

University of Kent

The Development of Higher Education in Malaya

1919-1949

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Abstract

The establishment of a University of Malaya was the main recommendation of the British Commission which visited the Malayan Union and Singapore from 26 March to 30 April 1947 as part of its enquiry into the provision of higher education in Malaya. The Commission was announced in January 1947 with Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, Director of the London School of Economics as the designated chairman. The Commission's report was published in May 1948 and provided a major point of interest and considerable surprise by recommending the foundation of an autonomous university which was to be created through an amalgamation of two existing Singaporean institutions of higher education, the King Edward VII Medical College and Raffles College. The Commission's recommendations were subsequently accepted by the Governments of the Federation and Singapore and the University of Malaya was formally constituted at a foundation ceremony held in Singapore on 8 October 1949.

This is the essential narrative of the thesis which aims to complete a critical historiography of educational developments towards the end of Empire. It was a time of uncertainty and violence when the concepts of nation-state and national identity lacked consensus, indeed they were often bitterly contested subjects. Additionally, the major fault-lines of ethnicity, language and culture remained to be re-constituted to provide the foundation for an independent political order in a post-colonial world. The thesis concentrates on the genealogy of higher educational developments during the period from 1919 to 1949 with an emphasis on the final years beginning with the McLean Commission's enquiry in 1939 and ending with the foundation of the first University in Malaya a decade later. The thesis is presented chronologically and relies on material from archival sources, primary texts and scholarship conducted by Malaysian and European researchers. Following the introduction, the context of the study is examined through the political circumstances which

marked the presence and subsequent extension of British dominion on the Malay Peninsula (Semenanjung Tanah Melayu) Early educational developments are also considered including the foundation of the King Edward VII College of Medicine and Raffles College in Singapore. Selected educational developments in the wider context of the British Empire during the inter-war years are assessed in chapter three before a detailed assessment of the McLean Commission's enquiry in Malaya is undertaken in chapter four together with an account of efforts by the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies to progress matters prior to the Japanese invasion of Singapore in 1942. The next chapter deals with the Carr-Saunders Commission of enquiry and includes profiles of the members of the Commission together with an analysis of the published report. The reactions to the report are considered in chapter six and include views expressed at a Symposium held in Singapore. The concluding statement provides an assessment of the success achieved by the Commission together with the more problematical aspects of the legacy that remained. The significance of the University's foundation is considered together with the work of the commissioners and the leadership and management skills that Carr-Saunders contributed.

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Although for most students, doctoral research marks the beginning of an academic career, this study is different in that it was formally launched during the early years of my retirement from university teaching. There are commonalities with younger researchers however beginning with the obligation to express my thanks to the many people who have given their help and support during the period of my research. The origins of the research began tentatively whilst employed at UEL when I made regular visits to Malaysia, India and occasionally to China to develop academic courses and maintain partnerships with local colleges and universities. I was fortunate to visit many educational institutions over several years to meet senior managers, administrative and academic staff from whom I learned much about higher education in Malaysia and I wish to record my appreciation of this experience. Meeting on a regular basis, I am particularly indebted to Datin Mrs Chan-Low Kam Yoke, Dato Dr Nellie Tan S. L. Tan-Wong, Dr Khong Kim Hoong, Dr James Nayagam and Dr Kumar Menon.

As I began to formalise my ideas, I was grateful to colleagues at UEL for their interest which encouraged me to proceed with an application for research at the University of Kent. In this respect Dr Peter Fenwick and Robin Little were especially helpful and I have benefitted greatly from their continuing support. My initial plan was to register with the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at Kent and I am grateful to Dr Janice Malcolm for her advice and guidance at that time - the centre's research seminar which I regularly attended was very helpful preparation for undertaking my research. In the event, and given the direction of my work, I registered with the School of History and began my association with Dr Andrew Cohen. He has been my first supervisor throughout the project and I owe him a great deal for his measured advice and guidance. My thanks are also due to Dr Giacomo Macola, my second supervisor, who *inter alia* agreed to my attending his MA

Imperial History seminar classes which helped to contextualise my work. Following Dr Macola's return to Italy to take up an academic appointment, Dr Aparajita Mukhopadhyay took over his role as my second supervisor and again I have been very fortunate in the support I have received. I am very grateful to both Andrew and Aparajita for their attentive and supportive supervision and the considerable encouragement and feedback they have given at the different stages of the research; they have proved to be highly effective supervisors and I value the relationship that has emerged over the research period. During the course of my work, I regularly attended the School of History's research seminars which facilitated useful exchanges between fellow students and staff (until Covid struck!). In this context I learned much from discussions with Dr Balasubramanyam Chandramohan, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies on researching educational developments in colonial societies and wish to thank him for his perceptive comments and suggestions. An important component of the Kent PhD programme has been the annual review of progress and I have to thank Dr Philip Boobbyer and Dr Edward Roberts, successive review chairs, for their professional and constructive approach.

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Professor Stockwell a very considerable intellectual debt and wish to acknowledge his meticulous scholarship. I should also thank Eleanor Sier who was very helpful regarding the early history of Toynbee Hall and Dr Kate Bradley, Reader in Social History/Policy, University of Kent, who directed me to key sources on Carr-Saunders and his social work involvement in East London. I was grateful for the considerable help I received from Robin Edmonds, Margaret Edmonds and Patrick McKeating who gave very generously of their time and knowledge of Lord Milner during my visits to the Junior Kings School, Canterbury. My thanks are also extended to archivist, Peter Henderson, for enabling me to visit senior Kings School and providing access to the Cantuarian and School Records.

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The research hopefully has some value for a future that remains to be written, a future which does not belong to me or my peers but rather to a younger generation and so I dedicate this work to my grandsons, Arlo Cocking and Alban Cocking with much love, great trust in their values and huge belief in their future success.

Abbreviations

ACEC	Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies
AID	Agency for International Development
BCE	Before the Common Era
BMA	British Military Administration
CD & W	Colonial Development and Welfare
Cmd	Command Paper
CO	Colonial Office
CRLSC	Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, Univ. of Birmingham
CUGAC	Colonial University Grants Advisory Committee
FCO	Foreign and Colonial Office
FMS	Federated Malay States
<i>HC Deb</i>	House of Commons Debates
ICS	Institute of Commonwealth Studies
IMP	Independence of Malaya Party
IUC	Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies
<i>JMBRAS</i>	Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LSE	London School of Economics and Political Science
MAS	Malay Administration Service
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association
MCKK	Malay College Kuala Kangsar
MCP	Malayan Communist Party

MCS	Malayan Civil Service
MDU	Malayan Democratic Union
SJLSCA	Sydney Jones Library, Special Collections & Archives, University of Liverpool
SCBA	Straits Chinese British Association
SHLSC	Senate House Library Special Collections, University of London
SITC	Sultan Idris Training College
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies
SS	Straits Settlements
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, UK
TES	Times Educational Supplement
UEL	University of East London
UMNO	United Malays National Organisation
UMS	Unfederated Malay States
UMSU	University of Malaya Student Union

Glossary

<i>Arkib Negara Malaysia</i>	National Archives Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
<i>Bab-ud-Darajat</i>	‘The gate to high positions’, a metaphorical reference to the Malay College and the benefits of its prestigious education.
<i>Bendahara</i>	Chief Officer
<i>Dato/Datin</i>	Title, frequently honorary, to recognise distinctive achievement by men/women
<i>Godown</i>	Factory or warehouse
<i>Hikayat</i>	Historical narrative, usually celebratory of a Sultanate
<i>Hikayat Marang Mahawangsu</i>	Kedah Annals
<i>Kampung</i>	Traditional Malay village
<i>Kuala</i>	Estuary
<i>Madrasah</i>	Religious school
<i>Madrasah Mariah</i> ruler of	School for girls founded in 1914 by Sultan Idris Murshidul Perak and named after his consort Yteh Mariah
<i>Melayu</i>	Malaya
<i>Mantri Bear</i>	Chief minister
<i>Maranta/peri merantau</i>	Patterns of historical migration
<i>Merdeka</i>	Independence
<i>Orang Asli Melayu</i>	Original people of the Malay Peninsula
<i>Orang baik-baik</i>	Malay elite
<i>Penghulu</i>	Headman of village or district
<i>Pondok</i>	Residential religious school for boys and young men

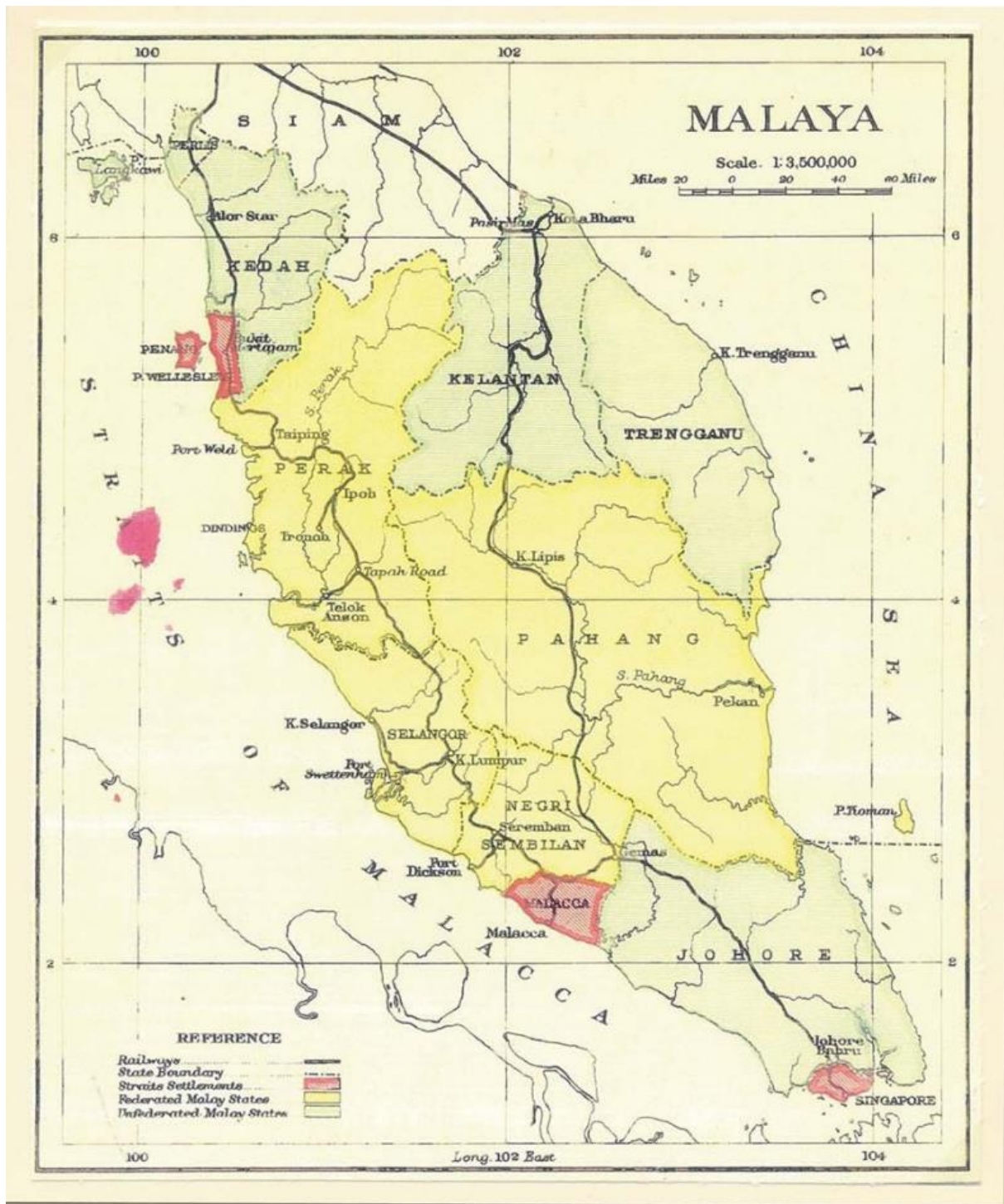
<i>Qur'an</i>	Holy text of the Islamic faith
<i>Ra'ayat</i>	Lower classes, commoners
<i>Raja Muda</i>	Heir apparent to succeed a Sultan
<i>Sejarah Melayu</i>	Records of Malay Sultanate
<i>Sungai</i>	River
<i>Surau</i>	Village building for educational and religious activities
<i>Temenggung</i>	High-ranking Malay minister
<i>Undang</i>	Ruling chief
<i>Ulama</i>	Religious leader
<i>Yang Di Pertuan Agung</i>	Council of Rulers, deriving from the Durbar or Conference of leaders of the Malay States
<i>Yang Di Pertuan Besar</i>	Malay ruler, a 'great king'.



Southeast Asia

<https://www.nationsonline.org/maps/Southeast-Asia-Map.jpg>

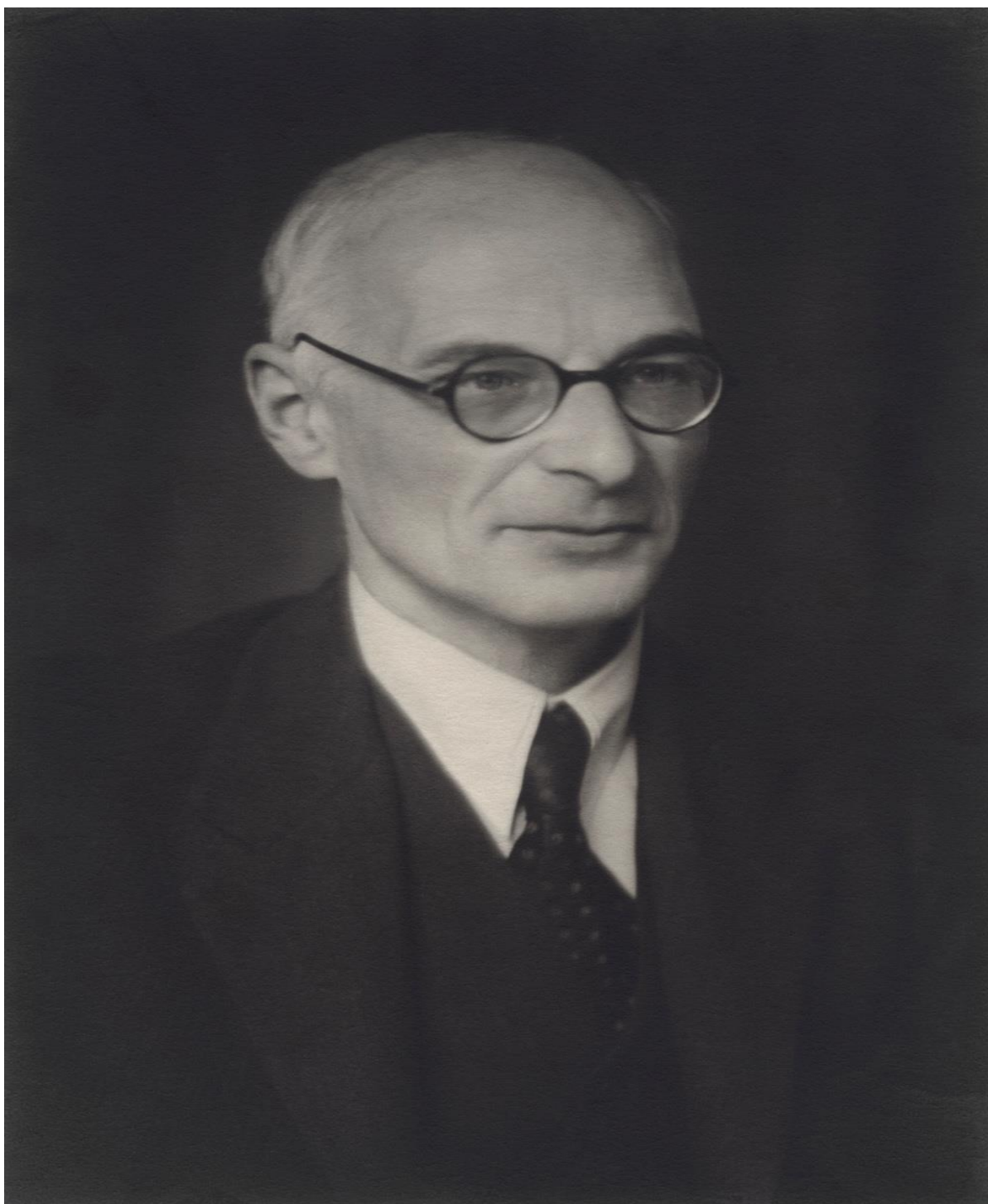
[accessed 22/09/2021]



Malaya and the Straits Settlements 1939

www.vicstamps.com/displays/foreman_exhibit/img07

[accessed 16/06/2021]



Sir Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders

Photographic Collection, 166406, National Portrait Gallery, London

22 March 1946, Walter Stoneman

rightsandimages@npg.org.uk [accessed 10/10/2021]

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1. Overview

The establishment of an autonomous university was the major and progressive recommendation of the report by a Commission of enquiry into the provision of university education in Malaya.¹ The Commission was chaired by Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, Director of the London School of Economics (LSE) and had been appointed by Arthur Creech Jones, the Secretary of State for the Colonies in the post-war Labour Government. As part of its enquiry the Commission visited Malaya during the period 26 March to the 30 April 1947. Its report was published the following year in May 1948, an event that was both celebrated widely in Malaya and received positively in political and academic circles in Britain. Legislation providing for the formation of a University of Malaya based on an amalgamation of two existing Singaporean institutions, King Edward VII Medical College and Raffles College, was passed by the respective governments of the Malayan Federation and the Colony of Singapore in March 1949. It was a critical moment and enabled the new university to be ceremonially constituted in Singapore on 8 October 1949. In so doing, the Malayan Governments, following the Commission's recommendation, rejected the Asquith principle which emphasised a university college as a necessary precursor institution for an autonomous university.²

¹ Colonial Office, *University Education in Malaya: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies*, No. 229 (London, 1948). [Carr-Saunders Report] The Commission reported on university education, earlier inquiries reported on higher education, e.g., Colonial Office, *Higher Education in East Africa: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies*, Colonial No.142 (London, 1937). [De La Warr Report]; Colonial Office, *Higher Education in Malaya: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies*, Colonial No. 173 (London, 1939). [McLean Report] This thesis uses the terms interchangeably to refer to education after secondary school whilst acknowledging the wider interpretation usually implied by the concept higher education, see, S. Rothblatt and B. Wittrock, 'Introduction: Universities and Higher Education', in S. Rothblatt and B. Wittrock, eds., *The European and American University since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays*, (Cambridge, 1993), pp.1-16; See also the discussion by Harold Silver, 'Things change but names remain the same: Higher Education Historiography 1975-2000', *History of Education*, Vol. 35, No. 1, (2006), pp. 121-140, pp. 121-123.

² Colonial Office, *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies*, Cmd. 6647, (London, 1945), [Asquith Report] pp. 12-13.

The genealogy of the University of Malaya forms the basis of this thesis. The main focus however is not entirely education *sui generis* as it is important to situate the study in the wider political context and the volatile circumstances of post-war Southeast Asia. The founding of the university in October 1949, well before the declaration of Malaysian independence in August 1957, was a clear demonstration that significant institutional change was possible and the thesis will argue that the existential fact of the opening of the university was important in contributing to a psychological break in colonial domination and making progression towards independence less implausible.³ The importance of the newly founded University of Malaya was further emphasised by the general lack of higher education in the colonial state; in 1949 there were just three autonomous universities in the dependent territories of the British Empire.⁴

This thesis consists of several components, for example, the formulation and development of educational policy, the idea of a colonial university and the relationship between the university and the making of an independent state. This framework will allow further analysis of more specific educational issues including the institutional model of governance that was exported, the medium or language of instruction to be followed and the academic quality standards that were required. Such an approach is important because a

³ A similar argument has been developed in relationship to decolonization, see A. J. Stockwell, 'British Imperial Policy and Decolonization in Malaya, 1942-52,' *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 68-87, p. 84.

⁴ In addition to the University of Malaya, these included The Royal University of Malta 1592 and the University of Hong Kong 1911. British responsibilities had previously included the Hebrew University of Jerusalem formed in 1919 and the University of Ceylon founded in 1942, responsibilities which were relinquished when Ceylon gained Dominion status and the university became independent in 1948; during the same year the Palestine mandate was terminated and British governance of the university in Jerusalem was concluded. By now five university colleges had been established in Africa as well as the University College of the West Indies see, Colonial Office, *Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas 1946-1954*, (London, 1955), p. 2. For discussion see, I. C. M. Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership: The Inter-Universities Council and the Growth of Higher Education in Developing Countries 1946-1970*, (Edinburgh, 1980), pp 3-12; Asquith Report, pp.7-10. The number of universities in Great Britain at this time was 18, all of whom were founder-members of the Inter-Universities Council in 1946. This figure excludes university colleges and takes the universities of London and Wales as unitary institutions, see Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership*, Appendix III, p. 462; Tamson Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars: Universities, Networks and the British Academic World 1850-1939*, (Manchester, 2013), pp. 202-209.

broad ‘... research agenda draws attention to the very different functions of higher education depending on the socio-historical context ... these may differ from each other so fundamentally that the name “university” just becomes an empty signifier for [a] very different object’.⁵

1.2. Focus of Research

In *Empire of Scholars*, Tamson Pietsch makes a distinction between universities that were founded in the Dominion countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand and to some extent South Africa, describing them as ‘products of a proud “colonial nationalism”, whereas later developments in Africa, India and Southeast Asia [...] universities were established by British officials and more explicitly associated with the imposition of rule and the institution of foreign language and culture’.⁶ This thesis analyses developments in this latter context of the dependent Empire and gives particular emphasis to higher education in Malaya and Singapore, a somewhat under-explored area of educational research compared with the more extensive work completed in Africa and India.⁷

⁵ Eva Hartmann, ‘The New Research Agenda in Critical Higher Education Studies’, *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (June 2010), pp. 169-173, p. 169. See also, Eva Hartmann, *The Internationalisation of Higher Education: Towards a New Research Agenda in Critical Higher Education Studies*, (Abingdon, 2011).

⁶ Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, p. xii.

⁷ A classic work particularly with reference to the study of African higher education is Eric Ashby, with Mary Anderson, *Universities: British, Indian, African: A Study in the Ecology of Higher Education*, (London, 1966); More recent scholarship has maintained the emphasis on Africa, albeit from a different theoretical perspective, see Tim Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development*, (London, 2017); further examples include the two papers by Robert Koehl, ‘The Uses of the University: Past and Present in Nigerian Educational Culture’, Part I, *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 15, No. 2, (June 1971), pp. 116-131; Robert Koehl, ‘The Uses of the University: Past and Present in Nigerian Educational Culture Part II’, *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 15, No. 3, (Oct.1971), pp. 367-377. See also, Clive Whitehead, ‘The Historiography of British Imperial Education Policy, Part I: India’, *History of Education*, Vol. 34, No. 3, (May 2005a), pp. 315-329; Clive Whitehead, ‘The Historiography of British Imperial Education Policy, Part II: Africa and the Rest of the Colonial Empire’, *History of Education*, Vol. 34, No. 4, (2005b), pp. 441-454. Extensive and extensive research on Southeast Asia has of course been completed by A. J. Stockwell and his paper on the University of Malaya is particularly relevant see, A. J. Stockwell, ‘The Crucible of the Malayan Nation: The University and the Making of a new Malaya 1938-1962’, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 5, (2009), pp.1149-1187. Subsequent chapters of this thesis draw on his thorough and comprehensive research and are detailed in subsequent footnotes and in the bibliography rather than indicated here. It should also be noted that colonial educational studies have focussed on school rather than tertiary level research. Well known studies based in Malaya include D. D. Chelliah, ‘A History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements with Recommendations for a New System Based on Vernaculars’, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London,

The thesis aims to make an original contribution to the field with a focus on developments in higher education in Malaya during the colonial period from 1919 to 1949 and a consideration of the salient genealogical factors which contributed to the emergence of the University of Malaya. Whilst emphasis is given to the final decade beginning with the McLean Commission in June 1939 and ending with the foundation of the University in October 1949, the wider frame beginning in 1919 enables the inter-war period to serve as a significant prologue to the analysis of events and policies from 1939 to 1949. Through an investigation of the emergence of a colonial university in Malaya the study aims to reveal new insights particularly regarding the influence exerted by individuals such as Sir Raymond Priestley who undertook a significant exploratory visit to Malaya in the summer of 1946 and leading members of the Commission, for example, Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, Leonard Barnes and Sir Ivor Jennings. The thesis takes as an organising focus the concept of colonial higher education and refers to significant debates and controversies which have shaped the field's historiography, for example, the language or medium of instruction and the academic standards expected. Consideration is given to the development of colonial education policy with reference to Ashby's incremental formulation and to Stockwell's thesis on the relationship between the university and the state.⁸ The wider political context is significant and contributes further complexity. In the late 1940s there was an absence of consensus regarding the nature of the imagined post-colonial state and the meaning of citizenship; as has been emphasised, 'the very identity of the Malay was at issue'.⁹

1944); Philip Loh Fook Seng, *Seeds of Separation: Education Policy in Malaya 1874-1940*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1975); Rex Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators: British Education Policy Towards the Malays 1875-1906*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1975).

⁸ See Ashby, *Universities*, particularly, *Part Two India* and *Part Three Africa*; Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malay Nation', p. 1149.

⁹ See Tim Harper, *The End of Empire and the Making of Malaya*, (Cambridge, 1999), p. 87. The problem of identity was not a limited concern, it was shared by Chinese, Indian and Tamil communities; for a discussion of these issues see, Muhammed Ikmal Said, 'Malay Nationalism and National Identity', *Suomen Antropologi*, 2, (1995), pp. 11-31. The terms, Malaya and Malaysia, are considered by, Ito Mitsuomi, 'The Evolution of

1.3. Method and Sources

The importance of theory and methodology in historical research has been recognised as ‘integral to the historian’s task’, epistemologies which are most appropriately considered in relationship to each other rather than conceived and studied as two distinctive entities.¹⁰ This observation draws on the work of Mills who emphasised that: ‘if historians have no “theory”, they may provide materials for the writing of history, but they cannot themselves write it. They can entertain, but they cannot keep the record straight. That task now requires explicit attention to much more than “the facts”’.¹¹ These strictures are difficult to follow and as Mills himself acknowledged:

The master task of the historian is to keep the human record straight ... a deceptively simple statement of aim. The historian represents the organised memory of mankind (sic) and that memory as written history is enormously malleable. It changes, often quite drastically, from one generation of historians to another ... because of changes in the points of interest and the current framework within which the record is built.¹²

Aiming to “keep the record straight”, a major imperative guiding this thesis is to present a grounded explanation and interpretation of events leading to the formation of Malaya’s first University. In doing so and pursuing the objectives of the study, considerable attention has been given to searching archival material particularly the records held at the National Archives, Kew, UK, and the source of all archival materials consulted in this thesis

Regional Awareness and Regionalism in Southeast Asia’, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Malaya, 2017), pp. 104-140.

¹⁰ See, Gary McCulloch and Ruth Watts, ‘Introduction: Theory, Methodology and the History of Education’, *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 2, (2003), pp 129-132, p. 129.

¹¹ C. W. Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, (Harmondsworth, 1970), p. 161.

¹² Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, p. 161; pp 159-182. Following Silver’s discussion of the contribution of the non-historian to historiography, see H. Silver, *Higher Education Historiography*, pp. 135-137, the following indicative works have contributed a background to this study, see, Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*, (Singapore, 1946). J. M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, (London, 1958); Ian Morrison, *Malayan Postscript*, London, 1942); Katharine Sim, *Malayan Landscape*, with an Introduction by Sir Richard Winstedt, (London, 1946); Sir Frank Swettenham, *The Real Malay Pen Pictures*, (London and New York, 1899); Sir Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya: An Account of the Origins and Progress of British Influence in Malaya*, (London, 1948).

unless otherwise stated.¹³ These files were mainly consulted for enquiries into the development of higher education in Malaya, the work of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies (ACEC) and Colonial Office (CO) policy and communication on educational provision in the dependencies. In order to progress the study further visits were made to other archives for example the LSE to examine the research and administrative papers of Carr-Saunders and to the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA) in order to consult files relating to Carr-Saunders' early career and his work at Toynbee Hall. Subsequent visits were made to archives at the Special Collections Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), the Cadbury Research Library Special Collections at the University of Birmingham, (CRLSC) and the Senate House Library Special Collections at the University of London (SHLSC), to consult files on Leonard Barnes, Sir Raymond Priestley and Sir Ivor Jennings respectively and to assess their influence on the Malayan higher education project which is discussed in chapter 5 below. Several other visits were made, for example to The King's School, Canterbury to consult the Alfred Milner Collection. The current junior school's premises, formerly Sturry Court and now named Milner Court, was the residence of Lord Milner whose period of office as chair of the Council at Toynbee Hall overlapped with the period of Carr-Saunders' brief residency at the Whitechapel agency. Visits to the University of Malaya, the *Arkib Negara*, Kuala Lumpur, and the archives at the National University of Singapore were also considered but, in the event, did not take place.¹⁴

¹³ To prepare for archival study I attended a one-day Postgraduate Archival Skills Training programme, *Introduction to Archival Research* 20 October 2016 which was followed by a two-day *Skills & Methodology Workshop* 7 and 8 February 2017. Both training programmes were held at the TNA. Before this, I attended a Doctoral Students' Open Day at the British Library on *African and Asian Studies*, 27 February 2015 and also a PhD Research Spring Symposium, *Global Voices in the Archive*, 20 March 2016, again organised by the British Library.

¹⁴ A major objective of the research visit to Malaysia and Singapore was to consult the papers collected by W. S. Morgan as part of his secretarial duties to the Carr-Saunders Commission 1947-48. Morgan sent the papers comprising 'largely memoranda received from organisations and individuals', to Walter Adams, then secretary of the IUC, BW 90/551, correspondence, Morgan to Adams, 22 November 1949. Subsequent correspondence confirmed that Adams sent the papers to Dr G. V. Allen, the first Vice Chancellor of the University of Malaya, see BW 90/551, Adams to Allen, 27 March 1950. Enquiries to the archivists at the University of Malaya and the

1.4. Malaya and Empire

The period of study for this thesis between 1919 and 1949, was a time of Empire for the British in Malaya where the first tentative steps to establish imperial hegemony had been taken towards the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁵ Following the cessation of the First World War further expansion of Britain's colonial Empire occurred, legitimised through arrangements developed and adjudicated by the League of Nations in 1919. This gave governmental responsibility for former colonies of imperial Germany and the Ottoman Empire to the victorious allied powers.¹⁶ As a result, the extent of British colonial territoriality increased and the end of Empire seemed a distant, far-off prospect.¹⁷ This view of colonial development encouraged a disregard for time as a key imperative for action and there was general agreement amongst London's political class 'that social and economic development should precede constitutional advancement-British elites hence anticipated that the pace of political progress would be determined *by*, rather than itself *determine*, the pace of institutional, social and economic development'.¹⁸ The complacency of such thinking was disrupted by the rise of nationalist movements working towards colonial independence with insistence and determination, a phenomenon that was to hasten the end of Empire, threaten Britain's standing in the world and thereby contradict earlier pronouncements by British

National University of Singapore however failed to locate the papers, reply received 19 October 2017. Following personal correspondence, 29 July 2017, Professor Stockwell confirmed that he could not add more about the papers than already indicated in his footnote, see Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation', p.1166, n. 52. This uncertainty, together with the usual financial constraints, militated against travelling to Southeast Asia.

¹⁵ The expansion of British control in Malaya is discussed in chapter 2.

¹⁶ Susan Pederson, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, (Oxford, 2015), p. 4. Although this resulted in the apogee of British colonial territory it was to lead to problematic changes for the colonial power, for example, new obligations towards the colonised, recognition of rights to ultimate self-determination and support for anti-colonial views, see, Martin Thomas and Andrew Thompson, 'Empire and Globalisation: from High Imperialism to Decolonisation', *The International History Review*, 2014), Vol. 36, No. 1, pp. 142-170, pp.150-51.

¹⁷ A view which found general acceptance and certainly was endorsed by British officials in Malaya. see, A. J. Stockwell, 'British Imperial Policy and Decolonization in Malaya, p. 68.

¹⁸ See, Sarah Stockwell, *The British End of the British Empire*, (Cambridge, 2018), p. 64. [author's emphasis]

officials.¹⁹ Such misjudgement, however, needed reappraisal and as has been observed: ‘The major issue of Britain’s declining world power was not a matter of government decision; it was a trend to which wise men adjusted. By the late 1940s decolonization had entered the official mind of British imperialism’.²⁰

During and following the end of the Second World War local agendas, policies and regional complexities contributed to political conflict and instability. A major and potentially damaging conflict of interest developed between Britain and the United States leading to ‘the great American scare’ from 1941 to 1943 when America called for the end of colonial empires with dis-engagement being conducted by international supervision.²¹ Washington later modified its position as it realised that its own military strategy needed colonial bases particularly in the Pacific. Nevertheless, American anti-colonialist policy remained influential and ‘it was no accident that from 1943 the British began to liberalise their arrangements (first in terms of economic development and social welfare and from 1947 with more emphasis on political and constitutional reforms) in order to appease American anti-colonialism’.²² Whilst there was less American concern over British policy in Malaya compared with policy in other colonies under European control, the colonial government in Kuala Lumpur was careful to avoid criticism.²³

Conscious of the need to protect political, economic and security interests in the volatile post-war period, the British were increasingly attracted to the potential benefits of

¹⁹ For example, Malaya gained independence in 1957 and together with Singapore formed the Federation of Malaysia in 1963; in 1965 Singapore left Malaysia to become an independent state.

²⁰ A. J. Stockwell, ‘British Imperial Policy and Decolonization in Malaya’, p. 84.

²¹ See CO/323/1853/24, for proposed four-power declaration on colonies; CO/323/1858/24 for Joint Anglo-US Declaration on Colonies.

²² See, R. E. Robinson, ‘Andrew Cohen and the Transfer of Power in Tropical Africa 1940-1951’, in W. H. Morris-Jones and G. Fischer, eds., *Decolonisation and After: The British and French Experience*, (London, 1980), pp. 50-72, p.54. See also, W. R. Louis, ‘American Anti-Colonialism and the Dissolution of the British Empire’, *International Affairs*, (1985), Vol. 61, pp. 395-420.

²³ A. J. Stockwell, ‘The United States and Britain’s Decolonization of Malaya 1942-1957’, in D. Ryan and V. Pungong, eds., *The United States and Decolonization: Power and Freedom*, (Basingstoke, 2000), 188-206, (pp. 188-89).

federalisation.²⁴ Federation was not a new idea in Malaya, for example, under the Federation Agreement of 1895 the Malay states of Selangor, Negri Sembilan, Pahang and Perak were combined to form the Federated Malay States (FMS).²⁵ Later, following the end of the Second World War, a further step towards federation was taken by the British with the introduction of the Malayan Union experiment in 1946. This was unexpectedly opposed by the Malay community so much so that the Governor of the Malayan Union, Sir G. Edward Gent, was forced to recommend its withdrawal. In 1948 it was replaced by the Malayan Federation, a revised model of governance which restored the traditional constitutional position of the Malay Sultans and their relationship with the *ra'ayat* whilst retaining Gent as High Commissioner.²⁶

The later stages of the Second World War saw considerable changes in the structure and organisation of the CO including a significant expansion of staff reflecting a determination and energy to plan and formulate strategies for post-war development. As a result: ‘... doctrines of “responsible trusteeship” gave way to ideas about technical co-operation and education in citizenship and in this transformation, the “London end” of the administration was expected to give a lead, setting the example and providing the

²⁴ See, Nicholas J. White, *Decolonization: The British Experience Since 1945*, 2nd edn., (Abingdon, 2014), pp. 74-75.

²⁵ Constitutional reform was attempted by Sir Laurence Guillemard, Governor of the Straits Settlements (SS) & High Commissioner of the FMS 1920-1927 and by Sir Cecil Clementi, Governor & High Commissioner 1930-1935. While the two Governors were unsuccessful, floundering on embedded communal interests, the idea of a “Malayan Union” to provide a more coherent administrative structure remained part of the continuing political agenda in Malaya, see Rupert Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1964), p. 153 and pp. 312-377. An important objective of the Malayan Union was to extend the rights of non-Malay communities in the interests of a more coherent, multi-racial society.

²⁶ See A. J. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics During the Malayan Union Experiment 1942-1948*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1979), pp.162-172. There had been Colonial Office hopes that the Malayan Union model could be extended to form the framework for a wider polity in Southeast Asia but this was not realised, see, D. S. Ranjit Singh, ‘British Proposals for a Dominion of Southeast Asia 1943-1957’, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, (JMBRAS)* (1998), Vol. 71, No. 1, pp 27-40. A. J. Stockwell, ‘Malaysia: The Making of a Neo-Colony’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, (1998), Vol. 26, No. 2, pp. 138-156. For a detailed African case study see, Andrew Cohen, *The Failed Experiment of the Central African Federation*, (London, 2017). For a discussion of the federal idea in an international context see, M. Collins, ‘Decolonisation and the “Federal Moment”’, *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, (2013), Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 21-40.

personnel'.²⁷ This led to planning for higher education in the dependent colonial territories led principally by the Asquith Commission from 1943 to 1945.²⁸ It was an initiative that was long overdue although informal and exclusive networks between academic staff of British universities and universities in the “white” settler colonies had been evident for many years.²⁹ As Pietsch has emphasized this was largely a privileged academic exchange ‘that connected settler scholars to those in Britain [and] simultaneously side-lined the Empire’s various “others”’.³⁰ It was to be much later that universities were developed and new relationships established in the former dependent territories.³¹

1.5. British Colonial Higher Education

A study of British colonial higher education involves a complex and extensive historiography which requires a cautionary approach. Discussing the selection, organisation and the writing-up of research findings for his book on *British, Indian and African Universities*, Ashby conceded that the ‘most difficult problem has been to decide what to leave out. The subject spreads all over the place’.³² For the purposes of this discussion, and noting Ashby’s advice

²⁷ See, J. M. Lee, “‘Forward thinking’ and the War: The Colonial Office during the 1940s’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 6, No. 1, (October 1977), pp. 64-79, p. 66. It has been argued that ‘British postcolonial assistance cannot be reduced to merely a manifestation of a ‘neo-colonial’ project. It was also constituted by different motivations which deliberately sought to reduce dependence rather than maintain it ... one way of conceptualising these motivations is to see British technical assistance as an extension of the process of decolonization beyond the constitutional’, see Sarah Stockwell, *The British End of the British Empire*, (Cambridge, 2018), p. 60.

²⁸ The war-time planning of Asquith is discussed in chapter 4.

²⁹ See Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, pp. 109-168; see also, Heike Jons, ‘The University of Cambridge: Academic Expertise and the British Empire 1885-1962’, *Environment and Planning*, Vol. 48, (2016), pp. 94-114. For discussion of the Empire role of Oxford University see, Richard Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause?* (New York, 1986).

³⁰ Pietsch, *Empire of Scholars*, p. 6. For a comprehensive account of the development of universities in former colonies following the Second World War see, Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership*, (Edinburgh 1980).

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 171-198. Academic relationships, particularly involving students were not unidirectional, see *Ibid.*, pp. 178-183; see also, A. J. Stockwell, ‘Leaders, Dissidents and the Disappointed: Colonial Students in Britain as Empire Ended’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 36, No. 3, (2008), pp. 487-507.

³² See, Ashby, *Universities*, p. ix; also cited by Clive Whitehead, ‘The Contribution of the Christian Missions to British Colonial Education’, *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 35, No. 1, (1999), pp. 321-337. Ashby first presented his ideas as part of the Godwin lectures at Harvard University in 1964 which were subsequently published; see, Eric Ashby, *African Universities and Western Tradition*, (London, 1964). This latter work was based on his Godkin Lectures given at Harvard University in 1964. The Godkin Lectures were prestigious events, e.g., in 1963 Clark Kerr, President of the University of California (1958-1967) presented on the theme of the *Gold and*

on what to include and what to leave out,³³ it is important to establish an organising framework and structure, to assess where subject boundaries lie and to identify critical themes and relevant historiographies. This is achieved here with historiographical reference to three main areas. First, the development of colonial education policy by the British Government is considered and its broad characteristics are identified. A focus on the idea of the colonial university and its purpose and status within colonial society provides a second area for discussion; this includes the institutional model of governance that was “imported”, the medium or language of instruction that was adopted and the academic standards that were required. The standards debate had intensified following indifferent levels of academic performance and contingent employment difficulties in Bengal which came to be referred to as the “Indian problem”.³⁴ The third area concerns the relationship between the university and the state as progress towards independence became more insistent and explicit. Although the main focus is based on developments in Malaya reference is also made to research from other colonial territories, principally India and Africa.

It was recognised that the formation of an Advisory Committee in 1923 provided the CO with a more formal procedure for supporting the development of educational policy in

the Blue: A Personal Memoir of the University of California 1949-1967, Vol. 1, *Academic Triumphs*, (London, 2001), p. 262.

³³ It is acknowledged that missionary societies were important agencies in the development of colonial schools and whilst reference is made to the work of religious agencies a direct study of this subject lies beyond the scope of the present research. The study of the influence of Christian missions in the Empire has given rise to an extensive historiography; for an assessment of the paradoxical cultural relationship between imperial and indigenous constituencies see, Andrew Porter, ‘Cultural Imperialism and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780-14,’ *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 25, No. 3, (1997), pp. 367-391; for studies set in a wider context see, Elizabeth Elbourne, ‘Religion in the British Empire’, in Sarah Stockwell, ed., *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives*, (Oxford, 2008), pp.131-156; for the experience in Malaya see, D. F. Cooke, ‘The Mission Schools of Malaya 1815-1942,’ *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 6, No 2, (1966), pp. 364-399

³⁴ The Indian problem was a term often used pejoratively to describe what were held to be unrealistic vocational ambitions of the *babu class*, principally young Bengali men who, having taking degree level studies in English, found themselves unemployable and at odds with the colonial government. For their affected manners and extravagant misuse of the English language see, Swettenham, Sir Frank, *Unaddressed Letters*, (London, 1911), pp 220-222; see also Clive Whitehead, ‘The Concept of British Education Policy in the Colonies 1850-1960,’ *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol. 39, No. 2, (2007), pp.161-173, p. 165. For a detailed and scholarly work which explores the relationship between English education and the rise of Indian Nationalism see, B. T. McCully, *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism*, (New York, 1940).

British overseas dependencies.³⁵ At the same time, Arthur Mayhew who served in the Indian Educational Service from 1903 to 1922 and rose to be Director of Public Instruction in the Central Provinces,³⁶ also claimed that educational development was frequently neglected as the Government became pre-occupied with other problems such as territorial security, legal and economic affairs. He described the history of colonial education as ‘... a very English story [because] from the start a fundamental feature of our colonial policy established itself [that is] free scope for private enterprise, a suspicion or mistrust of rigid official control, arising ... from the absence of clear educational ideas on the government’s part, as well as a lack of belief in education’.³⁷

Doubts about the efficacy of policy and its administration were also expressed by Whitehead who declared that ‘... the British had no uniform colonial policy ... [at] best the CO kept a paternal eye on ... each territory supplemented by the occasional visit of an official or advisor from London. The development of education was a prime example’.³⁸ One of the problems rested with the equivocal nature of ministerial statements. For example, in the summer of 1917 Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India, between 1917 and 1922 spoke to the House of Commons on the question of Britain’s developing relationship with

³⁵ Arthur Mayhew, *Education in the Colonial Empire*, (London, 1938), p. 40. The Advisory Committee on Native [sic] Education in British Tropical Africa first met in January 1924 chaired by the Under-Secretary of State, William Ormesby-Gore. In 1929 the Committee’s brief was extended to include educational provision across the entire Empire and it was re-named the Advisory Committee for Education in the Colonies although it remained an advisory rather than an executive body see, Clive Whitehead, ‘The Advisory Committee on Education in the [British] Colonies 1924-1961’, *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (1991), pp. 385-422.

³⁶ See, Arthur Mayhew, *The Education of India: A Study of British Educational Policy in India, 1835-1920, and of its Bearing on National Life and Problems in India Today*, (London, 1926). Returning to England, Mayhew was appointed joint-secretary of the re-constituted Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies and editor of a new journal, *Oversea Education*, see, Clive Whitehead, ‘Oversea Education and British Colonial Education 1929-1963’, *History of Education*, Vol. 32, No. 5, (2003), pp. 561-575; Clive Whitehead, ‘The Nestor of British Colonial Education: a Portrait of Arthur Mayhew, (1878-1948)’, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol. 29, No. 1, (1997), pp. 51-76.

³⁷ Arthur Mayhew, *Education in the Colonial Empire*, (London, 1938), p. 39. A similar point is made by Ruth H. K. Wong, ‘Education and the Problems of Nationhood’, in Wang Gungwu ed., *Malaysia: A Survey*, (New York, 1965), p. 199; see also, P. C. Wicks, ‘Education, British Colonialism and a Plural Society in West Malaysia: The Development of Education in the British Settlements along the Straits of Malacca 1786-1874’, *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 20, No. 2, (1980) pp. 163-187, p. 166.

³⁸ Clive Whitehead, ‘Education in British Colonial Dependencies, 1919-39: A re-appraisal’, *Comparative Education*, Vol. 17, No. 1, (March 1981), pp. 71-80, p. 72.

India.³⁹ In his well-known address he stated that henceforth the Government's policy was to reflect '... the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire'.⁴⁰ Such statements, lacking a clear strategy and timetable for change, were largely expedient and provided a formula that disingenuous ministers accepted and researchers criticised as: 'Delphic utterances ... primarily designed to please as many different groups as possible ... to win new friends while nurturing vested interests ... to satisfy conservatives that the Empire remained at least half full and at the same time convince progressives that it had become half empty'.⁴¹

A general, but fundamental criticism of British educational policy in Malaya, charged that it was politically motivated and deliberately formulated with the intention of creating docility and subservience in school students in order to sustain and perpetuate imperial rule.⁴² This interpretation was held elsewhere, for example, by many Africans who believed that: 'Imperial officials had no respect for the views of the colonized [as] the schools were designed, not to meet the needs and aspirations of the indigenous population, but those of the colonizers'.⁴³ Whitehead, who has written extensively on British colonial education⁴⁴ refuted

³⁹ *HC Deb Fifth Series, XCVII, col. 1695*, E. S. Montague, 20 Aug. 1917.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ A. J. Stockwell, ed., *British Documents on the End of Empire: Malaya, Part 1 The Malayan Union Experiment 1942-1948*, p. 38, (London, 1995).

⁴² Critiques along these lines are extensive and include: Phillip Loh, *Seeds of Separation*; B. W. Andaya and L. Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 3rd ed., (London, 2017), pp. 230-244. Haris Mohd. Jadi, 'Ethnicity, Politics and Education: A Study in the Development of Malayan Education and its Policy Implementation Process 1955-1970', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Keele, 1983), pp. 25-27; Tan Yao Sua, 'The British Educational Policy for the Indigenous Community in Malaya, 1870-1957: Dualistic Structure, Colonial Interests & Malay Radical Nationalism', *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 33, No. 4, (2013), pp. 337-47. The historiography has been extended by more recent scholarship, e.g., Siew-Min Sai, 'Educating Multicultural Citizens: Colonial Nationalism, Imperial Citizenship and Education in Late Colonial Singapore', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1, (2013), pp. 49-73; Paula Pannu, 'The Production and Transmission of Knowledge in Colonial Malaya', *Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 37, (2009), pp 427-45; Parimala Rao. ed., *New Perspectives in the History of Indian Education*, (New Delhi, 2014).

⁴³ See Michael Omolewa, 'Educating the "Native": A Study of the Education Adaption Strategy in British Colonial Africa, 1910-1936', *Journal of African American History*, Vol. 91, No. 3, (2006), pp. 267-287, p. 280.

the idea ‘that the content of schooling with its emphasis on European civilisation and knowledge was deliberately designed to promote a sense of inferiority and inadequacy in the minds of colonial people’,⁴⁵ a contention that was mischievously described by Mangan as “boldly revisionist”.⁴⁶ It placed Whitehead in opposition to those writers and researchers who perceived a more invidious sense of purpose underpinning colonial education.⁴⁷ His defence of British policy is surprising given his familiarity with a speech made by the Secretary of State Leo Amery who described British education policy in the following unequivocal terms:

Our whole endeavour now is to substitute for a purely literary education, not suited to the needs of the natives, a type of education more adapted to their mental aptitude ... the building up of character on the part of the native, at giving him an understanding of his environment, at making him useful in his own environment rather than at giving him the of education which is really only suitable in the environment of a country like Great Britain.⁴⁸

While adaptation was part of early British education policy in the 1920s, it came to be opposed by indigenous populations in Africa and other dependent colonies.⁴⁹ Whitehead’s

⁴⁴ The main focus of Whitehead’s work was on policy and administrative issues resulting in a series of papers published between 1981-2007 and include, ‘Sir C. Cox: An Imperial Patrician of a Different Kind’, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (1989), pp. 28-42; ‘Education Policy in British Tropical Africa: the 1925 White Paper in Retrospect’, *History of Education*, Vol. 10, No. 3, (1981a), pp. 195-203. He also edited a book see, C. Whitehead, ed., *Colonial Educators: The British and Colonial Education Services 1858-1983*, (London, 2003). His works are cited variously in this thesis.

⁴⁵ Clive Whitehead, ‘Education in British Colonial Dependencies’, p. 72.

⁴⁶ J. A. Mangan, *Benefits Bestowed? Education and British Imperialism*, (Abingdon, 2012), p. 15.

⁴⁷ See, Clive Whitehead, ‘British Colonial Education Policy: A Synonym for Cultural Imperialism?’ in Mangan, *Benefits Bestowed?* pp. 211-230. Whitehead specifically attacked several left-wing or ‘neo-Marxist’ writers such as Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (Harmondsworth, 1972); Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, (Harmondsworth, 1972); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, (London, 1972). Another frequent target was Martin Carnoy who wrote the well-known book, *Education as Cultural Imperialism*, (New York, 1974). Criticisms of Carnoy are re-cycled in several of Whitehead’s papers including: ‘The Concept of British Education Policy’ p. 171; ‘Historiography, Part II’, p. 446.

⁴⁸ Colonial Office, *Imperial Conference 1926: Appendices to the Summary of Proceedings*, Cmd. 2769, (London, 1926), p. 123. An extract from Amery’s address is cited by Whitehead in his paper on Cultural Imperialism, see Mangan, *Benefits Bestowed*, p. 212.

⁴⁹ The first statement of this policy was made by the Advisory Committee on Native (sic) Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies, Cmd. 2374, (1925). For a critical view see, Udo Bude, ‘The Adaption Concept in British Colonial Education’, *Comparative Education*, Vol. 19, No. 3, (1983), pp. 341-355. The ideas on ‘adaptation’ originated with Lord Lugard, particularly his methods of administration during his early career in Northern Nigeria 1898-1906 and in Nigeria 1912-1938, see Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945*, (London, 1960). For a discussion of indirect rule from a practical and administrative perspective see, C. L. Temple, *Native Races and their Rulers*, (Cape Town, 1918). As Director of Education 1908-1919, Sir Hans Vischer developed educational practices based on adaptative principles in Northern Nigeria and later became joint secretary to the ACEC in London 1923-1939 sharing the post with Arthur Mayhew. Vischer’s work has been extensively researched see, Sonia Graham, ‘History of Education in Relation to the Development of the

response was simply to describe Amery's statement as 'an expression of the confused nature of British colonial policy in the 1920s'.⁵⁰ As Mangan observed: 'Clive Whitehead calls into question the validity of widely accepted canons of belief and interpretation. The Orwellian view that British imperialism was 'something clamped down, in *saecula saeculorum* upon the will of prostrate peoples [clearly] exasperates him'.⁵¹ Recent scholarship has also been critical of the work of researchers such as Martin Carnoy with its emphasis on structural analysis and the instrumental functions of education.⁵² It has been argued that more attention should be given to local agency recognising that '... knowledge was a continuation of the pre-existing [i.e., pre-colonial] intellectual curiosity...'.⁵³ Frustration was again evident when Whitehead discussing the historiography of Indian education observed that: 'To date much of the criticism of British policy appears to have been motivated by emotion rather than by detailed scholarly analysis, what is urgently needed ... is more plodding in archives to substantiate, refine or refute the claims of India's educational historians'.⁵⁴ As Wright Mills pointed out the key issue remains that: 'History as a discipline does invite grubbing for detail, but it does encourage a widening of one's view to embrace epochal pivotal events in the development of social structures',⁵⁵ arguably a preferred strategy rather than being '... content to plough the same narrow plot over and over again',⁵⁶ a tendency to which Whitehead was prone.

Protectorate of Northern Nigeria 1900-1919, with special reference to the work of Hanns Vischer', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of London, 1955). See also, Sonia Parkinson, (née Graham), 'Sir Hanns Vischer: Champion of African Cultures: A Portrait of an Adviser on Colonial Education', in Whitehead, *Colonial Educators*, 2003), pp. 106-148. During the 1930s the relevance of educational adaption declined particularly in relationship to developments in higher education, see Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 190-223.

⁵⁰ Clive Whitehead, 'British Colonial Education Policy', p. 212.

⁵¹ Mangan, *Benefits Bestowed*, p. 15.

⁵² See, Carnoy, *Education as Cultural Imperialism*.

⁵³ Rao, *New Perspectives*, p. 22.

⁵⁴ Clive Whitehead, 'Historiography, Part I, India', p. 327.

⁵⁵ C. W., Mills, *The Sociological Imagination*, p. 160.

⁵⁶ D. Kennedy, 'Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 24, No. 3, (1996), pp. 345-363, p. 345.

Although the historiography of colonial higher education has continued to expand,⁵⁷ the most extensive and detailed treatment of the evolution of the colonial university remains the research undertaken by Eric Ashby and Mary Anderson during the 1960s describing the different stages of the British project to develop higher education in the dependent territories.⁵⁸ In reality progress was inconsistent and less than incremental but nonetheless the enquiries and reports made, for example, by the Currie Committee's report in 1933 and the De la Warr Commission's report in 1937 together with the work of Professor Channon at the CO between 1943 and 1945, were seen by Ashby as the "precursors of Asquith" providing his Commission with 'a new momentum and [giving] a new direction to British policy'.⁵⁹ Despite this generous praise Ashby was critical of the university model that Asquith recommended for the colonies. It was, he claimed, insufficiently responsive to the needs of colonial people and their environment and as he described in his well-known statement it was essentially British:

The pattern of university appropriate for Manchester, Exeter and Hull was *ipso facto* appropriate for Ibadan, Kampala and Singapore. If we were going to export universities ... they would of course be British universities just as the cars we export ... are British cars. As with cars, so with universities: we willingly made minor modifications to suit the climate, but we proposed no radical change in design; and we did not regard it as our business to enquire whether French or American models might be more suitable.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ See for example, Philip Altbach, and T. Umakoshi, eds., *Asian Universities: Historical Perspectives and Contemporary Challenges*, (Baltimore, 2004); P. A. Cunich, *A History of the University of Hong Kong*, Vol. I, 1911-1945, (Hong Kong, 2012). T. Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development*, (London, 2017); T. H. Silcock, *Southeast Asian University: A Comparative Account of some Development Problems*, (Durham, NC, 1964). H. E. Wilson, *Social Engineering in Singapore: Educational Policies and Social Change 1819-1972*, (Singapore, 1978). For more specific discussion see, Grace Ai-Ling Chou, 'Transnational Governances in Higher Education: New Universities, Rhetorics, and Networks in Post-war Singapore', *European Education*, Vol. 47, No. 3, (2015), pp. 260-273; J. D. Hargreaves, 'The Idea of a Colonial University', *African Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 286, (Jan.1973), pp. 26-36; Robert Koehl, 'The Uses of the University', pp. 116-131; V. Selvaratnam, 'Dependency, Change and Continuity in a Western University Model: The Malaysian Case', *Southeast Asian Journal of Social Science*, Vol. 14, No. 2, (1986), pp. 29-51.

⁵⁸ As indicated above, Ashby's ideas were initially presented at Harvard and later published, see, Ashby, *African Universities and Western Tradition*. His major, research-based study followed, see Ashby, *Universities*.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, p. 475.

⁶⁰ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 224; also cited by V. Selvaratnam, 'Dependency, Change and Continuity in a Western University Model', p. 36. The American university model referred to is the Land Grant University; for discussion see, Scott Key, 'The Establishment of American Land Grant Universities', *Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 67, No. 2, (March-April, 1996), pp 196-220. Extended studies have been made by, Edward E. Eddy, *Colleges of our Land and Time: The Land-Grant Idea in American Education*, (New York, 1957); Allan

This observation by Ashby suggested that there were different ways of thinking about adaptation but nonetheless after all the discussions over a period of more than ten years he concluded that the unimaginative idea of a British export was the outcome of the Asquith Commission. According to Ashby the ideas developed by Asquith ‘hardened into dogma, resistant to criticism and change. People talked of the “Asquith doctrine” and referred to university colleges ... as “Asquith colleges”. The doctrine was a vivid expression of British cultural parochialism’.⁶¹ These uncompromising observations were vigorously contested by Carr-Saunders, in a review article.⁶² He was particularly critical of Ashby’s treatment of the Asquith Report and his failure to consider the circumstances under which the Commission worked. More recent scholarship based on the work of the Elliot Commission has challenged the colonial model asserting that ‘the West African universities that [Asquith] recommended are not ... best thought of as a British modernising project that was exported to Africa’.⁶³ According to Livsey, developments ‘were formed through interactions between agendas and ideas with roots in West Africa, Britain and elsewhere’.⁶⁴

Throughout his research Ashby raised pertinent questions about the purpose of the colonial university, for example, the extent to which the curriculum should be adapted to be relevant to local conditions and whether explicit vocational training programmes were needed to alleviate shorter-term economic problems. He emphasised that ‘what was wanted in the colonial territories was not a large number of men with specialised technical training and

Nevins, *The State Universities and Democracy*, (Urbana, Ill., 1962). The question of different university models is also considered by, Martin Kolinsky, ‘The Demise of the Inter University Council for Higher Education Overseas: A Chapter in the History of the Idea of the University’, *Minerva*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (March, 1983), pp. 37-80. See also, T. Kim, Old Borrowings and New Models of the University in East Asia’, *Globalization, Societies and Education*, Vol. 5., No. 1, (2007), pp. 39-52.

⁶¹ Ashby, *African Universities and Western Tradition*, p. 19.

⁶² See, A. M. Carr-Saunders, ‘Britain and Universities in Africa’, *Higher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 3, (June 1965), pp. 227-239, p. 239.

⁶³ Tim Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age: Reframing Decolonisation and Development*, (London, 2017), p.19.

⁶⁴ Tim Livsey, ‘Imagining an Imperial Modernity: Universities and the West African Roots of Colonial Development’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 44, No. 6, (2016), pp. 952-975. p. 952.

little else; but a smaller number, carefully prepared for wider service'.⁶⁵ Lord Hailey, came to a different view based on his recently completed field research and report.⁶⁶ He stated that:

The proper aim at the moment of higher education should be to enable a man to be of first-class assistance in administration or in medical work or a really good assistance surveyor or assistant engineer rather than to fill the highest posts in the services. The intermediate need was the highest possible extension of the administrative and social services and this could not be achieved by increasing the number of men in the highest and the lowest stages; it could only be achieved by an increase in the "intermediate" stage.⁶⁷

These contrasting views gave a different meaning and sense of purpose to the colonial university; they created a political tension that was particularly evident during the early years of decolonisation between a policy based on instrumentalism and training for the fulfilment of short-term economic goals on the one hand and on the other, a commitment to more intrinsic and longer-term educational needs. A critical point remains; overall the values of the new colonial universities reflected those of English universities at a certain time and period of their development,⁶⁸ a position that was to be challenged by later research.⁶⁹ Could it have been any different? As Hargreaves points out, 'if British academics had waited to act

⁶⁵ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 206. See, CO 885/41, minutes of the ninety fourth-meeting of ACEC, 18 May 1939.

⁶⁶ See, Lord Hailey, *An African Survey*, (Oxford, 1938).

⁶⁷ See, CO 885/41, minutes of the ninety fourth-meeting of ACEC, 18 May 1939.

⁶⁸ For a discussion of the academic climate and the disposition of universities in 1945 see Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 224-233. According to Ashby, Asquith's recommendations for the development of colonial universities were largely informed by pre-war thinking, but new ideas about higher education were being discussed, see for example, Adolfe Lowe, *The Universities in Transformation*, (London, 1940); Bruce Truscot, *Red Brick University*, (London, 1951). The name Truscot was a pseudonym for E. Allison Peers, Professor of Spanish at the University of Liverpool, see Harold Silver, 'The Universities' Speaking Conscience: 'Bruce Truscott' and Redbrick University', *History of Education*, Vol. 28, No. 2, (1999), pp. 173-189. For Peer's career, see Ann L. Mackenzie and Adrian Allan eds., *Redbrick University Revisited: The Autobiography of 'Bruce Truscot'*, (Liverpool, 1996). The publication of a series of Government reports signalled a response to the planning and development needs of post-war society and added a sense of urgency, reconstitution and reform. The reports included, Committee on Higher Technological Education, *A Report of the Special Committee appointed by the Minister for Education*, (London, 1945) [Percy Report]; Committee on Scientific Manpower, *A Report of the Committee appointed by the Lord President of the Council*, Cmd. 6824, (London, 1946) [Barlow Report]. For details of further Government reports see, Ashby, *Universities*, p. 231. There is little evidence to suggest that either the Asquith or the Carr-Saunders Commissions gave full consideration to the educational implications of Hailey's emphasis on the 'intermediate stages' of training or to technological educational reform proposed by the above Government reports.

⁶⁹ For example, Grace Ai-Ling Chou, 'Translating Higher Education in the British Empire: The Question of Vernacular Degrees in Post-War Malaya', in L. Vega, ed., *Empires, Post-Coloniality and Interculturality*, (Rotterdam, 2014), pp. 217-232.

until they had freed themselves from the corrupting influence of their own history they would have waited for ever'.⁷⁰

The model of governance for the university and its approved language of instruction were clearly linked, but the nature of the relationship was problematic particularly given that 'where English was designated as the medium of university instruction it would be so as an acquired language',⁷¹ thereby further disadvantaging students schooled in vernacular languages. Despite this it was considered 'desirable and inevitable in view of Malaya's history and present social condition that the University of Malaya should be an English-speaking university and not a polyglot university'.⁷²

These difficulties and the introduction of English as the medium or language of instruction in schools and universities had a long and controversial history in the development of British colonial education beginning with the publication of Thomas Babington Macaulay's, infamous minute on Indian education, an exposition that was to reverberate throughout the Empire⁷³ and signal the beginning of an intense educational

⁷⁰ John Hargreaves, 'The Idea of a Colonial University', *African Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 286, (January 1973), p.29. The presence of Professor Channon cannot be overlooked. He had very clear ideas on the functions of a colonial university which are examined in chapter 4 below. Through his work with the ACEC and with the then Secretary of State Oliver Stanley, Channon exerted considerable influence during the post-war period, his memorandum being described by Ashby as 'a seminal document of unusual importance', see Ashby, *Universities*, p. 475. For the Channon papers see, See CO 859/45/2 & CO 859/45/3, H. J. Channon, *Some Observations on the Development of Higher Education in the Colonies*, (London, 1941); repr., Ashby, *Universities*, (1966), pp. 481-492 [Channon Memorandum]. CO 1045/106, ACEC, *Report of the Sub-Committee on Higher Education* (London, 1943), [Channon Report], repr., Ashby, *Universities*, (1966), pp. 492-524.

⁷¹ See *Asquith Report*, p. 89. This was one solution to nation-building but as has been observed 'education and language may be regarded as the *Scylla* and *Charybdis* of Malaysian multi-communal politics,' and problems regarding a national language continued, see, Tham Seong Chee, 'Issues in Malaysian Education: Past, Present and Future,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (September, 1979), pp. 321-350. Subsequent enquiries over-turned the colonial government's strategy and strengthened the claims for primacy of the Malay language see, Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Committee on Malay Education*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1951) [Barnes Report]; Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Committee on Malay Education*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1956) [Razak Report]. The status of Chinese languages, remained unresolved, see, Federation of Malaya, *Chinese Schools and the Education of Chinese Malaysians: The Report of a Mission Invited by the Federal Government to Study the Problems of the Chinese in Malaya*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1951b), [Fenn-Wu Report]

⁷² See Carr-Saunders Report, p. 17.

⁷³ The implications of this policy decision were not confined to India. As Anderson noted, 'from this point on, all over the expanding empire, if at different speeds, "Macaulayism was pursued". Its influence was evident in Malaya with the founding of the Kuala Kangsar Malay College in 1905 where despite original intentions to the contrary it became a school for boys of the Malay elite and 'quickly became known, wholly without irony, as

controversy between those who supported the introduction of an English-based curriculum with English as the language of instruction, the Anglicists, and those who emphasized local cultural and religious traditions as taught in vernacular schools, the Orientalists.⁷⁴ Presenting his proposal to the Board of Public Instruction in Calcutta (Kolkata) in February 1835, Macaulay forcefully emphasised the supremacy and utility of the English language and advances made in European sciences and arts compared with the status and applications of Arabic and Sanskrit language and knowledge. In his well-known, un-compromising assertion of European cultural supremacy he stated that ‘... a single shelf of a good European library was worth the whole native literature of India and Arabia.’⁷⁵

To the delight of his fellow Anglicist board members and with the unequivocal support of the Governor General, Lord Bentinck, Macaulay gained approval for his proposal to give primacy to the diffusion of English language and literature at the expense of oriental studies. The policy was intended to be politically and financially expedient rather than purely educationally beneficial by seeking the diffusion of knowledge to the general population through the agency of administrative “native elites” trained and educated in the manner of upper-class English gentlemen.⁷⁶ This latter group was described by Macaulay as ‘a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions we govern, a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect’.⁷⁷ It was envisaged that they would serve ‘to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with the terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to

the Malay Eton,’ see, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, (London, 2006) p. 91, n. 20. The development of the college is discussed further in chapter 2 which follows.

⁷⁴ See Hazel, M. Griffin, ‘Thomas Babington Macaulay and the Anglicist-Orientalist Controversy in Indian Education 1833-37’, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 1972).

⁷⁵ ‘Minute recorded in the General Department by Thomas Babington Macaulay, law member of the Governor-General’s Council, dated 2 February 1835’, document no. 14, in Lynn Zastoupil and Martin Moir, eds., *The Great Indian Education Debate: Documents Relating to the Orientalist-Anglicist Controversy, 1781-1843*, (Richmond, 1999), pp 161-173.

⁷⁶ Anthony Sweeting and Edward Vickers, ‘Language and the History of Colonial Education: The Case of Hong Kong’, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 41, No.1, (Jan. 2007) pp. 1-40, p. 11ff.

⁷⁷ Zastoupil and Moir, *The Great Indian Debate*, p. 171.

render them by degrees an effective means for the conveyance of knowledge to the great mass of the population'.⁷⁸ The process and the debate rumbled on but with increasingly less conviction from the Anglicists. Subsequently, research has suggested: 'that the minute has reverberated so long in the Indian and British cultural psyches has ... much to do with the contemptuous dismissal of Indian thought and literature and its uncompromisingly anglo-centric notion of India's future'.⁷⁹ But the pre-occupation with Macaulayism began to change as a result of the publication of another educational document which rejected his 'downward filtration' policy and through a proposal for a more inclusive and extensive policy was able to diminish some of the influence generated by Macaulay's Minute. This later document, a despatch,⁸⁰ was attributed to Charles Wood although there has been considerable debate about its authorship.⁸¹ The tone and disposition of the despatch were markedly different from the starkness of Macaulay although Wood also took an instrumental view of the type of education that was needed⁸² explaining his approach as follows:

You want surgeons and engineers and superintendents of railroad works and of irrigation works ... Train up men for practical purposes. Give the means of conferring distinction on people who choose to educate themselves highly, but educate yourself for practical employment.⁸³

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 1-72. Recent scholarship has extended an understanding of Macaulay and his father Zachary's influence on the imperial project by revising and re-focussing familiar narratives, see Catherine Hall, *Macaulay and Son: Architects of Imperial Britain*, (New Haven, CT, 2012).

⁸⁰ See, 'Despatch from the Court of Directors of the East India Company to the Governor General of India in Council', No. 49, 19 July 1854, in J. A. Richey, ed., *Bureau of Education, India. Selections from Educational Records, Vol. 2, 1840-1859*, (Calcutta, 1922), pp. 364-93. See, R. J. Moore, *Sir Charles Wood's Indian Policy 1853-1866*, (Manchester, 1966). For a critique of the Despatch see, Syed Nurullah and J. P. Naik, *History of Education in India During the British Period*, (Bombay, 1943), pp. 158-173.

⁸¹ The identity of the writer of the Despatch has been confirmed as Charles Wood, then President of the Board of Control, see, R. J. Moore, 'The Composition of Wood's Education Despatch', *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 80, No. 314, (January 1965), pp. 70-84. Indian research on the writing of the Despatch has been more equivocal claiming that Dr Alexander Duff, a Scottish missionary of great repute and founder of the first mission school in Calcutta, played a considerable role, see, *Nurullah and Naik*, p. 158. Additional scholarship has concluded that 'the despatch was the outcome of a group of minds, however, considerable Duff's contribution may have been', see, Bruce McCully, *English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism*, (New York, 1940), p. 137. For discussion, see Ibid., p. 135ff.

⁸² There was some commonality with Macaulay, for example, the Despatch stated 'that the education which we desire to see extended in India is that which has for its object the diffusion of the improved arts, science, philosophy and literature of Europe; in short of European knowledge,' cited by *Nurullah and Naik*, p. 160.

⁸³ Wood to F. Halliday, Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, 24 July 1854, cited by Moore, *Sir Charles Wood's Indian Policy*, p. 115.

In addition to Calcutta (Kolkata) Wood's despatch proposed the establishment of Indian universities in Bombay (Mumbai) and Madras (Chennai) and elsewhere as might be appropriate.⁸⁴ The universities were to be modelled on the University of London which at the time was organised as a federation, an examining rather than a teaching institution; the Indian universities were to function similarly, that is to admit students from affiliated colleges, to hold exams and award degrees to successful candidates.⁸⁵ It was a convenient arrangement but one that created several unintended consequences; there were difficulties in establishing appropriate standards of admission and assessment and thereby a failure to preserve the integrity of degrees awarded. Despite these problems in academic administration the numbers of graduating students increased and competed for limited job vacancies in the field of government administration and the civil service, a classic case of supply far exceeding demand. Within imperial circles this phenomenon became a matter of concern and was widely referred to as the "Indian problem" and usually accompanied by the imperative, it must not be repeated.⁸⁶ There were attempts to reform Indian universities in the earlytwentieth centuries⁸⁷ before the British finally relinquished their educational responsibilities in favour of elected Indian provincial governments in 1921.⁸⁸ According to the Asquith Commission the university had a critical role to play in the development of self-rule stating that:

⁸⁴ For a discussion of the development of Indian Universities see, Henry Sharp, 'The Development of Indian Universities, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 73, No. 3778, April 1925), pp. 513-533;

⁸⁵ See, Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 54-64; The initiative for the University of Calcutta was drawn up by Dr. F. J. Mouat and is described in his paper: Frederick J. Mouat, 'The Origin, Progress and Influence of Universities in India', *Journal of the Society for Arts*, Vol. 36, No. 1844, (March 1888), pp. 483-524.

⁸⁶ See, Clive Whitehead, 'The Medium of Instruction in British Colonial Education: A Case of Cultural Imperialism or Enlightened Paternalism?', *History of Education*, Vol. 24, No. 1, (1995), pp. 1-15, p. 2. For a discussion of British education policy in India, see Whitehead, 'Historiography, Part 1: India', pp.318-325;

⁸⁷ For a discussion of reformist measures see, Suresh Chandra Ghosh, 'The Genesis of Curzon's University Reforms 1899-1905', in Parimala, Rao, ed., *New Perspectives*, pp 224-268; first publ. in *Minerva*, Vol. 26, No. 4, (1988), pp. 463-492; see also the Sadler Report and for discussion, see Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 113-136.

⁸⁸ Whitehead, 'Historiography, Part 1: India', p. 325.

In the stage preparatory to self-government universities have an important role to play: indeed, they may be said to be indispensable. To them we must look for the production of men and women with the standards of public service and a capacity for leadership which self-rule requires ... In short, we look on the establishment of universities as an inescapable corollary of any policy which aims at the achievement of colonial self-government'.⁸⁹

The report saw great value in residential universities explaining that 'nothing could minister more effectively to a spirit of unity where communities were divided by racial or sectional differences' a principle that had particular relevance to the multi-racial and communal interests which were deeply embedded in Malayan society. These progressive ideas were laudable attempts to link education to political change. But the tone and concepts of the report, for example, the use of the term "self-rule" rather than "independent government" and reference to reform as a long-term process taking many years to complete, sounded paternalistic and redolent of pre-war laissez faire politics in comparison with the more urgent and insistent expectations characterising the political objectives of emergent nationalist movements.⁹⁰ Despite this however Ashby argued that 'if the Asquith Commission had not reported in 1945 and action on it had been delayed, the opportunity would have been lost to set the colonies on the road to independence'.⁹¹ This assertion has some validity but as Ashby himself acknowledged, colonial territories 'would have taken the road just the same'.⁹² In Malaya the initial role and influence of the university was limited. The changing political landscape of the post-war years proved decisive and the university, as a newly formed social institution, was not sufficiently powerful to significantly influence external events. Following

⁸⁹ See the Asquith Report, pp. 10-11.

⁹⁰ For Malay nationalist politics see, William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, (New Haven and London, 1967); Cheah Boon Kheng, 'The Erosion of Ideological Hegemony and Royal Power and the Rise of Post-war Malay Nationalism, 1945-46', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 19, (1988), pp. 1-26; Simon C. Smith, "'Moving a Little with the Tide": Malay Monarchy and the Development of Modern Malay Nationalism', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 34, No. 1, (March 2006), pp. 123-138; James Ongkili, 'The British and Malayan Nationalism, 1946-1957,' *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (September 1972), pp. 256-277; T. H. Silcock, and Ungku Abdul Aziz, 'Nationalism in Malaya', in W. L. Holland, ed., *Asian Nationalism and the West: A Symposium Based on Documents and Reports of the Eleventh Conference Institute of Pacific Relations*, (New York, 1973); Radin Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism, 1896-1941', *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (1960), pp. 1-28.

⁹¹ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 233.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 233.

a deterioration in the political relationship between the Federation and the Colony the university separated in January 1962 establishing a presence in Kuala Lumpur in addition to the campus in Singapore. This signalled the demise of the original, unitary concept of the university introduced by the Carr-Saunders Commission.⁹³ In the final analysis it appeared, as Stockwell observed that, 'it was the politics of nation-building which moulded the university rather than the other way round'.⁹⁴

The various forces of decolonisation⁹⁵ provided a problematic background to the importation of university education into Malaya. The importing agency, the Carr-Saunders Commission, acted locally but was guided by principles formulated in London. To a complex situation such arrangements contributed further difficulties in the form of potential ambiguities and discontinuities which required considerable engagement and resolution, paradoxically, at the point when the Empire was in irreversible decline.⁹⁶ This provided the context and the challenge for Carr-Saunders and the members of his Commission.

1.6. Organisation and Structure

The chapters of the thesis are arranged chronologically. Following this introduction, the second chapter provides the background to the study with a consideration of the origin and extension of British political control over the Malayan Peninsula. The chapter examines the political circumstances which gave rise to the initial acquisition of territory and the subsequent extension of British dominion on the Malayan Peninsula. The idea of 'British Malaya' is taken problematically recognising that its original meaning, first promulgated by

⁹³ Other difficulties were formally investigated see, Singapore Legislative Assembly, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry on the University of Malaya*, Cmd. 54, (Singapore, 1957) [Aitken Report]. For discussion see, Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation', pp. 1181ff.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1149. These issues are discussed further in chapter six of the thesis.

⁹⁵ See, A. J. Stockwell, 'British Imperial Policy and Decolonization', pp. 68-87; C. M. Turnbull, 'The Post-War Decade in Malaya: The Settling Dust of Political Controversy', *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 60, No. 1, (1987), pp. 7-26. J. Darwin, 'Decolonization and the End of Empire', in R. Winks, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, Vol. 5, *Historiography*, (1999), pp. 541-55.

⁹⁶ See, Grace Ai-Ling Chou, 'Translating Higher Education in the British Empire', p. 230; Sarah Stockwell, *The British End of the British Empire*, p. 23.

high-ranking colonial officials in the mid to late nineteenth century, became increasingly complex, a 'deceptively unified term'.⁹⁷ This foregrounds a review of selected educational developments including the opening of colleges at Kuala Kangsar, Tanjong Malim and the foundation of the King Edward VII College of Medicine and Raffles College in Singapore. The main aim is to construct a selective and critical historiography against which it is possible to begin to trace the slow and uncertain development of higher education in the colonial society of British Malaya.

The limited provision of higher education in British colonial societies is considered in chapter three with reference to the ACEC and the enquiry into university education for Africans undertaken by Currie in 1933 and in East Africa by De La Warr in 1937. Drawing on these sources and other policy developments encouraged by Malcolm MacDonald, the chapter aims to describe the circumstances prior to the McLean Commission's enquiry into higher education in Malaya in 1939. The chapter will argue that while a more strategic and coherent approach to policy making was sought by the Colonial Office, initiatives often remained fragmentary and inconclusive. In this respect progress towards the provision of colonial higher education was neither incremental nor straightforward. Chapter four considers the work of the McLean Commission. It analyses the recommendations of the report and examines attempts made by the ACEC to progress matters with the Governor of Malaya during meetings in London during the summer of 1940. The question of policy change by the British Government during the Second World War is discussed with reference to the policies of Professor Channon and Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies which led to the appointment of the Asquith and Elliot Commissions. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the significance of these later policy developments for colonial higher education. This leads to chapter five which assesses the work of the Carr-Saunders'

⁹⁷ B. W. and L. Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 2nd edn., (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 160.

Commission. The chapter first considers a preparatory visit to Malaya that was made on behalf of the CO by Sir Raymond Priestley, a visit that proved to be of considerable benefit to the Commission which followed. The membership and biographies of the commissioners are described prior to the analysis of the report that was produced. Public reactions to the Carr-Saunders report form the basis of chapter six. The chapter opens with reference to the political instability and violence that characterised post-war Malaya which contributed a difficult and uncompromising context in which to conduct a discourse on educational development. The chapter refers to a Symposium that was held in Singapore to discuss the relevance and implications of the report, before concluding with reference to the enactment of the University of Malaya Bill and the University's Foundation Day. The final chapter, the conclusions, provides a critical summary of the main issues and an assessment of the significance of the research that has been conducted, including analysis of the critical aspects of the University's development and the significance of its foundation. Issues relating more specifically to the Carr-Saunders Commission are also considered, for example, the decision to recommend an independent university, the nature of the leadership that Carr-Saunders brought to the enquiry and the areas of success and the problems and difficulties that were evident. Arising from the study, areas for further research are indicated.

Chapter 2 The Study in Context

2.1. Introduction

The year of 1511 was a year of historical significance on the Malay Peninsula. It saw the capture of the port of Malacca by a Portuguese fleet commanded by Affonso d'Albuquerque who had seized the port of Goa in 1510 and proclaimed the *Estado da India*.¹ His victory in Malacca (Melaka) reversed a previous defeat in 1509 when Malay forces had successfully resisted the Iberian invaders. In 1511 the Portuguese returned to the Straits of Malacca; better equipped and in greater numbers they were victorious and ended the Sultanate of Malacca from 1400 to 1511.² The Portuguese established limited territorial authority beyond the port of Malacca which proved sufficient and they survived, not without some difficulty, before the Dutch gained control in 1641 and became the dominant imperial power in the region until 1786.³ A slow but inexorable period of western influence had begun and was to culminate in the establishment of British hegemony during the final quarter of the nineteenth century.

Prior to the colonial era Malay history is often taken to begin with the emergence of the Sultanate of Malacca although it has been argued that this ignores the significance and legacy of much earlier periods.⁴ Rather more than a beginning the Sultanate is recorded in the *Sejarah Melayu*⁵ as a high point of wealth and power, a classical period in the Malay national tradition. The work, written for the Sultan of Malacca, was a collection of stories not only

¹ The capture of the Indian port of Goa and the port of Malacca on the Malay Peninsula was part of a strategy to establish and control a 'spice trade route' funded by the Portuguese Government using a rudimentary form of state capitalism, see, Leonard Y. Andaya, 'Interactions with the Outside World and Adaptation in Southeast Asian Society, 1500-1800, in Nicholas Tarling, ed., *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia: Vol. I: From Early Times to c.1800*, (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 345-401, p. 355; R. J. Wilkinson, 'The Capture of Malacca, A.D. 1511, *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, No., 61, (1912), pp. 71-76.

² Richard Wilkinson, 'The Melaka Sultanate', *JMBRAS*, Vol. 13, No. 2, (1935), pp. 22-69.

³ D. K. Bassett, 'European Influence in the Malay Peninsula 1511-1786', in L. A. Mills, *British Malaya 1824-1867*, ed., by C. A. Turnbull, *JMBRAS*, Vol. 33, Part 3, No. 191, (1960); repr. *MBRAS*, No. 22, (Kuala Lumpur, 2012), pp. 9-35, p. 9.

⁴ B. W. Andaya, and L. Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 2nd edn., (Basingstoke, 2001), p. 7.

⁵ The work was originally entitled, *Sulalat Us-Salatin*, 'The Genealogies of the Sultans', see, C. C., Brown, 'Sejarah Melayu', *JMBRAS*, Vol. 25, No. 2 & 3, (1952).

about Malaccan leaders but also of the rulers of other states in the region; it has been defined ‘as a court-based text of ruler-legitimation which also documents court institutions’.⁶ Its main aim was ‘to vindicate a claim to greatness: of the dynasty, the *Bendahara* and the realm as a whole; and most important, to provide a mythically-based, a truly sacral, code of political conduct by which this greatness could be retained or restored’.⁷ According to later research the original manuscript was amended in 1612 in a further attempt to enhance the influence and reputation of the Malaccan Sultans.⁸ A more recent assessment contrasts the model of diarchic sovereignty described in the *Sejarah Melayu* with the singular and autochthonous characteristics of the political constitution of contemporary Malaysia and argues for greater recognition of the significance of foreigners in the shaping Malay sovereignty and nationalism.⁹ In addition to the *Sejarah Melayu*, the other literary source of significance is *The Suma Oriental* written by Tome Pirés whilst in India and in Melaka during the years from 1512 to 1515.¹⁰ Pirés was an apothecary who journeyed to India and to Melaka during the early years of the sixteenth century. He was later appointed as the first Portuguese ambassador to China, where he died in obscurity.¹¹ *The Suma Oriental* is important because it provides the first European account of the East, describing regions over a vast area from the Red Sea to Japan and includes in the second volume a detailed description of early settlement

⁶ See, Virginia Matheson, ‘Concepts of Malay Ethos in Indigenous Malay Writings’, *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, (Sept. 1979), pp. 351-371, p. 352.

⁷ P. E. de Josselin de Jong, ‘The Character of the Malay Annals’, in J. Bastin, and R. Roolvink, eds., *Malayan and Indonesian Studies, Essays Presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his Eighty Fifth Birthday*, (Oxford, 1964), p. 241.

⁸ Richard Winstedt, ‘Sejarah Melayu’: The Earliest Recension’, MS. No. 18, *Raffles Collection*, Vol. 16, No. 3, (1938).

⁹ Eng seng Ho, ‘Foreigners and Mediators in the Constitution of Malay Sovereignty’, *Indonesia and the Malay World*, Vol. 41, No. 120, (2013), pp. 146-167.

¹⁰ T. Pirés, *The Suma Oriental of Tomé Pires and the Book of Francisco Rodrigues*, trans. from the Portuguese MS. in the Bibliothèque de la Chambre des Deputés, Paris, by Armando Cortesao, ed., 2 Vols., (London, 1944). Although the MS was originally written by Pires in the early sixteenth century, it was only “found” in Paris by Cortesão in 1937. For Cortesao’s account of locating the Suma and translating the work for publication by the Hakluyt Society, see *The Suma Oriental*, Vol. 1, pp. 13-18.

¹¹ For a detailed biographical note on Pirés see *Ibid.*, pp. 18-71.

in Malacca, the surrounding states and the ‘book’ of Francisco Rodrigues, a pilot and cartographer.¹²

Despite the importance attached to the Sultanate of Melaka it is evident that the origins of Malaysia (*Melayu*) go back still further into pre-history.¹³ For example, research has traced human occupation by groups of people known today as *Orang Asli Melayu*, the original, indigenous people, back to at least 30,000 years Before the Common Era (BCE) at a site at Kota Tampan in Perak and between 10,000 and 3,000 years BCE at Gua Chain, Kelantan.¹⁴ Later, between 3,000 and 1,000 BCE foraging economies and their cultures began to change significantly as contact with new groups of Austronesian people, who had developed varied agricultural skills, became more frequent and sustained. More settlements were established throughout the islands of the region as migration and colonization increased; there was ‘... a slow filtering of peoples into the archipelago occurring over a vast period of time and combined with continued movement back and forth between the islands and along the coasts and rivers rather than ‘waves’ of immigrants from South China each progressively more advanced ...’.¹⁵ A process of migration, described by Wang Gungwu as *merantau* or *peri merantau*, pre-dated the formation of the different Malay states and became embedded in the culture of the region retaining the idea of movement and change alongside the challenge of building more settled communities.¹⁶ These opening references to pre-colonial times serve to introduce the chapter and foreground a consideration of the origin and development of a British presence on the Malay Peninsula. The impact of early educational developments in

¹² Less is known about Francisco Rodrigues. For his ‘book’, see *The Suma Oriental*, Vol. 2, pp. 290-305. The volumes are replete with maps and sketches drawn by Rodrigues.

¹³ See, Leonard Y. Andaya, ‘Search for the Origins of Melayu’, *Journal of South East Asian Studies*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Oct. 2001), pp. 315-330.

¹⁴ Peter Bellwood, ‘Cultural and Biological Differentiation in Peninsular Malaysia: The Last 10,000 Years’, *Asian Perspectives*, Vol. 32, No. 1, (1993), pp. 37-60, p.43. For a more extensive review of pre-history from a regional perspective see, Peter Bellwood, ‘Southeast Asia before History’, in Tarling, ed., *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia: Vol. I*, pp. 55-136.

¹⁵ Wang, Gungwu, ‘Migration Patterns in History, Malaysia and the Region’, *JMBRAS*, Vol. 58, No. 1, (1985), pp. 43-57, p. 45.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, p. 46.

Malaya during the nineteenth century are considered before the chapter concludes with an assessment of selected educational developments in Malaya during the years of the twentieth century prior to the Japanese invasion in December 1941. The main objective is to contextualise the lengthy and uncertain progress towards the provision of higher education in British Malaya.

2.2. British Malaya

During the mid to the late nineteenth century the territory of the Malayan Peninsula, whose political structure was to pass through several iterations under colonial rule, remained largely unknown to the British community. As the staunch imperialist Sir Frank Swettenham¹⁷ observed:

Mysterious Malaya was a *terra incognita* to official and trader alike. There were no reliable books on the subject, the whole country was an absolute blank on every map; even the names of the States and the titles of their rulers were not known to more than half-a-dozen Englishmen. Of the nature of the country, the character of the people, their numbers, distribution, sentiments, or condition, there was an ignorance, profound, absolute and complete.¹⁸

Such indifference was consistent with the limited interest the British, largely through the East India Company, had traditionally shown towards the Malay Peninsula and its people. It is true that voyages to Southeast Asia had been undertaken by English ships during the

¹⁷ Sir Frank Athelstane Swettenham (1850-1946) had a lengthy and influential career in the colonial service in Malaya. Before his retirement in 1904 he had attained high office being appointed Governor of the Straits Settlements (SS) in 1901 and previously Resident-General in 1896 during which time he organised the building of Carcosa, Kuala Lumpur, to be the home for the resident-general. He had arrived in Singapore many years before as a civil service cadet in 1871, unusually as a non-graduate. He became proficient in colloquial Malay which helped his career to progress steadily and he was appointed Resident of Selangor in 1886, and Resident of Perak in 1889. He wrote several books which showed considerable insight into Malay life for example, *The Real Malay*, (London, New York, 1900); *British Malaya: Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya*, revd., ed., (London, 1948); see also his autobiography *Footprints in Malaya* (London, 1942). During his long retirement he continued to write, mainly to the press, for example regarding his opposition to the introduction of the Malayan Union. Shortly before his death he was a signatory to the 'Pro-Consuls' letter to the *Times*, 12 April 1946, see, H. S. Barlow, *Swettenham*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1995), p. 727. As his biographer notes: 'throughout his career, even in the early stages, he had argued that local indigenous Malay institutions should be fostered and supported: the velvet glove which masked the iron fist of British control', *Ibid.*, p.730.

¹⁸ Swettenham, *The Real Malay*, pp. 7-8; see also, C. M. Turnbull, 'The Origins of British Control in the Malay States Before Colonial Rule', in J. Bastin and R. Roolvink, eds., *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, p. 167.

seventeenth and early eighteenth century but they were irregular and although an early trading base had been established by the East India Company at Bencoolen in neighbouring Sumatra it was later abandoned.¹⁹ For many years the British contact on the western coast of the Malayan Peninsula was itinerant, revealing an interest that was essentially mercantile and exploitative, lacking political and cultural responsibility. During the late eighteenth century, a base was established at Penang which was to lead to a more strategic presence in the region.

Efforts to create a British influence were motivated by the commercial interests of the East India Company particularly its need for marine re-fitting stations and security along the sea routes between India and China. After several attempts and years of unsuccessful negotiations Captain Francis Light, a former sea captain with the East India Company, concluded an agreement with the Sultan of Kedah for the cession of Penang, known initially to the British as Prince of Wales Island. In August 1786 Light took formal possession of the island on behalf of the British Crown and for the use of the East India Company.²⁰ This was significant because ‘if Light had not firmly established British power on the borders of the archipelago Sir Stamford [Raffles] could never have planted the flag at its very heart [in Singapore] ... unless Light had taken the first step, British Malaya would never have existed’.²¹ For the first time the British had a base on the Straits of Malacca which they would use to contest Dutch influence in the region. Some years later in 1800 another treaty was signed with the Sultan of Kedah which resulted in the East India Company gaining possession of a strip of land called Province Wellesley. This lay on the Malay Peninsula and whilst the new arrangement was advantageous to the Company giving control on both sides of the harbour of Penang, the terms of the agreements were to become matters of contention and caused reputational costs to the British. The Sultan believed that the treaty he had agreed

¹⁹ C. M. Turnbull, ‘Malaysia’, in Robin Winks, ed., *The Historiography of the British-Commonwealth: Trends, Interpretations and Resources*, (Durham, N.C., 1966), p. 460.

²⁰ H. P. Clodd, *Malaya’s First British Pioneer: The Life of Francis Light*, (London, 1948), p. 51.

²¹ See, L. A. Mills, *British Malaya*, p. 37.

stipulated a defensive alliance which the British would honour should he be attacked. His assumption proved to be mistaken and when Siam invaded Kedah in 1821 the Company did not come to his aid and he was forced into exile. Although senior British officials took the view that technically the Sultan had not been misled, Swettenham proved to be a trenchant critic accusing the Company of ‘... a breach of faith which sullied the British name and weakened its influence with the Malays for very many years’.²² In his address to the Royal Colonial Institute in June 1884, Sir Frederick Weld, Governor of the SS was also highly critical of the East India Company’s treatment of the Sultan of Kedah observing that ‘... its consequences affect our interests deeply to this day’.²³

During the early years of the nineteenth century political developments in Southeast Asia were increasingly influenced by events in Europe. Although Britain had occupied Malacca since 1795 the port was returned to the Netherlands in 1818 in accordance with the London convention of 1814. Later, the significant Anglo-Dutch Treaty of 1824 reversed this decision and agreed a distribution of territory to the British and Dutch empires respectively. The Malay Peninsula was formally recognised as a British ‘sphere of interest’ and Malacca was returned to Britain. At the same time the islands south of Singapore, including Java and Sumatra were ceded to Holland. This was followed by further political developments, for example the British acquisition of Singapore in 1819 and Malacca in 1825, possessions which were consolidated by treaty to form the Crown Colony of the SS in 1825. Following the settlement in 1786 there was great confidence that Penang would become a successful and economically rich colony. This was emphasised in 1805 when it was incorporated as the fourth Indian Presidency in addition to Bengal, Bombay and Madras and again in 1826 when

²² Swettenham, *British Influence in Malaya*, pp. 37-61; p. 37. These events are also considered by Mills, *British Malaya*, pp. 41-59.

²³ Sir Frederick Weld, ‘The Straits Settlements and British Malaya’, in Paul Kratoska, ed., *Honourable Intentions: Talks on the British Empire in South East Asia delivered at the Royal Colonial Institute 1874-1928*, (Singapore, 1983), p. 51.

the other SS of Singapore and Malacca were placed under its administrative control. The anticipated commercial and maritime development was not realised however and the costs of maintaining a large civil service to support the Presidency were disproportionate and could not be justified. In 1831 the SS Presidency was abolished and its administrative status was reduced to the appointment of a Resident and overall responsibility returned to the Indian Government in Bengal.²⁴ By 1832 Singapore had eclipsed Penang as a port and commercial centre and was to be designated as the capital of the SS. With the decline of Penang and Malacca the history of Singapore effectively became the history of the Straits Settlements.²⁵

The eventful period between 1830 and 1867 saw the demise of the East India Company. The Company lost its trading monopoly with China in 1833 when Britain gained control of Hong Kong in 1842 and the locus of commerce moved further east away from Singapore and the Malay Peninsula. Increasing internal disturbances and military threats from an expansionist Siam emphasised the need for decisive political action and further exposed the weaknesses of the laissez faire policy of the East India Company.²⁶ Following the trauma of the Indian “uprisings” the Company was finally abolished in 1858 with administrative responsibilities passing to the India Office before being transferred to the Colonial Office in 1867. Despite these changes however non-interventionist practices inherited from the East India Company prevailed and a lack of strategic British policy continued. The situation did not improve until Sir Andrew Clarke was appointed Governor of the SS and served from 1873 to 1875, a period which saw the beginning of a more interventionist and federalised

²⁴ See, C. M. Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements 1826-67: Indian Presidency to Crown Colony*, (Singapore, 1972), pp. 55-60.

²⁵ Mills, *British Malaya*, p. 85.

²⁶ An additional factor to the Company’s demise emerged from British commercial interests which, together with Chinese and Indian business communities, were increasing hostile to the ineptitude of governance displayed by the East India Company, see, Anthony Webster, ‘The Development of British Commercial and Political Networks in the Straits Settlements 1800 to 1868: The Rise of a Colonial and Regional Economic Identity?’ *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 4, (2011), pp. 899-929 and also Anthony Webster, *Gentlemen Capitalists: British Imperialism in South East Asia 1770-1800*, (London, 1998).

policy based on a residency system of governance.²⁷ This was established by the Pangkor Treaty of 1874 and resulted in the appointment of British residents in the Malay States of Perak, Selangor and Sungai Ujong. The treaty was significant because it clarified British intentions in which forward movement became an explicit policy objective; henceforth, ‘it essentially became a question of how and when the British ‘sphere of influence’ would become a legal reality’.²⁸ The practice of indirect rule developed in India and there is evidence to suggest that this informed methods of governance in other parts of the Empire including Malaya and Nigeria.²⁹

Following the Pangkor agreement and through further negotiations and treaties with other Sultans and Rajas, states such as Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang were acquired over a number of years and the Residency system consolidated. Finally, the aim of the Federation Agreement in 1895 was to consolidate these states together with Perak as a quartet under a unified civil service and a Resident-General working to the Governor to form the FMS.³⁰ These measures took many years to complete, e.g., the state of Sungei Ujory accepted a British Resident in 1874 with the smaller state of Jelevu being added in 1886 and both states were amalgamated with the old states of Negeri Sembilan to form part of the FMS. The arrangements nonetheless were problematic. With little dissent from Malay leaders, British Residents gained disproportionate administrative powers which led to an:

²⁷ For a discussion of Clarke’s role in establishing the residency system in Malaya see, C. D. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control*, (London, 1961), p. 176-211; see also, Swettenham, *British Influence in Malaya*, pp. 173-193.

²⁸ B. W. Andaya and L. Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 3rd edn., (London, 2017), p. 165; see, E. Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1968); E. Thio, ‘The British Forward Movement in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1889’, in K. G. Tregonning, ed., *Papers on Malayan History*, (Singapore, 1962), pp. 120-134.

²⁹ M. H. Fisher, ‘Indirect Rule in the British Empire: The Foundation of the Residency System in India (1764 – 1858)’, *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, (1984), pp. 393-428. A similar and well-known approach to indirect rule was developed by Lugard, as Governor of Northern Nigeria, 1899-1906, see, Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 5th edn., (London, 1965); for discussion of the concept and application of indirect rule see, Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945*, (London, 1960), pp. 138-154 and pp. 155-173. For a more specific analysis of the Malay Rulers, particularly in the context of decolonization, see, Simon C. Smith, *British Relations with the Malay Rulers from Decentralization to Malayan Independence 1930-1957*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1995).

³⁰ See, Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, p. 257.

unsanctioned system of direct government by Residents ... completely at variance with the *de jure* position. For what resulted was not a federation of Malay states, but a union with a British directed central government. This was the system under which the Federated Malay States were administered until the outbreak of the Japanese War.³¹

The rights of suzerainty over the remaining states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu were transferred to the British by Siam in 1909. In exchange, Britain conceded some border territory rights and also made financial contributions to support the extension of rail networks. The rights for the state of Johore (Johor) were finally agreed in 1914. These five states remained outside the FMS and were known as the Un-federated Malay States (UMS). They accepted British protection and advisers but were reluctant to concede sovereignty. It was emphasised that under the terms of the treaty ‘... sovereign authority belongs to the sovereign of the state and not in any sense to the British Crown’.³² More generally it has been observed that:

The classic protectorate is conceived to be an international personality standing somewhere between the fully sovereign state, supposedly unrestricted in the control of its foreign and domestic affairs, and the vassal state which is hardly more than an autonomous province with some vestige of international relations. In practice a neat differentiation is impossible and the term has been employed to cover the situation of a multitude of diverse communities from Cuba to Kelantan.³³

The European powers found the implementation of a protectorate agreement convenient since it could be regarded as, ‘... a compromise measure and a stage on the road either to independence or annexation ... Its announced purpose was to permit autonomy to the

³¹ Ibid., pp. 270-1.

³² See, A. B. Keith, *The Government of the British Empire*, (London, 1935), p. 508.

³³ A. H. Feller, ‘Protectorate’, *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*, 12, (1930), p. 567; cited by Emerson, *Malaysia*, p. 57.

indigenous inhabitants. In reality it was used in cases where the benefits derived from territory would not compensate the mother country for the cost of administration'.³⁴

Moving slowly by negotiation that was not always straightforward nor indeed ethical, the British extended political and administrative control over the states of the Malay Peninsula and Singapore – a polity that increasingly became known as 'British Malaya', a term used by Sir Frederick Weld during his lecture to the Royal Colonial Institute in 1884.³⁵ He was referring to the SS of Singapore, Malacca and Penang; the 'protected' states such as Perak, Selangor and Sungei Ujong and a larger group of 'independent' states that included Kedah, Pahang, Johore and Negri Sembilan and other rural states such as Patani, Kelantan and Leggai. As has been observed,³⁶ the reality was that, 'British Malaya' lacked coherence and did not constitute a holistic political structure. Malayan governance was described as 'a piece of political joinery "crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed" out of three types of constitution which had emerged during the mid and latter part of the nineteenth century and prevailed until the Japanese invasion in 1941'.³⁷ It was further emphasised that the problems of governance were such that by the beginning of the twentieth century 'the Peninsula remained an untidy conglomeration of crown colony, federated and un-federated states, with no sense of nationhood'.³⁸ The policy of the British Government during the period between 1874 and 1942 was questionable largely because the dual objectives, the imposition of a British-style democracy and the development of an imperial economy within the frame-work of a traditional Malay culture were irreconcilable. As one researcher observed:

³⁴ Feller, 'Protectorate', pp. 568-569. For an instructive discussion of the protectorate in the colonial state, see Emerson, *Malaysia*, pp. 53-62.

³⁵ Weld, 'The Straits Settlements and British Malaya', p. 44. According to later research, Weld was the first person to use the term, see, William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, (New Haven, Conn., 1967), p. 91.

³⁶ See chapter 1, p. 24.

³⁷ Sir Richard Winstedt, *Britain and Malaya*, (London, 1944), p. 36.

³⁸ C. M. Turnbull, 'Malaysia', p. 460.

The masquerading of direct political and administrative control under the rubric of ‘advice’, the insistence that in signing the federation agreement of 1895 the rulers would not “in the slightest degree be diminishing the powers and privileges which they now possess nor be curtailing the right of self-government which they at present enjoy,” ... all testify to the schizoid character of British Malay policy and practice between 1874 and 1942.³⁹

By 1914 and despite governmental and administrative inconsistencies the British could assert that ‘... there was one common feature – the fact of British control was a reality everywhere, no matter in what constitutional forms it was clothed.’⁴⁰ British hegemony sustained a colonial polity whose economy was largely dominated by the primary industries of tin mining and natural rubber production. It was these industries which had attracted substantial immigration from China and India and had given rise to a multi-ethnic, multi-religious society.⁴¹ It also generated inequalities in educational opportunity which particularly affected Malay and indeed other indigenous students.⁴² Nevertheless, society remained intact until the Japanese invasion began in December 1941.

2.3. Educational Developments in Malaya

During the early years of the British presence on the Malayan Peninsula there was no formal provision of higher education and a general lack of organised schooling at lower age levels beyond village schools where boys studied the *Quran*. Classes were rudimentary and commonly held in a room at the house of the teacher or in the *surau*, a building reserved for religious functions and found in the larger, more resourceful villages. A smaller number of schools mainly in the northern Malay states were residential and were known as *pondok* schools where groups of boys and young men studied under the direction of a teacher

³⁹ Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 12-13.

⁴⁰ Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, p. 262.

⁴¹ See, Kernial Singh Sandhu ‘Some Preliminary Observations of the Origins and Characteristics of Indian Migration to Malaya, 1786-1957’, in K. G. Tregonning, ed., *Papers on Malayan History*, pp. 40-72.

⁴² See, Charles Hirschman, ‘Educational Patterns in Colonial Malaya’, *Comparative Education Review*, Vol. 6, No. 3, (1972), pp. 486-502.

frequently undertaking agricultural work in exchange for religious instruction.⁴³ In the absence of formalised policies, the British in Malaya, as elsewhere in the Empire, did little to directly enhance educational provision. The extent of provision and the quality of schooling was generally poor with limited access, particularly for indigenous students in rural environments.⁴⁴

A more ambitious vision had been launched in the early part of the nineteenth century in the 'educational minutes' prepared by Sir Stamford Raffles.⁴⁵ The first minute of 1819 outlined the idea of a new educational institution in Singapore, to be known as the 'Malay College'; it was followed by a second minute in 1823 which Raffles presented to a public meeting of the principal inhabitants of Singapore held at the Residency-House, on 1 April 1823.⁴⁶ This gave further details of his plans to form the 'Singapore Institution' through an amalgamation with the existing Anglo-Chinese College in Malacca.⁴⁷ His outlook was broad and far-reaching and included an education not only for the indigenous population of the Malay Peninsula, but also for Javanese, Bugis and Siamese peoples. His intention was to create something more than 'a mere distributing centre for second-hand western culture' and he envisaged courses in eastern languages, literature, history and science, with students

⁴³ Rex Stephenson, *Cultivators and Administrators*, p.16.

⁴⁴ See, Arthur Mayhew, *Education in the Colonial Empire*, (London, 1938), p. 31-59. For a useful overview of education in colonial Malaya see Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaya*, 3rd edn., pp. 230-247. For a discussion of the early development of Malay religious and private schools see, Khoo Kay Kim, 'Malay Society, 1874-1920s', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 2, (1974), pp. 179-198.

⁴⁵ Raffles, Lieutenant Governor of Fort Marlborough and its Dependencies is famous as the founder of Singapore. For an authoritative bibliography see, C. E., Wurtzburg, *Raffles of the Eastern Isles*, ed. by C. Witting, (London, 1954).

⁴⁶ Raffles articulated his educational vision early in the nineteenth century in his celebrated minutes on education see, Sir T. S. Raffles, 'Minutes on the Establishment of a Malay College at Singapore, 1819', in Sophia, Lady Raffles, *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles Particularly in the Government of Java, 1811-1816 and of Bencoolen and its Dependencies, 1817-1824*, (London, 1830).

⁴⁷ The College had been founded by Dr Robert Morrison of the London Missionary Society in 1818, a development that had motivated Raffles to establish a similar institution in Singapore, see, Peter Cunich, *A History of the University of Hong Kong, Vol. 1, 1911-1945*, (Hong Kong, 2012), pp. 3-9; Wurtzburg, *Raffles*, p. 626; see also, C. M. Turnbull, *The Straits Settlements 1826-67*, pp. 222-227.

studying their own languages and traditions as well as those of the west.⁴⁸ Raffles' more open and progressive approach sounded a very different note to the controversial educational minute which, we have seen, was formulated by Macaulay in 1835.⁴⁹ The difference in perspective is captured in the following somewhat whimsical but telling criticism of Macaulayism:

Hence no doubt much that is good; but hence also Babuism, worthless BA degrees, Cambridge examinations, the study by small Tamil children of paraphrases of Shakespeare's Twelfth Night - and all the rest of it.⁵⁰

Raffles' educational legacy was to articulate a vision of an institution which was ambitious and not limited by a narrow instrumental curriculum, one capable of providing expansive and advanced learning. The educational minutes written by Raffles suggest that he '... has left us the plan of something far better than anything that has yet been built. It is a common place to say that Raffles was far in advance of his time; it seems probable that he was also far in advance of ours'.⁵¹ His ideas were bold and creative but his health was poor and failing. Following the Institution's foundation ceremony in May 1823 Raffles left Singapore in June of that year to return to England where he died in July 1826 at the age of 45. He had been confident that his educational plans would flourish but after his departure financial and political difficulties in Singapore contributed to a decline in interest and support as Raffles' powerful and energetic advocacy was lost.⁵² A major difficulty was attributable to unscrupulous, inadequate management by the trustees and as a result 'the founder's great idea

⁴⁸ G. G. Hough, 'Notes on the Educational Policy of Sir Stamford Raffles', *JMBRAS*, Vol. 11, No. 2, (1933), pp. 166-170, p. 167.

⁴⁹ See chapter 1, pp. 19-21.

⁵⁰ Hough, 'Notes', p. 167. Professor Graham Hough (1908-1990) taught English at Raffles College from 1930. During the Second World War he was a volunteer in the Singapore Royal Artillery before being captured by the Japanese and interned in Changi prisoner of war camp in Singapore. He survived his ordeal and re-entered academic life in Cambridge in 1950 where he was Professor of English from 1966 until his retirement in 1975. As an English literary critic and poet his publications included: *The Last Romantics*, 1949; *An Essay on Criticism*, 1966; *Selected Essays*, 1978. His final work was, *The Mystery Religion of W. B. Yeats*, 1984, see Frank Kermode, 'Obituary: Graham Hough, Scholar-Poet of Romantics', *The Guardian*, 10 September 1990.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁵² For a brief description of the ruins of the Singapore Institution, see, Wurtzburg, *Raffles of the Eastern Isles*, pp. 650-51.

of a Malayan College for the study and dissemination of Eastern literature died at the hour of its birth'.⁵³

The site that Raffles bequeathed was generous but it was neglected and through misuse and decay, its incomplete buildings became more ruinous as time went on, '... until by the end of 1837 the building was not a shrine of culture but a den of thieves and the fields did not produce athletes but bred mosquitoes ...'.⁵⁴ During 1836 the 'Institution' buildings were refurbished and the following year the Singapore Free School, which had opened in August 1834, moved to the improved site. Over the following years the school experienced mixed fortunes and was re-named several times, for example, The Singapore Institution Free School in 1840, The Singapore Institution in 1856, and finally, The Raffles Institution in 1868.⁵⁵ New trustees were appointed and the Institution was re-organised as a secondary school based on anglicised principles and traditions with English as the medium of instruction. It was reasonably successful as a colonial secondary school but it did not become the establishment of higher education that Raffles had imagined.⁵⁶ Against a background of continuing financial constraint the Colonial Government was to take over the management of the school at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁵⁷

A political change occurred in 1867 when the Colonial Office assumed responsibility for the governance of the SS now designated a British crown colony.⁵⁸ While this did not lead to any immediate developments in educational policy, the newly established Legislative

⁵³ Board of Education, *Special Reports on Educational Subjects, Vol. 14, Part 3, Federated Malay States, Hong Kong, Straits Settlements, Fiji*, Cmd. 2379, (London, 1905), pp. 136-137.

⁵⁴ The observation was made by the Minister of Education, Mr Yong Nyuk Lin, in his address to the school, Founders Day 1960, see, E. Wijesingha, *A History of Raffles Institution 1823-1963*, (Singapore, 1963), p. 163.

⁵⁵ T. R. Doraisamy, ed., *150 Years of Education in Singapore*, (Singapore, 1969), pp. 20-22.

⁵⁶ Wijesingha, *History of the Raffles Institution; Cunich, University of Hong Kong*, p. 9.

⁵⁷ See recommendations made by the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the System of English Education in the Colony*, (Singapore, 1902). [Kynnersley Report]

⁵⁸ A British crown colony was a British territory ruled by a Governor appointed by the Sovereign on the advice of the Secretary of State for the Colonies. The Straits Settlements became the first Crown Colony in Malaya in 1867. This resulted in direct control from Britain and contrasted with the 'advisory' or 'indirect' relationship Britain maintained with the other Malay states.

Council for the Colony finally appointed select committees to examine educational and financial policy during the year 1869 to 1870. The Isemonger Committee was convened in 1869 and this was followed in 1870 by the appointment of the Woolley Committee. Progress was slow, partly because the committees were critical of the Government's management of educational finances and were undecided on an appropriate course of action. Delays occurred and it was not until 1872 that A. M. Skinner, a young British official based in Penang, was appointed Inspector of Schools for the Straits Settlements.⁵⁹ The appointment was successful and Skinner did much during a seven-year term of office to increase the number of Malay village schools using vernacular languages as the medium of instruction.⁶⁰

During the nineteenth century educational developments were taking place elsewhere in the Empire, for example, in India and in Great Britain for whom this was a period of major political and educational reform.⁶¹ There were many profound social and economic problems which a range of enquiries and reports sought to address.⁶² The impetus for reform continued into the twentieth century and further commissions were appointed and reports presented.⁶³ In their different ways these reports contributed to a reformist climate and prepared the way for major educational legislation, for example, the Elementary Education Act of 1870; the Education Act of 1902; the Education Act of 1918, and eventually the Education Act of

⁵⁹ See, Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators*, pp. 11-22.

⁶⁰ Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, p. 4; Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators*, pp. 23-53.

⁶¹ See, Maria Skondas, 'Developments in British Education during the Nineteenth Century that led to the Government Act of 1870', (unpublished MA thesis, University of Kent, 1993).

⁶² For example, see, *Reports of the Parliamentary Committee on the State of Education, 1834; Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England, 1861; Report of the Royal Commission known as the Schools Inquiry Commission, 1864; Report of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education, 1895*. The works and reports of Royal Commissions and Select Committees dealing with elementary education are discussed by Richard Johnson, 'Elementary Education: The Education of the Poorer Classes', in Gillian Sutherland ed., *Education (Government and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain. Commentaries on British Parliamentary Papers)*, (Dublin, 1977).

⁶³ These included: The Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, *Report on the Education of the Adolescent*, (London, 1926); The Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, *Report on Secondary Education with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools*, (London, 1938); The Committee of the Secondary Schools Examination Council, *Report on Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools*, (London, 1943), see J. Stuart Maclure, *Educational Documents England and Wales 1816 to the Present Day*, 4th edn., (London, 1979).

1944.⁶⁴ These reformist measures were slow to take effect and did not appear to have a direct impact on educational developments in Malaya.⁶⁵

(i) The Malay College, Kuala Kangsar

During the course of proceedings at the Conference of Rulers held in the Federal capital of Kuala Lumpur in July 1903 two major problems emerged. First, there were demands from the Malay leaders for a greater level of involvement in the Government of the FMS. A second area of difficulty was the need for more administrative staff to fill positions becoming vacant in expanding and overburdened bureaucracies supporting government and administrative services. It was recognised however that further recruitment of educated European personnel, particularly at lower grade clerical positions was becoming financially prohibitive, a constraint which suggested that attention should be given to the education and training of an indigenous work-force. The conference concluded that the employment of Malays from both upper and lower echelons of Malay society should be considered for appropriate levels of government service.⁶⁶

In light of these discussions J. P. Rodger, Resident of Perak, proposed a partial solution. He advocated the foundation of a new school with English as the medium of instruction and proposed that the sons of the Malay elite class should be recruited to undertake an education to equip them for administrative posts in their respective states. The Resident-General, W. H. Treacher, and the Governor of the SS and High Commissioner of the FMS, Sir Frank Swettenham, opposed the idea of a new school being developed, but they were sympathetic to the introduction of a competitive scholarship scheme. By the end of 1903 however the position had changed considerably; Swettenham resigned when on leave in

⁶⁴ Ibid. For a discussion of these sources see, Michael Argles, 'British Government Publications in Education during the Nineteenth Century', *History of Education Society Bulletin*, Vol. 5, (1970), pp. 19-39.

⁶⁵ See Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators*, p. 22, n. 42.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 177.

London and Rodger was appointed to a new post as Governor of the Gold Coast (Ghana).⁶⁷ Treacher was on the point of retirement but before he did so he forwarded Rodger's proposal to Richard Wilkinson who had recently been appointed as Inspector of Schools for the FMS.⁶⁸

Wilkinson saw the possibilities for educational development and broadened the scope of Rodger's original proposal to include a more progressive admissions policy. He envisaged a residential school that would provide an education for the sons of Malay royalty and the elite class as preparation for employment in more prestigious government posts. He also sought however to attract students from lower social classes on the basis of merit as he imagined a school comprising members of the Malay elite, *the orang baik-baik* together with *the ra'ayat*. In the early stages Wilkinson proposed an annual total intake of twenty-five boys comprising twenty scholarship holders to be admitted on the basis of merit and determined by open examination performance. The remaining five places were to be allocated to the sons of socially elite Malay families, effectively admission by patronage. All students were expected to follow a five-year programme leading to the seventh standard examination. It was further proposed that the best students would proceed to a further three-year advanced programme in English language, law, history and literature. Wilkinson calculated that the programmes

⁶⁷ For a discussion of what Swettenham preferred to call the "Federal" Conference of 1903 and his resignation in London see, H. S. Barlow, *Swettenham*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1995), pp. 604-615.

⁶⁸ Richard James Wilkinson (1867-1941) began his colonial career as an Eastern Cadet in Singapore 1889 After early peripatetic postings which proved unsatisfactory, he was appointed acting superintendent of education in Penang in 1895 and later deputy inspector of schools in Singapore; he had found his *métier* in educational administration. His annual report for 1899 was impressive and as a result he was described by colonial office officials in London as "a very capable man". Following the formation of the FMS in 1896 a new post, inspector of schools, was created to which Wilkinson was appointed in 1903 and it was during this time that he established a new policy for producing school texts relevant for Malay pupils and led the initiative to develop the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar. He was a gifted linguist, fluent in several languages including Malay and although he left Malaya to take up a Governorship in Sierra Leone in 1916, his study and writing reflected a deep and life-long interest in Malay pre-history and language. His literary and educational works include, P. L. Burns, *Introduction to Papers on Malay Subjects* ed., R. J. Wilkinson, (Kuala Lumpur, 1971); R. J. Wilkinson, 'Malay Customs and Beliefs', *JMBRAS*, (1957) Vol, 30, No., 4, pp. 1-87; R. J. Wilkinson, *Malay-English Dictionary* (2nd edit.), (Mystilene, 1932a); R. J. Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', *JMBRAS* (1932b), Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 67-137; R. J. Wilkinson, *A History of the Peninsular Malays*. (Singapore, 1923); R. J. Wilkinson, *Malay Beliefs*. London, 1906).

would produce some twenty clerks and interpreters and four officers each year, the latter being candidates for higher grade positions.⁶⁹ He further proposed that the new school should be founded at Kuala Kangsar, the Royal capital of Perak, ruled by the influential Sultan Idris.⁷⁰ Wilkinson experienced opposition to his plans, particularly from Sir William Taylor, the Secretary to the High Commissioner and to some extent from Sir John Anderson who had taken over from Swettenham in April 1904. In the event Anderson, noting the support given by Sultan Idris, approved the project on a three-year trial basis. A specific condition, that William Hargreaves the successful Headmaster at Penang Free School should be appointed as Head at Kuala Kangsar, was agreed and the Malay Residential School opened on 2 January 1905.⁷¹ Although facilities were modest and resources scarce the school made good progress and the first-year results were excellent. Wilkinson reported favourably on the level of academic performances that had been achieved by saying that following:

the stiffest examination I have ever set in the Federated Malay States ... twenty- one boys, including six Rajas passed with flying colours [and] all get 7th standard certificates ... but most will remain on at the school for further instruction ... whatever happens the results now obtained will eventually dispose of the fiction that the Malays are not capable of being instructed.⁷²

The school achieved permanent status on the basis of the examination results and additional funds for a new building were made available. Despite this success however Wilkinson's liberal-democratic principles flowered only briefly at Kuala Kangsar. As the school's reputation grew, the sons of the Malay nobility increasingly took up most of the

⁶⁹ Jagjit Singh Sidhu, *Administration in the Federated Malaya States 1896-1920*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1989), p. 147.

⁷⁰ Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators*, pp. 177-178.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 183. The Malay College Kuala Kangsar (MCKK) continues today as an all-boys Malay school. It is fully residential with 600 students allocated to one of four houses, Ahmad, Idris, Sulaiman and Mohd Shah. Since 1965 the school has been led by a Malay Principal, a position currently held by Mohd Shahadan bin Abdul Rahman, see, <https://mckk.edu.my04/05/2021>

⁷² Letter, Wilkinson to Sir William Hood Treacher, Resident-General of the FMS, cited by Treacher in his address to the Royal Society of Arts, Colonial Section, 5 March 1907, see W. H. Treacher, 'British Malaya, with more especial reference to the FMS', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, (22 March 1907), Vol. 55, No. 2835, pp. 493-505; also cited by Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p.104.

places and the progressive principle of admission by merit was subverted.⁷³ Moreover, on his return from extended leave Wilkinson clashed with Taylor and Anderson by challenging decisions that had been taken on school policy during his absence - the ensuing organisational conflict was to prove detrimental to Wilkinson's career in Malaya. When Anderson came to re-structure the senior educational posts in the FMS and the SS and create a single new position, the Director of Public Instruction, Wilkinson as the Inspector of Schools for the FMS appeared a most appropriately qualified candidate. He was however over-looked and immediately transferred to Batang Padang in Perak to become a District Officer. Although he was subsequently appointed as acting Secretary to the Government of the state of Perak, his immediate posting represented a downgrading of position, in what would now be described as a case of *constructive dismissal* but this has not been fully acknowledged in subsequent research.⁷⁴ The school consolidated its educational reputation and social standing⁷⁵ by successfully preparing students for civil service and government positions in one of two organisations, the Malayan Civil Service (MCS) which was almost exclusively European⁷⁶

⁷³ Khasnor Johan, 'Keeping the Malay College Exclusive: Perceptions and Attitudes of British Officials and the Traditional Malay Elite', *Malaysian Journal of History, Politics and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 18, 119-127.

⁷⁴ Stevenson, provides details linking the Wilkinson-Taylor conflict to 'Wilkinson's premature departure from the educational scene', see *Cultivators and Administrators*, p.187; see also, his discussion of Wilkinson's educational work in Malaya pp.103-113 and the development of the Malay College, pp. 174-192. Although very supportive of Wilkinson's educational role, Roff states that, 'there is no evidence that [his transfer] reflected more than current MCS. exigencies ...', see '*Origins of Malay Nationalism*', p. 102-103. A cautious approach is taken by Loh who noted that 'apparently a difficult personal relationship had existed between Anderson and Wilkinson', p. 26. For further discussion see, Sidhu, *Administration in the FMS*, pp. 135-185; Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, pp. 79-81; Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 100-113. For biographical details see J. M. Gullick, 'Richard Wilkinson (1867-1941): A Man of Parts', *JMBRAS*, (2001), Vol. 74, No. 1, pp. 19-42. Major research on this topic is provided by Khasnor Johan see, 'The Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, 1905-1941' (unpublished MA thesis, University of Malaya, 1969); 'The Administrative Elite in the Federated Malay States: An Aspect of Malaysian Social History' (unpublished PhD thesis, Monash University, 1974). This research formed the basis of a later publication see, Khasnor Johan, *The Emergence of the Modern Malay Administrative Elite*, (Singapore, 1984).

⁷⁵ The Malay College was organised on the lines of an English public school and became known, as the 'Malay Eton', see above, Introduction, p. 16, n.71. It was also known to Malays as the *Bab-ud-Darajat*, i.e., '*The Gate to High Positions*', see, Yeo Kim Wah, '*The Grooming of an Elite: Malay Administrators in the Federated Malay States, 1903-1941*', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 11, No. 2, pp. 287-319, p. 293.

⁷⁶ The Report of a Committee on Employment of Malays in the Government Services in *Interim Reports of the Retrenchment Commission*, 1922, Report No. 41, Council Paper No. 15 of 1923, Federal Council Proceedings (1923), pp. C126-31, cited by Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, who noted that the first Malay appointments to the MCS included Mohamed Eusoff, see p. 115, n.67. This is also confirmed by Yeo Kim Wah, 'The

and the Malay Administrative Service (MAS) which was predominantly staffed by Malay personnel. The MAS has been bitterly criticised for serving as ‘a decoy for legitimate aspirations’ and acting ‘as a large funnel into which ambitious Malays were thrust and where they were very slowly processed. Those who were impatient, ‘uppish’ or ‘ungentlemanly’ stayed in the funnel forever or resigned’.⁷⁷ Any attempts at democratic reform suffered with Wilkinson’s transfer which signalled the end of a more open and equitable admissions policy.

Although he was unable to continue his work at Kuala Kangsar, Wilkinson was a significant figure in educational development in Malaya who respected the Malay people and sought to promote their well-being.⁷⁸ It has been observed that in his writing he displayed ‘qualities rare for the time in their relative freedom from ethnocentricity of judgement or moral patronage. Particularly where education was concerned, Wilkinson showed a grasp of the basic social predicament facing the Malays such as one finds no-where else’.⁷⁹ A question which invites further inquiry is the extent to which his removal from educational administration was due to circumstances beyond ‘current MCS exigencies’ - the phrase which Roff used to explain the action.⁸⁰

(ii) The Sultan Idris Training College (SITC)

The SITC with a principal interest in the development of Malay vernacular education in rural village schools was a very different institution from the elitist Malay College at Kuala Kangsar. SITC opened in 1922⁸¹ in Tanjong Malim, a small town in the northern Malay state

Grooming of an Elite’, Table 2, p. 317. Eusoff was appointed as a member of the Carr-Saunders Commission see, below in chapter 5.

⁷⁷ J. de V. Allen, ‘Malayan Civil Service, 1874-1941: Colonial Bureaucracy/Malayan Elite’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 12, No. 2, (1970), pp.149-178, p. 176.

⁷⁸ J. Gullick, ‘Richard James Wilkinson (1867-1941): A Man of Parts’, *JMBRAS*, Vol.74, No.1, (2001), pp.19-42.

⁷⁹ Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 131.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p.103.

⁸¹ SITC has gone through several iterations since its opening and today is known as Sultan Idris Education University (SIEU). From 1922-57 it was known as SITC.; from 1957-87 it was known as Maktab Perguruu Sultan Idris (MPSI); from 1987-97 it was known as the Institute Pergurun Sultan Idris (IPSI). In May 1997 it

of Perak and served as a memorial to Sultan Idris Murshidul 'adzum Shah the twentieth eighth Sultan of Perak who was particularly interested in Malay education during his reign as Sultan from 1887 to 1916.⁸² The first Headteacher to be appointed was a progressive educator from England, Mr. O.T. Dussek, who was a Malay speaker and insisted on Malay being the medium of instruction in all aspects of teaching and learning. Although SITC only provided secondary school level training programmes, Dussek increasingly focussed on raising standards by teaching the arts of pedagogy, and the study of the Malay language, literature and history. In 1939 he gave a retrospective lecture on the work of SITC in which he described the institution as a 'vernacular university in embryo'.⁸³ The College was residential and offered a three-year course of study for students aged sixteen to eighteen years old who were drawn from Malay vernacular village schools located in the different states of the FMS and UMS. Admission to SITC was determined by the results of written examination and interview conducted by Inspectors of Schools. On successful completion of their course students were expected to return to teach in their village schools.

A formative influence on the curriculum at SITC, particularly in its early stages, was Richard Winstedt who was appointed Assistant Director of Education, for the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States in 1916. Shortly afterwards he visited Java and

was incorporated as a university under the Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (Incorporation) Act 1997, see, S. N. Boyman, 'Students and Campus Elections: Case Study at the Sultan Idris Education University, Malaysia', *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 9, No. 6, (2017), pp. 32-45.

⁸² Sultan Idris, (1849-1916), developed close relationships with British officials, particularly, Hugh Low, Resident at Perak. He was described by Swettenham as 'a man of high intelligence and experience', see Swettenham, *British Influence in Malaya*, p. 343. He was regarded similarly by Hugh Clifford., see, Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators*, p.147; Stevenson also provides a useful biographical note on the Sultan, see, p. 169, n. 17. As the reign of Sultan Idris progressed, Kuala Kangsar became the most important royal town in the country by hosting prestigious events such as the first Conference or Durbar of Malay Rulers in 1897 and the first meeting of the Federal Council in 1909. Perak also gained a reputation as a centre for education with the formation of a Teacher Training Centre at Larut 1898 and the Malay College 1905. In addition to these secular educational establishments Sultan Idris also supported the development of religious schools and in 1914 founded the Madrasah Mariah, a school for girls, named after his consort Uteh Mariah. This was expanded and opened with new premises in 1922 after the death of Idris; it was open to both girls and boy and took the name Madrasah Idrisiah, see, Khoo Kay Kim, 'The Perak Sultanate: Ancient and Modern', *JMBRAS*, Vol. 59, No. 1, (1986), pp. 1-26, p.19.

⁸³ O. T. Dussek, 'Growing Points in Native Education: The Sultan Idris Training College', (Roneod Lecture, May 1959), cited by Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 143.

the Philippines to conduct a survey of developments in vernacular education and presented his report to the Straits Settlements Legislative Council in 1917.⁸⁴ The report was educationally conservative and influenced the formation of a practically-based curriculum at SITC comprising subjects such as drawing, agriculture (school gardening), hygiene and basketry. It signalled little awareness of a need for social and economic change; indeed, its main objective was constraint and the confinement of the Malay population to the *kampung* and the pursuit of rudimentary agricultural activities in rural areas. As Winstedt emphasised: ‘Any ideal of education, not adjusted to local wants, must lead to economic dislocation and social unrest’.⁸⁵ Subsequent scholarship has observed that:

Winstedt showed little real understanding of the Malay spirit and its strivings, despite his undoubted knowledge of the language and his enormous corpus of writings on a variety of Malay subjects. Nothing in his 1917 report strikes one more than the absence of any thoughtful reflection on the aims and effects of vernacular education (such as had been demonstrated by Wilkinson), or of any concern at all beyond the practical aims of British colonial rule.⁸⁶

In a further report Winstedt again identified the practical objectives that should underpin the work at SITC as follows:

Manual training has received much thought and attention of recent years. With the opening of the [Sultan Idris] Training College in 1922 it is hoped to train all Malay teachers in gardening and elementary agriculture, so that they in turn may introduce scientific methods into the most remote villages. Headway against the Malay teachers’ contempt for manual work has been made already by the introduction of basketry into the Malay colleges and schools. But more remains to be done.⁸⁷

According to Winstedt it was important that the Malay population continued to engage in agricultural work and that the educational curriculum supported this emphasis. He was a

⁸⁴ Legislative Council S.S., ‘Report by Mr. R. O. Winstedt, Assistant Director of Education, SS and FMS on Vernacular and Industrial Education in the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines’, No. 22 of 1917.

⁸⁵ R. O. Winstedt, *Education in Malaya*, p.15; cited in Loh, *Seeds of Separation*, p. 30.

⁸⁶ Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 139. For a bibliography of Winstedt’s writing see, Bastin and Roolvink, eds., *Malaya and Indonesia Studies*, pp. 1-23. For a detailed eulogy of his work see, John Bastin, ‘Richard Olaf Winstedt 1878-1966’, *Proceedings of the British Academy*, Vol. 65, (1981), pp. 845-852.

⁸⁷ *Report on Education*, FMS, 1921, p. 8, cited by Philip Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, p. 28.

negative influence on education development and his antipathy to an expansion of educational provision particularly his 'rejection of Malay secondary education remains strangely incongruent with his interest in Malay scholarship'.⁸⁸ His views on Malay education, however, did not resonate favourably with the SITC students who felt that:

They were being fobbed off ... with a sub-standard education fit only for tillers of the soil, while more privileged or more fortunate Malays, and large numbers of other races, were preceding from education in English to comfortable and rewarding jobs and ultimately to positions of influence in a world in which every transaction of importance was conducted in the English language.⁸⁹

Dussek retained an ambitious vision for his students and during the course of his headship encouraged the growth of literary studies drawing on the traditions of Malay culture. While the formal level of study at the College did not rise significantly beyond secondary school standards it has been observed that the students at SITC gained a perspective and a consciousness of a wider world which was to be significant. They returned to their villages with new ideas and a sense of confidence and authority to discuss them.⁹⁰ As Roff explained:

Though their influence was often tempered by the inertia of traditionalism and frustrated by the strength of competing authority figures in village society, they served to introduce a new generation of Malays not only to modern Malay literature but to the wider problems of social change with which that literature and its writers were concerned.⁹¹

In their different ways the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar and the Training College at Tanjong Malim were important institutions in the development of Malayan education. Despite Wilkinson's efforts to the contrary the Malay College became an exclusive establishment enabling the Malay Sultan class to secure and modernise its position within the framework of the colonial state. British interests coincided with and conciliated this objective

⁸⁸Loh, '*Seeds of Separation*', p. 89.

⁸⁹ Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p.150. The quotation derives from interviews with students conducted by Roff at SITC 1959-60.

⁹⁰ It has been argued that the educational experiences of the SITC students enabled them to be contributory to the development of Malay nationalism, for discussion see Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 142.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

since cooperation with the Malay rulers was regarded as essential to effective and peaceful colonial governance. The Malay College, based on the culture and values of the British public school was the perfect instrument to assist the Sultan class to realise their ambitions for the maintenance of high status, prestige and rewards. The importance of a compliant Sultanate to the British and their policy of indirect rule should not be under-estimated particularly since it has been suggested that the development of secondary education was largely ignored as its introduction was a potential threat to the patronage system upon which the Malay Sultan class relied.⁹² This was in distinct contrast to the SITC programme at Tanjong Malim where the sons of the poor and lower classes received a vernacular education to return as teachers to the Malay-speaking world of the rural village school. It is difficult to judge the veracity of Roff's claim regarding the influence of SITC students and their contribution to the wider nationalist cause. As newly trained teachers returning to village life, they were potentially in a good position to work effectively at a local community level, to influence events and contribute to social and political change. The more limited objectives of SITC as a Government-financed establishment offering a practical curriculum with a major focus on "school gardening with rural husbandry", should not be overlooked.⁹³

2.4. The Precursor Colleges.

Two Singaporean educational establishments, the King Edward VII College of Medicine which was founded in 1905 and Raffles College which began in 1928 were amalgamated to form the first University of Malaya in October 1949. A brief review of the origins and background of these precursor institutions follows below.

⁹² Loh, *'Seeds of Separation'*, p. 89.

⁹³ See O. T. Dussek, 'The Preparation and Work of Rural School Teachers in Malaya', in, The Colonial Office, *Education in Malaya*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1948), pp. 19-23, p. 19.

(i) The King Edward VII College of Medicine

The Straits and Federated Malay States Government Medical School was formally opened by Sir John Anderson, Governor of the FMS, on 28 September 1905.⁹⁴ In his address Anderson thanked the Chinese community for their financial generosity, especially Tan Jiak Kim for his generous, personal, contribution.⁹⁵ Anderson went on to express his support for the Medical School seeing it as a vital instrument in the campaign to improve public health and particularly its role in helping to reduce excessively high child mortality rates; he urged the students to commit seriously to their studies in order to counter widespread ignorance and prejudice regarding medical treatments.⁹⁶

The College of Medicine had emerged from very modest origins during the early nineteenth century. The medical departments of the SS were initially based in Penang and comprised a senior surgeon as head of the service, together with an assistant surgeon and additional support provided by medical subordinates-assistant surgeons were posted to each of the other SS, i.e., Malacca and Singapore, where again support was provided by medical subordinates. The surgeons were seconded from their duties in India or from their posts in the armed services based in Malaya and were responsible for the dispensation of medical care to both civil and military communities. As we have seen the position of Penang declined during the early years of the nineteenth century and by 1832 Singapore had become the capital and economic centre of the SS, a development which prompted the medical department to move

⁹⁴ The institution was renamed as the King Edward VII Medical School in 1912. There was a further change in 1921 to the King Edward VII College of Medicine following the receipt of a generous donation from the King Edward VII Memorial Fund.

⁹⁵ Tan Jiak Kim (1859-1917) was a Straits Settlements born, wealthy Chinese businessman who was co-founder and Director of the Straits Steamship Company. He was a long serving member of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council and co-founder and President of the Straits Chinese British Association (1900-1904), see <https://www.mci.gov.sg> (Tan Jiak Kim) [accessed 04/05/2021]

⁹⁶ See *Eastern Daily Mail and Straits Morning Advertiser*, 28 September 1905. The paper also reported a speech by Dr G. D. Freer, Principal of the College, that a small group comprising twelve Tamil and Singalese students, nine Chinese students and one European student, a total of 22, had already begun their studies in July.

south to Singapore in 1835.⁹⁷ Despite a change in location, however, staffing problems were not resolved. India was a preferred posting compared to the under-resourced Malay Peninsula and secondment proved to be an unreliable method for the replacement of qualified staff. As a result, several attempts were made to train local Asian young men for subordinate roles, a training programme which involved collaboration with the Madras University Medical College, but the difficult conditions of work and low financial rewards continued to have a negative effect on recruitment.⁹⁸ In 1889 Dr Max Simon, the Principal Civil Medical Officer for the SS made a formal proposal to establish a medical school in Singapore. Under the scheme the school would offer a two-year preliminary course in Singapore before sending successful students to the Indian Medical Schools of either the University of Madras or Calcutta to complete their final three years of training and examination. Only a small number of applicants came forward and all failed the qualifying examination.⁹⁹ The following year two applicants passed the examination but they were deemed to be physically unfit and were forced to withdraw. The scheme was then abandoned.

During the period to 1904 arrangements for education and training continued on an *ad hoc* and unsatisfactory basis. At the same time the population of the SS was increasing and there was an evident and growing need to provide more reliable and higher quality medical services. In September 1904 the Chinese community through the Straits Chinese British

⁹⁷ Khoo Kay Kim, *100 Years: The University of Malaya*, (Kuala Lumpur, 2005), pp. 1-2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁹⁹ The failure rate was not surprising when the requirements of the qualifying examination are considered. The first part was 'English' and involved a dictation exercise not exceeding 30 lines selected from a standard English author. Marks were deducted for defective handwriting and 10 spelling errors excluded the candidate from further examination. Additional parts of the examination included, the 'leading facts of the history of England and pages 95-142 of Lucas' Historical Geography of the Empire; Algebra, + addition, subtraction, multiplication and simple equations [and the] first book of Euclid'. The pass mark was 66% of the total number of marks and 75% in the English component of the examination. Additional, punitive rather than progressive conditions applied, for example, fees for hospital attendance and lectures for two years – payable in advance; students admitted to the Medical School were required to enter into a Bond to repay the Government the cost of their instruction should they without gaining permission give up their studies or should their progress be at any times reported as unsatisfactory. They were also expected to serve the Government of the Colony or a Protected native state for a period of three years after passing their final examination in Madras, *Gazette*, 9 May 1890; see also, the *Strait Times Weekly Issue*, 14 May 1890.

Association¹⁰⁰ led by Tan Jiak Kim, petitioned the Colonial Government for the establishment of a medical school. Government funding together with considerable finances raised by the Chinese and non-European communities secured the development, the Legislative Council gave its approval in June and the Medical School officially opened on 28 September 1905.¹⁰¹ It offered a five-year course of study with the first two years being devoted to a range of theoretical subjects including physics, chemistry, physiology and anatomy. The final three years emphasised ‘clinical clerkships’ in medicine, surgery and midwifery a more practical period of training conducted initially at the Singapore General Hospital and from 1908 the Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Successful students graduated as Licentiates of Medicine and Surgery, the standard and equivalence of which was formally recognised by the General Medical Council of Great Britain. During the period from 1905 to 1949, a total of 384 men and 33 women successfully graduated from the course at the King Edward VII College of Medicine.

(ii) Raffles College

Raffles College was formally opened on 23 July 1929 by Sir Hugh Clifford, Governor, of the SS and High Commissioner for the FMS.¹⁰² Richard Winstedt, Director of Malay Education for the SS and the FMS gave a key-note speech in which he emphasised the importance of continuing to make donations saying, ‘I entreat you not to think that the College has got all the funds it requires, that with the funds it has got at present it can become part of the University of Singapore (sic). It needs further endowments for professorships and buildings

¹⁰⁰ The Straits Chinese British Association was founded in Singapore 1900 by prominent Chinese businessmen such as Tian Jiak Kim and doctors and intellectuals for example, Lim Boon Kang. Branches of the Association were subsequently established in Malacca and Penang; it was renamed The Peranakan Association in 1966. See, Heng Pek Koon, ‘The Development of the Malayan Chinese Association’, (unpublished PhD thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1984), pp. 23-31.

¹⁰¹ Khoo Kay Kim, *100 Years: The University of Malaya*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁰² The College had opened informally the year before on 21 June 1928 with forty-three students most of whom were male and in receipt of Government scholarships. The total number of students included two women and nine privately funded students, see *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 5 July 1928.

before that can happen'.¹⁰³ He did not draw attention to the fact that it had taken nearly ten years for plans for a tertiary level college to come to fruition.¹⁰⁴

The idea of a higher college originated in 1918 when a committee chaired by Sir William Maxwell, Chief Secretary to the Government of the FMS met to report on an appropriate way to celebrate the centenary of the founding of Singapore by Sir Stamford Raffles in 1819. It was agreed that a suitable educational memorial should 'provide for the advancement of the education of the Colony with a view of laying securely the foundations upon which a university may in the course of time be established'.¹⁰⁵ The matter was referred for more detailed consideration to a Governor's Committee which was chaired by the then Director of Education for the SS, H. Firmstone and comprised an exclusively European membership. The committee agreed that a new institution, to be known as Raffles College, should be constituted and at the same time it proposed some re-organisation to facilitate exclusive access to the new college for students from English-medium schools.¹⁰⁶ The committee also acknowledged a need to increase the numbers of qualified teachers and for more advanced 'training in higher technical and scientific subjects' to be made available.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰³ *The Straits Times*, 23 July 1929.

¹⁰⁴ Richard Winstedt was an English orientalist and colonial administrator, an expert on the history and culture of Malaya. He was born in Oxford, educated at Magdalen College School and New College. In 1902 he became a cadet in the Federated Malay States Civil Service and was posted to Perak where he studied the Malay language and culture. In 1913 he was appointed District Officer, Kuala Pilah, Negri Sembilan. Later, he held a series of posts in educational administration and management serving as President of Raffles College, Director of Education, Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States, and Director of Education of the Federal Council, Federated Malay States. From 1931-35, he was General Adviser to Johore before retiring from the Malayan Colonial Service and returning to England where he was appointed Lecturer and subsequently, Reader in Malay at SOAS. Although he retired from teaching in 1946, he continued his association with SOAS as a member of the Governing Body until 1959. See, Dora Gordine, 'Winstedt, Sir Richard Olaf (1878-1966)', <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/36981> [accessed 25/01/2018]

¹⁰⁵ Report of the Committee appointed to consider and report upon a scheme to commemorate the centenary of Singapore, Proceedings of the Legislative Council, 1918, C61-C62, cited by H. E. Wilson, *Social Engineering in Singapore: Educational Policies and Social Change 1919-1972*, (Singapore, 1978), p. 72.

¹⁰⁶ Report of the Committee Appointed by his Excellency the Governor to Advise as to a Scheme for the Advancement of Education Preparatory to a University in Singapore [Straits Settlements, *Proceedings of the Legislative Council*, No. 4 of 1919, (Singapore, 1920) [Firmstone Report]; cited by Wilson, *Social Engineering in Singapore*, p. 72.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, C16.

Notwithstanding these recommendations the Government seemed reluctant to commit the necessary funding and support the development of a tertiary college. This was not a new reaction by officials in Colonial Government as is revealed by an earlier educational project. The Methodist Episcopalian Mission, an American-based religious organisation was a successful provider of education in Singapore. It opened its first school in 1886 and by 1917 controlled a total of ten schools with a combined enrolment of just under 5,000 students. It had developed good relations with the Chinese community and with their financial support the Mission proposed to open a college which would enable local students to undertake courses leading to external degrees awarded by British universities. Following a meeting in August 1917 with Sir Arthur Young, the Governor of the SS, the Mission was informed that the Government itself was intending to, 'inaugurate a system of higher education as soon as conditions admit [...] and are unable to sanction the granting of degrees by the proposed College'.¹⁰⁸ There had been no indication hitherto of any such British intent.

Despite Government antipathy in Singapore, the Mission determinedly continued its efforts and later sent its representative, Dr. J. F. Goucher, to London in July 1920 in an effort to win support. Productive meetings were held with Lord Fisher, then President of the Board of Trade, and subsequently with Leo Amery at the Colonial Office who confirmed that: 'we regard the proposal with interest and sympathy and feel sure that the educational advantages [...] will be of great benefit to Malaya as well as the Far East generally'.¹⁰⁹ This view was not reciprocated in Singapore and several objections to the Mission's plans were raised by Winstedt, when he met the Rev. J. S. Nagle, Principal of the Methodist Anglo-Chinese School in Singapore and Principal-designate of the proposed college.¹¹⁰ The CO remained optimistic but after some inconclusive exchanges with local officials in Singapore it was

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 66.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

¹¹⁰ See, H. E. Wilson, 'An Abortive Plan for an Anglo-Chinese College in Singapore', *JMBRAS*, Vol. 45, Part 2, No. 222, (1972), pp. 97-109, pp.104-105.

finally agreed to withdraw support for the Mission's College plans causing Nagle and his supporters to abandon their project.¹¹¹

Further constraints on progress derived from Winstedt's approach and management of the project for example, delays were caused when he introduced 'a long, drawn-out competition to select the best architectural designs for the new institution.'¹¹² In addition his views on education were unhelpful. As we have seen he was committed to vernacular education with a strong emphasis on practical subjects in Malay schools and it is not surprising that education at Raffles College in its early years became associated with teacher training and the award of diplomas rather than degrees. For many people this outcome proved disappointing and was something less than the university they had sought to achieve.¹¹³ Winstedt's employment position also presented difficulties. He held the full-time post of Assistant Director of Education-Malay with responsibilities for Malay Schools in the SS and FMS. He was then appointed Principal-designate of Raffles College in 1921 and arguably unable to give full attention and priority to the task of planning and developing the new institution.¹¹⁴

2.5. Conclusion

The chapter has sought to contextualise the foundation of the first University in Malaya, an event which occurred some one hundred and fifty years after the establishment of a formal British presence on the Malay Peninsula. Consideration has been given to political, economic and social imperatives before addressing educational developments beginning in the early

¹¹¹ Ibid., see also, Wilson, *Social Engineering in Singapore*, pp. 65-75. For a research study see, J. S. Nagle, Educational Needs of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States, (unpublished PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, 1926).

¹¹² Wilson, *Social Engineering in Singapore*. p. 73. The eventual winners were Messrs. Farey and Dawbarn, London architects whose plans were selected by open competition across the Empire, see, *The Straits Times*, 23 July 1929; see also, P. Holden, 'A Building with One Side Missing: Liberal Arts and Illiberal Modernities in Singapore', *Journal of Social Issues in Southeast Asia*, Vol. 33, No. 1, (2018), pp. 1-28, p. 6.

¹¹³ Most male graduates (82%) and all women graduates became teachers, *McLean Report*, p. 25.

¹¹⁴ Winstedt was later criticised by the McLean Commission for simultaneously occupying senior positions at Raffles College, see, Ibid., pp. 25-27.

nineteenth century. The main emphasis has been directed towards the first part of the twentieth century with consideration of several institutions, the Malay College, the Sultan Idris Training College, the College of Medicine and Raffles College. This narrative reveals different educational establishments and whilst there are commonalities the colleges do not represent a group of collaborating institutions nor do they provide ‘stepping stones’ leading to the foundation of the University. The chapter reveals a lack of aspiration for a university on the part of individuals, particularly Winstedt, who as Principal-designate of Raffles College, was favourably placed to advance the cause of a higher education. His educational interests however remained elementary and vernacular leading him to focus on the training of junior school teachers. After considerable prevarication Raffles College opened in 1928 but ‘... the original conception of a university with provision for Malay and Chinese studies had disappeared [leaving] a functional English-medium teacher training college’,¹¹⁵ and a continuing struggle for a more significant and inclusive education at a higher level.

¹¹⁵ Philip Loh, ‘The Beginnings of Higher Education in Singapore: Raffles College 1928-1938’, *Malaya in History*, Vol. 9, No. 1 and 2, (1965), pp. 9-17, p. 14.

Chapter 3 The Inter-War Years

3.1. Introduction

Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations gave the victorious allied powers of the First World War a general authority over the former colonial territories of Imperial Germany and the Ottoman Empire. The Covenant identified colonial peoples ‘not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world and [proposed] that tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experience, or their geographical position can best undertake this responsibility ...’.¹

While there was an expectation of assisting mandated territories towards greater development and autonomy, this was contingent on the stage of development reached in a particular territory and so it was recognised that progress would vary.² The Permanent Mandates Commission was the agency designated to oversee the administration of the mandate system, a responsibility it was to discharge by monitoring and interrogating annual reports submitted by the imperial powers. The Covenant however omitted to address several important questions such as, the length of time a mandate should last, the procedure for terminating a mandate and the action the League would take if a mandatory power failed to comply with the principles embodied in the Covenant.³ In moving the assessment of colonial governance from a national to an international forum of review there was an expectation of general

¹ Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, repr., Susan Pederson, *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire*, (Oxford, 2015), pp. 408-09.

² ‘The League of Nations designated three classes of mandate: A, B, and C. Class A mandates were those territories deemed to have reached a stage of development whereby the wishes of the territory’s people must be a principal consideration. There was a single British Class A mandate: Mesopotamia. Class B mandates were deemed to require a greater level of control by the supervising country which had to guarantee freedom of conscience and religion. The mandatory powers were also forbidden from constructing military bases in this class of territory. Britain’s Class B mandates were Tanganyika, (Tanzania); British Cameroons, (Cameroon/Nigeria); British Togoland, (Togo/Ghana); Class C mandates were considered to be best administrated as integral portions of the Mandatory’s territory. Britain’s Class C mandates were administered in conjunction with its regional Dominions and were the Territory of New Guinea (Papua New Guinea/Indonesia); (with Australia); Nauru (with Australia and New Zealand); Western Samoa (Samoa) (with New Zealand and South West Africa (Namibia) with (South Africa)’, see C. Andersen, and A. Cohen, eds., *The Government and Administration of Africa, 1880-1939: Vol. 1: Recruitment and Training*, (London, 2013), p. 335.

³ Pederson, *The Guardians*, p. 2.

improvement. In the event however ‘mandated territories were not better governed ... and in some cases were governed more oppressively ...’.⁴ During the ensuing years colonial territories experienced increased levels of economic and social hardship which *inter alia* fuelled an emergent nationalism; tutelage exercised by mandatories was unsatisfactory and appeared to be less relevant. By the end of the 1930s it was not surprising that there was little appetite and support for ‘imperial internationalization’.⁵

During the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 the competing interests of the allied powers resulted in acrimonious discussions about the efficacy of a mandate system. A significant critic of the application of mandates was the leading British politician Lord Milner,⁶ ‘an imperialist far more than a League man’.⁷ In January 1919 Milner had been appointed as Secretary of State for the Colonies in the Liberal Coalition Government led by Lloyd George.⁸ Later in the year he attended the Paris Peace talks and subsequently chaired Commission meetings in London but remained sceptical of the mandate project stating that:

⁴ The move to an international context has been reflected in more recent scholarship by recognising the League of Nations as the ‘first great experiment in international government,’ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5 ff.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁶ Alfred Lord Milner (1854-1925) was a leading imperialist at the centre of British politics for many years. In addition to service in Egypt and the long years in South Africa he was a prominent and key member of the exclusive war cabinet selected by Lloyd George 1916-18. As Colonial Secretary he made a brief contribution to the Paris Peace Conference before returning to Egypt to lead a Special Mission to consider Egypt’s constitutional position and its status as a British Protectorate. His long-held belief in self-government for Egypt was only belatedly accepted by the British Government by which time Milner, after several previous threats, finally resigned 7 February 1921 and retired to his residence at Sturry Court, Canterbury, Kent. For his work in South Africa see, Cecil Headlam, ed., *The Milner Papers: South Africa 1897-1899*, Vol. 1, (London, 1931) and, Cecil Headlam, *The Milner Papers: South Africa 1899-1905*, Vol. 2, (London, 1933); V. Halperin, *Lord Milner and the Empire: The Evolution of British Imperialism*, (London, 1952). Milner’s ‘kindergarten group’ is discussed see Walter Nimcocks, *Milner’s Young Men: The “Kindergarten” in Edwardian Imperial Affairs*, (London, 1970). For a biographical account see, John Evelyn Wrench, *Alfred Lord Milner: The Man of No Illusions*, (London, 1958). For a sense of his own beliefs and ideas see, Viscount Milner, *Questions of the Hour*, new edn., (London, 1925), particularly pp. 202-214.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 33

⁸ He accepted the appointment with reluctance as he was looking forward to being free of official responsibilities after demanding and exhausting service in the War Cabinet during the First World War, see, Wrench, *The Man of No Illusions*, p. 383; see also Pedersen, *The Guardians*, p. 30-35.

We really cannot go on playing this game of mandates all by ourselves. Before I would agree to putting any portion of the world, which we at present govern, under a mandate, I should want to feel much surer than I do that the mandatory system is going to work. At present, it is not too much to say that nothing has been done to make it a reality except what we have done (I might say almost I have done), and that we have not succeeded in imposing its restrictions upon anybody but ourselves.⁹

Milner's doubts were arguably more a consequence of his political credo and a sense of general unease rather than a prediction of events to come although there was a prescient quality in his remarks.¹⁰ His misgivings suggested the onset of a troubled era which was to characterise the inter-war years and presage an ultimate uncertainty about political governance and social policy in the British Empire. Towards the end of his life Milner described himself as a British (indeed primarily an English) Nationalist an identification and affiliation that was constituted on the basis of 'the speech, the traditions, the spiritual heritage, the principles, the aspirations of the British race'.¹¹ He was perhaps more rounded than his espousal of these values might suggest. He was not, in his own estimation, 'a Little Englander',¹² and as has been observed, 'imperial unity and social welfare were for him not

⁹ This was a reply to Robert Cecil's suggestion that Milner should place Egypt under mandate to assist the efforts of the Mandates Commission and demonstrate a way forward, cited by Pederson, *The Guardians*, p. 34. Lord Robert Cecil (1864-1958) was the third son of the long-serving Conservative Prime Minister Robert Gascoyne-Cecil and was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs from 1915 until his promotion to Assistant Secretary in June 1918. He was re-elected in the general election 1918 but left the Foreign Office in January 1919 to become an advisor to the British delegation at the Paris Peace Conference. Progressive in his views Cecil was a highly committed advocate of the League of Nations and played a significant role in the drafting the Covenant and the League's development. He saw Milner as a model of influence and support. Cecil became a leading figure in the League of Nations Union and in 1937 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, see Martin Ceadel, 'Cecil, (Edgar Algernon) Robert Gascoyne - [known as Lord Robert Cecil], Viscount Cecil of Chetwood, (1864-1958)'. <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/32335> [accessed 23/07/2019]

¹⁰ Milner conceptualised a different polity based on the view that: 'United Kingdom is no longer the power in the world which it once was, or in isolation, capable of remaining a power at all ... [and] no longer even self-supporting ... But the British Dominions as a whole are not only self-supporting. They are more nearly self-sufficient than any other political entity in the world ... if they can be kept an entity, if their present loose and fragile organization can be made tenacious though elastic, Milner, *Questions of the Hour*, p. 213.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 211-212.

competing aims, but essentially complementary and inseparable parts of a single comprehensive policy'.¹³

If the issues of mandates and the concerns of Milner signalled the beginning of the inter-war years, they also mark the end of an era and the decline of a hegemonic political imperialism. By the late 1930s the Permanent Mandates Commission had recorded so many violations of the terms of the mandates that there was little confidence that colonial territories could be protected from international economic and social problems.¹⁴ Whilst the considerable positive influence that Milner had on people and events should not be understated his views on Empire were redolent of a passing era. During the 1930s even in Oxford University imperialism was a declining interest and 'most dons and students ... seemed to find the contemporary Empire a boring topic'.¹⁵ It is against this background and with reference to selected events and debates that the chapter proceeds to assess initiatives that may be taken as examples to advance the development of higher education policy in British colonial territories during the inter-war years.

¹³ See, Leo Amery, 'Foreword', Halpérin, Lord Milner and the Empire, p. 9. The origins of Milner's interest in social philosophy originated from his student days at Oxford and his friendship with the social reformer Arnold Toynbee. Toynbee's qualities, were such that for Milner '... in spite of the lapse of years, his thought, his aspirations, his manner of speech, yea the very expression of his countenance and the tone of his voice, are so vividly present to me, and seem to me still, though I am long past the age of illusions, no less noble and inspiring than they did in the radiant days of youthful idealism, when we first were friends ...'¹³ On Toynbee's death, Milner gave a Reminiscence which honoured his friend's life to the members of Toynbee Hall where it was delivered on 27 November 1894. Milner was described in a prefatory note written by Mrs C. M. Toynbee as my 'husband's closest friend, who shared his entire intellectual life', see A. Toynbee, *Lectures on the Industrial Revolution of the Eighteenth Century in England: Popular Addresses, Notes and other Fragments Together with a Reminiscence by Lord Milner*, 6th ed., (London, 1920), p. viii. Milner was a founder member of Toynbee Hall in London's East End and Chair of the Board of Trustees from 1911 until his death in 1925. He continued to chair board meetings at Toynbee Hall during the period 1916-1918 when he was a member of the war cabinet.

¹⁴ M. Havinden and D. Meredith, *Colonisation and Development: Britain and its Tropical Colonies 1850-1960*, (London, 1993), p. 197.

¹⁵ R., Symonds, *Oxford and Empire: The Last Lost Cause?* (New York, 1986) p. 22. Symonds includes a thought from a young historian of the day who remarked that: 'It is idle to deny that the history of the Overseas Dominions has for many persons a very faint attraction. The importance and interest of the new societies may be admitted; there may be full agreement that someone ought to know about them, but the normal attitude is that someone is always someone else', D. W. Brogan, *Oxford Magazine*, vol 55, (4 Feb., 1937), p. 354, *Ibid.*, p. 22.

3.2. The Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies

Scholars and policy-makers have presented the development of British colonial education policy in different ways. Clive Whitehead, an experienced researcher in the field¹⁶ has sought to explain the formulation of policy as a consequence of Colonial Office responses to geopolitical conditions which emerged during the Second World War.¹⁷ On the other hand earlier scholarship has emphasised a more evolutionary approach involving a ‘body of intentions, beliefs, and prejudices which together are recognised as “British policy”’.¹⁸ Creech Jones, the Labour Government’s Secretary of State for the Colonies between 1946-1950, made a similar point when discussing his new initiative¹⁹ on local democratic government in February 1947 when he emphasised that a:

new policy has not ... just now been ‘discovered’; it has developed over a period of years as the need for development in all fields ... has been studied and appreciated It is the result of a natural organic growth which has quickened in pace as it developed and which owes much to the many far-sighted administrators who guided it through the various stages of native administration to present conceptions.²⁰

Although the discussion which follows recognises the importance of an evolutionary approach to policy-making it would be overly simplistic and inaccurate to suggest that progress towards the development of colonial universities and colleges was consistent and incremental. There were discontinuities between the different commissions and a surprising lack of communication. It has been observed for example, that the Currie Report completed in 1933 ‘was never published ... it was forgotten: by an astonishing oversight it was not

¹⁶ Dr Clive Whitehead has written extensively on colonial education policy in the British Empire. He taught at the Graduate School of Education, University of Western Australia and for many years was a visiting researcher at the Institute of Education University of London.

¹⁷ Clive Whitehead, ‘The Advisory Committee on Education in the [British] Colonies 1924-1961’, *Paedagogica Historica*, Vol. 27, No. 3, (1991), pp. 385-422, p. 421. Whitehead acknowledged that the ACEC demonstrated an earlier interest with its enquiry into higher education in Africa 1933, *Ibid.*, p. 409.

¹⁸ Ashby, *Universities* p. 10.

¹⁹ See ‘The Despatch by the Secretary of State to the Governors of the African Territories 25 February, 1947’, in Ronald Hyam, ed., *British Documents on the End of Empire, The Labour Government and the End of Empire 1945-1951, Part 1, High Policy and Administration*, (London, 1992).

²⁰ Creech Jones, A. ‘The Place of African Local Administration in Colonial Policy’, *Journal of African Administration*, Vol. 1, No. 1, June 1949, pp. 3-5; see also, Anthony Kirk-Greene, *The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria: Selected Documents 1900-1947*, (London, 1965), pp. 245-248.

before the Asquith Commission which largely reiterated Currie's findings twelve years later'.²¹ The draft report which was commissioned by the ACEC and discussed at its meeting in November 1933 was made available to the public on application to the Committee's secretary.²²

A significant event in the development of colonial education policy occurred with the appointment of the Advisory Committee on Native (sic) Education in the British Tropical African Dependencies on 27 December 1923.²³ In his communication to the Governors of the East and West African territories, the Duke of Devonshire, Secretary of State for the Colonies explained that the initiative had originated from the conference held at the Colonial Office in June 1923.²⁴ The conference had called for more direction and leadership from London 'to co-ordinate educational policy ... and to secure co-operation with the Missionary Societies and other bodies interested in the question of native education'.²⁵ The Advisory Committee was appointed to 'advise the Secretary of State on any matters of native (sic) education in the British colonies and protectorates in tropical Africa which he may from time to time refer to them; and to assist him in advancing the progress of education in those colonies and protectorates'.²⁶ The committee was chaired by William Ormsby-Gore and comprised a

²¹ Ashby, *Universities*, p.197, A similar point was made by A. M. Carr-Saunders, *New Universities Overseas*, (London, 1961), p. 33. Ashby pointed out that at least two members of the Asquith Commission, i.e., Lord Hailey and Sir Donald Cameron must have been aware of Currie's report. Hailey had reviewed the report in his epic work, *An African Survey: A Study of Problems Arising in Africa South of the Sahara*, (London,1938), pp. 1231-32 and Cameron would have seen the report as Governor of Nigeria, Ashby, *Universities*, p. 430.

²² *Oversea Education* VI, 4, (July 1935), pp. 208-9. Ashby does not explain why the report was not published, Ashby, *Universities*, p. 427. Hailey notes that Currie recommended 'that plans be made for the development in Africa of selected institutions of university standard having regard in their curriculum to the needs of the African environment; in the interests of economy such institutions should as far as possible, serve several territories', see Hailey, *African Survey*, p. 1232. According to Hailey the publication of Currie's report was simply postponed pending the report of the De La Warr Commission see, *An African Survey*, p. 1232.

²³ CO 1045/1, Secretary of State to the Governors, 27 December, 1923; the work of the committee is discussed see, Whitehead, 'The Advisory Committee on Education', pp 385-422; its origins are briefly summarised by, Ashby, *Universities*, p. 426. For a more extended research study see, F. J. Clatworthy, 'The Formulation of British Colonial Educational Policy 1923-1948', (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Michigan, 1971).

²⁴ Devonshire, was Colonial Secretary Oct. 1922-January 1924.

²⁵ The conference of African Governors was held in London on 6 June 1923 and attracted the soubriquet, 'The Derby Day' meeting, see, Whitehead, 'The Advisory Committee on Education', p. 392.

²⁶ Secretary of State to the Governors 27/29 December 1923, CO 1045/1.

powerful membership which was highly experienced in colonial governance and educational development.²⁷

At the first meeting held in January 1924, Ormsby-Gore identified the committee's general aim as one of developing a more effective and responsive system of education in the dependent territories of the Empire which now comprised a vast population of some fifty million people the majority of whom (forty million) were African. This was likely to increase demand for indigenous education and thereby a need for higher levels of financial support. The committee therefore sought to consider the relationship between British colonial governments and missionary societies and their potential as sources of financial aid for the provision of education in the dependencies.²⁸

The committee set to work and within a year forwarded its report to the Secretary of State for the Colonies Leo Amery.²⁹ The report outlined general principles to guide educational provision in the African territories. It emphasised that:

The first task of education is to raise the standard alike of character and efficiency of the bulk of the people ... provision must also be made for the training of those who are required to fill posts in the administrative and technical services as well as those who as chiefs will occupy positions of exceptional trust and responsibility, [and that] the door of advancement through higher education in Africa must be increasingly opened for those who by character, ability and temperament showed themselves fitted to profit by such education.³⁰

²⁷ Ormsby-Gore was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and later became Secretary of State May 1936-May 1938. Other members included Sir Frederick Lugard, formerly Governor-General, Nigeria; Sir Michael Sadler, Master of University College, Oxford; Sir James Currie, late Principal of the Gordon College, Khartoum & Director of Education in the Sudan; Mr J. H. Oldham, Secretary of the International Missionary Council. Major Hans Vischer, formerly Director of Education in the Northern Provinces of Nigeria, was appointed as (remunerated) secretary and member of the committee.

²⁸ CO 1045/1, Minutes of the Advisory Committee on Native Education, 9 January 1923.

²⁹ See, Colonial Office, *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa*, Cmd. 2374, (London, 1925). Amery held office Nov.1924-June 1929. Furse regarded him as 'unquestionably the most effective [colonial secretary] that I served under between 1910 and 1948', Sir R. Furse, *Aucuparius Recollections of a Recruiting Officer*, (Oxford, 1962), p. 145.

³⁰ See, Cmd. 2374, p. 4; The report is discussed by L. J. Lewis, 'Higher Education in the Oversea Territories 1948-58', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, (1959), Vol. 8, No. 1, pp. 3-21, p. 21.

The report recognised the importance of adapting education to ‘the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, conserving as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life’.³¹ The report provided the first statement of educational policy by a British government and according to Ashby it was the commitment to the principle of ‘educational adaptation’ which added distinction to the report.³² A more critical view however suggests that its importance has been over-stated.³³ There did appear to be a tension between respect for indigenous culture and the imposition of a residential school, modelled along the lines of an English public school, which would ‘create a social life and tradition in which standards of judgement are formed and right attitudes acquired almost unconsciously through imbibing the spirit and atmosphere of the school’.³⁴ The significance of the report lay in its emphasis on all stages of education including higher education and the importance it attached to inclusive provision insisting that: ‘Female education is not an isolated problem, but is an integral part of the whole question and cannot be separated from other aspects of it’.³⁵ The report was a useful statement of initial policy rather than a strategy for action.

The Advisory Committee was regarded favourably in British Government circles and as a result its terms of reference were extended four years later in January 1929 when the Colonial Secretary agreed that the Committee should consider colonial education not just in Africa but across the entire Empire. The new committee was re-named, the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies ‘to which would be referred for advice, with the Secretary of State’s authority, any questions relating to education in the Oversea

³¹ Cmd. 2374, p. 4.

³² Ashby, *Universities*, p. 190-191.

³³ Clive Whitehead, ‘Education Policy in British Tropical Africa: the 1925 White Paper in Retrospect’, *History of Education*, Vol. 10, No. 3, (1981), pp. 195-203. Even Ashby concedes that action did not always follow pronouncements of policy and that the principle of adaptation was less than popular with some Africans, Ashby, *Universities*, p. 426.

³⁴ Cmd. 2374, p. 5.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Dependencies'.³⁶ Ormsby-Gore continued as chairman and the existing membership was retained but some changes were made.³⁷

During the inter-war period and despite its extended terms of reference the ACEC's main focus of interest lay with the African Dependencies particularly those in West Africa; education in Malaya and the territories of Southeast Asia was rarely subject to serious discussion in London and there was some criticism that its approach was 'piecemeal, almost spasmodic'.³⁸ The Committee was under-resourced but other difficulties were identified for example:

The membership of the Advisory Committee is impressive from the point of view of professional standing. But the members are usually either ex-colonial officers who cannot divest themselves of an interest in the fields over which they once ruled, or theorists (academic or otherwise) who tend to regard all problems referred to them as potential subjects for a thesis. This coupled with a tendency to split up into sub-committees, seemed to result in a position where little can be obtained in the way of advice except after microscopic examination and considerable argument.³⁹

Another CO official, Sir Arthur Dawe, an Assistant Under-Secretary in the African Division who regularly attended Advisory Committee meetings was equally critical stating that 'there is far too much eye-wash and paperasserie and not enough solid administrative

³⁶ CO 10451, Minutes of the forty-fifth meeting of the ACEC 27 September 1928.

³⁷ For example, Miss Sara Burstall, the former Headmistress of Manchester High School for Girls and Miss A.W. Whitelaw, Headmistress of Wycombe Abbey School who had joined the Committee in 1926. The Secretary of State also proposed to appoint Will Spens, Master of Corpus Christi College (later, Sir Will Spens, Vice Chancellor of Cambridge University) and also Sir George Maxwell, formerly Chief Secretary of the FMS. In a somewhat unusual arrangement Hanns Vischer was appointed as full-time secretary with Arthur Mayhew as joint-secretary. Vischer was to concentrate on matters in the Tropical African Dependencies while Mayhew was to focus on Dependencies elsewhere and undertake responsibility for the publication of an educational bulletin. It was felt by one of the committee members, J. S. Oldham of the Conference of Missionary Societies, that Mayhew was a more adept and reliable writer who would keep the Advisory Committee regularly informed. This proved to be the case and in addition to memoranda and reports a new journal, 'Oversea Education', edited by Mayhew and sponsored by the Colonial Office, was launched. Mayhew was also the author of *Education in the Colonial Empire*, (London, 1938).

³⁸ See, Whitehead, 'The Advisory Committee on Education', p. 405.

³⁹ CO 967/10, Minute, by J. S. Seel, 28 August 1942; cited by Whitehead, 'The Advisory Committee on Education', p. 411.

achievement'.⁴⁰ There have been more favourable assessments made about the Committee's work and its 'unique legacy of achievement'⁴¹ but the views expressed by Colonial Office officials together with the enormity and complexity of the terms of reference suggest a 'talking shop' rather than a committee effectively engaged with the educational problems of extensive and variable colonial territories.

3.3. Colonial Administration

Following the end of the First World War it became increasingly clear that the Colonial Service required an expansion of its personnel and that a more systematic recruitment and training programme should be developed. The need for change was acknowledged by the CO whose officials continued to manage the process of recruitment but looked to leading universities, particularly Oxford and Cambridge, to provide relevant training programmes. It has been argued that this marked the beginning of the institutionalisation of colonial training, although this was not without tension between the political world of the CO and the academic world of the universities regarding a controlling influence on the development of an administrative elite.⁴² The emerging pattern of training was based on the 'exportation of expertise', involving the recruitment of graduates from British universities for training by British agencies before appointment to colonial service posts, a model that foreshadowed the later institutional export of universities. The idea of selecting and training indigenous candidates for colonial service appointments remained a future and limited development.

⁴⁰ CO 967/10, Minute by Sir Arthur Dawe, 31 August 1942; cited by Whitehead, *The Advisory Committee on Education*, p. 412.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 421. It has been suggested that the ACEC 'were inspired to their finest hour during the war years', see Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership*, p. 7.

⁴² See, Veronique Dimier, 'Three Universities and the British Elite: A Science of Colonial Administration in the UK', *Public Administration*, Vol. 84, No. 2, (2006), pp. 337-366.

A critical figure in colonial administration was the long serving and influential Major (later Sir) Ralph Furse.⁴³ His particular expertise lay in the selection and training of recruits to the colonial service, skills which he developed over a lengthy career of some forty years. While Furse was guided by certain conservative moral precepts he was, in his professional judgement often a harbinger of change, a quality that was evident in the reports he produced.⁴⁴ Furse was influential in the world of colonial education and training. When he was interviewed some twelve years after his official retirement he was described as a man who ‘was interested in certain families, schools and universities because he believed that by passing through the kinds of conditioning they provided, a man would acquire the needed sense of responsibility – [his] view of civil service requirements was moral not scientific’.⁴⁵ There was no real doubting that his essential educational interests resided with the more exclusive English public schools and that Oxford and Cambridge were his higher education institutions of choice.⁴⁶ He was no democrat; acknowledging ‘that every soul is, as I believe, of equal value in the sight of God, [but]‘equality’, in this world, is a manifest delusion.’⁴⁷ These values provided the essential foundation on which to launch ‘...the determined and

⁴³ Furse joined the CO in December 1910 at the age of twenty-three having graduated the previous summer from Balliol with what he described as ‘an indifferent degree in Classical Greats’, see Furse, *Aucuparius*, p. 9. He began working as Private Secretary for Appointments to the Secretary of State, an appointment described as ‘a patronage appointment’, see R. Heussler, *Yesterday’s Rulers: The Making of the British Colonial Service*, (New York, 1963), p. 71. Furse returned to the CO in February 1919 as Assistant Private Secretary (Appointments) to the new Secretary of State Lord Milner, one of seventeen Colonial Secretaries he was to serve. He retained his position as Director with responsibility for recruitment until his retirement in 1948 which was followed by an appointment as advisor until 1950, see Furse, *Aucuparius*, (London, 1962).

⁴⁴ During this time, he wrote several major reports, for example, CO 323/982/5, Colonial Office Conference 1927, ‘Recruitment and Training of Colonial Civil Servants; CO 877/22/16, *R. D. Furse*, ‘An Inquiry into the System of Training the Colonial Service with Suggestions for its Reform to meet Post-War Conditions, Memorandum by the Private Secretary for Appointments’ (London, 1943), pp. 1-15. He also made a significant contribution to the Report of the Committee on Post-War Training for the Colonial Service, Col. No 198, (London, 1945). [Devonshire Report]

⁴⁵ Heussler, *Yesterday’s Rulers*, p. 69.

⁴⁶ His affection for Oxbridge seemed to be inspired by a classical romanticism and sustained by the delights of the All Souls high table, ‘... the soft, shaded candlelight islanding a magical world which belongs, materially and spiritually, to an ampler, mellower, more genial civilisation – discovering the gleam in silver and the sparkle in wine, gathering into an enchanted glowing warmth the lively informed conversation, the good fellowship, the wit and laughter, the special flavour of academic courtesy, the ancient ritual ...’, see, Furse, *Aucuparius*, p. 72.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 308.

largely successful effort of Furse to make the administrative branch of the Colonial Service [what Heussler] calls an elitist corps'.⁴⁸

Towards the end of 1924 Furse circulated a memorandum to his CO colleagues in which he proposed to transfer the training course for junior administrative officers in Tropical Africa from the Imperial Institute in South Kensington to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge. He met with negative responses from his colleagues at the Colonial Office but the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Leo Amery supported the proposal and pencilled in his approval to proceed immediately.⁴⁹ The training course introduced at Oxford and Cambridge in October 1926 followed the previous course at the Imperial Institute but there were several revisions including training for administrative, forestry and agricultural service recruits at Oxford whilst Cambridge focussed on training recruits for administrative, survey and agricultural services; two rather than three points of admission were introduced. Several curricula changes were also made involving a series of lectures on colonial history with special reference to the treatment of dependent races given by the Beit Professor of Colonial History, Professor Reginald Coupland. Senior colonial officers were invited to attend during periods of home leave to meet probationers and provide more practical insights into the nature of their future work and responsibilities. Similarly, a series of lectures was given at Oxford University by Professor R. S. Troup, Professor of Forestry and founding director of the Imperial Forestry Institute in Oxford during the period 1924-1935. These were designed to provide colonial service administrators with a clearer understanding of the work of forestry officers with the aim of enhancing relationships between officers in different service areas. On the basis of these changes Furse reported an increase in the quality and intellectual

⁴⁸ Margery Perham, 'Introduction', Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers*, p. xix.

⁴⁹ Furse admitted that he '... traced the outline of every letter in [Amery's] minute with fine ink lines on both sides after the manner of preparatory schoolboys. An unnecessary precaution, doubtless, and I am a little ashamed of it. But I was taking no chances; the stakes were too high', Aucuparius, p. 152. The reasons for the disclosure of this somewhat trivial incident remain unclear.

standard of recent recruits but highly selective procedures were retained and the majority of successful candidates were honours degree graduates from the universities of Oxford or Cambridge.⁵⁰ Furse was well known for his distinctive methods of selection and the thoroughness of his interview procedures, what he called his ‘hunches,’ but they were slow, labour-intensive and suspect to error.⁵¹

In 1929 a committee was appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to review procedures for appointment to the Colonial Service and to make recommendations for its future development. The review was chaired by Sir Warren Fisher⁵² and took place in 1930 against the background of an Empire which had increased in size and complexity following territorial mandates acquired at the Versailles Peace Conference. This led to the Secretary of State for the Colonies being responsible for more than fifty separate governments; a further difficulty as Fisher observed was that:

on the political side we are labouring to establish a regime which seeks to preserve what is best in the traditional native culture, rather than provide a cleared ground for the establishment of a ready-made alien polity. Such a purpose demands a high degree of knowledge and understanding on the part of the administrators.⁵³

Despite Furse’s gilded accounts of his system of selection Fisher recognised that, ‘the present system is open to criticism, first and foremost, as being ... a system of patronage ... We cannot escape the conclusion ... if seriously challenged, such a system could not in theory be

⁵⁰ CO 323/982/5, Colonial Office Conference, 1927, Memorandum by the Private Secretary for Appointments, pp. 6-11.

⁵¹ In 1948 they were described in an Appointments Handbook issued by the Colonial Office as a confidential guide for the use of staff involved in appointments. The handbook was compiled by Furse’s deputy and brother-in-law, F. Newbolt. An extract is included in A. Kirk-Greene, *On Crown Service: A History of HM Colonial and Overseas Services, 1837-1997*, (London, 1999), pp. 191-196.

⁵² Fisher was Head of the Home Civil Service and Secretary to the Treasury from 1919 to 1939. For his report see, Colonial Office, *Report of a Committee on the System of Appointment in the Colonial Office and the Colonial Services*, Cmd. 3554, (London, 1930). [Fisher Report]; The report is repr. in Andersen, and Cohen, *The Government and Administration of Africa*, pp. 193-230.

⁵³ The Fisher Report, p. 7. For a reference to the tension between the sentiments of Lugard’s methods of indirect rule and modern methods of western administration, see, Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 5th edn., (London, 1965); Perham, *Lugard, The Years of Authority 1898-1945, Part 2*, chapters 22-24.

defended'.⁵⁴ Although Fisher was engaged in a reformist project he was even-handed in his judgements believing that his committee 'should be doing the system and those responsible for it less than justice if we did not add that the fact that it has not so far been called into question is a striking testimony to the work of Major Furse and his colleagues and to the confidence felt in it by successive ministers'.⁵⁵ Whilst the outcome of the review was generally positive Fisher was critical of some of the procedures that had been developed over the years. He took the view that 'existing arrangements should be replaced by a system ... at once more authoritative and more independent'.⁵⁶

There was a striking difference between the systematic recommendations of Fisher and the approach of Furse.⁵⁷ The latter favoured more generalised solutions based on his perception of the public's indifference and ignorance of the Empire. This could be addressed by what he described as 'a sustained educational campaign' using 'the indirect method,' by this he meant the influence of good books and articles that would engage the more thoughtful type of candidate and their trainers.⁵⁸ The key 'aim should be to educate, to lay stress on the importance and interest of the work to be done by officers in the service, on the fact that only the best men are needed - it is an honour to be chosen ... "missionary work" should be undertaken and co-ordinated by those who are responsible for recruitment'.⁵⁹ He also saw an important role for Colonial Governments who 'must rely on the inherent attractions which their services offer to the type of man they need and on their capacity so to frame their policy

⁵⁴ Fisher Report, p. 20.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 20.

⁵⁶ Fisher Report, p. 20. For a summary of recommendations see, Part IV, pp. 55-56.

⁵⁷ The Fisher Report was praised as the "Magna Carta" of the modern Colonial Service by Sir Charles Jeffries, see, Kirk-Greene, *On Crown Service*, p 30. Sir Charles Jeffries was a career official with the Colonial Office and Deputy Permanent Under-Secretary of State, April 1947-August 1948. He wrote several books on his civil service experience, see, Sir Charles Jeffries, *The Colonial Empire and its Civil Service*, (Cambridge, 1938) and *Partners for Progress*, (London, 1949).

⁵⁸ CO 323/982/5, p. 13, Colonial Office Conference, 1927.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 13.

that demand does not outrun supply'.⁶⁰ Summarising the contribution Furse made to the development of the training and education, Heussler wrote that 'more than any single man he *made* the Colonial Service and is deservedly spoken of as its father. His personality, his outlook on life and the conception of the qualities which colonial officials ought to have stamped indelibly on the character of the service'.⁶¹ Such a judgement is not without substance and Furse continued at the centre of colonial administration until his retirement in 1948.⁶² His own prescient view arguably provides a more realistic epitaph on a man and an era whose times were over.

When the [anti-aircraft] balloons come down for good, the curtain will go up on a colonial stage set for a new act. At first, as after 1918, the lighting may be dim and the voices of some of the actors muffled ... when the lights are turned full on, we may well find that we are watching ... a new play... The pioneer era of colonial development has passed. Things are already much more complicated. The issues are less clear ... Men ask if we are really in the colonies to serve or to exploit? Ought we even to be there at all? New problems are arising, demanding of the Colonial Service careful study in preparation for new roles ... a new actor, the educated native is moving towards the front of the stage ...⁶³

3.4. The Currie Report

In June 1932 the Directors of Education of the East African territories met in conference in Zanzibar to consider the development of university education for African students. A key subject for discussion was that of entry qualifications for higher education, the importance of which was emphasised by the decision to provide opportunities for Matriculation through the University of London's School Examination in January 1933. Paragraph Nineteen of the Director's Conference Report sought to identify a strategy by which this objective might be achieved:

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 15

⁶¹ Heussler, *Yesterday's Rulers*, p. 14. [author's emphasis]

⁶² Following the Fisher Report, Furse was promoted to assistant secretary in the appointments department of the new personnel division, a position he retained until his retirement in 1948. Thereafter he continued at the Colonial Office until 1950 as an advisor to the Secretary of State, see, Kirk - Greene, *On Crown Service*, p. 42.

⁶³ Extract from Devonshire Report; see also, Furse, *Aucuparius*, p. 294.

It was suggested that a syllabus should be drawn up covering the last five years of this matriculation course and that the first two years of this syllabus should be undertaken in Secondary Schools, and the last three years at Makerere. As soon as sufficient numbers of students have reached the stage of entering for the intermediate Arts Examination of London University, the Secondary Schools should undertake the whole matriculation course, and matriculation should become the standard for entry to Makerere.⁶⁴

The discussions in Zanzibar were of particular interest to the ACEC who had spent some time considering the question of qualifications for entry into higher education in Africa and following the Directors' Conference in East Africa appointed a sub-committee in January 1933 to report on the educational policy implications of paragraph nineteen which had emerged from Zanzibar. Sir James Currie⁶⁵ was appointed chairman of the enquiry directed to consider the educational policy underlying paragraph nineteen of the report of the Conference in Zanzibar.⁶⁶

Whilst paragraph nineteen provided the starting point for the work of the sub – committee, Currie was determined on a wider approach and identified issues which provided the basis for a report on the provision of higher education across much of colonial Africa.⁶⁷ It was noted, for example, that the number of secondary schools had expanded leading to more

⁶⁴ Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, 44/33, *Report of the Sub-Committee Appointed to Consider the Educational Policy Underlying Paragraph 19 of the Report of the Conference of Directors of Education of Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda and Zanzibar*, Zanzibar, June 1932 [Currie Report], repr., Ashby *Universities*, pp. 476-481, p. 476.

⁶⁵ Currie (1868-1937) was an educationalist of considerable practical experience. Following university studies at Edinburgh and Oxford he returned to Edinburgh to teach for several years in a board, that is a state, school before joining the Egyptian education service. He was subsequently appointed by Lord Cromer to be the first Director of Education in Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and ex-officio Principal of Gordon College where he championed vocational education and scientific research centres. Following his retirement from the Sudan he became critical of British educational policy particularly policy based on the principles of 'indirect rule.' During his visit to the Sudan in 1932 he had noted that '...the romanticists of indirect administration had been busy [and] in 1927 training courses for junior administrative officers were closed down'. '... Indirect administration ... in the Sudan in recent years has been an unmitigated evil. If it means anything, it should mean a stringent limitation of the number of British officials, particularly higher-grade officials...', see Sir James Currie, 'The Educational Experiment in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1900-33', Part II, *Journal of African Affairs*, Vol. 34, No. 134, (Jan.,1935), pp. 41-59, pp. 53, 55. This was preceded by his first paper see Sir James Currie, 'The Educational Experiment in the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, 1900-33', Part I, *Journal of African Affairs*, Vol. 33, No. 133, (Oct.,1934), pp. 361-371. See also, G. A. Sanderson, 'Currie, Sir James, (1868 - 1937)', <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/32672> [accessed, 30/10/ 2018]

⁶⁶ In addition to Currie, the other members of the ACEC sub-committee were: A. G. Church; Miss Philippa Esdaile; F. G. Mann; A. I. Mayhew; W. H. McLean; W. W. Vaughan and H. Vischer, see Ashby, *Universities*, p. 427, n. 8.

⁶⁷ Currie Report, repr. Ashby, *Universities*, pp.. 476-481. Page numbers indicated refer to the Ashby reprint.

qualified male pupils who would benefit from higher education but the provision of tertiary level studies was limited and restricted to Government - supported institutions at Achimota, Gold Coast; Yaba, Nigeria; Makerere, Uganda and Gordon College, Khartoum. Further provision was provided by the college at Fourah Bay, Sierra Leone-a missionary college partly funded by Government grant with historic links with Durham University.⁶⁸ Currie was keen to emphasise the importance of maintaining indigenous culture for the benefit of African society and was suspicious of creating a reliance on London - based educational practices such as external examinations which in their design and purpose were inevitably euro-centric.

In their deliberations the sub-committee emphasised that access to a university education was prohibitive to all but the wealthiest of African students and that:

[Normally, courses] in European Universities are naturally enough designed with no regard whatever to the special needs and social and intellectual background of African students: they are seldom, therefore anything like as helpful to them as they might be. There is something grotesque ... in the fact that an African wishing for higher training in agriculture should have to seek it in an English university situated in, and very often concerned with the agriculture of a non - tropical country. [Further] there is a grave danger, '... of the African's zeal for education being neglected and ignored by the Government to whom they ought to be able to look for its reasonable satisfaction.'⁶⁹

Given this context the sub-committee recommended that the British Government should seek to develop a selected number of African institutions offering higher education following the university college model which had successfully enabled English colleges over time to achieve full and independent university status. This could be developed in partnership with the University of London, an institution with very positive experience of African students. The sub-committee emphasised that such a scheme should be introduced carefully and

⁶⁸ The report pointed out that the Government - supported institutions were not yet working at the level of a 'real university', see, *Ibid.*, p. 477.

⁶⁹ Currie Report, repr., Ashby, *Universities* pp. 477-478.

sensitively in order to ‘clear the native mind of any suspicion that African Universities were a sham merely designed to side-track native ambition’.⁷⁰ Whilst the sub-committee did not wish to ignore the importance of more theoretically based academic studies it believed that the introduction of courses of study in applied subjects such as medicine, engineering and agriculture should have initial priority. They further recommended that staff from British universities should be seconded to provide support and advice to the fledgling African institutions and importantly recommended a system of assessment of final degree examinations involving both local and external examiners.

The sub-committee did not consider the financial details and implications of their proposals, as they perhaps might have done. They did, however, make the political point that:

The present situation is one which cannot continue without danger, and which must be faced at all costs, if years of increasing strain and embarrassment and the growing alienation of enlightened African opinion are to be avoided. We believe that the passion of the African for higher education, properly guided, may prove a boon to the economic, social and cultural development of the country ... neglected it must create social and political confusion.⁷¹

The ACEC discussed Currie’s draft report at its meeting in November 1933 and was fully supportive of its recommendations, as was the CO. When the committee’s report was circulated to all Governors and Directors of Education in East and West Africa there was less enthusiasm from Colonial Governments who were reticent to give their approval for developments in higher education. They considered universities to be more of a future than an immediate concern. The different reactions to the Currie Report in London and in Africa reflected contrasting views on the idea of a university in colonial society. Local colonial officials characteristically favoured an incremental approach with an initial emphasis on

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 479. Currie differed from the views of his committee regarding the use of external assessment procedures as opposed to locally devised forms of examination but finally agreed that an African university should proceed by progressive stages in order to gain full university status, a model that was adopted by the Asquith Commission twelve years later.

⁷¹ Currie Report, repr., Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 480-81.

institutions that would provide sub-degree courses in more relevant technical and applied subjects. The more theoretically orientated degree programmes typically offered by English universities were held to be of less than immediate concern and part of an imagined future provision. It is most likely that differences were financial rather than philosophical,⁷² but in any event it was in 1936 before the consultations with the Colonial Governments were concluded without agreement and little or no progress being made. Whitehead has suggested that the ACEC kept alive plans for higher education in Africa during the following years and pointed to their success in persuading the CO to appoint a Commission of Enquiry under the chairmanship of Lord Asquith in 1943, although it is perhaps more appropriate to see the appointment as part of a wider strategic and political agenda.⁷³ Whilst the ACEC continued to meet during the war there were examples of discontinuity and a lack of communication between different agencies working on colonial educational development; as has been indicated, the Currie Report was largely overlooked.

3.5. The De La Warr Report

Following his appointment as Secretary of State for the Colonies in May 1936 William Ormsby-Gore⁷⁴ appointed a Commission of Enquiry into Higher Education in East Africa later in the year.⁷⁵ The Earl De La Warr was appointed to chair the Commission the main objective of which was to report on the organization and activities of Makerere College, Uganda and its affiliated institutions and to assess capability for the provision of higher

⁷² See, Whitehead, 'The Two-Way Pull', p. 122.

⁷³ Whitehead, 'The Advisory Committee on Education', p. 403.

⁷⁴ Ormsby-Gore was an advocate for higher education throughout the inter-war period. He was first elected to the House of Commons in 1910 and in 1916 joined the Arab Bureau as an intelligence officer only to be recalled by Lord Milner in March 1917 to serve as his parliamentary private secretary. He was a member of the British delegation to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 and the first British member of the Permanent Mandates Commission 1921-22, In 1928, as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies he undertook an extensive tour of Southeast Asia see, *Report on his Visit to Malaya, Ceylon and Java 1928*, Cmd. 3235, (London, 1928). See, K. E. Robinson, 'Gore, William George Arthur Ormsby-Gore- fourth Baron Harlech, (1885-1964)', <<http://www.oxforddnb.com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/printable/35330>> [accessed 10/10/2017]

⁷⁵ See, De La Warr Report.

education in East Africa.⁷⁶ The Commission was also required to consider the regional implications that might follow developments at Makerere and interestingly, to assess the educational needs of women. The De La Warr Commission had a strong collective experience of colonial education and included several members - Philippa Esdaile, W. H. McLean and Hanns Vischer, who as we have seen, served on a previous enquiry into higher education in Africa led by Sir James Currie. The other members were Harold Nicholson, Robert Bernays, Mouat Jones, Alexander Kerr, Z. K. Mathews, and John Murray. The approach taken by the enquiry was consistent with the modernist and progressive views held by De La Warr although one commissioner - John Murray, Principal of University College, Exeter - submitted a brief minority report in which he opposed the Commission's proposal that post-secondary education should be offered by a newly built Higher College and that Makerere College should retain its emphasis on secondary education. Despite the enormous size of East Africa and the social, cultural and ethnic diversity that characterised the constituent territories of Uganda, Kenya and Tanganyika, it is evident from the report that the Commission maintained its principal focus on education. It did so whilst simultaneously emphasising the critical importance of a building a sound economy if an effective system of

⁷⁶ The appointment of Earl De La Warr as chairman of the Commission was an interesting but not an inappropriate decision given the progressive views of his family especially those of his mother, Muriel Brassey. Lord Buckhurst or 'Buck' as he was more informally known throughout his life came from one of England's oldest and wealthiest families. He was the first hereditary peer to represent the Labour Party in the House of Lords and impressed Ramsey MacDonald who brought him into his first administration in 1924 as Lord in Waiting and Government Whip. He was later appointed Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture in MacDonald's National Government of 1931 and also became the chairman of the National Labour Organisation formed after the bitter split with the Labour Party. He held a series of political appointments including parliamentary secretary to the Board of Education 1935-36, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies 1936-37 and Lord Privy Seal 1937-38 - the latter post was arguably the high point of his formal political career. In 1945 he joined the Conservative Party and was appointed Post-Master General 1951-1955. During his long and varied political career he served in Labour, Conservative and National administrations under four Prime Ministers, MacDonald, Baldwin, Chamberlain and Churchill, see, D. Selkirk, 'Sackville, Herbrand Edward Dundonald Brassey ninth Earl De La Warr, (1900-1976)'.
<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/31647> [accessed 01/07/2018]

See also, A. Fairley, *Bucking the Trend: The Life and Times of the Ninth Earl De La Warr*, (Bexhill, 2001); Nigel Nicolson, ed., *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1930 -1939*, (London, 1966).

education was to be created in East Africa.⁷⁷ The relationship between educational and economic development was very much part of De La Warr's thinking and philosophy.⁷⁸

The Commission's report was presented in three main parts. The first considered the background to education in East Africa by assessing the needs of the region, the demand for education and the standard and conditions of employment. This was followed in part two by analysis of educational provision at primary and secondary levels together with a discussion of vocational schools and an expression of support for the education of women and girls. Finally, in part three 'advanced education' was considered with particular reference to the commission's main proposal for a new institution to be known initially as 'The Higher College of East Africa' to be developed on a new site between the Ugandan towns of Mulago and Kololo. The report expected that the Higher College would achieve university college status but did not specify how long this might take.⁷⁹

The Commission identified several precepts underpinning their progressive approach to the enquiry.⁸⁰ First, the value of education for the African people was asserted to be not only 'inevitable', but 'right' as part of the policy of Trusteeship. As the report emphasised, '... if the concept of Trusteeship, if the method of Indirect Rule, are to be anything more than glib evasions of responsibility they must assert that the African shall in due course reach full

⁷⁷ De La Warr Report, p. 6.

⁷⁸ He continued the family's entrepreneurial traditions as Mayor of Bexhill, when he commissioned the building of a new cultural centre which was completed in 1935. Emphasizing the relationship between economic and cultural development it was described by De Warr as a 'new model of cultural provision [which would] lead to the growth, prosperity and greater culture of our town', see, '1935', An Exhibition', De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill, 24 February 2018 to 6 January 2019. The centre subsequently became known as the De La Warr Pavilion; it survives today, an iconic representation of modernist architecture, see, A. Fairley, *De La Warr Pavilion: The Modernist Masterpiece*, (London & New York, 2006).

⁷⁹ The Report did not indicate a clear timetable and used vague phrases to indicate a time when a university might be formed, for example, 'as soon as the name is appropriate', p. 79; '... in a few years ...' p. 80; '...the establishment of a university college in the near future and of a university at no very distant date...' pp. 118-19.

⁸⁰ These were welcomed by a former Director of Education in Uganda and in Nigeria, see E. R. J. Hussey, 'Higher Education in East Africa: Report of the Commission Appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies: A Review', *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 36, No. 145, (Oct. 1937), pp. 3-19.

maturity and take his place among the peoples of the world'.⁸¹ The commissioners recognised the centrality of education in achieving this objective, not through a direct European-British import, but from a model that was adapted to take account of African circumstances. Second, The Commission saw the school as pivotal to the education and wider development of individuals and communities although recognising that it would take time to achieve the necessary political change which would enable African education to be directed and controlled by Africans. Third, the report considered the tension between European and African cultures and its implication for education, stating that:

the African background ... comprises not the native alone and not the European alone, but the interaction between the African theory of traditionalism and the European theory of progress. The infiltration of European culture, whether good or bad, has irretrievably occasioned a new and additional state of mind. These two supplementary and complementary systems are already interlocked; it is no longer possible to sunder their union.⁸²

The report was optimistic that a constructive synthesis of European and African traditions was possible through a planned and measured approach to social change although it was mindful that '... much ... of doubtful value to the African has been, and still is, taught and

⁸¹ De La Warr Report, p. 7. Indirect rule was defined as '... a system by which the tutelary power recognises existing African societies, and assists them to adapt themselves to the functions of local government', see M. Perham, 'Some Problems of Indirect Rule in Africa', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, 8 May 1934; repr., M. Perham, *Colonial Sequence 1930-1949*, (London, 1967), p. 92. The administrative system of indirect rule was originally developed by Lord Lugard during his appointment as High Commissioner for Northern Nigeria and described in his famous work, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*, 5th ed., (London, 1965). Some held the view that Lugard 'had made a lasting virtue out of ... temporary necessity', see Perham, *Colonial Sequence*, p. 92 while others were more critical of the system and its application by Lugard's subordinates particularly the Lieutenant Governor, Charles Temple who favoured passing excessive powers to local rulers see J. E. Flint, 'Frederick Lugard: The Making of an Autocrat (1858-1945)', in L. H. Gann and P. Duigan, eds., *African Proconsuls: European Governors in Africa*, (New York, 1978), pp. 290-312, p.302; see also C. L. Temple, *Native Races and their Rulers: Sketches and Studies of Official Life and Administrative Problems in Nigeria*, (Cape Town, 1918). Lugard later developed stronger interests in international and educational affairs. In 1922 he was the nominated British representative to the League of Nations and in 1924 he joined the International Labour Organisation's Committee of Experts on Native Labour. He became a member of the ACEC in 1923 and developed a close relationship with Dr J. H. Oldham a member of ACEC and active against white settlers in Kenya. This led Lugard to contacts with Labour politicians such as Sidney Webb, see, Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Authority 1898-1945*, pp. 641-702; also, Flint, 'Frederick Lugard', pp. 308-309.

⁸² De La Warr Report, p. 10.

much that would be of great value ... has been, and still is, omitted ...'.⁸³ There was recognition of the importance of education for leadership and development involving: 'the legitimate aspirations of the small but growing group of Africans who by patience and industry are now ready to acquire a high culture ...'.⁸⁴ This requires a system of education that made provision '... for the development of those who have reached and exceeded the standards aimed at by the majority and who will be in the vanguard of the future progress of the whole group. To penalize that small group by forcing it to mark time while the majority is making up leeway would be a reactionary measure'.⁸⁵

The Commission recommended the consolidation of post-secondary school level courses at Makerere initially under the aegis of the new institution 'The Higher College of East Africa' to be organised into several academic departments: Arts, Science, Agriculture, Medicine, Veterinary Science and Engineering. The Department of Arts was recommended as a vehicle for the academic development of African Studies incorporating the study of African languages, law, customs and administration and together with courses in social anthropology and economics with particular reference to Africa. The development of more vocational courses was envisaged for people who had identifiable responsibilities within local administrative contexts and that '... in the course of time it should become usual for such persons to have completed a full course at the Higher College'.⁸⁶ The commissioners also noted that '... the whole system of native government in Africa deserves serious study by educated Africans ...'.⁸⁷ They emphasised the importance of research as a necessary function of the new institution investigating subjects such as indigenous languages, history and

⁸³ Ibid., p. 11

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 12

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 12

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 92

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 92

archaeology and in addition, establishing links with more applied government research stations and centres in other regional territories.

To facilitate teaching and research in these subject areas the report recommended that under its constitution the Higher College should have a Council, an Assembly, and an Academic Board. The Council was to be an executive body comprising approximately seven members with responsibility for the organisation and management of the college. Academic Board, comprising all heads of department and at least two members of junior teaching staff was to be responsible for the curriculum and academic affairs. The Assembly with some thirty members including representatives from African communities and two representatives of Academic Board was to be appointed by the Secretary of State. It was envisaged as a non-executive body which would receive annual reports from the Council and consider broader aspects of policy and governance. The Secretary of State had additional powers of appointment involving the critical roles of principal and members of the Council. De La Warr and his colleagues were ambitious and emphasised that the Principal ‘... should be of the highest calibre, [with] personality, educational zeal, administrative capacity, first class academic attainments and a vocation for work among Africans... salary and conditions should be such as to attract a first-rate man’.⁸⁸ Subsequent developments were disappointing falling short of the Commission’s high expectations. Members of academic staff were to be appointed by the Council following advice from the Principal. It was envisaged that most staff would be permanent appointments but the report had suggested that appointments on the basis of short-term contracts should also be considered.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 83. The results were disappointing and failed to match the aspirations expressed by De La Warr. The appointed Principal, George Turner (1939-46), lacked ambition on the scale recommended and the curriculum offered was narrow and vocational, more practically than theoretically based, see Ashby, *Universities*, p. 200.

⁸⁹ The report also recognised that the process of staff appointments could be facilitated through liaison with ACEC and Sir Ralph Furse, De La Warr Report, p. 83.

While the commissioners saw benefit in cooperation between the Higher College and other more established institutions such as the Kitchener School of Medicine in Khartoum, Achimote and Fourah Bay they did not support a federal approach as ‘... one college and later one university will be better than separate institutions serving restricted areas [of East Africa]’.⁹⁰ They were aware however of the very limited opportunities for higher education in Africa and somewhat inconsistently urged the Higher College to ‘... develop an outlook which embraces not merely Buganda but Uganda, not merely Uganda but East Africa, and not merely East Africa but the wide lands beyond...’.⁹¹ Despite this exhortation the imagined size of the Higher College revealed that the commissioner’s aspirations were more modest as they estimated that ‘... in 10 years- time the college should aim at having not less than 350 to 400 students in residence ...’.⁹²

The imagined institution was a relatively small, college which would aim to achieve university status against the background of a vast territory with limited educational resources to serve a seriously under-educated and highly diverse rural population. The report by the De La Warr Commission was detailed and educationally progressive given the context and period in which it was produced so much so that it has been described in glowing terms as ‘a seminal document’ and compared favourably with Advisory Committee’s White Paper of 1925.⁹³ Such comparisons are difficult to make particularly when the respective reports are separated in time and serve different purposes. The De La Warr Report was comprehensive giving consideration to primary and secondary education in addition to the development of a Higher College; it is a detailed and substantive document based on extensive field work in East Africa comprising one hundred and forty pages. The 1925 report was the outcome of London-based discussions and outlines general principles of educational policy in just eight

⁹⁰ Ibid., pp. 83-4.

⁹¹ Ibid., p. 84.

⁹² Ibid., p. 84.

⁹³ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 197-98.

pages. A more critical note on the De La Warr report was sounded by Nigel Nicholson who while acknowledging that his father, Harold Nicolson, a member of the De La Warr Commission, ‘... had worked extremely hard on mastering the problems of native education and was without doubt the leading intellectual force behind the report [it] ‘presented no new view of British responsibilities’.⁹⁴ Following his experiences with the De La Warr Commission, Nicholson published his ideas on the colonial affairs.⁹⁵

Part of the difficulty for De La Warr was to provide a convincing financial statement to support the recommendations made, a problem that was exacerbated by the complexity of educational problems facing the large and disparate dependencies of Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya and Zanzibar.⁹⁶ The Commission recognised that whilst the total amount of money needed would be large, incremental payments might be a way of mitigating costs. Several provisional and predictable sources of funding were identified, for example, the Imperial Government, the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1929 (CD & W) and the Colonial Governments of East Africa. It was also envisaged that commercial corporations operating in East Africa, philanthropic trust funds and private donors might prove to be additional sources of funding.⁹⁷ There was an expression of hope and optimism that generous benefactors would come forward and support the project and a confidence that:

Africans will be equal to this task we firmly believe and it is on the basis of that belief that our recommendations have been made. Governments can provide facilities for the education of peoples, but it rests with the peoples themselves to make of that education a lifeless and meretricious sham or a vivid and vivifying reality.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ See, Nigel Nicolson, *Diaries and Letters 1930-1939*, p. 291. He also added that ‘the tour left no permanent mark on [his father’s] political outlook, except to confirm his life-long belief that true civilisation existed nowhere outside the inner circles of certain West European capital cities’, *Ibid.*, p. 291.

⁹⁵ Harold Nicolson, ‘The Colonial Problem’, *International Affairs*, Vol. 17, No.1 (Jan.-Feb. 1938), pp 32-50.

⁹⁶ De La Warr’s solution was to exclude a detailed financial statement from the report and to forward an approximation of costs to the Secretary of State for his private information, see De La Warr Report, p. 115.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

3.6. MacDonald: A ‘Seething of Thought’

The appointment of Malcolm MacDonald as Secretary of State for the Colonies in May 1938 created a determined and much needed impetus for a fundamental reappraisal of relationships between Britain and the colonies. He recalled that ‘... even in 1935 he had been convinced that British colonial policy needed substantial revision [and] when he returned to the Colonial Office in 1938, he was resolved to inaugurate a more pro-active response.’⁹⁹ MacDonald explained that:

Our policy had sauntered along as if the world had not altered at all. I felt concerned ... that we were doing very little to aid the economic, social, educational and other related advances of the people for whom we were trustees ... I soon decided that we must make a widespread review and in some cases an overhaul of our whole attitude to the Colonial Empire, to be followed by a practical expansion of our creative activities throughout it.¹⁰⁰

He therefore sought to establish a more dynamic culture within the Colonial Office which would generate new and long overdue initiatives in colonial affairs. At a meeting with his senior officials held on 21 November 1939 MacDonald explained some of the issues and responses to be made and wished to see a “seething of thought” in the African Division of the CO and that even the most junior members of the Administrative Staff of the Division ought to be given an opportunity of thinking in terms of policy and of putting forward their suggestions.¹⁰¹ MacDonald’s exuberance as Secretary of State at the Colonial Office was remembered by Sir Christopher Cox who was appointed as educational advisor in January 1940.¹⁰² In a letter of tribute written after MacDonald’s death in 1981 Cox recalled how

⁹⁹ Stephen Constantine, *The Making of British Colonial Development Policy 1914-1940* (London, 1984), p. 234. See also, David J. Morgan, *The Official History of Colonial Development, Vol. I, The Origins of British AID Policy 1924-1945* (London, 1989), p. 15.

¹⁰⁰ C. Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald: Bringing an End to Empire*, (Liverpool, 1995), p. 145.

¹⁰¹ CO 847/17/11, Minute by F. J. Pedler, 23 November 1939; See also, R. D. Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-1948*, (London, 1982) p. 46.

¹⁰² Cox (1899-1983) began his career as a fellow and lecturer in ancient history at New College, Oxford. In 1937 he accepted a position as Director of Education and Principal of Gordon College (later the University of Khartoum). His period of office in the Sudan coincided with the visit to East Africa of the Commission of

MacDonald, some forty years earlier, had circulated a letter to his officials in Whitehall stating that he wanted ‘... a seething of ideas... he changed my whole life ... he was in a sense the framework of my own life ...’¹⁰³ During the final meeting of ACEC in 1961 Cox recalled the early work of the committee and drew attention to ‘... the seething ferment of the war years, when CD & W policy required the seal of United Kingdom professional approval on overseas planning and the Committee’s interest in higher education [which] led to the setting up of the Asquith and Elliot Commissions ...’.¹⁰⁴

To progress policy developments MacDonald convened a meeting of senior Colonial Office officials and recognised experts at the Carlton Hotel in Central London 6 October 1939.¹⁰⁵ Introducing the meeting MacDonald outlined three key issues for discussion. First, he identified the relationship between Native Authorities and Legislative Councils including related tensions between European immigrant communities and native populations. Second, was the development by government of technical and social services and the need for significant increases in the training of Africans for local services. Third, was the crucial area involving the reform of land tenure. Finally, he referred to ‘the need for thinking out some

enquiry into higher education led by Earl De La Warr and Cox was able to assist the Commission with its enquiries. Following his return to England in 1939 he was appointed educational adviser to the Colonial Office, an advisory position he was to hold until his retirement in 1970. He travelled extensively in the colonial empire developing extensive personal networks but was not an administrator in the conventional sense, indeed he was quite eccentric, tendencies which were generally tolerated at the time. A short paper, Sir C. Cox, ‘The Impact of British Education on the Indigenous Peoples of Overseas Territories’, *The Advancement of Science*, Vol. 50, (Sept, 1956), pp. 125-136, was one of the few written policy statements he produced beyond CO memoranda, notes, letters etc. Following the award of a supernumerary fellowship in 1946 he maintained residential accommodation at New College, Oxford until his death. He was knighted in 1950. For further details see, C. Whitehouse, Sir Christopher Cox: An Imperial Patrician of a Different Kind’, *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (Jan. 1989), pp. 28-42; CO 1045, Cox, papers as educational adviser to the Colonial Office (1940-1961).

¹⁰³ MacDonald Papers, file 91/2, letter from Sir Christopher Cox, Jan 1981, and cited by Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald*, p. 150; see also Stockwell, ‘The Crucible of the Malayan Nation’, p. 1152. Although the sentiment of MacDonald’s injunction for action is clear, what he actually said is less so. The term reported by Sir Frederick Pedler was “a seething of thought” and is most reliable since his minute is dated 23 November 1939, two days after MacDonald’s meeting.

¹⁰⁴ CO 987/8, Minutes of the 242nd and final meeting of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies, 8 June 1961; see also Whitehead, ‘The Advisory Committee on Education’, p. 408.

¹⁰⁵ CO 847/17/11, Future Policy in Africa, Carlton Hotel discussion. Those in attendance included: Lord Lugard, Lord Hailey, Professor Reginald Coupland, Professor Keith Hancock, Dr Julian Huxley and Miss Margery Perham. Colonial Office officials included Sir Cosmo Parkinson, Sir John Shuckburgh, Sir Henry Moore, Mr A. J. Dawe and Mr F. J. Pedler.

constructive settlement of the Colonial question if the peace which will be made after the war is to have a prospect of being permanent'.¹⁰⁶ Throughout the discussion there was a sense of forward-thinking, of anticipation of the colonial challenges of the post-war era. There was little discussion of education policy but the Carlton Hotel meeting was to lead to another extensive African journey by Lord Hailey in 1940 which included visits to West and East African territories.¹⁰⁷

One of MacDonald's first measures on taking office was to respond to the immediate problem of unrest in the West Indies and he appointed a Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Lord Moyne¹⁰⁸ to report on the situation. Moyne conducted a thorough enquiry and reported to the Secretary of State as requested in December 1939. The Commission's Report provided such disturbing accounts of conditions in the West Indies that MacDonald consulted the War Cabinet in January 1940 regarding its publication. He

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., Carlton Hotel discussion.

¹⁰⁷ Lord Hailey, *Native Administration and Political Development in British Tropical Africa*, (London, 1944). This was a confidential document prepared for Colonial Officials although it was not a statement of Government policy. Hailey acknowledges his debt to Mr. F. J. Pedler for his assistance in Africa and in the preparation of the report. For the details of its publication see, Porter and Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy*, p. 77. Hailey was a major figure who secured his reputation through his epic work *African Survey* 1938. He was instrumental in the establishment of the post, Education Advisor to the Secretary of State, see, CO 885/41, Minutes of the ninety-fourth meeting of ACEC 18 May 1939, and highly influential in colonial policy planning in the early 1940s, see Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa*, pp. 42-69. It was observed that: 'As Colonial Office committees were set up ... it was the accepted thing for Lord Hailey to be chairman ...', Sir Cosmo Parkinson, *The Colonial Office from Within*, p.122. For example, Hailey chaired the Colonial Research Committee 1943-48.

¹⁰⁸ Walter Edward Guinness, first Baron Moyne (1880-1944) was the third son of the brewer and philanthropist Edward Cecil Guinness. Walter Guinness was elected to the House of Commons as Conservative member for Bury St Edmunds 1907-1931. He was appointed financial secretary to the Treasury in 1923 and 1924-25 under Churchill who was Chancellor of the Exchequer. He became friendly with Churchill and a close relationship developed. In 1925 he was appointed Minister of Agriculture before retiring in 1929 following the Conservative defeat in the general election. He became Baron Moyne of Bury St Edmunds in 1932 and subsequently held several public offices, for example, chairman of the West Indian Royal Commission 1938-39. He travelled extensively to pursue his interests in biology and anthropology in his so-called yacht, *Rosaura*, a converted passenger ferry boat that he had purchased. In August 1942 he was appointed Minister of State in Cairo and in January 1944 Minister Resident in the Middle East. He was accused of being anti-Semitic and targeted by radical Zionist groups. He was assassinated 6 November 1944 by two members of the Fighters for Israel's Freedom, previously the Stern Gang, see Marc Brodie, 'Guinness, Walter Edward, First Baron Moyne, (1880-1944)', <<https://doi.org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/33605>> [accessed 23/07/2019]

circulated extracts from the Report and following discussion the Government decided extraordinarily against publishing the full text of the Commission's Report.¹⁰⁹

Following this MacDonald turned his attention to the question of financial support for colonial development under the CD & W Act of 1929. This legislation had provided funding for development schemes and represented 'the first statutory recognition by the British Government of its responsibility for the development of dependent territories on a continuing basis', whereas previously financial support was more tenuous through 'grants in aid' arrangements.¹¹⁰ The terms of the legislation limited claims to agricultural and industrial developments; claims in support of technical education linked to industrial schemes were admissible, but claims for general educational and public health projects were excluded.¹¹¹ The sums of money which had been made available under the CD & W Act were regarded by MacDonald as insufficient, for example, during the period from 1929 to 1940, the total amount available was £8.8 million with actual expenditure limited to £6.5 million.¹¹²

Apart from a general under-funding and a specific lack of financial support for educational development, the function of the Act, particularly the attempt to alleviate unemployment problems in Britain, attracted further criticism.¹¹³ Its main purpose appeared to be less about creating significant financial aid for colonial development and more about

¹⁰⁹ Only the recommendations of the report were published, see, Colonial Office, *Recommendations of the Royal Commission on the West Indies*, Cmd. 6174, (London, February 1940). At the same time MacDonald arranged for the publication of a policy statement see, Colonial Office, *Statement of Policy on Colonial Development and Welfare*, Cmd. 6175, (London, February 1940). In his letter to Moyne explaining the delay in publication MacDonald emphasised that: 'Since it is not intended to delay in any way action on your Report, it would be of great value to publish a statement of the Recommendations of the Royal Commission, which could serve as a guide to those interested in the affairs of the West Indies until such time as circumstances will permit of the publication of the full Report see, *West India Royal Commission Recommendations*, p. 5. The full report was finally published at the end of the war see, *West India Royal Commission Report 1938-39*, Cmd. 6607, (London, 1945). [Moyne Report]

¹¹⁰ CD & W Acts 1929-70: A Brief Review, Cmd. 4677, (London, 1971), p. 6. Proposals were considered by the Colonial Development Advisory Committee, see, Colonial Office, *First Interim Report of the Colonial Development Advisory Committee covering the period August 1929-February 1930*, Cmd. 3540, (London, 1930).

¹¹¹ Morgan, *The Origins of British AID Policy*, p. 45.

¹¹² CD & W Acts Cmd. 4677, p. 6.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 45-46.

enabling benefits to accrue to the British economy through a relatively low-cost scheme. As Lord Passfield (formerly Sidney Webb), Secretary of State for the Colonies explained to the House of Commons on 23 July 1929:

The object of this measure is, by supplying a little money ... to accelerate, as far as possible, the development of the Crown Colonies, Protectorates and Dependencies, distinctly with a view ... among other objects ... of causing an increase in our export trade in a way which we think to be legitimate and economically justified.¹¹⁴

In practice accessing grants from the CD & W was difficult largely because loan approval was subject to conditions which proved to be more constraining than enabling.¹¹⁵ Fundamental social and economic problems consequently remained unresolved and as we have seen there were serious levels of unemployment and poverty with disturbances and riots in the West Indies.¹¹⁶ Between 1935 and 1939 the question of transfer of colonial mandates to Germany particularly involving Tanganyika added a further level of complexity to parliamentary and public debate. In December 1938 MacDonald, far from refuting any suggestion of transfer, could only attempt to reassure the House of Commons that its views and those of the colonies concerned would be sought prior to any final decision being agreed.¹¹⁷

Against this background a departmental committee was established by the CO in June 1938 to consider enlarging not only the scope of provision by including social and educational services but also increasing the level of funding to be made available. Several influences contributed to a change of emphasis. First riots in the West Indies had emphasised the failure of existing policies to provide an effective basis on which to address underlying

¹¹⁴ See, CD & W Acts, Cmd. 4677, p. 4.

¹¹⁵ See, Constantine, *British Colonial Development Policy*, p. 221.

¹¹⁶ See, Morgan, *The Origins of British AID Policy*, pp. 23-27; Porter and Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy and Decolonization*, Vol.1, pp 12-17; Havinden and Meredith, *Colonisation and Development*, pp. 187-205.

¹¹⁷ *HC. Deb.*, Vol. 342, cols 1241-3, 7 Dec. 1938, cited by Morgan, *The Origins of British AID Policy*, p. 21. For a discussion of the Colonial Question, see *Ibid.*, pp.14-21.

socio- economic problems and prevent disaffection and violence. Second Hailey had completed his extensive and influential survey of Africa which emphasised the importance of immediate social reform and called for planned and continuing programmes of research.¹¹⁸ A final and significant point was the perception of a need to respond positively to international criticism of Britain's governance of its 'slum Empire', a charge which it was feared might lead to the sequestration of Britain's colonies in an uncertain post-war period.¹¹⁹

In order to gain support for his financial reforms MacDonald put forward his case on two main areas. Politically, 'it was an essential part of [Britain's] defence policy that her reputation as a colonial power should be unassailable'; morally, 'there was our responsibility as trustees for peoples of the Colonial Empire'.¹²⁰ In a memorandum to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Simon, MacDonald outlined a basis on which to defend Britain's reputation as a responsive colonial power by suggesting '... an announcement that despite the burdens that are put upon us by the necessity of fighting the war, we are going as far as conditions permit to find some additional money for promoting the welfare of the millions of peoples in the Colonial Empire for whom we are the trustees.'¹²¹ There was a need for:

a policy of constructive trusteeship ... as a method of removing legitimate grievances in the colonies, re-stabilising the empire and defusing criticism of British colonial rule. The emphasis on colonial development and *welfare* was ... a defensive operation to provide a new justification which would legitimise the perpetuation of colonial rule. This was the essence of the arguments advanced by MacDonald [and] they proved irresistible.¹²²

¹¹⁸ Lord Hailey, *An African Survey*.

¹¹⁹ Havinden and Meredith, *Colonialism and Development*, p. 201-02. There was a feeling within the Colonial Office that Britain was not fulfilling the standards of good colonial government and hence was vulnerable to criticism from the international community, see Constantine, *British Colonial Development Policy*, pp. 231-32. This was substantiated by the Moyne Report, see above.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

¹²¹ CO 859/19/7475; Havinden and Meredith, *Colonialism and Development*, p. 203; Constantine, *British Colonial Development Policy*, p. 251.

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 259.

The CD & W Act received the support of all the political parties and gained the approval of the House of Commons in July 1940.¹²³ It provided for an allocation of £5.5 million a year for ten years a sum which, following advice from Lord Hailey, included £500,000 for research purposes.¹²⁴ The terms of the Act were broadened to apply to ‘any purpose likely to promote the development of the resources of any colony or the welfare of its people’; all reference to British economic benefit was withdrawn and relief was extended ‘to colonial territories in respect of miscellaneous loans and for advances under the Act of 1929 to be wholly or partly remitted’.¹²⁵ It was emphasised that the onset of the Second World War had curtailed any meaningful application of the new legislation and over the next two years only £860,000 was spent. By 1945 however financial commitments including future expenditure had increased to over £23 million and over £400,000 for research.¹²⁶

3.7. Conclusion

During the inter-war years British discourse on higher education in colonial societies was mainly conducted by the Colonial Office through the agency of its Advisory Committee. The discussions were generally recognised to be constructive and the membership was impressive comprising leading figures drawn from the field of colonial policy and governance. The committee’s deliberations have been criticised for often failing to lead to more tangible outcomes of educational reform although inaction was not wholly a product of inertia in London. At times there was a lack of commitment on the part of Colonial Governments, for example, their slow, almost negligent response to the Currie Report which was later described as ‘a symptom of the indifference of white administrators on the spot’.¹²⁷ The

¹²³ MacDonald regarded the CD & W Act as his most important achievement as Secretary of State, Sanger, *Malcolm MacDonald*, p. 158.

¹²⁴ See, CD & W Acts, Cmd. 4677, pp. 7-8. It was emphasised that financial support was not limited to ten years and that the question of development and welfare would be reviewed before the end of this period. A new Act came into force in 1945 with funding increased to £120 million for 10 years 1946-56 with £1 million available in any one year for research.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 8. see Constantine, *British Colonial Development Policy*, p. 258.

¹²⁷ Eric Ashby, *African Universities & Western Tradition*, p. 17.

ambitious policies of the De La Warr Commission were positively received by the ACEC and the CO but were ultimately defeated by the onset of the Second World War and a lack of commitment to the commissioners' ambition by Makerere's newly appointed Principal, George Turner who favoured the development of vocational and practical rather than more theoretical courses of study.¹²⁸

From an advisory perspective the remit of the ACEC was overwhelming particularly after its re-constitution in 1929 when its brief was extended to include not just the African Dependencies but those throughout the Empire. At the time and following the allocation of mandates by the League of Nations the responsibilities of the CO had increased to 'territories which ... cover an area of about two million square miles – nearly twice the size of British India – and contain a population of nearly fifty million – nearly twice the total population of the oversea Dominions ...'.¹²⁹ In these circumstances it is difficult to envisage the non-executive committee with limited financial support being other than a forum for liberal debate, a source of well – meaning but often ineffectual commentary. A critical factor and influence on progress made rested with the ambition and energy of the Secretary of State and in the development of effective relationships with officials in Whitehall and with Colonial Governors and their officials in the Dependencies.

Although in office for a relatively short period of time MacDonald was a Secretary of State who, utilising parliamentary experience gained during the 1930s and working closely with supportive CO officials, managed to create the necessary impetus to progress legislation leading to the CD & W Act of 1940.¹³⁰ While this did not produce significant financial benefit to the colonies in the short term it was important 'because it made possible and indeed

¹²⁸ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 200.

¹²⁹ Fisher Report, p.5.

¹³⁰ Another progressive Secretary of State was Oliver Stanley whose work in higher education is discussed in the following chapter.

vital the preparation of a real policy'.¹³¹ According to Lord Hailey it signalled a new era in the development of colonial policy whilst Sir Charles Jefferies saw a need for a 'revolution in official methods of thought and approach, there was a general recognition that the inter-war era of *laissez-faire* was over'.¹³² It should not be overlooked that beyond the purview of potential developments in post-war planning, the CD & W Act served other purposes, for example, it had considerable propaganda value for Britain as its enactment coincided with a particularly bleak stage in the European theatre of the Second World War.¹³³ At the same time it has been argued that the end of the 1930s was characterised by a sense of British failure in the exercise of colonial governance and administration and it was 'this feeling of failure which was the real legacy of the "colonial question" in the 1930s and which provided the context in which wartime aspirations for post-war colonial reconstruction and rehabilitation were made'.¹³⁴ British imperial fortunes were to encounter a further and devastating blow with the fall of Singapore in 1942 which, it was argued, would require the development of '... a new ... and more intimate and generous relationship with its peoples'.¹³⁵ The changing political order signalling the end of the 'drift' of the inter-war years was to prove critical in the development of colonial higher education. Analysis of a more decisive period of educational planning including an account of the McLean Commission of Enquiry is considered in the following chapter.

¹³¹ See Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa*, p. 20.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹³³ The Act was seen 'as an outstanding illustration of the true nature of British Imperialism that, at a supreme crisis in the fortunes of the Mother Country, its legislators acknowledge without question the continuing duty to contribute from our own substance to the needs of the peoples whose interests we hold in trust. The contrast between that of trusteeship and the evil doctrine of *Lebensraum* (policy for national existence adopted by Nazi Germany) could not be more glaring', *The Times* 22 May 1940; cited, by Constantine, *British Colonial Development Policy*, p. 260.

¹³⁴ Havinden and Meredith, *Colonisation and Development*, p. 205.

¹³⁵ Margery Perham, *The Times* 14 March 1942; cited by Pearce, *The Turning Point in Africa*, p. 23.

Chapter 4 Towards the University of Malaya

4.1. Introduction

During the 1940s British policy makers in Whitehall gave considerable attention to the development of higher education in the colonial dependencies. It was a period of intensity and change, quite distinct from the complacency and laissez faire of the inter-war years. It must not be forgotten that this was also a time of world conflict and the chapter will argue that while officialdom desired a more strategic and coherent approach to policy making rational objectives could not always be fulfilled as:

British imperial policy distilled in the crucible of war and peace was an alchemy of self-interest and altruism, the rhetoric and pragmatism of politicians and the drive and drift of civil servants, novel ideas and ingrained attitudes, metropolitan initiatives and peripheral reactions, a desire for uniformity balanced by a respect for colonial variety.¹

The chapter considers various influences and events which are best seen as an unstructured prelude rather than a series of clear steps towards the development of the University of Malaya on the grounds that rarely are there ‘... few natural staging-points’.² The discussion begins with an assessment of the report produced by the McLean Commission on Higher Education in Malaya which had been appointed in 1938 by Malcolm MacDonald as Secretary of State for the Colonies.³ Reactions to the report are considered from different sources, for example, the ACEC and from Sir Shenton Thomas, the Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for Singapore who, true to character, insisted on taking approved leave in London during the summer of 1940. The chapter progresses to an appraisal of plans that were formulated for the development of colonial universities, a productive period that benefited from the political momentum generated by the Secretary of State for the Colonies

¹ Porter and Stockwell, *British Imperial Policy*, p.74.

² *Ibid.*, p. 74.

³ Mclean Report.

Oliver Stanley⁴ and from memoranda and reports on higher education in the dependent territories written by Professor H. J. Channon.⁵ The Channon papers were favourably received by the CO and ACEC and were influential in the appointment of several commissions of enquiry into higher education.⁶ The Commission on University Education in Malaya chaired by Carr-Saunders was later appointed in March 1947 by Creech Jones and reported in 1948.⁷ The available evidence suggests that the extent to which the Malayan initiative was influenced by the work of earlier commissions is questionable.

4.2. The Maclean Commission

In June 1938 Malcolm MacDonald the Secretary of State for the Colonies⁸ appointed a Commission to enquire into higher education in Malaya.⁹ This was not the first enquiry into higher education in the colonies to be conducted under the aegis of the Imperial Government but it was the first to assess the conditions for the development of higher education in British Malaya.¹⁰ The chair of the Commission was Dr K. W. M. Pickthorn¹¹ with just two other

⁴ Oliver Stanley (1896-1950) was educated at Eton and commanded a battery in the Royal Field Artillery during the last three years of the First World War. His political career began in earnest when he was elected Conservative MP for Westmoreland in 1924, a seat he held until 1945. During the years 1924-29 he was parliamentary private secretary to the President of the Board of Trade. He was progressive and associated with a group of liberal conservatives including Robert Boothby, Walter Elliot and Harold Macmillan. His political career was uneven and rather than serve in Churchill's war-time government he returned to the army where he contributed to the planning of military operations in North Africa and Europe. Although a critic of the Churchill administration he was appointed Secretary of State for the Colonies in November 1942 and remained in office until July 1945; see Andrew Whitfield, 'Stanley, Oliver, Frederick, George, (1896-1950)', <http://www.oxforddnb.com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/printable36249> [accessed 10/10/2017]

⁵ See, Channon Memorandum; Channon Report, 1943.

⁶ That is, the Asquith, Elliot, and Irvine Commissions all of whom reported in 1945.

⁷ Creech Jones who had been a member of the Elliot Commission in West Africa, Secretary of State, 7 October 1946 to 2 March 1950.

⁸ During the period May 1938 to July 1945 there were five different holders of the office of Secretary of State for the Colonies with three appointees, Lord Lloyd, Lord Moyne and Viscount Cranborne serving for periods of twelve months or less.⁸ The other two Secretaries, Malcolm MacDonald and Oliver Stanley, occupied the Colonial Office for longer although MacDonald's service was not continuous and comprised two separate terms of office. His first appointment was very short, from 7 June 1935 to 22 November 1935; this was followed by a second appointment of two years from 16 May 1938 to 12 May 1940. On both occasions MacDonald served as a member of the Labour/Nationalist Coalition Government whereas Stanley served for three years as a member of the Conservative Coalition Government.

⁹ McLean Report.

¹⁰ There were earlier enquiries and discussions conducted by the Colonial Government, see Firmstone Report. For more general provision and development of educational policies, see, Doraisamy, *One Hundred and Fifty*

members - Sir William McLean¹² and Professor H. J. Channon.¹³ Their terms of reference instructed them: 'to survey existing arrangements for higher education, general and professional, in Malaya; and to consider in the light of local needs and conditions whether they require extension and, if so, in what directions and by what methods [and to] 'report on the present work of Raffles College and on any additional developments that may seem desirable'.¹⁴ The Commission's main task was to consider the development of higher education in Malaya with specific reference to two tertiary level institutions in Singapore, the King Edward VII College of Medicine and Raffles College which had been founded in Singapore in 1905 and in 1928 respectively. A small commission was considered sufficient for the enquiry planned and just three appointments were originally made. The chairman,

Years of Education in Singapore, pp 33-44; Loh, *Seeds of Separatism*, pp. 71-121; Wilson, *Social Engineering in Singapore*, pp. 29-84.

¹¹ Pickthorn had a long association with Cambridge University. He was appointed a Fellow of Corpus Christi College in 1914 and served as Dean from 1919 to 1927. He was a tutor from 1927 to 1935 and President of the College, from 1937 to 1944. He entered the House of Commons as conservative member for Cambridge University in 1935 and successfully held his seat in the 1945 general election. He continued as MP for Cambridge University until 1950 when the constituency (and also Oxford University) was abolished. See n. 15 below for a further note on Pickthorn.

¹² Sir William McLean (1877-1967) graduated from Glasgow University as a civil engineer and was appointed to the Sudan Civil Service He worked with Lord Kitchener in Khartoum and was later posted to the Egyptian Civil Service as Engineer in Chief to the Ministry of Interior where he was responsible for various services such as drainage, electric lighting and water supply. In 1926 he retired from service in Egypt and returned to Glasgow to take up studies in technical and economic research at the University and in 1929 successfully completed his PhD. From 1931-35 he was conservative member of Parliament for the Tradeston division of Glasgow. He was an established member of the ACEC, a member of the Currie Committee 1933 and the De La Warr Commission to East Africa 1937. He was particularly concerned to develop and make available accurate information about British Colonial Policy and produced a series of file papers on a variety of subjects, largely for the use of members of the House of Commons and House of Lords, e.g., Recognition of Institutions of Higher Education in the Colonies; Adult Education in Malaya; Cooperation of British Universities with Institutions of Higher Education in the Colonies, see, CO 859/1/1-859/181/5. He chaired the Commission on Higher Education in Malaya 1939.

¹³ Professor H. J. Channon held the Johnston Chair of Biochemistry at the University of Liverpool, from 1930 until 1943. He worked closely with the Secretary of State, Oliver Stanley from February 1943, before moving to industry and an appointment as Research Director with Unilever Ltd. in 1945, see 'Johnston Chair of Biochemistry at Liverpool: Retirement of Professor H. J. Channon', *Nature*, Vol. 152, No. 71, (July 1943), See also, Ashby, *Universities*, p. 208; Sidney Jones Library Special Collections and Archives, University of Liverpool, (SJLSCA), D255/10/1/23.

¹⁴ McLean Report, p. v.

however, was forced to withdraw 'owing to the difficult political situation at the time [he] most unfortunately found it impossible to complete the journey to Malaya'.¹⁵

McLean and Channon arrived in Singapore 7 October 1938 where they stayed for eight days. They then travelled to the west and north of the Peninsula to visit the towns of Ipoh (six days), Taiping (two days), Penang (seven days) and Alor Star (one day). On their return journey the commissioners spent nine days in Kuala Lumpur and a day in Malacca before arriving back in Singapore on 15 November.¹⁶ They spent a further two weeks in Singapore before leaving for the return journey to London on 2 December. Given their terms of reference the commissioners felt 'it was clearly necessary that [they] should consider the educational system as a whole' and consequently they familiarised themselves with work in a range of secondary, primary and vernacular schools as well as holding discussions with instructors in vocational/technical institutions and with senior officials in the Colonial Government's Education Department. In this way they sought to gain 'as comprehensive a view as possible of the school system on which the development of any university must depend'.¹⁷

The commissioner's specific attention was formally directed towards the work of the two existing tertiary colleges in Singapore, Raffles College and the College of Medicine, the potential precursor institutions of a University of Malaya. They were impressed with the considerable progress and developments made by the latter college since its opening in 1905.

¹⁵ McLean Report p. ii. For further details see British Library, R/20/B/1517. Pickthorn travelled to Malaya on the P & O liner SS Ranpura and on reaching Aden he received a telegram from the Secretary of State which read: 'In view of most recent political developments, I cannot properly ask you to continue on your present mission if you feel as I do that, parliamentary duties have a prior call on Member's services in the present national emergency. Nevertheless, I attach importance to the Malayan investigation on which you and your colleagues have embarked and if you decide to return, I should desire McLean and Channon should not interrupt their task but continue the voyage to Singapore with purpose [sic] of carrying out investigation as completely as possible on the lines hitherto contemplated', Ibid. Pickthorn decided to terminate his journey to Malaya and returned to London. McLean and Channon continued their journey to Singapore to conduct their enquiry as planned with Mclean as chairman, see, McLean Report, p. ii.

¹⁶ For the map showing the towns visited see this thesis p. xiii.

¹⁷ McLean Report, p. vi. The commissioners were unable to visit the SITC at Tanjong Malim which was closed during Ramadan. Discussions were held, however, with the Director and staff of the college in Kuala Lumpur.

It was an established institution offering a Diploma that had been recognised by the General Medical Council of Great Britain since 1916 and new courses had been developed in accordance with the Council's standards and requirements. Importantly the medical diploma was not simply a local qualification but one that was recognised throughout all the countries of the Empire. The commissioners reported '... that the teaching facilities are in many respects not inferior to those of medical schools at home' [whilst] on the clinical side the student has great advantages over the student in England in that a much greater amount of clinical material is available...'. Overall, they concluded that 'the opportunities available to the student of medicine in Singapore are admirable'.¹⁸

They were less impressed with Raffles College and during the course of their enquiries became increasingly concerned with academic standards and its capacity to offer courses of study at an appropriately advanced level. The commissioners were also concerned about arrangements for governance and administration at the college. In terms of governance the College was controlled by its Council which comprised fifteen members, eight of whom were official members as defined in the Raffles College Ordinance of 1928. This body was responsible for all matters of general policy and finance and was chaired by the President of the College. The other main body was the Senate which, consistent with university practice in the United Kingdom, was responsible for academic affairs. The Senate reported to the Council and its membership was drawn from the College professoriate but as the College lacked a post of Principal or a full time equivalent to provide academic leadership the President chaired both the Council and the Senate and was the only link between the two bodies as the Senate was not formally represented on the Council. There was a further conflation of roles and a conflict of interest given that from its opening in 1928 until 1935, the responsibilities of both President and Principal of the College had been undertaken by the

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 74.

same person, i.e., the Director of Education of the Straits Settlements which was a full-time executive position in itself.¹⁹ This made for poor governance and ineffectual academic leadership. The commissioners also noted that there had been a lack of stability and continuity in the development of academic policy largely as a consequence of constant changes in the Presidency-there had been seven different post-holders during the decade from 1928 to 1938 and as they pointed out this ‘...has greatly impeded ... the progress of the college’.²⁰

In addition to concerns about governance, the commissioners were critical of the academic standards achieved by the two main courses, the Diploma of Arts and the Diploma of Science. A major problem was the ‘wastage rate’, that is the high proportion of students who failed to gain an award by the end of their course of study. Of 360 students who had completed their courses and left the college, the commissioners found that only 190 students had been successful in gaining the final award of Diploma. Of the remaining students, 146 had left the college before completing the course while 24 other students had failed their diploma examination. There were 135 students who withdrew before reaching their third year of study, 75 cases were due to failure in Part I or II examinations, 26 other students left for a variety of reasons including health or migration and 34 students left for ‘private’ reasons. Reviewing eleven student intakes since the college opened in 1928 the commissioners found that only 53% of the students who completed their course of study were successful in gaining the diploma; put another way, 47% of students entering the college failed to achieve the award of diploma. According to the commissioners the failure rate was due to students being ‘insufficiently prepared for the courses on which they were embarked’ and only ‘... in a small

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 27. This practice began with Dr. R. O. Winstedt who was appointed as the first Principal of Raffles College in 1921 during its planning phase. At the time he was also Assistant Director of Education with responsibility for Malay Schools in the SS and FMS and later became Director of Education, 1924-1931, see Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 137. Winstedt’s details are given above in chapter 2, n. 105.

²⁰ Mclean Report, p. 27.

proportion of cases does the fault appear to lie with the student himself ...'.²¹ The problem was systemic rather than attributable to individual student ability and they concluded that '... no university, in the sense we understand it, can arise unless this high wastage rate is substantially reduced'.²²

The commissioners also expressed concerns regarding the limited range and level of subjects offered at Raffles College i.e., English, Geography, History, Economics and Education in the Faculty of Arts and Chemistry, Physics and Mathematics in the Faculty of Science. They concluded that the curriculum was unduly narrow and incompatible with the requirements of institutions seeking university status and observed that whilst:

There is no doubt in our opinion that the College has made progress since its inception; equally there is no doubt that this progress must proceed further before the College can fulfil the ideas of its founders that it should become the nucleus of a university. Clearly at the present time neither the standard of achievement of its students, nor its contributions to knowledge, fulfil the conditions which we have laid down.²³

There were in addition specific concerns with the difficulties involved in the teaching of English particularly as a subject which formed part of the London University B A degree course and carried a requirement to pass an examination in Latin. The commissioners were not unsympathetic and recommended that whilst English as a subject should continue to be taught, it should do so without the mandatory study of Latin because 'we feel that an Eastern university must supply Eastern needs [and] we regard Latin as an undesirable subject for the

²¹ Ibid., p. 36

²² Ibid., p. 36. The College of Medicine also had a high failure rate with an average of 44% for the years 1930-32, see Ibid., p. 80. The commissioners were less concerned with this however given the College's proven medical status and levels of research over a period of some thirty years.

²³ The conditions identified by the commissioners were as follows. First, subject levels must be sufficiently high to justify a degree award, Second, through research by staff and post-graduate students the institution must extend fields of knowledge, Ibid, p. 88.

students of Malaya'.²⁴ They proposed that alternative language courses in Malay and Chinese should be made available.

On the basis of their enquiries and discussions held with educationalists and government officials in Singapore and elsewhere during their tour of Peninsula the commissioners concluded that whilst Raffles College and the College of Medicine had reached different stages in their development there was the basis for cooperation and they could be amalgamated to form a university college in the first instance. The development of an independent university could be achieved provided certain steps were taken. As the commissioners explained:

an essential step in the formation of a university must be a preliminary period in which the two colleges become constituent parts of a University College. During this period of transition many things will need to be done; the building up of a suitable constitution and the creation of a smooth working administrative machine; the extension of work of the two Colleges; the raising of the standard of achievement of the students; the recognition of the necessity of placing greater emphasis on research; and ... the creation of a university atmosphere and all that this entails. We believe that the achievement of these aims is essential before a university should be created and that the establishment of a University College will be the most successful method for facilitating their achievement.²⁵

This evolutionary approach was not specifically designed for application in a colonial context - it was common practice in England where similar strategies had been followed. Indeed, in making their recommendations, the commissioners drew on the example of the formation of the University of Liverpool, an institution which had finally achieved its independence and autonomy to award its own degrees in 1903 following the establishment of its precursor institutions, the Liverpool Royal Institution School of Medicine and Surgery in 1834 and the

²⁴ Ibid., p. 32.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 90. The commissioners recommended that the new institution should be known as University College of Malaya, King Edward VII College of Medicine and University College of Malaya, Raffles College, an unexciting choice hardly reflecting the beginning of an institution working towards a common and integrated identity. The imposition of a lengthy title however was not new. When it opened in 1905, the Medical School was named, "The Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States Government Medical School", a title which was retained until 1912 when it was changed to the King Edward VII College of Medicine.

University College of Liverpool in 1881.²⁶ This recommendation was strongly linked to the appointment of a Principal with overall responsibility for the leadership and management of both constituent colleges.²⁷ The commissioners did not underestimate the difficulties in making this important appointment as they believed it ‘requires a man of wide knowledge of university administration and if possible of special experience of the growth of University Colleges ... he must possess broad vision and also great ability to deal with the particular difficulties which human relationships in the Tropics from time to time present...’. The commissioners were adamant that ‘neither of the present Principals of the two Colleges is suited to become the new Principal’.²⁸ They also emphasised that an appointment should take place before the new college was established to allow the Principal-designate sufficient time to carry out a detailed study of Malaya and its institutions before assuming office.²⁹

²⁶ This provided a convenient example as Professor Channon was extant Professor of Chemistry at Liverpool. There were however other examples. The University of Swansea was designated a university college in 1920 before gaining full university status in 1949, the same year as the foundation of the University of Malaya and the universities of Exeter, Hull, Leicester, Nottingham, and Southampton had all been university colleges, see, Committee on Higher Education, *Higher Education: A Report*, Cmd. 2154, (London,1963). [Robbins Report] Similar proposals had been made more recently in the Empire, for example, the De La Warr Commission had recommended the formation of a University College at Makerere, Uganda, 1937.

²⁷ At the time of the enquiry Dr. G. W. McOwan was Principal and Dr L. W. Evans was Acting Director of Raffles College and the College of Medicine respectively, see McLean Report, p. vii. Dr McOwan, Professor of Chemistry, had been appointed as Acting Principal of Raffles College in 1937 and was later made Principal until April 1940 although he retained his professorial duties. In the event he resigned his position at the beginning of August 1940 and was replaced by Professor W. E. Dyer who had been Professor of History at Raffles College since 1930. Dyer was appointed in July 1940 on an acting basis for one year see, CO 273/660/13, Cox to Channon, 16 July 1940.

²⁸ CO 273/651/14, McLean and Channon to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 17 June 1939. These comments insofar as they applied to Professor McOwan were not shared by Sir Shenton Thomas, the Governor of the SS who stated that the commissioners ‘...were not [in Malaya] long enough to form a considered opinion of [McOwan’s] capabilities nor have they any knowledge of his record. McOwan is a good man, and before deciding against him a much more careful study of his work is required,’ Thomas to Gent, 11 October 1939. The commissioners, particularly Channon were similarly unimpressed by Dyer who had been appointed by Thomas as a replacement for McOwan. Dyer had graduated from St John’s College Oxford in 1922 with a first-class honours degree in Modern History and had practical experience of educational administration serving as Inspector of Schools in Malacca and Pahang. Despite this Channon remained critical of Dyer’s capabilities asserting that: ‘... Clearly [his] three years at Oxford as a student cannot have given him the wider outlook and university experience necessary for the development of Raffles College...’, CO 273/660/13, Channon to Cox, 21 August 1940. Gent subsequently cautioned against judgements made on largely subjective grounds emphasising that ‘... we must not become involved in personalities but must continue pressing for the appointment of a new Principal from outside for the proposed University College which is justified on far more substantial grounds’, CO 273/660/13, Gent to Cox, 10 September 1940.

²⁹ This condition was based on the assumption that the appointee would be British and most probably lacking experience of conditions in Malaya.

A key element in the amalgamation of the two colleges was a proposal for a revised funding mechanism and constitution. The commissioners recommended that the College of Medicine which was largely funded and managed by the Straits Government's Medical Department should be made independent of these arrangements and subject to governance by an independent Council, that is, a governing body which was in place at Raffles College. They envisaged that the Council would be responsible for the overall revenue and property of the new institution and chaired by the President. The Council should be a large body of some forty-eight members including a Malaya wide membership and including representatives from the FMS and the SS. It should be supported by an Executive Committee of not more than fifteen members who were resident in Singapore. The Senate should be the other major body with responsibility for academic management and policy development. Given the social, economic and political complexities involved the commissioners emphasised that '... it is not possible to draw up a constitution which can be regarded as in any sense final; only by experiment over a period of years ... can anything like the ideal constitution be reached'.³⁰ In order to maintain academic standards, the commissioners also recommended the appointment of a Statutory Board of Examiners based in England to cooperate with academic staff at Raffles to moderate the setting and marking of examination papers. They also proposed an additional year of study to better prepare students for the diploma and degree courses they planned to take. In proposing an institution of higher education, the commissioners were cautious in their approach and felt certain that people '... would not wish for an institution which, while bearing the name of a university, did not provide all that is essential for the recognition of its graduates as university men in the full sense'.³¹ Despite this they remained confident that:

³⁰ McLean Report, p. 97.

³¹ Ibid., p.104. The implicit model conveyed by the Commission was of an Oxbridge-type university based on a general understanding of the idea of 'graduates as University men in the full sense'.

in the Medical College and Raffles College, Malaya has indeed the foundation of a future university of which she will be proud; steady and solid developments of these two institutions as a University College, with their expansion in the directions we have indicated, seems to us certain to lead to the justified establishment of this University within a reasonable time ... if the progress which appears possible under the proposals we have made were completely achieved, the question of the establishment of a university should be ready for consideration within a period of ten years ...³²

This estimate of the time needed for the development of a university might be judged to be remarkably prescient given that the University of Malaya was eventually founded a decade later in 1949 but as will be discussed in chapter 5, the events of the intervening years and the nature of the eventual outcome were not as McLean imagined. The Commission reported to the Secretary of State in June 1939 although it was to be some time before their findings were published and made available to the public.³³ At the same time McLean and Channon having completed and reflected on their work in Malaya felt it necessary to identify additional issues which they forwarded in confidence to the Secretary of State.³⁴ The commissioners made several points. First, while they recommended the constitution of a Council and a Senate, they were not in favour of a Court since, as they declared ‘the racial complexity of the country and the difficulties associated with the oriental mind make it potentially dangerous.’ Second, they advocated that European control of the Council should be maintained ‘and that only by very slow stages should members of the Asiatic populace of Malays take a greater share in its work’.³⁵ Third, they recognised the importance of providing education for Malay girls through an increased provision of vernacular schools ‘so that more of these girls will

³² Ibid., p.104. Progress towards full university status was conditional and reminiscent of statements often made by colonial officials and politicians about the necessary stages towards ‘independence’ and what might be achieved in the ‘fullness of time.’

³³ The report was published in January 1940. Its delayed publication was held to be a casualty of wartime restrictions with the unfortunate result that it ‘... evoked less interest than its importance warrants. People just glanced at the long extracts published in the newspapers after wading through the war news and dismissed the matter as one which can and must wait till “afterwards” - Hitler must be disposed of first! See, CO 273/651/14, *British Malaya Magazine*, January 1940, p. 1.

³⁴ CO 273/651/14, McLean and Channon, Confidential Observations to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 17 June 1939.

³⁵ Ibid.

find their way into the English schools’, - they did not however address the complexities of how this might be achieved. Finally, they suggested the somewhat capricious idea ‘of a British University of the Far East’ involving collaboration between Singapore and the University of Hong Kong. It is difficult to understand why this ‘addendum’ was felt to be necessary as there was much reiteration of points already made in the formal report. There was considerable equivocation which did little to clarify or prioritise key recommendations; attention was given to operational details rather than the identification of strategies for linking the two Singaporean colleges.

4.3. A Colonial Governor in London

The outbreak of war dealt an inevitable blow to the task of implementing the recommendations made by the McLean Commission. Shortly after its report was presented to the Secretary of State in June 1939 Britain was at war with Germany. In December 1941 Japan began its invasion of the Malay Peninsula and Singapore and by early February 1942 had taken complete control of the British colony and much of Southeast Asia. These events were to disrupt British educational developments in Malaya but during the initial period of the war, from 1939 to 1941, several attempts were made by the CO to maintain a dialogue with the Colonial Government in Singapore. In an effort to make some progress on the reforms proposed by McLean an advanced copy of the Commissioner’s report was sent to the Sir Shenton Thomas, Governor of the SS on 7 July 1939 together with a request for his observations. At the same time Thomas was assured that the 500 printed copies of the report he had requested for distribution in Malaya would be forwarded as soon as they became available.³⁶ Thomas’s reply on 8 August was unhelpful stating only that he did ‘not propose

³⁶ Sir Shenton Thomas (1879-1962) was a career diplomat who held senior administrative posts in Nigeria, Nyasaland and in 1932 became Governor of the Gold Coast before being appointed by the then Colonial Secretary Malcolm MacDonald to the position of Governor, SS and High Commissioner, FMS 1934. Following his return to the CO MacDonald wrote to Thomas in October 1939 asking him to remain as Governor during the war. Thomas accepted on condition that he be permitted to take ‘home leave’ due in 1940; this was agreed by

to offer any preliminary observations either on the report or the ‘letter’ but to reserve ... comments on both until after the publication of the report’.³⁷ The printed copies were forwarded to Thomas as promised in November but there was no response from Singapore. On 7 February 1940 MacDonald sent a further request for a progress report but it was not until April 1940 that he received the following reply from Thomas:

The larger problems of higher professional education involve reference to Raffles College and the College of Medicine and, besides, to a larger number of bodies and government departments throughout the country. Necessarily, this takes time and I doubt therefore whether I shall be able to furnish you with considered observations on the Report in less than six months-time.³⁸

The Colonial Office regarded this ‘... a very poor effort [particularly as] a copy of the report was sent to the Governor last July [and] printed copies followed in November’.³⁹ Cox, was also very critical of Thomas’s lack of action observing that:

it is difficult to avoid the impression that the Governor has made up his mind that action on the principal recommendation of the Commission is undesirable and that little effort has been made to expedite considerations of the report ... [which]... though it was largely the work of one man [Professor Channon] is an able, thorough and careful document of considerable importance.⁴⁰

MacDonald and so, improbably, Thomas was in London during the summer of 1940. Although his leave had been formally approved, the wartime circumstances necessitated such unusual and lengthy travel itineraries that might have deterred a less insistent and determined official. He left Singapore, April 1940 on an old P. & O. ship, the *Empress of India*, reaching England in June via Colombo, Bombay Durban, Cape Town and West Africa. The return journey began, 3 October and involved a series of long flights and lengthy stopovers. He flew from London to Singapore via Lisbon, Canada and Australia arriving back in Singapore, 5 December see, B. Montgomery, *Shenton of Singapore*, (London, 1984), p. 73. See FCO 141/16264, for the transcript of a radio broadcast by Thomas 22 December 1940 describing conditions in Britain.

³⁷ CO 273/651/14, for the “letter” i.e., the additional confidential observations sent by McLean and Channon to MacDonald.

³⁸ CO 273/660/12, Thomas to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, 12 April, 1940.

³⁹ CO 273/660/12, Note by Martin, 13 May 1940. John Martin, later Sir John Martin, was a career civil servant who previously had been seconded to the Malayan Civil Service 1931-34 following which he was appointed secretary to the Royal Commission on Palestine 1936-37. He returned to departmental duties at the Colonial Office by which time he had built a reputation as ‘wise, tactful and eminently dependable’ see, *The Times*, 3 April 1991. These qualities had impressed Churchill and led to Martin’s appointment in May 1940 as Assistant Private Secretary in the Prime Minister’s office. The following year Martin was promoted to the position of Principal Private Secretary and continued to successfully manage Churchill’s office until the end of the war. He then returned to the Colonial Office and from 1945-56 was Assistant under Secretary of State before becoming one of two Deputy Under-Secretaries of State. His final post was as High Commissioner of Malta 1965-67. See, Roger T. Stearn, ‘Martin, Sir John Miller’, (1904-1991),

<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10/1093/ref.odnb/49893> [accessed 20/05/2019]

⁴⁰ CO 273/660/12, Note by Cox, 17 May 1940.

Cox proposed that since both Thomas and Dr William Lineham Director of Education for the SS and Advisor on Education for the FMS were both on “home leave” they should be invited to the next meeting of ACEC on 27 June 1940 to discuss the development of higher education in Malaya with particular reference to the McLean Report.⁴¹ This was agreed and the general direction of CO thinking and expected outcomes of the forthcoming discussions were described in the following terms:

what ... would be welcomed locally, judging from the favourable reception of the Commission’s report in the Malayan press is a declared intention of the Straits and FMS Governments to adopt a development policy ... favoured by the Commission and practical steps to prepare for the institution of a University College by putting into effect the subsidiary recommendations which are designed to improve the pre-University stages of instruction and to broaden the basis of the future University institution.⁴²

Thomas duly attended the meeting and gave a general summary of education in Malaya saying he regretted that there had not been time for the Malayan Governments to consider the McLean Report in its entirety. He made more specific comments about the tertiary colleges in Singapore stating that the ‘Medical School was very good in nearly all respects and granted recognised Diplomas in Medicine and Dentistry; scholarships and grants were given to boys of all races to enter the college if they were fit to do so’. He held a less positive view of Raffles College saying that it ‘was not, and never had been satisfactory’. On this particular point he was in agreement with the assessment made by the commissioners. Referring to the lack of a full time Principal, a deficiency which had also been criticised in the McLean Report, Thomas emphasised that the situation ‘... needed a man who could devote his whole

⁴¹ Ibid., Dr Lineham was in Ireland but he was not pressed to interrupt his holiday and did not attend the June meeting of ACEC although he was present at the next meeting, 18 July 1940.

⁴² Ibid., Note by Gent, 20 May 1940.

time to the College and see that good fellowship and good citizenship was fostered... the difference between the atmosphere at [Raffles] and that at Achimota College was marked'.⁴³

The ACEC was interested to learn of the public's response to the commissioner's report, particularly to understand reactions from the Malay and Chinese communities. Thomas was clear and uncompromising stating that 'the Malays did not support the foundation of a university as they feared that benefits would accrue disproportionately to the better educated Chinese population rather than to themselves, the indigenous Malay people. He went on to say that the proposals advanced by the McLean report were unconvincing and emphasised that he was uncertain 'why a university was recommended or whether Malay opinion had been consulted'.⁴⁴ He also opposed the proposal to establish a Chair of Chinese Studies and asserted that the Government of the Straits Settlements took the view that the Chinese, as residents in an English colony, should learn English. He explained that '... in order to get rid of communism and to avoid serious trouble later on, it was necessary to make them "British-minded" and for this it seemed that the only course was free English education [which] would entail a very large expenditure – perhaps as much as £2,000, 000 a year'.⁴⁵ Throughout Thomas appeared ill-prepared for the meeting and seemed unable to understand the difference between the approach advocated by the commissioners, i.e., the development of a university college offering degrees awarded and approved by an external institution such as London University and that of an independent university with its own degree awarding

⁴³ CO 273/60/12, Minutes of the meeting of the ACEC 27 June 1940. Thomas was previously Governor of the Gold Coast and would have been familiar with the African College.

⁴⁴ There is some evidence of Malay opposition to the development of higher education at this time. For example, the Persatuan Melayu Selangor, a quasi-political association founded in June 1938 distributed a pamphlet setting out its opposition to the creation of a university or similar institution on the grounds that a greater priority was the extension of educational opportunities at school rather than university level. According to Roff this view was widely held by the Malay community and was supported at a political level by Onn b. Ja'afar who declared his opposition to the formation of a university in the Johore State Council, see Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 239-240. As is discussed in the following chapter, another Malay leader, Mohd Eusoff also spoke against the foundation of a university in favour of provision at elementary and secondary school. These pronouncements were not anti-educational as their post-war support for higher education and the Carr-Saunders Commission indicated.

⁴⁵ CO 273/660/12, Minutes of the meeting of ACEC, 27 June 1940.

powers.⁴⁶ There were some areas of agreement, however, between the Governor and the commissioners particularly their recognition of the high standards achieved by the Medical School and the comparability in standards between its Diploma and degrees awarded in England.⁴⁷ There were also mutual concerns regarding some poor performances at Raffles College; as Professor Channon pointed out, ‘the standard of admission to the College should be raised so that students [could] profit by the opportunities afforded to them ...’.⁴⁸

Nearly three weeks after the first meeting in June Thomas forwarded a brief statement to the ACEC secretary describing his reactions to the discussion that had taken place on the McLean Report. He explained that his reasons for writing before the next ACEC meeting on 18 July were to correct any impression that the Malay Governments were ‘indifferent’ to the McLean Report and requested that the statement be circulated to committee members. He emphasised that:

It would be quite wrong therefore to suppose that in saying that hitherto there has not been time to consider the Report I implied that there is not the desire ... The Commission was appointed as the result of my own personal representations in regard to the inadequacy of Raffles College and was universally welcomed. We shall consider the recommendations gladly and fully, as soon as we can. In the present stress we have to deal with those subjects that demand priority and we have regarded war work as coming first.⁴⁹

His statement to the ACEC was defensive if not disingenuous as he claimed that he ‘did not know that the report was to be the principle item on the agenda for the June meeting and it

⁴⁶ CO 273/660/12, Anderson, letter to Cox, 6 July 1940. Sir George Anderson a member of ACEC who attended the June meeting was highly critical of Thomas observing that ‘... his preliminary remarks were superficial to a degree [and] though the [ACEC] indicated their interest in the [McLean] report, he [Thomas] has neither the capacity nor the desire to understand the proposals’.

⁴⁷ Such were the areas of agreement that it would seem quite possible for any remaining differences to have been reconciled. There was some personal antipathy between the Governor and the Commissioners for as Thomas claimed, during their visit to Malaya ‘neither McLean nor Channon made themselves particularly pleasant and Mr North Hunt (secretary) found them “very difficult”. It was quite clear to me that the two couples (sic) were on strained relations long before they left here, CO 273/651/14, Thomas letter to Gent, 11 October 1939.

⁴⁸ CO 273/660/12, ACEC minutes, 27 June 1940.

⁴⁹ CO 273/660/12, Thomas to S. R. Pughe, Secretary, ACEC, 16 July 1940. At the time Thomas was on official leave from his duties as Governor in Malaya, a circumstance which appears to undermine his arguments concerning the importance he attached to his official duties and responsibilities.

did not occur to [him] that the committee would wish to discuss a report which had not been considered by the Governments concerned'.⁵⁰ He said that he could not remember whether the printed copies of the Commission's report had reached Malaya before he left, but he was clear that there had not been time to read the cyclo-styled copies which had been sent out earlier. With regard to the amalgamation of the two colleges he reiterated his view '... that it might be well to raise the performance of Raffles College before linking it with the Medical College ...'.⁵¹ In conclusion he urged the ACEC:

to remember that the report raises questions which are more political than educational. They impinge directly on the administration of the country and nothing should be done which will make that less harmonious and effective. Subject always to this proviso the Malayan Governments will give the report all possible consideration.⁵²

This uninspiring statement reveal Thomas to be more committed to the continuation of existing administrative arrangements and practices and less open to change and innovation, contrary to the progressive terms of reference which guided the work of a commission of enquiry. Professor Channon was also unconvinced of Thomas's capacity for reform observing that:

if Thomas goes back to Malaya in his present frame of mind there is little likelihood of his being helpfully disposed towards the type of educational progress which the ACEC has in view. His mind is full of misunderstandings and partial understandings ... My remarks concerning the Malays were made not to suggest that [they] were in favour of a university-they are strongly opposed to it-but to illustrate that their fears might be dispelled if by careful explanation they could be convinced that their interests would not be allowed to suffer. I believe this ... can be achieved by wise development.⁵³

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ CO 273/676/1, Channon to Cox, 22 July 1940.

The next meeting of the ACEC was held on 18 July with both Sir Shenton Thomas and Dr William Linehan in attendance.⁵⁴ During the discussion Cox and Channon made important contributions which helped to dispel doubts and possible misunderstandings that committee members may have had.⁵⁵ For example, Cox summarised three different stages in the development of a colonial university involving the embryonic institution offering a post-secondary level diploma with limited, local validity, the university college offering an externally validated degree and finally the autonomous university offering its own degrees. Cox drew members' attention to the middle stage of development, the concept of a university college, which was a key recommendation of the McLean Report. Channon made a similar point when he reminded the meeting that 'it could not be too strongly emphasized that the commissioner's report did not propose the formation of an [independent] University of Malaya at this stage [and] he did not think the distinction between a university and a university college was appreciated in Malaya'.⁵⁶ He explained further that, '... the commission had been at considerable pains to get information about the political background from more sources than was perhaps realised. The conclusion they had arrived at was that both [the Chinese and Malay communities] must develop and that Kuala Lumpur must run parallel with Singapore.'⁵⁷

As far as the ACEC was concerned both meetings with Thomas had served a useful 'double purpose' insofar as they had stimulated members' interest in a significant issue of colonial development and had served notice to the Governor of the SS of their intention to support educational changes proposed by the McLean Commission. There was confidence that this would lead to the establishment of a new institution in Singapore, the University

⁵⁴ CO 273/660/12, Cox, 25 July 1940, noted that Lineham '... had not grasped the issues under discussion and was not wholly equal to advising on them ... it is unfortunate that at this juncture of the educational developments in Malaya the direction should be in such hands ...'.

⁵⁵ CO 273/660/12, Approved minutes meeting of the ACEC, 18 July 1940.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

College of Malaya with overall executive responsibility residing in the hands of a single Principal.⁵⁸ The summary reflected an official assumption of progress made but it was extremely unlikely, as Channon and Cox pointed out, that Thomas was equally committed to educational reform. Any judgement on progress made or agreements shared was to prove of little consequence given events that followed.

In Malaya, questions regarding the McLean Commission Report, particularly the recommendations that had been made, were raised at a meeting of the Singapore Legislative Council by Captain Noor Mohamed Hashid who was impatient to see progress being made.⁵⁹ According to Cox, Hashid was ‘doing useful work in keeping the issues raised by the McLean-Channon Report to the front (sic)’.⁶⁰ Thomas, meanwhile had returned to Singapore in early December and three days before Christmas 1940 he gave a radio broadcast addressed to the “People of Malaya”.⁶¹ There was little reference to educational issues as he gave a somewhat bizarre picture of war-time London and demonstrated little understanding of the position of Singapore and its people at a most critical time. He mentioned the progress the British army was making, the negligible effects bombing raids were having on London and the bravery of the civilian population of civilians who faced ‘getting home only to find it in ruins with all [they] have in the world destroyed. This is happening every day at home’.⁶²

In April 1941 the Conservative/Coalition Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Moyne, still pursuing matters of education policy, forwarded a lengthy despatch to Singapore

⁵⁸ CO 273/660/12, Minute, Gent 3 July 1940; *Ibid.*, Approved minutes ACEC meeting, 18 July 1940.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, Extract, Minutes, Singapore Legislative Council, 9 December 1940.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, Cox summary, ACEC, 18 July 1940. Hashid was an interesting, not to say controversial figure. He was an early appointee to the Malayan Civil Service and he had long campaigned for the establishment of an English medium university although such advocacy had drawn criticism from the Malay-Muslim community see, Siew – Min Sai, ‘Educating Multicultural Citizens’, p. 56. According to Roff, Hashid was one of several people who ‘was known, or thought beyond reasonable doubt,’ to be employed as a British agent, see Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 218. He was an associate of another British agent, Haji Abdul Majid bin Zainuddin, see, W. R. Roff, ed., *The Wandering Thoughts of a Dying Man. The Life and Times of Haji Abdul Majid bin Zainuddin*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1978), p. 81; p. 90.

⁶¹ See, FCO 141/16264, Broadcast by Sir Shenton Thomas, ‘People of Malaya’, 22 December 1940.

⁶² *Ibid.*

requesting Thomas to publish a statement of intent which would clarify the Straits Settlements and Malayan Governments' plans for implementing the main recommendations of the McLean Commission. The despatch also called for a statement on admissions procedures and pre-university courses which would enable prospective students to qualify for entry to the new university college.⁶³ Despite this communication there is no record of any further progress before educational developments were finally overtaken by military events. By the end of the year Japanese forces launched the invasion of Malaya and the fall of Singapore was completed in February 1942.⁶⁴ Thomas was captured by the Japanese and imprisoned first in Changi internment camp in Singapore and later in Manchuria until his release in 1945.⁶⁵

Although the war clearly put an end to educational reform in Malaya and Singapore a major problem regarding innovation and change was the obdurate attitude of Thomas himself – not simply that he was negatively disposed towards the recommendations put forward by McLean, but also because he had presided over an essentially moribund and complacent administration. Thomas was not overtly malevolent but neither was he fundamentally and intelligently interested in improving the lives of ordinary people who suffered as subjects of a colonial regime. He was essentially dedicated to the preservation of his own self-interest and privilege within an unchanging society. Cecil Brown a reporter with Columbia Broadcasting Systems in Singapore during the Japanese invasion described Thomas as:

⁶³ CO 273/660/12, Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States Governors, 17 April 1941. These issues had been raised earlier by Gent as matters for discussion with Thomas, see footnote No 40 above. Gent also contributed to the Moyne despatch particularly on the subject of Chinese education and made a recommendation for the appointment of a local commission to report on improvements in the education of Chinese children, *Ibid.*, Gent, note, 18 March 1941, This later despatch from Moyne suggests that Thomas's defensiveness and prevarication had prevailed until the issue became lost amidst the confusion and turmoil of war.

⁶⁴ A detailed account of the surrender of Singapore is given by Louis Allen, *The Politics and Strategy of the Second World War: Singapore 1941-1942*, (London, 1977), pp. 175-184.

⁶⁵ For an account of Thomas' years of captivity see B., Montgomery, *Shenton of Singapore*, pp. 140-171.

An uninformed individual with an urbane manner ... a slave to Civil Service clichés, bromides and banalities. He lives in a dream world where reality seldom enters and where the main effort is to restrict the entrance of anything disturbing. He shows the manner and approach of a man who has been telling African bush men and Malayan natives how to conduct their lives.⁶⁶

During his years of internment in Formosa he assessed the difficulties that Malaya would encounter in a post-war period of reconstruction. But rather than consider constructive and reformist policies that a new government might pursue Thomas dealt with technical and administrative problems. He envisaged that the first essential task would be to reform 'the system of administration [which] is wasteful and faulty and must be corrected' and advocated departmental re-organisation and the abolition of posts 'rather than ... allow the pre-war holders to return and clog the works.' He concluded, without irony, that since 'the machinery has been destroyed there is a wonderful opportunity for a lively government'.⁶⁷

At a personal and professional level Thomas displayed a lack of political interest and engagement with progressive ideas leading to political and social change. As Governor of the SS and High Commissioner for the FMS he occupied a powerful position but in the conduct of his communications with London through the agency of the Secretary of State, the CO and the ACEC, he exerted a largely negative influence on events. He was the fabled 'man on the spot' but failed to understand the need for new policy developments and strategic planning.⁶⁸

In personal terms he exemplified:

that stolid British doggedness ... he was not a realistic thinker or even a very clear-headed one. He was sanguine to the verge of complacency. He had risen to his position, not by virtue of any outstanding ability, but by dint of long years of steady conscientious work. There was no colour or forcefulness about him, nor much decisiveness.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Cecil Brown, *Suez to Singapore*, (New York, 1943) p. 210; cited by Allen, *Singapore*, p. 213.

⁶⁷ CO 1073/324, Sir Shenton Thomas, Memorandum: Post War Malaya, 29 February 1944.

⁶⁸ CO 967/77, Duff Cooper, letter to Churchill, 18 December 1941 in which Cooper observed that Thomas was 'one of those people who find it quite impossible to adjust their minds ... he is also the mouthpiece of the last person he speaks to'.

⁶⁹ Ian Morrison, *Malayan Postscript*, (London, 1942) pp. 157-58. For a discussion of Thomas's responsibility regarding the invasion of Singapore see, Allen, *Singapore*, pp. 212-225.

Given these characteristics it was not surprising that Thomas, deploying the argument that with inadequate funds, the dangers of excessive numbers of graduate students, *pace* India and a need to prioritise elementary education,⁷⁰ would prevaricate against the development of higher education until a World War intervened and made further oppositional comment unnecessary.

4.4. A Defining Period of Planning

Following his visit to Malaya as a member of the McLean Commission Professor Channon returned to Great Britain and gave some thought to his experiences. The outcome of his reflection was a short paper focussing on the problems of developing higher education in the colonies. Channon had been a member of ACEC since 1940 and on the advice of Christopher Cox, an ACEC colleague, he presented his “Memorandum” to a meeting of the Advisory Committee in February 1941.⁷¹

According to Channon a fundamental difficulty was the reluctance of colonial officials to recognise the importance of higher education and a failure to acknowledge a need for the development tertiary level institutions. He acknowledged that difficulties might occur leading to ‘the production of a highly educated class among ... the native population’.⁷² This was redolent of the so-called “Indian problem” but he considered this to be largely due to a fundamental misconception of the function of a university. It should not be seen as a centre for vocational training with a premium on memorising facts,⁷³ but rather as a site for teaching and learning higher order knowledge and skills as preparation for citizenship in society at

⁷⁰ Stockwell, ‘Crucible of the Nation’, p. 1152; Siew-Min Sai, ‘Educating Multicultural Citizens’, pp. 57-58.

⁷¹ Channon Memorandum.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 2. References to the Memorandum are by paragraph number and not by page number.

⁷³ Channon referred to the ‘memorisation of facts’ several times describing it as ‘... the cultivation of [the students’] peculiar ability to memorise facts ...’ *Ibid.*, p. 11. He saw this trait negatively and a constraint on a deeper understanding and acquisition of analytical skills, but tended not to question how and why students came to adopt and apply the skills of rote learning.

large. Another aspect of university life which Channon believed to be misunderstood concerned the status of research and the idea that:

immediate public utility is not and cannot be the standard by which universities measure the value of researches conducted within them, nor is the fact understood that teaching in any university ... becomes sterile unless the inspiration of the teacher is maintained by some form or other of original investigation.⁷⁴

A further problem that Channon perceived was that of staffing and ways in which appropriately qualified lecturers could be attracted to colonial universities as generally, ‘... men who take posts in colonial universities are not good enough to obtain appointments carrying the same ... status in [Britain]’.⁷⁵ Various models of secondment from English universities were proposed but little thought was given to the training of indigenous teachers for service in elementary and secondary schools. Channon drew attention to the requirements of quality in the standard of teaching, the level of work achieved by students and the qualifications awarded. He emphasised the importance of colonial universities achieving equivalence with practices in British universities since ‘... there must be a rigorous avoidance of the degree by inferior standard ...’⁷⁶ Central to his thinking was the key role which British universities must play if developments in colonial colleges were to be successful. In a concluding statement Channon emphasised that:

If we are sincere in our belief in the value of education and in our professed wish to help the colonial peoples to maturity, one step of the greatest value would be to endeavour to bring university institutions of the colonies into active relationship with the university system of this country.⁷⁷

The ACEC was duly impressed with these initial thoughts and agreed to take matters forward by appointing a sub-committee to advise the Secretary of State concerning the ways

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.11.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p.21.

in which the development of higher education in the colonies, particularly in the African territories and Malaya, could be assisted by British universities. A strong and experienced sub-committee was appointed in April 1941 with Channon as the chairman.⁷⁸ but given the exigencies of war its final report was not submitted until May 1943.⁷⁹ It was detailed and well informed regarding the issues and practices of teaching, learning and research then current in British universities. It emphasised the importance of ‘adaptation’ pointing out that ‘...we ought not slavishly to translate into the colonies methods which have served well enough in the very different conditions of our own country without imaginative exploration of possible new methods of approach’.⁸⁰ Perhaps not surprisingly, the report was underpinned by the precepts and assumptions of British higher education stating that:

A university is not a mass production vocational machine through which are passed ... students of indifferent mental calibre ... it should be a place where carefully chosen young people of promise are fitted to take their places in the different professions ... The Governments must be led to appreciate ... that its adoption is possible without the production of a surplus “intelligentsia”.⁸¹

Channon was indirectly aware of some of the problems that had occurred in India with an over-production of graduates seeking limited employment opportunities in government services. As Ashby observed ‘what was wanted in the colonial territories was not a large number of men with specialised technical training and little else; but a smaller number, carefully prepared for wider service’.⁸² Channon held a similar view and his immediate focus was ‘to find and educate the potential leaders of the peoples of the Colonies’.⁸³ This was at odds with other views. Lord Hailey, for example, had argued for a different approach in which the aim of higher education should be to:

⁷⁸ The sub-committee comprised the following membership: Professor Channon (Chair), Sir Fred Clarke, Mr C.W.M. Cox, Mr E. R. Hussey, Dr Julian Huxley, Mr B. Mouat-Jones, Professor W. M. Macmillan, Miss Margery Perham. Cox and Hussey were deployed on overseas duties before the report was completed.

⁷⁹ Channon Report. References to the report in this thesis are by paragraph not page number.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 63. This refers to the idea of an award-giving body. The suggested name was the ‘Colonial University’ and is discussed below, see pp. 117-18.

⁸¹ Channon Report, p. 30.

⁸² Ashby, *Universities*, p. 206.

⁸³ Channon Report, p. 97.

Enable a man to be of first-class assistance in administration or in medical work or a really good assistance surveyor or assistant engineer rather than to fill the highest posts in the services. The intermediate need was the highest possible extension of the administrative and social services and this could not be achieved by increasing the number of men in the highest and the lowest stages; it could only be achieved by an increase in the “intermediate” stages”.⁸⁴

His views were pragmatic saying that:

Africa at the moment did not need to concentrate on work of university degree rank. This did not by any means imply that the door must be closed to Africans in the fields of higher employment since a certain percentage of the men holding “intermediate” posts could, as in India, be promoted to higher posts ... He considered that the primary need was not for Africans to take their place at the top so much as for good African headmasters and good assistant inspectors.⁸⁵

One of the most interesting ideas proposed by Channon’s report emerged as a response to the problem of degree awards and involved the creation of an academic body representative of all universities in Great Britain with powers to award degrees in the colonies. The sub-committee suggested that it might be called “The Colonial University” that would act as a joint trustee until such time as colonial colleges gained full university status with degree awarding powers.⁸⁶ The report stressed the critical importance of home universities providing help and support for the colonial project believing that ‘as older members of the university family, our home universities should admit to the family circle those young colonial members and that they should use their great experience to help guide them to constructive development’.⁸⁷ This led to a consideration of how to elevate existing colonial colleges to university status, how to develop appropriate examination procedures and recruit well qualified staff. Ashby observed that Channon ‘envisaged ... a great intellectual

⁸⁴ CO 885/41, Minutes of the ninety-fourth meeting of ACEC, 18 May 1939.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid., p. 63. It has been observed that this idea foreshadowed establishment of the IUC see Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership*, p. 8. A parallel might also be drawn with the Council for National Academic Awards which was established in 1964 ‘to grant degrees, diplomas, certificates and other academic awards comparable in standard to those conferred by universities, to students who have successfully completed courses at educational institutions other than universities’, see John Pratt and Tyrrell Burgess, *Polytechnics: A Report*, (London, 1974), pp. 104-105.

⁸⁷ Channon Report, p. 33.

partnership between the British universities and the colonial institutions overseas: one that would not only promote the welfare of colonial peoples but foster the unity of the empire and help to realise the ideals underlying it'.⁸⁸

Although the report recognised the vastness of the colonial territories under scrutiny and the over-whelming sense of social and racial diversity it emphasised the commonality of problems facing the different territories. This was confirmed for Channon in consultative meetings with the Principals of Achimota and Makerere Colleges which had '... vividly shown that the fundamental issues in East and West Africa are identical with those of Malaya [although] the differences in the peoples and the economic development are so striking'.⁸⁹ This provided a basis for the formulation of general policy; once this was achieved adaptation to local conditions is a relatively easy matter'.⁹⁰

It was recognised that such a policy was necessarily "evolutionary" and that it would take a considerable period of time before responsible administration by local officials could be achieved. Channon emphasised that 'a first step must be to provide adequate opportunities for the higher education of those few who are capable of becoming pioneers in the evolution of their own people'.⁹¹

The approach to development particularly the estimates of time it would take to achieve self-government were familiar but remained assumptions that were to constitute a serious misjudgement by British officialdom.⁹² Such an approach was evident in the recommendations of the Channon Report, particularly its insistence on working cautiously and deploying measures to ensure that quality standards as defined by British higher

⁸⁸ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 207.

⁸⁹ The sub-committee consulted the Principals of Achimota and Makerere Colleges during their visit to London towards the end of 1942, see Ashby, *Universities*, p. 208. This would have been particularly useful for Channon who was familiar with educational arrangements in Malaya but lacked first-hand experience of Africa.

⁹⁰ Channon Report, p. 32.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁹² The point is raised below in chapter 7, pp. 1-2.

education were not compromised. In this way key processes such as student admissions, staff appointments, examination procedures and degree awards could be established appropriately and protected in colonial colleges. A critical issue that neither Channon nor subsequently Asquith or Elliot satisfactorily resolved was the idea of a university defined by its location, culture and community aspiration. As Ashby declared:

No-one reading the reports is likely to come away with the impression that the long-term prospects of these universities [as they were imagined] depend upon their becoming indigenous, and that research, design of curriculum, pattern of government, should all contribute to this end; always, of course, with safeguards to ensure that colonial universities remain on the gold standard of learning.⁹³

This was an important issue but more nuanced than Ashby suggested. Enquiries led by Currie and De La Warr were not unaware or insensitive to the problems of imposing a European curriculum in Africa, Currie's report particularly emphasising the negative consequences of such an attempt.⁹⁴ Whilst it is true that the Carr-Saunders Commission had recommended English as the medium of instruction, they also recommended the establishment of Departments of Malay, Chinese and Tamil studies, believing that the University of Malaya was in a favourable position to become a centre for -oriental studies.

4.5. The Asquith Commissions

A critical stage in the development of colonial higher education was reached in November 1942 when Oliver Stanley was appointed as Secretary of State for the Colonies. The field of higher education was of particular interest to Stanley who had been impressed with the work of the ACEC sub-committee and he began a series of discussions with Channon in early 1943.⁹⁵ Their collaboration resulted in the completion of the ACEC

⁹³ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 221.

⁹⁴ Currie Report, repr., Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 476-77.

⁹⁵ At Stanley's request, Channon moved to the Colonial Office on a part-time advisory basis to facilitate the completion of the report and to contribute to forward planning, see Ashby, *Universities*, p. 208.

report⁹⁶ which later informed Stanley's statement to the House of Commons on 13 July 1943.⁹⁷ In his address Stanley first identified the wider policy context in which '... we are pledged to guide colonial people along the road to self-government within the framework of the British Empire,' a journey that he envisaged undertaking more as a partner than simply a trustee.⁹⁸ He envisaged a broad and flexible interpretation of the sort of education that was needed – it was encapsulated in the phrase 'education for life' which he saw as providing a basis for political development together with sound economic planning, as had been emphasised by De La Warr. Education was to be developed and enhanced through a variety of agencies such as local government, community associations, trade unions and cooperatives and appointments to administrative services. In order to progress educational development, Stanley believed that it would be:

a tremendous gain if ... these colonial colleges could be admitted as partners in the circle of the home universities, if there could be ... an intellectual lend-lease between the universities at home and the colonial centres of higher education, between the old established centres here and the new, rising centres in the colonies ... that would be a real lend-lease.⁹⁹

He acknowledged the challenges but emphasised that the constraints of war had produced a time and opportunity for planning '... when we make up our minds where we are going and how we are going there, so that as soon as we can start, as soon as peace gives the signal, we can get rapidly under way'.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ The Channon Report.

⁹⁷ *HC Deb* 13 July 1943 vol 391, col. 48. According to Ashby, 'the ideas necessary for creating colonial universities had been supplied by Currie, De La Warr and Channon; what was now needed was a strategy to turn the ideas into accomplishments', Ashby, *Universities*, p. 211.

⁹⁸ *HC Deb* 13 July 1943 vol 391, col. 54. In a policy speech at Oxford in 1938 MacDonald had also spoken of the length of time self-government would take see, Andersen and Cohen, *The Government and Administration of Africa*, p. 273-76.

⁹⁹ *HC Deb* 13 July 1943 vol 391, col. 54.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, col. 70.

He then announced the appointment of a Commission of enquiry on higher education in the colonies to be chaired by Sir Cyril Asquith.¹⁰¹ In terms of colonial education development, he explained that the ‘... the general problem is, on the whole, common to all territories and the findings of the (Asquith) Commission will establish general principles that can be applied. They will ... need adaptation in view of local conditions but that will be comparatively easy if we have adequate information as to the social and economic developments of [a] particular area’.¹⁰² Following the more general purview of the Asquith Commission, Stanley then announced a more regionally based commission to consider the development of colonial universities in British West Africa chaired by the Rt. Hon. Walter Elliot M.P.¹⁰³ The membership of the Commissions was drawn from government, public service and academic sources. Several members of the ACEC-Channon sub-committee were appointed, for example, Sir Fred Clarke and Margery Perham served on the Asquith Commission while Julian Huxley and Bernard Moutat Jones, Vice Chancellor of the University of Leeds from 1938 to 1948, served on the Elliot Commission. Such was the standing of Professor Channon and the favourable impact his ACEC papers had created, that he was invited to serve as a member of both the Asquith and Elliot Commissions; Sir James Duff, formerly Professor of Education at the University of Manchester before being appointed to the Wardenship of the Durham Colleges, was also a member of both Commissions. The overlap of membership was deliberate and formed part of an attempt to

¹⁰¹ Sir Cyril Asquith (1890-1954) was the fourth son and youngest child of H. H. Asquith, Prime Minister from 1908-1916. Cyril Asquith was educated at Balliol College, Oxford and followed a legal career. ‘He was knighted in 1938 and introduced to the House of Lords in 1951 as the Rt. Honourable Sir Cyril Asquith, Knight, a Lord Justice of Appeal, ... with the dignity of a Baron for life by the style and title of *Baron Asquith of Bishopstone, of Bishopstone in the County of Sussex*’, Hansard 25 April 1951, <https://apl.parliament.uk/history-hansard/lords-reports/1951/apr/25/lord-asquith-of-bishopstone> [accessed 25/08/2021]

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, col. 54. Stanley’s speech owed an intellectual debt to Channon, this particular point was taken verbatim from the Channon Report, p. 32.

¹⁰³ Walter Elliot was educated at Glasgow University where he studied medicine and graduated BSc (1910) and MBChB (1913). He served as a medical officer in the first world war and was awarded the Military Cross. He entered politics and was a conservative MP for the Kelvingrove division of Glasgow 1924-1945, regaining the seat in 1950. He was regarded as a progressive conservative. He held numerous political positions and was appointed Secretary of State for Scotland 1936-38, see Gordon F. Millar, ‘Elliot, Walter Elliot, (1888-1958)’, <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/33003> [accessed 25/08/2021]

co-ordinate the general concerns of the Asquith Commission with the more specific enquiries of the Elliot Commission.¹⁰⁴ The idea of a linked enquiry was extended further in January 1944 with the appointment of the ‘Asquith Committee’ to consider the development of higher education in the British Colonies in the West Indies.¹⁰⁵

The Asquith Commission was appointed in August 1943 with an impressive and experienced membership¹⁰⁶ ‘to consider the principles which should guide the promotion of higher education, learning and research and the development of universities in the colonies’.¹⁰⁷ The Commission was also charged with exploring the ‘... means whereby universities and other appropriate bodies in the United Kingdom may be able to co-operate with institutions of higher education in the colonies in order to give effect to these principles’.¹⁰⁸ Asquith saw the ‘establishment of universities as an inescapable corollary of any policy which aims at the achievement of colonial self-government [and supported] the provision at an early date of facilities for university education in the colonies themselves’.¹⁰⁹ The Commission took the view that there should be a transitional stage during which a local university college would be established and work within a regulatory academic framework imposed by a British University such as London or Durham. After a period of improvement, demonstrable ‘good practice’ and pending a successful academic review, the local institution

¹⁰⁴ See, Asquith Report, p. 4. Recent scholarship has suggested that the prominence given to the Asquith Commission relative to the Elliot Commission has been overstated, see Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*, p. 30.

¹⁰⁵ The Committee was chaired by Sir James Irvine and included Margery Perham, Dr Raymond Priestley, P. M. Sherlock, and H.W. Springer. The secretary was T. R. Rowell. Additional members were W. D. Inniss who served as a member during deliberations in Trinidad and J. A. Lukkhoo who joined the Committee for meetings in British Guiana, see Colonial Office, *Report of the West Indies Committee of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies*, Cmd. 6654, (London, June 1945). [Irvine Report] A summary of the Committee's report is also included in the Asquith Report, pp. 94-100.

¹⁰⁶ The membership comprised, Sir Donald Cameron, A. M. Carr-Saunders, H. J. Channon, Sir Fred Clarke, J. F. Duff, Lord Hailey, Sir James Irvine, Sir Richard Livingstone, R. Marrs, Professor Lillian. M. Penson, Margery Perham, R. E. Priestley, Professor J. A. Ryle, R.V. Southwell & J. A. Venn, see, Asquith Report, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ Asquith Report, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ Asquith Report, p.11.

could be expected to achieve independent status.¹¹⁰ In order to ensure that British Universities were providing effective support for the development of colonial colleges, Asquith recommended the formation of a new agency, the IUC. In addition to responsibilities for general matters of academic administration, it was anticipated that the IUC would liaise with the proposed Colonial University Grants Advisory Committee (CUGAC)¹¹¹ whose specific responsibility was to provide the Secretary of State with advice on financial matters and aid to support colonial educational projects.¹¹²

It was envisaged that while the IUC would eventually comprise representatives from all British Universities there would be an initial period of transition to enable the formation of a special relationship between the colonial colleges and London University with a view to colonial students being examined for a degree awarded under the aegis of London.¹¹³ Administrative preparations began in October 1944, when the University of London established a Special Committee to examine the nature of the relationship between the university and the colonial colleges and the procedures that would be required.¹¹⁴ The chair

¹¹⁰ The transitional period was usually left unspecified, although the McLean Report anticipated a period of 10 years would be required for Raffles College to achieve the necessary qualities of a competent university.

¹¹¹ CO 859/87/9. The CUGAC chairman was Sir Hector Hetherington, Vice Chancellor of the University of Glasgow and Walter Adams, secretary of the IUC was appointed secretary of the Grants Advisory Committee (Great Britain). This latter committee was very powerful including such eminent figures as Lord Hailey, Sir James Irvine, Vice-Chancellor of the University of St Andrews, Sir Walter Moberly, chairman of the University Grants Committee, Professor D. Hughes Parry, Vice Chancellor of the University of London and Dr R. E. Priestly, Vice Chancellor, University of Birmingham.

¹¹² The Asquith Report, p. 106. For a report on the work of the IUC during its initial years see, Colonial Office, *Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies 1946-54*, Cmd. 9515, (London, 1955). The first secretary of the IUC, Walter Adams (later Sir), served with distinction, 1946-1955. He had previously worked for the Society for the Protection of Science and Learning to assist academic lecturers who had been displaced on grounds of race, religion or political circumstances. He was later to encounter hostility from all quarters during his appointment as Principal at the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and later when he became Director at the LSE in 1967, see James Joll, 'Adams, Sir Walter, (1906-1975)', <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10/1093/ref:odnb/30751> [accessed 14/06/21]

¹¹³ See, Asquith Report, pp.37-43; Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership*; B. Pattison, *Special Relations: The University of London and New Universities Overseas 1947-1970*, (London, 1984), pp. 1-32. With reference to the University of London Institute of Education, see Angela Little, *Seventy-Five Years of Education Partnerships with Developing Countries*, (unpublished paper, January, 2004).

¹¹⁴ It was expected that before a college was accepted to join the partnership 'the University would be satisfied that, in relation to staff, resources, equipment and machinery of government, the arrangements were appropriate to an institution aspiring to university status ... within each Colonial College [there was] an Academic Body charged with the duty of formulating academic policy', Pattison, *Special Relations*, p. 29.

of the Senate Committee was Alexander Carr-Saunders who was already a member of the Asquith Commission. The arrangement worked well as the IUC and the University of London subscribed to similar principles in the development of higher education, for example, the Asquith Committee envisaged the colonial university ‘maintaining all that is best in local traditions and cultures’¹¹⁵ while the Senate Committee emphasised that a tertiary institution ‘... should be an integral part of the intellectual, technical and economic life of the community it serves. It should accordingly be the prime duty of the Academic Body established ... to frame its courses of study with due regard to local needs and circumstances.’¹¹⁶ As Ashby pointed out the appointment of the Senate Committee was critically important as ‘... it ensured that when the Commission’s recommendations were made public ... all the [essential] tortuous and time-consuming motions of academic diplomacy ... had already been completed’.¹¹⁷ This has considerable significance for this thesis as it illustrates the central administrative role played by Carr-Saunders and the invaluable experience of higher education developments in the colonies that he gained prior to his subsequent role as chair of the Commission of Enquiry in Malaya.

As we have seen the Secretary of State also informed the House of Commons of his intention to appoint another Commission in addition to Asquith ‘to report on the organisation and facilities of the existing centres of higher education in British West Africa, and to make recommendations regarding future university development in that area’.¹¹⁸ The task presented to the chairman Walter Elliot and members of the Commission¹¹⁹ was particularly onerous not least given the vast territories they sought to cover ‘... the boundaries of [which] are not

¹¹⁵ Asquith Report, p. 10.

¹¹⁶ University of London Senate Minutes, 25 October, 1944; cited by Ashby, *Universities*, p. 213.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 213-214.

¹¹⁸ Colonial Office, *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa*, Cmd. 6655, (London, June 1945), p.vi.

¹¹⁹ Following recommendations from the Secretary of State, the Commission included three African members. The full membership was: Walter Elliot (chair), H. J. Channon, J. R. Dickenson, Elliot; Sir Geoffrey Evans, Julian Huxley, A. Creech Jones, B. Mouat Jones, K. A. Korsah, The Rev. I. O. Ransome Kuti, Eveline C. Martin, Margaret Read, E. H. Taylor-Cummings, Professor A. E. Trueman, see the Elliot Report, p. ii.

even contiguous: they are separated from each other by large territories, administered by several foreign powers.¹²⁰ There were of course other imperatives - political, economic and educational - which belied the integrity of the regional concept of British West Africa and by extension the relevance of the idea of a unitary university.¹²¹

The Commission, nonetheless, took up the challenge of its enquiry; three preparatory months were spent in London taking written and oral evidence from a variety of sources before travelling out to West Africa on 15 January 1944 where a further three months were spent visiting the territories under review. Every opportunity to elicit opinion on the subject of higher education was taken as the commissioners ‘... visited the colleges, all grades of schools ... night classes, technical courses, army technical training units, farm schools, land resettlement schemes, research institutes, hospitals, health services, native authorities, municipal authorities, mines ports and labour organisations’.¹²² They returned to England on 10 April 1944 where their work continued and further discussions were held involving a further thirty three days of meetings.

The commissioners agreed that higher education should be extended but the form this should take and the extent of provision to be implemented was disputed.¹²³ The Commission was divided and broke into two unequal factions which authored a majority and a minority report. The “majority” report, supported by the chairman Walter Elliot and eight other commissioners including the three West African members, K. A. Korsah, Rev. I. O. Ransome Kuti and E. H. Taylor-Cummings proposed the development of university colleges in Nigeria, the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone and hence were known as the “trinitarians”. The “minority” report was produced by Professor Channon, Sir Geoffrey Evans, Julian Huxley,

¹²⁰ Ibid., p. 1.

¹²¹ Clive Whitehead, ‘The Two-Way Pull’, p. 132.

¹²² Ibid., pp. vi-vii.

¹²³ For discussion of the issues see, Livsey, *Nigeria's University Age*, pp. 30-40.

Arthur Creech Jones and Dr Margaret Read, the “unitarians”. They recommended the establishment of a unitary university college in Ibadan, Nigeria to serve the entire region of West Africa, together with territorial colleges to be established in Nigeria, the Gold Coast and Sierra Leone and The Gambia.¹²⁴ They proposed that these colleges should offer academic courses to an Intermediate level and offer training for teachers and social welfare workers while also providing adult education courses and extra-mural activities.¹²⁵ The failure to resolve differences of opinion clearly reduced the impact of the Commission’s work and in retrospect it is difficult to fully appreciate how the enquiry could conclude in such disarray and it would appear, with acrimony.¹²⁶ After all, the Commission comprised a professional membership familiar with the culture and protocols of enquiry by committee and had worked closely together for a not inconsiderable period of time on the West African investigation.

Livsey has argued that divisions were caused by ‘... contrasting ideas about which geographical frames offered the best route to development’. For the majority group there were two key units, ‘... the colony which was held to require a university and the empire, across which its qualifications would be recognised’. They saw university development as an organic process and stressed the rationality of gradualism’. In contrast, the minority group claimed ‘... a technocratic, planners’ expertise which stressed efficiency ... They dismissed the claim of individual colonies to universities and recognised only the relevance of the geographical unit of the empire and the imperial region of British West Africa, in university planning’.¹²⁷ This analysis tends to ignore other more powerful tensions which coalesced around the politics of decision-making in London and the political aspirations of local African territories. The problem facing the Elliot Commission was arguably less an intra-

¹²⁴ Ibid., p.35.

¹²⁵ See, Elliot Report, p. 175.; for discussion see, Whitehead, ‘The Two-Way Pull’, pp. 119-33; Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 211-223.

¹²⁶ Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age*, p. 34.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 35-36.

commission conflict over educational ideas and more a failure by both groups to fully interpret and understand education and its relationship to political development sought by indigenous communities. As a result of the impasse within the Commission and African opposition to British policy, the IUC intervened and a small delegation led by Sir William Hamilton Fyfe, Vice Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen, went out to West Africa in an attempt to resolve matters. The delegation recognised the case for another university and recommended the establishment of a second university college in the Gold Coast.¹²⁸ The concession was later agreed, subject to funding from local government, by the new Labour Government's Secretary of State, Creech Jones. This represented an ironic change in policy since as a member of the Elliot Commission Creech Jones had supported the minority group's unitarian university proposal.

4.6. Conclusion

As the ACEC discussions and the Moyne despatch of April 1941 made clear, there was strong support in Whitehall for the McLean Commission's recommendation to establish a university college in Singapore based on the amalgamation of Raffles College and the College of Medicine. According to Dr Linehan this had also been agreed in Singapore,¹²⁹ although Governor Thomas appears not to have formally endorsed any agreement and from the evidence presented in this chapter it seems unlikely that he would have changed his position. By 1945 this was something of an irrelevance. The period of Japanese occupation which turned 'Malaya Upside Down'¹³⁰ was over but political uncertainty and upheaval

¹²⁸ See, CO 554/135/3, Inter-University Council for Higher Education in the Colonies, *Report of the Delegation to West Africa, 21 December 1946-15 January 1947*. [Hamilton Fyfe Report]; for discussion see, Whitehead, 'The Two-Way Pull', pp. 130-133; Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership*, pp 91-94.

¹²⁹ BW 90/543. Linehan, Extract from Notes on Malayan Education, October 1945.

¹³⁰ Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*.

continued.¹³¹ The long period of internment in Japanese prison camps had taken its toll on Thomas who retired to London in 1946 following his liberation.

The McLean Commission produced an important report which subsequently encouraged Professor Channon to a greater level of involvement in the development of colonial higher education. Together with Sir Christopher Cox and through his work with Oliver Stanley, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Channon had a significant influence on war-time planning and policy development through his policy papers. His enhanced reputation led to further appointments, for example, membership of the Asquith Commission and the Elliot Commission.¹³² He was an advocate of a structured, incremental approach to the foundation of a university which was consistent with the philosophy of the Asquith Commission.

Considerable efforts to effect policy changes were made during the Second World War. As discussed in chapter three the CD & W Act of 1940 was an important piece of legislation which committed finance for the development of higher education and research with additional funding being made available under the provisions of a second CD & W Act in 1945. It is also fair to say that following the outbreak of the war, higher education policy-making had been addressed purposefully and there had been some positive, if limited developments, in Africa as a result of the Asquith and Elliot Commissions. Perhaps most significant, however, was the establishment of administrative agencies such as the IUC under whose aegis colonial higher education was to develop more strongly over the next two

¹³¹ Following the British Military Administration (BMA) October-March 1946, the Malayan Union was introduced in April 1946 but proved to be short-lived and was succeeded by the Federation of Malaya in February 1948. Sir Franklin Gimson was appointed Governor of Singapore in April 1946 and Sir Edward Gent, following his appointment as Governor of the Union, was briefly High Commissioner of the Federation, see Stockwell, *British Documents on the End of Empire, Part 1*, pp. 25-36.

¹³² Despite this, he was described as a “divisive figure” by members of the Elliot Commission, see Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age*, p. 34. See also, James Duff, ‘The Ecology of Higher Education’, *Minerva*, Vol. 5, No. 1, (1966), pp. 39-46.

decades¹³³ and the CUGAC which brought a more coherent and systematic approach to the process of funding colonial development.¹³⁴

In 1944 the Senate of the University of London appointed a Special Committee to plan the formulation and administration of special relationships between the University and colonial colleges, a prescient action which made an important contribution to the implementation of policy to follow.¹³⁵ At the centre of these developments was Carr-Saunders. Already a member of the influential Asquith Committee, he was appointed chairman of the University of London's Special Relationships Committee in 1944, a position he held until 1956.¹³⁶ He went on to play a key role in the work of the IUC as a member of the executive committee, and vice-chair from 1946 to 1951 and chair from 1951 to 1956. These positions, it should not be forgotten, were supernumerary to his full-time role as Director of the LSE and they provided him with invaluable experience of policy development in the field of colonial higher education.¹³⁷ The responsibilities and memberships of key advisory committees contributed to his growing reputation in the field of leadership and management of higher education with particular reference to the development of colonial universities. Following the Second World War when the position of higher education in Malaya was subject to review, Carr-Saunders was a strong candidate to lead a commission of enquiry.

¹³³ See Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership*, pp. 228-237 for the work of the Commission on Higher Education for Africans in Central Africa in 1953.

¹³⁴ The CUGAC was proposed by the Asquith Commission, see, the Asquith Report, pp. 54-57; Maxwell, *Universities in Partnership*, pp. 21-34; Carr-Saunders, *New Universities Overseas*, pp. 97-104.

¹³⁵ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 211; Pattison, *Special Relations*, pp.1-16.

¹³⁶ Carr-Saunders was the first of three chairs of the Special Committee. Dame Lillian Penson was the second appointment and chaired the committee from 1956 to 1961; Professor Terence Ingold was the third and final chair between 1961 and 1970. For the complete membership see, *Ibid.*, p. 30.

¹³⁷ See chapter 7, p. 220, n. 39.

Chapter 5 The Carr-Saunders Enquiry

5.1. Introduction

During the inter-war period and under the aegis of the CO, a limited number of enquiries were made into the development of colonial higher education. A small committee appointed by the ACEC and chaired by Sir James Currie conducted an early investigation in the African territories in 1933. Towards the end of the decade, as we have seen, the De La Warr Commission considered provision in East Africa and published their report in 1937 while the first assessment of higher education in Malaya by the Imperial Government was undertaken in 1939. During an intensive period of war-time planning further commissions were appointed, for example, Asquith chaired a comprehensive enquiry into higher education in the colonies and the ways in which British Universities might provide support. Elliot chaired an enquiry into developments in British West Africa while Sir James Irvine chaired the West Indies Committee of the Asquith Commission for an enquiry into education in British Caribbean colonies.¹ These initiatives provide a background to, but not necessarily a direct connection with, the Malayan enquiry chaired by Carr-Saunders.

The membership of the Commission to Malaya was finalised during the period January-March 1947 although discussions had started earlier in the autumn of 1946.² Its work was to be facilitated through a timely association of several agencies and their representatives who were politically and educationally progressive. These included the IUC and its secretary Walter Adams; the CO and its representative Sir Raymond Priestley; the Governments of Singapore and the Malayan Union and their respective Governors, Sir Franklin Gimson and Sir Edward Gent; the Labour Government, principally through the Secretary of State, Arthur

¹ Asquith, Elliot and Irvine reported in June 1945 while Carr-Saunders reported in London in July 1948.

² *Singapore Free Press*, 15 March 1947.

Creech Jones.³ A significant and powerful intermediary between British and Malayan Governments was Malcolm MacDonald, a recent appointee to the post of Governor-General of Malaya, Singapore and British Borneo which he was to hold from 1946 until 1948. MacDonald was to prove a significant and long-standing figure of influence in developments in Southeast Asia including the foundation of the University of Malaya in October 1949.

This chapter begins with the analysis of a visit to Southeast Asia made by Sir Raymond Priestley following the end of the Pacific War to assess the potential for developing higher education in Malaya. This is followed by an assessment of the steps taken to appoint a commission together with the background and experience of the individuals who formed its membership; particular emphasis is given to influential members such as Sir Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders, Sir Ivor Jennings, and Leonard Barnes. The third section describes the enquiry undertaken by the Carr-Saunders Commission during March and April 1947, a period characterised by ‘... an impoverished and unstable economy, of food shortages ... lawlessness [and] disturbing Sino-Malay clashes resulting in bloodshed on both sides [with] violent crime particularly in Singapore ...’.⁴ A bitter and drawn-out insurgency moreover was about to begin and the BMA gave way in April 1946 to a contested and short-lived experimental civil government devised by the British Government in London. The educational discourse conducted by Carr-Saunders and his colleagues is assessed against this background of increasing political volatility and societal unease. The chapter concludes with an examination of the Commission’s report and its proposals for the establishment of a University of Malaya.

³ This refers to a progressive approach in a general sense and does not imply specific modernising colonial policies of the Labour Party designed to encourage concerted developments involving local government, trade unions and cooperatives. These have been considered elsewhere see, Paul Kelemen, ‘Modernising Colonialism: The British Labour Movement and Africa’, *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 34, No. 2, (June 2006), pp. 223-244. An interesting, related question centres on the significance of party-political affiliation. Oliver Stanley, a progressive Secretary of State and member of the conservative coalition Government was instrumental in creating policies in colonial higher education that his Labour Government successor Creech Jones was to follow rather than initiate. For a note on Stanley, see p. 94, n. 4 and n. 8 above.

⁴ See Colonial Office, *The Colonial Empire (1939-1947)*, Cmd. 7167, (London, 1947), para., 171.

5.2. The Visit of Sir Raymond Priestley

The question of developing higher education in Malaya was raised at the inaugural meeting of the IUC, a new agency whose establishment had been recommended by the Asquith Commission to provide support for the small number of independent colonial universities and the larger group of colleges aiming to become autonomous institutions.⁵ The IUC meeting was convened by the Secretary of State, George Hall, and was held in London on 8 March 1946.⁶ Walter Adams, reported that the Colonial Office had proposed a visit to Malaya by British academics to follow up the recommendations made by the McLean Commission in 1939 and it was agreed that Professor Noah Morris, IUC representative, Glasgow University, should travel to Malaya.⁷ Mr Mouat Jones, Vice Principal of Leeds University was later invited to accompany Morris.⁸ The arrangement of convenient dates proved difficult and a delay seemed inevitable until an intervention by Malcolm MacDonald emphasized the urgency of a visit to discuss developments and to familiarise the Malayan Governments with recent policy developments in London, particularly the recommendations of the Asquith report. A flurry of correspondence concluded with Christopher Cox, persuading Raymond Priestley to travel to Southeast Asia in August 1946 ‘... as an emissary for the Secretary of State to meet a special short notice request for exposition of the Asquith Report ...’.⁹ Priestley was an appropriate choice. He was experienced in the administration of higher education having been appointed as Vice Chancellor of Birmingham 1938 and a member of the Asquith Commission and the Irvine Committee which had reported on higher education in the West Indies. He was therefore well equipped to discuss the implications of the Asquith

⁵ See, Asquith Report, pp. 30-34. For a discussion of the IUC’s early work see, Colonial Office, *Inter-University Council for Higher Education Overseas 1946-54*, Cmd. 9515, (London, 1955).

⁶ CO 859/86/9, minutes of the IUC meeting. Hall was Secretary of State for the Colonies in the post-war Labour Government, August 1945-October 1946.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ BW90/543, letter from Walter Adams to T. I. K. Lloyd, 25 April, 1946.

⁹ BW 90 /550, Cox to Mouat-Jones and Sir James Irvine, 3 August, 1946; Secretary of State to Governor-General, Malaya, confidential telegram No. 100, repeated to Singapore, No. 689 and Malayan Union, No. 928, 30 July 1946.

Report with the Malayan Governments and to assess the prospects for the development of higher education in post-war Malaya. As he himself stated, 'I have served universities for most of my adult life ...I know universities well ... I have belonged to six myself ... I know most of the universities of the British Commonwealth and have visited a dozen of the best in the United States ...'.¹⁰

Priestley arrived in Singapore on the evening of 24 August 1946 having left London on 20 August and completing a series of flights that contributed to a journey which by present-day standards would be considered impossibly lengthy and arduous. His main task was to consider the views of Government officials, educationalists and others with a special interest in higher education. He sought to determine the extent to which the McLean Commission's report remained a relevant basis on which to tackle the problems of post-war higher education in Malaya and what specific action was needed in the short and medium term; mindful of political tensions between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore, Priestley wished to establish the most appropriate site for a new university.¹¹ In pursuit of his brief he followed a demanding schedule both in Singapore and the Malay Peninsula which included visits to the Technical College and Schools of Agriculture and Forestry, Kuala Lumpur, the SITC, Tanjong Malim and the Malay Women Teachers' Training College, Malacca. He met with numerous officials, for example, Malcolm MacDonald, Sir Edward Gent, Sir Franklin Gimson and the respective Principals of King Edward VII College of Medicine and Raffles College, Dr G. V. Allen and Professor W. E. Dyer together with the Director of Education, Singapore, Mr. J. B. Neilson. Priestley attended the Council meetings of both Raffles College

¹⁰ Cadbury Research Library Special Collections, University of Birmingham, (CRLSC), US38/2/5-7, Diaries, 1943-47, extract from a broadcast made on Radio Malaya, August, 1946. See CO 323/1737/14, for other educational broadcasts in the colonies.

¹¹ BW 90/550, Priestley identified the questions he asked in his Report to the Governor General, September 13, 1946.

and the College of Medicine and with Dr Allen's help obtained additional information from the Heads of both Colleges regarding developments and the problems they were facing

During his broadcast on Radio Malaya, he explained his mission and ideas on higher education. Priestley emphasised that in order to progress towards self-government it was essential to have a university that could train and educate future leaders. He gave a clear model for an effective university saying that '... the only university worthwhile in a developing colonial region is a comparatively small, wholly residential university of the highest standards ... and this '... is especially the case where different races have to learn to live together and achieve a common citizenship and outlook ...'.¹² Priestley's statements were entirely consistent with the philosophy of the Asquith Report although somewhat disingenuously he added that whilst '... it is an expensive ideal ... the Imperial Government has set quite a large sum to help the poorer colonies with the initial cost'.¹³ Under the provisions of the CD & W Act of 1945 a total of £4,500,000 was available for the development of higher education, but as Creech Jones had pointed out Malaya and Singapore would only receive a proportion of this amount following a consideration of their needs against those of other colonial claimants.¹⁴

As a result of his discussions in Malaya Priestley drew several conclusions.¹⁵ First, he believed that the Malayan Union and Singapore should cooperate as soon as possible to develop an institution of university rank. Second, he recommended the appointment of a Commission to enquire further into the key requisites for university development such as finance, staffing and governance. He advised that the membership of such a Commission should reflect an expertise in several areas such as medical education, science and arts together with a working knowledge of the relationships being developed between London

¹² CRLSC, US38/2/5-7, Diaries, 1943-47.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *HC Deb* 29 January 1947 vol 432 cc 221-2W.

¹⁵ BW 90/550, Priestley's Report to the Governor-General, 13 September, 1946.

University and Colonial Colleges. Third, he felt that it was unnecessary to advertise the post of Principal of the new institution as the existing principal, Dr. George Allen ‘... has the necessary local knowledge and experience and it is extremely unlikely in my view that a better man can be found if the field outside is explored ...’.¹⁶ Following conversations with Sir Franklin Gimson, the Governor of Singapore, Priestley took the view that Singapore provided the most suitable location for the new university believing that ‘... the project will be indefinitely deferred unless Singapore is accepted as the immediate site. Gimson had stated his preference for Singapore rather than Kuala Lumpur as a site for the university on the grounds that the cultural values of the staff were better and the prospects of significant endowments were greater. In a prescient observation Gimson explained that, ‘... the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore controversy is likely to be the crux of the whole situation here-I think the two points of view may be based on such dissimilar premises as to be irreconcilable’.¹⁷

In many ways Priestley was progressive in his educational thinking. He advised that the undue specialisation that characterised much of school education in Britain should be avoided in Malaya and that qualifications other than intellectual attainment should be taken into account in selecting students for entry to the university college. He took a holistic view of the concept of a university and was against the separation of discrete Faculties of Arts, Science and Medicine. He also suggested that a commission of enquiry should specifically consider the question of university admission for Malay students and that a small number of places should be reserved for them.¹⁸ This was a politically astute observation given the

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

tensions between Malay, Chinese and Indian communities and proved to be consistent with educational policy which was later adopted by an independent Malaysia.¹⁹

It was recognised that Priestley's judgements were sound and that he had worked extremely diligently in Malaya, both in terms of the number of meetings he attended and the seriousness with which he had engaged in the complex issues of Malayan politics and their impact on social, cultural and particularly educational problems. His written "reports" tended to be informal and subjective and it is sometimes difficult to assess what he intended to write and what he actually produced, for example, there is a record of a "report" to the Governor-General, dated the 13 September 1946 and also a "diary".²⁰ Priestley gave three copies of what he described as an "interim note" to MacDonald who agreed with its findings. Priestley mentioned that MacDonald '... wants me to put in a full report giving the reasons that caused me to reach the decisions or form the opinions I have [but he admitted this] will be a bit of a strain but I must do it.'²¹ The available evidence suggests that Priestley did not produce a final report.²² As Cox confirmed: 'Nothing was said about your writing a [formal] report when you went to Malaya and we all [are] anxious that you should not feel under any kind of obligation to produce anything more than the extremely interesting series of notes that you have already made available to us'.²³ Throughout his adult life Priestley was an inveterate diarist and it would seem probable that the CO settled for his more informal notes and comments, after all he had agreed to go out to Malaya in haste, further delays had been avoided and he had helped to progress developments. Priestley acknowledged that although he had found his Malayan visit physically and emotionally exacting, the experience had been

¹⁹ For discussion of the concept of 'Malay Precedence' in a political context see, Philip Loh Fook Seng, 'Malay Precedence and the Federal Formula in the Federated Malay States, 1909 to 1939,' *JMBRAS*, Vol 45, No. 2, (1972), pp. 29-50.

²⁰ BW 90/550. See also discussion by Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation', p. 1164.

²¹ CRLSC, US38/12, Priestley's diaries.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ CO 1045/483, Cox, letter to Priestley, 23 October, 1946.

positive and personally rewarding, a view endorsed by Malcolm MacDonald who spoke highly of the work he had undertaken saying that:

Priestley's visit was a conspicuous success. He never spared himself in travelling, meeting people and pursuing his enquiries. Everyone was impressed by his personality, zeal and high qualifications for his mission. Because of this, his suggestions will carry all the greater weight here. I believe them to be sound and very helpful to us.²⁴

On his return to London Priestley met with CO officials who also considered his visit to have been successful. Although Priestley's approach was intuitive and general, rather than measured and forensic, his recommendations were to provide the basis of a policy statement by the Secretary of State and confidence to proceed with the appointment of the Carr-Saunders Commission.²⁵

5.3. Membership of the Commission

The potential membership for a Commission of enquiry was considered at a meeting on 12 November 1946. The meeting was attended by several CO officials including, T. I. K. Lloyd and J. J. Paskin; Christopher Cox, and Walter Adams were also present.²⁶ Although the Secretary of State did not attend the meeting, he confirmed his agreement with Priestley's recommendation that the membership of the Commission should reflect expertise in the areas of medical education, science and the arts and that someone familiar with recent work by London University in supporting developments with colonial colleges should be included.²⁷ The Colonial Secretary made two further suggestions; he proposed that a member with expertise in socio-economics or sociology having 'the stature of Carr-Saunders or Tawney' should be appointed together with another member having 'political experience and

²⁴ BW 90/550, Governor-General, Malaya, Telegram to the Secretary of State 24 September, 1946.

²⁵ For a brief discussion of Priestley's role see Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation', pp.1163-1164.

²⁶ BW 90/550. T. I. K. Lloyd was Assistant under Secretary of State 1946-47 with superintending responsibility for Eastern Department. J. J. Paskin, was Assistant Secretary and Head of the Eastern Dept., 1942-47, see, Stockwell, *British Documents on the End of Empire, Malaya, Part I*, p. 24.

²⁷ CO 1045/483, Secretary of State, telegram to Governor-General, 1 November, 1946.

understanding'.²⁸ After a full discussion it was agreed that Alexander Carr-Saunders should be proposed as chairman given his high academic standing, his membership of the Asquith Commission and his position as Director of the LSE. His involvement as chairman of the University of London's Special Senate Committee which had worked with colonial colleges was regarded as particularly relevant and provided the additional expertise that the Secretary of State required; Geoffrey Crowther, editor of *The Economist*, an experienced political commentator and a governor at LSE was suggested as the political member. Further discussion resulted in other persons being considered for membership of the commission, for example, Professor Leonard Parsons, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Professor of Children's Diseases, University of Birmingham; Professor J. A. Ryle, Professor of Social Medicine, University of Oxford as the medical member; Professor William Pugh, Professor of Geology and Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Manchester as the science member and Professor Keith Hancock, Professor of Economic History, University of Oxford as the arts member.²⁹

By November 1946, Priestley's influence was particularly strong. His procedural recommendations had been accepted by the Secretary of State and even some of the above nominees carried his personal endorsement, for example, Leonard Parsons and Professor Pugh. It is perhaps understandable that Priestley recommended these individuals given that Parsons was a Professor at Birmingham University and Pugh was a Professor of Geology, a field of academic and practical interest to Priestley.³⁰ Recognising the importance of representation from Malaya, MacDonald advised that the Commission should have at least two local members.³¹ This was agreed by the Secretary of State and as a result Tuan Haji Mohamed Eusoff, of the MCS and Sir Han Hoe Lim, a member of the Advisory Council,

²⁸ BW 90/550.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ See, BW 90/550, *Composition of the Commission. United Kingdom Members*, 26, November 1946.

³¹ Ibid., Governor-General telegram to Secretary of State, 14 November, 1946.

Singapore were appointed. Officials at the CO correctly anticipated that not all the original nominees would be available to become members of the Commission, for example, Parsons, Ryle and Crowther while Professor Hancock had been commissioned to write an official history of the Second World War and could not serve.³²

It was not until January 1947 that a formal announcement confirming the establishment of a Commission of enquiry was made. It came as a response to a request for information on the development of higher education in Malaya from Oliver Stanley, the previous Secretary of State for the Colonies. A response was made in the House of Commons by Creech Jones, Labour's Secretary of State. It followed the visit to Malaya made by Dr Priestley and was informed by the ideas of the Asquith Commission and discussions with the CO. There were several key points which Creech Jones emphasised. First, was his decision that a University College should be established through an amalgamation of two Singaporean Colleges, the King Edward VII College of Medicine and Raffles College. He envisaged that this would represent the first phase in the development of a University of Malaya. Second, Creech Jones informed the House that he was to appoint a small Commission of enquiry chaired by Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders to take matters forward by considering the key issues of governance, finance and staffing arrangements. Third, he emphasised the importance of enquiry and local consultation to assess relationships with research and teaching institutions in the Colony and the Peninsula and made reference to the foundation of chairs in Malay and Chinese studies. He concluded by confirming his intention to appoint a Principal-designate of the university college.³³

Carr-Saunders, having accepted the appointment as chairman of the Commission in January 1947 became more directly involved in discussions concerning the membership, for

³² See, Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Nation', p.1165.

³³ *HC Deb* 29 January 1947 vol 432 cc221-2W. Dr George Allen, the Principal of the College of Medicine was confirmed as Principal-designate.

example, with Walter Adams who advised that ‘... every effort should be made to try to secure Professor George Pickering as the ‘medical member’,³⁴ emphasising that ‘he has an immense knowledge of medical schools and medical education; he has the very great value of experience on the University Grants Committee; and is a man of academic distinction in his own subject’.³⁵ The ability of the Carr-Saunders Commission to reach agreement on an informed and visionary final report in difficult circumstances is in no small way a measure of the qualities and experience which individual members brought to the enquiry.³⁶ The biographical accounts which follow provide a brief glimpse into the professional lives of members and serve to contextualise their engagement with the political, cultural and educational issues of the enquiry. Following an introductory note on Carr-Saunders, chairman of the Commission, the accounts are presented in alphabetical order; rather more emphasis is given to Carr-Saunders, Ivor Jennings and Leonard Barnes who made significant contributions to the work of the Commission.

Sir Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders (1886-1966)

Carr-Saunders’ early career was uncertain and he was doubtful about the direction he should take.³⁷ He had a strong academic background in the natural sciences gaining a first in zoology at Magdalen College, Oxford in 1908. He was then elected to a biological scholarship which enabled him to study for a year in Naples before returning to Oxford as a demonstrator in comparative anatomy. He moved to London and studied biometrics under Karl Pearson.³⁸ The following year Carr-Saunders became secretary of the research committee of the

³⁴ BW 90/550, Letter, Walter Adams to Carr-Saunders, 23 January 1947.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Walter Adams, Note, Appointment of Commission, 3 February 1947. Pickering’s details follow, see pp. 154-55.

³⁶ As we have seen, some enquiries failed to agree a unitary report, for example, the Elliot Commission into Higher Education in West Africa 1945, see earlier discussion, chapter 4, pp. 125-127.

³⁷ Dahrendorf, *LSE*, p. 394.

³⁸ Pearson (1857-1936) established the discipline of mathematical statistics and formed the first university statistics department at University College, London in 1911.

Eugenics Education Society. and began a long association with the Eugenics Society.³⁹ At the same time his interests were increasingly social and humanitarian and he took up a residency at Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel, East London from September 1911 to June 1913. He developed further his social work and reformist interests becoming honorary sub-warden during his final year at Toynbee.⁴⁰

Toynbee Hall was no ordinary voluntary agency. It took its name as a tribute to Arnold Toynbee, the famed social reformer and from the outset there was a close affiliation between Oxford colleges, particularly Balliol, and the settlement in Whitechapel. Over the years many students who were to become illustrious public figures such as Attlee, Beveridge and Tawney took up residence at Toynbee Hall.⁴¹ Lord Milner was a founder member of Toynbee Hall, an association deriving from his student days at Oxford and his close friendship with Arnold Toynbee.⁴² Milner was chairman of the Council from 1911 until his death in 1925; he regularly attended meetings and despite his appointment to the War Cabinet in 1916 continued to do so whenever possible.⁴³ Toynbee Hall had opened on Christmas Eve in 1884 with Samuel Barnett as Warden and a small number of student-residents. It was founded largely through the efforts of Barnett, a graduate of Wadham College, Oxford and clergyman, who had come to the East End with his wife Henrietta some ten years earlier as vicar of St Jude's parish dedicated to the alleviation of poverty and the social ills of the slums

³⁹ Carr-Saunders joined the Eugenics Education Society in 1910 which later became the Eugenics Society in 1924. He was awarded the Society's first Galton medal in 1946 and served as President 1949-1953, *Eugenics Review*, Vol. 38, No. 1, (1946), pp. 39-42. He was no ideologue having an academic and critical view of eugenics as a field of study. He defined this as 'the bearings of the science of heredity together with such complementary studies as the influence of the environment upon human society,' see, A. M. Carr-Saunders 'A Criticism of Eugenics,' *Eugenics Review*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (October 1913), pp. 214-233, p. 214. It is important to note his commitment and support for the improvement of Race Relations, see below, p. 143, n. 53.

⁴⁰ London Metropolitan Archives, (LMA), ACC/2486/013, Toynbee Hall, Annual Report, 1912-13.

⁴¹ LMA, A/TOY/009, The Universities Settlement in East London. For a list of residents 1884-1934 see, J. A. R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall*, (London, 1935). pp. 283-299.

⁴² See, above, chapter 3, p. 61, n. 13.

⁴³ See, LMA, ACC/2486-1, Toynbee Hall, Council Minutes.

of the East End.⁴⁴ Barnett had a distinctive approach to social reform and outlined his ideas in a paper given at St John's College, Oxford.⁴⁵ His main proposal involved the establishment of a University Settlement which would support university students to serve as resident social workers in the areas of the city where social needs were greatest, where there was '... the need for scientific research, the need for a wider life through education and the need for leadership'.⁴⁶ Barnett was later to emphasise the necessity for the collection data on social deprivation in order to achieve social reform.⁴⁷

These methods were part of a tradition established by Beveridge when he was sub-warden at Toynbee Hall from September 1903 to November 1905.⁴⁸ His approach to social research resonated strongly with Carr-Saunders when he became a resident some ten years later, although he perceived that there had been some slippage from the Beveridge model. During the summer of 1913 Carr-Saunders wrote a bold, reformist memorandum in collaboration with two other residents, Wilfred Langdon and T. S. Lukis which argued that a reform of practice was overdue.⁴⁹ The memorandum highlighted internal divisions at Toynbee Hall between a "traditionalist" group who continued to support practical philanthropy and a "modernist" group who supported a continuation and development of the Beveridge policy of social research and investigation as a prerequisite for reformist policies.⁵⁰ As a result, and probably for the first and last time in his career, Carr-Saunders was described as being part of a group of "rebellious critics".⁵¹ Carr-Saunders discussed matters with Ernest

⁴⁴ For Barnett's work (1844-1913) see, Emily K. Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', (unpublished PhD thesis, Queen Mary College, University of London, 1969); A biography written by his wife Henrietta, H. O. Barnett, *Cannon Barnett: His Life, Work and Friends*, (London, 1918); Asa Briggs and Anne Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years*, (London, 1994), pp. 25-60.

⁴⁵ Barnett, S. A. *Settlements of University Men in Great Towns*, A paper read at St. John's College Oxford, 17 November 1883, repr., J. A. R. Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall*, pp. 266-273.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ LMA, Annual Report, Toynbee Hall, 1903. p. 8. See also, Briggs & Macartney, *Toynbee Hall*, 1984, p. 62.

⁴⁸ See, W. H. Beveridge, *Power and Influence*, (London, 1953), pp. 21-38.

⁴⁹ LMA, A/TOY/006, Residents Memorandum.

⁵⁰ Emily K. Abel, 'Canon Barnett and the First Thirty Years of Toynbee Hall', p. 196.

⁵¹ Briggs & Macartney, *Toynbee Hall: The First Hundred Years*, pp. 85-86. Also, Pimlott, *Toynbee Hall*, p. 135.

Aves an established and highly regarded member of the Toynbee Hall Council who had previously worked with Charles Booth and made a significant contribution to the research into the social and economic conditions of the working classes in London.⁵² Carr-Saunders agreed to withdraw the memorandum, a decision which was noted at the next meeting of the Council chaired by Lord Milner on 16 June 1913; there is no evidence to suggest that the chairman commented further on the matter! This was the context in which Carr-Saunders worked and the people with whom he associated during a critical and formative point in his career. Toynbee Hall was a source of what has been described as “his hard-headed liberalism”.⁵³

After a lengthy period of war service, a return to teaching biology at Oxford and the publication of his first book, *The Population Problem* (1922) he was appointed to the newly established Charles Booth Chair of Social Science at the University Liverpool in 1923. During his years at Liverpool and reliant on colleagues such as Ms Elinor Black, he developed new methods in the teaching of social science and training of social workers but did not neglect his own research and several publications followed for example, in collaboration with D. Caradog Jones, *A Survey of the Social Structure of England and Wales* (1927); with P. A. Wilson, *The Professions* (1933); with P. Sargant Florence and R. Peers, *Consumer's Cooperation in Great Britain* (1938). His own, *World Population* was published in 1936.⁵⁴

⁵² See, Rosemary O'Day, 'Aves, Ernest Harry (1857-1917)', <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/47803> [accessed 18/01/2020]

⁵³ Maurice Freedman, 'Sir Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders (1886-1966)', *Race*, Vol. 8, No. 3, (1967), pp. 293-295. Carr-Saunders was the first chairman of the Council of the Institute of Race Relations from 1958-1964. He then became the Institute's first President and was also a member of the editorial advisory board for the Institute's Journal – *Race*, later, *Race and Class*. Following his death, the Carr-Saunders Memorial Lecture was established by the Institute of Race Relations. The inaugural lecture, entitled, *Race Relations: The Limits of Voluntary Action* was delivered on 20 November 1967 at the Goldsmith's Hall, London, by The Rt. Hon. Sir Edward Boyle, MP see, *Race*, Vol. 9, No. 3, (1968).

⁵⁴ Obituary, D. Caradog Jones and T. H. Marshall, 'Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, Vol. 130, No. 2, (1967), pp. 276-279.

His proven research status and his successful experience of academic leadership in the social sciences at Liverpool provided a sound basis for his appointment to succeed William Beveridge as Director of the London School of Economics in 1937, a position he was to hold for a period of nineteen years. He was warmly welcomed by LSE academic staff including controversial figures such as Harold Laski, Lionel Robbins and Theo Chorley and made a refreshing change from the enigmatic period of management during the Beveridge years.⁵⁵ It was observed that ‘... his lean frame and ascetic, somewhat melancholy mien concealed great energy ... his exertions responded to the breadth of his intellectual interests and his deep sense of social responsibility...’.⁵⁶ Such qualities, together with the attributes that have been reviewed, suggest that his appointment as chairman of the enquiry was appropriate and well made.

Leonard Barnes (1895-1977)

Leonard Barnes was born in London and following his education at St Paul’s School he won an open scholarship to University College, Oxford to read Greats. Before he could begin his studies in 1914 the First World War claimed him and he joined the Kings Royal Rifle Corps with whom he served for a total of 24 months on front line duty, a period of service which very few officers survived. He rose to the rank of captain and was awarded the Military Cross with bar. Just seven weeks before the end of the war however he suffered severe injuries and was invalided out of the army. He underwent multiple operations during the course of a year in hospital and suffered physical pain and trauma intermittently throughout his life.

More positively he was finally able to begin his academic studies at University College, Oxford in 1919 and graduated with a first in Greats. He went on to be the top

⁵⁵ Dahrendorf, *LSE*, p. 335.

⁵⁶ Henry Phelps Brown, ‘Sir Alexander Morris Carr-Saunders (1886-1966)’, <http://www.oxforddnb.com.chain.kent.ac.uk/view/article/32308> [accessed 10/03/2016]

scoring candidate in the higher civil service examinations and choose to enter the CO, a decision most probably influenced by his father who had been a senior civil servant at the “Office”. Barnes found it hard to reconcile his war-time experiences with life in the CO and became increasingly dissatisfied. With few exceptions he was dismissive of his colleagues describing them as ‘gifted hacks [who] looked like pettifogging deities who had chosen to eke out their being in the dim netherworld of low visibility and high irrelevance’.⁵⁷ The CO responded with restrained disapproval saying that ‘... some men ... can never be happy in the Civil Service ... such a one is Leonard Barnes ... he stayed in the Office only a few years; a man of Leonard Barnes’ temperament could not adjust himself to the restraints of the government machine. And so, entirely at his own wish, he resigned, and set out upon a new life in the open spaces of Zululand ...’⁵⁸ A more convincing explanation was that Barnes ‘... grew increasingly dissatisfied, partly because acquaintances such as Hugh Dalton, T. E. Lawrence and above all Norman Leys were imparting to him their doubts about the morality of colonial rule, but perhaps also on account of a general restlessness which Barnes attributed to his traumatic war experiences ...’.⁵⁹

In the event Barnes resigned from the CO in 1925 and went out to South Africa with a war-time friend Eric Gibb to farm under the South African government’s settlement scheme for ex-servicemen. It was principally as a result of his experience of farming on what had been an African reserve, that Barnes left and devoted himself to writing as a journalist, becoming increasingly critical of South African racial policies. He returned to Britain in 1932 and became an active member of the Labour Party and through his writing, an increasingly

⁵⁷ School of Oriental and African Studies, (SOAS), PP MS 9, Barnes Box 10, Leonard Barnes, *Let Them Scratch: Memoirs of a Life Among Men*, p. 39. See also, A. McAdam, ‘Leonard Barnes and South Africa’, *Social Dynamics* Vol. 3, No. 2, (1977), pp. 41-53, p. 43.

⁵⁸ Sir Cosmo Parkinson, *The Colonial Office from Within*, (London, 1954), p. 114.

⁵⁹ Stephen Howe, ‘Barnes, Leonard John (1895-1977)’, <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/38831> [accessed 05/06/2018]

strident critic of colonial policies.⁶⁰ He became increasingly radicalised and by 1939 ‘Barnes was as far “left” as it was philosophically and politically possible to be without being a communist’.⁶¹ As a result Barnes suffered and felt victimised as the recipient of:

the most damaging of all stereotypes, “Red”. Acquaintances began to cut me, the Home Guard indicated that it would feel safer without my services. Newspapers I had contributed to found themselves unwilling to use my material. Invitations from the BBC dried up. ... I gathered that the *school-master sophist* with his quasi-papal powers, had passed sentence of ex-communication on me ... my record showed me unfit to serve my country.⁶²

He began an academic career and in 1935 was appointed lecturer in education at the University of Liverpool where it is possible that he may have had some contact with Carr-Saunders who at the time was head of the Department of Social Science.⁶³ When Carr-Saunders resigned from Liverpool in 1937 to take up the Directorship of the LSE, Leonard Barnes applied for the vacated post but his application was unsuccessful.⁶⁴ After the war in 1948 he accepted a position as secretary-director of the social work training *delegacy* at Oxford University where he was based at Barnett House, another connection with Carr-Saunders and Toynbee Hall.⁶⁵ Barnes was to remain at Oxford until his retirement in 1962 but not before he had achieved approval from the university for the training *delegacy* to be recognised as a full academic department teaching social science subjects such as sociology and social psychology.⁶⁶ Barnes was to prove an invaluable member of the Carr-Saunders

⁶⁰ See, Leonard Barnes, *The Future of the Colonies*, (London, 1936); ‘The Colonial Servant,’ in W. A. Robson, ed., *The British Civil Servant*, (London, 1937); *Empire or Democracy*, (London, 1939); *Soviet Light on the Colonies*, (1944).

⁶¹ McAdam, ‘Leonard Barnes and South Africa’, p. 49.

⁶² SOAS, PP MS 9 Barnes Box 10, Leonard Barnes, *Let them Scratch: Memoirs of a Life Among Men*. The “*school-master sophist*” was a metaphor for his hatred of authority see, Symonds, *Oxford and Empire*, p. 95.

⁶³ Enquiries to the Sydney Jones Library Special Collections and Archives, University of Liverpool, (SJLSCA), have confirmed that there is no apparent evidence of communication or contact between Carr-Saunders and Barnes during this time, personal correspondence received on 16 September 2020.

⁶⁴ SJLSCA, P405/6, Charles Booth Chair of Social Science, 1937-38. It is hardly surprising that Barnes, a Lecturer in Education of two years standing, should fail to be appointed as Head of the Social Sciences Department.

⁶⁵ The centre for social work was deemed to be a ‘delegacy’, that is, having a lower status than an academic department.

⁶⁶ See, Stephen Howe, ‘Barnes, Leonard John’, p. 2.

Commission particularly his contribution to writing the report.⁶⁷ His wife, Peggy Barnes, suggests that he played a major role noting that:

In 1948 Leonard Barnes was a member of the commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies under the chairmanship of Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders to undertake this work. Much of it was written by Leonard Barnes as Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders put it in a letter to him “our excellent secretary Morgan is not good at drafting will you please write a large part of this report” This he did.⁶⁸

Tuan Haji Mohamed Eusoff (1895-1957)

Tuan Haji Mohamed Eusoff, the son of Dato Panglima Kinta, was born into a traditional and wealthy family of Malay chiefs from the Kinta district in the state of Perak and was educated at Anderson School, named after Sir John Anderson, who served as Governor and High Commissioner of the Federated Malay States between 1904 and 1911. It has been described as ‘... the best boys’ school in Ipoh [where] he grew up in the company of the sons of high status European and Chinese families, all of whom spoke English’.⁶⁹ The school provided specialist classes in English for Malay students.⁷⁰ Eusoff was extensively involved in government and public services before and after the war and served on numerous voluntary and statutory organisations varying from United Nations committees to smaller associations in his own district of Kinta.⁷¹ He was a founder member of the Ipoh Rotary Club and elected as President from 1932 to 1933; he was appointed assistant registrar, cooperative societies,

⁶⁷ He was later appointed to chair a committee on Malay vernacular education which enquired into methods for raising scholastic attainment in Malay schools and admissions to Malay Training Colleges. See, Federation of Malaya, *Report of the Committee on Malay Education*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1951). [Barnes Report]

⁶⁸ SOAS, PP MS 9/24: Box No. 3, a hand-written note signed by Peggy Barnes on a preliminary page of a copy of the Carr-Saunders Report. The SOAS file note states that Barnes ‘wrote most of the report’ and personal correspondence with the SOAS archivist, 20 February 2020, confirms that this was “likely”. Although not entirely certain, with his authorial skills and publishing record, it is quite plausible that Barnes made an important contribution.

⁶⁹ Lynn Hollen Lees, ‘Being British in Malaya, 1890-1940, *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 1, (Jan. 2009), pp. 76-101, p. 99.

⁷⁰ Philip Loh Fook Seng, *Seeds of Separatism*, p. 137.

⁷¹ *Straits Times*, 8 July 1957.

Kuala Lumpur in 1935.⁷² In 1948 he was appointed to the Federal Legislative Council and continued his Rotarian activities as vice chairman of the Rotary club in Kuala Lumpur. As with other Malay leaders such as Dato Onn he spoke against the foundation of a university at a meeting of the Malay Association of Selangor in 1938 when he expressed Malay fears that the main beneficiaries of such a development would be students from the Chinese and Indian communities.⁷³ He was more progressive after the war and became a strong advocate of higher education. Linking education to the nationalist cause, he saw the university and its students as contributory to a new Malayan culture saying that ‘... it is for our students today to start laying the foundations of a fine Malayan tradition to which tomorrow’s students will add still more ...’⁷⁴ He believed that it was important to attend to ‘... life outside the classroom ... it is not enough just to attend lectures and take a degree ...’.⁷⁵ In 1958 he gave his name to Eusoff College which later became Eusoff Hall, the first women’s’ hall of residence at the University of Malaya in Singapore.⁷⁶ By 1951 the hereditary family title, the Panglima Kinta of Perak, passed to Dato Eusoff. He was also awarded an honorary doctorate in law at the University of Malaya’s convocation ceremony on 16 July 1951. He was made a Justice of the Peace in Selangor in 1948 and in Perak in 1953. In that year he became chairman of the University of Malaya’s council and the following year Pro-Chancellor of the University. He was an officer in the Malay Civil Service when he was appointed to the Carr-Saunders Commission on 20 March 1947.⁷⁷ As a result of his schooling and his experience of public service, particularly his membership of the Ipoh Rotary Club, Eusoff was familiar with British culture which ‘... illustrates the way Britishness could be balanced with other

⁷² Ibid., 18 July 1935.

⁷³ *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, 24 October 1938.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ <https://nus.edu.sg/osa/eusoffhall> [accessed, 09/05/2020]

⁷⁷ *Malaya Tribune*, 21 March 1947.

identities ...’⁷⁸ He argued against racial inequalities which suggests that his ‘... oblique references to the injustices of colonial rule and the not-endless patience of the Malays ought to be seen as an expression of early Malay nationalism’.⁷⁹ In his Rotary club speeches, Eusoff could be more direct when identifying the inequalities suffered by Malay people observing that whilst resources had been exploited and huge sums of money taken out of the country, ‘nothing has come back in the shape of benefactions for the promotion and encouragement of academic prowess of the people of this country’.⁸⁰

Ivor Jennings (1903-1965)

Sir William Ivor Jennings had an extraordinarily productive and successful career in which he made distinctive contributions both as an academic/advisor in the field of constitutional law and as an educational administrator in higher education. He was brought up in a respectable working-class family in Bristol where his father was a skilled carpenter and his mother a machinist in a local factory.⁸¹ When 10 years old he entered and passed the entrance examination for the ‘City School’ – as it was colloquially known, i.e., The Queen Elizabeth Hospital School for boys. Life at the Hospital School was spartan but he made good academic progress and left at 14 years of age to go to Bristol Grammar as an exhibition scholar which entitled him to free education and a grant of £15 per year. While he attended the grammar school as a day pupil, his father died while serving in France during World War 1. Jennings did not comment in detail on the effect of this dramatic and tragic death except with a reference to the family’s reduced financial circumstances which caused him to walk the six

⁷⁸ Lees, ‘Being British in Malaya’, p. 99.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 99.

⁸⁰ See, Su Lin Lewis, *Cities in Motion: Urban Life and Cosmopolitanism in Southeast Asia, 1920-1940*, (Cambridge, 2018), p. 130, n. 140. Eusoff regularly contributed articles to a Rotarian magazine distributed in Malaya, see, Dato Haji Mohd Eusoff, ‘The Malay Peasant’, *Roda*, 10, (October 1938), pp. 121-24. See also Datin Ragayah Eusoff, *Lord of Kinta: The Biography of Dato Panglima Kinta Eusoff*, (Petayling Jaya, 1955), cited by Lees, ‘Being British in Malaya’, p. 99.

⁸¹ Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICS), 125 14/1, Ivor Jennings, *The Road to Peradeniya*, The MS was subsequently published as an edited work, see, H. A. I. Goonetilleke, ed., *The Road to Peradeniya: An Autobiography of Sir William Ivor Jennings*, (Colombo, 2005).

miles to school each day, thereby saving the tram fare.⁸² He went on to gain a State Scholarship and Open Scholarship in mathematics at St. Catharine's College, Cambridge in 1922. By 1925 he achieved first class honours in the mathematics tripos (part 1) and in the law tripos (parts 1 & 2) before proceeding to a Whewell scholarship in international law and a series of law examination successes including a first-class award in the LLB examination, Cambridge before being called to the bar in 1928.

His first university appointment was as lecturer in law at the University of Leeds from 1925 to 1929 before moving to the London School of Economics in 1929 as Lecturer before being appointed as Reader in English Law, a position he was to hold from 1930 until 1940. His tenure at the LSE was highly stimulating and he developed a close association with leading scholars such as Harold Laski, and law department colleagues who included Otto Kahn-Freund, William Robson and Theo Chorley.⁸³ In this creative environment he produced a substantial body of academic research.⁸⁴ Towards the end of summer of 1940, Jennings was appointed as Principal of Ceylon University College for a period of five years. He arrived in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) in March 1941 and subsequently became the first Vice Chancellor of the newly founded and independent University of Ceylon in 1942.

On arrival in Ceylon, Jennings' main task was to develop a university from two existing institutions in Colombo, the Ceylon Medical College founded in 1870 and the Ceylon University College established in 1921. He familiarised himself with some of the difficulties and pursued his objectives.⁸⁵ Drawing on his legal and constitutional experience he was able to formulate new legislation by amending the 1930 Bill. As he said: 'I could have

⁸² ICS 125 14/1, *The Road to Peradeniya*.

⁸³ See, Dahrendorf, *LSE*, p. 387.

⁸⁴ His publications included: *The Law and the Constitution*, (1933); *Parliamentary Reform*, (1934); *Cabinet Government*, (1936); *Parliament*, (1939); *A Federation for Western Europe*, 1940. See, W. A. Robson, 'Jennings Sir William Ivor (1903 – 1965)', <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/34181> [accessed 14/01/2020]

⁸⁵ See, Ivor Jennings, 'Higher Education in Ceylon', before 1945', in A. M. Carr-Saunders, *New Universities Overseas*, (London,1961), 240-41 (first publ. as 'The Foundation of the University of Ceylon' *University of Ceylon Review*, Vol. 9, No. 3, (July, 1951), p. 148.

produced a better Bill but the Bill of 1930 was reasonably good and it was better to get that Bill through quickly than get a better Bill through more slowly'.⁸⁶ He made good progress and the new institution, the University of Ceylon was constituted in April 1942.⁸⁷

Jennings had a strong belief in fund-raising for educational purposes. This derived from his own educational experiences and the benefits that he gained from people he called his 'pious benefactors.' He was a 'scholarship boy' and remained grateful for the financial assistance that he had received. Through his experiences as a determined and highly successful scholar he developed an educational philosophy which was both self-deprecating and progressive. He placed little value in educational theories which emphasised the importance of the innate qualities of 'aptitude' believing that success in educational performance was more a result of 'concentration'. Although he was formidably acquisitive in the pursuit of qualifications at each succeeding stage of his formal education, he reflected that: 'I placed much less emphasis on educational qualifications than most people ... but I suppose a Vice Chancellor ought to be reasonably well qualified.'⁸⁸ The creation of a purpose-built university at Peradeniya was to take longer but Jennings finally achieved his goal over the next ten years and in 1952 the University of Ceylon opened on the Peradeniya campus. His contribution to the development of higher education in Ceylon was considerable and made him an influential member of the Carr-Saunders Commission in Malaya where the critical issues involving the fusion of two different colleges mirrored those that Jennings had successfully confronted five years previously in Ceylon. Jennings' work moreover had a

⁸⁶ Ivor Jennings, *The Road to Peradeniya*, p. 94.

⁸⁷ Jennings was able to build on earlier attempts to establish the university. For example, it had been agreed by the Buchanan-Riddell commission 1929 that a unitary and residential university should be established based on the precepts of Oxbridge but procedural and protracted locational disputes had obstructed progress until Jennings' arrival. The foundation of the University coincided with the most serious Japanese air raids which occurred during Easter week 1942. In addition to his work with the university, Jennings took on the role of Deputy Civil Defence Commissioner 1942-45. He was very involved and wrote many pamphlets in support of the defence of Ceylon from Japanese attacks and gave weekly radio talks countering "Tokyo Lies" broadcast by Japanese radio. *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 47.

wider dimension for he was an expert in Commonwealth public law and constitutional theory. He advised governments and contributed extensively to the formation of constitutions in a variety of emerging nation states,⁸⁹ for example, he was a leading member of the Reid Commission which drafted the Malayan constitutional document and effected the constitutional transition from the Malayan Federation 1948 to the newly independent state of Malaya in 1957.⁹⁰

Lim, Sir Han Hoe (1894-1983)

Lim Han Hoe was born in Singapore, the second son of Lim Cheng Sah a landowner and a Justice of the Peace. He was educated in Singapore at the Chung Cheng School, St Andrew's School, Raffles Institution and finally he studied for two years at King Edward VII College of Medicine, one of the founding colleges of the University of Malaya. In 1912 at the age of eighteen Lim travelled to London and spent a year taking public speaking and elocution lessons before entering the Royal College of Surgeons and Physicians at Edinburgh University in 1913. He graduated in 1918 and during the next year was resident house surgeon at North Devon General Hospital and also medical officer in charge of the military auxiliary section. Following his work in Devon he returned to Singapore and was briefly employed by the China Mutual Steamship Co. as a ship's surgeon before taking up general practice in 1919.⁹¹ At the same time he began to involve himself more widely in public affairs and in 1920 he was appointed as honorary secretary of the Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA) in Singapore. This was a small but influential organisation which sought to protect the interests of the Chinese community who were Straits-born British subjects.

⁸⁹ Asanga Welikala, "Specialist in Omniscience"? Nationalism, Constitutionalism and Sir Ivor Jennings' Engagement with Ceylon,' in H. Kumarasingham, ed., *Constitution-making in Asia: Decolonisation and State Building in the Aftermath of the British Empire*, (Colombo 2016).

⁹⁰ For a detailed analysis of the leading intellectual role played by Jennings in this process see, Joseph Fernando, 'Sir Ivor Jennings and the Malayan Constitution', *The Journal of Imperial Commonwealth History*, Vol. 34, No. 4, (December, 2006), pp. 577-597.

⁹¹ *Straits Times*, December 22 1935.

While essentially pro-British in its political and cultural outlook, the SCBA ‘...was the first political organisation in Malaya to articulate the need to generate a common Malayan identity among the different communities in the auxiliary country’.⁹² Lim was a leading member and went on to become President from 1930 to 1932. In 1933 he was appointed unofficial member of the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements and was also appointed an unofficial member of the Executive Council in 1940. After the war he was an unofficial member of the Singapore Advisory Council between 1946 and 1948 and the senior unofficial member of the Executive Council of Singapore from 1948 to 1951.

He had a strong interest in education and was a member of Council of the King Edward VII College of Medicine between 1930 and 1941 and a member of the Education Board from 1930 until 1938. In 1942 following the invasion of Singapore he was arrested by the Japanese *Kempei-tai* for listening in to broadcasts made by the Allied forces and sentenced to seven years imprisonment although he was freed in 1945 following the surrender of the Japanese forces. After serving on the Carr-Saunders Commission, Lim was appointed to the Public Service Commission from 1952 to 1956 and for a brief time was chairman during his final year.⁹³

Along with other leaders of the SCBA such as Tay Lian Teck, Lim advocated educational reform and supported the establishment of a University of Malaya. As a member of the Alumni Association of the College of Medicine, Lim attended various social functions that were organised. He was present, for example, at a dinner on 10 January 1937 when Dr Ang Swee Hiau, the President of the Association, called for the formation of a university.⁹⁴ It was a subject raised frequently at similar functions organised by Raffles College, the SCBA and at meetings of the Legislative Council. It should be emphasised that this was during the

⁹² Heng Pek Koon, ‘The Development of the Malayan Chinese Association’, p. 24.

⁹³ <http://www.gov.sg> [accessed, 09/04/2020]

⁹⁴ *Malaya Tribune*, 11 January, 1937.

pre-war period and prior to the visit of the McLean Commission 1939. The various bodies of which Lim was a member provided him with opportunities to influence events and he has been described as ‘... an educationalist, ... an impressive speaker and a man of progressive views who fought for the rights of Asians to enter the Malayan civil service’.⁹⁵

Sir George Pickering (1904-1980)

Sir George Pickering was born in Northumberland where his parents’ families had strong farming associations in the region. His father, however was a schoolteacher but sadly died and during his early years Pickering lived with his mother and sister in Newcastle. He was educated at the Royal Grammar School in Newcastle before he moved south to attend Dulwich College where he was an academic success. He won a scholarship for entry to Pembroke College, Cambridge where he studied physiology and went on to gain a first in both parts of the Natural Sciences tripos during 1925 and 1926. He became increasingly interested in clinical science and gained an entrance scholarship to St Thomas’s hospital and qualified as a Member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1928 and became a Member of the Royal College of Physicians of the United Kingdom in 1930.

He went on to University College Hospital where he was to work with Sir Thomas Lewis during the next eight years in what proved to be a stimulating and eminent centre for medical research in which to consolidate his area of specialism, the control of circulation, and to complete a high-level apprenticeship. In October 1939 he moved to St Mary’s Hospital Medical School having been recruited to head the medical unit by Sir Charles Wilson who was to become widely known as Lord Moran, physician to Sir Winston Churchill. Pickering was clearly making impressive progress in the medical world as ‘... he created an atmosphere of excitement and critical enquiry ... his influence was instrumental in gradually making St

⁹⁵ Yong Ching Fatt, ‘A Preliminary Study of Chinese Leadership in Singapore 1900-1941, *Journal of South East Asian History*, Vol. 9, No. 2, (September 1968), pp. 258-285, p. 266.

Mary's the place that people wanted to get to, both from abroad and at home, to work with George Pickering'.⁹⁶ In 1956 he moved from London to become Regius Professor of Medicine at the University of Oxford where his brief was to revitalise and develop clinical research. His work in medical science was formally recognised when in 1960 he was elected a fellow of the Royal Society. In 1968 he became Master of Pembroke College, Oxford, a post he held until his retirement in 1975.

He contributed a great deal to the development and management of education and training in the medical world. He emphasised the importance of research in the National Health Service and helped to formulate national policy leading to the establishment of centres for postgraduate education in large regional hospitals. The existence today of the George Pickering Education Centre at the John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford is a fitting legacy of this work. He was chairman of a planning initiative which resulted in the formation of new medical schools at Nottingham and later at Southampton universities and during his appointment as regius professor at Oxford he was instrumental in consolidating and centralising erstwhile disparate post-graduate departments. His progress through formal education and professional career was not dissimilar from that of Sir Ivor Jennings who also benefited from a grammar school education and financial assistance through scholarship awards. In the search for a medical member of the Carr-Saunders' Commission, Walter Adams recommended George Pickering as a man with 'an immense knowledge of medical schools and medical education; he has the very great value of experience on the University Grants Committee; and is a man of academic distinction in his own subject'.⁹⁷ In 1947 Adams obviously did not have awareness to Pickering's complete resumé but his advice was sound.

⁹⁶ W. S. Peart, 'Sir George White Pickering (1904-1980)', *Royal College of Physicians*, Vol VII, (London, 1983), p. 464, <https://history.rcplondon.ac.uk> [accessed, 06/10/2020]

⁹⁷ BW 90/550, Walter Adams, Note, Appointment of Commission, 3 February 1947.

Sir William John Pugh (1892-1974)

William Pugh was born in the village of Westbury in West Shropshire on 28 July 1892. He was the only son of John Pugh and Harriet, Pugh's second wife. William Pugh tended to attribute his disposition for academic and research endeavours to his mother's encouragement but his father, a well-known non-conformist lay preacher, was also a significant influence. There were children from John Pugh's first marriage but now in adulthood they had moved away and essentially William Pugh grew up as an only child, the main recipient of attention from a middle-aged couple.⁹⁸ He went to the local village school in Westbury and won a scholarship to Welshpool County School. He was a good all-rounder; he was captain of the 1st XI football team, head boy and in 1910 was successful in gaining entry to the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth to read geography and graduated in the subject in 1914. During his first year he took a course in geology taught by Professor O. T. Jones which opened up an area of academic study of compelling interest that was to last his entire professional life – as did the friendship and research partnership with Jones. In early 1915 when Jones was presenting the paper based on their joint research in the Dyfi estuary in North Wales to the Geological society in London Pugh was in France with the British Expeditionary Force. He demonstrated great bravery throughout the war receiving an OBE and the Croix de Guerre. He completed the war with the rank of major and returned home to Aberystwyth to learn that Jones had accepted the position of Professor of Geology at Manchester University. In 1919 Pugh was appointed to succeed Jones as Professor of Geology at the University College of Wales at Aberystwyth. He took on extensive teaching and administrative responsibilities and at the same time continued with his research on the

⁹⁸ Alwyn Williams, 'William John Pugh 1892-1974', *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society*, Vol. 21, (Nov.1975), pp. 485-495, p. 485, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rsbm.19750015> [accessed 06/10/2020]

rock successions on either side of the Ordovician-Silurian boundary throughout much of North Wales leading to the presentation of three papers to the Geological Society in 1923, 1928 and 1929.

In September 1931 Pugh succeeded Jones as Professor of Geology and Director of the Geological Laboratories at Manchester University, a position he was to occupy for the next twenty years. His responsibilities at Manchester were considerable and included, the Chairmanship of the University Joint Recruiting Board from 1935 to 1947 and Dean of the Faculty of Science from 1940 to 1941. He served as Pro-Vice Chancellor from 1941-1943 and Deputy Vice Chancellor between 1943 and 1950. In November 1951 Pugh resigned his position at Manchester to become the Director of the Geological Survey of Great Britain and of the Museum of Practical Geology. He retired in 1960. His professional achievements were recognized in several ways; he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society in 1951 and received a knighthood in 1956. The Geological Society awarded him the Murchison Medal in 1952 and he received honorary doctorates from several universities including Nottingham and the University of Wales. He was elected to a Fellowship of Imperial College of Science and Technology in 1960. He was a highly skilled specialist researcher in his chosen field, respectful of the work of other scientists and displayed ‘... a consistent gentleness in reaction to any disputatious matter ...’ a trait and subtlety which contrasted sharply with the characteristic style of his close colleague and friend O. T. Jones.⁹⁹ It is not difficult to see why he was appointed to the Carr-Saunders Commission.

The members appointed to the Commission to enquire into higher education in Malaya contributed a wealth of experience in university leadership and research. The British commissioners were less familiar with Southeast Asia and Malaya but local expertise was secured through the membership of Tuan Haji Mohamed Eusoff and Sir Hoe Han Lim who

⁹⁹ Alwyn Williams, ‘William John Pugh’, p. 489.

were able to contribute relevant communal perspectives from their knowledge of politics, culture and education in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore respectively.¹⁰⁰ In addition, of course, Jennings contributed valuable experience in developing a colonial university as Principal and then Vice Chancellor of the University of Ceylon.

5.4. The Commission's Visit to Malaya

The Commission's visit to Singapore and the Malayan Union took place during March and April 1947. Those members who were resident and working in the UK including the chairman, Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, Leonard Barnes, Professor George Pickering and Professor William Pugh left by air for Malaya on 22 March 1947 and arrived in Singapore on 26 March.¹⁰¹ This was where they met the other members of the Commission, Sir Ivor Jennings who had travelled from Ceylon and the Malayan members, Sir Han Hoe Lim from Singapore and Tuan Haji Mohamed Eusoff from Kuala Lumpur. The commissioners were accompanied in their meetings and travel in Malaya by Dr G. V. Allen, who had been appointed Principal-designate of the new institution¹⁰² and the secretary W. S. Morgan, a member of the Malayan Education Service.

The Commission held its first meeting on 27 March 1947 at Government House, the residence of the Governor-General where the first task was to review the terms of reference.¹⁰³ The Commission was asked to consider matters in relation to the earlier report completed by McLean in 1939, particularly its recommendation to create a University College by combining the King Edward VII College of Medicine and Raffles College as a first stage in the development of a University of Malaya. The Carr-Saunders Commission was also asked to report on such matters as, the constitution, financial arrangements, staffing and

¹⁰⁰ Eusoff's interests in higher education were to develop further; in 1953 he was appointed chairman of the University of Malaya's Council and the following year was appointed Pro Chancellor of the University while Lim extended his position in local political circles as unofficial member of the Executive Council of Singapore from 1948 to 1951 and as a member of the influential SCBA.

¹⁰¹ *The Straits Times*, 27 March 1947, reporting the Commission's arrival in Singapore.

¹⁰² The Secretary of State had assumed that initially this would be a university college.

¹⁰³ Carr-Saunders Report p. ix; for members of the Commission see pages, p. v and p. 114.

the siting of the University and of the University College which would precede it. Other matters included the desirability of the creation of chairs in Malay and Chinese and the relationship of various research and teaching institutions (including the Technical College at Kuala Lumpur) to the University College. These points were to be considered with reference to the more recent findings of the Asquith Report and provided the framework and basis for the enquiry in Malaya. In order to facilitate the work of the Commission an itinerary had been organised by Morgan involving meetings and social functions in both Singapore and the main towns of the Malayan Union, the new political entity which had been constituted on 1 April 1946 under the governorship of Sir Edward Gent.¹⁰⁴

The first few days were spent in Singapore and involved meetings at the two colleges – the College of Medicine and Raffles College. There were also visits to the Raffles Museum & Library and the Botanical Gardens as well as hospitals and observation of a potential site for the new university.¹⁰⁵ The visits to the two colleges involved meetings and discussions with senior staff of both institutions, for example, Dr. D. W. G. Faris, Principal of the Medical College and his academic staff; Professor W. E. Dyer, Principal & Professor of History at Raffles College. The commissioners also met other leading officials in Singapore, such as Dr. W. J. Vickers, Director of Medical Services, Mr. J. B. Neilson, Director of Education, Mr. M. W. F. Tweedie, Director of Raffles Museum and Library together with representatives of the Government of Singapore's Education Department and of a range of school Principals.

Before leaving Singapore Carr-Saunders had a very significant meeting with a small group of students from the College of Medicine, a discussion which was to change the nature

¹⁰⁴ See, The Colonial Office, *Malayan Union and Singapore. Statement of Policy on Future Constitution*, Cmd. 6724, (London, 1946); also, Stockwell ed., *British Documents, Malaya, Part. I*, pp. lii-lxiii; Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics During the Malayan Union Experiment*; Allen, J. De V., *The Malayan Union*, (New Haven, 1967).

¹⁰⁵ This led to the transfer of biology from the College of Medicine to Raffles College and collaboration with the Botanic Gardens to incorporate the subjects of botany and zoology in a biology degree course.

of the main proposal put forward in the Commission's report. The students involved were Kanagaratnam Shanmugaratnam, President of the College of Medicine Student Union, Tan Chee Khoo, Vice President and Wong Poh Lam secretary. Many years later Professor Shanmugaratnam recalled the meeting with Carr-Saunders that took place during the Commission's visit to Singapore in 1947. The reflections form part of an oral history interview recorded for the National Archives of Singapore on 15 September 1994: extracts from Professor Shanmugaratnam observations follow below:

When we heard that the Commission was coming and that it was going to be a university college, we wrote to the Commission formally, suggesting that we should have an independent university ... we wrote a memorandum and the Principal called me up and he said, "Look, this is not the sort of memorandum we want. We want a memorandum of the union activities, your constitution, this and the other." I said, "Well we have got annual reports that you can have." Mind you he supported us eventually because he was already Principal-designate.¹⁰⁶ By our getting a university, he became Vice Chancellor, you see.

Our memorandum was [submitted] ... the Commission called us for a meeting at the College of Medicine building. And that started, you know, about 5.30 or something. After about half an hour, somebody got up, I think the secretary to the Commission, he said, "Sorry, this is all we can [have time for] because we have got another appointment. Thank you very much." But Carr-Saunders at this stage said, "Well the other function is only a social one. Why don't all the other commissioners go? I will stay behind with the students and discuss this further" So all the others left, he stayed behind. That was about 6.30 or 7.00 and he said, "Well, you have to give me dinner." [And] "... we were just wondering you know, here is a man who has lost his dinner appointment and here is our committee [with] Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders ... and we think about dinner". He says, "... he wants to eat what we normally eat." I said, "We normally eat the lousy food at the college hostel." He said, "There we go."

... As students we always say that the hostel food is lousy. We were disappointed because Carr-Saunders not only had the food. I remember he thought it was nutritious and delicious in the extreme." He said, "You mean you have this every day?" So much to our disgust, of course. But he stayed back in the lounge, it was well past midnight, hours and hours of talking. He asked us about political development ... what we want to do, ... why we want a university ...

Our main idea, ... we were pushing to have an independent university straightaway. We said "Look, Hong Kong has one university for twenty years, what's the difficulty here? Mind you there were some students who were also in favour of a university college with all the prestige to be affiliated to

¹⁰⁶ Dr G. W. Allen, the first Vice Chancellor, University of Malaya, 1949-1952.

University of London. But most of us, at least the medical students, I don't know about the other side at Raffles College, we felt it was this. And in the letter which he wrote to me, {March 1948] ... he questioned ... the colonial government [for saying] that the standard was much lower ... and he did say that the memorandum so and so and the long conversation that I had with you, your friends...¹⁰⁷

Despite some lack of fluency-it should be remembered that the transcript was based on a memory of events that occurred nearly fifty years previously-the reflections provide a valuable insight into the approach adopted by Carr-Saunders, particularly his willingness to meet informally and spend time discussing the issues with a group of students to further his understanding of higher education in Malaya. He certainly remembered his conversation with the students and in a subsequent letter he emphasised the significance of the time he had spent with them and the influence they had on his thinking about the direction in which the university should develop. He acknowledged that:

The long conversation that I had with you and your friends before, during and after dinner, was not merely most interesting but very impressive. It was after meeting with you and your friends that I had little doubt in my mind that we should recommend the immediate formation of a university.¹⁰⁸

The commissioners then travelled to Kuala Lumpur¹⁰⁹ and held meetings with officials representing a range of agencies including, Mr. H. R. Cheeseman, Director of Education, Enche Abdul Malek, Principal Assistant Secretary to the Malayan Union government, Mr. W. L. Blythe, Secretary for Chinese Affairs, Dr W. Linehan, Constitutional Adviser, Mr. G. J. Gurney, Principal, Technical College and Mr. C. E. T. Mann, Director, Rubber Research Institute. Meetings were held with several educational institutions such as the Technical College, the School of Agriculture at Serdang, the Medical Research Institute and several schools. Whilst in Kuala Lumpur the Commission journeyed to Malacca for

¹⁰⁷ <https://www.nas.gov.sg>oral> (Prof. K. Shanmugaratnam, interview 001562) [accessed 23/06/2020]

¹⁰⁸ Khoo Kay Kim, *100 Years: The University of Malaya*, p. 43.

¹⁰⁹ A map showing the towns visited is included in the preliminary pages of the thesis, see, p. xiii.

meetings with Mr E. V. G. Day, Resident Commissioner, Mr. C. P. Purcell, Inspector of Schools and undertook a visit to the Malay Women's Teachers Training College.¹¹⁰

After a week in Kuala Lumpur the Commission travelled to Ipoh and went on to Kuala Kangsar where they visited the well-known Malay College before arriving in Penang where they held a series of meetings over a two-day period. These included discussions with Malcolm MacDonald, and educational officials including the Senior Inspector for Schools, the Headmaster of Penang Free School and the Headmistress of the Anglo-Chinese Girls School. During their visit to Penang the commissioners also visited several schools including St George's Girls' School and Chung Ling High School. They returned to Kuala Lumpur on 15 April where they met Sir Edward Gent and his senior officials. The following morning on 16 April they travelled back to Singapore where they stayed for the remainder of their time in Malaya. They held talks with Sir Franklin Gimson, Governor of Singapore, and his Advisory Council and went on to complete their schedule by meeting with the combined councils and senates of the Medical College and Raffles College, holding conferences with other representative organisations and undertaking further school visits before returning to the U.K. Several commissioners including Barnes, Pickering and Pugh left Singapore on 23 April whilst Carr-Saunders concluded the work of the Commission and left on 30 April.

On their return to London the Commission held further meetings and were joined by Tuan Haji Mohamed Eusoff who arrived in London on 30 June to participate in the final discussions leading to the completion of the report. According to Carr-Saunders, Sir Han Hoe Lim and Sir Ivor Jennings were both unable to attend meetings in London but they were kept informed by correspondence.¹¹¹ During this final stage and prior to the completion of the

¹¹⁰ For a complete list of persons interviewed, memoranda received and institutions visited see, Carr-Saunders Report, Appendix IV, pp. 136-146.

¹¹¹ See, Carr-Saunders Report, p, x. Sir Han Hoe Lim confirmed that he had received a copy of the draft report but added that he was not required to travel to London, see *The Straits Times*, 11 July 1947.

report the commission took advice from several different specialists.¹¹² In addition the Commission took advice from Mr J. L. Brereton, University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate who held traditional views on the relationship between the school curriculum and examinations.¹¹³ Contrary to the more progressive view that the curriculum should determine the examination it was noted that, ‘Mr Brereton resolutely maintained that the external examination should ... determine the curriculum’.¹¹⁴ The Commission was also able to take further advice from Dr G. V. Allen and Mr. H. R Cheeseman who were both on leave from Malaya and in London during the summer of 1947.¹¹⁵ The consultants, mainly academics, constituted a very interesting and informed group whose involvement provides a good example of Carr-Saunders’ leadership style, his thoroughness and political astuteness in ensuring that when released the report would stand critical scrutiny particularly in political and educational circles in both Malaya and Britain.

5.5. The Published Report

The report which the Carr-Saunders Commission published was a cogently written and succinctly organised document that was well-received in Malaya and in the United

¹¹² The specialists consulted included: Sir Frank Engledow (1890-1985), Drapers Professor and Head of the Department of Agriculture, University of Cambridge 1930-57. He was a successful researcher and lecturer being closely involved in scientific and agricultural problems of the tropical empire and teaching on post-graduate diploma courses for recruits to the colonial service. Professor A. J. S. Pippard (1891-1969), Professor and Head of the Department of Civil Engineering, Imperial College 1933 -1956 where he developed new courses in hydraulics and concrete technology and an extensive programme of research. He published five books including *The Analysis of Engineering Structures* (with J. F. Baker, 1936). Professor Eve Dora Edwards (1888-1957), Professor of Chinese Studies & Head of Department of the Far East, SOAS (1939-1953). In 1913 she had studied in China at the Peking Language School and in 1915 she was appointed Principal of the Women’s Normal College in Mukden, Shenyang. She returned to Britain and a lectureship at SOAS in 1921. She subsequently gained a B A (Hons) in Chinese, an M A in Chinese from the University of London before successfully completing her doctorate in 1931 on prose literature of the Tang Dynasty. Dr Vesey Fitzgerald, Head of the School of Law, SOAS. Mr. Charles C. Brown (1888-1972). He was Lecturer in Malay, SOAS, (1946-57) and had previously served as the British Resident in Pahang, Malaya (1935-41). Dr A. E. Trueman (1894-1956), Professor of Geology, University of Glasgow and member of the University Grants Committee (GB). Mr. R. H. de Montmorency, member of the University Grants Committee (GB).

¹¹³ See, J. L. Brereton, *The Case for Examinations*, (Cambridge, 1944).

¹¹⁴ H. C. Dent, *Secondary Education for All: Origins and Development in England*, (London, 1949), pp. 41-42.

¹¹⁵ Allen, previously Principal of Raffles College was Principal-designate of the proposed new University of Malaya whilst Cheeseman was Director of Education, Malayan Union and previously Deputy Director of Education, Straits Settlements and Deputy Adviser on Education, Malay States. His papers on education included: ‘Education in Malaya’, *Oversea Education*, 1930-1942 and 1946, (Kuala Lumpur, 1948); ‘Malaya: Post War Policy in Education’, *The Yearbook of Education*, (London, 1949), pp. 544-51.

Kingdom.¹¹⁶ A critical part of the report, as with reports in general, concerned the recommendations that were made; and in terms of the key functions of a university such as teaching, research, finance and governance, the Commission's recommendations were surprisingly progressive. They were also practical with the inclusion of a draft constitution providing details of the requisite legal framework within which the University would conduct its affairs and discharge its responsibilities. The Commission's report which was first published in Singapore on 1 May 1948 and afterwards in London on 19 July proved to be an event of significance.¹¹⁷ It was celebrated by the press, particularly in Malaya and received very positively in political and academic circles in both Britain and Malaya.

While the Carr-Saunders report was influenced by the work of the Asquith Commission,¹¹⁸ there was an important distinction between the conclusions reached by the two Commissions. A major principle asserted by Asquith referred to the relationship between universities and self-government for the colonies; he drew attention to '... the establishment of universities as an inescapable corollary of any policy which aims at the achievement of colonial self-government...'.¹¹⁹ As part of this process a university college was envisaged as the first step in the development of a university, although Asquith was unable to '... say how long the university college stage will last, because the length of this period depends upon much that cannot be foreseen'.¹²⁰ When considering the formation of a university college on the basis of a merger between the College of Medicine and Raffles College, Carr-Saunders recommended the immediate establishment of an autonomous University on the grounds that:

¹¹⁶ Carr-Saunders Report.

¹¹⁷ As reported in *The Times Educational Supplement (TES)* 24 July 1948.

¹¹⁸ This is not surprising as Carr-Saunders was a prominent member of the Asquith Commission and together with other commissioners had written preliminary papers as preparation for the final report see, B312/B313, A. M. Carr-Saunders, Lillian M. Penson and J. A. Venn, 'Constitution and Government of Colonial Universities and Colleges', presented to the Commission, 16 December 1943. Lillian Penson was a successful academic holding a chair in modern history at Bedford College and becoming Vice Chancellor in 1948, the first woman to be so appointed. For further details see, Robert Greaves, 'Penson, Dame Lillian Margery (1896-1963)', <https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref.odnb/35468> [accessed 14/10/21]

¹¹⁹ Asquith Report, p. 11.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 13. A defining characteristic of a university college was its inability to award its own degrees.

It is not always necessary to pass through a stage in which there is a university college teaching for external degrees and organised like a university. What is necessary is that the institution or institutions should have attained status, strength and experience ... before degree-giving power is granted.¹²¹

The College of Medicine founded in 1905 and Raffles College established in 1928 were considered to have achieved the necessary status and, despite the judgement made by the Mclean Commission in 1939, Carr-Saunders was able to assert that 'a body which has for thirty years conferred a medical qualification accepted by the statutory organisation and recognised throughout the British Commonwealth as sufficient authority to practise does not require the tutelage of the University of London'.¹²²

During their tour of the country the Commission was impressed with the interest and enthusiasm that people from different sectors of society showed towards the idea of a university, thereby transcending bitter and disturbing tragedies of war by focussing on the future and projects that carried possibilities for nation building and improving life chances. This provided another reason for the commissioners to support a recommendation for an autonomous institution observing that:

Malaya has had nearly four years of enemy occupation and a difficult period of rehabilitation. Out of her sufferings have come a new energy and a more emphatic realisation of the importance of university education, not merely for training students to fill the highest posts in the country, but also for giving them the qualities of leadership and disinterested public service which are necessary for the progress of her people.¹²³

The Carr-Saunders Commission agreed that a University of Malaya should be constituted with powers to award its own degrees. It was to be the result of an amalgamation of two Singaporean colleges, the College of Medicine and Raffles College and comprise the

¹²¹ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 4-5. In making this point the report cited the University of Hong Kong (1911) and the University of Ceylon (1942) as precedents, an observation which had been put to Carr-Saunders by the Medical School students during their discussion in Singapore, see above pp. 160-61.

¹²² Carr-Saunders Report, p. 6.

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

Faculties of Arts, Science and Medicine. Academic standards were to be safeguarded by the appointment of External Examiners; it was also recognised that the new institution would benefit from continuing support through British universities and the recently constituted IUC. Two other recommendations followed. The first represented an attempt to extend the number of students eligible for university entrance by providing access to English - speaking schools for both girls and boys from all communities and by providing greater opportunities for potential students living in poorer rural areas. The second recommendation was based on a recognition that the School Certificate did not provide a sufficiently high-level qualification for university entrance. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of student performance the report recommended the introduction of a two-year course - Higher School Studies - which if completed successfully would lead to a new qualification – the School Leaving Certificate. The commissioners recommended a broad-based, liberal arts approach with courses in English Literature, English Language, General Studies and three optional subjects. The emphasis was to be non-specialist and the provision of a course supplemented by participation in a community- based project.¹²⁴

The report considered vocational needs and requirements in several areas including public administration, accountancy, social work, education and law for which relevant degree courses were recommended. The Commission did not propose formal relationships between the University, other agencies such as the Technical College in Kuala Lumpur or the School of Agriculture in Serdang as both institutions provided sub-degree courses with an emphasis on technical training. The report also examined different subject-area studies and recommended the formation of Departments of Malay Studies, Chinese Studies and Tamil

¹²⁴ The idea of a two-year programme of study had first been suggested by Professor Raymond Priestley during his visit to Malaya the previous year; the proposal for community work may well have been influenced by Carr-Saunders' experience at Toynbee Hall.

Studies with professorships in Malay and Chinese and a lectureship in Tamil.¹²⁵ Evoking the original vision of Raffles, the Commission declared that ‘the University of Malaya is well placed to become a centre of oriental studies’.¹²⁶ The report made a series of recommendations at departmental level, for example, that the Department of English should provide a range of teaching as provided in English universities; the Department of Geography should be expanded in order to develop its research profile, and chairs in Zoology and Botany were recommended together with a post in Genetics. It was thought that good relationships could be developed between the University and the Botanic Gardens and Raffles Museum and that the University was potentially an important centre for the study of the Social Sciences with special reference to Eastern Societies.¹²⁷

The Commission was clear that research, which it described as the “life blood” of a university should be developed to a high level and that this would contribute significantly to its growth and status within the region and beyond. It was envisaged that much research particularly that undertaken in areas such as Oriental Studies, Social Science, Geology, Biology and Medicine would be applied research focussing on indigenous problems to the benefit of Malaya. It was recognised that research was not the sole prerogative of the University and that external organisations such as the Institute of Medical Research and the Botanic Gardens, Singapore and the Rubber Research Institute, Kuala Lumpur were well established centres of research. In order to encourage and strengthen a culture of research through a structured and continuing discourse the Commission proposed the formation of a Scientific Advisory Council to advise the Government on scientific and technical matters

¹²⁵ The recommendation of a lectureship rather than a chair in Tamil was not explained but presumably it related to Tamils constituting the smallest group of the total population.

¹²⁶ Carr-Saunders, Report, p. 109.

¹²⁷ There are useful references to indigenous studies, although the curriculum and pedagogic models implied were eurocentric, see earlier discussion, chapter 1, p. 13. The application of a British university model continued to be applied during the post-colonial years, see V. Selevaratnam, ‘The Higher Education System in Malaysia: Metropolitan, Cross-National, Peripheral or National’, *Higher Education*, Vol. 14, No. 5, (1985), pp. 477-496, p. 486; see also, T. Kim, ‘Old Borrowings and New Models of the University in East Asia’, *Globalization, Societies and Education*, Vol. 5, No. 1, (2007), pp. 39-52.

which presented problems of national importance. Membership would include representatives of Government Departments, Research Institutes and the University.

As has been observed the institutional model for the development of a university was based on British precepts of higher education and so it was not surprising that the commissioners, when considering student life and welfare, emphasised the importance of a corporate student experience which they regarded as ‘one of the essential differences between a university and a mere teaching college ...’.¹²⁸ They had several proposals to make in order to achieve this. First, the University should be a unitary institution established on a single campus with students living in halls of residence not ‘mere dormitories [to enable students] to live in fellowship and harmony with other people of widely differing tastes and opinions’.¹²⁹ The second proposal was that all students, consistent with university practice elsewhere, should be obliged to become members of a society responsible for organizing all student activities. Even at Oxford University whose practices influenced much of the Commission’s thinking such an organisation was named “The Union”. For the University of Malaya, the Commissioners recommended that the student organisation should be called the “Raffles Society”. As the report explained: ‘The disappearance of Raffles College as an entity seems to impose on us an obligation to find some way of continuing the association of the name Stamford Raffles with higher education in Malaya. No more fitting tribute could be paid to his memory than to give his name to the student organisation’.¹³⁰ In another celebratory act the commissioners proposed that there should be a building called “Raffles House” which would cater for all the various activities that the Society would undertake. The commissioners recommended that “Raffles House” should be maintained by the university and that it should

¹²⁸ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 76

¹²⁹ Ibid., p. 78. See discussion by Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 224-255. For a critique of Ashby’s views on the Asquith Report, see, A. M. Carr-Saunders, ‘Britain and Universities in Africa’, *Higher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 3, (June 1965), pp. 227-239.

¹³⁰ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 76.

contain a lending library the purpose of which was to provide, 'good samples of literature ... to put students into the way of discovering new interests; there would be no attempt to do more in any subject than to enable a student to set off on a path of exploration for himself. Such a library would be a possession for any university, but it would be of the greatest value in Malaya where students have limited access to good literature'.¹³¹ It is relatively straightforward to critique this extract from a contemporary, anti-colonial perspective whereas to the commissioners it presumably was a resource that should be provided. It was to prove an anathema to increasingly politicised students who perceived further evidence of unacceptable euro-centrism.¹³² Finally, there was a proposal for a Board of Student Welfare to manage student organisations and associated facilities such as athletic and recreational areas together with matters arising from the conduct of students. It was recommended that the Board should have a consultative role viz-a-viz the student body as a whole with a membership that would include the Vice-Chancellor and nominees of the Senate. It was recommended that the Board should report to the Council through the Senate.

Part of the Commission's terms of reference concerned the location of the future university and this is examined in some detail in their report. The starting point was the problematic nature of the existing sites and buildings of the College of Medicine and Raffles College. The two colleges were situated just under four miles apart and given the emphasis placed on the importance of a unitary campus this presented a major difficulty. Following the war and a brief period of military administration many of the Raffles College buildings required refurbishment although two new buildings in a matching style had been constructed and left intact by Japanese forces.

It was important that the College of Medicine had access to a teaching hospital of appropriate size and one that would be representative of the whole country in terms of its

¹³¹ Ibid., p. 77.

¹³² See, Yeo Kim Wah, 'Student Politics in University of Malaya', 1949-51', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2, (September, 1992), pp. 346-380.

patients and their medical conditions. The Commission surveyed several potential locations including Penang, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Malacca, Johore Bahru (Johor Bahru) and Singapore. Each place was discussed on its merits particularly its ability to support an institution that would be representative of the whole country of Malaya.¹³³ The decision was reduced to one between the town of Johore Bahru at the southern end of the Malay Peninsula and just thirteen miles away from Singapore and a site at Bukit Timah on the island of Singapore. In its deliberations the Commission was influenced by an imperial legacy concluding that, 'to place the University elsewhere than in or near Singapore would be to fail to fulfil the vision of Stamford Raffles, whose wisdom and foresight have been questioned by no one'.¹³⁴ Both potential sites had their advantages; Bukit Timah had greater proximity to the city of Singapore whilst Johore Bahru had a superior natural environment. In the final analysis a politically nuanced decision was taken. Carr-Saunders explained that:

We are anxious that the University should be so placed as to be in intimate touch with the physical and social conditions of the country which it will serve. Singapore cannot be regarded as typical of Malaya; typical Malaya is out of sight and out of mind in that city. It would be impossible to forget Malaya at Johore Bahru; there the University would be in a truly Malayan environment ... we believe that Malaya can build a great university at Johore Bahru and we hope that it might become a great centre of teaching and research in South-East Asia.¹³⁵

In approaching constitutional and administrative issues for the university the commissioners were guided by several principles which were integral to their thinking about

¹³³ The concept of Malaya and attendant issues of citizenship, the rights and responsibilities of its citizens were highly complex issues. When the Commission was in Malaya in March/April 1947 there was considerable opposition particularly from the Malay community to the Malayan Union Government in Kuala Lumpur which had taken office the previous year. By the time the report had been published and was being discussed in Malaya, the Union had been replaced by the Malayan Federation. For a critical assessment of this period see, T. N. Harper, 'The Politics of Disease and Disorder in Post-War Malaya', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1, (1990), pp. 88-113.

¹³⁴ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 84.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 86. The choice of Johore Bahru was reasonably sound, but was subsequently overtaken by larger political events and financial realities. In reaching their decision the Commission would have drawn on the experience of one of their members, Sir Ivor Jennings who, as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ceylon, had been the driving force in successfully moving the University to a new site at Peredeniya, some ninety miles from Colombo. Later, Carr-Saunders was to describe the University of Ceylon as one of the greatest University enterprises ever undertaken in the Commonwealth, see, BW 90/1017, see, Carr-Saunders, Report on a Visit to the University of Malaya, July 1951.

higher education. They considered, for example, that universities should be autonomous, responsive only to legal imperatives enshrined in their constitution and statutes and importantly, ‘not otherwise subjected to governmental or legislative control’.¹³⁶ Further the commissioners took the view that higher education was best served by residential institutions in order to develop ‘that broad-based wisdom which ought to be the characteristic of the university graduate’.¹³⁷ The report recognised that such an institution could not be achieved immediately but emphasized that there should be no delay in constituting the University of Malaya on the existing sites of Raffles College and the College of Medicine. The report included a chapter on the constitution and administration and in order to avoid unnecessary procedural delays in the founding of the University also includes a draft constitution and draft statutes.¹³⁸ These provide the details of governance and administration through the different authorities of the University, e.g., the Court, the Council, the Senate, the Faculties, the Board of Studies, the Boards of Selection, the Board of Student Welfare. The Court and the rationale for it provided by the commissioners are particularly interesting. Although it was a large and potentially unwieldy body, the commissioners believed that with its wide representation it could “speak” to and for Malaya. They wished to sustain a sense of the enthusiasm and interest they had encountered in public forums and meetings during their visit to Malaya. It was an attempt to present the University as a unifying institution; on the other hand, it should be noted that the Council responsible for the administration of the University and the Senate responsible for academic policy were instruments of governance that would not have been out of place in an English university.

In terms of financial issues and particularly those involving income the report encouraged the University to seek endowments for contributions to developments in the usual areas such as library extensions, halls of residence, laboratories and academic positions such

¹³⁶ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 87

¹³⁷ Ibid., p. 87.

¹³⁸ Ibid., Appendix I, pp.115-123 and Appendix II, pp. 124-130.

as professorships. More specifically, the report proposed that there should be a rise in student fees to approximately 20% of the University's total income, an increase from the relatively low figure of 11.8% which obtained for the two colleges in 1939, an increase that compared more favourably with the rates of 22.5% for British universities between 1945 and 1946. In order to maintain a commitment to students of limited financial means and to encourage the admission of students from low-income backgrounds the Commission proposed the introduction of a system of government grants that would support fee and maintenance costs. When considering items of recurrent expenditure such as staffing costs the Commission assumed that student numbers would reach a total of approximately 1000 over a period of ten years and on the basis of these figures proposed the appointment of the following numbers of academic staff: Professors 31; Senior Lecturers and lecturers 53; Assistant Lecturers & Demonstrators 62.¹³⁹ The projected student numbers represented a considerable underestimate as the table below indicates:

Table 1 Student numbers by area of study

Estimated numbers 1947			Reported numbers 1950			
Faculty	Students	Total %	Men	Women	Students	Total %
Art	300	30	122	46	168	26
Science	200	20	67	15	82	13
Medicine	500	50	264	46	310	48
Dentistry	N/a	N/a	78	7	85	13
Total	1000	100	531	114	645	100

Source: *Carr-Saunders Report*, p. 104. *Carr-Saunders, Report on a Visit to the University of Malaya 1950.*

The curriculum developed steadily over the first decade and the range of taught subjects increased with new faculties in dentistry, law and education in Singapore and engineering in Kuala Lumpur. Further increases in admissions occurred and by 1959 there were 1600

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 104. During his visit in 1950 Carr-Saunders reported that good progress had been made with the appointment of additional staff, for example, 19 Professors, 31 Senior Lecturers and Lecturers and 28 Assistant Lecturers.

students enrolled in Singapore and 323 students enrolled in Kuala Lumpur exceeding by some measure the Carr-Saunders estimates, see Table 2 below:

Table 2: Student numbers by area of study 1959

Faculty	Singapore	Kuala Lumpur	Total
Arts	560	163	723
Science	218	031	249
Medicine	462	-	462
Dentistry	099	-	099
Pharmacy	27	-	027
Engineering		129	129
Law	147	-	147
Education	087		087
Total	1600	323	1923

Source: Carr-Saunders, A. M., *New Universities Overseas*, (London, 1961), p. 122.

The rapid growth in student numbers created an urgent need for additional student accommodation in Singapore and raised questions about the wisdom of developing the University in Johore Bahru. The Governments in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore had previously agreed a move as recommended by the Carr-Saunders Commission but the spiralling costs of relocation generated anxieties and contributed to a loss of confidence in the project. After a full review the University and a joint committee appointed by the two Governments recommended that developments should be concentrated on the existing sites in Singapore and that a new centre should be established in Kuala Lumpur with particular emphasis on engineering and agriculture.¹⁴⁰ The change in policy was accepted in June and August 1954 and after several years of indecision it was finally agreed to develop the

¹⁴⁰ The second centre of the University in the Federal capital initially consisted of three Faculties, Arts, Science and Engineering. It was agreed that Singapore would concentrate on medicine and law while Kuala Lumpur would develop courses in engineering and later in agriculture, *Ibid.*, p. 124.

University in Singapore and in Kuala Lumpur.¹⁴¹ The circumstances were not dissimilar to the experiences encountered during the formation of the University of Ceylon but in Malaya romanticism ultimately gave way to educational and political expediency and the move to Johore Bahru was abandoned.

Subsequent research has claimed that ‘this marked the beginning of the end of the unitary university’.¹⁴² It was undoubtedly a critical decision but the development of the University and the direction it took progressing towards its foundation was influenced by several other factors. These took the form of educational principles enshrined in the Asquith Report which significantly influenced the work of the Carr-Saunders Commission, for example, the view that universities should be ‘open to all classes, without distinction of wealth and without discrimination on the grounds of race, sex or creed ... [and where] the criterion of entrance should be one of academic achievement and of personal suitability to profit by the course offered’.¹⁴³ The application of these principles however was difficult given Malaya’s diversity and the communal basis of schooling; reformist policies had to contend with the legacy of *laissez faire* governance promulgated by successive colonial administrations which had contributed to conditions of educational inequality particularly the severe under-representation of Malay students in higher education. The disproportionate representation of the University’s student population is illustrated in table 3 below:

¹⁴¹ *IUC, 1946-54*, p. 24. On becoming Vice Chancellor in 1952 Caine found that the costs of the move had increased dramatically and far outweighed available funds. He discussed matters with Carr-Saunders and advised the Colonial Office to abandon the Johore Bahru scheme, see, Stockwell, ‘The Crucible of the Malayan Nation’, p.1171. For a brief discussion of the difficulties of moving to Johore Bahru see, Caine, Sir Sydney, ‘The University of Malaya’, *Nature*, Vol. 175, (January 29 1955), pp.186-188; The problems faced by the University in the years following the Carr-Saunders enquiry are discussed by Stockwell see, ‘The Crucible of the Malayan Nation’, pp. 1168-74.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 1171.

¹⁴³ See, Asquith Report, p. 15.

Table 3: University of Malaya: classification of students by race and gender 1949

Chinese		Malay		Indian		Ceylonese		Eurasians		Total		Grand Total
M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
327	80	63	3	53	14	65	9	20	5	3	3	531 114 645
407		66		67		74		25		6		645
63%		10%		10%		11%		4%		1%		-

Source: Carr-Saunders, *Report on a Visit to the University of Malaya, July 1950*.

The significant figure was clearly the major under-representation of Malay students compared with the dominant position of Chinese students. This should be seen in the context of figures for the general population which was constituted as follows:

Chinese-44.7%: Malay-43.49%: Indian-10.25: Eurasian-0.33%: Others-1.23%.¹⁴⁴

That the Malay student was severely disadvantaged in gaining admission to the University was not in doubt but this could not be explained by easy and stereotypical reference to innate racial traits of under-intelligence. According to evidence presented in the annual reports of the Directors of Education the people with the least access to post-primary education, were women, members of low-income families and those living in remote, rural areas. The Report argued that:

It may well be that there is a higher proportion of females to males, of poor to rich, of country-dwellers to town-dwellers, in one racial group than in another; and if there were a high proportion of all three in the Malay group, the small Malay representation in secondary schools would be explained. In that case the lack of balance would be grounded in facts of economics, geography and social convention and not in differences of capacity between one race and another. Balance is restorable by appropriate adjustments to those facts, rather than by measures of discrimination in favour of Malays as an undifferentiated racial group.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Carr-Saunders, *Report on a Visit to the University of Malaya, July 1950*.

¹⁴⁵ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 18. This is a critical observation giving emphasis to structural reforms within society rather than acceding to a view of inequality based on racial characteristics and stereotypes. A contemporary analysis would doubtless be more nuanced.

The question of priority for the development of higher education and its relationship with provision at primary and secondary school levels was problematic. As we have seen in the earlier discussion of the McLean report there was opposition in Malaya to the provision of higher education and the establishment of a university on the grounds that resources for growth and development should be directed towards the school sector. In 1947 the school sector remained a focus of concern but it was to be some time before a formal investigation was conducted.¹⁴⁶ As Carr-Saunders pointed out such attention on opportunities in primary and secondary schools should not exclude tertiary level developments. Whilst in Malaya he discovered a genuine public interest in higher education observing ‘how well the functions of a university were understood’.¹⁴⁷ The Commission again took note of the Asquith report which had emphasised that ‘where education as a whole is backward, effort is most rewarding when ... directed to the higher levels.’¹⁴⁸

The Carr-Saunders report was endorsed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies who described the document ‘of profound importance for all those who are concerned for the future of Malaya’.¹⁴⁹ The published report was unanimous, agreed by all seven members of the Commission, an outcome which had eluded both the Elliot and De La Warr Commissions.

5.6. Conclusion

The enquiry was successful by several measures. It was effectively led and managed by Carr-Saunders who brought a sense of professionalism and clarity of purpose to a CO initiative, a perspective that was refreshingly different from some of the approaches that had characterised the inter-war period. A key figure in the early stages of developments in

¹⁴⁶ In 1950 Sir Henry Gurney, High Commissioner for the Federation of Malaya 1948-51, appointed a committee to consider the problem of Malay Education. The enquiry considered strategies for raising the academic achievement of Malay pupils and gave additional emphasis to improvements in teacher training. The committee was chaired by Leonard Barnes, see, the Barnes Report, 1951. The morale of British administration in Malaya was to be badly shaken by the news of Gurney’s assassination during the “insurgency” in October 1951.

¹⁴⁷ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 12.

¹⁴⁸ Asquith Report, p.12.

¹⁴⁹ Creech Jones, Carr-Saunders Report, p. iii.

Malaya was Sir Raymond Priestley who travelled to Southeast Asia in late August 1946. It is most probable that had he not done so at that time and successfully engaged with political, cultural and educational agencies in Malaya, progress towards the development of a university would have been seriously delayed or even derailed. The evidence suggests that Malcolm MacDonald played a significant role particularly in re-opening discussions on higher education following the Japanese occupation and urging the Secretary of State to initiate political discussions between British and Malayan Government officials in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore as a matter of priority.

It was following Priestley's return and conversations with CO officials in London that support was consolidated and agreed for the appointment of a relatively small commission of enquiry comprising individuals with requisite skills and interests in specific area such as medicine, politics and colonial higher education. The strategy for the appointment of British members did not appear to be particularly subtle or creative but together with the appointment of two Malay representatives suggested by MacDonald it resulted in the formation of a competent and experienced membership.

The Carr-Saunders' report provided a basis for progressive higher education in Malaya by recommending the foundation of an institution with full university status. Whilst this was not entirely consistent with the evolutionary approach favoured by the Asquith Commission and applied in West Africa, there was commonality between the two reports. First, there was a curriculum requirement which involved striking a balance between the pursuit of professional, academic studies and the development of wider interests including a social awareness of community needs. Second, it was important to ensure that universities were open institutions, accessible 'to all classes, without discrimination on the grounds of race, sex or creed [where] the criterion of entrance should be one of academic achievement

and of personal suitability to profit by the course offered'.¹⁵⁰ Finally, Carr-Saunders readily adhered to the Asquith maxim which held that universities should be residential since 'nothing could minister more effectively to a spirit of unity where communities are divided by racial or sectional differences'.¹⁵¹

The Carr-Saunders Commission also supported the preparation of students for entry to the professions and public services. This was not simply a matter of adopting a narrow vocationalism but part of a broader concept of public service whereby graduates who had benefitted from a university education might contribute to social and economic progress and development at community level. The attainment of professional skills was a necessary but not a sufficient outcome of their higher education. As the commissioners explained universities should seek:

to enlarge the sphere of interest, to sharpen sensibility, to quicken perceptivity and to deepen sympathy university education should be liberal as well as vocational, general as well as special. It is the essence of our view that there should be no insuperable antagonism between the special and the general, the vocational and the liberal in the sphere of education'.¹⁵²

Cognizant of their terms of reference, the Carr-Saunders Commission gave full consideration to the relocation of the new University before finally agreeing to recommend that the institution should move from Singapore to Johore Bahru. The Governments in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore originally accepted the Commission's recommendation but during the early years of the University's development the question of relocation became an increasingly difficult issue to resolve. The costs of the move had substantially increased and there were operational issues to address but other factors militated against the move. As the then Vice Chancellor Sydney Caine concluded, 'it became more and more obvious that neither political

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., p. 15.

¹⁵² Carr-Saunders Report p. 11.

unit [i.e., the Governments in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore] would be content with a university situated wholly within the borders of the other'.¹⁵³ The move to Johore Bahru was abandoned and it was agreed that developments should concentrate wholly on the existing sites in Singapore and that a new centre for the University should be opened in Kuala Lumpur.¹⁵⁴ Discussing the recommended move to Johore Bahru some years later Carr-Saunders was sanguine about the failure to secure a unitary university. Reflecting on events he conceded that his report had:

cast the University of Malaya for the role of helping to foster a common Malayan nationality [but] the two territories have grown apart, and it hardly seems likely that either territory would be content with a university at Johore Bahru; to Singapore it would look like a university in the Federation and to the Federation it would look like a university under the shadow of Singapore.¹⁵⁵

The move to Johore Bahru is considered further in chapter six which assesses the reactions to the Carr-Saunders report.

¹⁵³ Sir Sydney Caine, 'The University of Malaya', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, Vol. 106, No. 5022, (May 1958), pp. 442-454, p. 448.

¹⁵⁴ As Vice Chancellor, Caine was instrumental in this decision.

¹⁵⁵ Carr-Saunders, *New Universities Overseas*, p. 62. For discussion of the political relationship between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore see, Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation', pp. 1165-1166. On gaining support of the Chinese community, see Stockwell, *British Documents, Malaya, Part II*, document. no., 170, pp. 79-87.

Chapter 6 Reactions to the Report

6.1. Introduction

The report of the Commission on University Education was published in Malaya on 1 May 1948 to positive and supportive press releases in both London and Singapore.¹ It was the culmination of an intensive period of work by the Commission led by Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders who brought to the project a character that had previously been described as ‘... admirable on Committees, practical, clear-headed and judicious, very even-tempered and magnanimous. He doesn’t inspire; but he encourages. People ... like and trust him; and he [will] stay the course’.² The Carr-Saunders report was timely and its importance was emphasized by the Secretary of State who expressed the hope that the document would ‘... receive favourable consideration in the territories concerned and that it may be possible to establish a University of Malaya with the least possible delay and by October 1948, if that is at all practicable’.³ The commissioners had also recommended the early establishment of the university and included a draft constitution and draft statutes in their report to facilitate progress towards its foundation.⁴ The desire for urgency was understandable but formal approval from the respective governments in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur was first required, a potentially time-consuming procedure even in normal times. Moreover, during the immediate post-war years conditions in Malaya were uncertain with adverse political, economic and social forces likely to militate against the ready adoption of an unexpectedly progressive report on higher education.

¹ BW 90/551, The report was printed in Malaya and sent in batches to London., see correspondence, Walter Adams and Mrs Elizabeth Alexander. See also reports, *The Times*, 1 May 1948; *The Straits Times*, 3 May 1948.

² Dahrendorf, *LSE*, p. 334, extract from a recommendation given by Sir Hector Hetherington, Principal of Glasgow University; Hetherington was later appointed chairman of the Colonial University Grants Advisory Commission, see, chapter 4, p. 123, n.111.

³ Arthur Creech Jones, Foreword, Carr-Saunders Report.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.115-130.

Despite extensive war-time planning by officials in London⁵ the British faced considerable problems on their re-entry into Southeast Asia following the surrender of Japanese forces on 15 August 1945.⁶ It had been agreed that after the war there could not be an immediate return to civil authority and that the BMA should first establish political control and provide stability for an incoming and permanent civil government. In the event the BMA had difficulty in discharging its responsibilities and presided over ‘... a tense and confused few months [from September 1945 to March 1946] punctuated by outbreaks of Sino-Malay fighting [resulting] in grievous damage to both Anglo-Malay relations and relations between Malayan communities’.⁷

The war-years were also used by the CO to revise and develop new constitutional arrangements in Malaya. In contrast to the indirect forms of government which had prevailed during the inter-war years a more centralised and coherent system to meet the demands of a modern post-war world was envisaged in ways which to planning officials in London, with no direct contact with occupied Malaya, ‘seemed tidy ... logical [and] based on reality’.⁸ A new constitution based on two important principles was formulated. First, there was to be a transfer of sovereignty from the Sultans as State Leaders to the British Crown. Second, equal rights were to be extended to all citizens, including non-Malays who claimed Malaya as their homeland and it was emphasized by the Colonial Secretary that: ‘No one must rely upon past privilege or regard Malaya simply as a source of material wealth’.⁹ Given the changes to be made and before a full policy statement was published it was agreed that Sir Harold

⁵ See, F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration, in the Far East 1943-1946*, (London, 1956) pp 135-152; A. J. Stockwell, ‘Colonial Planning during World War II: The Case of Malaya’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 2, No. 3, (May 1974), pp. 333-351.

⁶ Donnison, *British Military Administration*, pp. 153-170; Khong Kim Hoong, *Merdeka: British Rule and the Struggle for Independence in Malaya 1945-1957*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1984), pp. 37-72; Stockwell, ed., *British Documents, Malaya, Part I*, pp. lii-lxiii.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. lvii.

⁸ C. M. Turnbull, ‘The Post-War Decade in Malaya: The Settling Dust of Political Controversy’, *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 60, No. 1, (1987), pp. 7-26, p.10.

⁹ *HC Deb* 10 October 1945, Vol. 414, Col. 254-6W.

MacMichael should travel to Malaya as a representative of the British Government to secure agreement for the new policy with each of the Malay Leaders.¹⁰ MacMichael duly obliged and completed his task between October and December 1945, following extensive preparatory work by Brigadier H. C. Willan during September 1945.¹¹ Although MacMichael, working with the support of the BMA, successfully gained the required written agreements from each of the Malay Leaders, he was criticised for being too heavy-handed and failing to give sufficient time for consultation. His methods resulted in protestations by the Sultans who claimed “agreement obtained under duress” and were to lead to a rejection of the British proposals.

There were additional protests in Britain from a small group of retired “Old Malaysans” including the former governors and high commissioners, Sir Cecil Clementi and Sir Frank Swettenham; Sir Richard Winstedt who completed his lengthy service in Malaya as advisor to the Sultan of Johore was also part of the group.¹² The “Pro-consuls” condemned the reforms and the abandonment of established practices of governance; they were particularly outraged at the limited consultation that had taken place between MacMichael and the Malay Leaders and their people. They joined with Sir George Maxwell, a former chief secretary of the FMS to meet with George Hall, the Secretary of State on 26 February but to no avail. The House of Commons also heard letters of complaint from the Sultans but the British Government, at this stage, was not dissuaded from its intended course of action. The “Pro-consuls” continued their opposition to the Malayan Union and were still publicising

¹⁰ MacMichael, Special Representative of His Majesty’s Government in Malaya 1945, was previously High Commissioner and C in C, Palestine and High Commissioner, Trans-Jordan, 1938-44. See, Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics During the Malayan Union Experiment*, p. 180.

¹¹ See, Sir Harold MacMichael, *Report of a Mission to Malaya*, Col. No. 194, (London, 1946). For Willan’s report, see, Stockwell, *British Documents, Malaya, Part. I*, doc. no. 57, pp. 139-168.

¹² The term “Old Malaysans” is discussed by Stockwell, *Ibid.*, p. lviii.

their views in April 1946.¹³ As Turnbull pointed out they were able to have some effect opinion in Malaya, long after their active service had concluded.¹⁴

The statement of policy on the future constitution of Malaya was presented to the House of Commons in January 1946.¹⁵ It provided for a Malayan Union consisting of all nine of the Malay States on the Peninsula together with the Settlements of Penang and Malacca with the aim of creating a centralised political system under British jurisdiction with sovereign rights passing from the Leaders of individual Malay states to the British Crown. The other key objective was 'to promote a broad-based citizenship which will include, without discrimination of race or creed, all who can establish a claim, by reason of birth or a suitable period of residence, to belong to the country'.¹⁶ The question of citizenship however remained contentious. It attracted considerable opposition from the Malay community and was later withdrawn from the constitution of the Malayan Union.¹⁷ Because of its distinctive geographical position and its extensive trading and commercial enterprises, Singapore was not included in these arrangements although future unification was not ruled out.

Sir Edward Gent, Head of the Eastern Department at the Colonial Office from 1939 to 1942 and who had played a significant role in planning the new constitution, travelled out to Malaya at the end of March to take up his position as Governor in Kuala Lumpur on 1 April 1946 and to implement new arrangements for governance by the Malayan Union. Unfortunately for the British Government, and despite its postponement of the proposals for citizenship, Gent encountered considerable opposition from the Malay community on his

¹³ 'A Malayan Union', *The Times*, 15 April 1946. A further letter was written by Clementi, *The Times*, 23 April 1946. For a brief discussion see, Barlow, *Swettenham*, pp. 725-728.

¹⁴ Turnbull, 'The Post-War Decade in Malaya', p.13.

¹⁵ Colonial Office, *Malayan Union and Singapore. Statement of Policy on Future Constitution*, Cmd. 6724, (London, January 1946). Further proposals to be included in Orders in Council were necessary and these were presented in March 1946, see, Colonial Office, *Malayan Union and Singapore: Summary of Proposed Constitutional Arrangements*, Cmd. 6749, (London, March, 1946).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.5

¹⁷ Turnbull, 'The Post-War Decade', p. 13.

arrival in Malaya, largely orchestrated by Dato Onn bin Ja'afar President of the Pan Malayan Malay Congress and *Mentri Besar* in Johore. A prominent, if temperamental Malay politician, Dato Onn was to exercise considerable influence on Malay politics during the immediate post-war period. He persuaded the Malay rulers who had gathered in Kuala Lumpur for Gent's inauguration as Governor to boycott the official ceremony and to join with the crowds who were demonstrating against the implementation of the Malayan Union as they feared the usurping of the sovereignty of the Sultans and their traditional relationship/allegiance to them. The Malays also opposed the erosion of communal rights of precedence, an issue of importance for them given their fears of dominance by the Chinese community. The rulers unexpectedly supported Dato Onn's entreaties, a show of defiance which provided a significant moment as 'never before had rulers acted in concert, nor ... aroused such displays of popular support ...'.¹⁸

At a subsequent meeting in Johore Bahru from 11 to 13 May, the Pan Malayan Malay Congress was re-organised to form the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) with Dato Onn as President of the new organisation.¹⁹ Under his leadership a major aim of the UMNO was to oppose the Malayan Union and promote the cause of Malayan independence although Dato Onn recognized that it would be a generation before the country was ready for self-rule and hence there were advantages in maintaining British governance over the short term. Miscalculating public opinion, he went on to reform the UMNO as a party which would accept non-Malay membership. This led to the formation of the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) but he lost personal support as his non-communal position became more explicit and less popular. In 1952 the IMP was heavily defeated by the UMNO and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) led by Tan Cheng Lock in municipal elections in Kuala Lumpur.

¹⁸ Stockwell, *British Documents, Malaya, Part. 1*, p. lix.

¹⁹ See, A. J. Stockwell, 'The Foundation and First Years of the United Malay National Organisation 1946-48', *Modern Asian studies*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1977), pp. 481-513.

It has been observed that the aspirations of the Malay, Chinese and Indian races were to be fulfilled ‘... not by multi-racial parties but through bargains struck between communal organisations. It was to an Alliance of mutually exclusive communal parties, not to a homogenous national movement, that the British were to transfer power in 1957’.²⁰

Dato Onn was vehemently opposed to the imposition of the Malayan Union and while he established a good relationship with Malcolm MacDonald, a personal enmity towards Sir Edward Gent as the architect of the Union was never resolved. This was unfortunate because Gent, a political realist, quickly conceded that the strength of Malay opposition would make the Union unsustainable. He worked diligently thereafter to reach agreement for a new political entity, the Malayan Federation, although both he and the British Government remained committed to the original principles of sovereignty and citizenship which had underpinned the Union arrangements. The British Government ‘appeased the Malays over the Malayan Union ... and adopted a more circuitous route towards the goals of strong government for the peninsular and common citizenship for all peoples, goals which continued to guide British policy for the next decade’.²¹ The Federation was adopted on 1 February 1948 and as the appointee of the Secretary of State and with MacDonald’s approval, Gent retained his senior status through his new position as High Commissioner. The new constitution did not significantly reduce tensions in the country and the following months saw widespread social unrest involving labour disputes and acts of violent crime culminating in the murder of three European planters and their Chinese assistants at Sungei Siput.²² It was following this incident that a state of emergency was finally declared by Gent in Johore on 16 June 1948 and extended to the rest of the Federation two days later. The Malayan Communist Party (MCP) through its military wing, the Malayan National (min-tsu) Liberation Army had

²⁰ Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics During the Malayan Union Experiment*, p. 172.

²¹ Stockwell, *British Documents, Malaya, Part I*, p. lxiii.

²² *Ibid.*, p. lxiv-v.

exploited the situation and in mid-June launched an armed insurrection against the colonial state.²³ During the ensuing lengthy and exhaustive struggle it has been observed that:

The MCP was never able to overcome the initial disorder and confusion of June and July 1948 with the result that at no stage did it progress beyond the stage of terrorism to more concerted guerrilla warfare The fact that such terrorism attained the intensity that it did and persisted for so long was, however, partly attributable to the uncompromising inflexibility of British employers and officials. In the Federation of Malaya where the terrorist challenge was based, the British response to the MCP's challenge was in no sense that of reform but of authoritarian restriction. Only in the period after 1952 was any consistent effort made to win the 'hearts and minds' of the great majority of the de facto population.²⁴

Gent had been '... reluctant to declare a state of emergency and to order troop reinforcements ... he had become an increasingly isolated figure ... the object of unprecedented criticism from the European press and, more discretely, from within his own administration'.²⁵ He lost the support of MacDonald and was recalled to London for what today would be termed "a career talk" with the Secretary of State.²⁶ Tragically, the RAF York transport aeroplane on which he was travelling home to London as the only passenger was involved in a mid-air collision with a Scandinavian Sky-master airliner. This took place on the approach to Northolt Airport and resulted in the death of all passengers on both aircraft.²⁷ It was later observed that if Gent had not lost his life '... he would have put his case before the Secretary of State. As it was, a gifted and gallant public servant became the scapegoat for British set-backs in a Malaya turned upside down by the war'.²⁸

²³ Ibid., pp. lxiii-lxxii; For a collection of original documents on the communist insurrection see, Stockwell, *British Documents, Malaya, Part II, The Communist Insurrection, 1948-1953*. Additional works include, A. Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya 1948-1960*, (London, 1975); R. Stubbs, *Hearts and Minds in Guerrilla Warfare: The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960*, (Singapore, 1989).

²⁴ M. R. Stenson, *Repression and Revolt: The Origins of the 1948 Communist Insurrection in Malaya and Singapore, Paper No. 10, International Studies, Southeast Asia Series*, (Athens, Ohio, 1969), p. 30.

²⁵ Ibid., p.25-26.

²⁶ See, *The Straits Times*, 29 June, 1 July and 31 July, 1948.

²⁷ For a brief report of the air-crash see, *The Manchester Guardian* 5 July 1948; see also, A. J. Stockwell, 'Gent, Sir (Gerard) Edward James (1895-1948)',

<https://doi-org.chain.kent.ac.uk/10.1093/ref:odnb/63543> [accessed 23/05/2019]

²⁸ Ibid.

These politically volatile circumstances characterised by increasing levels of violence and personal tragedy provide the background to the unlikely focus of this chapter, the reactions to the report published by the Carr-Saunders Commission. It seems most improbable that an educational event involving public discussions on proposals for the development of the first university in Malaya should take place just a month before Sir Edward Gent, Governor Malay Union declared a state of emergency in the territories. Having outlined the political context, the chapter now considers reactions to the commissioners' report with reference to a Symposium that was held in Singapore. In addition to this there were other contexts such as the press, political assemblies and communal associations where the report's proposals were examined; the idea of "Symposium" therefore has a metaphorical dimension as the discussion was extended to enable reactions to be heard from other sources in the country.²⁹ The chapter analyses views in the British and Malayan Press and those of students at the Singaporean Colleges. It concludes with reference to the enactment of the University of Malaya Bill and the University's Foundation Day.

6.2. Symposium in Singapore

A Symposium was held on 15 May 1948 at the Medical College in Singapore to discuss the recently published report by the Carr-Saunders Commission.³⁰ It was organised by Lim Tay Boh and the Malayan International Student Service to provide an opportunity for officials and representatives of local organisations to meet and reflect on the significance of the report for the future development of university education in Malaya.³¹ The event had no formal status

²⁹ See also n. 31 below.

³⁰ Lim Tay Boh, ed., *A Symposium on the Carr-Saunders Report on University Education in Malaya*, (Singapore, 1948). For a copy of the report see, BW/90/551. Lim Tay Boh was later appointed lecturer and then Professor of Economics in the department of Economics at the University of Malaya. A successful academic career culminated in his appointment as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Singapore, 1965-67. This is also discussed by Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation,' p. 1167.

³¹ A commission of enquiry has been conceived as a 'theatre of power ... in which a central "truth" of state power is played out before a public audience. This truth is that the subjects of power can speak freely of their interests and will be heard; that state power is civilized, is a partner with 'society' in pursuit of the 'common

or remit; its aim was ‘... merely to provide a forum for the exchange of views ...’ [but as Lim Tay Boh pointed out] ‘... it is necessary to place on record the unanimous agreement of those present at the meeting that in order to avoid delay the ... report should be adopted in principle immediately’.³² He explained that:

no other report published within the last twenty years has been received with such enthusiastic acclamations. This is not surprising for what is most impressive about the Carr-Saunders report is not its brilliant presentation of ideas, nor yet its magnificent conception of the functions of a university, but its sympathetic insight into the aspirations of the people of this country and the bold liberalism of its recommendation.³³

The event was extremely well attended by more than 250 participants including lecturers and students from the Medical College and Raffles College. In addition many organisations were represented such as the Singapore Teacher’s Union, the Alumni Association of the College of Medicine, the Stamford Club (the Association of Raffles College Graduates), the Medical College Union, the Raffles College Union, the Singapore Rotary Club, the Malayan Democratic Union and Progressive Party (MDU).³⁴ A range of speakers addressed the Symposium, including Professor T. H. Silcock, Head of the Department of Economics at Raffles College, En-Chooi Yip, Secretary, Malayan Democratic Union, P. V. Sorma, General Secretary, Singapore Teachers Union, Tan Chee Khoo, President, Medical College Union, and Professor R. G. M. MacGregor (College of Medicine). These contributions were integral to the discussions and were subsequently published in the proceedings of the Symposium.³⁵

good, see, Adam Ashworth, *The Politics of Official Discourse in Twentieth-Century South Africa*, (Oxford, 1990), p. 7. The Symposium exemplified this form of communal engagement.

³² Lim Tay Boh, ‘Symposium’, p. ii.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. ii-iii.

³⁴ Several of these organisations had met and/or submitted memoranda to the Carr-Saunders Commission see, Carr-Saunders Report, Appendix iv, pp. 136-146.

³⁵ Lim Tay Boh, ‘Symposium’.

Most speakers were enthusiastic about the report. For example, Dr. Sreenivasan, Alumni Association of King Edward VII College of Medicine, believed that ‘the most striking thing ... is the liberal opinion of the members of the commission and their progressive and sympathetic attitude towards the local people and their aspirations ... surpassing even the wishes of the local men themselves’.³⁶ In an important address Professor Silcock explained that he was particularly gratified by the comments that the commissioners had made about academic standards at Raffles College saying to the Symposium that the ‘... underrating and depreciation of the standard of Raffles College has not merely caused injustice and discontent. It has done grave mischief to the intellectual life of Malaya ...’.³⁷ Silcock commended the Commission’s work as ‘a masterly report, a noble conception beautifully presented and defended with brilliant logic and fine sensibility and urged the Symposium to give its unequivocal support saying that ‘first you must get your university’.³⁸

In a more cautious statement A. P. Rajah a representative of the Progressive Party recognised that change would be incremental and that ‘the fusion of the two colleges should provide us with a university adequate in scope to start with. But only to start with. I hope that at the end of the next ten years the full scheme set out in the report will be an achieved fact’.³⁹ This was a reference to the proposed establishment of the University at Johor Bahru, a more complex and challenging project than the merger of the two Singaporean Colleges. The Symposium also discussed the achievement of requisite quality in teaching and learning identified as areas of concern by the pre-war MacLean commission which had been critical of academic standards at Raffles College.⁴⁰ A critical and contentious area concerned university entry qualifications a point on which Carr-Saunders had been particularly clear when he

³⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 16.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 14-16.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 3.

⁴⁰ See, chapter 4, p. 98-99.

emphasized that ‘if students are to enter the University with a proper equipment of knowledge, character and social experience, a course of higher school studies should be provided for them after the School Certificate stage.⁴¹ The Report had added that in conceiving of higher school studies:

we wish to guard against the implication that they should be modelled on the somewhat specialised course which has led in the past to the Higher School Certificate Examination in England. We are persuaded that in Malaya the need is for a liberal course in the fullest sense of the term, a course aiming at the mastery of principles rather than the mere assimilation of factual knowledge.⁴²

The Commission therefore recommended a two-year course with an additional six months for a community service component. It should be available for a wide range of students not just for prospective university students and should provide studies leading to a School Leaving Certificate based on ‘assigned tasks, private study, and supervised reading in order to transmit the technique of [independent] learning and to wean [students] finally from dependence upon intellectual spoon-feeding.⁴³

There was support for the achievement and maintenance of high academic standards so that the quality of degrees awarded in Malaya would compare favourably with those awarded in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the Empire. This was specifically emphasised by The Hon’ble Enche Sardon bin Haji Jubir, one of six elected members of the Singapore Legislative Council who addressed the Symposium on the topic: *The University – A Malay View*. Miss B. E. Chapman, Raffles Girls School, also emphasised the importance of standards and pointed out the need for a more rigorous preparation for entry to university.⁴⁴ The proposed length and scope of the qualifying entry course however presented some difficulties and there was support for more rapid progress and the introduction of a shorter,

⁴¹Carr-Saunders Report, p. 22.

⁴² Ibid., p.22.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 23. See also, BW 90/550, Priestley’s report on his visit to Malaya and his suggestions for a more rounded approach.

⁴⁴ Lim Tay Boh, Symposium, p. 19; p. 30.

one-year course. The pre-university programme appears to have been strongly influenced by Carr-Saunders' own educational experiences - the liberal tutorial system, private study and independent learning from Oxford University, social and community service from Toynbee Hall.

The subjects of governance and management were discussed and centred mainly on the appointment of a Chancellor and Vice Chancellor. The Carr-Saunders Report had acknowledged the position of Dr George Allen as Principal-designate and recommended that the non-executive position of Chancellor should be appointed by Royal assent; Malcolm MacDonald, now Commissioner-General of South East Asia, was regarded as an appropriate candidate.⁴⁵ Once the university was constituted, the appointment of Vice-Chancellor could be made by the university council following consultation with the senate with an interim appointment being made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. These proposals were not contested by the Symposium. Creech Jones had announced the appointment of Principal-designate of the University College ahead of the appointment of the Carr-Saunders Commission and its visit to Malaya which began at the end of March and concluded at the end of April 1947.⁴⁶ Dr Allen, Principal of the Medical College, Singapore was duly appointed Principal-designate and attended meetings held by the Carr-Saunders Commission in Malaya and on their return to London. He was confirmed as Vice-Chancellor of the new university in 1949 and served until 1952.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Carr-Saunders Report, p. x.

⁴⁶ *HC Deb* 29 January 1947, Vol 432, Col. 221-2W. The decision originated with Sir Raymond Priestley, see chapter 5, p. 136.

⁴⁷ Sir Sydney Caine was appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Malaya in 1952 and succeeded Carr-Saunders as Director of the LSE in 1956. Caine's appointment was welcomed and described as a '... pleasure at having for the first time a former student and current Governor, a true LSE man as Director' There was a reference to an absence of the drama and of Sidney Webb, in the appointment of Director, the latter usually creating the former, see, Dahrendorf, *LSE*, p. 397.

The Symposium also heard of the need for more significant reforms and structural changes in society, sentiments that were expressed by representatives of political parties and associations. For example, Eu-Chooi Yip, Secretary of the MDU emphasized that:

the acceptance of the Carr-Saunders Report implies logically a complete re-orientation of the educational policy of this country ... If the University is to live up to the name of being 'a focus for the intellectual self-expression of the people', the schools which feed it with young aspirants for learning must cease to be merely the training ground for 'clerks and foremen'.⁴⁸

Referring to the MDU Memorandum which had been presented to the Carr-Saunders Commission the previous year Eu-Chooi Yip stated that:

an arrangement which places the Malayan institutions in a position of a satellite will be most unwelcome since the principle of natural autonomy has been widely accepted as the only one compatible with progress ... we maintain that the central machinery ... the Asquith Commission proposes to set up for the purpose of co-ordinating university work in the colonies could be more effectively achieved if a full university were established now.⁴⁹

According to Carr-Saunders, one of the reasons for recommending a full university rather than a university college was the palpable enthusiasm displayed by people at all levels of society for higher education which he encountered during his visit of enquiry to Malaya. As he observed:

There is a 'divine discontent' with things as they have been and a recognition of the contribution which a university could make towards a higher standard of living, a broader culture, a closer integration of the people and a greater measure of self-government ... and it was evident to us that many of the young men and women had thought to good purpose while all else was controlled; many witnesses who came before us realised where the university would fit into their ambitions for a new Malaya.⁵⁰

During the Symposium it was emphasized that the Commissioners had been particularly impressed by the excellent memoranda of the MDU, Singapore Teachers' Union, Stamford Club, Medical College Union and the Medical Alumni Association and by the oral presentations of their leaders such as Eu Chooi Yip, John Eber, P. V. Sarma, Goh Keng

⁴⁸ Lim Tay Boh, Symposium, p. 24.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

Swee and Dr R. Sreenivasan.⁵¹ The Symposium was a highly successful event which enabled individuals and representatives from a range of statutory and voluntary organizations to debate the main issues of the Carr-Saunders report and to declare an enthusiastic support for the recommendations it made; there was unanimous support to proceed to the formation of the university without delay. The more complex issues - obtaining the necessary financial resources and the establishment of a unitary, residential and multi-racial university at Johore Bahru were considered but not in great depth. Despite this, the Symposium was a significant event in that it signalled a break with previous colonial education policies and practices and revealed support for progress towards a more independent society. As Eu-Chooi Yip emphasised:

Only when the Malayan youths have acquired a sense of dignity of independence can we expect the University to make its full contribution towards the building up of a living and virile cultural tradition ... University of Malaya can become a university in fact as well as in name only in the context of a democratically self-governing Malaya.⁵²

The Symposium was confirmation of a desire to develop and sustain enthusiasm and support for university education throughout Malaya but the complexities of moving towards an autonomous university were perhaps less fully appreciated by many of those in attendance. Full university status would not simply be 'given'; it had to be achieved, a position that Lim Tay Boh fully recognized. The development was not simply an amalgamation of two existing colleges but a project involving the expansion of the curriculum and resources to encourage research activities. He maintained that if this was not undertaken, 'the new institution would have no advantage over a university college "tied to the long apron strings" of the University of London'.⁵³ A similar note was sounded by Eu-Chooi Yip when he

⁵¹ Yeo Kim Wah, 'Student Politics', pp. 347-48.

⁵² Lim Tay Boh, 'Symposium', p. 24. For a critique of the limited aims of colonial education in Malaya, see, K. Johan, *The Malay College Kuala Kangsar 1905-1941*; Philip Loh Fook Seng, 'A Review of the Educational Developments in the Federated Malay States to 1939', *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, (September 1974), Vol. 5, No. 2, pp. 225-238.

⁵³ Lim Tay Boh, 'Symposium', p. (iii).

emphasized that a recommendation was not a guarantee and he cautioned against a passive and uncritical response to forthcoming events saying that, ‘experience shows that official reports do not in themselves constitute reforms; schemes less liberal than the Carr-Saunders report have been aborted in the process of being carried out before now.’⁵⁴

6.3. Press Reports

The reaction by the Malayan press to the Carr-Saunders report was very positive with newspapers covering the publication of the report in considerable detail.⁵⁵ On the same day Dr George Allen described the importance of the Carr-Saunders report in a broadcast on Radio Malaya, his understated exposition being considered to be most effective.⁵⁶ The significance of the Carr-Saunders report was emphasized in an article written by H. R. Cheeseman, a prominent figure in the administration of Malayan education. After the war Cheeseman was appointed Director of Education and advised the Carr-Saunders Commission during their visit to Malaya in April 1947. He was present later in the year when the final report was being prepared in London and in Malaya during 1948 when he gave considerable support to the Carr-Saunders’ proposals at meetings of the Legislative Council.

In his newspaper article Cheeseman declared that, ‘since the birth of education institutions in Malaya in 1816,⁵⁷ there has been no report of greater importance to the progress of this country than the Carr-Saunders Commissions’ report on university education’.⁵⁸ Cheeseman was especially impressed by the idea that the university should be a centre for Oriental Studies with a department of Malay Studies which in time would become an international focus and rallying point for Malay scholarship. ‘As I read this’, he said, ‘I

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 22.

⁵⁵ The *Indian Daily Mail* and the *Malay Mail*, 1 May 1948.

⁵⁶ BW 90 /551, Letter, Mrs Elizabeth Alexander to Walter Adams, 4 May 1948.

⁵⁷ This was a reference to the opening of the Penang Free School in 1816, the first European school in the Straits Settlements, see, Stevenson, *Cultivators and Administrators*, p.11.

⁵⁸ See, *The Straits Times*, 1 May 1948, ‘Blueprint of Raffles’ Dream’.

felt how much nearer this comes to bringing this country to the realisation of Raffles' dream of Malaya as just such a centre'.⁵⁹ At the beginning of the following week the *Straits Times* published a further article, *A New Spirit Abroad*, which emphasized the significance of the commissioner's report as follows:

To those whose memories of the old Malaya go back a long way and who are now trying to render what service they can in their several ways to the new Malaya which has emerged from the second world war, the report of the Commission on University Education comes as the most inspiring document that they have ever read in this country. Here at last we see the end of that era of the development of Malaya in which there was nothing but the godown, the tin mine and the rubber estate; in which overseas capital and immigrant enterprise were dominant in almost every walk of life; in which the English educated classes of the Asian population were merely clerks and foremen serving a European ruling caste; and in which the life of the mind and of the spirit languished in a completely materialistic environment.⁶⁰

The evocative article powerfully captured a sense of release from colonial oppression and the end of an epoch and concluded by saying:

Today our main purpose is to urge that this brilliant presentation of the case for the proposed University of Malaya should be given the widest possible circulation and study among the domiciled communities, and to suggest to those communities, both Malay and non-Malay, that if ever there was a British contribution to the progress of Malaya that they should seize with both hands, this is it.⁶¹

A different but salutary note was struck towards the end of the month in the vernacular press. In *Utusan Melayu* there was a three-page special article with the headline, *Malays and the University-We Must Take Our Own Steps*, written by Haji Mohamed Zain Ayub.⁶² He identified some of the educational problems faced by the Malay community saying that 'our backwardness in education is due to our own carelessness', insofar as '... there are many

⁵⁹ Ibid.; see, chapter 2, pp. 38-39.

⁶⁰ *Straits Times*, 3 May, 1948; cited in part by Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation', p 1167.

⁶¹ *Straits Times*, 3 May, 1948.

⁶² Haji Mohamed Zain bin Ayub, Anderson School, Ipoh, *Utusan Melayu*, 26 May, 1948. He attended a meeting with the Commission during its visit to Ipoh, in April 1947, see, Carr-Saunders Report, p. 143.

non-Malays around us today taking all the educational opportunities ... [who] have advanced further than us'⁶³ He envisaged a bleak future unless the Malays became involved and supportive of their children's education, particularly if they were to progress and qualify for entrance to university. The Carr-Saunders report had emphasized that English, at best a second language for most Malays, would be the language of instruction in higher education, thereby presenting a further problem for Malay pupils the majority of whom did not attend English-speaking schools and who tended to begin school much later. In a direct, unsophisticated way the article spoke of the many disadvantages facing Malay pupils and contrasted sharply with the eloquence of the Commission's Report and the optimism of newspapers like the *Straits Times*.

The developments in Malayan higher education were reported favourably in the English press. *The Sunday Times* saw opportunities for the new university to become part of the wider academic community and provide a focus for Malay culture through the establishment of a department of Malay studies. The paper also noted plans for parallel departments of Chinese studies and '... a place for Tamil studies including not only the Tamil language but the whole range of Dravidian culture and south Indian history'.⁶⁴ The proposal for an independent university with degree-awarding powers was identified as '... the outstanding recommendation [and represented] 'a bold advance on the report produced by the Asquith Commission ...'.⁶⁵ The proposed university was seen as having two main aims. The first was to provide a higher-level education and to conduct research; the second more distinctive aim was '... to weave into one cloth the education of three races- Malays, Chinese and Tamil-speaking Indians, now on uneasy terms'.⁶⁶ *The Times* recognised the importance of the Carr-Saunders Report to the development of Malaya and considered that the

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ *The Sunday Times*, 2 May 1948.

⁶⁵ *The Manchester Guardian*, 1 May 1948, p. 4.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Commission had acted responsibly in seeking to reassure the Malay community that a university would not be detrimental to their standing in the country, particularly in relationship to the position of the Chinese and Indian communities. The Report was described as ‘... a finely considered document [and] if recent disorders have made 1st October less likely as Foundation Day, it should not be long delayed’.⁶⁷ In a later article the TES described the Carr-Saunders Report under the heading “No Apron Strings”, considering it to be ‘one of the most fascinating ... to have appeared in recent years on any aspect of education in the British colonies ...’.⁶⁸

In addition to the discussions at the Symposium and press reports in Malaya and Britain, the Carr-Saunders Report was subject to political scrutiny as formal approval from the respective Legislatures in Singapore and in Kuala Lumpur was sought; as the Straits Times put it the Report began ‘to run the gauntlet of the Councils’.⁶⁹ At their meeting in Singapore on Tuesday 25 May the Colony’s Legislative Council unanimously passed a resolution approving the report in principle; it also appointed a select committee to examine the details of its proposals and to liaise with an equivalent committee representing the Federation. The following week on Monday 31 May the Federal Legislative Council held its meeting Kuala Lumpur to consider the following resolution.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ CO 717/161/3; See, *The Times* 20 July 1948.

⁶⁸ BW 90/551; See, *The TES* 24 July 1948.

⁶⁹ *The Straits Times*, 20 May, 1948.

⁷⁰ The Federal Legislative Council together with the Federal Executive Council formed part of the Federation Agreement which replaced arrangements under the Malayan Union. For details, including powers and membership of the Councils see, Colonial Office, *Federation of Malaya: Summary of Revised Constitutional Proposals*, Cmd. 7171, (London, 1947). Four years later, 21 December 1951, further revisions were made and the membership was expanded see, Stockwell, *British Documents, Malaya, Part. II*, doc. no. 257, Appendix iii.

That this Council welcomes the report on University Education in Malaya and approves in principle the recommendation of the Carr-Saunders Commission for the creation of a University of Malaya. That a select Committee be appointed for the purpose of examining the detailed proposals of the Commission for the Constitution of the University, with a view to legislation being enacted as soon as possible. That such a Select Committee be empowered to deliberate jointly with a Select Committee appointed for a similar purpose by the Legislative Council of the Colony of Singapore.

The resolution was strongly supported by Cheeseman who emphasized that the ‘establishment of universities [was] an inescapable corollary of the policy which aimed at the achievement of self-government’.⁷¹ Carr-Saunders acknowledged the very active role Cheeseman played in gaining Malay support and recognised that ‘... we owe a lot to Cheeseman; he has been talking in favour of the report and has been conducting a campaign on its behalf most successfully’.⁷² There was also strong support from Dato Onn bin Ja’afar who urged his colleagues to vote in favour of the resolution saying that ‘... the University ... would be in the best interest of Malaya. It would provide [people] with that incentive they need to meet the challenge of the world today. The benefits of the University would be vast to the Malays themselves’.⁷³ Dato Onn’s position was significant because it contrasted markedly with his opposition to the development of higher education in Malaya at the time of the McLean Commission’s enquiry ten years previously. The reasons for this change were consistent with Onn’s more enlightened views which he had adopted by the end of the Second World War, for example, a less strident communal perspective, increasing support for the rights of non-Malays and recognition of the need to develop a leadership elite and managerial class in the country to address the political and economic problems of the post-war era.

⁷¹ *The Straits Times*, 31 May 1948.

⁷² CO 717/161/3, Carr-Saunders, letter to D. M. Man, 23 June 1948.

⁷³ *The Straits Times*, 31 May 1948. The membership of the Federation’s select committee had been agreed as follows: Dato Onn bin Ja’afar (chairman); Dato Nik Ahmed Kamil; Dr Kamil Mohammed Ariff; Mr Yong Shook Lin; Mr E. E. C. Thuraisingham; Tengku Abu Bakar; Dr R. B. MacGregor (Director of Medical Services); Inche Zainai Abidin bin Haji Abbas; Mr H. R. Cheeseman, Director of Education, Federation of Malaya. The Singapore select committee was chaired by J. B. Nielson, Director of Education, Singapore.

The passing of the resolution by both councils marked their agreement in principle to the creation of a University of Malaya and represented the timely completion of an important first stage but many problems remained to be resolved. In part these derived from the terms of reference which had provided the framework for the Carr-Saunders enquiry and which had envisaged a more incremental approach to the provision of university education as recommended by the Asquith Commission. This was partly resolved by the Carr-Saunders' proposal to move directly to the foundation of the University of Malaya on the basis of an amalgamation involving the Medical College and Raffles College in Singapore. This left the second stage of development – the formation of a unitary, multi-racial and residential institution to fully achieve the Commission's concept of a University for Malaya. The recommendation by Carr-Saunders was to move the new University from Singapore to a purpose-built campus at Johore Bahru, a far more difficult and expensive project involving the procurement of an appropriate site, securing sufficient levels of finance and the establishment of management structures for planning and construction. These were all matters requiring agreement between the two Governments but increasing political tensions between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore only added complexity to the planning exercise.⁷⁴ A press report captured the dilemma by stating that:

The transitional stage was recognised by the decisions of the respective Councils as being within the range of practical politics here and now, but consideration of the ultimate university at Johore Bahru will have to be deferred until 'the time is ripe' ... both Councils will have to decide just how much of the Carr-Saunders report they are prepared to implement and how far they are prepared to commit themselves.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ The political difficulties between Kuala Lumpur and Singapore were raised by Gimson in conversation with Priestley, see above, chapter 5, p. 135.

⁷⁵, CO 717/161/3; see also, *The Straits Times*, 27 May 1948.

The two select committees then held a series of meetings which took place over the next year a process of negotiation which concluded with draft legislation for the constitutional basis of the University of Malaya. It provided for a Senate, a Council and a Court in which all sections of local opinion would be represented; provision was also made for the appointment of the Governor-General Malcolm MacDonald as Chancellor and for Dr George Allen, Principal of the King Edward VII Medical College, as Vice Chancellor. Financial arrangements were similar to those which pertained in Great Britain with a Malayan University Grants Committee serving as an intermediary between the University and the respective Governments of the Malayan Union and Singapore to secure and distribute requisite grants-in-aid funding on a quinquennial basis. It was anticipated that each of the Malayan Governments would appoint three members and that at the time the Governments of Borneo and Sarawak were participatory in the allocation of grants, they each would appoint two members to the Grants Committee.⁷⁶ Legislation was presented to and agreed by the respective Legislative Councils in Singapore and in Kuala Lumpur in March 1949 an event which was hailed enthusiastically by MacDonald who observed that: 'Though less than a month old, the University of Malaya, is no *lusus naturae* but the establishment of a centre of learning and education in Malaya, having been first proposed by the great and far-seeing Stamford Raffles over a century ago'.⁷⁷ Both Councils were informed that the capital cost of the building programme was estimated at £3 million spread over ten years, with an additional recurrent expenditure expected to reach £600,000 per annum over ten years. In order to meet these costs three main sources of revenue were identified including student fees, government grants and public donations to a University Endowment Fund. Malcolm MacDonald emphasised the importance of generating income from the latter source as the University would be particularly dependent on financial support from the people of Malaya during its

⁷⁶ BW 90/543, University Education in the Far East: Progress in Malaya and Hong Kong. For details of financial arrangements see Carr-Saunders Report, pp 90-91.

⁷⁷ *The Times*, 11 April 1949.

early years.⁷⁸ A similar point was made by Sir Franklin Gimson, Governor of Singapore who called for 'generous donations from the public'.⁷⁹ Although support was forthcoming from these different sources, the estimates of costs particularly those pertaining to the move to Johore Bahru were to prove significantly understated. During a subsequent visit to Malaya in 1950, Carr-Saunders acknowledged there were financial difficulties but remained '... convinced that the recommendation concerning the site was wise ...'.⁸⁰

6.4. The Student Response

The Carr-Saunders' commissioners had been impressed by the commitment shown by young people to higher education despite years of war and consequently sought to promote their interests. As they reported:

Malaya has had nearly four years of enemy occupation and a difficult period of rehabilitation. Out of her sufferings have come a new energy and a more emphatic realisation of the importance of university education, not merely for training students to fill the highest posts in the country, but also for giving them the qualities of leadership and disinterested public service which are necessary for the progress of her people.⁸¹

Further research emphasised a need for the development of higher education regarding the end of the Japanese Occupation as '... a turning point in the development of tertiary education in Malaya. Out of the tumults and sufferings of the Occupation had emerged a wider realization among Malaysians of the importance of university education to the future of the country ...'.⁸² The commissioners' positive view of young Malaysians was reciprocated by students who were encouraged by the recommendations of Report and particularly enthused by the emphasis on the importance given to the 'autonomous university' which the Carr-Saunders Report defined as follows:

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁷⁹ *The Times*, 30 March 1949. A brief note on Gimson follows below, p.204, n. 92.

⁸⁰ Carr-Saunders, Report of Visit to the University of Malaya, 1950.

⁸¹ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 6-7.

⁸² Yeo Kim Wah, 'Student Politics', p. 347.

an independent corporation, not controlled by any department of Government, possessing its own funds and spending them within its legal powers as it thinks fit, and carrying out in its own way its public duty, which is the advancement and dissemination of knowledge. Its officers and teachers must not be government servants, but must be in a position to speak truth as they see it, whether it is convenient or inconvenient to the Government for the time being.⁸³

These sentiments appealed to radical students who were inspired to imagine that the University of Malaya would:

play a major role in the evolution of the Malayan nation. As the apex of the education system, the university was seen as the key centre for the training of the future statesmen, administrators and professions of the country. Equally important, the university would vitally help to 'synthesise the different cultures' of the Malayan peoples in order 'to produce a new Malayan culture' and to 'crystallise the unconscious impulse towards unity and fellowship which is the tradition of our schools.'⁸⁴

In an attempt to develop a cultural base a 'campus press' emerged comprising several publications including, *The Undergrad* (later *Malayan Undergrad*), *The Cauldron* (later *New Cauldron* and *The Malayan Orchid*). They were dominated by radical students and played a key role in propagating nationalist and anti-western views.⁸⁵ *The Cauldron* was sponsored by the Literary & Debating Society of the Medical College Union and was formed in early 1947 to promote an interest in literature and modern thought. A more radical policy very opposed to Western social practices developed when Lim Chan Yong became editor and Wong Soo Kai became associate editor in March 1949 as indicated below:

We observe that whatever energy remains for sports and pastimes is squandered in pantomimic socials, pervaded by a bizarre and too frivolous air. Here the preposterous etiquette of so-called western society is fawningly simulated with meticulous care to a loathsome degree. Here native customs are heaved overboard while gentlemen and ladies covet grotesque esoteric ones. We revolt against these artificial practices. We must maintain our independence in every sense at all costs. Whatever little culture we have must be our own, characteristic of our Malayan soil, genius and atmosphere.⁸⁶

⁸³ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 87; cited in part, by Yeo Kim Wah, 'Student Politics', p. 376.

⁸⁴ J. J. Puthuchery, *Medical College Union Magazine*, 11, (1949-50), p. 34; cited by Yeo Kim Wah, 'Student Politics', p.376.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp.367-372.

⁸⁶ *The Cauldron*, March 1949, p. 40; cited by Yeo, 'Student Politics', p 372.

Students were conscious of the problems and inequalities existing in wider society and many considered that:

they stood on the threshold of a new era in Malaya and believed that they were entrusted with the major task of helping to create a new Malayan nation, a Malayan society and a first-class Malayan university in the great western tradition of academic freedom. Hence, a high tide of idealism and near euphoria flooded the campus during the early years of the University of Malaya.⁸⁷

With the foundation of the University in October 1949 Raffles College Union and the Medical College Union merged to form the University of Malaya Student Union (UMSU). The radical caucus was at its most influential between 1949 and 1951, a period during which James Puthuchery became general secretary of the UMSU and gained support from a body of moderate and left-wing students including Wang Gungwu.⁸⁸ As Yeo observed:

student radicals felt that student politics should develop along a party line, promote Malayan nationalism and try to move the country more rapidly towards independence. Much to the concern of the university authorities, they openly criticized the university and the expatriate academician.⁸⁹

Although some students were drawn into communist-inspired activities, most were realists with an over-riding commitment to the nationalist cause who were to 'become the inheritor generation supplanting the British in positions of authority and influence'.⁹⁰ It was an outcome that Carr-Saunders would see reflecting favourably on the work of his Commission and that of the new University.⁹¹

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 348.

⁸⁸ Professor Wang Gungwu went on to become a distinguished historian and prominent in the Asian Studies Association of Australia. His publications included: *A Short History of the Nanyang Chinese*, (Singapore, Eastern Universities Press, 1951); *Malaysia: A Survey*, ed., (New York, Praeger, 1964); 'Malaysia: Contending Elites', *Current Affairs Bulletin*, Vol. 47, No. 3, (December, 1970), pp. 35-48; *Nation Building: Five Southeast Asia Histories*, (Singapore, 2005).

⁸⁹ Yeo Kim Wah, 'Student Politics', p. 357.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 379.

⁹¹ By the 1970s University administration's tolerance of student activism had diminished and the independence of the student union was severely curtailed. For an account of student activism from a student perspective, see, Edgar Bolun Liao, 'Reclaiming the Ivory Tower: Student Activism in the University of Malaya and Singapore 1949-1975', (unpublished MA Thesis, National University of Singapore, 2010). See also, Meredith Weiss, 'Still

6.5. Foundation Day

The ceremony to mark the foundation of the University of Malaya was held in the Oei Tiong Ham Hall, Raffles College, Singapore on 8 October 1949 and as this study has demonstrated it had taken a long time and considerable effort to reach this momentous occasion. The ceremony was attended by some twelve hundred guests and dignitaries such as Malcolm MacDonald, who was confirmed as the University's first Chancellor, Dr George Allen, the Vice Chancellor, the four Pro-Chancellors, Sir Franklin Gimson, Governor of Singapore, Sir Henry Gurney, High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya, Dato Onn bin Ja'afar, President of the UMNO and Sir Han Hoe Lim, Straits Chinese Leader. There were in addition representatives from many international academic institutions including those from leading universities in Australia, Canada, Ceylon, Hong Kong, United Kingdom and USA. Gimson's attendance was particularly appropriate as he had supported the development of the University during his role as Governor of Singapore between 1946 and 1952.⁹² Gurney was also an advocate of higher education and an experienced and progressive colonial officer who supported an increase to unofficial membership on the Legislative Council. He replaced Sir Edward Gent as High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya on 6 October 1948 having served in East and West Africa and Palestine. He developed a close and effective working relationship with MacDonald during his service in Malaya but like Gent, Gurney suffered a tragic end when he was assassinated by communist guerrilla forces on 6 October 1951.⁹³

with the People? The Chequered Path of Student Activism in Malaysia', *South East Asian Research*, Vol. 13, No. 3, (November 2005), pp. 287-332.

⁹² Sir Franklin Gimson was politically astute and a social reformist. His colonial service began in Ceylon in 1914 where he progressed steadily occupying a variety of posts until 1941 when he was transferred to become colonial secretary in Hong Kong in 1941. Shortly after his arrival in Hong Kong and following the Japanese occupation, Gimson was interned in Stanley Camp. On his release some four years later and as acting Governor, he played a critical role in returning British rule to Hong Kong. For a detailed account of his colonial service, see A. J. Stockwell, 'A Colonial Progress: Franklin Gimson in Ceylon, Hong Kong and Singapore', in Nicholas Tarling ed., *Studying Singapore's Past: C. M. Turnbull and the History of Modern Singapore*, (Singapore, 2012), pp. 192-227. I am grateful to Professor Stockwell for alerting me to this paper.

⁹³ For a discussion of Gurney's work as High Commissioner and his relationship with MacDonald see, A. J. Stockwell, 'British Imperial Policy and Decolonization in Malaya, 1942-52', *The Journal of Imperial and*

The order of proceedings was broadly based on the protocols of an English university ceremony with processions arranged as follows: Academic staff, members of the senate, council and court together with student representatives; Academic representatives from other universities and organisations; The Undang of Rembau and the Undang of Jelebu. Their Highnesses, the Rulers, who entered to a fanfare of trumpets and comprised, the Regent of Johore, the Sultan of Perak, the Sultan of Kelantan, the Rajah of Perlis, the Sultan of Selangor, Yang Di-Pertuan Besar of Negri-Sembilan and the Sultan of Pahang. Principal officers from the University included the Vice-Chancellor and the Pro-Chancellors.⁹⁴ The Chancellor was installed and this was followed by an address from the Pro-Chancellors, Dato Onn bin Ja'afar and Sir Han Hoe Lim. Speaking to the congregation, Dato Onn bin Ja'afar asserted his confidence that, '... all will rise to the occasion and demonstrate to the world that, in a period of much destruction, we can proudly hand down to posterity something constructive which will contribute to a more peaceful, more content and more understanding world.'⁹⁵

In his Foundation Day address Malcolm MacDonald observed that it was a significant time, one of great moment and he claimed that:

We are witnessing in Malaya the birth of a nation ... The peoples of Malaya are marching along the road to nationhood ... let us today lay well and truly, the foundation of this university. Let us raise aloft its lamps and light them - the lamp of knowledge, the lamp of truth, the lamp of wisdom ...⁹⁶

MacDonald linked the opening of the University to wider political developments involving unity of territory, community and an emerging sense of Malayan nationality in which 'the university will be a cradle where a truly non - communal nation is nurtured'. More broadly he

Commonwealth History, Vol. 13, No. 1 (October 1984), pp. 68 – 87, p.75. For details of Gurney's assassination, see FO 371/93118, No 2; repr. in Stockwell, *British Documents, Malaya, Part. II*, doc. no. 246, p. 301.

⁹⁴See, *The Observer*, 9 October 1948; *The Manchester Guardian*, 10 October 1948.

⁹⁵ Hanizah Hashim, 'A Milestone in the Education of a Nation', *New Straits Times*, 8 October 1999.

⁹⁶ Khoo Kay Kim, *100 Years, the University of Malaya*, pp. 46-49; see also, *The Times*, 10 October, 1949, p. 3; Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation', p. 1168.

imagined an internationalist future in which ‘... this university can serve far more than a local purpose, that its fame will grow until it takes a high place amongst the seats of learning which bind all peoples round the Earth together in recognition ... that human civilisation is indivisible ...’.⁹⁷

MacDonald’s speech was reminiscent of an earlier address which he had delivered in similar grandiloquent terms⁹⁸ so much so that it is tempting to conclude that he brought a sense of vacuity to the occasion. According to Mary Turnbull, a researcher in Southeast Asian studies at the University of Malaya and later at the University of Hong Kong, such a judgement would be misplaced. In the early 1950s she had worked in the Malayan Civil Service prior to her academic appointments. During this time, she had been present to hear MacDonald’s speech to the convocation at the University of Malaya in 1955. Turnbull disavowed initial impressions that she had held of MacDonald; she confirmed that he was ‘... no light-weight playboy. His speech was direct, frank, hard-hitting ... his collection of papers reveals how much hard work went on behind that deceptively relaxed façade’.⁹⁹

6.6. Conclusion

The essential work of the Carr-Saunders Commission was carried out between 1947 and 1949, a difficult, improbable period during which to conduct an enquiry into higher education given the increasing violence and administrative dislocation which came to characterise post-war Malaya. Societal unease was widespread, partly a consequence of policy designed by the British to bring about changes in Malayan governance, for example, the supersession of civic government by the BMA which was in force from September 1945 to March 1946 and the imposition of the Malayan Union Government in April 1946 until February 1948. These

⁹⁷ *Malaya Tribune*, 9 October 1949. Although widely reported, *The Malaya Tribune* was one of the few newspapers to print the entire speech made by MacDonald.

⁹⁸ Andersen, and Cohen, eds., *Recruitment and Training*, (London, 2013), p. 276.

⁹⁹ Turnbull, ‘The Post-War Decade in Malaya’, p. 8.

years were of course preceded by the Japanese occupation which prevailed from 1942 until 1945. The fall of Singapore in 1942 had a profound effect on subsequent British policy as ‘it gradually sank in that there was no returning to the *status quo ante bellum* ... before that date policy was based on the belief in indefinite rule; afterwards the premise became that of eventual self-government’.¹⁰⁰

Other researchers have made similar points observing that: ‘The surrender of Singapore ... was not only the final stamp signifying the military defeat ... it also ... signalled the end of British political power ... British prestige received a blow from which it never recovered ...’.¹⁰¹ A further deterioration in public order occurred during the course of 1948 leading to the introduction of a state of emergency in June that year and the onset of a long, debilitating period of communist-led insurrection, conditions were to continue until 1960.¹⁰² Such political volatility and guerrilla violence coincided with the Carr-Saunders enquiry. While it may have posed a threat, it did not defeat the progress of the commissioners whose report was duly published in May 1948 and did not prevent Legislative approval for the University by the Governments in Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

The reaction to the publication of the Carr-Saunders’ report was welcomed with enthusiasm and support particularly as evidenced by discussions at the Symposium in Singapore and reflected in press reports released in both Britain and Malaya. The commissioners’ report was seen as timely and extremely well researched. It put forward a rationally argued case for the development of a university in authoritative, succinct prose; it was an official report *sui generis* and people warmed to its vision and progressiveness. It was the commission’s boldness in rejecting transitional arrangements involving the imposition of

¹⁰⁰ See Stockwell, *British Documents, Malaya, Part I*, p. lii.

¹⁰¹ Khong Kim Hoong, *Merdeka*, p. 30.

¹⁰² The ‘emergency’ finally concluded in December 1989 when the communist leader Chin Peng agreed to the cessation of hostilities, see Stockwell, *British Documents, Malaya, Part I*, p. lxiii; See also, A. J. Stockwell, ‘Chin Peng and the Struggle for Malaya’, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 16, No. 3, (November 2006), pp. 279-297.

a university college and recommending instead an autonomous university free from the tutelage of a British University that produced surprise and excitement in Malaya.

Despite high levels of public support, there were some difficulties with the recommendations put forward by the commission. First, the institutional model underpinning the report was based on ‘Anglo-Oxbridge’ assumptions regarding the purpose and function of a “real” university and raised questions about its validity as a university for South East Asia.¹⁰³ It may be argued that there is a sense of universal validity about values such as the transmission of academic and moral responsibilities, research activity and the maintenance of high academic standards through a system of external examination but, as has been emphasised, these elements were not ‘culture-free’.¹⁰⁴ It is important therefore to consider ‘... how far these alien importations, did, as was hoped, bring with them ideas and values of universal reference and of specific application to the needs of [the] twentieth century...’.¹⁰⁵

The second difficulty was implicit in the recommendation which involved a second-stage development, to move the recently constituted university from Singapore and its established base provided by the Medical College and Raffles College, to a new site at Johore Bahru. When Carr-Saunders re-visited Malaya in July 1950 he was able to confirm that the first major recommendation of his commission had been carried out with ‘... marked efficiency and success; standards of work are high and the reports from external examiners are uniformly favourable’.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand there were continuing problems with the Johore Bahru project and progress was limited. Despite this Carr-Saunders remained convinced that a move was in the best interests of the University and should not be delayed.

¹⁰³ The institutional model was consistent with the values espoused by the Asquith Commission, of which Carr-Saunders had been an influential member.

¹⁰⁴ Hargreaves, ‘The Idea of the Colonial University’, p. 29.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 26. Hargreaves was writing about Africa but a similar question might reasonably be asked of the foundation of the University of Malaya, a point raised in the concluding chapter.

¹⁰⁶ Carr-Saunders, Report of Visit to the University of Malaya, 1950. While in Malaya he attended the University’s first convocation ceremony, 8 July 1950 describing it as ‘a very impressive, dignified and colourful ceremony’, *Ibid.*, p. 1.

The precursor institutions, the Medical College and Raffles College, were based on different sites some three miles apart in Singapore and he believed that the concept of a unitary university which underpinned his report could only be achieved by moving to a single campus and creating a truly residential university. He was confirmed in his view following a “stop-over” in Ceylon on his return to London where he was able to see developments at the new university site at Peredeniya which he described as ‘one of the greatest university enterprises ever undertaken in the Commonwealth’. He acknowledged that the Johore Bahru site in Malaya was less dramatic but the adjacent grounds, ‘... a magnificent tropical park ...’ belonging to the Sultan of Johore suggested that ‘... Johore Bahru like Peredeniya can form a setting for a university unparalleled in the Commonwealth’.¹⁰⁷ He warned that, although ultimately successful, years of prevarication had threatened developments in Ceylon and urged the Malayan authorities to take decisive action and proceed as quickly as possible.

Despite this advice from Carr-Saunders doubts about the Johore Bahru project lingered and remained unresolved for several years whilst other pressing issues emerged, e.g., student enrolment had increased beyond initial expectations and additional hostel accommodation and attendant facilities were now urgently required in Singapore. These factors together with a realisation of ever-increasing costs and fears of removing higher education from its established base in the then leading Malayan and international city of Singapore ultimately defeated plans for the creation of an entirely new university in Johore Bahru, a relatively small town at the southern tip of the peninsula.¹⁰⁸ In 1954 the respective Governments of the Federation and the Colony together with the University’s Council agreed that the institution should continue in Singapore and that requisite facilities should be developed accordingly. It was also agreed that the University should open a centre in Kuala Lumpur to offer courses in more technical and applied subjects such as engineering and

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

¹⁰⁸ In 1950 the population of Johore Bahru was 46,824, <https://www.dosm.gov.my> [accessed 01/08/2020]

agriculture.¹⁰⁹ The move to Johore Bahru was formally abandoned and a central principle underpinning the Carr-Saunders' report was finally put aside.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Several histories of the University of Malaya and the National University of Singapore have been written for example, C. T. Lim, *University of Malaya, 1949-1985: Its Established Growth and Development*, (Kuala Lumpur, 2013); E. Lee and T.Y. Tan, *Beyond Degrees: The Making of the National University of Singapore*, (Singapore, 1996); M. Quah ed., *One Hundred Years of Heritage: The National University of Singapore Story*, (Singapore, 2006).

¹¹⁰ See, Sir Sydney Caine, 'The University of Malaya', *Nature*, Vol. 175 (29 January, 1955), 186-188. A retrospective view of the university was later provided by Caine, see Sir Sydney Caine, 'The University of Malaya', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, (May 1958), Vol. 106, No. 5022, pp. 442-454.

Chapter 7 Conclusion

As discussed above, Malcolm MacDonald used the occasion of the Foundation of the University of Malaya to imagine the institution 'as a cradle where a truly non-communal nation is nurtured'.¹ In expressing this sentiment he drew on the idea that the role of a university included educating an indigenous elite class to prepare the colonial state for self-government, a principle that had been emphasised by the Asquith Commission.² MacDonald foreshadowed what he hoped would be the new University's contribution to Malayan nationhood. A similar idea was evoked some years later by Walter Adams, Secretary of the IUC, in a presentation to the Royal Society of Arts. Reviewing the progress being made to establish colonial universities across the Empire he declared that:

In Malaya the university is the crucible of a new nation. Within it are Chinese, Malays, Tamils, Indians, Eurasians, all working together with the overriding, common purpose of study and devotion to learning, and from that, I believe, is beginning to emerge the possibility of a common Malay nation.³

The statements were the positive responses that might be expected from British officials addressing issues of higher education in colonial society, but they did so against the background of two opposing imperatives. On the one hand there was the widely-held metropolitan belief in the status quo, that the Empire would be sustained for the foreseeable future; on the other, there was a growing indigenous reaction to colonial rule which was to threaten and ultimately displace British hegemony. In the event, the accuracy and the form of the observations made by MacDonald and Adams proved inaccurate. The political structure of independent Malaya did not materialise on the non-communal basis that MacDonald had envisaged while the multi-racial and harmonious characterisation of student life of which Adams had spoken was slow to develop and for many years university admission favoured

¹ *Malaya Tribune*, 9 October, 1949.

² The Asquith Report, p.10.

³ Adams, 'Colonial Universities Today', p. 726.

the entry of Chinese rather than Malay and Indian students.⁴ The two speeches highlight a dilemma that faced British officials planning higher education; they also provide an important frame of reference for this thesis since it was widely assumed that the independent colonial state was a distant prospect that would evolve gradually aided by the development of university colleges. These circumstances were consonant with the views expressed by educational advisors such as Channon who emphasised that higher education policy ‘cannot take place rapidly for many years will elapse before full effect can be given to it ... in all cases this policy must be ... evolutionary ...’.⁵ As we know, the amount of time available for educational development proved contrary to expectations, another example of miscalculation by British officialdom.

A similar evolutionary approach to the development of colonial higher education policy involving incremental growth over a period of time has been described in further scholarship conducted by Eric Ashby and Mary Anderson.⁶ While Ashby’s method of analysis has much relevance and indeed heuristic value, this thesis has contended that his approach gives undue importance to singular events and reports. It suggests a sense of a constructed genealogy with imagined links between different stages which are not necessarily contributory or indeed connected. Several examples drawn from the thesis support this view. First, was the Advisory Committee on Education in the African Dependencies which, as we have seen, provided the first public statement on British colonial education policy in 1925.⁷ It was a brief pronouncement that achieved relatively little; as Ashby himself acknowledged, ‘it often remained no more than a starting point ... an illuminating commentary on the way in which practice continued to lag behind policy ...’.⁸ Second, was the report of the Currie

⁴ See, table 3, chapter 5, p. 175.

⁵ Extract from a statement by Channon, see, chapter 4, p. 118.

⁶ Ashby, *Universities*, pp. 190-223.

⁷ See, chapter 3, pp. 63-64.

⁸ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 426.

Committee in 1933 which Ashby described as ‘bold and imaginative ...’.⁹ The report was well received by the Advisory Committee and the CO and significantly, it anticipated several ideas that the Asquith Commission was to incorporate several years later in 1945. Carr-Saunders, a member of the Asquith Commission, also confirmed that Currie had ‘produced a remarkable report.’¹⁰ Despite this, however, the report was not taken forward; according to Carr-Saunders, it was not discussed by the Asquith Commission and both committees ‘... arrived independently at a very similar view’.¹¹ Far from providing continuity of ideas and practices the report, as Ashby confirmed, was not published, it was forgotten.¹²

Third, was the report of the De La Warr Commission which Ashby described as ‘a seminal document ... the first published exposition of British policy for university education in tropical Africa ... the De La Warr report was not only the first ... but remained for two decades the most enlightened statement of policy for universities in British colonial Africa’.¹³ The Commission’s report on Higher Education in East Africa was published in 1937 but its aspiration for a higher learning was not fulfilled until 1949 with the formation of the University College of East Africa. Even allowing for the negative effects of the second world war, progress was slow and unproductive. As this thesis has indicated, available evidence does not support the consistent development of De La Warr’s ideas leading to the foundation of the University College.¹⁴ Although Ashby convincingly asserts that the reports of the ACEC, the Currie Committee and the De La Warr Commission provided important ideas for colonial educational development, there is no evidence of discourse between the different committees whose reports did not contribute incremental and intentional progress of policy leading towards the formation of the colonial university. In contrast, this thesis argues less for

⁹ Ibid., p. 194.

¹⁰ Carr-Saunders, *New Universities Overseas*, p. 28.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 33, n. 16.

¹² The idea of the report being “forgotten” is misleading; rather it was not published as might have been expected.

¹³ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 197-198.

¹⁴ See chapter 3, pp. 76-84.

incrementalism, linearity and defined stages and more for ‘disjuncture’ and ‘fragmentation’ as plausible signifiers in understanding the emergence of a colonial higher education.¹⁵ The thesis has suggested that developments occurred via more informal means exemplified by individuals working constructively together. This was particularly the case with the Carr-Saunders Commission and involved a timely association of agencies and their representatives who were politically and educationally progressive.¹⁶ This stands in contra-distinction to the Ashby thesis.

There were other difficulties regarding the nature of the advice given to the Secretary of State on the development of the policy and provision of colonial higher education. As the thesis has discussed this was first dispensed by the Advisory Committee on Education in the African Dependencies which was appointed in late 1923.¹⁷ In 1929 its brief was extended to include the formulation of advice on educational developments across the Empire and the committee was renamed the ACEC but given the enormity of the tasks that it faced and the scale of analysis required the Committee lacked commensurate resources. The Secretary of State was frequently advised to appoint a commission of enquiry with broad if not ambitious terms of reference to be applied to enormously large and variable colonial territories, often in Africa. The reports compiled by commissions of enquiry were then considered by the ACEC, a wholly advisory body, willing to acknowledge the expertise of local officials to act appropriately, but lacking powers to charge specific agencies with responsibility or indeed to hold them to account. There was much discussion at committee level but as this thesis has observed, there was far ‘... too much eye-wash and paperasserie and not enough solid administrative achievement’.¹⁸

¹⁵ Chapter 3, pp. 62-63.

¹⁶ See, chapter 5, pp. 130-131. Those involved included Sir Raymond Priestley, Walter Adams and Malcolm MacDonald.

¹⁷ Chapter 3, pp. 63.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67.

There were similar problems arising from the delivery of ambiguous communications from senior Government ministers which made it difficult to determine the nature and extent of policy intended. As the thesis has discussed, Edwin Montagu, Secretary of State for India in his well known address to the House of Commons during August 1917, aimed to signal a change in policy by stating that the Government wished to pursue ‘the increasing association of Indians in every branch of the administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions, with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible government in India as an integral part of the British Empire’.¹⁹ Shortly after Montagu’s statement the Government of India appointed a Commission of enquiry into the University of Calcutta’. Following the publication of the Commission’s report,²⁰ Ashby observed that ‘the next transplantation of universities to Britain’s overseas possessions did not occur until after the second world war, but the policies then adopted by the British government were the result of twenty years of reflection and maturation of ideas’.²¹ The evidence reviewed by this thesis suggests little evidence to corroborate this statement. It is true that commissions of enquiry were appointed but their findings were not carried forward in any systematic way and despite the regularity of ACEC meetings there was little ‘banking’ of accumulated knowledge and experience. Whilst there were undoubted strengths, the members of the committee were:

usually either ex-colonial officers who cannot divest themselves of an interest in the fields over which they once ruled, or theorists (academic or otherwise) who tend to regard all problems referred to them as potential subjects for a thesis ...’.²²

As this thesis has indicated, it seemed that there was always another committee meeting to be convened to decide the next step forward.

¹⁹ See, chapter 1, pp. 12-13.

²⁰ Sadler Report.

²¹ Ashby, *Universities*, p. 142.

²² See, chapter 3, p. 66.

This thesis has confirmed there were few institutions of higher education in the territories of the British Empire. In 1946 there were four universities which came under the aegis of the newly formed IUC as follows: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Royal University of Malta, The University of Ceylon and the University of Hong Kong. The University of Ceylon and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem became independent of the IUC in 1948 when Ceylon became a Dominion and the Palestine mandate was concluded. With the formation of the University of Malaya there were three independent universities in 1949.²³ The thesis has considered the paucity of provision to be a consequence of several factors. First, the relationship between higher education and the state was rarely considered as integral to discussions on British colonial policy. Second, there was an historical reluctance by the Imperial Government and Colonial Legislative Councils to commit to adequate funding arrangements and this tended to generate indifference from local government officials towards the idea of educational development projects, particularly those at a tertiary level. Such antipathy cannot be wholly explained by financial constraint; the problem was more complex and underpinned by cultural manifestations which are aptly expressed below:

[Officials] displayed very little sympathy with local aspirations for university education ... They had little understanding of the part played in the modern world by universities and of the importance of the professions for which universities are a preparation, and to them the idea of transplanting to the regions where they worked the only type of university known to them doubtless seemed fantastic.²⁴

The third factor refers to the tendency of the Imperial Government to rely on local initiatives for reform and the thesis has demonstrated successes in such cases, for example, the founding of the Medical School in 1905.²⁵ Similar developments also occurred in Ceylon and Hong Kong where local initiatives led to the opening of medical colleges which eventually became

²³ See chapter 1, p. 2.

²⁴ Carr-Saunders, *New Universities*, pp. 30-31.

²⁵ See chapter 2, p. 51-53.

precursor institutions for a university.²⁶ On the other hand, a communal initiative to develop a college in Singapore in 1917 collapsed.²⁷

While higher education was characteristically a subject of marginal interest and even a contested value within the ethos and culture of British colonial society, progressive developments were also constrained by individual officials. As the thesis has discussed, Richard Winstedt, Director of Education for the SS and Director-elect of Raffles College, was able to delay the opening of the College for nearly ten years from 1918-28 largely because of his commitment to a restricted form of vernacular education and his desire to see the preservation of traditional Malay life in the *kampung*. His caution and reluctance to yield to educational change and development derived from his ideological commitment, a form of conservative indirect rule and support for an indigenous value system that he wished to perpetuate. Winstedt spent the whole of his career in colonial service in Malaya and while he developed a formidable reputation as a Malay language and cultural scholar, he appeared content to confine the Malay population to a rudimentary level of economic sufficiency, education and accomplishment.²⁸

As we have seen another official, Sir Shenton Thomas, Governor of the SS and High Commissioner for the FMS, displayed little understanding of the need to develop higher education. His lack of engagement, indeed his ignorance of many of the issues involved have been revealed in this thesis and illustrate the difficulty of introducing educational reform and development. Progress was understandably impeded during the Second World War and the occupation of Malaya by Japanese forces, but as the thesis has demonstrated Thomas exacerbated the difficulties involved in taking forward the recommendations of the McLean Commission. Towards the end of the 1930s there were genuine political and financial

²⁶ Sir Ivor Jennings, 'The Foundation of the University of Ceylon', p. 148. See also, Peter Cunich, *A History of the University of Hong Kong*, pp. 40-73.

²⁷ Chapter 2, pp. 55-56.

²⁸ Chapter 2, pp. 47-49.

problems which militated against the pursuit of educational reform but his deadening phrase, 'we can only carry on with existing arrangements',²⁹ was a poor response to the efforts in both Malaya and London to progress the cause of university education in Singapore.³⁰

The assessment of the work of the Carr-Saunders Commission is central to this research and it reveals several factors which contribute an extension to the historiography of colonial higher education. For example, the thesis has attributed much of the Commission's success to the highly experienced team of commissioners³¹ who worked effectively together in the difficult circumstances of post-war Malaya, a neglected point of emphasis in existing scholarship but one which should not be under-estimated. The thesis has sought to demonstrate that the critical influence on the work of the Commission derived from Alexander Carr-Saunders and his significance cannot be over-emphasized. He brought the requisite qualities to the position of chair of the Commission which enabled him to successfully lead and direct enquiries and produce a report of high quality³², a rarity in official documentation particularly when compared with the overwritten and poorly organised McLean report and the conflicts which had divided the Elliot Commission resulting in a major and minor report. While the Carr-Saunders report was progressive the university model advocated drew on the precepts of Oxbridge, its values and curriculum, there is little to suggest an engagement with the technological and labour demands that might be required in Malaya moving towards self-government.³³

The prelude to his main career was a period of some uncertainty taking him in different directions for example his studies at Oxford University, social work activities at

²⁹ See Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation', p. 1152.

³⁰ See Siew-Min Sai, 'Educating Multicultural Citizens', p. 58.

³¹ See chapter 5, pp. 140-158.

³² See chapter 5, pp. 141-144.

³³ Technological and scientific educational needs were being discussed in post-war Britain, for example, the Percy Report, 1945; the Barlow Report, 1946.

Toynbee Hall and research in biology and biometrics in Naples and London respectively.³⁴ Following this it is possible to identify three main stages of his career³⁵ during which he acquired additional knowledge, skills and experience which were to serve him well as chair of commissions of enquiry into higher education. First, was a period of research activity and scholarship which was mainly carried out during the time he was Professor and Head of the Department of Social Science at the University of Liverpool. His publications included studies of the population problem, a statistical study of the social structure of England and Wales and a study of the place of the professions in society. This work was received positively by the academic community and confirmed in various accounts of his life's work and achievement.³⁶ Second, the skills of academic management and administration which he began to develop at Liverpool were extended to a yet higher level as Director of the LSE from 1937 to 1956 where he presided undramatically but to great effect. In his history of the LSE Dahrendorf credits Carr-Saunders with considerable administrative and managerial skills, but more than that he was full of admiration for him as Director of a College and his deep sense of responsibility for his students' well-being.³⁷ This is an interesting observation because it was Carr-Saunders' lengthy conversation in Singapore with the President of the College of Medicine Student Union, K. Shamugaratnam and fellow students that proved decisive in recommending that the new institution should be independent with powers to award its own degrees. In a subsequent letter to Dr. (later Professor) Shamugaratnam in March 1948 Carr-Saunders acknowledged that:

The long conversation that I had with you and your friends before, during and after dinner, was not merely most interesting but very impressive. It was after meeting with you and your friends that I had little doubt in my mind that we should recommend the immediate formation of a university.³⁸

³⁴ See, chapter 5, p. 140-41.

³⁵ A similar approach is followed using the construct "the three lives", see, Dahrendorf, *LSE*, pp. 394-395.

³⁶ See, chapter 5, p. 143, n. 54.

³⁷ See, Dahrendorf, *LSE*, p.333; pp. 395-6.

³⁸ Khoo Kay Kim, *100 Years: The University of Malaya*, p. 43.

Third, as we have seen, was the emergence of an international dimension to his work as later in his career he became involved in the development of higher education institutions in the colonial dependencies. This interest developed during the Second World War through his membership of the Asquith Commission and his appointment as chair of the Special Committee on Higher Education which had been constituted by the University of London's Senate Committee. It was envisaged that the committee would be instrumental in building relationships with colonial colleges in Africa seeking to achieve full university status. Carr-Saunders was appointed as chairman of the Special Committee in 1944 and served until 1956. His interests in higher education overseas were extended by his work with the IUC where he played a pivotal role as an executive committee member, vice chair and finally chairman from 1951 to 1956.³⁹ He was very much at the centre of developments. By focussing on these individual qualities, the thesis has provided a context to more fully assess the work and achievements of the Commission. As his career progressed Carr-Saunders was increasingly a man of influence, his professional experience and achievements culminating in a formidable person who made a significant contribution to the development of higher education in the colonial territories.

The Commission's decision to recommend the foundation of an autonomous university in Malaya was surprising particularly in light of Asquith's support for a staged approach involving the establishment of a university college as essential preparation for the development of a self-governing university. Indeed, the Asquith Commission had warned that 'no step could be taken which would more gravely prejudice the interests of these

³⁹ Following his work in Malaya he was active in developments in African higher education, for example, as chairman of the Central African Council, see *Report of the Commission on Higher Education for Africans in Central Africa*, (Salisbury, 1953). He chaired the Mission on University Education in Northern Nigeria in 1961 and was a member of the Committee on the University of East Africa in 1962. His book *New Universities Overseas* was published in 1961 in which he evaluated the developments of higher education in colonial territories with reference to the role of the IUC and British Universities.

institutions than the premature grant of degree-giving powers'.⁴⁰ In a statement of Government policy for Malaya, the Colonial Secretary also agreed 'that there should be created a university college, of which the King Edward VII College of Medicine and Raffles College would form part, as the first stage in the development of a University of Malaya'.⁴¹ This derived from the conclusion of the McLean Commission which had supported the establishment of a university college in Singapore although their concerns with Raffles College made their approval strongly conditional.⁴² McLean had declared that before recommending the formation of an independent university, 'fundamental changes are necessary both in the standard of the knowledge of the students entering upon its courses, as well as in the conduct of the examinations held at the end of the course'.⁴³ The differences between the recommendations of McLean and Carr-Saunders were considerable and have not been satisfactorily explained although it has been argued that conditions at Raffles College could not have materially improved during the intervening years especially when it is remembered that Malaya was an occupied territory from 1942 until 1945.⁴⁴ Despite this the view of the Carr-Saunders report was clear and progressive stating that:

we have no hesitation in recommending that full degree-granting powers be conferred upon the institution resulting from the fusion of the two Colleges. To confer these powers is to run no risk; to withhold them would be to retain it in a state of tutelage which is wholly unwarranted and to fail to appreciate the remarkable achievements of those responsible for the present high standing of the two Colleges.⁴⁵

The evidence presented in this thesis suggests that the decision was informed by wider political influences. For example, planning undertaken during the Second World War generated a change in emphasis in British colonial policy which was captured in the aphorism

⁴⁰ Asquith Report, p. 13.

⁴¹ Chapter 5, p. 139.

⁴² Chapter 4, pp. 97-100.

⁴³ MacLean Report, pp. 29-30

⁴⁴ See, Ho Seng Ong, *Education for Unity in Malaya*, (Penang 1952); cited by Doraisamy, *One Hundred and Fifty Years of Education in Singapore*, p. 44.

⁴⁵ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 8.

from ‘trusteeship to partnership’, although in Malaya this did not signify the more structural changes that had been envisaged by the introduction of the Malayan Union in 1946. The maintenance and extension of influence in Malaya and the region continued to be a British political objective to which a university could contribute. This was recognised by Carr-Saunders when he acknowledged that his Commission ‘cast the University of Malaya for the role of helping to foster a common Malayan nationality’.⁴⁶ This thesis, with specific reference to the discussion of the Commissioner’s biographies, the analysis of the published report and the inclusion of the transcripts of the student-conversations Carr-Saunders had in Singapore,⁴⁷ suggest that the Commission had the political will, the educational expertise and a collective confidence to avoid the new institution being subject to “unwarranted tutelage” from London University. In so doing the Commission took cognizance of the wider political circumstances and their policy implications thereby giving tacit support to the aspiration for Malayan self-government.

Despite the positive public reception given to the Carr-Saunders’ Report several difficulties became evident. First, while the Commission had recommended that the University of Malaya should be relocated to Johore Bahru the financial costs involved were demonstrably prohibitive and the project was finally terminated.⁴⁸ Second, the model of the institution proposed was strongly euro-centric in its organisation and governance with English being confirmed as the medium of instruction. The Commission did not rule out the introduction of a vernacular degree programme at a later date recognising that it would be possible ‘for the formation of a department which will not only assume responsibility for the scholarly care and extension of Malay literature and folklore but will also exercise a refining as well as a modernising influence on the Malay language’.⁴⁹ Subsequent research has

⁴⁶ Carr-Saunders, *New Universities Overseas*, p. 62.

⁴⁷ See, chapter 5, pp. 160-161.

⁴⁸ See, chapter 6, pp. 208-210.

⁴⁹ Carr-Saunders Report, p. 16; pp. 41-42.

contested this approach to vernacular education and its implications for the Malay, Chinese and Tamil communities making the following observation:

Asquith's overarching principles were themselves a mixed compilation: they consisted of British metropolitan attitudes, on the one hand, and hypotheses based on colonial sites vastly different from those to which they were transferred, on the other. This combination meant, almost inevitably, that re-interpreting the grand imperial vision would fold in on itself: it transferred an aggregate whole while mismatching the component parts; it transported ambiguities while circumventing core content.⁵⁰

While this critique is consistent with Ashby's denunciation of the university model the British exported to the colonies,⁵¹ it simply reaffirms the obvious disparities between metropolitan and colonial perspectives particularly involving issues such as the medium of instruction and subjects taught. Although it was recognised that the plan for a university should not wholly replicate the English model, the evidence reviewed in the thesis suggests that it was inevitable in the continuing circumstances of British colonialism that an imported university would be very largely English in its essential design and purpose. That is to say English would constitute the medium of instruction, that there would be an emphasis on high standards of attainment moderated by British external examiners and that significant research activity would form an important institutional aspiration. There was also a strong belief that the creation of a residential university was one of the surest ways to develop academic and social success for students. These were some of the constituents of the dilemma confronting colonial higher education development which have been reflected throughout this research study.⁵²

The research undertaken suggests avenues for several further areas of scholarship. The first refers to Carr-Saunders and the early stage of his professional career. The thesis has

⁵⁰ See, Chou, 'Translating Higher Education in the British Empire', p. 230.

⁵¹ See chapter 1, p. 16.

⁵² See chapter 4, p. 114; chapter 5, p. 165.

discussed his engagement with Toynbee Hall prior to the First World War but this requires further investigation. The people he met are of particular interest, possibly Lord Milner, for example, who was a founder member and an active chair of the Council at Toynbee Hall from 1911 until his death in 1925. Further, the social and political values he encountered and the potential tensions in his research activity at a time when he was beginning an association with the Eugenic Society and a study of biometrics under Karl Pearson at University College. A second area of research concerns the study of commissions of enquiry, as a ‘theatre of power in which a central “truth” of state power is played out before a public audience’.⁵³ This has potential for a comparative study of the Carr-Saunders Commission in Malaya and the Elliot Commission in West Africa with reference to recent scholarship regarding the enquiry conducted by the latter Commission.⁵⁴ A further area for investigation is an assessment of the selection and training of colonial administrators with specific reference to the methods developed by Major (later Sir Ralf) Furse and his influence on recruitment to the colonial service. A useful starting point would be the Fisher Report (1930) which described Furse’s approach as ‘... a system of patronage [which] if seriously challenged ... could not ... be defended...’.⁵⁵ Despite this assessment Furse was not only retained, he was promoted and remained in office for over forty years. A critical appraisal of his work and times could provide a useful historiographical addition. Finally, there are few women involved in the narrative of colonial higher education although there are some notable exceptions including Margery Perham, (Fellow, Nuffield College Oxford and definitive biographer of Lugard), Dame Lilian Penson (Vice Chancellor, University of London Bedford College) and Margaret Read (Head of Colonial Education, University of London Institute of Education). Less well known are Professor Eva Dora Edwards (Professor of Chinese Studies, SOAS and specialist adviser to the Carr-Saunders Commission), Eveline Martin, (Historian, Westfield College and

⁵³ Ashworth, *The Politics of Official Discourse*; see also chapter 6, p. 190, n. 32.

⁵⁴ Livsey, *Nigeria’s University Age*.

⁵⁵ See chapter 3, pp. 70-71.

member of the Elliot Commission) and Sara Burstall, (Head of Manchester High for Girls and member of the ACEC. The latter group offer a focus for research into the expectations and outcomes of women's careers in CO commissions, committees and services in Great Britain and the dependent territories.

At the Symposium in Singapore held to discuss the Carr-Saunders Report, Professor Silcock, Head of Economics at Raffles College urged the meeting '... to get the report accepted ... with all possible speed ... first you must get your university ...'.⁵⁶ This was an unambiguous and realistic objective which as we have seen was achieved on 8 October 1949 when the University of Malaya was formally constituted. While the ceremony of Foundation Day was historic it also signified a problematical legacy. Foremost, it would be necessary to imagine and achieve a political framework within which it would be possible to develop a national rather than a colonial university. There were other major factors which were unresolved in the emerging political landscape of post-war Malaya, for example, the insurgency, its effects and potential resolution and above all the transition from an emergent nationalism to *Merdeka* was yet to be achieved. These imperatives severely limited the University's possible contribution to nation building and self-government while they also emphasised the long-term nature of educational development which the fulfilment of the Asquith principles required.⁵⁷ Politics, as is usually the case, came first.⁵⁸ This was the context in which the Carr-Saunders Commission made a decisive political and educational

⁵⁶ Chapter 6, p. 189.

⁵⁷ The period following the establishment of the University of Malaya was marked by a series of educational enquiries initiated by the Colonial Government with particular reference to junior and secondary school provision and the training of teachers for example, the Barnes Report, 1951 which was criticised by the Fenn Wu Report, 1951; the Razak Report, 1956. Major themes included consideration of Malay as the national language and the integration of educational provision across the different communities in the Federation. Despite these enquiries major tensions continued particularly regarding the medium of instruction, for example, the 1952 Education Ordinance which followed the Barnes Report was strenuously opposed by Chinese communities, see, Heng Pek Koon, 'The Development of the MCA', pp. 286-301. The University of Malaya itself was subject to enquiry see, the Aitken Report 1957.

⁵⁸ The power of politics to prevail over educational developments was particularly strong in post-war Malaya and more inevitable than has been suggested, see, Stockwell, 'The Crucible of the Malayan Nation'.

statement and, as this thesis has sought to demonstrate, the new University symbolised an irrevocable step forwards to a future Malaysia.

This thesis has argued that the emergence and foundation of the University of Malaya in 1949 was cause for celebration, a response which was captured in an evocative statement emphasising the hope of an end to the limitations of colonial Government and a society ‘... in which overseas capital and immigrant communities were [totally] dominant ... in which the life of the mind of the spirit languished in a completely materialistic environment’.⁵⁹ By giving expression to the founding of an autonomous university the Carr-Saunders’ Commissioners raised the possibility of lifting the dead-weight of colonialism; this was their true legacy. It is most important, however, to recall the observation made at the Symposium in Singapore that the amalgamation of the two colleges must be ‘accompanied by the early implementation of the schemes for expanding the scope of studies and increasing the facilities for research ... [otherwise] the new institution would have no advantage over a university college “tied to the long apron strings” of the University of London’.⁶⁰ The new University of Malaya was indeed a British export, with the development of a more indigenous culture, organisation and status inevitably part of a longer-term project.⁶¹ Lim Tay Boh clearly recognised this and the challenges that lay ahead. These were to prove considerable but they were to be challenges for Malaya rather than the colonial power and to deal with them a major educational asset was available, an independent university.

⁵⁹ See chapter 6, p. 195.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p.196.

⁶¹ Carr-Saunders’ personal view was that ‘universities ... should not be places dissociated from the community and its most pressing interests ... they should rather stand in the centre of the field’, see, LSE B/313, Meeting of the Commission on Higher Education in West Africa, 9 Dec. 1943. This position was reflected in the Commission’s report which envisaged the University as a ‘centre of oriental studies’ with departments in Malay and Chinese studies, see chapter 5, p. 169. It is difficult to see what more the Commission might have included in its report, although it has been argued that a stronger emphasis on the indigenous aspects of university organisation was needed at the outset, see Ashby, *Universities*, p. 221.

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