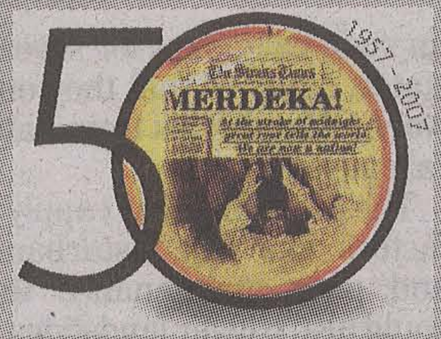
Underneath the waving frond stands the impoverished farmer

NST- 20/5/2007

RECENTLY (ST, Apr 23), your columnist, G.L. Peet, bewailed his present inability to rhapsodise as he used to about the beauty of the Malayan countryside.

He attributed this loss of poetic fervour to the combined effects of Ungku Abdul Aziz's articles on the economic position of the Malays and his sojourn in Australia where the farmers apparently enjoy a standard of living incomparably higher than that of the Malay paddy planters.



The realities

While it may be true that the Ungku's sober and illuminating articles have, for the first time, opened the eyes of many to the realities of life behind the aesthetically pleasing rural scene of lush, green paddy fields and waving coconut fronds, the Malays themselves have been acutely conscious of their economic backwardness for many years.

It was a subject of frequent discussions among Malay intellectuals in the early twenties and since then, a spate of articles has appeared in the Malay press, bewailing the abject poverty of the kampong people and pleading for relief and redress.

But all these discussions and articles did not produce any tangible results since the laissez-faire policy of the past did not permit the adoption of any really effective measures to ameliorate the economic position of the Malays.

The consequence has been that despite special privileges and all the rest of it, many sensitive Malays have felt all along like strangers in their own native land or as the saying aptly puts it — *seperti melukut di-tepi gantang.*

I would like to suggest quite seriously that it is this sense of repeated and continuing frustration in the economic sphere that is really the root cause of much of the intransigence and diehard racialism of certain Malay political parties and individuals and that the appeasement of these seemingly unreasonable extremist elements is not possible so long as the great and difficult problem of rural poverty remains unsolved and the Malay people as a whole are not conscious of a sense of real participation in the economic life of the country.

The Tengku rightly said in a recent speech to a Chinese audience in Kuala Lumpur that we all must "now make up our minds to sink or swim together".

One of the logical implications of this wise and sane remark is that in future, the Malays must not be allowed to sink deeper and deeper in the mud of their sawahs.

M. Said
Seremban

MANAGERIAL REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA

ST 20 MAY 1957 (pg.06)

MAN-IN-THE-STREET

Underneath the waving frond stands the impoverished farmer

RECENTLY (S. T. Apr. 23), your columnist, G. L. Peet, bewailed his present inability to rhapsodise as he used to about the beauty of the Malayan countryside.

He attributed this loss of poetic fervour to the combined effects of Ungku Abdul Aziz's articles on the economic position of the Malays and his sojourn in Australia, where the farmers apparently enjoy a standard of living incomparably higher than that of the Malay paddy planters.

The realities

While it may be true that the Ungku's sober and illuminating articles have, for the first time, opened the eyes of many to the realities of life behind the aesthetically pleasing rural scenery of lush, green paddy fields and waving coconut fronds, the Malays themselves have been acutely conscious of their economic backwardness for many years.

It was a subject of frequent discussions among Malay intellectuals in the early twenties and since then, a spate of articles has appeared in the Malay press, bewailing the abject poverty of the kampong people and pleading for relief and redress.

But all these discussions and articles did not produce any tangible results since the laissez-faire policy of the past did not permit the adoption of any really effective measures to ameliorate the economic position of the Malays.

The consequence has been that despite special privileges and all the rest of it, many sensitive Malays have felt all along like strangers in their own native land or as the saying aptly puts it — "seperti melukut di-tepi gantang."

I would like to suggest quite seriously that it is this sense of repeated and continuing frustration in the economic sphere that is really the root cause of much of the intransigence and die-hard racialism of certain Malay political parties and individuals and that the appeasement of these seemingly unreasonable extremist elements is not possible so long as the great and difficult problem of rural poverty remains unsolved and the Malay people as a whole are not conscious of a sense of real participation in the economic life of the country.

The Tengku rightly said in a recent speech to a Chinese audience in Kuala Lumpur that we all must "now make up our minds to sink or swim together."

One of the logical implications of this wise and sane remark is that in future the Malays must not be allowed to sink deeper and deeper in the mud of their sawahs.

M. SAID.

Seremban.

Bungalows in homeland

WHILE I agree, in principle, with the point of view of "Local Employee" (S.T. Apr. 17) that preference in offering jobs should be given to those who have residential qualifications, but not at the expense of those who are already in employment, I feel perturbed and embarrassed at the attitude he expressed against the Indians.

He stated that 80 per cent of W.D. employees were Indians and that most of them were not loyal to this country and they make a lot of money from Singapore and build bungalows in India.

I would like to remind him that not only Indians send money to their homeland in order to buy properties, but also there are other nationalities who send money to their own countries for the same purpose.

Why does Govt. engage private archite