A REBEL IN HONG KONG

I reckon it takes from three to six months for a newcomer to Hong Kong to become either one of US or one of THEM. US means the colonials, the social climbers, the omniscient and omnipotent ones. THEM means all the rest, numbering about four million people, the ordinary folk.

A lot depends on where a person lives, on what propaganda he is exposed to, as well as on his natural prejudices and opinions. It is possible, of course, to find a rebel on the Peak, or a colonial on the plain. Certain areas are out-of-bounds for an ex-patriate in Government service; he usually ends up far from the madding crowd, so cut off that there is little else to do but hold coffee parties or cocktail parties. Talk seldom rises beyond amahs, horses or stock-market prices. Knowledge of Chinese ways is strictly limited to what "our amah" does or says: her aptitude for demanding higher wages and her resourcefulness in evading work are the yardstick for measuring all Chinese people; her owning a flat means that all Chinese workers are suspected of being flat-owners; her faults are the norm for the Chinese race.

Small talk on the amah's shortcomings gradually become a habit to the newcomer who, if he is so inclined, begins to see all Europeans (with a few rich Chinese patronizingly included) as US, and all other Chinese as THEM. WE have done so much for THEM. It was OUR money that brought prosperity to THEM. OUR laws are very just and fair, so why do THEY not always accept them? Living conditions here are so good. Don't THEY know how much we have done for THEM?

But, living in beautiful flats subsidised by public money, with all needs supplied, with long and frequent, paid holidays, it never seems to occur to these highly privileged people that THEY, the others, are totally without the same benefits, treatment and justice? It is the supreme example of "I'm all right. What's the complaint?"

One imperially-minded lady who came to Hong Kong, OUR Colony, on a visit, had the effrontery to say to a Chinese man, "We allowed you to come into our beautiful garden, Hong Kong. You should be grateful. Yet you are not satisfied." Chinese politeness prevented him from telling her where she should go. Did she not know whose garden it was and how it came to be OURS? Perhaps she had never read a history book! In fact, I would be surprised if she had.
And that is why I give a newcomer three to six months to see which way he is going. If he goes with the colonials, his expectations for the future are unlimited. He may end up in the upper set, will hold a top position, may be awarded an O.B.E. or more, and will retire a rich man still young enough to take another well-paid job with a local wealthy firm. If he is truly British and believes in justice for THEM as well as US, he may find his term of employment here very short; or he may be ostracized, found "incompatible"; he will almost certainly be unhappy and frustrated. If he opens his mouth in criticism, he will certainly be an "undesirable". Here, British virtues are vices; vices are virtues.

Of course, I have been generalizing. I must therefore pause to mention that some have lived in peak circumstances but have never become colonialized; others have lived at a lower level and have become rabid colonials. In any case, one is expected to keep quiet about one's feelings that society is unjust to the majority, and more than fair to the few. To speak out is to be "traitor", or worse. One may even find oneself on the wrong end of the law on a framed-up charge.

Friends of mine who do not accept the colonial way of life, when they first arrive in Hong Kong, ask me if I have had any problems because I refuse to be brainwashed into being a colonial. This question has been asked so many times, and it always requires such a long answer, that I have decided to write it down once for all, and in future I can give a printed reply to the question.

As a one-time missionary, it has never been my ambition to make money or gain position. I began life in Hong Kong living among squatters, partly from choice, partly from necessity. One group of squatters were Swatow embroiderers, the people who embroider those exquisite table-cloths and blouses, so cheap because of sweated labour. In those days, that is in the 1950s, the fastest workers could not earn more than H.K. $1.20 a day, even labouring at it from dawn to dusk. It was fascinating to watch them work, the needle flashing up and down through the cloth stretched over a small frame held in one hand. It was also agonising to watch them straining their eyes to catch every moment of daylight for the work. But even so they could not earn enough to feed one person. Father had to work at another job, and the children had to earn their coppers if the family was to eat at all. They had only small oil lamps in those huts and could scarcely work after dark, so they would sit at their doorways to catch the last ray of light, straining their eyes over the fine strands. Some were near blind at forty years of age. Even children of eight or nine sat
for all those long hours trying to earn their rice. None of them, to my knowledge, went to school, except the children of one woman who could herself read and write and was considered the scholar of the area. Most of the children, even the tiniest babies, suffered from enormous boils and skin infections, due to malnutrition and hot, sticky living conditions. A "home" was a bed in a hut shared with several other similar families in similar double-tiered beds, some of them made three-tiered by adding sleeping mats on the floor below. Wages for a working man were in the region of H.K. $100 - 150 a month, about half or less than half the amount required for a family of five to buy the bare necessities of life.

It was while I was living in this area that I made my first "bloomer" with the authorities and the wealthy. I had read an article in the "Guardian" criticizing the fact that in China workers laboured for ten hours a day six days a week. I do not know if that information about China was correct at that time; what I did know was that Chinese people I knew in Hong Kong were working twelve or more hours a day seven days a week. I wrote to the "Guardian" to say so. News of this reached Parliament, and someone asked a question in the House. The report, it was said, came from a Mr. Elliott. I presume I was "Mr." Elliott. Mill owners in Manchester had already been complaining that they were unable to compete with cheap labour in Hong Kong. It was a justifiable complaint: they could not.

Many excuses were found, not least the excuse that our Hong Kong machinery was more up-to-date than that in Lancashire. Some of it may have been; some of it certainly was not. It was even possible at that time to find women spinning on the streets using the old hand-spinning-wheels found only in museums in Britain: and these women were supplying cotton yarn to factories.

The result of the agitation was that working hours in Hong Kong were cut, with the proviso that anyone could volunteer to do overtime. Wages were cut in proportion, so it takes little imagination to see that almost all workers volunteered for overtime. Those who did not volunteer were likely to lose their jobs. We did not move from square one for many years. But the colonials had a good answer: they had tried to cut working hours, but the workers did not WANT them cut. One newspaper editorial (English) went so far as to say that Chinese people enjoy long hours of work!

Since that time almost all labour laws have been negativied by similar provisos for voluntary work, including
night-shift for women. Child labour was hidden by failure to issue Identity cards with photographs for children, who could then borrow the cards of older people and take a job at almost any age. On more than one occasion when I asked for Social Welfare Assistance for a family, I was told that the family did not require assistance as the thirteen-year-old child was working in a factory. Indeed, the families concerned had no alternative: it was that, or starve.

From my experiences in these working-class areas, I have come to the conclusion that labour legislation is not intended for the good of our Hong Kong workers, but to satisfy foreign critics and deceive international labour organisations.

Living among squatters, I saw many acts of injustice by the Hong Kong authorities. I saw fires being allowed to burn out all the huts in an area before fire engines were sent. I have seen people permitted to build illegal houses after paying "squeeze", only to have them demolished when they could not meet further demands. I have seen hawkers arrested late at night, and their small children left screaming with terror, alone. I saw how little assistance, if any, they were given after fires and typhoons - terrors I have myself experienced in the middle of the night. I saw how little chance those children had of getting any education, and how social welfare assistance given by the Government, if any, was so paltry that even the poorest would spurn it. I also saw how gangsters were often informed of resettlement plans, and were able to set up dummy shops to gain resettlement shops on clearance, while genuine shop-keepers were often deprived of their rights.

That was in the 1950s. Some little progress in some fields has been made since then. How far my bull-headed efforts were responsible for changes I cannot say. I found bull-headed tactics necessary in dealing with bull-headed bureaucrats. I am not sorry that I tried to change things.

During this time I was trying to run a school for underprivileged children. The day school was for those who could pay a small fee: I had to take extra teaching jobs to supplement the teachers' salaries. There was also a free evening school for the Swatow squatter children, who used to come and press their noses against the wire-netting of the school-yard, rocking their baby brothers and sisters on their backs. They had no toys and did not know how to play games; but they did know how to cook and look after babies, or even embroider.
When we first invited them to come and study in the evenings, they rushed in, still carrying the babies; they learned their lessons still standing hiking the babies when they cried. Many of them preferred to leave after lessons by scrambling through the windows. Perhaps some of them had to leave their homes this way because of over-crowding in their huts. Certainly they found it great fun to climb through our windows. Several Europeans helped in this evening school. It was a labour of love that they did well, in spite of the laughter of the children at their antics in trying to teach English words. English people with their long noses and big feet never fail to amuse children not accustomed to seeing "kwai lo" (foreign devils).

Swatow people are supposed to be known for their violent tempers. Some Chinese call them "the barbarians". I found them charming people, very loyal to their friends, but quite frightening when anyone hurt one of their group. We once had to protect a cyclist who carelessly knocked down a child. But as the law protected neither a driver nor a victim in that area, the people may have considered it necessary to carry out their own justice. I saw a number of children killed or injured in that area, and the drivers were never brought to book, although I am certain that in some cases they were speeding.

One day, after another child had been killed by an army vehicle, I went to the Traffic Police to ask if they would put up a signboard "CHILDREN - GO SLOWLY" or something to that effect. After long delay I was called to the police station and told that the signboard was being delayed because the road was used mainly by the army (it was near a shooting-range), and the board should be put up by the army. The army maintained that the road was also used by the public, and the Government was therefore responsible for putting up the board. I had to make myself very objectionable and ask how many children needed to be killed before they put up the warning sign. Eventually the sign was put up, but I never found out who won the battle to pay for it. Nor did I care. It was a small win, just for once, for the squatters.

While these battles were going on for the rights of the squatters, the workers and so on, pressures were beginning to be felt. Some of my English friends with Government connections asked me to keep quiet. They would have been happy if I had done some charitable work, but not to clash with the authorities, not to rock the boat, to be condescending, but not treat people as equals. I found it impossible to meet these demands. Charity is a necessity in time of need, but it is not human progress, and I
knew that by keeping quiet I could only encourage exploitation. At that time I was trying to get land to build a proper school instead of the temporary building we were using. I was warned by friends that I was not likely to get Government help unless I kept quiet; moreover, to obtain Government land and grant one has to prove "financial soundness". Had we been financially sound in my school, I should have found it unnecessary to ask for help.

I had also committed another blunder, though I did not know it, by joining the United Nations Association of Hong Kong. I am still not clear why Europeans are warned not to join this organisation. I have not found any political affiliation in it; I only know that it was one of the few bodies speaking out for the people. I have since then come to realise that if one speaks out in Hong Kong one is automatically given a political colour. This is the best way to discredit a person who may rock the boat. I have learned to ignore the implication.

These warnings to leave the United Nations Association reached a peak in 1963, when, in January of that year, I was given an ultimatum by two European managers of my school to give up membership of the Association, or they would have to resign. The final date was 15th February. I was warned that by being a member and speaking up, I was jeopardizing not only my own chances of getting help for a new school, but also the chances of one of them to get land for his own projects. On the contrary, if I resigned and kept quiet, I would find plenty of supporters for my school projects.

Nothing could have been more calculated to prevent my resignation from the Association. I had known what it was to lack freedom in the Church to which I belonged. Nothing was going to remove this freedom of thought again, not even the promise of land for a school. Nor did the threat of difficulty with the school if I refused to resign from the Association. I had had thoughts myself of resigning from the Association, for other reasons, mainly that I did not like the entrance fee charged to poor people needing assistance — all organisations must of course have entrance fees, but I preferred to work without them. Now it became a matter of principle to remain a member of the United Nations Association. Threats about school could not move me, as I felt there was important work to do for the community, including the struggle to get education for all children in the Colony. Compared with this aim, my small school seemed of less importance.

At the next Annual General Meeting, the two managers resigned, and the Minutes reveal that pressure had
been put on them by the then Director of Social Welfare. I was upset, naturally: one never likes saying good-bye to old friends. However, I was not shaken in my resolve that moral honesty is the only way to keep a clear conscience.

After my refusal to resign from the United Nations Association, a decision was apparently made at the highest level in the Colonial Secretariat that I was to be given no assistance for my school. This information was relayed to me by an Assistant Director of Education, who repeated it in the presence of Mr. John Rankin, Member of Parliament, when he visited Hong Kong. Mr. James Johnson, another Member of Parliament also took up the matter on my behalf in London.

I am fortunate that I have informants within the inner precincts of the Government. They are not spies, but angry and frustrated persons. I was told by one of them that when in the same year I was elected to the Urban Council, some of the Government officials were glad. "Now," they are reported to have said, "she will see the Government angle on things." I did indeed, but not in the way some had hoped. It showed me how shallow was the whole quasi-democratic set-up on this one and only body with even a minority of elected members, albeit chosen by less than 1% of the population. I discovered that it was almost impossible to win a case for the common man, because a sea of pro-Government hands always defeated motions to that end.

Being on the Council, however, had its advantage in bringing me closer to the people, as they came in large numbers every week with their problems in housing, licensing, and legal matters. They gave me information on drug dens and other houses of vice protected by police corruption and their Triad connections. I began to report these activities, and soon fell foul of the police, many of whom were making fortunes from vice and crime. The myth grew up, sown and fostered by the police themselves, that I had an allergy towards police. The fact is that I had friends among police too, and they gave me valuable information. I was informed, for example, that some police (scoundrels sheltering in the police) were planning to have me expelled from the Colony, because I was reporting their crimes. I ignored these threats, though I knew they were not idle threats: I had seen them carried out on Chinese people. It became a matter of moral honesty to go ahead without fear or favour.

Two events in the years 1963 to 1966 led to a climax. One was a report on crime issued by the Reform Club of Hong Kong, of which I was then a member; this
report heavily involved police in the organisation of crime in Hong Kong. Lawyer friends warned the Reform Club that one senior policeman whose name is now a household word in crime organisation, had sworn to "get" some of us, including myself. We waited to see how he would do this.

The second event was a hunger strike in Stanley Prison. Quite unexpectedly the mother of a prisoner visited me one day pleading for me to save her son from dying. He was in prison, she said, on a false charge, and along with others had gone on a hunger strike in protest against unlawful detention.

I made enquiries and found out that seven or eight prisoners had joined in the strike, all for the same reason. I also discovered that in all cases they had reported drug trafficking, had been arrested and tried in secret under the Deportation and Detention of Aliens Ordinance, which operates with a Tribunal of three, calls no witnesses, and permits no legal representation. The reason given for not calling witnesses is absurd: that the prisoner is too dangerous to be allowed to see the witnesses against him. All evidence is hearsay, usually given by a single policeman. As to legal representation, the lawyer (if the prisoner engages one) is told that it is not "necessary" for him to enter the court, as the trial will be fair anyhow. The lawyer in one of these cases was most alarmed and asked me to find out what was going on. I never found out why he did not do so himself, but presumed that he too was afraid of sticking his neck out. Almost everyone in Hong Kong is.

In these hunger-strike cases, the sentences had been reviewed by a magistrate who ordered the prisoners' release. The Governor-in-Council had the last word on such cases, and he had reversed the Magistrate's order. I was told that this led to the latter's resignation from the Tribunal, but I was never able to confirm this point.

The story of how I eventually fought this case out publicly, and soon after, all the men were released, is told in Volume 1 of this book. It caused a public scandal, and destroyed my faith in the Colonial Secretariat at that time.

At that time, the Deportation and Detention Regulations were commonly used by police as a means of squeezing corruption. One shocking example came to light in 1965 in Kowloon City. A hawker had placed his barrow outside the Kowloon City Market for a few minutes while transacting some business. A police inspector came along and ordered the barrow removed and confiscated. The
hawker ran to him and begged to have back his cart. According to bystanders and to the hawker himself, the police inspector, known as "the Tiger of Kowloon City" grabbed the hawker from behind, put his arm across his chest, and pushed his knee into his back. The hawker was a weak elderly man, and he fell to the ground. Later examination showed that he had a fractured rib. According to witnesses, the inspector then kicked the hawker as he lay on the ground, and eventually had him thrown into the police van. The crowd of hawkers urged the man to beat the policeman, but he was in no condition to defend himself. A friend of mine who happened to be passing by in a taxi told me how the crowd had shouted for revenge, "Beat him! Beat him!". Yet, later not one of them would stand as a witness.

Soon after, the wife of the hawker visited me and asked for help. I called a solicitor, and we interviewed a large group of hawkers. At a meeting held for this purpose, the hawkers listened in silence. Not one would offer to be a witness. Yet as they left the meeting, a number of them said they had witnessed the incident. They could not be witnesses, they said, as the "Tiger" had had all of them photographed if their stalls were in that vicinity, and had warned them that if they became witnesses they would be sent to Stanley Prison, deported, and their families left to starve. In those days, such a threat was enough to destroy the stoutest police antagonist.

Yet two men did volunteer to be witnesses. They were not hawkers, but had witnessed the affair from a nearby building. Shortly before the case went to court, one of these was arrested and charged with possession of drugs. Whether or not he was a drug addict I do not know, but it is common to charge an anti-police witness with drug possession as it lowers his credibility with magistrates. The other witness disappeared, I never discovered whether he had gone into hiding after intimidation, or if he was disposed of in some other way.

The solicitor then decided to sub-poena the hawker nearest to the incident, and he also called the nine-year-old daughter of the hawker as a witness, as she had seen the beating of her father.

The hawker who was sub-poenaed was very frightened, but he survived attempts to pay him to change his story. The trial was a farce. The Magistrate had recently arrived in Hong Kong, and could not have realised how cases are fixed up in court. The prosecutor shamelessly put the answers into the mouths of the police witnesses, and on several occasions the Magistrate upheld
protests by the lawyer for this. On one occasion, while the Magistrate was leaning over his report writing, the Prosecutor crossed the courtroom and spoke in the ear of the police witness.

In spite of clear evidence, the case failed on a technical point. The two witnesses for the hawker did not agree on the number of kicks administered! Not many people have the presence of mind to count the number of kicks or blows administered in a scuffle.

The next day, the hawker who had been subpoenaed rushed to see me. His stall had been smashed up and his goods confiscated by police, on a false charge of obstruction. His licensed stall was between two others and could not have been extended. He begged me never again to subpoena him. I certainly would not, since it would serve no useful purpose. The police are protected in Hong Kong no matter what they do.

The injured hawker eventually recovered. On one occasion when he took his barrow on to the streets, the police drove him with it to Kwun Tong, where they released him and told him he could walk home, a distance of about four miles. This hawker was a very quiet, law-abiding man, who minded his own business and looked well after his family. I was not surprised to find that in 1967 he went over to the leftists, though he was not involved in any violence in the disturbances.

With all these cases in mind, I decided to put a motion in the Urban Council, asking the Government to investigate the charge that threats of deportation were being used against hawkers by police. The Motion was passed with unanimous support by the unofficials - who in those days had more spirit than they do now - but it was opposed by all the officials.

A few days later I was the subject of a full-page attack by the Colonial Secretary, Mr. M.D.I. Gass, who accused me of using the Urban Council for making unfounded allegations. He said that I had sheltered behind my privilege as a Council member. This was untrue. I was not afraid, and would have welcomed any libel action in order to speak out in court what I knew to be the truth. I repeated my charges outside the Council, hoping Mr. Gass would take action, but he then denied he had made any such threat. Considerable public interest was aroused, and he was challenged to debate the matter with me on television - but refused.
Mr. Gass was the last person in the world who should have attacked me. Throughout the period of my efforts on behalf of the men staging the hunger strike, he had refused to investigate any evidence I gave him. He always said he would investigate any fresh evidence, but whenever I brought fresh evidence, he ignored it. Though he released the prisoners, he continued to insist that they had been rightly convicted in the first place. He never gave them the chance to prove otherwise. This was a case where they were not allowed to prove their innocence, a far cry from the so-called British Justice that a man is innocent until proved guilty. In Hong Kong this system does not work, as it is used to protect a criminal but not to protect innocent people.

These two matters, the report on organised crime, and this motion showing the police misuse of Deportation Regulations, inflamed the corrupt police against me. They were only awaiting a suitable occasion. Meanwhile they were further angered when I reported a number of drug and gambling dens in the Mong Kok and other areas. That was like interfering in their big profits and could not be tolerated.

The occasion soon presented itself, in what appeared to have no connection: the Star Ferry fare rise.

Many people believe, because the Hong Kong Government has told the world, that the riots of 1966 began because of a five-cent rise in the first-class ferry fare. Of course, gunpowder needs a spark of fire to light it. The fact is that we were in the midst of an economic crisis. Prices were rising; there had been bank runs and the poorer people appear to have lost most in their small savings. Big speculators were planning to retrieve their losses by raising monopoly charges, and the bus company in Kowloon had already made it known that they would follow if the Star Ferry rise was granted. The newspapers were voicing the opposition of the people long before I took any action on trying to channel their petition.

The Star Ferry Company had been making very high profits for many years, and the fall in profits in 1965 was the result of the opening of a new route. There was an agreement that if after one year's trial the company found the new route unprofitable, they could raise the fare on that route. But the Company did not wait one year: it applied as soon as the route opened, and the rise was to be effective on both routes. This Company counts its profits as a percentage of its assets. With a new route opened, it is obvious that the percentage of profit based on these inflated assets must fall at first.
I tried a civilised way of protesting, by collecting signatures. I had no thought of violence, as the issue did not seem to require such strong measures, though some were so angry that they did threaten to burn ferries. In fact, no ferries were ever burnt, and I did not believe, nor do I today believe, that those who demonstrated against the fare rise had any connection with the violence that followed. I believe these riots were staged by police through their Triad gangs. I was only the fall guy.

While I was on the job of collecting signatures, I was invited to become a member of the Transport Advisory Committee, a Government-appointed body to advise on matters of transport. A friend in Government circles warned me that this was intended to stop the petition. The Riot Report would seem to confirm that opinion. But as I have said, I do not respond to fear or favour. The petition continued, and in the end there were 200,000 signatures attached to it. Later the Government was to report this petition as ONE LETTER of protest.

My experience on the Transport Advisory Committee in that year, 1966, made me very angry. We were not asked to advise on a fare rise, but merely on how much the fare rise would be. As one older member told me at the first meeting: "It is already decided at a higher level. I hope you will oppose it." I did. He did not, but signed in favour of the rise. My respect for him vanished. Another member said he opposed the rise, but as he had not had time to read the papers, and as he attended only one meeting that I remember, he also signed in favour of the rise.

I was at a disadvantage as I did not have a copy of the terms of the franchise. I had read it in the past, and felt sure that I remembered a clause stating that, as royalties were intended to syphon off excess profits, they could therefore be varied instead of raising fares. I asked the Commissioner for Transport if there was such a clause; he said there was not. The Director of Public Works (since retired) roared with laughing at my question: "You discuss this matter without having read the terms of the franchise?" he asked scornfully. The Commissioner for Transport came to my rescue by saying that they were out of print so I had been unable to get a copy. Soon after that another Government servant obtained a copy for me on loan. Sure enough, my memory had served me right, and there was a clause that stated royalties could be varied in lieu of a rise in fares.
When I next saw the Commissioner for Transport I asked him the same question: I wanted to give him a chance to correct his earlier statement. However, he just replied impatiently that he had already told me there was no such clause. I then asked him to look up the clause, which I named. He was non-plussed when he saw that there was indeed such provision, but not for long. "Well, yes," he said, "but we count royalty as merely paying rent for the ferry piers which were put up at Government expense." The franchise mentioned nothing about paying for public piers from royalties. And it was my turn to laugh scornfully at the ex-Director of Public Works who either had not read the terms himself, or was prepared to hide the facts; I suspect the former.

Since I could see no valid reason for raising the fares, I was advised to write a minority report. The Commissioner for Transport himself offered to write the draught for me, but the reasoning he gave was far inferior to his normal reasoning on the Government issues, and I decided to write my own, with the help of an unnamed Government servant who felt as I did about the whole issue.

It was not my fault, but only a reflection of public opinion, that my minority report was almost universally accepted by the Hong Kong people, and given greater publicity than the majority report. Hong Kong had seldom been so united on any issue, and this anger was not of my making: it was due to the fast rising cost of living at a time when the small man had lost his savings, and the big companies and speculators were planning to recoup their losses from the public, the poorest of the public, since being at the bottom they are the only ones who cannot recoup from those below them. It was deliberate blindness on the Government's part to spurn public opinion, and the Government was partly responsible for what followed, though the main culprits were corrupt police.

I warned the public that a decision was to be made soon, and that any organisation that wanted to join in the petition should take immediate action by informing the Government of its views. Violent action was the farthest thing from my mind, though one newspaper, which had been in the habit of sensationalising reports and statements, did print, wrongly, that I had called on the public for urgent action. This was untrue as there was no urgent action the public could take. I called only for urgent signing of petitions by organisations. Those who understood this call, younger people, had no thought of violence, as can be seen from the fact that the first demonstrator, who posted himself at the Star Ferry
concourse next day, simply stated that he was going on a
hunger strike until the Government withdrew its decision
to raise the fares.

I was attending a meeting at the City Hall —
ironically, an anti-suicide meeting — on 4th April, 1966
when someone told me that a man dressed in black was
wearing a placard calling people to support me against the
fare rise. He intended to fast to death, I was told.
I eventually went to see him, shook hands with him,
advised him to avoid causing an obstruction, and told
him not to carry out his hunger-strike as the issue was
not one for sacrificing a life. He continued his vigil
next day. Crowds of people stopped to watch him, many,
I am told, expressing their support for the cause.
Several other young men joined him, holding newspapers
and shouting slogans against the rising cost of living.
The demonstration was peaceful, in almost holiday spirit.

On that day we had an Urban Council public
meeting, and I caught a glimpse of the demonstrators as
I passed them by at the ferry. I did not know any of
them.

During the meeting a message was brought to me
that the "Man in black" had been arrested, and some young
people were waiting to see me. When the meeting ended, it
seemed as if crowds of people were waiting outside, most
of them pressmen. Cameras flashed, and microphones were
pushed in front of us as we were questioned by young men
and reporters. The young people were very agitated about
the arrest of the man in black. I agreed to go with them
to the police station, though I was not sure what my errand
was to be. Advice given to me by Mr. Bernacchi, a lawyer
and Urban Councillor, was that I should tell the arrested
man of his right to plead not guilty. Many people in
Hong Kong are not told of this right, and are frequently
ordered by police to make a confession.

How we went to the Police Station I cannot
remember, whether we walked or went by car, or whose car
if we did. In our party was a girl, a young man in a red
jacket, and a young Eurasian who introduced himself as
Brian Edwards. I later found that his real name was
Brian Edward Raggensack. I was later told that he was
a police informer, but at this point he claimed to be a
friend of the man in black and had joined him in his Star
Ferry protest.

At the Police Station, the European in charge was
called. He agreed to allow two of us to enter to see the
man in black, and Brian Edwards immediately claimed that
right as his friend. I later learned that they had never met until that day. All I said to the arrested man, the man in black, who identified himself to me as So Sau Chung, was that he had the right to plead not guilty if he believed himself to be innocent. He had, in fact, already indicated his intention to plead not guilty. The European policeman at the Riot Enquiry later in 1966, told the Commission that I had TOLD the young man to plead not guilty. It would have been out of character for me to do so, as I am experienced in dealing with young people in school, and it would never occur to me to tell them to deny something if they wanted to confess guilt. So insisted on his innocence.

There was nothing more to say to the prisoner, but we asked him if he wanted anything. He did. He wanted us to go and tell his parents that he was all right, not to worry about him. It was when he wrote down his name and address that I realised I had once had some correspondence with him about a play he was writing. I had never met him, nor was I able to help him in his project.

We went by taxi to So's home in Happy Valley, and on the way the young people told me that they wanted to demonstrate peacefully against the rising cost of living, but they were afraid, did not know how to do things. They asked me to lead them, but I refused, explaining that it would be wrong for an older person to lead young people into trouble. As demonstrations in Hong Kong were illegal, trouble could scarcely be avoided. When they insisted that they would have a demonstration, I told them to take care not to cause an obstruction, for which they could be arrested. They told me their names and I wrote them down. One was Lo Kei, the young man in the red jacket. I learned later to respect this young man as being sincere, capable, but somewhat confused by his circumstances. He was not in any way a ruffian or a gangster.

When we arrived at So's home we found the parents were upset. They disapproved of what their son had done. However, his mother insisted on going to the Police Station to see her son. We travelled back to town in the same taxi, and I alighted at the Star Ferry, having another meeting to attend in Kowloon. I paid the taxi fare, a few dollars. This was the only money I handed over to the young people, who continued their journey with So's mother back to the police station. The taxi had been engaged for my benefit, and it was right that I should pay for it.
I was late for my meeting - a meeting at which it was decided to send a delegation to advise So to give up his suicide attempt, to give up his threatened fast to death. I was not a member of that delegation, nor do I know if any action was carried out, in view of what happened that same evening.

When I arrived home I found a group of young men waiting to see me. They were all complete strangers, all workers, as far as I could tell. They said they were concerned about the situation in Hong Kong: petitions to the Governor, they said, were ignored; demonstrations were illegal. How could they then make a protest that the Government would listen to? I warned them that if they had violent action in mind, they should consider carefully, since police are armed and violent action could result only in trouble for themselves. In fact, they showed little sign of violent intention. I told them I was going to London soon and would mention this problem to members of parliament. The New Labour Government was just taking over, and I saw some hope of a change of attitude to Hong Kong - a hope that quickly faded after my visit to London that year. My main purpose in going to London was to bring the attention of the Government to bear on the detention of men who had tried to expose the drug trade.

These young men wrote down their names and addresses, but later I destroyed this paper when I found the police making wanton charges against all young people who had shown an interest in demonstrations. It was not beyond the bounds of possibility that my house would be searched for names - including the names of those who gave me important information on police crimes. Another possibility, of course, was that these strangers were police informers trying to find out if I would urge them to violence. If that was the case, they would be disappointed: I did not.

Next morning I was surprised to learn that the young people who had met me outside the Urban Council, and hundreds of other young people had held a demonstration during the night, marching up Nathan Road shouting slogans against rising prices. The police had been fairly restrained, making only a few arrests for obstruction. There was no violence.

That afternoon, Mr. Bernacchi held a meeting of the young people in his Chambers. They had approached him through the Reform Club. Mr. Bernacchi told them in no uncertain terms that they must not demonstrate, but he
offered to arrange a mass meeting for them in the Government Stadium. The date was fixed and the young people seemed satisfied with this arrangement. They were angry, but showed no sign of becoming violent. If anything, they were a little afraid of their own boldness in going so far: Hong Kong youth has always been afraid of the authorities.

That evening I had a pre-arranged dinner with some teacher friends in the Princess Restaurant, Nathan Road. During the meal we heard shouting in the street outside, and on enquiring about it, I was invited by the waiters to look out and see what was happening. Crowds of young people were standing in the middle of the road shouting slogans. I could not hear what they were saying, but understand that they were protesting against rising prices. Then they all moved on quietly. There was no sign of violence.

Accompanied by another teacher, I walked along Nathan Road towards Yamato, passing on the way a group of very young people carrying placards. They were going in the direction of the Ferry, the opposite direction from that of the earlier demonstrators. What interested me was the fact that walking behind them and urging them along was a man wearing an overcoat and I think he was wearing a cap. He was distributing leaflets. Since he was urging the youngsters on, I expected to find an anti-Government leaflet being distributed, but I was surprised to find that it was issued by the Government, and was explaining the Star Ferry Fare rise, urging the people not to oppose. The youngsters did not recognise me, though I noticed that their banners bore my name in Chinese. I did not know them, and none of them had been among those at the meetings I had attended.

My friend and I then hailed a taxi to return to school, and we began to travel along Nathan Road in the direction of Mong Kok. When the taxi reached Public Square Street, I suddenly noticed a crowd of people. They looked older than the ones involved in the demonstrations, and they appeared much angrier. They were hurling stones, and I then saw that their target was a police jeep, some of the windows of which had been broken. The Police in the car were trying to get out from their parking site on the crown of the road, and, ironically enough, our taxi-driver halted to allow them to escape. They made their way up Nathan Road towards Mong Kok. It occurred to me momentarily that I should jump out of the taxi and try to reason with the stone-throwers, but I knew none of them,
and if they had not recognised me I might have been killed for no purpose. Thinking back, it was fortunate I did not get out, as it seems clear that these were not the original demonstrators, and may have been the thugs sent in by Police to stir up trouble. However, at that point I did not know of the Police plot. Later, at the Riot Enquiry, some of the youngsters said that older thugs had forced them to throw stones. These may well have been the thugs they were talking about.

The episode shook me up, as no one could have foreseen this nasty turn of events. Therefore on arrival at school I was distressed to find a group of hawkers waiting to tell me that they were planning a meeting and would display banners of protest. Their method was completely correct, the kind of protest I had wanted, orderly, firm, but not riotous. However, they knew nothing of the riot we had just witnessed. I told them that the situation was dangerous, and if they wanted to hold a meeting and put up banners, they had better get police permission first. They promised to do so, but later, very wisely, decided not to hold their meeting.

While I was talking to this group of hawkers, someone rang the doorbell. The teacher who had accompanied me to school, whom I knew well and who had often taken messages for me, answered the doorbell. One of my students was also present. After the hawkers left, they then gave me the message that the caller was a lady friend of mine. The teacher said that she had told him a "lot of rubbish" about the police engaging gangs of thugs to start a riot, and that later they would force the young demonstrators to say that I had paid them to riot. I agreed that it was nonsense. It was the kind of thing one reads of happening to others in other countries, but which cannot happen to oneself. At least, so I thought. "Just let them try," I replied, and promptly forgot about it. I knew I was not guilty, and still believed (quite wrongly as I know now) in British Justice.

For the next few days that lady gave me repeated warnings. Others were present and would verify what I write - in fact they offered to verify it to the Police and to the Commission of Inquiry into the riots but no one wanted to hear them. This lady, who had several relatives in the police, told me that the boys had been arrested and beaten, and forced to sign statements blaming me for paying them to riot. After the statements were signed, they were then offered scholarships abroad for having done what they were asked: the condition was, of course, that they must remain silent as to what had happened. To show her earnestness, this
lady whom I had known for several years and believed to be truthful, gave me the names of her relatives, and also the names of the persons who were framing me. The police framers were named Law Kong and Law Chiu. The names of my informants I will never divulge without their permission.

This lady was so insistent that eventually I decided to write to a lawyer friend, a member of JUSTICE, of which I was also an associate member. My letter read as follows:

"Dear Mr. Sanguinetti,

My instinct and information both suggest that a witch-hunt is on concerning the riots, and before long there will be a slaughter of the innocents; in fact, it has already begun, as many of those in the courts are children, no doubt incited by the real criminals, who are not in court I expect. I hope I am wrong, but in case I am right, I want to put this short report in your hands first, before it happens.

I have been informed (with how much truth I cannot say) that the riffians who entered into the peaceful demonstrations and turned them into riots were "ah feis"* from black societies, appointed by corrupt police, with the intention of forcing them afterwards to prove that I had paid them to do it. Naturally, the riffians themselves would push others forward as their scapegoats. The motive is not far to seek if this is true: recently I have been reporting police and black societies in that area for corruption and drug rackets. I knew they were planning revenge, but did not know how they would do it; the demonstrations offered them the chance they were waiting for. The information came second-hand from a decent policeman related to someone who knows me.

I heard from Dr. Bell that the original hunger-striker has admitted that he was paid to do it, but I feel sure this is a rumour; he struck me as being genuine, but I do not know him so cannot judge too well. What I do know is that some of those accused of "inciting a riot" were not arrested until several days later; their arrest must then have depended upon hearsay rather than their having been caught in the act.

What kind of world do we live in? Please keep this letter. If I am accused, will you defend me and send the case to JUSTICE please? Meanwhile I must try to save the innocents, if I can find out who is innocent, which is difficult.

Sincerely,
Elsie."
* My Cantonese was not very good at that time and I should have used the words "lang chai", which were the words used by my informant.

This letter to Mr. Sanguinetti was dated 13th April, nine days after the man-in-black had begun his hunger-strike.

No one outside my own group of friends was given this information. Yet in the days that followed, the information was seemingly confirmed by rumours, which even reached the press, that I was to be made the scapegoat for the riots. I had planned to go to Britain in the Spring to try to draw Parliament's attention to the detention of men who had informed on the drug trade, and on the generally unsatisfactory situation in Hong Kong. I wanted to urge the new Labour Government to return to its immediate post-war policy of setting up a wholly elected Municipal Council. I was naive enough to believe that a Labour Government would be interested in a bigger slice of democracy for the Colony. I was later to discover that not only was the new Labour Government not interested, but that the new Colonial Secretary knew nothing whatever about Hong Kong.

I waited a few days before leaving for London, to give the Government a chance to do something should the rumours prove true that I was to be framed. But when nothing happened I went on my way to London, and more or less forgot the rumours. No one, I thought, would be foolish enough to imagine he could get away with fabricating such rumours. Yet I was wrong. I was still trusting the Government here more than it deserved.

It was announced before I left that there would be a commission of enquiry. I was not much interested in this as all previous enquiries (and later ones too) were intended to cover up, not to expose, the truth. I expressed my opinion, that unless the enquiry was to be an independent one set up in London, it would be a farce. How great a farce it was to be I had yet to discover.

In the face of all opposition, the Hong Kong Government gave the go-ahead for fares to rise. It would not do, we heard, to allow the people to imagine that the Government would yield to pressure. Such is the Government's attitude towards public opinion, which I have heard expressed so many times on different issues. In fact, the five-cent rise on the first class fare only was negligible, and would have hurt no one, but it had become a matter of principle in which neither side would yield; the Government, however, is the one holding the big stick and was bound to be the winner.
The Manager of the Star Ferry Company did not help matters when he made a public speech stating that anyone who was unwilling to pay the extra fare could travel second class. This statement was to backfire on him. On the day the fares rose, the first-class deck was almost empty, while crowds queued up for the second class deck. To be a second class passenger became a principle. Those who travelled second class were with the people, all one class. Those who travelled first class were traitors to the cause. The message was clear enough: "You may hold the power to raise fares, but we hold the power to travel on the cheaper fare."
Many passengers who previously had always travelled first class changed over to second class, and have never returned in all these eight years to the habit of going first class. I am one of those who changed and remain to this day a second class passenger—and I am happy to be so.

In London I pitched right into the task of lobbying Members of Parliament. I found it an interesting but hard job. One passes in a request to see an M.P., and there is an unwritten law that he will eventually appear when the message reaches him and he has time to come out of the House. That meant waiting for days. There are times when the House sits most of the night and if an important vote is to be taken, no one will leave until the count. Or a Member may be away at his constituency and that may mean making the request several times and waiting for days. But eventually the name is called, and there he is, waiting to see what he can do.

This visit was quite an education for me. I made contact with all kinds of people beside Members of Parliament. Quite a lot of valuable information was given at the Labour Party's Headquarters. I met student leaders, including some Chinese from Hong Kong, and members of various organisations such as Amnesty International. There were constant calls by newspaper reporters, so many that the Y.W.C.A. where I stayed at first was glad to be rid of me. I had lived in London before, in 1947, but knowing very few people, had found it rather lonely. This time I was too busy to feel lonely, and made many acquaintances. I also spent my evenings writing a booklet on Hong Kong, to pass on to Members of Parliament who showed an interest in learning something about Hong Kong.

But as far as Government officials were concerned, I broke no ice. I had an interview with the Colonial Secretary, Mr. Fred Lee, and found, as I had been warned, that he knew little about Hong Kong. Someone from the
Colonial Office answered all the questions, and gave me information that he must have obtained from Hong Kong. It was obvious that no good would come from that part of the visit. It was at the time of the Rhodesian Independence Issue, and the Dockers' Strike, so Hong Kong was scarcely given a thought in spite of the recent riots.

In spite of the problems, I made four contacts that proved useful, as those four Members came to visit Hong Kong on my invitation. They were Mr. Jeremy Thorpe, now leader of the Liberal Party, Mr. Evan Luard, who lost his seat at a later election and who turned out to be a very conservative socialist, Mr. John Rankin and Mr. James Johnson, who later tried very hard to bring about political changes in Hong Kong. As backbenchers there was little they could do, but at least they made an effort and that was appreciated.

Mr. John Rankin actually set up a Parliamentary Group on Hong Kong, intending to bring before it the problems of political change. But on the day his group met to choose its officers, it was sabotaged by swamping it out with Conservatives, who voted their own man into the Chair. Since then it has been a pressure group for Hong Kong businessmen, and many of its own members have business in Hong Kong. It has never discussed the problems of the ordinary people of Hong Kong, and it supports all the measures the Hong Kong Government takes to curtail political rights.

Suddenly, while I was working hard on lobbying and writing in London, an urgent telegram arrived to tell me that I had been cited in a statement in court as having paid young boys to throw stones in the riots. "This is it," was my first remark. "So the framing was true after all." In Hong Kong, my barrister friend showed my earlier letter to him to his friends, with similar words. He admitted that until that time he had begun to think I was suffering from some mental strain and imagining persecution. There was no imagination here. The statements of the boys said precisely what my informant had told me would happen: that in return for breaking glass and throwing stones, I would pay them £5000. This was something that would never have entered into my thoughts even in imagination. I was advised to appoint solicitors and a barrister at once, and chose Mr. Brian Tisdall and Mr. Albert Sanguinetti.

But this unexpected turn of events left me in a quandary. Should I finish my job in London, or should I return at once to Hong Kong to face any charges that might be made. My friends in Hong Kong urged me to remain in
London. I knew that this might be misconstrued as fear. And indeed that surmise was correct. Enemies in Hong Kong said that I had run away to London. Even the Chairman of the Reform Club of which I was a member, wrote urging me to return, adding that even he wondered if I had run away to London. I certainly had not. My visit had been planned even before the riots. I was now eager to return to Hong Kong, but still my friends urged me to remain a little longer to finish my task, and also to give them a chance to see how things were going. Perhaps they were more afraid for me than I was for myself, and when I did eventually decide to return to Hong Kong in June, they were still unconvinced that I was doing the right thing. I believe it was the right thing to do. The only fear I had was that I would not be allowed to return. Ironically enough, when I arrived at Kai Tak Airport, the crowds of people waiting to welcome me were so large that the police had to protect me from being crushed and (against my wishes) formed a cordon around me. The welcome was unmistakable: no one believed that I had caused the riots, except those who wanted to believe it, and they were almost all Europeans, or Chinese of a particular class.

Meanwhile the ordeal of the boys at the Riot Enquiry continued, and I was sorry not to be present to protest at this show of brutality and injustice. I knew the boys had been badly beaten up: this information was given to me by the lady who told me about my own framing. Lo Kei was the star witness, not only because he had led the demonstrators (strictly ordering them to march peacefully), but also because he caught the imagination of young spectators by giving graphic accounts of the way in which the police had forced them to throw stones, and afterwards forced them to write untrue statements involving me. The enquiry was being held in the City Hall, and so dramatic was his account that the young audience kept bursting into fits of laughter. The Riot Enquiry Commission was therefore glad, when floods stopped meetings in the City Hall in early June, to change to the Supreme Court, where the Chairman of the Commission, Sir Michael Hogan, felt more at home. From that time on he was no longer in a Commission of Enquiry, but conducted the proceedings like a high court, forbidding photographs, finding witnesses in contempt, and behaving in a way that earned him the title of "Chief Injustice". The contribution of the other members of the Commission was negligible: it was Hogan's Show from that time on. Since that time I have had an insatiable ambition to hang a banner from the Supreme Court Building bearing the words "Courts of Injustice". However, having always been a law-abiding citizen, I have refrained.
My barrister acted under the most difficult conditions. Counsel for the Government and Counsel for the Police (which amounted to two Counsel for the Government in fact) and the Chief Justice adamantly refused to allow him to see statements made by the witnesses. He never knew what was likely to come up in court, so my lawyers could never prepare anything to defend me. I had had little experience of court procedures, never having been on a charge in my life, and when later I was asked if I believed in British Justice, I was ignorant enough to say something to indicate that I did. There is, in fact, no such thing as British Justice in a Hong Kong court.

When the boys were brought forward one by one as witnesses, they were shown statements said to have been written by them. These statements included information that I had offered to pay them $5000 to throw stones. They admitted that the signatures were theirs, but denied that I had ever paid them to throw stones. "Why did you write such statements?", they were asked.

"Because we were beaten by the police and forced to sign such statements," they replied. In some cases they had signed blank papers and the statements had been filled in later.

"Did Mrs. Elliott support you in any way?"

"No, we supported her; she did not support us," they replied. These boys suffered from their honesty in court. Lo Kei was placed on a false charge of attempting to steal a bicycle. No one believed the charge, but that did not stop his conviction.

Edwards also stated in his statement that he was told he would be paid for his part in the demonstration. This boy's statement said he had been told by Lo Kei in prison that I was to pay them, but Lo Kei denied that they were in the same prison when the statement was made. The Commission preferred to believe the lie and did not clarify if what Lo Kei said was correct, that they were in different prisons. When Lo Kei was found dead a year later, a verdict of suicide was returned. Not one of his friends believed he had committed suicide, and indications are that he could have been murdered. Whether or not he was physically murdered may never be known, but that he was judicially murdered by Police and by the Commission is not in doubt. I wrote to Michael Hogan accusing him of responsibility. The boy had no criminal record. This was true of many convicted at this time. The criminals were their accusers.
So many lies were told on the police side, and there was so much manoeuvring on the Government side, that one witness, So Sau Chung, refused to take the oath, on the grounds that he did not want to be associated with the perjury of the court. He was found guilty of contempt of court - in spite of the fact that he had gone into the box as a voluntary witness. He was imprisoned, but later released when it became obvious that the Government side was losing its credibility even with that conservative body, the legal profession. Perjury, I find from experience, is overlooked daily in the courts of Hong Kong; but blunt honesty is not acceptable.

With all this farce going on in the so-called Commission of Enquiry, the question now arose as to whether I would go into the witness box as a voluntary witness. In normal circumstances I should have considered this a civic duty; but with so much duplicity going on, it was just like walking into a trap prepared. In fact, while in London I had received a newspaper cutting posted anonymously, from which a piece had been carefully cut out and a typewritten strip inserted, saying, "A trap is laid for your return". It was indeed. Had I not gone into the witness-box, I would have been accused of being afraid, and would have been subpoenaed anyhow. Yet to enter the box was just walking into a trap, and I knew it. The power to trap was in the Government's hands; I had no way of escape.

After a great deal of hesitation and little faith in the outcome, I decided to volunteer as a witness at the Enquiry, mainly out of anxiety for the boys who had been so unfairly and ruthlessly treated both by the Police and by the Commission. I thought I might be able, by exposing the Police plot, to exonerate the boys and perhaps lift the pressure being exerted upon them. Again I misjudged the authorities, giving them more credit than they deserved: they had no intention whatever of allowing me to prove either my own or the boys' innocence. The plot to exonerate the guilty police was already well worked out, and since they have the manpower, and the expertise at prevarication, as well as the unscrupulousness to carry it out, I was no match, as I had only honesty to depend upon. I had no experience in manoeuvring a situation.

It was necessary first to submit a written statement to the Commission. This procedure gave the Commission the chance to see the cards of all witnesses, without giving away any of their own cards. I gave my
submission, simply stating the facts as they had occurred. I made it quite clear that I would not name the person who had come to my home to warn me of a police plot, and if the Commission had any scruples at all, they should not have allowed me to enter the witness box without a warning not to take the oath on those terms. The Commission had no such scruples, but permitted me to take the oath knowing perfectly well that this was one point in my evidence on which I would remain silent. The plan was ready: they would hammer me with questions, lies and half-truths, but use my silence on my witness's name to get me out of the witness box when it was my turn to hammer back.

I deeply mistrusted the Government, but I was not prepared for such duplicity as this.

From the moment of entering the witness box, I was no longer a witness, but an accused person in the dock, with a Police Counsel, a Government Counsel and Counsel for the Commission, all bent on destroying whatever I had to say.

Police Counsel was by far the worst. He had in his possession every letter I had ever written to the Police stations during my four years as an Urban Councillor. He read out extracts from my letters, totally out of context, omitting points that would have shown that most of my requests were only for information, omitting anything that could have put any good light on what I was trying to do. That the Police had prepared such a strong and unscrupulous defence is an indication of their guilt, not mine.

This Counsel, whom I learned to despise, shouted and bullied until my mind reeled, and I would afterwards wake up in the middle of the night hearing his shrill voice (reminiscent of Herr Hitler's) screaming in my ears. For the first time in my life I took sleeping tablets offered me by a friendly doctor who thought I was going to collapse under the ordeal of being a "voluntary witness". I took them only once. I do not believe in artificial aids to overcoming one's problems.

One question to which this man, whose name was Wilcox, demanded an answer was what I thought of every member of the Transport Advisory Committee that had decided to raise the Star Ferry fares. He had all the names, and asked me one by one. I tried to give an honest opinion, though somewhat reluctantly. However, I did not forget I was under oath, and tried to be fair. When I
realised that he intended to go through every name, and that some of them had behaved in what I thought was an unethical manner, I knew I was trapped. One is not supposed to reveal what goes on in closed Committee Meetings. Yet here I was being questioned under oath. I appealed to Michael Hogan as Chairman, asking whether I was really supposed to analyse all my colleagues in this way. He ordered me to answer the questions, and reminded me that I was on oath. Yet, in his report he was unjust enough to criticise me for criticising my colleagues. As Chief Justice, could it be that he expected me to lie about them on oath? Would he have lied in the same position - and if not, why should I be criticised for answering what he ordered me to answer?

At one point this man Wilcox asked me if I believed in British Justice. I replied that I did not think that the term "British" could be applied to what happened in Hong Kong in the name of justice. He then shouted at me and accused me of using "Nazi tactics". Now, if Nazi tactics were ever used in Hong Kong, they were certainly used by this man, and I retorted to that effect. Unfortunately, the press reported that I had called the Commission Nazi, but failed to mention that Wilcox had first called me a Nazi. The next day, with its usual dishonesty, the Commission asked me to clarify if I had been criticising the Commission for using "Nazi tactics". The Commission could have checked the point by reading the court record, which was more than well kept by a whole squad of stenographers such as had never before been seen in the Supreme Court, not even for the worst of murders. Apparently it would have been wrong for me to call the court Nazi, but it was quite in order for Counsel for the Police to call a voluntary witness by that name -- a choice example of "British Justice," Hong Kong style. I was there to try to help the Government to establish the truth about the riots, but the truth was the last thing they wanted to hear. Certainly the report of the Commission that followed established nothing of the truth except the fact that a lot of young people were not getting a fair deal in Hong Kong; but it offered no remedy to the injustice, and on the contrary added to the injustices the young people had suffered from lack of schooling and opportunities. To the ordinary citizen, the truth was clear, but it had little to do with the report.

My bullying in the witness box continued for almost a week without let-up, and the Commission offered no protection to its witness. On several occasions, the screaming of Wilcox and the snarling from the cruel injustices of his accusations reduced me to tears, but
still the Commission was happy to allow him to go on unchecked. By the end of this ordeal I had reached the point when I was quite prepared to accuse the Commission as well as Counsel for the Police of "Nazism".

My own letters to the Police were the main weapon used against me, but, as I have said, they were all quoted completely out of context. It is difficult to remember the contents of letters years after they are written, and I was not allowed to prepare even by being told which of my letters would be brought forward. Nor was I allowed to tell the Commission that the letters were being quoted out of context, but usually had to reply YES or NO as to whether or not that was my signature. How this could be called an enquiry is beyond my imagination. I thought I was going to give some facts to help to show what had happened during the riots. Instead it was an inquisition, a mental torture.

When the time came for my counsel to give the other side of the picture and quote the rest of my letters to show that they were not as bad as the misquotations suggested, again, the police were ready with their plot: first I must name my witness on the night of the riot. They could not go forward on the case, I was untruthfully told, unless they had those names. Why the names of my informants were important was never explained to me. I offered to bring forward a number of witnesses to prove that I was not lying, but that I had received this warning about my being framed. I wrote the names of persons who could prove my statement. The Commission was not interested in my witnesses: it was determined to use this impasse to get me out of the witness box in time to stop the truth being heard. It is significant that all the time I was in the witness box, drug dens and gambling dens protected by the police were closed down. It was therefore obvious that my presence in the witness box was a menace, and I had to be got out before splitting on these nefarious activities of the police: and the Commission played into the hands of the Police; I cannot believe they did so unintentionally. Michael Hogan's attitude throughout had been entirely pro-police. I cannot speak for the other members of the Commission, who took little part in the proceedings and were probably there more to enhance its appearance as an independent body than as a bona fide commission. It was very much Hogan's world.

Rights in this "trial" were all one-sided: the Government Counsel had the right to demand what they wanted, but I had no right to speak. Therefore, when Counsel demanded names I would not give, Hogan held me in
contempt of the Commission. Indeed I was not. I had been polite enough to indicate beforehand that I could not give names as I must protect my witnesses: others had withheld names and in court it is common for names to be withheld when there is danger of reprisal. Michael Hogan then warned me that some British Journalists had been imprisoned for contempt of court on a similar offence: he had by then forgotten that this was a Commission of Enquiry and not a court. I would either be fined or imprisoned, he warned.

I do not enjoy being obstinate, but I can be obstinate where principles are involved. Fine or imprisonment, I would not have changed my stand. It occurred to me that I might give the names in camera, and suggested doing so. But that night my informant came to see me in a distraught state saying that if I divulged the names she would commit suicide, as the police involved, those who had told her the facts of the police framing, would be in serious trouble for giving the plot away. I assured her that I would give no names, and she apologised for endangering my freedom. It was well worthwhile to risk punishment, as it was quite clear that the names were not required by the Police in order to learn the truth, but in order to punish those who had assisted me. Moreover, I had just learned that the Commission itself was concealing important evidence. It was sheer hypocrisy to demand the evidence from me while the Commission itself was hiding facts.

The evidence the Commission intended to hide concerned the actual framing. Another witness had offered to go in the witness box and give evidence passed on to him from another Police Station, no less than Police Headquarters. I tell it now for the first time publicly.

The information came from some police at Headquarters who were shocked at the machinations of their colleagues; this information was afterwards confirmed from another quarter which will be quoted below. But first I must give some background information.

After the arrest of some of the boys in connection with the riots, I was approached by telephone by an Englishwoman who refused to give her name, but she said she was a friend of the mother of Brian Edward Raggensack. Raggensack was at that time awaiting trial on charges of rioting. This Englishwoman asked me if I could help to get a solicitor for the boy. I seldom turn down a call for help, even though I may not always support the person who asks me, and in this case I promised to find a solicitor, on the understanding that I would not be responsible for paying the bill. That was accepted by the
other side. I happened to be going that morning to see my own lawyer, and I asked if anyone in the firm would take on this boy Raggensack's case. One solicitor promised to do so, but I made it clear that the boy's mother would be responsible for paying the bill. This solicitor will certainly remember the incident and confirm what I say. Indeed, my part in the engagement of the solicitor ended when I rang up the mother, Mrs. Silva, and told her which solicitor to contact. Whether or not she ever did so I do not know. Later in court this boy told the Commission of Enquiry that I had offered to pay for a solicitor to fight his case. I was never given the opportunity to contradict this lie.

In June I was informed by a friend of some police at Arsenal Street Headquarters that two senior police officers from Arsenal Street had visited this lady, Mrs. Silva, with a sum of money, with the intention of persuading her to go to the prison and tell her son either to give or to withhold certain evidence on the case before the Commission. My informant, who offered to make this statement to the Commission of Enquiry, was never allowed to be a witness, so I quote here the statement exactly as he wrote and signed it:

"Towards the end of May a serving officer of the Hong Kong Police Force informed me that an attempt had been made by at least two other police officers to interfere with a witness who was concerned with the Commission of Inquiry into the Kowloon Disturbances.

"He told me that on May 24th or May 25th, for he was not sure of the date, Senior Inspector Currie and Inspector Quinn of C.I.D. H.Q., either on the instructions of or with the knowledge of Assistant Superintendent Hunt of the Triad Society Bureau, had left Police Headquarters Hong Kong with the intention of visiting Mrs. Da Silva (Dulce) at her home in Crown Apartments, Tsimshatsui. They left PHQ after office hours.

"He told me that he had heard them discussing their visit, that one of the officers was asked by the other if he had the money on him, and that one of them expressed some concern that their visit might become known and that it was dangerous. From what he heard, the officer said that the money was to be given to Mrs. Da Silva on condition that she visit her son, Brian Edward Raggensack at Chi Ma Wan Prison, and persuade him to say something or not to say something in connection with the son's possible re-call to give evidence at the Commission. The Officer made what may be called a shrewd guess and
suggested that it might be that Raggensack would refuse to allow Mr. A. Sanguinetti, Counsel for Mrs. Elsie Elliott, to be given a copy of the statement which he made to the Police.

"He told me that Mrs. Da Silva had visited PHQ Hong Kong on three occasions, to see the two inspectors named above. As far as I can remember, he said that two of the visits were before their visit to her, and one was after. Subsequently, he told me, Director of Criminal Investigation Mr. Clunie asked these two officers if Mrs. Da Silva had visited them in PHQ Hong Kong, and when this was confirmed Mr. Clunie is alleged to have said that the visits might lead to serious allegations being made. The two officers then made entries in their official diaries concerning the visits. As far as I can remember I think it was mentioned that new diaries may have been issued.

"The officer who told me this does not know if the visit of the two officers to Mrs. Da Silva was completed. He does not know whether or not she accepted the money.

"This officer is unwilling to reveal his identity for fear of victimisation.

"The above statement is the truth to the best of my memory."

Signed by ALAN ALLIS
(In point of fact, my barrister, Mr. A. Sanguinetti, complained throughout the enquiry that the police withheld witnesses' statements from him.)

On receiving the above statement from Mr. Ellis, my solicitor, Mr. B. Tisdall invited Mr. J.H. Sanders, Solicitor for the Commission, to go to see Mrs. Da Silva. This visit proved that the two officers had indeed visited her, and Mr. Sanders' statement is quoted below:

"Mrs. Silva
"In company with Mr. Tisdall I went to Mrs. Silva's flat near the Crown Restaurant in Nathan Road, Kowloon, on Thursday, the 21st July. We interviewed Mrs. Silva who was lying in bed of an illness and Mr. Tisdall asked her a number of questions relating to her son Brian Edward Raggensack. Mrs. Silva mentioned that she had been informed by her son that he had been beaten up by prisoners both before and after his giving evidence before the Commission. Naturally being rather concerned about this she had written to the Superintendent of Prisons, Victoria, asking that the matter be investigated. The reply, if I remembered rightly, was to the effect that there was no
substance or foundation in these allegations. Sometime afterwards Mrs. Silva had gone to see Superintendent Hunt of the Anti-Triad Society Bureau, and informed him that her son had been beaten up. Apparently Mrs. Silva had known Hunt for some considerable time. Mr. Hunt a few weeks ago, had telephoned me and I spoke to him about another matter, and he happened to mention that Mrs. Silva had told him that Raggensack had been beaten up, but according to his version it was the warders who had beaten Raggensack. According to Mrs. Silva when I asked her who had beaten her son she replied that it was not the warders but the prisoners.

2. In answer to questions put to her by Mr. Tisdall, Mrs. Silva said that two senior officers named Currie and Kwine (sic) had come to see her at her home sometime in the middle of June. When asked to explain the purpose of this visit, Mrs. Silva stated that she had known these police officers for a period of 13 or 14 years. They with their wives were often in the habit of visiting the King Kong Club where she worked. I believe she is either a Maa San or manageress in that Club. She said that they came to see her because she was ill and I think she said they brought sweets for her young daughter. She denied that they attempted to make suggestions to her that she should persuade her son Brian Edward Raggensack to change his evidence if recalled before the Commission. She explained that their visit had been in the nature of a social call. Tisdall claimed that she was lying because it would be in her interest to curry favour with the police in view of her occupation. I believe that if she was lying, and it was extremely difficult to tell, she is a plausible liar. I had noticed however, that she remarked several times that she was in financial difficulties since her son's arrest and you may also recall in Raggensack's statement given to me at Chi Ma Wan, that he contributed a large proportion of his wages to his mother for household expenses, etc. She also stated that she had pawned during the last month or two, a lot of her possessions. There was a tendency in her answers, perhaps, to be rather over-ready to deny that the visit made by 2 senior police officers to her home was unusual."

This statement was signed by Mr. J. H. Sanders, Solicitor to the Commission, and addressed to the Solicitor General (Mr. Denys Roberts).

Indeed, Mr. Tisdall said Mrs. Silva was over-ready to deny she had been given money, even before she was asked any question about money.
The fact that the two officers named actually visited Mrs. Silva puts the seal of truth on the report from the friendly Police at Arsenal Street, and I have no doubt whatever that they were also speaking the truth that those officers took with them a sum of money for the purpose stated. The name Kwine was wrongly spelt, and should have read Quinn, this person being the leader and the other named more passive in the expedition. It is incongruous to imagine two senior police officers of their age and rank going from Arsenal Street across the harbour only to take sweets to a sick child, and to pay a social call to a woman whose son was in prison for rioting: they had more experience than to expose themselves to trouble for such a mission. Naturally the Solicitor for the Commission would be wary in his report, and this, especially as the whole report was suppressed and the evidence never came out in the Enquiry: indeed, nothing relevant to the truth was allowed to come out in the enquiry, the purpose of which was to condemn me and cover up the facts. However, it failed to condemn me in the eyes of the public.

Later I wrote to Currie asking him what had happened during that visit, but he ignored my letter. What could he have explained? His silence was a condemnation, since if he had had a good reason he could have told me.

Since the Commission of Enquiry was itself in contempt by hiding relevant evidence, it is ironical that they should order me to give evidence by naming my witnesses: they certainly did not want those names for the purpose of uncovering the truth, but to attempt to discredit their evidence.

The fact that the purpose was to destroy my witnesses was proved a few months later when I went to see the Commissioner of Police, Mr. W.H.E. Heath. In the course of the conversation, he said casually, "Oh, we found out who was your witness in the so-called police framing in the riots."

"That's interesting," I replied. "Who was she then?"

"She was the wife of one of our police. She had been gambling with some other police and lost. She decided to tell you these lies about the framing in order to get revenge for losing."

Immediately I conjured up in my mind some poor policeman's
wife being persecuted because she was suspected of having tried to get revenge by telling me a cock-and-bull story about a framing that never was. Or perhaps Mr. Heath was only fishing for the truth.

"I hope you will not persecute that lady," I told Mr. Heath, "because my witness's husband is not a policeman and she never gambles. You seem to have the wrong lady, but anyhow it shows me that you would not check for the facts, but only try to find something against her."

I felt happier than ever that I had concealed the name of my informant, since the information would only have been used to discredit my witness by one means or another.

To return to the Commission of Enquiry: when I refused to give my informant's name because I knew the Commission was not looking for the truth, I was found guilty of contempt of the Commission. The Commission now had to decide what punishment to lay on me, though I was a voluntary witness and had stated from the beginning that I would not name my witness. In fact, their purpose was more cunning than I knew: they wanted to stop me giving any further evidence, as my evidence was too damning to be allowed to continue. Michael Hogan told me that I would either be sent to prison for contempt, as someone had been punished in a court in Britain (he forgot this was not a court), or I would be heavily fined. I did not at that time know that an influential European whose name was never given to me had visited Government House and advised the acting Governor not to be foolish enough to have me sentenced, unless he wanted a riot on his hands. Indeed, as I went to the court that morning, I noticed many young people standing around: I do not know who they were. Inside the court the policewomen were all prepared to carry out the arrest. One Chinese friend was also ready to step forward and offer to be arrested in my place—a step I could not have permitted. I had made up my mind to refuse to pay any fine, as I had done nothing to deserve a fine: it was up to Hogan and his heroes to send me to prison if they intended to carry the farce to its final conclusion.

But the Commission knew it was skating on thin ice, and after long deliberation passed a sentence that must be unique in the history of the English Judiciary: Hogan said he would not give a prison sentence, or impose a fine, but he would send me "to the bar of public opinion for censure." How can one be sent for judgment to the public FOR CENSURE? Those words had already prejudged the matter.
The public considered this sentence quite hilarious. One journalist said he had visited every bar in Hong Kong and had made himself drunk in the effort, but had not found the bar of public opinion. The public did find the bar, however, for in the next two elections I came top of the polls for the Urban Council, by a bigger majority than has even been known in this undemocratic colony. Yet Hogan’s cronies in the upper hierarchy still now and again remind me that I am still before the bar of public opinion! All the indications are that Hogan is in exactly that position, except that his censure comes from the voters!

After this episode, people used to stop me in the streets, in buses, on the ferry, anywhere, to shake hands and congratulate me. One American lady said that as Hogan had been unfair enough to give me no way of knowing public opinion and the sentence was therefore for life, it might be a good idea to stand on statue square and tell people passing by: "If you like me, throw a flower; if not, throw a stone!" I forecast that the stones would have come from colonials, corrupt members of the police, and thugs, three groups that work very closely together.

For my own part, I viewed this affair not so much as a personal triumph as a message to the Government that they had failed to win public support and had better do some rethinking. But unfortunately people of this calibre are always blind: they shut their eyes to truth so often that in the end they cannot see the truth. Truth is something that unfolds step by step; if one refuses to take the first step, the next step is concealed. That is why this world is in such a mess: men in power have shut the truth until they truly believe a lie. They profess to be Christians, yet this is a truth that Christ taught and they cannot understand it.

One thing the Commission did for me, unintentionally of course, was to win over public confidence in me. Many Chinese people had believed that I was supporting the Chinese, but when faced with a dilemma of this kind, I would show my true British colours and tell the name — betray the name — of my Chinese informant. I now found myself being trusted by Chinese people as never before; nor did I lose the trust of my own British people — those who have not been tarred with the colonial brush. This trust had the advantage that I was able to learn much more about how the colony is run, because informants gave information knowing that I would not betray their confidence.
It is a sad reflection on our form of justice here, and a sorry condemnation of the whole system, that this episode which the colonial Government intended to use to destroy my credibility did exactly the reverse: it did a great deal of harm to the colonial Government. The blatant lies that were accepted by the Commission, the duplicity and the manoeuvring on the Government side were particularly disgusting to one like myself who had believed to some extent in the British courts of justice. That experience was only the beginning of an eye-opener. What could happen to me, an English person of some standing in the Colony, must certainly be happening to a much worse degree among Chinese, especially those without money or influence. In the seven years that have followed this episode, I have had much to do with court cases, and have attended the courts frequently on hawker and other cases that have been referred to me. I have come to the considered and somewhat reluctant conclusion that the Hong Kong courts are becoming more and more the tool of gangsters and corrupt police and others betraying the principles of law and order. The British system of justice gives these gangsters and corrupt persons exactly the scope and the loopholes they need to fix many cases either by bringing forward false evidence to produce a condemnation of someone they wish to liquidate, or by withholding evidence against a guilty person who has paid them to bring about an acquittal. I have frequently drawn the attention of Magistrates and Judges to what is happening, but with a few outstanding exceptions, most of them prefer to sit in their seats of honour demanding public respect, but betraying the principles of justice for which courts are supposed to stand.

Some magistrates and judges have taken the trouble to explain the legal system to me, to prove that they are following the rules. I can only say that if following the correct rules is leading to wrong results in the miscarriage of justice, there must be something in need of radical change. But changes require effort, time, perhaps struggle, while money and pensions and holidays are too easy to come by in colonial service; no one wants to sacrifice them. Indeed, if changes are to come within the colonial system, they must come from the upper crust, as any magistrate in the lower ranks can only share the unpopularity suffered by that hero of the people, Magistrate John Millar, who stood out a shining example of the real meaning of justice, but was hated by some of his colleagues because the people respected him for his actions and his outspokenness. In the
longrun, the people will respect what is right, not what they are ordered to respect: if they stand up respect-
fully in court, it may not be out of respect but because they are ordered to do so: yet at a dinner party, without being ordered, all will rise to their feet in respect at the entrance of Magistrate Millar! I have called this chapter, "A Rebel in Hong Kong" and I have tried to show why I am considered to be a rebel. The fact is that anyone who wishes to look into my back-
ground will find that reticence to speak has always been my weakness, even from my schooldays. I was never involved in any kind of demonstration, never came up against the law. Being a rebel in Hong Kong means standing for what a British person believes to be British justice, and believing that British justice should apply to all, rich and poor, Chinese, Portuguese, Indian, British or any other nationality. But such principles are not welcome in a colony where the only principle that exists is freedom for the ruling class to make money without having to consider the rights of any but their own class. This principle I cannot accept, and must therefore remain, along with John Millar, a rebel.

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* This first letter to Mr. Currie, dated 31st May, 1968, simply asked him to tell me his version of this visit to Mrs. Silva in company with Mr. M. Quinn. He ignored the letter.

Then in 1973, when Hunt was found guilty under the Bribery Ordinance of living beyond his means, I wrote again to Mr. Currie in a letter dated 1st November, 1973. In this letter I told Mr. Currie that I had recently approached Mr. Charles Sutcliffe, Commissioner of Police, asking him to investigate what happened on that visit, and why Hunt had sent the two Inspectors to see Mrs. Silva. Mr. Sutcliffe never gave me the result of this "investigation". I therefore asked Mr. Currie to speak up so that Hunt might be brought to justice. Indeed, I had been asked by the Legal Department to give any information I had on Hunt relevant to the charges brought against him. I believed it to be in the public interest to expose crimes, especially when they interfere with the course of justice, as corruption does.

Instead of answering my letter, Mr. Currie took it to the Police and eventually I received a summons to appear in court on Christmas Eve, 1973, on a charge of
writing a libellous letter through the post, under Section 32(l)(f) of the Post Office Ordinance Cap. 98 of the Laws of Hong Kong.

I had been careful to mark my letter "Personal Only", and it must have been Mr. Currie himself who made it public, as a newspaper reporter who seems to have special police contacts reported the letter and its contents.

It has always been a police policy in Hong Kong that if a member of the public reports a crime of a policeman, he will find himself in trouble with the police. They had tried for years to catch me, and this was the best they could do, to catch me on a law that does not exist in London, and which I did not know existed here. One wonders who had combed the law books to find some small charge.

As I had planned a trip to Britain for Christmas, I had to have the case postponed until 7th January, 1974. But on 3rd January I received a letter from the Magistrate saying that the Attorney General had decided to enter a "nolle prosequi". I believe it was an unprecedented charge, and an unprecedented step to enter a nole prosequi without first appearing in the Magistrate's court, as a matter of courtesy if not law. But then, this is Hong Kong, where laws can be used to prevent criminals being brought to trial and to bring the innocent into disrepute. Here nothing applies according to law.

When the press began to question the reason for the cancelling of the case, which could have exposed so much of what went on in 1966 in the Commission of Enquiry, one policeman, who may have been more than closely connected with the case, volunteered the information to the press that the case had been stopped as it would have exposed the fact that in 1966 there were enquiries into the homosexual activities of influential persons in Hong Kong, after which the police files went missing.

For my own part, I see in the cancellation of this case a reaffirmation of the fact that the Government will on no account allow the truth of the 1966 frameup of a number of persons to come out into the open.

Indeed, is it not within my rights according to Hong Kong standards that the truth should be made known, since I was the one accused of causing a riot and sent before the bar of public opinion merely for trying to get the truth out in public?