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## On the Margin

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### Batu Hampar

WHEN the Federation Government wiped the Selangor village of Jenderam off the map on Feb. 15, there were shocked comments in Great Britain, if not in Malaya itself. And indeed it was a drastic thing to do. The whole village was razed to the ground, and the entire population of 1,600 men, women and children shifted to a detention camp.

But by chance this week, among some Press cuttings of mine, I came across one from the Straits Times of the immediate post-liberation period which provided a very remarkable contrast with Jenderam. This cutting was a report of the trial of three collaborators at Seremban, and the evidence given showed that the Japanese bayoneted in cold blood an entire Chinese community of thirty men, women and children living in a timber kongsi at a remote spot in the jungle near Kampong Batu Hampar, at the 17th. mile on the road from Seremban to Tampin.

PERMIT me to recall the evidence of one eye-witness :

Chong Pen stated that on the morning of March 5, 1942, he was in his house searching for documents such as China Relief Fund receipts, photographs of General Chiang Kai-shek, and the former





Prince of Wales.

Witness heard his nephew shouting to him to run. He ran out and hid. From his hiding place he saw the three accused leading a party of Japanese soldiers to the kongsi.

The soldiers surrounded the place while the three accused stood in front of his house and called the inmates. The second accused blindfolded some children while the third accused did likewise to Thoong Wah.

Continuing his evidence, Chong Pen said that he saw about thirty Chinese taken to a spot where he alleged the three accused gestulated to the Japanese to bayonet the Chinese.

Further allegations were that he saw the three accused clap their hands after the soldiers had completed their bayoneting. Being upset at what he had seen, he fell unconscious.

\* \* \*

**A**T least Jenderam was destroyed without harming a hair of anybody's head, and the people were allowed to take their personal belongings with them, while property that could not be taken into the camp was auctioned and the money carefully handed back to the owners; and of those who are in the Kluang camp now, most will be freed and re-settled elsewhere as soon as places can be found for them. After all, there is a good deal to be said for the British way of doing things.

Cecil Street.



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