayeir to Anne Bryant, 17 January 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
2 Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 12 February 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/2.
3 Ibid.
affiliation could be obtained from the MNU Committee. Consequently, the Jasa would probably have to be formed separately and the MNU would lose about 300 of its members. 'I consider', he wrote, 'that Jasa P.M.S. is the only way for the Malays to work jointly with the Dayaks.' As he had predicted, however, Haji Abdul Rahman completely rejected the idea.

Now possessing no alternative, the 'inner circle' worked towards establishing a separate organization and Robert Jitam informed Anne Bryant in May that the Barisan Pe-muda Sarawak (Sarawak Youth Front) was in the making. He explained that it had been planned as a reaction to 'the very autocratic steps' of the MNU office-holders whom he described as stifling the wishes of younger members and ridiculing their intentions. The new organization was publicly reported as being open to indigenous youths 'irrespective of race and religion' and designed to 'develop the social, cultural, economical and political welfare of the natives.' At the inaugural meeting in June, Mohd. Nor, Sharkawi bin Haji Osman and Johari Bojeng were elected vice-presidents with Haji Su'at Tahir as general secretary and Suhaily bin Matlayeir as chairman of political affairs. Interestingly enough, however, the 'inner circle' still saw some advantage in maintaining links with the traditional elite and pressure was brought to bear on Abang Haji Kassim, the Datu Patinggi's youngest grandson who had been one of the 338 resigners, to take an active part in the BPM and 'replace his grandfather's fighting post.'

Claiming to have 3,000 active members and 2,000 more supporters in the First Division, the BPM's first task was to help mark the first anniversary of annexation. Consequently on 28 June the 'Sarawak National Conference' was convened at Darul Kornia. Attended by 40 delegates, the meeting was a striking example of how the anticession movement had aroused Malay support in widely dispersed parts of Sarawak. In addition to the MNU, BPM and SDA there were representatives

1 Ibid.
2 Robert Jitam to Anne Bryant, 23 May 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
3 Sarawak Tribune, 5 May 1947.
4 Mohod. Nor to Anne Bryant, 16 June 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1; interview with Abang Haji Kassim, May 1975.
of Kaum Ibu MNU, Persekutuan Bumiputra Sarawak, Persekutuan Melayu Miri, Angkatan Semengat Anaknegri Sarawak, Persekutuan Melayu Limbang, Perkimpunan Kabajikan Baram, Kersetuan Club Dalat, Sulam Mas Seria, PPM (Sibu), Kaum Ibu Sibu and USNA. Also present as observers were 19 tua kampong from the Kuching district. It was subsequently decided to stage a mass procession on 1 July and to send cables of protest to the King and Prime Minister Attlee which would be signed by all the organizations represented at the Conference.  

At the same time, the BPM continued the campaign to 'convert the big bribed state Councillors' to the anti-cession side, its first victory being the Datu Menteri who was persuaded in early June to visit Anthony Brooke in Singapore. Also on the list for conversion were the Datus Amar and Hakim and the mufti, Haji Nawawi, followed by the Datu Pahlawan, Abang Haji Abdulrahim and other members of the Council Negri whom Mohd. Nor described as 'threatened' by the rumour that Anthony Brooke's wife, Kathleen, would visit Sarawak at the end of June. He believed that since the formation of the Barisan, the MNU had 'lost its active services' and the support of its women's section.

The Kaum Ibu had formed at an inaugural meeting of more than 1,000 Malay women on 16 March 1947. Dominating the proceedings were two schoolteachers who had resigned from government service over Circular No.9. Lily Eberwein, headmistress of the Permaisuri

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1 Sarawak Natives' Association, Miri Malay Association, Sarawak Natives Uplift Movement, Limbang Malay Association, Baram Welfare Association, Dalat Club, Seria Gold (?).
2 Sarawak Tribune, 30 June 1947.
3 Mohd. Nor to Anne Bryant, 16 June 1947, Brooke Papers, Box 11/1.
4 A Muslim Eurasian of outstanding ability, 'Chegu' Lily was 47 when elected chairman. Educated at St Mary's School, Kuching, and Raffles Girls' School, Singapore, she was the first headmistress of the Permaisuri. During the war she was head of the Malay section of the Japanese-sponsored Kaum Ibu. In 1947 she established her own English school at Satok Road which is still functioning.
Melayu, was elected chairman and her fellow teacher, Ajibah Abol, secretary. Similar associations were formed in Sibu and elsewhere and were to play an important part not only in the anti-cession campaign but in providing Sarawak's Malay women with their first opportunity for political expression. In pre-war times, upper-class Malay women hardly dared show their faces in public and it must have seemed an extraordinary development that they should now be speaking on a public platform and taking part in political activity.

Describing the meeting as 'History in the Making', the editor of the Sarawak Tribune was impressed by the eloquence of the speakers whose subjects ranged from Malay nationalist movements and Sarawak history to the backwardness of women in Sarawak and their demand for rights. 'What a far cry the women of today are from their grandmothers', he reflected. 'There is no trace of the bashfulness that so characterized a woman in the old days when making a public appearance, and the woman of today stands out on just as firm and equal a ground as that of any man, in full realization of the part they have to play in the country.' Like the younger group within the MNU, the leadership of the Kaum Ibu represented a movement towards social change.

Like the MNU, the Kaum Ibu busied itself in petitioning the colonial government, taking part in demonstrations and other activities. One of the high points came in August 1947 when Kathleen Brooke arrived in Sarawak. During her subsequent tour of the state she was accompanied by Lily Eberwein, Haji Su'au't Tahir and other MNU members and was given an enthusiastic reception.

1 Ajibah Abol, 1929-76, was only 18 when she became secretary, a post she retained until 1957. She had been one of Lily Eberwein's students and after resigning she taught at one of the sekolah ra'ayat. Replacing Lily Eberwein as chairman of Kaum Ibu in 1960, she was made a member of the Supreme Council of the Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak in 1961 and vice-chairman of Parti Bumiputera in 1967. She was elected to the Malaysian Parliament in 1963 and when re-elected in 1974 was made Minister of State and then Minister for Welfare Services. She was also a member of the Council Negri, 1970-74.

2 The first president of the Kuam Ibu PMM in Sibu was Sharifah Hajjah Sipah, sister of the present Governor of Sarawak.

3 Sarawak Tribune, 17 March 1946.
wherever she went by the other kaum ibu which had sprung up since March.\(^1\) While her visit is beyond the scope of this study, it is clear that she and her Malay companions demonstrated exceptional courage in the face of the colonial government's thinly-concealed antagonism and the physical trials which such an extensive tour demanded. There is no doubt that both as a representative of the Brooke family and in her own right she was a source of inspiration to the anti-cession movement.\(^2\)

BY 1 July 1947, the first anniversary of annexation, the anti-cession movement was reaching its high point. Early that morning members of 16 different anti-cession organizations assembled in the grounds of Darul Kornia and later marched out four abreast behind their own brass band. Carrying Sarawak flags of all sizes as well as banners and posters with such slogans as 'We do not want Cession', they followed the prescribed route through the kampong area towards the centre of Kuching. As they passed the Brooke Memorial\(^3\) outside the Court House, flags were raised and slogans shouted in unison. 'It is only such an occurrence like this', observed the Sarawak Tribune, 'that points out to us just how far the country has developed and progressed in the march of time ...'\(^4\) Its one regret was that the incentive had been provided by the cession issue since this inevitably threw the people of Sarawak into two opposing camps 'bound to clash in opinions in all instances'.\(^5\) Without such contradictions, however, political development would have been more in keeping with the racially-based Malayan pattern. What made Sarawak so different was that there were contradictions not only between the different races but within the leadership of Malay society itself.

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1 See Plate XV.

2 Interviews with Lily Eberwein and Haji Su'aut Tahir, April 1974. It is to be hoped that Mrs Brooke will write a memoir of her visit.

3 A monument to the first two Rajahs which was unveiled in 1924.

4 Sarawak Tribune, 3 July 1947.

5 Ibid.
The subsequent history of the anti-cession movement and its relevance to the current political scene in Sarawak is beyond the scope of this study and must be left to another historian who can re-create the extremely complicated web of political interaction. However, some general observations can be made. While there was some initial participation by First Division Ibans with relatively close links with the Malays, the anti-cession movement was from the outset an almost exclusively Malay phenomenon. The SDA was unable to extend its influence beyond the First Division and the colonial government's policy managed to secure Iban support through improved educational facilities and other developments, particularly in the Third Division. It was not difficult for the colonial government in Iban areas to represent the anti-cession movement as being exclusively concerned with the restoration of Malay privilege.

The pattern of conflict which emerged within the MNU in 1946 was later repeated by the other anti-cession parties in Kuching and Sibu. This consisted of the inevitable contradictions arising between members of the traditional Malay elite and the young educated Malays of non-aristocratic background. The traditional elite adopted a conservative attitude towards political action, favouring delegations and negotiations and invoking a constitutional frame of reference. Their young critics chafed under these restrictions and the undemocratic style of men who continued to emphasize their class status and authority.

When the colonial government continued to ignore the anti-cession movement in the hope that it would simply 'fade away' as the Malays lost interest, the conservatives lost ground. In Kuching the BPM became the radical force while in Sibu even the comparatively radical PPM failed to satisfy its more impatient activists. The consequence of this was the establishment in August 1948 of yet another 'inner circle' - the Rukun Tigabelas (Thirteen Precepts) dedicated to political action. Led by Awang Rambli, this clandestine group planned the assassination of Arden-Clarke's successor, Duncan Stewart, at Sibu in early December.
While the assassination was intended to re-open the whole cession issue again after years of mounting frustration, Stewart's death caused a wave of horror through all communities which, together with the government's punitive actions, virtually destroyed the anti-cession movement. Furthermore, the incident served to strengthen Iban support for the colonial government and to lend credence to the government's old argument that Anthony Brooke's presence in Sarawak would result in bloodshed. Nor were Awang Rambli, Rosly bin Dobbie and the two other Malays hanged for their involvement regarded as nationalist heroes by

1 For a description of the incident, see Sarawak Tribune, 5 December 1949. The evidence later adduced by the government suggested that the group had intended to assassinate a further ten colonial officials including the Resident of the Third Division (J.C.H. Barcroft), the Assistant Commissioner for National Registration in Sibu and the Acting Commissioner for Police in Kuching. Straits Times, 10 January 1950.

2 The PPM and all its branches were immediately proscribed, their members questioned and documents confiscated. Anti-cession organizations in Kuching and elsewhere were similarly harassed. See, e.g., Sarawak Tribune, 9 December 1949.

3 When they heard of the assassination, Ibans of the Balleh and other tributaries of the Rejang prepared to descend on Sibu in armed force to 'tolong perentah' (lit., to help the government - the standard expression used to describe Iban levies against 'rebels'). Temenggong Koh together with seven penghulus and a number of other Ibans in full war regalia were present throughout the Sibu trial.

4 Singapore Free Press, 6 December 1949.

5 From all accounts, the Sibu trial of the ten Malays accused of complicity in the assassination was a shabby and vindictive affair. The men were not allowed to seek counsel and were defended by a government officer who had no legal training. However, they were allowed representation in their appeal against the Circuit Court sentence in Kuching. Rosly bin Dhobie and Morshidi bin Sidek were hanged on 2 March 1950 and Awang Rambli and Bujang bin Suntong on 23 March; Abang Han was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment; Che Osman bin Ahmad, Mornie bin Onei and Othman bin Dollah to 10 years; Ahmad bin Haji Abu Bakar to seven years and Awang Osman bin Moh
the Malays until many years later.\(^1\)

Anthony Brooke rightly interpreted the incident as the inevitable outcome of the colonial government's refusal to take the anti-cession movement seriously.\(^2\) He and the anti-cession parties vehemently denied the Rajah's accusation that they were no more than a front for subversive activity.\(^3\) However, the increasing frustration of his position, the dismissal of the Privy Council appeal and the somewhat hysterical atmosphere of the Cold War caused him to abandon his six-year struggle against cession in early 1951 and to advise the anti-cession parties to do the same.\(^4\) The fact that they politely rejected his advice\(^5\) was the final indication that independence rather than the restoration of Brooke rule had become the focus of the anti-cession movement. However, it was no longer possible to muster the Malay support which had existed 1946-47.

As far as the colonial government was concerned, Stewart's death was not in vain. It achieved what had proved to be the difficult task of bolstering its authority after a very shaky beginning. At the same time, the post-war rubber boom had ensured favourable economic conditions for all races. Furthermore, the government had achieved some success in mustering Iban support as a counter-weight to Malay disaffection. The official view was

\\(^5\) [contd from previous page]

and Wan Zain bin Abdullah to five years. It is interesting that until the very end Awang Rambli believed that there would be a miraculous intercession by Anthony Brooke. Alastair Morrison, 'Fair Wind Sarawak', typescript, memoir, p.90. Awang Rambli seems to have been an outstanding personality.


\(^2\) See Appendix V.

\(^3\) For the Rajah's comments and the anti-cessionists' response, see *The Times*, 17 December 1949, and *Malay Mail*, 14 February 1950.

\(^4\) See Appendix V.

\(^5\) Ibid.
that the unwelcome incubus of 'politics'\(^1\) had been exorcized and it was now possible to get on with the real task of developing the state's economy and its social services.\(^2\)

Nevertheless, the schism within Sarawak's Malay community which had been brought about by cession continued to be a highly significant political factor.\(^3\) *Parti Negara Sarawak* (Sarawak National Party) established by the Datu Bandar as the political vehicle of the Malays was boycotted by the anti-cessionists who instead joined the *Barisan Ra'ayat Jati Sarawak* (Sarawak Natives' Front - BARJASA). With both ex-SDA and ex-MNU membership, BARJASA reflected the earlier aims of the MNU 'inner circle' who had abandoned the principle of Malay political hegemony in favour of a native alliance. It was only in 1967 that the two Malay parties were finally brought together to form *Parti Bumiputera*, a Malay communal party organized along the same lines as the United Malays National Organization and reflecting the desire of the Kuala Lumpur Malay leadership that Sarawak's political parties should conform with the West Malaysian model.\(^4\)

For many years the antagonisms created within the Malay community by the anti-cession campaign made Malay political organization along communal lines extremely difficult. The campaign had brought the new educated elite and a considerable section of the traditional elite together in an uneasy alliance against the Datu Bandar, the most senior member of the traditional elite, and his supporters. The consequence of this was a political pattern which to some extent transcended the loyalties of race and religion and was therefore capable of defusing to some extent the inevitable conflicts endemic to a multi-racial society.

\(^1\) Ironically enough, the colonial authorities' pejorative view of politics was similar to that of Mohd. Nor. See above, pp.385-6.

\(^2\) This is a view echoed by most contemporary Southeast Asian governments.


\(^4\) This is one of the major themes developed in Michael Leigh, *The Rising Moon: Political Change in Sarawak*, Sydney. 1974.
THE history of Sarawak is significant in that it epitomized one of the dilemmas of imperialism - how to bring about economic development without disrupting the indigenous culture and unleashing forces which would eventually bring about political change. In most colonies the relentless drive to exploit natural resources and consequent socio-economic change rendered this dilemma academic, but Sarawak did not seem to possess significant economic potential. While the Brookes were determined to prevent the economic exploitation of their people by foreign capital, non-exploitation was as much by default as by design. Unlike Malaya and even North Borneo, therefore, Sarawak was not opened up by mining and planting interests in the early twentieth century. It represented a different model of economic development whose emphasis was on native smallholding, although the interests of smallholders were disregarded in favour of European capital when Sarawak joined the rubber restriction scheme in the 1930s.

While it seems harsh to label the Brookes and their officers as keepers of an anthropological garden, there was something essentially feudal and self-serving about their administration. They were instinctively opposed to socio-economic change because they sensed that it would undermine their status vis-à-vis the natives. They had a vested interest in perpetuating the system of benign paternalism which had existed under Brooke rule: 'the interests of the natives' required that Europeans should remain indefinitely as their guardians. In this sense they were all 'white rajahs', or 'little tin gods' as the Rajah disparagingly described them in 1946. Their position prevented them from conceding anything more than lip service to the principle of trusteeship and the ultimate prospect of native rule.
THE cession of Sarawak was both the culmination of a process which had begun with the appointment of British Residents in the Malay states in the 1870s and the beginning of a post-war consolidation of British interests in Southeast Asia. For almost one hundred years the Colonial Office was happy for the Brooke family to rule Sarawak. There was little interest in acquiring possession of a state with a tiny population and limited economic potential whose administration would be yet another charge on the British government. As British subjects, the Brookes could generally be relied upon to conform with imperial policy and to discourage other powers from becoming involved in Sarawak. Although there were some doubts about the quality of their administration, it was recognized that their authority over Sarawak's polyglot population was a unique phenomenon which could only serve British interests. The relationship between the two governments as defined by the 1888 Treaty effectively precluded the introduction of the Malayan Residential system and made it difficult to bring pressure to bear on the Rajah. British intervention was limited to safeguarding the rights of British subjects, although there can be little doubt that intervention would have been decisive had there been a pressing need.

In the late 1930s a number of factors combined to bring about a change in Colonial Office policy. Concern about administrative standards and Britain's effective international responsibility for Sarawak suggested a greater degree of involvement. Sarawak's participation in the International Rubber Restriction Scheme and its inclusion in British defence planning after 1935 had also begun to end the state's isolation. Finally, it was becoming increasingly clear that the Rajah was on the point of either divesting himself of his sovereignty or of handing over to another member of the family. However, there were still difficulties in the way of intervention. The Rajah was elusive and almost impossible to pin down on specific points. Nor did the Colonial Office wish to be seen to take the initiative. An opportunity presented itself in early 1939 when Anthony Brooke and the Rajah agreed to the appointment of a General Adviser whose powers were extremely limited but whose position was...
regarded by the Colonial Office as providing a foot in the door. There was also the feeling that it would be possible to work more easily through Anthony than it had been through the Rajah. When the General Adviser was not allowed an opportunity to give advice and Anthony was demoted by his uncle, the Colonial Office's hopes of gradually increasing its influence were frustrated. The surprise announcement of a constitution in 1941 provided an opportunity to modify the 1888 Treaty and replace the General Adviser with a British Representative equipped with more substantial powers. But it was the Japanese invasion and subsequent Allied military administration which finally provided the Colonial Office bureaucrats with a long-awaited opportunity to decide Sarawak's future.

External pressure brought Brooke rule to a sudden end, but by the 1930s it had run its course. First there were the problems endemic to all dynastic regimes which sooner or later produce a weak ruler. Vyner Brooke was a more popular Rajah than his father but he was indecisive and could not delegate authority effectively. His reign displayed all the weaknesses and few of the strengths of personal rule. Nor was the arrangement whereby his brother Bertram shared responsibility calculated to improve matters. In this political vacuum it was inevitable that first MacBryan and then Anthony Brooke should compete with the senior bureaucrats of the Committee of Administration to exercise the Rajah's power. Like other dynasties, the Brookes were also plagued by conspiracies over the succession which had not been settled by the time the Japanese arrived. Although it was by no means certain that the Rajah would hand over to another member of the family, his distrust of Anthony Brooke was an important factor in determining Sarawak's future.

A solitary effort was made in the early 1930s to re-think Brooke administration with a view to ultimate native self-government. The Le Gros Clark Report of 1935 was a blueprint for a scheme which would have brought more Ibans into government service and vastly improved the education system. However, financial problems and the inherent conservatism of the administrative officers thwarted this scheme which threatened the perpetuation of their status. The only change was in the direction of bureaucratic centralization which would have meant
the eventual dismantling of the Resident system. The gradual development of a business-like and centralized bureaucracy had been inevitable but it, too, was resisted by the outstation officers who saw it as a frontal attack on their position.

With Anthony Brooke as their champion, the outstation officers made a counter-attack which secured the dismissal of the top bureaucrats in early 1939. But it became clear during Anthony's subsequent term as Officer Administering the Government that his solution to Sarawak's problems consisted of little more than a restoration of personal rule and the old administrative system of semi-autonomous Residents and District Officers. There was no indication that as the fourth Rajah he would do anything more than revive what he saw as the traditions of Brooke rule. If he had succeeded his uncle after the war, it is difficult to see how he could have coped with the significantly altered situation in Sarawak.

In 1945 Vyner Brooke had reached the age of 67 and was unwilling to return to the task of rebuilding war-torn Sarawak. His brother Bertram, the Tuan Muda, was physically unable to take his place and the Rajah was doubtful about his nephew's suitability for the position. As early as 1938 and again in 1942 Vyner had been prepared to surrender his responsibilities in return for a satisfactory financial settlement, but he was now faced with the prospect of having to meet the cost of the military administration and post-war reconstruction. Although we cannot wholly reconstruct the Rajah's reasons for deciding to cede his sovereignty to the British Crown in October 1945, material considerations and the problem of the succession dispelled whatever residual resistance he may have felt to a Colonial Office takeover. At the same time, it is likely that he saw no middle way between Brooke rule and rule by the Colonial Office.

The Labour government seemed to be committed against the restoration of Brooke rule. Nor was the Conservative party prepared to make an issue out of Sarawak. On Gammans' advice they declined to oppose cession which was subsequently confirmed by annexation without any reference to Parliament. But in the final analysis, neither party was particularly interested in Sarawak. Cession was a victory for
Gent and the bureaucrats of the Colonial Office who had been trying since the late 1930s to 'tidy up' Sarawak whose standards of administration were regarded as inferior to those prevailing in British colonies. This policy was strongly supported by Mountbatten and the War Office who were concerned to strengthen the defences of Britain's Southeast Asian dependencies against the new phenomenon of nationalism.

Together with North Borneo, Sarawak became Britain's final colonial acquisition. However, it was acquired not so much in a spirit of imperial expansion as one of colonial consolidation against the insecurities and uncertainties of the post-war world. Britain had adopted a 'hands off' attitude towards Sarawak as long as there was no serious threat of third-power involvement. But the Japanese invasion meant that it could no longer afford the risks involved in not having full internal control.

Originating from the same planning office as the Malayan Union, cession was executed with similar speed and lack of scruple. Had it not been for the agitation mounted by Anthony Brooke and the anti-cession faction in England through press and Parliament, cession might have been managed smoothly enough. Instead, the legal documents brought back by MacBryan had to be scrapped and some effort made to legitimize the arrangement by obtaining the formal consent of Sarawak's Council Negri and Supreme Council. As a sop to press and parliamentary opinion, a two-man delegation was despatched to lend respectability to what was in reality a carefully stage-managed exercise. Even so, a little more attention was paid by the British government to 'the natives' than by Anthony Brooke and the anti-cession faction who were doing battle with the Rajah and the Colonial Office in their name. And when in spite of the bribery and intimidation of Council Negri members there was still a native majority against cession, the Colonial Office did hesitate in its course. In the meantime, however, one of those extraordinary accidents of history had made cession a fait accompli. Nor was it clear what course the Colonial Office could have taken if their ability to manoeuvre had not been so unexpectedly removed. A resumption of negotiations with Anthony Brooke and the Provisional Government could only have revived the same stalemate which had been reached in early 1945 over the
application to Sarawak of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act.

Cession was thus the final resolution of the relationship between Sarawak and Britain, the consummation of a long drawn-out imperial affair. It also spelled the end of a European dynasty which had successfully established itself over the diverse peoples of north-west Borneo. The 'white rajahs' had lent a romantic and exotic dimension to European imperialism in Southeast Asia but history had finally penetrated their isolation. Nevertheless, cession was much more than a minor event in imperial history. It was also the catalyst of a new train of events which transformed Sarawak from a loose confederation of diverse cultures linked by little more than loyalty to the Rajah into something much more like a nation-state.

The reactions of Sarawak's different ethnic groups to cession provide the best indication of the strengths and weaknesses of Brooke rule. Under the Brookes, the Chinese were allowed to engage in trade and small farming. However, their prospects for economic advancement were limited by the land regulations and their ability to become Sarawak citizens was also restricted. For all except some of the Sarawak-born who were well established both economically and socially, colonial status possessed the attraction of improved economic possibilities and citizenship rights along the lines of those provided in the Malayan Union constitution.

The general interests of the Malays lay with the perpetuation of Brooke rule which had given the traditional elite a position of political power and social prestige subordinate only to that of the Brookes and their European officers. Consequently it was they who provided the initial leadership of the MNU, although even the Datu Patinggi had his price for supporting cession and might well have done so had it not been for the influence of the young Malay activists. This new educated elite saw the continuation of Brooke rule as the means of retaining political independence and the ultimate achievement of self-government as promised in the 1941 Constitution. Unlike the traditional elite, they were even willing to share political power with the Ibens whom they saw as allies. In its first expression, Sarawak nationalism took the form of a native coalition in defence against Chinese assertiveness and British imperialism.
For most Malays and Ibans, cession posed an extraordinary dilemma. The traditional principle of loyalty to the Rajah required that they obey his wishes and accept cession. On the other hand, loyalty to the Raj required that they should oppose its abolition. Brooke rule had in fact done very little for the Ibans in the way of educational and economic improvement, nor was there any significant political representation for this largest of all Sarawak's ethnic groups. There were pockets of resistance to Brooke authority in some areas until the late 1930s. Nevertheless, the question of loyalty was fundamental for all except those few who could see the benefits of education and an end to Malay monopoly of the second level of government administration. Only a handful of Kuching and First Division Ibans opposed cession and shared the educated Malay elite's vision of independence and self-government.

The anti-ceSSION campaign failed for a number of reasons. Unlike the Malay rulers who opposed the Malayan Union, the Rajah appeared to be the initiator of cession and ignored all appeals from his subjects to retain his sovereignty. He could exploit the loyalty of the Malays and Ibans as well as counting on the support of the Chinese. Unlike Malaya where Malay opposition to the Malayan Union was solid, Sarawak's Malay leadership was split by the support which Abang Haji Mustapha and the other datus gave to cession. Unlike Malaya where the differing attitudes of the Malays and the Chinese to the country's political future threatened to boil over into racial strife, in Sarawak the main political struggle took place within the Malay community. Apart from a small group of educated Ibans in Kuching who supported the MNU, the Ibans and the Chinese were onlookers to the conflict. However, the support given by the Third Division Ibans to the colonial government suggested that physical action by the Malays against the government would bring about a dramatic reaction. At the same time, the anti-ceSSION party in Britain could not match the big guns which the opponents of the Malayan Union trained on the British government. British commercial interests in Sarawak had favoured greater British control in the belief that this would allow easier access to Sarawak's resources.
Although the anti-cession campaign was unsuccessful in reversing cession, it provided Sarawak with its first political issue and its first political parties. The political development achieved during the immediate post-war years was brought to a halt by the assassination of Duncan Stewart and the collapse of the anti-cession movement. But when political life was resumed in the late 1950s it was still largely based on the earlier pattern. And since Sarawak achieved nominal independence through its membership of the Federation of Malaysia, the anti-cession movement has also provided the basis of a nationalist tradition and the means of legitimizing the power of the educated Malay elite.
GLOSSARY

abang title assumed by the sons of datus
adat custom, tradition
adat lama old-established custom
barisan political grouping (orig. military formation)
batang major river
datu non-royal Malay chieftain
haj pilgrimage to Mecca
haji title assumed by those completing the haj
jikeidan vigilante group
kampong Malay/Melanau village
kempeitai Japanese military police
ken sanji prefectural councillor
ken sanjikai prefectural advisory council
kyodohei native militia
mufti state Islamic leader
pemuda political youth
penghulu Iban leader (a Brooke invention)
pengiran title signifying connection with Brunei royalty
perabangan the abang class
pergerakan political movement
perimpun association
persatuan association, union
tua kampong Malay/Melanau village headman
tua rumah Iban/Dayak headman
tulin taxation rights.
Vyner Brooke’s installation as Rajah, July 1918. With him is Sylvia Brooke and bringing up the rear are Bertram Brooke (in the military cap) and the Datus, (left to right) Temonggong, Bandar, Hakim, Menteri and Imam.

The Raja and Ranee with the datus and Iban penghulus at the Astana after the installation. Vyner had been a cadet and District Officer in the Second Division for many years before succeeding to the Raj. He spoke fluent Iban as well as Malay.
During the Rajah's absences Sarawak was ruled by Bertram Brooke, the Tuan Muda, who is pictured here with the members of the Council Negri.
Lower Rejang river scene in the 1920's: an Iban family coming to the bazaar. The man is wearing a red fez which was one of the distinctive forms of headgear favoured by the Ibans at the time.
PLATE VI

Oil well at Miri, c.1925. By the late 1920's the Miri field was producing 1,000,000 tons a year, providing a substantial boost for government revenue. However, in 1941 the field was estimated as having a life of only ten more years.
Vyner Brooke (1874-1963) from a portrait by Margaret Noble. Many of the people who knew the Rajah have described his piercing blue eyes which 'seemed to look straight through you'. As this portrait shows, however, the Rajah had a cast in his left eye which made it difficult for him to focus both eyes together. It is a nice question whether he exploited the unnerving effect which this had on people.
The centenary of Brooke rule, September 1941. Emerging from the Court House are the Rajah, the Ranee and the Chief Secretary, C. D. Le Gros Clark. The British navy, upon whom the first Rajah had relied so much in order to secure his position, provided the guard of honour.
The Sarawak Rangers on parade. Before they were merged with the police in 1931 they constituted Sarawak's only armed force.

The Chief Secretary, C. D. Le Gros Clark, inspecting the 2/15th Punjab Regiment at the Kuching padang in late 1941. The British government was unable to provide any serious measure of defence against the Japanese, although the Miri oil field was effectively sabotaged.
Wartime Japanese propaganda poster. The Malays were urged to see the Japanese army as having saved them from Brooke oppression. Of all the ethnic groups, they suffered least during the occupation.

Japanese soldiers leaving Kuching after the surrender for a concentration camp up-country. They were allowed to keep their rifles as self-protection.
The Rajah in Australia, 1942
The Ranee in New York, 1943
Gerard MacBryan
Anthony Brooke
The Australian commander of Kuching Force, Brigadier T.C. Eastick, delivers an address at the combined Allied victory and Chinese 'Double Tenth' (National Day) celebrations, October 1945.

The Datu Patinggi presents the Rajah with the sword of state, symbolizing the restoration of civil government, in April 1946. The Ranee looks on and the Datu Patinggi is assisted by his grandson, Abang Kassim.
Abang Haji Abdillah, Datu Patinggi and 17th hereditary chieftain of the Sarawak Malays in official Brooke uniform. At his death in November 1946 aged 83 he was the figurehead of the anti-cession movement.
Malay school teachers who resigned from government service in early 1947 in protest against Circular No. 9's prohibition on anti-cession activity.

Resigners in the grounds of Darul Kornia (the Datu Patinggi's house), 2 April 1946. They are grouped to represent the MNU slogan: 'No Circular No. 9'.
Mrs Anthony Brooke's visit to Sarawak in July 1947 came at the high point of the anti-cession movement. As an official representative of the Brooke family she was given an enthusiastic reception by the Sarawak Malays wherever she went. In the top photograph she is pictured with Lily Eberwein and other members of the Malay National Union Kaum Ibu. In the bottom photograph she is seen with members of the Sibu Pergerakan Pemuda Melayu and its Kaum Ibu.
Appendix I

The International Status of Sarawak

1. Brunei's cession of Sarawak to James Brooke

(i) Transfer by Pangeran Muda Hassim of the Government of Sarawak, 1841.

This Agreement made in the year of the Prophet one thousand two hundred and fifty-seven at twelve o'clock on Wednesday the thirtieth day of the month of Rejab showeth that with a pure heart and high integrity PANGERAN MUDA HASSIM son of the late Sultan Muhammad hereby transfers to JAMES BROOKE Esquire the Government of Sarawak together with the dependencies thereof its revenues and all its future responsibilities. Moreover he James Brooke Esquire shall be the sole owner of its revenues and will be alone responsible for the public expenditure necessary for the good of Sarawak.

Moreover James Brooke Esquire acting with the same integrity and pureness of heart accepts this Agreement as set forth and further undertakes from the date hereof to pay to the Sultan of Brunei one thousand dollars to Pangeran Muda one thousand dollars to the Pettinggi three hundred dollars to the Bandar one hundred and fifty dollars and to the Temenggong one hundred dollars.

Moreover James Brooke Esquire undertakes that the laws and customs of the Malays of Sarawak shall for ever be respected since the country of Sarawak has hitherto been subject to the government of the Sultan of Brunei the Pangeran Muda and Malayan rajas.

Moreover should intrigues arise either within or without the State of Sarawak detrimental to its interests whether caused by peoples or princes or rulers who may be inimical to Sarawak the Sultan and his brother the Pangeran Muda shall uphold James Brooke Esquire as the lawfully appointed Ruler of Sarawak subject to no interference by any other person.

Moreover the Pangeran Muda and James Brooke Esquire do themselves make this Contract and the Pangeran agrees to relinquish all further activities in the Government of Sarawak except such as may be carried out by the consent of James Brooke Esquire and anything which they may severally or individually do in regard to the Government of Sarawak must be in accordance with the terms of this Agreement.

Written in Sarawak on the night of Friday the second day of Shaaban 1257 at ten o'clock.
(ii) Appointment by Sultan of Brunei of James Brooke to Govern as His Representative, 1842.

In the era of the prophet—God grant him peace!—the year one thousand two hundred and fifty-eight, the year Alip, the twenty-fourth day of Jamadalachir, the day being Monday and the time ten o'clock:—

His Highness Sultan Omar Ali Saifu'd-Din son of the late Sultan Mahomed Jamalu'l-Alam appoints James Brooke Esquire to be his representative and in that capacity to govern the province of Sarawak, and James Brooke Esquire covenants and undertakes to observe the orders, custom, laws and regulations of His Highness the Sultan. James Brooke Esquire is responsible for all the affairs of the province of Sarawak, and no one at all may interfere upon any pretext except on the express command of His Highness the Sultan. Regarding the affairs of the other districts within our coasts James Brooke Esquire is not to exercise authority or concern himself in any way, but only within the province of Sarawak. So it is agreed between His Highness and the Tuan Besar.

And with regard to the province of Sarawak the Tuan Besar alone is appointed our representative to govern it, and no other European of any nationality may except only after submission to His Highness and Pangeran Muda Hassim, and only with their permission.

Regarding the revenues of the province of Sarawak the Tuan Besar undertakes to pay as tribute every year to His Highness one thousand dollars, to Pangeran Muda Hassim one thousand dollars, to the Patinggi three hundred dollars to the Bandar one hundred and fifty dollars and to the Tumunggong one hundred dollars annually. If the trade of the province of Sarawak becomes flourishing and the province obtains a large revenue the Tuan Besar shall increase the tribute to be paid to His Highness and the Pangeran Muda Hassim.

Further with reference to the Sapang and Sambok Kongsies which have been working in the province of Sarawak taxation is to be in accordance with the size of their undertaking whether large or small for this is a matter which is excluded from the control of the Tuan Besar.

The above is the Agreement between His Highness and the Tuan Besar aforesaid and contained in this written contract for the province of Sarawak.

* Certain words are missing from the text.
2. Sarawak's Treaties with Britain

(i) The Treaty of 1888.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN HER MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND CHARLES BROOKE, SECOND RAJAH OF SARAWAK

WHEREAS Charles Brooke Esquire Rajah and lawful Ruler of the State of Sarawak, in the island of Borneo, has represented to Her Majesty's Government the desire of that State to be placed under the protection of Her Majesty the Queen under the conditions hereinafter mentioned; it is hereby agreed and declared as follows:

Article 1.

The State of Sarawak shall continue to be governed and administered by the said Rajah Brooke and his successors as an independent State under the protection of Great Britain but such protection shall confer no right on Her Majesty's Government to interfere with the internal administration of that State further than is herein provided.

Article 2.

In case any question should hereafter arise respecting the right of succession to the present or any future Ruler of Sarawak, such question shall be referred to Her Majesty's Government for decision.

Article 3.

The relations between the State of Sarawak and all foreign States including the States of Brunei and North Borneo shall be conducted by Her Majesty's Government or in accordance with its directions; and if any difference should arise between the Government of Sarawak and that of any other State, the Government of Sarawak agrees to abide by the decision of Her Majesty's Government and to take all necessary measures to give effect thereto.

Article 4.

Her Majesty's Government shall have the right to establish British Consular Officers in any part of the State of Sarawak who shall receive exequatur in the name of the Government of Sarawak. They shall enjoy whatever privileges are usually granted to Consular Officers and shall be entitled to hoist the British flag over their residences and public offices.

Article 5.

British subjects commerce and shipping shall enjoy the same rights privileges and advantages as the subjects commerce and shipping of the most favoured nation, as well as any other rights, privileges and advantages which may be enjoyed by the subjects commerce and shipping of the State of Sarawak.
Article 6.

No cession or other alienation of any part of the territory of the State of Sarawak shall be made by the Rajah or his successors to any foreign State or the subjects or citizens thereof, without the consent of Her Majesty's Government but this restriction shall not apply to ordinary grants or leases of lands or houses to private individuals for purposes of residence, agriculture, commerce, or other business.

Given under my hand and seal this 14th day of June in the year Eighteen hundred and eighty-eight.

(Signed) C. BROOKE, Rajah.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

5 September 1888.
(ii) The Supplementary Agreement of 1941.

AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT AND THE RAJAH IN COUNCIL OF THE STATE OF SARAWAK

WHEREAS by an Agreement dated September 5th, 1888, between her Majesty's Government and Charles Brooke, Esquire, Rajah and lawful Ruler of the State of Sarawak it was, inter alia, agreed that the State of Sarawak should continue to be administered by the said Rajah Brooke under the protection of Great Britain, but that such protection should confer no right on Her Majesty's Government to interfere with the internal administration of the State further than was therein provided:

And Whereas it is the desire of His Majesty's Government and of the Rajah in Council of the State of Sarawak that further provision should be made regulating the relations between His Majesty's Government and the State of Sarawak:

Now, therefore, it is agreed between His Majesty's Government and His Highness the Rajah in Council of the State of Sarawak, as follows:—

1. This agreement is supplementary to the above-recited agreement of September 5th, 1888, and the said agreement shall be read subject to the provisions of the agreement hereinafter appearing.

2. The State of Sarawak will receive and provide a suitable residence for a British Officer to be called the British Representative who shall be accredited to the Court or the Rajah, and whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all matters affecting the relations of the State of Sarawak with foreign states or the rights and status of foreign nationals and on all matters of defence.

3. The British Representative shall be appointed by His Majesty's Government.

4. The services of the British Representative shall be available for consultation and he shall be entitled to offer his opinion on matters touching the general administration of the State. He shall have access to such State documents and records as concern matters in respect of which his advice is sought under this Clause or under Clause 2 of this Agreement. He shall be entitled to attend meetings of the Supreme Council when such matters are discussed, but he
shall not be entitled to vote therein.

5. His Majesty's Government will at all times to the utmost of its power take whatever steps may be necessary to protect the territory of Sarawak from external hostile attacks.

In Witness Whereof the parties hereto have hereunto set their hands this twenty-second day of November, 1941.

Signed by His Excellency the Government of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for the Malay States for and on behalf of His Majesty's Government in the presence of:

(Sgd.) G.R.B. DON-FOX A.D.C.

(Sgd.) C.V. BROOKE

Signed by His Highness the Rajah of Sarawak in the presence of:

(Sgd.) G.T.M. MacBryan
3. Opinions on the Legal Status of Sarawak

(i) Opinion of the Colonial Office and Foreign Office, May 1945 (S.6)

'From the point of view of international law the State of Sarawak possesses no personality whatever and is simply a territory within the British Empire. The independence of Sarawak is a purely domestic matter with which no foreign state has any concern. From the point of view of United Kingdom municipal law, Sarawak is foreign [sic] in the sense of not being British territory; but from the point of view of international law, Sarawak is British territory and not foreign (vide, for example, the use of the word "foreign" in commercial treaties in connection with imperial preference). Sarawak is simply a British protected state. The Agreements between the British Government and the Rajah of Sarawak have no existence within the realm of international law, but only operate as domestic matters within the Empire'.

(ii) Opinion of Wynn Parry and Arnold D. McNair, September 1945.

The main question put to us is whether the statement headed 'The International Status of Sarawak' numbered S.6 and handed by the representatives of the Colonial Office to the representatives of the Government of Sarawak as being 'the considered opinion of the Colonial Office and the Foreign Office' is a fair and correct statement of the position.

In our opinion it is not, and we shall endeavour to show why.

(a) The legal personality of a Protected State varies according to the degree of dependence upon the Protector, and each case must be considered on its merits. At one extreme there are protected States which are undoubtedly international persons although they have entrusted the conduct of their international relations to their protector; at the other extreme there are States which have lost all their international personality, and are for all international purposes a part of the protecting state, their relations with it being a matter of domestic constitutional law. The words 'protection', 'protectorate', have no single meaning and cover a multitude of relationships.

(b) It is stated (in S.6 referred to above) that 'The Agreements between the British Government and the Rajah of Sarawak have no existence within the realm of international law, but only operate as domestic matters within the Empire'.

We are unable to accept this statement.
The precise date at which Sarawak became an independent State may be difficult to fix.

According to the *Dominions Office and Colonial Office List* 1940, (believed to be the latest), p.542, Great Britain recognized Sarawak as an independent State in 1864. There is some evidence that the United States of America had done the same thing at an earlier date. Then by an Agreement of September 5, 1888, executed by Lord Salisbury, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and Raja Charles Brooke the State of Sarawak 'was placed under the Protection of Her Majesty the Queen'. That Agreement was undoubtedly made between two independent States, operates within the field of International Law and derives its efficacy from that system of law. Its language is such that no other conclusion is possible. It envisages relations between the State of Sarawak and foreign States and provides for their being conducted either by His Majesty's Government or in accordance with its directions, but these foreign relations are the relations of the State of Sarawak. Again, it envisages differences arising between the Government of Sarawak and other Governments, and obliges the Government of Sarawak to abide by the decision of His Majesty's Government upon such differences, but the differences are between Sarawak and other States, not between His Majesty's Government and other States. Again, by Article IV His Majesty's Government received the right to send consuls who shall receive exequaturs in the name of the Government of Sarawak and shall hoist the British flag in their residences, and Article V confers upon British subjects both national and most-favoured-nation treatment.

Article VI requires the consent of His Majesty's Government to cessions of territory by the Raja to any foreign state. All these provisions presuppose the existence of the State of Sarawak as an international person, and the effect of the Agreement is to modify its international personality by making it a Protected State. Just as the English Law of status recognizes legal persons of incomplete personality and capacity, so likewise does international law recognize a variety of status and personality.

What then has happened since 1888 to convert this Agreement and the treaty relations resulting from it from the field of international law into 'domestic matters within the Empire'?

Owing to the military occupation of Sarawak the Government is separated from its records and is not in a position to quote from its files. No importance can be attached to the transference of Sarawak affairs by His Majesty's Government from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office at some time, so we are told, between 1906 and 1912. The change called forth a protest from the Sarawak Government and was ultimately acquiesced in by it as a matter of British domestic convenience on the understanding that it in no way altered the status of Sarawak. Sarawak's foreign relations are for the most part confined to her near neighbours. Two Boundary Agreements were made in 1912 and 1920 with the State of Brunei (See Maxwell's *Treaties and Engagements of the Malay
States, pp. 152-154), and it is significant that they are signed for Brunei by the British Resident and for Sarawak by the Raja's own officer of the appropriate Division. From time to time His Majesty's Government in pursuance of the Agreement of 1888 has made treaties and agreements with other States accepting Sarawak and has previously consulted the Government of Sarawak, for instance, a boundary treaty with the Netherlands Government in 1928 and an agreement with the same Government as to passports in 1926. When such a treaty or agreement requires legislation in Sarawak, it is for the Government of Sarawak to legislate, as in practice it does.

Finally what is the effect of the Agreement of 22 November, 1941, upon the previous state of affairs?

(i) Instead of wiping out the status quo ante and converting a relation between the two countries operating within the field of international law into a domestic matter within the Empire, it proceeds in the first article to re-affirm the vitality of the Agreement of September 5, 1888, by expressing the Agreement of 22 November, 1941, to be supplemental to it.

(ii) It then provides for a British Representative to be 'accredited to the Court of the Rajah' and makes it necessary that his advice should be 'asked and acted upon' upon all external matters, namely, relations of the State of Sarawak with foreign States, rights and status of foreign nationals (which involve obligations towards foreign States) and defence (that is, against foreign States). Moreover, the British Representative may offer his opinion 'on matters touching the general administration of the State', may attend the Supreme Council for certain purposes without power to vote and may attend and address the Council Negri without power to vote.

It may well be that after some years of the operations of this Agreement the influence of the British Representative might become so great that the internal independence of the State of Sarawak would, de facto and by acquiescence, come to an end, but within about one month of the signature of the Agreement Sarawak came under enemy occupation, and it is impossible to say that Sarawak vis-a-vis His Majesty's Government no longer possesses internal sovereignty and independence. It is hardly necessary to say that enemy occupation does not displace sovereignty.

(c) The independent status of Sarawak is accepted in the latest edition of Anson's Law and Customs of the Constitution, Vol.II., Part II (1935) (by Berriedale Keith) pp.106-108. After stating that 'the dependent or protected states may stand in varying degrees of dependence upon the government of this country', the editor continues:

'The Protectorates or Protected States, in which a settled form of government exists - Zanzibar, Tonga, Brunei, North Borneo, Sarawak and the Malay
States - possess these features in common, that the British Government by treaty exercises a control over their foreign relations, and in the first three cases* a jurisdiction over British subjects within their territories. The Malay States are practically controlled in their internal affairs by the advice of a British Resident, a phenomenon formerly exhibited on a large scale in the case of Egypt. In these cases it is not considered necessary to exercise jurisdiction. North Borneo and Sarawak are curious examples of independent sovereignty exercised by British subjects under the protection of the Crown under treaties of 1888, but not within the dominions of the Crown. In Sarawak foreign relations are controlled and questions of succession are determined by the British Government, which also in the case of North Borneo approves the Governor appointed by the Chartered Company. Zanzibar is governed by a Sultan advised by a British Resident, and has executive and legislative Councils: natives fall under the Sultan's Court, Europeans under the Resident's Court. Tonga, a constitutional monarchy, has in minor matters jurisdiction over Europeans'.

(d) Further evidence of the fact of the State of Sarawak being a foreign country is afforded by its position in regard to the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts, 1890 and 1913. These Acts enable the Crown to direct that certain British enactments shall extend 'to any foreign country in which for the time being His Majesty has jurisdiction'. Amongst these enactments has been, since 1913, the Colonial Probates Act, 1892. The British Crown appears to have been advised in or about the year 1927 that it has no power to legislate under the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts in respect, amongst other States, of Sarawak, because it did not assert jurisdiction over British subjects there, and the Colonial Probates (Protected and Mandated Territories) Act, 1927, was passed which empowers the Crown to apply the Colonial Probates Act, 1892 'to any territories being either territories under his Majesty's protection or territories in respect of which a mandate on behalf of the League of Nations has been accepted by His Majesty, to which it cannot be applied by virtue of the provisions of the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts, 1890 and 1913'.

* The fact that in the other Protected States jurisdiction is not asserted necessitated the passing of 17 and 18 Geo. V.c.43, to allow of the recognition of probates granted in such territories. Since 1908 consular jurisdiction is not exercised in Brunei, powers having been given to the Resident by a local law'.
(e) There are other factors which support the view that Sarawak is not an integral part of the British Empire. Not only does Sarawak possess its own flag and currency and postage stamps (as many States forming part of the British Empire do) and an armed force (the Sarawak Rangers), which in the words of Hailsham, _Laws of England_ Vol. XI (dated 1933), Sect. 351, 'is a force under the Rajah's sole control', but its internal independence differentiates it from many or most of those British Protected States which are regarded as part of the British Empire, in two respects: (a) the absence of any right in the British Crown to exercise jurisdiction in Sarawak, the concession of which by the Government of Sarawak appears to be one of the main objects of the pending negotiations (see the minutes of the Meeting held on March 20, 1945) and (b) the absence of any appeal from Sarawak Courts to the Privy Council or to any other British Court. The Following passage may be quoted from Hailsham, _Laws of England_, Vol. XI., Sect. 272, where, after referring to the Agreement of 1888 and the powers conferred thereby upon the British Government, the author continues as follows:-

'Otherwise no intervention in administration is allowed. The administration is controlled by the Rajah and a Supreme Council composed of the heir presumptive (the Tuan Muda), two Europeans and five Malays. There is a large administrative staff and a Chief Justice. No provision is made for British jurisdiction or even for an appeal to the Privy Council', (such as exists in the case of the Federated Malay States, British North Borneo and Brunei (see Hailsham, Vol.IX, Sect.271, note (f)).'

In short, if the statement made by the Colonial Office that 'Sarawak is simply a British Protected State' means that it is a State protected by Great Britain, the claim can be accepted; if it means that Sarawak is British, it goes too far.

(f) The treatment of Sarawak in the _Dominions Office and Colonial Office List_, 1940, (which is believed to be the last issue) lends support to the view that Sarawak is not regarded as an integral part of the British Empire. Part II (c) is described as an Historical and Statistical Account of the Colonies and other Territories with which the Colonial Office is concerned'. This section deals (inter alia) with Malaya which it is stated on p. 380, 'comprises the Colony of the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States of Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, Pahang and the Unfederated States of Johore, Kelah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Perlis. Malaya is also regarded as including the State of Brunei, in
the island of Borneo, of which the Governor of the Straits Settlements is High Commissioner and which, like the Malay States in the Peninsula, is in treaty relationship with Great Britain'.

It will be noted that two other States in the island of Borneo, namely North Borneo and Sarawak are not mentioned as comprised with in Malaya.

Later at p.539 there is an Appendix which gives some account of North Borneo, Sarawak, Trans Jordan and certain miscellaneous British possessions and Protectorates which are not included in the main portion of the Historical and Statistical portion above. On p.542 we are told that in 1864 Great Britain recognized Sarawak as an independent State and the Agreement of 14 June 1888 is summarized.

It is also worthy of note that the members of what is called the Malayan Establishment Staff appear in the Record of Services of Dominions and Colonial Officers, while the members of the Sarawak Service do not. The reason is presumably the fact that the members of the Malayan Service are British civil servants, while the members of the Sarawak service are not and hold contracts from the Sarawak Government.

Again on p.XIV the description of the establishment of the Colonial Office recognizes the distinction between the Malayan States and Sarawak by describing the affairs assigned to the Eastern Department of the Office as follows: 'Hong Kong, Straits Settlements, Malay States, Mauritius, Seychelles and Ceylon. Business connected with the Protected States of Sarawak and North Borneo.'

(g) It is instructive to compare Sarawak with one of the Unfederated Malay States, Kelantan, in 1924. As a result of a Treaty of 10 March 1909 between Great Britain and Siam and an Agreement of 22 October 1910 between Great Britain and the Raja of Kelantan (see Maxwell's Treaties and Engagements affecting the Malay States and Borneo, p.109) Great Britain exercises (or at any rate exercised in 1924) rights of protection over Kelantan which may be summarized as follows:

(i) Kelantan undertakes to have no political relations or dealings with any foreign power or protectorate except through the medium of His Britannic Majesty.

(ii) His Britannic Majesty reserves power to appoint officers to be Adviser and Assistant Adviser in Kelantan, and the Raja of Kelantan 'undertakes to follow and give effect to the advice'.

(iii) Posts, telegraphs and railways are under the control of the Raja.
His Britannic Majesty undertakes not to interfere with the internal administration of Kalantan except as provided in the Agreement so long as nothing is done which is contrary to treaty obligations between His Britannic Majesty and foreign Governments and so long as peace and order and justice are maintained in Kalantan.

An examination of the Agreements between His Britannic Majesty and the Rajah of Sarawak of 1888 and 1941 makes it clear that the rights of the British Crown in the State of Sarawak are less than they were in 1924 in the State of Kelantan.

In the light of the certificate given by the Colonial Office for the purposes of the hearing of the House of Lords in *Duff Development Co. v Government of Kelantan* (1924) A.C. 797 it is instructive to examine the international status of Kelantan at that time as accepted in the House of Lords.

Upon a summons to enforce an award against the Government of Kelantan, the Secretary of State for the Colonies was, in accordance with the usual practice, requested by the Court for information as to the status of Kelantan. The reply from the Colonial Office, dated 9 October 1922, is summarized in the passage about to be quoted from Viscount Finlay's speech. That letter was enough and indeed was conclusive upon the Court, but it enclosed certain documents which enabled the Court to examine the background of the opinion expressed in the letter.

Viscount Finlay (at p.814) said

'It is obvious that for sovereignty there must be a certain amount of independence, but it is not in the least necessary that for sovereignty there should be complete independence. It is quite consistent with sovereignty that the sovereign may in certain respects be dependent upon another Power; the control, for instance, of foreign affairs may be completely in the hands of a protecting Power, and there may be agreements or treaties which limit the power of the sovereign even in internal affairs without entailing a loss of the position of a sovereign Power. In the present case it is obvious that the Sultan of Kelantan is to a great extent in the hands of His Majesty's Government. The reply of the Colonial Office to Master Jelf on October 9, 1922, states that Kelantan is an independent State in the Malay Peninsula and that the Sultan is the sovereign ruler, that His Majesty's Government does not exercise or claim any rights of sovereignty or jurisdiction over Kelantan and that the Sultan makes laws, dispenses justice through Courts, and,
generally speaking, exercises without question the usual attributes of sovereignty.'

Viscount Finlay then analysed the Agreement of 22 October 1910 and considered that 'while there are extensive limitations upon its independence, the enclosed documents (in the letter from the Colonial Office) do not negative the view that there is quite enough independence left to support the claim to sovereignty.'

In our opinion this passage is applicable to the State of Sarawak. Indeed, Sarawak's is an *a fortiori* case. A comparison of the Agreement of 22 October 1910 with Kelantan and the Treaty of 5 September 1888 and Agreement of 22 November 1941 with the Rajah of Sarawak leaves no doubt in our mind that the State of Sarawak possessed after the Agreement of 22 November 1941 a larger degree of sovereignty than the State of Kelantan did in 1921.

(h) It is also instructive to examine a case affecting what is now one of the Unfederated Malay States - Johore - *Mighell v Sultan of Johore* (1894) 1 Q.B.149 (C.A.). By a treaty of December 11, 1885, the defendant Sultan maintained armed forces and a postal system, dispensed justice through properly constituted Courts, conferred titles of honour, 'and, generally speaking, exercised without question the usual attributes of a sovereign ruler'. By a treaty of 1885 the Sultan's territory was protected from hostile attack by the British Governor of the Straits Settlements and 'the Sultan bound himself not to negotiate treaties or to enter into any engagement with any foreign State'. In short, the Sultan had parted with his external sovereignty but retained his internal sovereignty. The Secretary of State for the Colonies, when the Court desired to ascertain the status of the Sultan, replied that Johore was an independent State and territory, that the defendant was the present sovereign ruler thereof, and that the relations between the Sultan and Her Majesty the Queen were relations of alliance and not of suzerainty and dependence. The Court of Appeal had no hesitation in holding that the letter from the Colonial Office was 'conclusive that the defendant was an independent sovereign' and added 'For this purpose all sovereigns are equal. The independent sovereign of the smallest state stands on the same footing as the monarch of the greatest.' Thus in 1894 the Colonial Office certified that a Protected State the external relations of which were conducted by His Majesty's Government but which internally possessed the usual attributes of a sovereign, was an independent State, and it does not appear that the condition of Johore then differed greatly from that of Sarawak today. Moreover, it is significant that the Court of Appeal regarded itself as applying international law and not the domestic law of the British Empire.
Finally, we may say that the remark (contained in Memorandum S.6) that 'no foreign State has any concern' with the independence of Sarawak is not understood. The British Crown and the Government of Sarawak are capable of managing and adjusting their relations themselves, and it has not been suggested on behalf of the Government of Sarawak that any other State is interested in the matter.

We shall now answer the specific questions put to us in our Instructions.

1. For the reasons stated above we do not consider that Memorandum S.6 is an adequate statement of the position.

2. The combined effect of the Agreements of 1888 and 1941 upon the internal administration of Sarawak is twofold. (a) The conduct of Sarawak's foreign relations conceded to His Majesty's Government by the Agreement of 1888 and elaborated in the Agreement of 1941 carries with it the powers necessary to implement these relations internally where required, and if the Government of Sarawak declined to implement internally a treaty or other agreement with another State purporting to affect the State of Sarawak, His Majesty's Government would be entitled to take the steps necessary for the application and enforcement of that Agreements. Moreover, the British representative accredited to the Court of the Rajah has access to the relevant Sarawak documents and records. (b) In what may be described as purely internal affairs, the British Representative has a right to offer his opinion upon matters touching the general administration of the State. In matters on which his advice is sought he has access to Sarawak State documents and records. He may attend certain meetings of the Supreme Council and all meetings of the Council Negri. These rights in themselves do not give His Majesty's Government the right to intervene in purely internal affairs.

3. In our opinion Sarawak is a Protected State possessing incomplete international personality but not an integral part of the British Empire.

4. and 5. The statement quoted in this question from the Colonial Office's Memorandum S.6 contains a twofold assertion, namely that responsibility for the administration of Sarawak already rests upon His Majesty's Government (a) in fact and (b) in public estimation.

As regards (a) we assume that by the words 'in fact' the writer of the memorandum meant 'in law'. For the reasons discussed at length above, we are of opinion that, as a matter of law the extent of the responsibility of His Majesty's Government for the administration of
the affairs of Sarawak is as follows and no further:—

(i) His Majesty's Government is responsible to other states for the conduct of the external affairs of Sarawak, including the rights of foreign nationals and the defence of Sarawak; and

(ii) As regards the internal affairs of Sarawak His Majesty's Government is responsible to the extent to which the Agreements of 1888 and 1941 confer rights and impose duties upon His Majesty's Government in relation thereto, including by necessary implication the right of requiring any internal legislation to be passed, which may be necessary to give effect to action taken by His Majesty's Government in the matter of the foreign relations of Sarawak.

His Majesty's Government have no further responsibility in law (or in fact) for the administration of Sarawak.

As regards (b) on the facts and documents before us we find it difficult to appreciate the accuracy of this assertion.

In view of the extent of the existing rights of His Majesty's Government which have been stated above, the assertion under discussion involves the allegation that a public opinion exists, of which His Majesty's Government ought to take notice, demanding that His Majesty's Government should take control or a substantial measure of control of the internal affairs of Sarawak.

We know of no circumstances which would justify such a public opinion, assuming it to exist; and there is before us one fact, which would seem to rob any such opinion of any justification, namely the admission of the Colonial Office that there exists no ground for complaint as regards the manner in which the internal affairs of Sarawak were administered before the Japanese occupation.

In view of the extent of the existing rights of His Majesty's Government under the existing Agreements and in view of this very important admission by the Colonial Office, it is difficult to appreciate either that any such body of public opinion exists, or, if it does exist, that, at the expense of the State of Sarawak, it should be heeded by His Majesty's Government, the relevant department of which Government has made the important admission referred to above. Speaking with all respect, if the suggested opinion exists (which we doubt), the case would appear to be one calling for the education of the public opinion in question, rather than one for bringing pressure upon or taking unilateral action against a state, with whom His Majesty's Government has two existing Agreements and against the administration of whose internal affairs no complaint can be made.
In the above circumstances we are of opinion that the Government of Sarawak should dispute with the Colonial Office the correctness of the view put forward in the Memorandum S.6 and the twofold assertion made in the Memorandum S.5 and referred to at the beginning of this paragraph of our Opinion, and in particular should request the Colonial Office to justify its assertion that a body of public opinion exists, of which His Majesty's Government ought to take official notice, holding the view that a case exists for the interference of His Majesty's Government in the internal administration of Sarawak.
Appendix II

The Brooke Succession

(i) The Political Will of James Brooke, 1867.

I JAMES BROOKE Rajah of Sarawak of Burrator in the County of Devon give devise and bequeath all that my Sovereignty of Sarawak aforesaid and all the rights and privileges whatsoever thereto belonging unto my Nephew Charles Johnson Brooke Tuan Muda of Sarawak Son of The Reverend Francis Charles Johnson and the heirs male of his Body lawfully issuing and in default of such issue unto my Nephew Stuart Johnson another son of the said Francis Charles Johnson and the heirs male of his Body lawfully issuing and in default of such issue I give devise and bequeath the said Sovereignty and Rights and privileges unto Her Majesty the Queen of England her heirs and assigns for ever and I appoint Miss Angela Georgina Burdett Coutts of Stratton Street Piccadilly and Thomas Fairbairn of the City of Manchester Esquire and John Abel Smith of Chester Square in the County of Middlesex Esquire M.P. Trustees of this my Will to see the purposes aforesaid carried into effect ...

(ii) The Political Will of Charles Brooke, 1913.

... In confirmation of the will of my predecessor I GIVE DEVISE AND BEQUEATH my sovereignty of Sarawak and all the rights and privileges thereto belonging in manner following (that is to say) Unto my eldest son Vyner and the heirs male of his body with remainder to my second son Bertram and the Heirs male of his body with remainder to my third son Harry and the heirs male of his body with remainder to the son of my late younger brother Stuart and the heirs made of his body with remainder to H.M. the King of England ...
WE, VYNER BROOKE, herewith take oath upon the Bible to establish clearly and honourably our attitude concerning the matter set forth in the following Articles:

Article 1.
We undertake to acknowledge and support the religion of Islam together with the laws and customs pertaining to that religion.

Article 2.
We undertake that such laws and customs as affect the Malay race shall follow the principles laid down by this Government in the past. And no question of any change or alteration shall be entertained except such as may be in accordance with the opinions and deliberations of the members of the Council Negri.

Article 3.
We undertake on behalf of ourselves and of our successors as Rajahs of Sarawak to abide by the conditions expressed in the Will of Rajah Sir Charles Brooke.

And we swear to obey and to carry out the wishes of the late Ruler, our honoured Father, as forming the Constitution of this State.
REPORTS of Anthony Brooke's term as Rajah Muda and Officer Administering the Government in 1939 persuaded Vyner Brooke that his nephew was 'as yet unfitted' for such responsibility. Sir Shenton Thomas dismissed the charges as insubstantial and defended him strongly. However, the Rajah's confidence in Anthony was shaken and this was one of the factors which ultimately made cession possible.

The general tenor of the complaints about Anthony can be found in Boyd's notes on a letter from the Rajah to H.B. Crocker, some months after the Rajah's return to Kuching. The letter listed three principal complaints: about a circular on officers' debts and Anthony's request to the Treasury for $40,000 with which to cover them; that he was supercilious and would not take advice; and that he judged his officers on the basis of their horoscopes. The Rajah reported that Anthony was unpopular and the administrative service had threatened to resign en masse if he succeeded to the Raj. Some officers had apparently told him that they would prefer the British government to take over than to have Anthony as Rajah.

The Rajah was given the impression by Archer and others that promotion to high office had gone to Anthony's head. He was supposed to have stood on ceremony and to have exploited the trappings of office. This was particularly damaging (regardless of whether or not it was well founded) because Vyner Brooke detested such behaviour in his officers and would have regarded it as doubly reprehensible in his nephew and probable successor.

The Crossley case highlighted the fact that most administrative officers were substantially in debt. This

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1 Notes by Boyd, Boyd Papers.
was a situation which had become widely accepted in Sarawak and was generally welcomed by the Chinese merchants as a guarantee of their security. But Anthony, fresh from his experiences in the Malayan Civil Service where indebtedness was regarded as intolerable, was determined to put an end to the practice. On 30 March 1939, with the Rajah's agreement, he issued a circular to government officers calling on them in the Rajah's name to provide in confidence full details of their private financial situation including overdrafts and the nature of their security. He added that it might be necessary for the Rajah to reprimand officers who were in serious financial difficulties because of 'undue extravagance', but there would be no other disciplinary action. When it was revealed that members of the Service were in debt to the tune of almost $50,000, Anthony directed that the debts be paid with government funds and that the officers concerned should repay the government in monthly instalments.

There were mixed reactions to the circular. Some outstation officers welcomed it as a means of transferring debts to the State and took the opportunity of making last-minute purchases of radios and other appliances. Others either resented what they regarded as interference in their personal affairs or suspected that the exercise was really designed to commute the debts of Anthony's associates, including his brother-in-law to be, Donald Hudden. The fact that the Rajah had himself authorized the circular before his departure was disregarded.

Another factor which probably worked against Anthony was the resentment which many senior officers felt about his overnight promotion from fledgling District Officer to Officer Administering the Government - a position for which there were other contenders. He may also have been

1 'Circular signed by Anthony Brooke, Rajah Muda, dated 30 March 1939', Boyd Papers.
2 Personal communication from Mr E. Banks, 25 November 1975.
less than tactful in his dealings with Archer who worked immediately beneath him and probably took the brunt of criticisms which could not be made openly. No doubt there was also a certain amount of antagonism towards Anthony's close relationship with two or three officers who were regarded by some as opportunists clinging to the coat-tails of power. His position in the Administrative Service had always been somewhat anomalous: on the one hand there was the feeling that he should not be regarded as anything more than an ordinary member of the Service dependent on his own talents for promotion. On the other hand, it could not really be overlooked that he was the obvious heir to the Raj and therefore occupied a rather special position.

While there is no evidence that during his term as Rajah Muda he depended on astrology in his decision-making, his appreciation of individual officers may have been influenced by their 'stars'. Anthony had always been interested in metaphysics, something which he might well have imbibed from either parent. In London he consulted one of the best-known mediums of the day, Estelle Roberts, and met Horace Leaf, another medium and one of the chief publicists of spiritualism. In December 1938 he wrote from Oxford to his sister Jean who was also interested in spiritualism and worried about the possibility of her husband being called to active service:

Personally I am much impressed that both Astrology and Spiritualism have come to the independent conclusions that 1) Hitler will be dead within 2 years (and possibly Mussolini too) 2) That there will be no war involving us next year or, according to Estelle Roberts for many years. Both Estelle Roberts and Astrology consider Germany due for an internal revolution within the next 18 months. Unfortunately I have no documents handy but you may take it that spiritualists are all with one accord quite certain that there won't
be a war next year.¹

He believed that it was R.H. Naylor's 'uncannily accurate' astrological forecasts during the Munich crisis which were responsible for the slogan of Lord Beaverbrook's *Daily Express* that there would not be war in either 1938 or 1939.

What passed between uncle and nephew during the ten days before Anthony left Kuching in October 1939 is not known, but his departure was a few weeks earlier than he had originally planned. Writing to Sir John Graham Kerr more than twelve months later, Boyd related an incident which he believed might well have had something to do with Anthony's downfall:

The Rajah got back on October 9 and on October 21 he held one of his roulette parties at the Club. The R.M. was there and apparently, before the roulette was finished, began doing some card tricks (at which he is pretty good) with the unfortunate result, for him, that all the ladies deserted the roulette and began to watch the conjuring. I'm told that the Rajah left in a huff, and on October 23 (the first available ship) the R.M. left Sarawak 'on two months leave'.²

Boyd understood that there had been 'a bit of a row', but that Anthony had not been informed of his dismissal until after his wedding. Shortly before Christmas the Rajah wrote to a friend of Boyd's (possibly Crocker) that 'Peter found the title of R.M. too much for him', but it was not until 17 January that Anthony was deprived of his title by Proclamation. Boyd was hard put to explain the Rajah's three month delay in taking a step which showered Sarawak with embarrassing publicity:

*It is possible, and if one were dealing with reasonable beings, probable, that something serious was found out between Oct. 23 and*

¹ Anthony Brooke to Jean Halsey, 13 December 1938, Brooke Papers, Box 10/2.
² Bod to Kerr, 15 February 1940, Boyd Papers.
Jan. 17 but, knowing Sarawak as I do, it is equally probable that some small incident (like the roulette) was discovered which finally spurred the Rajah to action. Again, it is possible that when Peter got the news [of his dismissal] in Singapore he said something in a letter or telegram that put the Rajah's back up.¹

Boyd also believed that the administrative changes made by Anthony may have precipitated the trouble. Anthony's restoration of the Fifth Division and his intention of reviving the Residential system can hardly have been rejected by the Rajah but the promotions he made were seen by some people as expensive and unwise. 'Even if it had been sound policy in itself, Boyd wrote, 'it was obviously very unwise to do it in the absence of the Rajah when the R.M. was only acting in his place, particularly if one knows the Rajah'.²

Sir Shenton Thomas' Letter to the Rajah

Government House
Singapore
18th January 1940

I had a talk with Lewis* yesterday, and afterwards he and his wife lunched with us.

I ought to say that Peter and his wife stayed with us for a few days before they went home, and he told me that you and his father were displeased with him and why. We talked it over and, while I was of course quite unable to judge how far you would have agreed with what he had done. I told him that it is a well-recognised rule that one who is appointed to act as he was must be guided in his actions by what he believes to be the wishes of the person who appoints him.

Lewis gave me a whole list of instances in which you consider that Peter has gone wrong, and on nearly all of them I feel I cannot offer any useful comment as I know so little of Sarawak or what your wishes would be. But on two matters I hope you will allow me to write a little.

The first is Peter's action in regard to indebtedness. He told me that before you went home you had authorised the issue of a circular to your officers requiring them

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¹ Ibid.
² Ibid.
* H. Thackwell Lewis, Sarawak's Judicial Commissioner.
to disclose their debts. The replies came in after you had left and showed that the Service was in debt to the extent of some 30,000 dollars. Lewis said 50,000 dollars but the actual figure is immaterial having regard to the large amount that was disclosed. Peter was gravely concerned, as was only to be supposed. He transferred to the Astana Account from Government funds the sum that was owing, and paid the debts, ordering all officers concerned to pay it back by monthly instalments. I suggested that, if he was not certain of your wishes, he could have issued an order that officers must pay off their debts direct to the firms concerned by monthly instalments, and have taken steps to see that it was carried out. His reply was that he hated to think that officers in the Sarawak service were so heavily in debt to local firms and preferred that they should owe the money to the Government.

Now, whether you approve his action or not, there is no doubt that he took it in what he conceived to be the interests of Sarawak, and I consider that he had a good deal of justification for what he did. To have ordered the officers concerned to pay their debts direct to the local firms would have meant that many months would have elapsed before they were cleared off, and in that time more debts might have been incurred. We know that here by experience. But if an officer knows that the Government has stepped in and has taken over his debts, he must be a very poor sort of man or very foolhardy if he incurs fresh debts before the others are cleared off. I think therefore that what Peter did certainly put the Government right in the eyes of the firms and would have had a salutary effect on the officers concerned. I think, too, that the magnitude of the sum must be taken into account. The greater the sum the greater the discredit. I should be horrified to learn that my officers were in debt to anything like the same extent.

We treat debt very seriously here and in the last five years I have dismissed a number of officers for it. I enclose a copy of our General Orders on the subject. On occasions here we have taken over the debts of European officers by lending them the money to pay, and in the same way we have taken over the debts of at least three Sultans, because we prefer that a Sultan should owe money to the Government rather than to firms. The money is not lost. As it was paid to the Astana account, I suppose that technically the officers concerned owe it to you. That may well be undesirable, but can easily be remedied by transferring the debt back to the Government account where it will appear as advances.

The other matter on which I feel able to comment is the furnishing of the house that Pepys is to occupy. As you probably know, Pepys has had a house in Johore which is completely furnished. Plate, cutlery, linen, china and
glass everything is provided. He has nothing of his own. If he had been required to pay all these things for Sarawak he would probably not have accepted the post. Peter's misdeed is that he gave Pepys carte blanche, in other words he trusted him. He had met Pepys and had heard about him from me. He knew, as I know, that Pepys would not have taken advantage of this trust. He would have sought authority before spending any sum that might appear excessive. I cannot regard Peter's action as rash in the circumstances. If you are going to have a really senior officer in Sarawak, his house must be furnished decently. If that officer is to come from Malaya, where all houses are really well furnished, then the furniture in his house in Sarawak must be met by the Government.

At the end of my conversation with Lewis I wired to you asking you to defer publication of your Proclamation cancelling the appointment of Peter as Rajah Muda. While I write this I have received your reply that I was too late. I am more sorry than I can say. You have, of course, a perfect right to appoint or demote as you see fit, but not to brand a man publicly and to demote him with ignominy until, at least, you have heard his side. You have revoked Peter's appointment because he (to quote the Proclamation) 'is not yet fitted to exercise the responsibilities of this high position' and this is being published abroad without his being given the slightest chance to defend himself. He left Sarawak to meet his bride and while he was away he was ordered not to return and is now deprived of his position on the ground that he is unfit to hold it. I cannot conceive more derogatory treatment.

I have no doubt that what he did while administering the Government was not always palatable to some of your officers and that since your return every possible grievance against him has been raked up, but I beg leave to believe that as a whole his actions have been welcomed by the Sarawak Service in general. I would remind you, too, that he rendered you a very great service in enabling you to get rid of some most unworthy officers a year ago, and that without any previous experience in responsible posts he was suddenly given the rank of Rajah Muda and was appointed to act for you in your absence. He was left to do the best he could and I say quite definitely that such of his work that came before me was extremely well done. I think some gratitude is due to him for all this. He may have committed errors of judgement, he may have been carried away by his position, but how many of us at his age would have done better. And whatever he has done has been for the love of Sarawak and he does not deserve to be put to shame. In every word he has ever spoken to me he has been completely loyal to you as Rajah and I am sorry to say that I consider the terms of your Proclamation unjust. By some of your officers it may be welcomed as a public indication that they have got their own back, but by many others it will be deplored. I am afraid Peter has lost face irretrievably and, as I have
telegraphed to you, I think it likely that the Proclamation constitutes a libel and that, although you yourself are immune from legal proceedings action could be brought against the Chief Secretary who signed it, the Government Printer who printed it, and perhaps the officer who drafted it.

I wish I could have written less frankly, but in a matter of this sort the only two courses are to say what is in my mind or to say nothing at all. I feel very gravely uneasy, partly by reason of the regard which I have for you and partly because of the interest which I know that you take in the welfare of the natives of Sarawak. I cannot believe that, when you signed the Proclamation, you realised the deplorable impression that it will create. In the eyes of the world Peter will lie under an undefined stigma, at the mercy of anyone's speculative conclusions. In the eyes of those who know Sarawak it will be regarded as a set back to administrative efficiency. I must tell you that it will be quite useless to enlist the services of a man like Pepys unless the recognised traditions of the Service are observed.

As you say Peter's father agrees with your decision, I hope you will see your way to send him a copy of this letter.

(Sgd.) T.S.W. THOMAS

The Straits Times Editorial of 6 July 1939

When the Committee of Administration was re-constituted in its present form some five years ago, the four Residents of Divisions ... were appointed ex-officio members. This was excellent in theory but not so good in practice, since three of these Residents did not live in the capital and so were unable to attend meetings or give opinions on matters discussed. The committee was therefore controlled by a strong departmental majority, and when two of the Residents retired on pension they were not replaced. Finally, when in August last year the last active administration member was transferred to an outstation, the State began to be governed by a committee no single member of which had any personal experience of the day-to-day job of running the country outside the capital. The results of this were inevitable, and soon became apparent. Authority was concentrated more and more in the capital, the outstations were neglected, and the men on the spot — namely, the District Officers, — began to feel that they did not possess the confidence of headquarters. Expenditure, too, seemed to them to be unfairly distributed, since though the most stringent economy was enforced on the outstations — often at the cost of social services — there appeared to be no lack of money in the capital.
As time went on, it became plain that the Committee of Administration - which was controlled to a great extent by an "inner cabinet" of two officers - was putting into force a policy which, in the view of the administrative officers in the district, had little in common with the traditional policy of the Brooke family. Although the Government under this regime reached a high pitch of efficiency, this was too often only "paper efficiency", and in some cases it was gained at the expense of human values. While the service, as an administrative organisation, was functioning with clockwork efficiency, the true interests of the people were suffering.

It may be said that the Rajah should have seen this, and checked it, but it must be remembered that there are two sides to every question, and there was for some time no proof that the critics of the policy of the Committee of Administration were right. Moreover ... it would have been a serious matter for the Rajah to refuse to endorse the policy framed after careful consideration by a group of his most senior officers. Matters came to a head, however, late in March, when the Rajah Muda ... presided at a meeting of the Committee of Administration and pointed out the divergence between the policy then being pursued and the traditional policy of his family. Since several of the European members of the committee (and it should be noted that no Asiatic members had attended meetings or had any say on the committee for a long time) were unable to agree that their policy was the wrong one, their resignations were inevitable and they retired from the service on generous terms ...

Sarawak has now reverted to its traditional policy of 'the country for the natives', and her critics may rest assured that at no time in her history has her administration been on a sounder basis. The personal loyalty of both the officers of the service and the people to the Rajah and to all members of his family is unbounded, since they know what, whatever happens, the Brooke family have their welfare at heart, and will work for them unceasingly ...
LIEUT. Col. A.A. Conlon, head of the Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs (DORCA) attached to General Sir Thomas Blamey's Land Forces Headquarters (LHQ) in Melbourne, in February 1943 proposed to General V.P.H. Stantke the creation of an 'Australian Administrative Corps' which would assume control of the Australian New Guinea Administrative Unit (ANGAU) and make plans for the military administration of other areas when they were taken by Australian troops. The Administrative Corps was not established but Blamey's resentment of the Army Department's own efforts to become involved in civil affairs meant that the responsibility remained with LHQ and effectively with Conlon.

Blamey pre-empted the responsibility for military administration in Australian-occupied areas by forestalling an effort by the Minister for External Territories, Senator Fraser, to establish a departmental organization along the lines of the British planning units functioning in London. Professor G.W. Paton of Melbourne University had been appointed chairman of a committee to rehabilitate Australian Territories in 1943 and after studying British and American

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1 Conlon was in many ways an extraordinary man. A medical student at Sydney University in the 1930's, he was greatly influenced by the libertarian philosopher, Professor John Anderson, and was active in student politics. Through his connections as student representative on the University Senate, he was appointed manpower officer for the university in 1939. This in turn brought him into contact with General Stantke, head of the Army's Adjutant-General's Branch at LHQ whom he persuaded to establish a research section. Impressed with Conlon's work, Blamey had the section upgraded to DORCA and placed directly under him in 1943. Its staff was also augmented with a number of academics brought together through Conlon's influence. DORCA's work involved everything from finding an alternative source of quinine to the question of changing from a military to a civil administration in Papua New Guinea, its most important responsibility. As Peter Coleman noted in _The Bulletin_, 28 September 1963, there is a crying need for a biography of Conlon whose brief but brilliant career as a backstage politician reveals a great deal about the nature of the Australian political system. He was also an important focus and catalyst of the intellectual life of his day. Impressive tribute to his influence has been paid by a number of significant Australians in the edited transcript of a series of interviews conducted by the poet John Thompson and published by the N.S.W. Benevolent Society, _Alfred Conlon: A Memorial By Some Of His Friends_, Sydney 1963.
ideas on military government he presented a report in January 1944.\(^1\) However, Blamey insisted that because control of Papua New Guinea would remain with the army for some time, the responsibility for its administration should be his.\(^2\) Unlike Britain and America, therefore, Australia did not possess its own specialized civil affairs section under the charge of a ministerial department. Inevitably, this allowed Conlon a good deal more room for manoeuvre than was possible for his British counterparts.

The question of the military administration of Borneo was raised for the first time between Britain and Australia in April-May 1944 when Blamey, who was in London for the Imperial Conference, had preliminary discussions on problems of military administration with the Under-Secretary of State at the War Office, Sir Frederick Bovenschen. The Australian military representative in London also had talks with Major-General Hone of the Malayan Planning Unit. The crucial question affecting Borneo, of course, was who would have the task of military reoccupation. General Douglas Macarthur’s consuming interest was with the Philippines but it seemed possible at first that his forces might later turn south-west towards the Netherlands East Indies to deal with the Japanese there. Alternatively, the responsibility might be given to Australian forces under ultimate American command. The only positive outcome of the London talks was an agreement that the War Office would send a liaison mission to SWPA headquarters. However, when the mission reached Melbourne in December 1944 en route for Macarthur’s headquarters in Manila it seemed possible that Borneo would be reoccupied by Australian forces. Blamey felt that there was no need for the mission to go on to Manila and that it should remain in Melbourne, reporting through him to the War Office. But the War Office was loath to abandon the original plan and two members of the mission were sent to the Philippines in July.

Another contingency discussed in London was the formation


\(^2\) Personal information from Mr W. Granger.
of a joint Anglo-Australian military administration for Borneo. This was the subject of some correspondence, but no real progress was made and it was eventually agreed on Blamey's suggestion that a War Office liaison officer should be sent to Blamey's headquarters. Col. L.M. Taylor accordingly arrived in Melbourne in December 1944. By this time the Borneo Planning Unit was in the process of being placed on an operational footing as '50 Civil Affairs Unit' (50 CAU) and both the War Office and the Colonial Office were anxious to finalize matters. Col. F.E. Stafford, who had been designated Controller of Finance, and the Unit's civilian adviser, Dr Percival Dingle, were despatched to Melbourne in December to arrange for its accommodation in Australia and for the secondment of suitable Australian personnel. An advance party under Col. W.R. Rolleston left England in February for Australia and was followed by Macaskie and the main party in March. Clearly, the intention of the Colonial Office and the War Office was that 50 CAU should be about 85 per cent British with little more than token Australian participation.

Meanwhile, Conlon had been trying to find out what Macarthur's plans were for military administration. His second-in-command, Captain J. Kerr, was told by an American officer, Brig. General C.R. Fellers, in Sydney in September 1944 that the military administration of Borneo was still an academic question. He believed that the British would prefer to launch an attack on the Netherlands East Indies from Australia rather than invading Burma and Malaya. However, if Borneo was to be an American responsibility, he thought that the ANGAU pattern of administration would be employed there. According to Fellers, Macarthur did not believe that the elaborate plans for civil affairs in Europe were appropriate to SWPA. He would not care whether Australian or British arrangements were made and would leave it to the two governments to decide between them. For his part, Fellers thought that there was no point in having detailed discussions with the British until the picture became clearer.¹

The problem was that planning was entirely in the hands of Macarthur's General Headquarters (GHQ). In mid-1944 it seemed likely that Australian forces would assist in the reoccupation of the Philippines, after which Macarthur would make a drive south-west to the Netherlands East Indies. In October, Blamey was told that the 1st Australian Corps would only be involved in attacks on Mindanao and Jolo in March and April, followed by advances on Kudat (North Borneo) and Labuan in June. However, in early February 1945 Lieut. General F.H. Berryman passed on the instruction from GHQ that the 9th Division was to secure the Jesselton-Brunei Bay-Miri area and arrange paratroop attacks on Sandakan and Kuching to release prisoners while the 7th Division was engaged on Tarakan.\(^1\) The capture of Borneo was Macarthur's sop to Curtin and Blamey for Australia's exclusion from the Philippines campaign.\(^2\)

The impact of all this on Conlon's thinking cannot be shown but it is a reasonable conjecture that by late 1944 he was determined to see an Australian military administration in Borneo. The British had to be mollified and it may have been for this reason that Blamey asked Sir Frederick Bovenschen to send out a civil affairs staff officer to assist in liaison with British planning. By the time Colonel Taylor arrived in December it was quite clear that Blamey favoured an Australian civil affairs authority for Borneo. Blamey also made it very clear that the war establishment prepared by the War Office for 50 CAU was inappropriate to the operational phase and should be revised. After some communication between LHQ Melbourne and London in early 1945 it was eventually conceded by the War Office that an Australian civil affairs organization for Borneo should be set up with an Australian war establishment. For his part, Blamey undertook to use as many of the suitable British officers as possible. Nevertheless, Blamey and Conlon were determined that the projected British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit (BBCAU) should be a predominantly Australian affair. Although BBCAU was later to be known affectionately

as 'B Cow', in Conlon's eyes it seems to have been more of a Trojan horse: a means of securing the post-war control of the three Borneo territories for the benefit of Australia's strategic and other interests. This is probably why it was so important to Conlon that as many Australian officers as possible should be seconded to BBCAU and that 50 CAU should be kept out of the picture as long as possible.

One of Conlon's problems was that Macaskie had already been designated by the British as Chief Civil Affairs Officer for Borneo and he and his senior officers were almost certainly bound to observe the policy of the Colonial Office. Consequently he made a determined effort to keep them in the wings as long as possible. Some weeks before the British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit was authorized by Blamey, Lieut. Col. K.C. McMullen, commander of the Islands Region of ANGAU, was called back to Australia to raise a civil affairs detachment. After a conversation with Blamey on 23 April, Conlon wrote to Berryman that he envisaged the establishment of four Civil Affairs detachments for Borneo with a headquarters for McMullen at corps headquarters. McMullen's detachment would be 'predominantly Australian' and it would be 'difficult, if not impossible' to use most of the 35 British 50 CAU officers during the operational phase. He had given instructions that they should 'concentrate' at Ingleburn which would be 'a sort of rear headquarters until it is prudent to send them in'.

Conlon had also told Macaskie that the Colonial Office would not be recognized as having any authority during the operational phase.

When Blamey announced the formation of BBCAU at the end of April 1945 he directed that the best possible use should be made of the British officers available but that the Unit was to communicate with LHQ and the Allied Intelligence Bureau (AIB) and through Conlon. A British officer was subsequently made the acting commander of one detachment and twelve others joined McMullen's detachment but Conlon was still at pains to keep the British component to a minimum. In mid-June when the 9th Division had already landed at Brunei Bay most of the British personnel were still at Ingleburn and McMullen had to

1 It was also known less affectionately as 'Bludgers, Bastards, Cunts and Urgers'. Personal communication from Mr Peter Ryan, 21 September 1976.

appeal to divisional headquarters for Macaskie and 13 other British officers with specialized skills to be sent forward. Major-General C.F. Wootten, who was then commanding the 9th Division at Labuan, agreed that the existing BBCAU headquarters and staff, consisting of only one detachment, was 'totally inadequate' but Lieut. General Sir Leslie Morshead at Morotai did not receive his message until 24 June. Stantke authorized the expansion of BBCAU a few days later and ordered Macaskie and five others to Labuan immediately but it was not until 22 July that Macaskie assumed command, the main body arriving some weeks later. Even then, Macaskie was virtually impotent. Unable to influence the war establishment drawn up for BBCAU he now found that he was unable to post its officers. All matters of this kind had to be referred to Conlon who was evidently hoping to direct the Borneo civil affairs situation by remote control.

In the meantime, Blamey had written to Morshead explaining the background of BBCAU. In this letter, which the was historian Gavin Long believes was drafted by someone in DORCA, Blamey said that there had been 'one or two difficulties' with senior officers and that there was some delicacy in explaining the situation to the Australian government, which had been so far disinclined to accept full responsibility for military administration in Morshead's area of command. As if to emphasize Australian interest in Borneo, he mentioned a proposal that an economist from the Department of Post-War Reconstruction should visit Borneo to make 'an Australian appreciation of the economic position of the territories for obvious reasons'. However, he stressed the 'need to proceed with care and circumspection in the interests of our relations with the U.K.'.

In a further note, Morshead was warned that some of the civil affairs advisers on whom he might have to rely (i.e. the British officers of 50 CAU) were not of satisfactory quality. However, Morshead was under pressure from Wootten to untie Macaskie's hands and ensure that BBCAU was properly

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1 Mr Peter Ryan has confirmed this. Personal communication, 21 September 1976.
3 Ibid.
designed to 'fit and suit British Borneo as regards the administration of civil affairs'.\(^1\) Discussions with Wootten and Macaskie later caused Morshead to recommend that Col. Rolleston should be appointed Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Adviser under Macaskie.

Although Conlon had failed to prevent Macaskie and Rolleston from taking effective command of BBCAU, he was not a man who conceded defeat easily. In mid-October, Macaskie was recalled from Labuan to Melbourne for 'consultations' at LHQ and, as he told Dingle and Gent later, it was clear that Conlon was making every effort to have him removed on the grounds either of inefficiency or physical disability\(^2\) and replaced by Col. H.H. Goss, a New Zealander who was presumably more amenable to Conlon's way of thinking. Macaskie survived this threat and Conlon's failure to gain support for his plan suggests that the power which he had wielded through Blamey was not always decisive. Nevertheless, the delays brought about by Conlon caused a good deal of anger and frustration among the British officers who shortly after their arrival at Ingleburn had heard rumours that Australia intended to have the Borneo territories for itself. Feelings ran high and on one occasion Conlon, who happened to be visiting the camp, was physically assaulted.\(^3\) Although the official war histories have been at pains to play down the conflict, Gavin Long acknowledged that there was serious friction:

In August some of the British officers were convinced that senior officers still in Australia were being prevented from going to Borneo, and remarks which had been made suggested to them that the Australian Government hoped to take over British Borneo. It seems that such remarks were made, but that they were irresponsible; the fact remains that they were believed...\(^4\)

Since Conlon did not place on record his ideas about the future of Borneo, it is difficult to reconstruct the thinking which lay behind his efforts to secure a dominant Australian position there.

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1 Ibid.
2 Macaskie to Dingle, 20 October 1945; Macaskie to Gent, November 1945. Macaskie papers, File 1.
3 Personal information.
by means of the military administration. It is clear that he anticipated independence for Papua New Guinea twenty or thirty years after the end of the war and thought that Australian policy should be geared accordingly. It is also clear that, like many other Australians whose thinking had been sharply jolted by the fall of Singapore, he was sceptical of the ability and the right of the British and Dutch to re-establish control over their pre-war territories in the Malay archipelago. According to Professor Julius Stone, who worked for DORCA as an adviser on international law, 'Conlon's general view was that the continuance of neither the British nor the Dutch colonial regimes to our North were in Australia's medium term strategic interests'. Although Australia's official policy during the war was to support the restoration of British and Dutch authority, Conlon was at pains to keep both governments in the dark about DORCA's plans. When one of his senior officers met a Dutch officer for an exchange of information about ANGAU organization, Conlon threatened to report him to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr Evatt. As far as the Borneo states were concerned, Conlon was no doubt aware that their peoples were comparatively innocent of nationalist aspirations but he may have been attracted by the idea of an Australian mandate over the area, similar to that exercised over New Guinea. Another possibility is that he saw Australian control in Borneo as a tactical move in anticipation of a post-war carve-up when it might be possible for Australia to make an exchange for Dutch New Guinea.

Probably the most useful assessment, however, is by the publisher, Peter Ryan, who worked under Conlon in DORCA:

There is no question that Conlon at that time regarded British power east of Suez as a spent force, and he was anxious lest worse rush in to fill the gap. His thinking was profoundly anti-colonial, and he felt that Australia's interests were so intimately affected by events in the Borneo area that we just

2 Personal communication from Prof. Julius Stone, 9 July 1976.
3 Personal communication from Prof. W.E.H. Stanner, 2 June 1976.
4 According to Prof. Stanner, Conlon at least discussed this possibility at one point.
had to have a major voice there. But my own impression is that he had not thought it through to the extent of framing firm ideas of the ultimate political fate of Borneo etc.¹

There is no evidence that Conlon had the support of Blamey or any of the leading political figures for his ideas about Borneo. Indeed, Blamey indicated privately during his visit to London in 1944 that the three Borneo territories would be impossible to defend, reinforce and supply should they come under Australian control.² And while he respected Conlon's general strategic thinking, he would almost certainly have been unsympathetic to the idea of the Australian occupying force being used as a means of establishing Australia in Borneo. Conlon also had access to Prime Minister John Curtin and to Minister for Territories E.J. Ward but there is no indication that they were any more receptive than was Dr Evatt.³ Since Conlon either destroyed all records of his more controversial schemes or (which seems more likely) preferred not to commit them to paper, it is doubtful that the question can be satisfactorily settled. What is clear is that Prime Minister Ben Chifley would not support an Australian mandate and his instructions to Blamey were that 'there was no question of Australia taking over Borneo as she lacked the manpower'.⁴ It is not possible to show that Chifley totally rejected the idea. His only stated objection was that, as with Evatt's projected Commission for the Indies, Australia would be required to provide more troops than was politically possible in a post-war atmosphere of 'bring the boys home'. He would also have been loath to do anything which could have laid Australia open to the charge of neo-imperialism, although Conlon was very far from being a neo-imperialist. In June 1945 he expressed bitterness that London should have suspected his political motives.⁵

¹ Personal communication from Mr Peter Ryan, 21 September 1976.
³ Personal communication from Dr J.W. Burton, 17 June 1976.
⁴ Cited in a personal communication from Mr M.L. Bernacchi, 2 January 1976.
⁵ Personal communication from Mr M.L. Bernacchi, 4 August 1976.
Far from seeking a permanent role in Borneo, the Australian government was reluctant to accept any responsibilities there. In fact, the establishment of BBCAU was presented by Blamey to the War Cabinet as a fait accompli. When the Cabinet approved the raising of the Unit on 28 May 1945, it did so in the belief that the degree of commitment already reached, together with urgent operational considerations, left no other choice. But in a mild reprimand to Blamey it recorded the view that 'an important question of policy, such as this, should have been submitted to War Cabinet before any commitment of this nature was entered into'.

Three months later the Japanese surrender altered the picture entirely and in anticipation of the Southwest Pacific Area passing to British and Australian command, Churchill cabled Chifley with a number of requests for Australian assistance. Chifley was asked for 'early agreement' that Australian forces, possibly assisted by New Zealand, should 'initially be responsible for Borneo and all Japanese occupied areas to the east thereof including Ocean and Nauru Islands'. Britain would undertake to provide a certain amount of shipping and supplies to maintain Australian forces there. Advised by the Defence Committee that this might still involve an obligation to provide food, clothing and hospitalization which was beyond Australian resources except in Australian territories, the War Cabinet indicated its conditional acceptance. The meaning of 'initial responsibility' would have to be clarified immediately, together with the responsibilities of American and New Zealand forces in the Celebes, the Halmaheras and Dutch New Guinea. The War Cabinet was, however, much more interested in Australian participation in the liberation of Singapore and representation in its own right at the Japanese surrender. There was considerable satisfaction in Canberra when Mountbatten indicated that he would be able to relieve

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1 Minute No.4209, War Cabinet meeting of 28 May 1945, CA A2673, Vol.XV.
2 Churchill to Chifley, 13 August 1945, Cable No.290, Appendix 'C', War Cabinet Agendum 379/1945, CA A2670, PSR48010.
3 Defence Committee Minute No. 351/1945, 16 August 1945, CA A2670, PSR48010.
4 Minute No.4350, War Cabinet meeting of 17 August 1945, CA A2673, Vol.XV.
Australian forces in Borneo by the end of October, although more pressing commitments in Indo-China and the Netherlands East Indies meant that the handover did not take place until January 1946.
Appendix IV

The Legalization of Cession

1. MacBryan's Abortive Attempt, January 1946.

(i) MacBryan's Agreement with the Datu Patinggi, 5 January 1946.

... The following are five requests to which I hope Your Royal Highness will consent:

1. I beg that my title and status of Datu Patinggi, and that of my descendants, be superior to that of the other datus forever.

2. I beg that my descendants will be allowed to replace me, holding the same rank and with sufficient income.

3. I beg that my eldest grandson, Abang Ibrahim, now be made Datu Bandar.

4. I beg to have the country's revenues [kehasilan] for the last 100 years and for the future.

5. I beg to have the revenues from the turtle eggs of Talang Talang Besar, Talang Talang Kecil and Pulau Satang as my right and that of my heirs forever.

I hope that you will include these requests in the treaty with the British government as required by Your Highness' representative ...

Written at Darul Kornia, Your obedient and loyal servant,
Kuching, 4 January 1946. A.H. Abdillah
Datu Patinggi of Sarawak.

Witnessed by Mr G.T.M.
MacBryan, Special
Representative of H.H.
the Rajah

I undertake that these requests shall be submitted to His Highness the Rajah for his consideration.

5/1/46 G.T.M. MacBryan, Personal Representative of H.H.
the Rajah.

[my translation]
(ii) Supreme Council Order authorizing the Rajah to negotiate cession

WHEREAS Section 4 (ii) of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941 provides that all the prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercised by the Rajah-in-Council and not otherwise except in so far as the Rajah-in-Council may from time to time determine.

AND whereas the Rajah has informed the Members of the Supreme Council that it is the desire and purpose of His Highness to conclude an Agreement with His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom whereby to provide for the cession of the State of Sarawak to His Majesty the King so that the exercise of any other authority in the State except that of His Majesty will thereupon be determined.

AND whereas the Members of the Supreme Council have intimated to the Rajah their unanimous advice and consent that such an Agreement should be concluded by the Rajah.

NOW, therefore, in order that His Highness the Rajah may more easily fulfill his purpose, and by virtue of the powers vested in the Rajah-in-Council by the provisions of Section 4 (ii) of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941, the Rajah-in-Council hereby determines that as from and including 1st January, 1946, all the prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercised by the Rajah and not otherwise.

Given under the Hands of the Members of the Supreme Council, the Hand of the Rajah's Personal Representative and the Seal of the Rajah-in-Council this 5th day of January, 1946.
(iii) Council Negri Order repealing the 1941 Constitution

ORDER NO. C-22 (CONSTITUTION REPEAL) 1946.

CONSTITUTION REPEAL.

(An Order whereby to vest in His Highness the Rajah absolutely all those powers and prerogatives of sovereignty exercised by the Rajah-in-Council and the Council Negri subject to the provisions of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941.)

[Enacted]
[ Gazetted]
[Operation]

WHEREAS by a Proclamation dated 31st March, 1941, We pronounced Our will and intention to provide for the future government of Sarawak by the enactment of an Order whereby to bind Ourselves and Our Heirs and Successors:

AND WHEREAS in fulfilment of the terms of that Proclamation We enacted Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941:

AND WHEREAS on 29th October, 1941, pursuant to Section 15 (1)(ii) of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941 the Rajah-in-Council appointed an Officer Administering the Government:

AND WHEREAS on 8th December, 1941, the Officer Administering the Government proclaimed that a state of emergency existed in the State of Sarawak:

AND WHEREAS from and including 25th December, 1941, up to and including the date of the enactment of this Order, the circumstances of emergency in the State of Sarawak precluded the proper operation of the provisions of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941:

AND WHEREAS the Members of the Supreme Council and the Members of the Council Negri in joint session assembled have declared their unanimous desire that We should enjoy absolute discretion and freedom to act in whatever manner We believe to be in the high interests of Our People and Our State:

AND WHEREAS in order to fulfill the aforementioned purpose the Members of the Supreme Council and the Members of the Council Negri have advised Us to consent to enact an Order whereby to repeal Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941:

It is hereby enacted by His Highness the Rajah acting by and with the advice and consent of the Council Negri as follows:

1. This Order may be cited as Order No. C-22 (Constitution Repeal) 1946 and shall come into operation forthwith.

2. Order No. C-21 (Constitution) is repealed.

We, the undersigned Members of the Council Negri, forming a lawful quorum for the transaction of business, by virtue of the powers conferred on the Council Negri by Section 14 (1) of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941, hereby advise that His Highness the Rajah may be pleased to act forthwith to enact the aforesaid legislation, Order No. C-22 (Constitution Repeal) 1946.

Given under the hands of the Members of the Council Negri, the hand of the President of the Council Negri and the seal of the Council Negri this 6th day of January, 1946.
2. The Second Attempt, April-June 1946

(i) Restoration of the 1941 Constitution: The Two Orders

Order No. C-23 (Constitution Re-enactment) 1946

(An Order to remove any doubts as to the continuance in force of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941)

WHEREAS at a meeting of members of the Council Negri held on the 6th day of January, 1946, an Order (hereinafter referred to as 'the Order of 1946') was made entitled 'An Order whereby to vest in His Highness the Rajah absolutely all those powers and prerogatives of sovereignty exercised by the Rajah in Council and the Council Negri subject to the provisions of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941' (hereinafter referred to as 'the Order of 1941'), whereby the Order of 1941 was repealed:

And whereas doubts exist as to the validity of the Order of 1946, but if that Order is valid the sole power of making laws for Sarawak is vested in His Highness the Rajah:

And whereas it is expedient that the Order of 1941 should have the force of law and that, for the removal of the aforesaid doubts, provision for that purpose should be made:

Now therefore it is hereby enacted by His Highness the Rajah as follows:-

1. This Order may be cited as Order No. C-23 (Constitution Re-enactment) 1946 and shall come into operation forthwith.

2. For the removal of doubts it is hereby declared that the Order of 1946 shall cease to have any effect which it may hitherto have had, and the Order of 1941 shall have the force of law.

Given under Our hand at Kuching, Sarawak, this seventeenth day of April, 1946.

C.V. BROOKE,
Rajah of Sarawak.
Order of His Highness the Rajah in Council

(Revocation of Order regarding the Rajah's Prerogatives)

WHEREAS by subsection (ii) of section 4 of Order No. C-21 (Constitution) 1941, it is provided that all the prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercised by the Rajah in Council and not otherwise except in so far as the Rajah in Council may from time to time determine:

And whereas at a meeting of the members of the Supreme Council held on the 5th day of January, 1946, an instrument was executed whereby it was determined that, as from the 1st January, 1946, all the prerogatives of the Rajah should be exercised by the Rajah and not otherwise:

And whereas doubts exist as to the validity of the said instrument and it is expedient that the said determination (if valid) should be revoked:

Now therefore, by virtue of the powers vested in the Rajah in Council by the aforesaid sub-section, the Rajah in Council hereby revokes the said instrument and determination and determines that all prerogatives of the Rajah shall be exercisable by the Rajah in Council or as they may hereafter determine.

Given under the hand of His Highness the Rajah, by and with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council, this 24th day of April, 1946.

C.V. BROOKE,
Rajah of Sarawak.
(ii) The Cession Order of the Council Negri

An Order to authorise the Cession of Sarawak to His Majesty the King

WHEREAS it is in the interests of the inhabitants of Sarawak that the territory of the State of Sarawak, and the full sovereignty and dominion over the State, should be ceded to His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, His Heirs and Successors:

Now therefore it is hereby enacted by His Highness the Rajah, acting by and with the advice and consent of the Council Negri, as follows:-

1. This Order may be cited as Order No. C-24 (Cession of Sarawak) 1946.

2. The Rajah-in-Council is hereby authorised to cede the territory of the State of Sarawak, and the full sovereignty and dominion over the State, to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, to the intent that Sarawak shall become part of His Majesty's dominions; and on such cession any claim, however arising, of any person other than His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, to succeed to any right of sovereignty in respect of the territory of Sarawak shall be barred and of no effect.

3. The Rajah-in-Council is hereby authorised to do all things necessary for the purpose of giving full effect to the cession, and of transferring to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, all property and rights whatsoever in respect of the State and Government of Sarawak.

4. This Order shall come into force forthwith.

C.V. BROOKE,
Rajah.

Kuching, 18th May, 1946.
(iii) The Instrument of Cession

WHEREAS His Highness Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, G.C.M.G., is lawfully Rajah of the State of Sarawak:

And whereas by an Agreement dated the fourteenth day of June, 1888, the State of Sarawak was placed under the protection of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria:

And whereas His Highness the Rajah, acting with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council of Sarawak, has determined that, in the interests of the inhabitants of Sarawak, the State of Sarawak should be ceded to His Majesty the King and thereafter form part of His Majesty's dominions, which cession has been authorised by an Order dated the eighteenth day of May, 1946, enacted by the Rajah with the advice and consent of the Council Negri of Sarawak, and entitled Order No. C-24 (Cession of Sarawak) 1946:

And whereas Christopher William Dawson Esquire has been authorised by His Majesty to accept on his behalf the said cession:

NOW THESE PRESENTS WITNESS -

1. The territory of the State of Sarawak, and the full sovereignty and dominion over the State, are hereby ceded by the Rajah, acting with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council of Sarawak, to and accepted on behalf of His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, as from the date on which this Instrument comes into operation (hereinafter called the date of cession), to the intent that the State of Sarawak shall thereupon become part of His Majesty's dominions.

2. There are hereby transferred to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, as from the date of cession, the rights of the Rajah, the Rajah in Council, and the State and Government of Sarawak in all lands and buildings including the Astana, but subject to existing private rights and native customary rights, and all the other property rights and assets of the State and Government of Sarawak, including the funds and securities of the Government, whether within or outside Sarawak; and all things necessary to give effect to such transfer shall be done.
3. All persons who immediately before the date of cession are employed in the service of the Government of Sarawak will be continued in their employment by His Majesty on terms not less favourable than those obtaining before the date of cession save that they shall hold office at the pleasure of His Majesty; and His Majesty accepts liability for the payment of any pensions gratuities and other like benefits due to be paid after the date of cession to any person or to his dependants in respect of service with the Government of Sarawak.

4. This Instrument shall come into operation on such date as by virtue of an Order made by His Majesty in Council Sarawak becomes part of His Majesty's dominions:

Provided that His Majesty shall from the date of execution of this Instrument have full power and authority to make provision for the government of Sarawak, such provision to take effect on or after the date of cession.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF His Highness Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, G.C.M.G., Rajah of Sarawak, on his own behalf, and Christopher William Dawson Esquire on behalf of His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, have signed the present instrument and have affixed thereto their seals; and the seal of the Supreme Council of Sarawak has been affixed thereto, by the authority of the Council and in its presence.

Done at Kuching, Sarawak, the twenty-first day of May, 1946.

C.V. BROOKE,
Rajah.

C.W. DAWSON.

[SUPREME COUNCIL]
The Royal Order-in-Council

At the Court at Buckingham Palace the 26th day of June, 1946

Present:

THE KING'S MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY IN COUNCIL

WHEREAS by an Instrument of Cession dated the twenty-first day of May, 1946, His Highness Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, G.C.M.G., Rajah of Sarawak, acting with the advice and consent of the Supreme Council of Sarawak, has ceded to His Majesty, His Heirs and Successors, the territory of the State of Sarawak and the full sovereignty and dominion over the said State, as from the date on which the said Instrument of Cession comes into operation, to the intent that the State of Sarawak shall thereupon become part of His Majesty's dominions;

And whereas it is provided by the said Instrument of Cession that it shall come into operation on such date as, by virtue of an Order made by His Majesty in Council, Sarawak becomes part of His Majesty's dominions:

Now, therefore, His Majesty is pleased, by and with the advice of His Privy Council, to order, and it is hereby ordered, as follows:-

1. This Order may be cited as the Sarawak Cession Order in Council, 1946, and shall come into operation on the first day of July, 1946.

2. As from the first day of July, 1946, Sarawak shall be annexed to, and shall form part of, His Majesty's dominions and shall be called the Colony of Sarawak.

3. All persons who on the first day of July, 1946, are Sarawak subjects by reason of the Sarawak Orders No. N-2 (Sarawak Nationality and Naturalization) 1934, and N-2A (Sarawak Nationality and Naturalization Amendment) 1939, shall on that day become British subjects.

4. His Majesty hereby reserves to Himself, His Heirs and Successors, power to revoke, alter, add to, or amend this Order.

E.C.E. LEADBITTER
Appendix V

Documents Relating to the Anti-Cession Movement

(i) The MNV's letter to Rees-Williams and Gammons, 3 May 1946.

Sirs,

As the representatives of the Sarawak Malays we respectfully introduce ourselves to you. We sincerely welcome you to our country. We understand that your visit is to see that justice is carried out and also to question thoroughly the inhabitants who have rights in this problem concerning the surrender of Sarawak as proposed by His Highness the Rajah.

2. On 20 April 1946 we received a letter from the Chief Secretary of Sarawak stating the Rajah's intention of giving up Sarawak to the British government. As a consequence of this a meeting of the Malay population was held on 2 May 1946 at the Sekolah Merpati Jepang. The decision of the meeting was unanimous, both men and women being opposed to the idea of Sarawak being handed over to the British. They asked that Sarawak's independent status be perpetuated and the will of the late Rajah firmly upheld. They authorized this organization to be their voice on the Sarawak problem.

3. Apart from the meeting mentioned above, this organization has received a number of letters and telegrams from Malay and Melanau leaders representing the inhabitants of the whole state stating that they had held meetings where it had been decided that Sarawak should not be handed over and that Brooke rule should be perpetuated.

4. His Highness the Rajah, Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, G.C.M.G., was installed by the people. It is his responsibility to rule fairly and justly and to protect the rights of the people as a trustee. The Malays and Melanaus also know that the responsibility of the Council Negri is only to administer the state and that it has no power to deal with matters relating to the handing over of the state, which would mean the end of Sarawak's independent status. Because of this the proposal should be abrogated.

5. The Malays and the Malanaus request the British government to respect treaties between the British and Sarawak governments.
6. Furthermore, Clause III of the Atlantic Charter should be borne in mind: 'Great Britain and the United States respect the right of every nation to choose the form of government they wish to live under and these two countries are determined to see that the rights of sovereignty and self-government be returned to those who had been forcibly robbed of their rights.' We believe that if the British government accepts this takeover plan, it does not value and respect the Atlantic Charter.

7. As an independent people we urge that the independence of our country be preserved and our views are as follows:

(i) The handing over of Sarawak is not desired.

(ii) If His Highness the Rajah ... feels too old and unable to rule, then the government of Sarawak should be handed over to his heir, His Highness the Tuan Muda, in accordance with the will of the late Rajah and the custom of this country.

(iii) If it is the Tuan Muda's wish, let His Highness the Rajah Muda be installed as Rajah of Sarawak.

Yours sincerely,

Abang Haji Zaini,  
MNU President.

[my translation]
Letter Presented to Sir Charles Arden-Clarke on his Installation as Governor, 29 October 1946.

Your Excellency,

With the greatest respect we, the Datu Patinggi, senior Native Chieftain of all the indigenous peoples of Sarawak, and the President of the Malay National Union of Sarawak on behalf of the Malay and Melanau communities of the State, would remind Your Excellency that for the past hundred years, Sarawak has been administered by the Brooke family. Each of the three Rajahs has ruled by the will and with the consent of the indigenous peoples, and their rule has been essentially just and considerate. They have regarded themselves as exercising a trust on behalf of the people of Sarawak to whom the country belongs. Rajah Sir Charles Brooke, however, has sought to cede Sarawak to the British Crown by employing the 1941 Constitution to his own advantage. There was no justice in this act, which constitutes a breach of faith with the people. Furthermore, Sir Charles Vyner Brooke had no power whatever to offer cession. The Constitution was never devised for such a purpose, but was enacted to advance the welfare and progress of the people. The acceptance by His Majesty's Government of such a cession from Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, which purports to make Sarawak a British colony, is not valid, and such an act is not only inconsistent with the Constitution but is also a breach of international law. The indigenous people throughout the entire country reject this act of cession and no matter how many council meetings may be held and no matter what other means may be employed, the people will remain adamant in their attitude and will never agree to cession. The vote of the Native communities at the State Council meeting recently held to discuss the cession proposal accurately reflected the attitude of the people, that is to say, the cession was not agreed to by the majority of the people.

We respectfully request Your Excellency to convey to His Majesty's Government an expression of the wishes of the indigenous people and of their opposition to cession. We trust His Majesty's Government will give their most careful and just consideration to our request and that they will bring the matter to the notice of His Majesty the King so that he may revoke the cession by the exercise of the powers conferred on him by clause 4 of the Sarawak Cession Order in Council of 26th June, 1946, and that His Majesty will thereby restore to Sarawak the independence it has enjoyed hitherto under the protection of the British Crown. The right of succession to the Raj of Sarawak, in accordance with the wishes of the people of the country to whom it indisputably belongs, is vested in the heirs of the Brooke family, that is to say, His Highness the
Tuan Muda, Bertram Brooke, and his son the Rajah Muda, Anthony Brooke.

We respectfully sign ourselves.

(Sgd.) Abang Haji Abdillah,
Datu Patinggi

(Sgd.) Abang Haji Zaini,
President, Malay National Union
of Sarawak.
... In the autumn of 1945 our Rajah, Sir Charles Vyner Brooke, G.C.M.G., whose status was graciously defined by Your Majesty's illustrious father as that of a subject of Your Majesty and the ruler of a friendly State, notified Your Majesty's Government of his proposal that our country, whose independence had been internationally recognized, should be ceded to Your Majesty, and in the words of Your Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies on February 6, 1946, "it was intimated to the Rajah that such a proposal would be acceptable to His Majesty's Government". This preliminary offer of cession and its immediate acceptance by Your Majesty's Government resulted from private consultations from which representatives of the Sarawak people and our Tuan Muda, heir presumptive to the Raj, were excluded. The public statement made by Your Majesty's Secretary for State for the Colonies on February 6, 1946, was the first intimation of such a proposal to the Sarawak people and to the Tuan Muda, who had a very special right to be consulted in matters of such high importance for Sarawak and its people in accordance with the terms of his father's political will, which Sir Charles Vyner Brooke on his accession in 1917 had solemnly sworn to uphold. In spite of much public criticism, and considerable opposition on the part of the representatives of the Sarawak people, the Cession Bill was duly passed and ratified by the Council Negri in May 1946. This result, however, was only obtained by including the votes of the European official members of the Council, without whose votes the Bill would have been decisively rejected. At the time of the cession serious allegations of constitutional and ethical impropriety were made against Your Majesty's Government and although these charges have been repeated on many occasions during the past eighteen months they have neither been the subject of inquiry nor have they been officially refuted. In reply to repeated protests against the annexation of our country Your Majesty's Government have consistently maintained, while avoiding references to the abovementioned charges, that the cession was effected "in a proper, legal and constitutional manner". Your Majesty's Government have also maintained that opposition to cession from within the country is not representative of the people as a whole. We have respectfully disputed this claim and we now venture to affirm that we are without question wholly representative of the indigenous people and especially the literate classes by whom alone the implications of the cession can be clearly understood.

We venture to claim that there is no support for the annexation from the indigenous people with the exception of certain persons employed in the Government Service and of an association of negligible membership whose president is an Assistant Commissioner of the Sarawak Constabulary.
It is because of our vain endeavours over a period of more than eighteen months to obtain from Your Majesty's Government recognition for Sarawak of the Atlantic Charter principles which Great Britain undertook to honour that we now humbly bring to the notice of Your Majesty our just plea for the revocation of the cession and for the restoration of our country as an independent monarchy under Your Majesty's most gracious protection.
Summary of comments received from Governor of Sarawak on the aide memoire in relation to Sarawak Affairs prepared by direction of His Highness Rajah Brooke

Paragraph 1.
There is ample evidence to show that the Chinese are keenly interested in the political issue. They favour cession, and, while avoiding active participation in local politics, maintain a close watch over all developments.

Paragraph 2.
The importance and extent of the social and religious boycott can be exaggerated. There has been no attempt to prevent people from using the Mosque. The Moslem members of the Constabulary, headed by the band, attend the Mosque services in Kuching as usual on Fridays. The attempt at social boycott is gradually disappearing. Active steps have been, and continue to be, taken to counter the propaganda of the anti-cessionists and to contradict false allegations.

Paragraph 4.
At the time of the handover His Highness agreed that, as a temporary measure, the Sarawak flag should be flown alongside the Union Jack. This arrangement ceased some time ago, and the Union Jack is now flying alone wherever it is available. Those Sarawak flags which, owing to the shortage of Union Jacks, continued to fly alone after the handover, are being replaced as fast as possible with Union Jacks as supplies of the latter arrive.

Paragraph 7.
In the past the Dyaks of the 2nd Division have been more susceptible to the influence of the Malays. This is no longer the case. They appear to be as strongly opposed to Malay domination as any other Dyaks.

Paragraph 8.
The importance of the Dyaks has not escaped the notice of Government. Active measures have been and continue to be taken not without success to win and maintain their confidence and good-will.

Paragraph 9.
The Indonesian influence that is becoming more and more apparent in the anti-cession movement comes from Singapore and is not due to the activities of the few Indonesians from Pontianak who visit Sarawak.

Paragraphs 11 and 12.
The suggestion that one of the late Datu Patinggi's family should be vested with the title "Datu Patinggi" is not favoured. The late Datu Patinggi was unaffectedly glad to see the Japanese and to put his services unreservedly at their disposal. It is understood that His Highness himself refused the late Datu Patinggi's request to have his grandson made a
Anthony Brooke's statement on the assassination of Duncan Stewart.

Although investigations into the attempted assassination ... are still taking place, and not a single press report from Sarawak itself has reached this country, official statements from Singapore - 500 miles away - interpret the crime as a political act.

I am bound in fairness to the Sarawak anti-cession organizations, who look to me to represent their views here, to answer these charges.

For three years, since the annexation of Sarawak in 1946, the anti-cession associations have tried to emulate western democratic practices in the expression of legitimate grievances by lawful means.

Their aim is the revocation of the so-called "cession" and the restoration of Sarawak as an independent state under British protection.

They have shown exemplary patience in the teeth of attempts by the authorities, in a series of improper and unjust acts, to frustrate their lawful aims and to belittle their cause.

In these three years not a single illegal or improper act has been laid at their door, but the authorities have ruthlessly refused either to answer or to investigate the repeated charges of bribery, intimidation and misrepresentation in connection with the expression of grievances of those opposed to it. Now when an impetuous and misguided youth, reverting to the traditional and atrocious resort of eastern - and western - peoples denied a constitutional outlet, plunges a knife into the innocent Englishman who represents in his eyes these injustices, the authorities try to use the incident to justify their own illegalities and to absolve themselves from responsibility for the situation they have created.

But for the policy they have pursued there would have been no crime. The implication that peaceful and law-abiding associations, by daring to criticise this policy, are responsible for its outcome seems to me outrageous.
Datu. It is felt that such an appointment would be an affront to many people in Sarawak who remained loyal and particularly to the two new Datus, appointed by the Governor on the occasion of the King's birthday, in recognition of their integrity, loyalty and good service. Very active measures have been and continue to be taken to counter the anti-cession activities and propaganda organised by Mr. Anthony Brooke.
The End of the Anti-Cession Campaign

Anthony Brooke's message to the anti-cessionists, 3 February 1951.

The gravity of the international situation impels me to urge you all to cease your activities against the Cession of Sarawak to Britain, as I myself am resolved to do. I have never been in doubt that your welfare lies with Britain and within the great British Commonwealth. In recognition of your acceptance of British Commonwealth aims, I invite you to discontinue henceforth the practice of demonstrating on Cession Day (July 1st) and to celebrate instead H.M. the King's official birthday which falls this year on June 7. I should like Sarawak to witness on that day a really magnificent demonstration of loyalty, and I appeal to you in all sincerity to forget past grievances and in the interests of all the peoples of Sarawak to co-operate wholeheartedly with the Sarawak Government. By so doing, you will, I feel convinced, earn the lasting gratitude of future generations of your people for the services you will have rendered to the great cause of unity and peace within Sarawak.

Report of Anthony Brooke's speech to the Moral Rearmament World Assembly, Caix (Switzerland), September 1951.

Describing the five year deadlock after the war between the Sarawak nationalists and the British Government, Mr Brooke said that this had resulted in division and disunity in the entire country which had split many families, and members of an illegal association who had broken off from the constitutional movement had assassinated a British Governor. The issue was the question of the status of Sarawak in the British Commonwealth... and he had previously felt that any compromise on his part might be interpreted as betraying the cause of the Sarawak nationalists. He admitted that frequent appeals to induce him to change his mind had left him cold, but "contact with Moral Rearmament made me realise that it would be wrong to continue and be a party to a growing state of disunity in Sarawak... I saw that by a change of attitude on my part I might help heal the divisions. One morning a clear plan came to me. I went to the Commissioner General, Mr Malcolm MacDonald, and offered to do all possible to get unity in Sarawak. I cabled the Sarawak nationalists that their cause was just but that there was a bigger cause on which they could unite with the British authorities and help save humanity from catastrophe. They agreed to do this and also cabled the British Prime Minister asking for an assurance that when the present threat to the British Commonwealth ended the Sarawak people would be consulted about their future." Mr Brooke expressed appreciation of the attitude the Prime Minister Mr Attlee and Mr Malcolm MacDonald and the Colonial Office had taken. He declared that this had helped to unite the parties in the dispute and on an effective basis of co-operation and the conviction that "by
infusing our way of life with inspired and dynamic moral rearmament standards, Moral Rearmament provides the only ideology in these times which can answer the materialistic challenge of our day and break deadlocks everywhere throughout the world and bring unity and peace to mankind."

The anti-cessionists' reply, 6 February 1951.

We have received your Highness's decision to withdraw from the Sarawak Cession controversy with deep regret, inasmuch as we sincerely believe that the cause of a united Sarawak now and in future years can best be served by the recognition on the part of His Majesty's Government that we do not want to be a colony but an independent state under the constitutional rule of Brooke Rajahs within the British Commonwealth of Nations.

We regret we do not feel able to accede to your request to abandon these aims, but with this reservation we shall most willingly do everything within our power to play an active and constructive role in co-operation with the Sarawak Government and all communities in the country to ensure that no element of doubt exists with regard to the unaltering attitude of all our people towards the growing menace of aggressive World Communism. To this end we have already held consultations aimed at the formation of a non-political association whose main object will be to support British Commonwealth ideals and to assist in safeguarding our peoples from subversive and foreign propagandists. It is our firm intention that the United Sarawak Association shall play leading part in giving effect to the keenly felt desire of all our peoples to demonstrate their loyalty to the person of the King by widescale celebrations throughout Sarawak on the occasion of His Majesty's birthday, and also to show, on that occasion, our pride, our gratitude and our appreciation of all he means to us as our protector in international affairs and as the highest symbol of unity within the British Commonwealth, upon the maintenance of which depends the fate not only of ourselves but of all mankind.

Malay National Union of Sarawak
Sarawak Dayak Association
Sarawak National Youth Movement
Sarawak Nationalist Party
United Malay Association
Message from the Malay National Union, Sarawak Dayak Association, Sarawak Nationalist Party, Sarawak Nationalist Youth Movement and United Malay Association of Sarawak to Prime Minister Attlee, 4 February 1951.

We shall be grateful if His Majesty's Government will be good enough to give us a firm declaration that when the present grave threat to Commonwealth interests no longer exists the Sarawak people will be encouraged constitutionally to form and express their opinion as to the kind of self-government they would prefer to achieve, and that this should not preclude should the peoples of Sarawak as a whole desire it, a constitutional monarchy with Brooke Rajahs within the British Commonwealth.

Attlee's reply, 18 February 1951.

His Majesty's Government are glad to have this opportunity of confirming their unqualified determination to guide and assist the people of Sarawak in their progress towards self-government within the British Commonwealth. In the future, as in the past, it will be freely open to all in Sarawak to express in a constitutional manner their views regarding the way in which progress towards self-government is to be realised, and any views expressed by bodies substantially representative of the people of Sarawak would receive the fullest consideration of His Majesty's Government. The constitutional form which progress towards self-government in the British Commonwealth should take could only be settled in the circumstances at the time.
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War Cabinet records:

CAB 98/41 War Cabinet Committee on Malaya and Borneo, 1944

B  Rhodes House Library, Oxford

A general listing including Sarawak material held at Rhodes House can be found in Louis B. Frewer, Manuscript Collections (Excluding Africana) in Rhodes House Library, Oxford, Oxford 1970. However, there have been a number of very important Sarawak acquisitions since that time, in particular, a collection of Brooke family papers and the papers of the Chief Justice of Sarawak, 1930-39, T. Stirling Boyd. Since the Brooke collection, which covers the period 1841-1971, amounts to 14 boxes and the Boyd collection to seven boxes, there is no point in my listing even the principal items which I have used. Besides, catalogues are now available from the Oxford University Colonial Records Project: Papers of the Brookes of Sarawak, Oxford 1974; Papers of T. Stirling Boyd, Oxford 1976. Collections and items listed below are under restriction if no shelf number is given.

Brooke Family Papers  MSS Pac.s.83
T. Stirling Boyd Papers  MSS Pac.s.86
E.C.G. Barrett Diary

This diary is a record of the various meetings held in Sarawak by D.R. Rees-Williams, M.P., and L.D. Gammans, M.P., to consult local opinion on the cession.

G.E. Bettison Diary  MSS Pac.s.56

This typescript diary is the personal record of a customs officer 1939-41. It is of limited usefulness.
W.C.S. Corry

Transcript of tape-recorded reminiscences.

C.W. Dawson Diary

This diary is the personal record of C.W. Dawson's experiences in Sarawak April-August 1946, first as British Representative and then as Chief Secretary.

K.H. Digby Papers


File on a libel suit brought by Anthony Brooke in 1947.

Memorandum entitled: 'Note on meeting held in Mr. Dale's room at the Colonial Office on the 5th April [1946]'.

Poems etc. connected with his time as editor of the Sarawak Gazette.

E.H. Elam Papers

Letters and cables home 1939-
Photographs
Press cuttings

L.D. Gammans Papers

Correspondence March-July 1946 between Gammans and the Colonial Office and related papers.

Itinerary of official mission to Sarawak; typescript memoranda about Sarawak.

Two letters from Anthony Brooke to Gammans (13 and 22 March 1946); copies of press cuttings and notes on Sarawak and its relations with the British government; extracts from correspondence between Bertram Brooke and the Secretary of State for Colonies.

Copies of four typescript memoranda on Sarawak and its administration and G.T.M. MacBryan.

Letter from Bertram Brooke to Gammans (26 April 1946) about the latter's forthcoming visit to Sarawak.

Typescript memorandum entitled 'Administration of Sarawak', probably by T. Stirling Boyd.

Typescript article by Gammans entitled 'The Cession of Sarawak'; typescript for an address on the end of Brooke rule.

'Parliamentary Mission to Sarawak'. Gammans' personal record of his visit to Sarawak, probably written for the Secretary of State for Colonies or for Oliver Stanley. Typescript.

Printed address given by Gammans and Rees-Williams to the Colonial Affairs Study Group.

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C.F.C. Macaskie Papers

Seven uncatalogued files of correspondence from his time as Chief Civil Affairs Officer, British Borneo Civil Affairs Unit and British Military Administration (British Borneo).


J.L. Noakes Papers MSS Pac.s.62

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M.P. O'Connor Papers MSS Pac.s.58

Correspondence with the Rajah, 1940, on medical and health administration.

A.J.N. Richards Papers MSS Ind.Ocn.s.213

Letters home 1938-42, 1946-50, including copies of official minutes and memorandum entitled 'The Search for a Policy in Sarawak, 1939'.

Photographs.

Sir Shenton Thomas Papers

Diary 1940-45

C Royal Commonwealth Institute Library

Sir George Maxwell Papers

D Archives of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel

Reports of the Bishop of Labuan and Sarawak, 1930-39

E Private Collections

Mrs K.M. Brooke Papers


Diary of her visit to Sarawak, July 1947 - February 1948

Press cuttings

Photographs
Mrs Evelyn Hussey Papers

Legal documents connected with G.T.M. MacBryan’s visit to Sarawak, December 1945 – January 1946.

Proclamation by the Rajah dated 1 November 1945 appointing the King as his successor.

Two files (Nos. 53 and 66735) formerly from the Sarawak Government Office, Millbank, and containing correspondence relating to negotiations between the Provisional Government and the Colonial Office 1944-45; the dismissal of the Provisional Government; visits to Sarawak in early 1946 by the Rajah, Bertram Brooke, F.H. Pollard and J.R. Combe; cables between members of the Malay National Union and Sarawak Dayak Association and Bertram and Anthony Brooke; letters from G.T.M. MacBryan to the Rajah and J.A. Smith relating to the Sarawak State Trust Fund and other matters.

Three letters from G.T.M. MacBryan to Mrs Hussey.

Collection of press cuttings and three letters from the Ranee Margaret to Charles Willes Johnson concerning Esca Daykin, 1927.

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A Eliab Bayang Papers

Files of correspondence, memoranda etc. mostly relating to his pre-war position in the Junior Administrative Service, the United Sea Dayak Co-operative and his position during the Japanese occupation; some correspondence relating to his post-war political activity.
Philip Jitam Papers

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C Mitchell Library

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List of Persons Interviewed

Great Britain (1974-75):

Mr and Mrs J.G. Anderson
Mr E. Banks
Mr E.C.G. Barrett
Anthony Brooke
Mrs K.M. Brooke
Lady Anne Bryant
Mr J.R. Combe
Sir William Dale
Mrs Madelein Daubeney
Mr and Mrs C.W. Dawson
Mr E.H. Elam
Mrs Gina Field
Mrs Barbara Pitt Hardacre

Mrs Evelyn Hussey
Rev. Philip Jones
Mr J.C.W. MacBryan
Mr Malcolm MacDonald
Mr W.L.B. Monson
Mr T.S. Monks
Mrs Margaret Noble
Mr A.J.N. Richards
Mr and Mrs A.R. Snelus
Mr B.J.C. Spurway
Mr B.A. Trechman
Sir Dennis White

Sarawak (1974-75):
(Some informants have wished to remain anonymous)

Madam Barbara Bay (Kuching)
Mr Sumping Bayang (Kuching)
Abang Boening (Miri)
Mr Harry Brody (Kuching)
Mr Harry Buxton (Bintulu)
Chegu Lily Eberwein (Kuching)
Dato Ekhwan Zaini (Kuching)

Archdeacon P.P.H. Howes (Limbang)
Mr Harold Jitam
Mr Ramsay Jitam
Mr Andrew Jika Landau
Abang Haji Mohd. Kassim Taha (Kuching)
Sarawak interviews (contd.)

Mr Dennis Law (Kuching)
Temenggong Datuk Muif (Miri)
Dato Stephen Ningkan
Encik Mohd. Ma'amom bin Nor (Kuching)
The late Mr Ong Hap Leong (Kuching)
Encik Osman bin Mohammad (Bintulu)
Encik Senawi bin Suleiman (Kuching)
Haji Mohd. Su'auit bin Haji Mohd. Tahir (Kuching)
Encik Sulhi bin Idin (Miri)
Bishop Basil Temenggong (Kuching)

Brunei (1974):

Dato I. Talog-Davies
Mr Robert Nicholl
Mr John North

Australia (1975-76):

Mr R.H. Morris
Alastair and Hedda Morrison
Professor W.E.H. Stanner
Sir Victor Windeyer

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