



Government officials will never ask you to transfer money or disclose bank log-in details over a phone call.
Call the 24/7 ScamShield Helpline at 1799 if you are unsure if something is a scam.

Home > Newspaper Catalogue > The Straits Times > 1951 > November > 8 > Page 6 > Prisoners Of Fear



Prisoners Of Fear

The Straits Times, 8 November 1951, Page 6

Share    

 Save Citation

Microfilm: NL2627

[« Previous Article](#) [Next Article »](#)



Prisoners Of Fear



The village that bred, harboured and helped the murderers of Sir Henry Gurney is being wiped out. At dawn yesterday, troops, police and government teams moved into Tras to begin the operation that will obliterate a notorious Communist centre. Whether action would have been taken against Tras except for the tragedy of the Gap is a question we need not explore. The village's record is as black as it could be. It is known from many captured terrorists' documents, said a Press statement yesterday, that Tras is a centre of very great importance to the terrorists in Western Pahang. Tras has given the Communists "active support...without interruption" for "the past three years." There have been twenty murders in this district and twenty-five attempted murders. There have been 138 "bandit incidents" and twenty-two skirmishes between terrorists and the security forces. Fifty-two guerrilla camps have been found in the Tras district, along with a large number of food dumps. To quote the official Press statement again, "it is known that the village has been the main source of supplies of food to the bandits in the area."



Recommended Articles

The Singapore Free Press / Article

TERROR VILLAGE DOOMED

7 November 1951 - fras sheltered the killers of From LESLIE HOFFMAN TRAS, Wednesday. yHE wiping out of Tras, the village which bred, harboured and helped the gang responsible for the murder of Sir Henry Gurney, began today. By Saturday, Tras, which is seven miles south of Raub, will be a...

The Straits Times / Article

'TERROR' TOWN TO BE MOVED

8 November 1951 - They helped Gurney killer gang ALL 2,000 WILL BE SENT TO IPOH CAMP From LESLIE HOFFMAN TRAS, Wednesday. AS security forces surrounded Tras village U> punish it for its aid to the gang which murdered Sir Henry Gurney, Gurkhas battled with the killer gang at...

The Straits Times / Article

18th village to get 17D penalty

8 November 1951 - 18th village to get 17D penalty HUU LUMPUB, Wed. EIGHTEEN villages in the Federation have now been punished under Emergency Repression 17D for collaboration with the Communist Bandits. Notable instances have been Pusing, in Pefak, which was fined, and Jenderam, in Selangor, which was razed. In 1949. 16 places...

The Straits Times / Article

JENDERAM CRITICS ARE TOLD: NONSENSE'

22 February 1951 - JENDERAM CRITICS ARE TOLD: NONSENSE' Malays Wanted Area Cleared From Our Staff Correspondent KUALA LUMPUR, Wednesday. IT was nonsense to compare the evacuation of Jenderam in Selangor with the razing of the Czech town of Lidice by the Germans in 1942, said the Director of Information, Mr. J. N. McHugh,...

The Straits Times / Article

KILLER GANG SLIPS OUT OF THE TRAP

30 October 1951 - KUAI A LIIMPIR Monday, THF



an infamous record. The population of this village "has been solidly behind the bandits. They have aided and abetted and consorted with the Communist terrorists." Tras has also been a village of sealed lips. There has been a persistent failure to give information to the police or to the other security forces. It might have been thought that the information which the security forces apparently discovered for themselves would have been warrant enough long ago. This is something which the Government, or the Director of Operations, must explain. How much rope are the Trases, the Jenderams and the Pusings to be given? How many other villages are there which have given the Communists "active support without interruption for the past three years"? Where else do the Communists have their republics of fear?

Next to relief that at last the authorities have taken stern action comes anger that they should have waited so long. It was the same in Pusing. It was the same in Jenderam. After the razing of Jenderam made headlines in the world's Press, the Secretary for Defence managed to make out a case. The Legislative Council was told how a hundred villagers had separately trekked to Kuala Lumpur to beg the Government to act. Jenderam was a known recruiting centre for the Communists, where armed terrorists often strolled openly through the village streets. From Jenderam well-worn paths led to jungle camps, and on the door of



each house was marked in chalk the monthly tax that was paid to the Communists. Let us note too the result of the Jenderam operation. A total of 1,496 persons were arrested and screened. Of these 1,230 have been released and resettled. Less than one-fifth of the people of Jenderam were Communist supporters, active or only suspected. Four-fifths were the prisoners of fear.

This may hold true too of Tras. What is quite certain



6 OCTOBER 1957 (REVIEWED BY MONDAY) The hunt for Sir Henry Gurney's murderers ended today with the killing of another bandit—the fourth killed in the operation. After a three-week hunt the 2/2 Gurkha Rifles and 250 auxiliary police are being withdrawn from the jungle east...

The Straits Times / Article

Town six years dead will live again

18 July 1957 - RALB. Wed.—Tras, the shuttered "ghost town" of Pahang, will come back to life before the end of the year. The Pahang Government has allotted 61 housing sites for those wishing to return to the town, at the foot of the central mountain...

The Straits Times / Article

New light on the Emergency in Malaya

27 March 1967 - New light on the Emergency in Malaya ALLINGTON KENNARD THE LONG LONG WAIL The Emergency in Malaya 1948-1960. By Richard Lutterbuck. (Cassell 30s) REVIEWED By AMERICANS must be sick by now of British counterinsurgency experts who explain with ruthless logic what went wrong in Vietnam, and why the Americans are...

Show More

is that at Tras the Communists for three years have openly flouted the Government and defied its authority. An authority that could have strangled them at any time in the last three years as, at last, it is strangling them now. What has the Government to say? In theory Government administration continued. "A few Government servants" who live at Tras have not been detained. But what have they been doing there? Did they live in Tras to be mocked at, the symbols of paralysed authority? Almost every paragraph of the Press statement which justifies the operation at Tras is a round condemnation of Government ineptitude. This rare frankness by the Department of Information, like a scornful wind, blows before it the chaff of official assurances.

Of course there have been many operations under Regulation 17D. It is not suggested that the Government has always neglected to take action. The history of Tras clearly suggests, however, that it has not made sufficient use of these powers. Three years is a long time, and Tras sprawls across a strategic road junction in an area which from the very first has hummed with terrorist activity. There is only one reason we can think of why action was not taken before, and that is the lack of good troops to keep the area sterile when already there are so many tasks awaiting good troops. If this indeed is the reason, the Government must say so. If more troops are needed, the Government must ask for them. What does it think the effect of Communist domination of this district has been over the mournful months?

There were signs at the beginning of the year of definite progress in the anti-Communist campaign. They are signs that have disappeared. The October figures of incidents and casualties are alarming. The Security Forces suffered approximately 140 casualties including 56 killed. Sixty-nine civilians were murdered or are missing. A total of 99 Communists were killed. Only eleven surrendered. Tras gives November a



different start. But this Communist village could have been wiped out at any time in the last three years. Why was it allowed to prosper the Communist cause for so long? Of how many other villages can it be said that they are "a centre of very great importance to the Communists"? And for how long will the Government stay its hand, as it stayed its hand against Tras?

NLB

NLB

Contact Us Feedback FAQ



[Report Vulnerability](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Linking Disclaimer](#) [Privacy Statement](#) [Takedown Policy](#)

©2026 Government of Singapore
Last Updated 2023-01-31