Precis

The purpose of this study has been to trace the growth of communal, ethnic and national feeling among the Malays of Peninsular Malaya in the first four decades of this century, and the expression of this feeling in voluntary associations of a modern and potentially political-nationalist kind. The study opens with a brief examination in Chapter I of the social organisation of the traditional Malay polity as it was at the time of British intervention in the internal affairs of the western states in the 1870s, and of the first effects upon Malay society of patterns of British rule formed during the early years of the Residential system. A second introductory chapter deals with the growth in the peripheral Straits Settlements, and particularly in Singapore, of a distinctive and heterogeneous urban Malayo-Muslim community, which acted as the focus in the latter part of the nineteenth century for the cultural and economic energies of the Malaysian world as a whole, and as a notable stimulant for subsequent Malay social change in the peninsular hinterland.

The main body of the thesis spans the years 1900 to 1941. No attempt has been made to present a detailed account of British policy and administration in Malaya during the period

THE ORIGINS OF MALAY NATIONALISM

1900-1941

William R. Roff

Thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

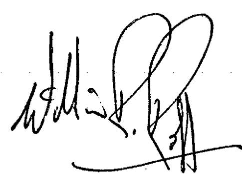
in the

Australian National University

February 1965

G48389

This thesis is my own work. Where I have used the findings of others to supplement my own, the notes carry an acknowledgement.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the people who have helped me with this research. I am, firstly, deeply indebted to my joint supervisors, Dr Emily Sadka (who bears the responsibility for my initial interest in Malaya) and Professor J.W. Davidson, for their untiring encouragement and help. I should like to thank also other members of the staff and my fellow research students at the Australian National University for frequent assistance and much stimulating discussion; gratitude is owed particularly to Professor A.H. Johns, Mr E.K. Fisk, Mr Christopher Wake, Mr John Purcal, Mr J.P.S. Uberoi, and Dr Paul van der Veur. The libraries of the Australian National University, of the Universities of Malaya and Singapore, and of Monash University, the Australian National Library and the National Library of Singapore have given me facilities and assistance which contributed largely to the completion of this study. My thanks are also due to the staff of the Public Records Office in Kuala Lumpur, and of the Museums Department, Federation of Malaya, for their interest and help.

I should especially like to thank Dr Herbert Feith, of the Department of Politics, Monash University; Dr Michael Swift, of the Anthropology Department, University of Sydney; Professor C.S. Skinner,

of the Department of Indonesian and Malayan Languages, Monash University; Professor J.D. Legge, of the Department of History, Monash University; and Miss Margaret Clark, of the Department of Indonesian and Malaysian Studies, University of Melbourne, for helpful criticism and comment on various stages of the draft. I am also grateful to Mrs Lesley Whitelaw and Miss Patricia Healy for typing the final version.

Finally, I owe a lasting debt of gratitude to countless Malays throughout Malaya and Singapore, without whose patient teaching, talking and hospitality, and unfailing courtesy, this study would have been quite impossible. The names of many are listed in the Bibliography, but I should like to give special thanks to my chief mentor and frequent host, Tuan Haji Abdul Karim b. H.M. Noor, of Kampong Jawa, Klang, who must stand for all the others.

ABBREVIATIONS

b.	:	*bin* ('son of')
CO	:	Colonial Office
F.M.S.	:	Federated Malay States
J.M.B.R.A.S.	:	*Journal of the Malayan Branch, Royal Asiatic Society*
J.S.B.R.A.S.	:	*Journal of the Straits Branch, Royal Asiatic Society*
J.S.E.A.H.	:	*Journal of Southeast Asian History*
KMM	:	Kesatuan Melayu Muda
KMS	:	Kesatuan Melayu Singapura
M.A.S.	:	Malay Administrative Service
M.C.S.	:	Malayan Civil Service
M.S.	:	Malay States
N.E.I.	:	Netherlands East Indies
PASPAM	:	Persaudaraan Sahabat Pena Malaya
PKI	:	Partai Komunis Indonesia
PNI	:	Partai Nasional Indonesia
SCM	:	Selangor Council Minutes
S.S.	:	Straits Settlements
U.M.S.	:	Unfederated Malay States

GLOSSARY

adat - Custom in the widest sense; common law or customary law in general.

akal - Intelligence; reason.

alim (pl. ulama) - One learned in religion. The word ulama is frequently used in the singular in Malay.

ayat - Verse, especially of the Kuran; dictum.

becha - Rickshaw or trishaw.

bomoh - Malay spirit doctor.

fatwa - Legal ruling by a jurist; answer by a Mufti (q.v.) to a question of law, on which his opinion is final.

fitrah - Charitable tax in kind (usually in rice) made by Malays at the end of the fasting month. cf., also, zakat.

hadith - Tradition about the Prophet. Name given to a mass of literature embodying for the guidance of Muslims stories about the sayings and doings of Muhammad, and forming one of the principal sources of Islamic jurisprudence.

haj - Pilgrimage to Mecca.

haji - Pilgrim to Mecca. Used also as a title for Malays who have performed the pilgrimage.

hikayat - Story, narrative, chronicle or history in prose.

ijtihad - Informed independent judgement (in religious matters).

imam - Leader of mosque congregation, and by extension of any Muslim community.

istana - Palace, ordinarily used only for royalty.

jawi - The Malay (modified-Arabic) script.

Jawi Peranakan - Local-born Muslim of mixed Indian-Malay descent.

kafir - Unbeliever, infidel.

<u>kampong</u> - Malay village.

<u>kathi</u> - Religious magistrate.

<u>kenduri</u> - Feast (especially in religious contexts).

<u>kerah</u> - Corvee; tribute labour.

<u>keramat</u> - Saintly; holy; often used substantively to denote a shrine or place of pilgrimage.

<u>kesatuan</u> - Union; association.

<u>khatib</u> - Preacher; reciter of the <u>khutbah</u> (address) at the Friday mosque service.

<u>kitab</u> - Literally (Arabic) 'book', but used in Malay to denote specifically religious literature.

<u>madrasah</u> - Religious school.

<u>masok Melayu</u> - To become a Muslim.

<u>mufti</u> - Jurisconsult; judge who gives rulings on points of law only; the senior religious functionary in a Malay state.

<u>mukim</u> - Parish; administrative sub-division of a district.

<u>munshi</u> - Language teacher.

<u>orang besar</u> - Literally 'great man'; term applied to anyone of position or wealth.

<u>penghulu</u> - Headman (usually of a group of <u>mukim</u>, or parishes), with some administrative and judicial authority.

<u>padi</u> - Rice: as a plant, in the ear or unhusked.

<u>persatuan</u> - Association; society.

<u>persekutuan</u> - Association; federation; union.

<u>pondok</u> - Literally 'hut' or 'shanty', but used especially with reference to small religious schools, usually residential.

<u>ra'ayat</u> - Subjects of a state or ruler, more particularly the peasants.

<u>riba</u> - Usury; interest on money lent.

<u>rumi</u> - The Latin script (as opposed to the Malayo-Arabic).

Sayyid - One tracing his descent back to the Prophet Mohammed.

shaer - Metrical romance or narrative; a long poem made up of four-line rhyming verses.

shaykh - (1) Agent- as in pilgrimage shaykh or immigration shaykh; (2) Honorific given to (or assumed by) many Malayan Hadrami Arabs who are not Sayyids (q.v.) and to men of unusual religious learning.

shariah - Canon law.

siasat - Affairs of government; politics.

sireh - Betel vine.

surau - A building that is not a mosque of general assembly, but is otherwise devoted to religious or quasi-religious purposes.

taklid buta - Blind adherence to intermediary (religious) authority.

tarekat - Literally (Arabic) 'path' or 'way'; used to denote Sufi mystic orders.

tauliah - Commission; letter of appointment from the Sultan.

titah - A ruling prince's word (which has the force of a command); royal utterance.

ugama - Religion.

ulama - See alim.

umat - Community; people.

wakil - Agent; attorney; deputy; representative.

waris negeri - Literally 'heirs to the state', signifying all members of the royal house, as being potential heirs of the ruler.

zakat - Religious tax; tithe on certain kinds of wealth (in Malaya usually only rice), levied once a year at the end of the fasting month.

CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgements	i
Abbreviations	iii
Glossary	iv
Preface	ix
Chapter I	
The Malays and the British: Initial Impact	
Malay Society in the Mid-Nineteenth Century	1
The First Effects of British Rule	16
Chapter II	
The Malayo-Muslim World of Singapore	
Migration to the Metropolis	49
The Arabs and the Pilgrimage to Mecca	61
Language, Literature and the Press	68
Chapter III	
Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction	
Al-Imam and the Reformists	85
The Traditional Elite and the Religious Establishment	101
Challenge and Response	113
The Politicization of Kaum Muda	131
Chapter IV	
The Malays and the British: The Middle Years	
Problems of Malay Participation in Government	137
Kuala Kangsar Malay College and the Creation of an Administrative Elite	151
The 'Pro-Malay' Policy and the Preservation of Malay Peasant Society	172
Chapter V	
The Growth of an Autochthonous Intelligentsia	
Development of Vernacular Education	189
Sultan Idris Training College	213
The Role of the Vernacular Press	237

Page

Chapter VI

Political Change and the Growth of Malay Organisations

Urbanisation and New Forms of Associational Activity 272
Clubs and Societies in the Peninsular States 283
The Singapore Malay Union 290
Political Controversies and Malay Traditional Leadership in the 1920s 305
The Reformists and the Brotherhood of Pen Friends 328
The Radical Intelligentsia and the Young Malay Union 346
The Administrative Elite and the Malay Associations 369

Retrospect 386

Note on Sources and Field Work 401

Bibliography 406

PREFACE

The political and economic history of Malaya during its brief period of colonial rule has been given increasing attention by historians during the past two decades. The trading, strategic and other considerations which led to the establishment of the British on the periphery of the peninsula in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are now well understood, even if the weight to be attached to one or other element in the process is still open to some dispute.[1] The transfer of the Straits Settlements of Singapore, Penang and Malacca from India Office to Colonial Office control in 1867, and the growth of Singapore in particular, in the nineteenth century, as the economic focus of two colonial empires, have been described in detail in a number of historical monographs.[2]

---

[1] Recent studies of this period include Nicholas Tarling, _Piracy and Politics in the Malay World_ (Melbourne, 1963) and _Anglo-Dutch Rivalry in the Malay World, 1780-1824_ (Queensland, 1962); H.J. Marks, 'The First Contest for Singapore, 1819-1824', _Verhandelingen van het Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde_, XXVII (The Hague, 1959); K.G. Tregonning 'The Founding and Development of Penang, 1786-1826' (PhD Thesis, University of Malaya, 1958: to be published); and C.D. Cowan (ed.), 'Early Penang and the Rise of Singapore, 1805-1832', _J.M.B.R.A.S._, XXIII, 2 (1950).

[2] See, e.g., Nicholas Tarling, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago, 1824-71', _J.M.B.R.A.S._, XXX, 3 (1958); L.A. Mills, 'British Malaya, 1824-67', _J.M.B.R.A.S._, III, 2 (1925) edited for reprinting by Turnbull, _J.M.B.R.A.S._, XXXIII, 3 (1960); and Wong Lin Ken, 'The Trade of Singapore, 1819-69', _J.M.B.R.A.S._, XXXIII, 4 (1960).

Particular attention has been devoted in recent years to the motives underlying British intervention in the peninsular states in the 1870s, to the establishment of the Residential system of administration following this, and to the extension of British political control to the remaining Malay states after 1900.[3] For the present century up to the second world war, there are a number of studies of British policy and administration in Malaya, and of the development of the export economy, which, though first published several years ago, still speak with authority on these topics.[4] In the field of economics proper, there have been historical studies of the development of the rubber and tin industries, and of the activities of western capital enterprise in Malaya.[5] Social history, more particularly in relation to the separate ethnic groups which comprise

---

[3]The principal studies are those of C.N. Parkinson, British Intervention in Malaya, 1867-77 (Singapore, 1960); C.D. Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya: The Origins of British Political Control (London, 1961); E. Sadka, 'The Residential System in the Protected Malay States, 1874-1895' (PhD Thesis, Australian National University, 1960: to be published); and E. Thio, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1909' (PhD Thesis, University of London, 1956: to be published).

[4]See, esp., R. Emerson, Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule (New York, 1937; reprinting, Kuala Lumpur, 1965); L.A. Mills, British Rule in Eastern Asia (London, 1942); and Virginia Thompson, Postmortem on Malaya (New York, 1943).

[5]See, e.g., P.T. Bauer, The Rubber Industry (London, 1948); J.Norman Parmer, Colonial Labor Policy and Administration: A History of Labor in the Rubber Plantation Industry in Malaya, c.1910-1941 (New York, 1960); Wong Lin Ken, 'The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914' (PhD Thesis, University of London, 1959: expanded version to be published shortly); G.C. Allen and Audrey G. Donnithorne, Western Enterprise in Indonesia and Malaya (London, 1957); and Kathleen M. Stahl, The Metropolitan Organisation of British Colonial Trade (London, 1951).

Malaya's plural society, has been less well served, but there are historical accounts of both the Chinese and the Indian communities, or of certain aspects of their lives.[6]

In all this activity, however, there has been a marked neglect, with some few exceptions,[7] of the original possessors of the peninsular states, of the people about whose ears the elaborate superstructure of modern Malaya was built, and who in present-day Malaya still hold the reins of political power. No attempt has so far been made to study the effects of British colonial protectorate control, and of consequent social, political and economic change in the peninsula, upon the indigenous inhabitants, the Malays. The present thesis has been written in the hope of doing something to remedy this lack, more particularly for the central years of British rule, from 1900 to 1941. Though it has in fact been necessary to go back beyond the earlier of these dates, they selected themselves initially as marking, in the case of 1900, the approximate date of the first intrusion of indigenous modernising forces upon the Malay scene, in the persons of the religious reformists; and in the case of 1941, the collapse of British rule in the face of the Japanese

---

[6] V. Purcell, The Chinese in Malaya (London, 1941) and The Chinese in Southeast Asia (London, 1951); L.F. Comber, Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya (New York, 1959); Usha Mahajani, The Role of Indian Minorities in Burma and Malaya (Bombay, 1960); and J. Norman Parmer, op. cit.

[7] Notably, J.M. Gullick's excellent study in historical sociology, Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya (London, 1958); and Sadka (op. cit.) gives a detailed analysis of the Malay-British relationship during the early years of the Residential system.

invasion, and the inauguration for the Malays of a period of rapid and confused change which requires much more detailed study than has been possible here.

No attempt has been made to present a detailed or connected account of British policy and administration in Malaya, except where these related to the Malays or to specifically Malay interests, but the contextual background has been filled in when this seemed necessary or desirable. So far as possible, the study has been conceived as an examination of continuities and changes (or incipient changes) within Malay society itself. Many of these changes took place or made themselves evident in response to factors extraneous or marginal to the incidents of British rule. Attention is focussed mainly upon the emergence of three new elite groups in Malay society, and upon the relationship of these with traditional Malay leadership. Following upon two introductory chapters, the first of these groups, the Arabic-educated religious reformists, is discussed in Chapter III. Chapter IV is principally concerned with the growth of the second group, the English-educated bureaucracy, and Chapter V with the third group, the Malay-educated radical intelligentsia. Chapter VI attempts to provide description and analysis of the growth of Malay voluntary associations during the period, seen in relation to the circumstances of Malay life generally, and finally an account of the development of large-scale, nationalist-type organisations in the 1930s, under the leadership of one or other of the new elite groups.

A bibliographical monograph published by the writer in 1961, and bearing on the growth of the Malay vernacular press, is submitted in association with this thesis, in amplification of some of the points made in the course of the argument. Chapter II of the thesis was published in the Journal of Asian Studies in November, 1964, and an earlier version of part of Chapter III was delivered at the First International Conference of South-East Asian Historians, held in Singapore in 1961, and published in the following year in a collection of conference papers entitled Papers on Malayan History. Details of both publications will be found in the Bibliography appended to this thesis.

CHAPTER ONE

The Malays and the British: Initial Impact

The Malays in the mid-nineteenth century were characteristically a riverine people, occupying the valleys of those waterways which, on each side of the peninsula, drain the main central ranges. For the most part they lived in scattered village communities along the banks of the main rivers, which formed both the only adequate means of communication and natural foci of political control. The few larger centres of population, notably the Malacca area and the Klang estuary on the west coast, and the port town of Kuala Trengganu and the rice plain of the Kelantan delta on the east, did little to detract from the impression of a forest-clad land sparsely and intermittently occupied. The majority of the settled population were peasant farmers engaged in a largely subsistence agricultural economy based on rice - wet rice cultivated in irrigated or flooded fields, and to a much lesser extent dry rice grown in shifting patches on cleared hill slopes. They fished the rivers, kept some domestic livestock in the form of buffaloes and goats, and supplemented their diet with coconut, tapioca, fruit and some vegetables, grown on homestead land. On both sides of the

peninsula, but especially on the east coast, many made a living from salt-water or estuarine fishing.

Although the Malay economy was, for the villager, basically a subsistence one, with only a small local exchange of goods and produce, there was at all times an appreciable amount of petty trade up the lower reaches of the rivers, in the hands of the local nobility, or very often of 'foreign Malays'[1] or Arabs, and latterly of Chinese. Villagers collected, usually under a system of tribute to their local chief, forest produce such as rattan, bamboo, gutta percha and resin, which were traded for imported textiles, Javanese tobacco, salt, and iron tools. In addition, there was a valuable export trade from several of the states in tin, and a much smaller one in gold, the two products for which Malaya was widely known beyond her own shores.[2] With the influx of Chinese miners and entrepreneurs in the middle years of the century, tin acquired an enhanced importance, and led to the introduction of radical elements of imbalance in Malay political life, as factional struggles took place, between and within the communities, for the possession and control of tin-bearing areas.[3]

The largest territorial unit of political importance in Peninsular Malaya was the independent State, in each case ruled over by a hereditary monarch described by the Malay title _Yang di-Pertuan_ (He who is made Lord),

---

[1]In the west coast states, mainly Buginese and certain Sumatrans. The term might be used of anyone from another state, but more commonly of ethnic Malays from outside the peninsula.

[2]For an account of these products in Malaya prior to the nineteenth century, see Paul Wheatley's historical geography of the peninsula, _The Golden Khersonese_ (London, 1962), pp. xxi-xxiv and _passim_.

[3]See, e.g., E. Sadka, 'The Residential System in the Protected Malay States' (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis, Australian National University: Canberra, 1960), pp.30-58.

or by the Hindu generic term for ruler, Raja.[4] The personal honorific Sultan, known in the Malay states since the coming of Islam, was not widely used in the nineteenth century, though it achieved general currency thereafter. The Ruler was supported by numbers of territorial chiefs, severally holding areas of the state in which, for the most part, they lived, and they in turn had at their command, for purposes of administration, revenue collection, and the raising of manpower, minor chiefs and village headmen. The role of Yang di-Pertuan was first and foremost to express the symbolic unity of the State, and to protect its order and integrity. Embodying in his person both daulat, the mystical reinforcement of personality conferred by kingship, and kuasa, supreme temporal authority, he was invested with an aura of sanctity and the supernatural which found outward form in an elaborate apparatus of ceremonial practice and belief, nonetheless important because it frequently represented no corresponding concentration of administrative strength or real power. Accounts of the installation of Rulers[5] make clear the sacred and magical importance of the office. Succession was confined to male members of a single royal line, with final selection and confirmation by the chiefs from among the available candidates. A Ruler's ascent to the throne was marked first by ritual

---

[4] In the discussion of Malay political organisation that follows, I am much indebted to J.M. Gullick's pioneering study in the historical sociology of Malaya, Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya (London, 1958).

[5] See, e.g., R.O. Winstedt, 'Kingship and Enthronement in Malaya', J.M.B.R.A.S., XX, 1 (1947), pp. 129-39; and R.J. Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', ibid., X, 1 (1932), pp. 78-80.

lustration, signifying exaltation from the ranks of his kinsmen and the creation of a new and larger personality. He had communicated to him privily the secret formula of state '_surat chiri_', and was equipped with the insignia of office, the royal regalia, ranging from symbolic weapons, drums and special dress, to the State Seal and ritual ornaments, all held to share in the supernatural qualities of kingship. A senior official of the court mosque uttered the Kuranic text, 'Lo, We have set thee as a Viceroy upon the Earth',[6] to mark the Ruler's function as defender and arbiter of the Islamic faith. And finally, the assembled chiefs performed before him a symbolic act of homage, repeated at intervals throughout his reign at gatherings specially convened for the purpose.[7] The accepted norm of conduct towards the Ruler was characterised by careful respect for the proper forms of address and approach, and by strict formal obedience to his commands (_titah_). Outside his ritual and symbolic roles, his most important functions concerning the State as a whole were those associated with external relations and defence. In these matters, it was the _Raja_ who represented his people, although even here decisions in important affairs required the presence of and a consensus of agreement from the senior chiefs.

The exercise of authority by the Sultan, beyond his own royal district, was limited by the extent to which he could in fact control and command his

---

[6] R. J. Wilkinson, _op. cit._, p. 79. This passage occurs in _Surah_ 38, Verse 7 of the Kuran.

[7] The ambivalent nature of these gatherings is discussed in J.M. Gullick, _op. cit._, p. 66.

territorial chiefs. This situation was much exacerbated in the western states in the mid-century, as disparate incomes derived from the richer tin-bearing areas gave to some chiefs a disproportionate source of economic power. Malay society was divided into two main social groups, a ruling class and a subject class, the distinction between them based on birth and clearly demarcated by custom and belief. In addition to those of royal descent (including both the _waris negeri_, or state heirs, and the remaining members of the line too remote to aspire to the throne), the Malay aristocracy consisted of a large number of others whose claim to privilege lay in belonging to families which had a customary right to various chiefly offices. These offices, appointment to which was authorised or validated by the Ruler, were ranked in complex orders of seniority, based on a system held to have been in use at the time of the Malacca Sultanate, but now serving primarily as a means of defining and determining relative position and influence within the traditional elite. As with the office of Ruler itself, chiefly titles had their own appurtenances and symbols of rank, respected and jealously guarded as an expression of the virtue which inhered in the office and was shared by the holder and his kin.[8] The concept of differential status, and concern for its expression, were of abiding interest to the traditional elite, with a correspondingly

---

[8] 'All rank and dignity is thought to be served by unseen forces that punish insults to lawful authority', R.J. Wilkinson, _op. cit._, p. 80. The same writer's _Malay-English Dictionary_ (2nd ed., Mytilene, 1932), Art.: 'daulat', lists descriptive names for these forces and their possessors as follows: '_daulat_', ruler; '_andeka_', major chief; '_tuah_', village headman; '_berkat_', saint; and others. Though this list is literary rather than historical, it makes the essential point.

exclusive attitude to those not privileged to belong to it. It was rare for a man to cross the barrier from the subject class, more especially in his own state, where his origins and background were known. Marriage outside one's class was also exceptional, though the marrying of children into advantageously positioned families was a well-established means within the ruling class itself of indulging a constant preoccupation with rank and influence.

The main advantage of chiefly rank, apart from the values inherent in the prestige it bestowed, lay in the right it gave the holder and his kin to a share in the economic resources of the state, in the form of taxation and toll, monopolies and concessions, produce, and labour or following. Although the actual workings of the Malay political system varied somewhat in detail from state to state, and within states from time to time, it was in the middle of the nineteenth century seldom characterised by any form of centralised authority. The district chief was the key to political organisation, holding, under _tauliah_ (commission) from the Sultan, an area of the state, usually based on a stretch of river, in which he exercised direct personal control. Because the non-subsistence sector of the economy was based on riverine trade, a chief usually found it of advantage to live in the principal village of his district at a strategic point on the river, a situation which enabled him to exact toll upon water-borne traffic and to control defence. The basis and emblem of authority was man-power, so that much depended on the ability of a chief to gather and retain a following, both from among his own kinsmen and from the peasants. A typical chief's household consisted of dependent kin, performing the necessary tasks of

administering his lands and acting as secretaries or accountants and tax gatherers; of mercenaries and free volunteers who provided a permanent, if often idle, armed force; and of debt-bondsmen and slaves, who filled a great variety of service roles, from those of household domestics and concubines for the chief and his followers, to boatmen and gardeners. Though the district chief's household was not, in absolute terms, particularly large,[9] it was sizeable in relation to most Malay agricultural communities, and being almost entirely non-productive relied heavily on the peasantry for its maintenance. To supplement the agricultural labour supplied by the chief's and his kinsmen's debt-bondsmen, use was made of the institution of *kerah*, or corvee, under which the inhabitants of all the villages in the district were obliged to contribute labour for working the fields, for the collection of forest produce, and for other work of a public or private kind, from clearing paths to erecting buildings.

In the absence of adequate communications, or of any form of centralised bureaucracy, only a Sultan possessing personal authority beyond the ordinary could expect to be, in effect, more than *primus inter pares*, a district chief among district chiefs. It is true that the usual situation of the royal capital, at the mouth of the state's principal river, and therefore at the most advantageous of all taxation

[9] Sadka, *op. cit.*, p. 20, gives a figure of about fifty followers for a normal sized household.

points, gave him some economic advantage,[10] as did to some extent the system of tribute from district chiefs in return for their benefices. But, proportionate to their power, chiefs commonly retained a great deal more than they surrendered, and achieved positions closely rivalling that of their Rulers. In this situation, there was a strong ambivalence within the ruling class, marked by jealousies and tendencies towards strife and fission, which were, however, counterbalanced by recognition of the values and virtues of the Sultanate as a validating mechanism for the whole system. It was to the advantage of the chiefs to maintain the Sultanate, the symbol of State and fount of title, as a basis for their position vis-a-vis each other, as a source of prize in dynastic manoeuvering, and as the embodiment of the larger political unit, with its advantages for trade and defence. Thus although the real power of a Ruler might be little greater in political and economic terms than that of some of the senior chiefs, and though the life of the state was punctuated by periodical quarrels and intrigues, there was a general acceptance of the Sultanate, if not necessarily the Sultan, as formal head of the state.

Below this level of high politics, control of outlying villages was vested in <u>penghulus</u>, or headmen, of whom an idealised picture is presented in the sixteenth century Malacca Code.'[They] shall', says

---

[10] An interesting example of a ruler moving court and capital to take advantage of a shift in trade is provided by Sultan Ahmad of Kedah, who in 1804 left the old capital of Alor Star for a new site at the mouth of the Muda river in South Kedah, in response to the rapid increase of the Kroh tin trade after the opening of Penang. See Mohd. Radzi b. Puteh, 'Kota Kuala Muda', <u>Malayan Historical Journal</u>, III, 1 (July, 1956), p. 30.

the Code, 'make themselves well acquainted with the following subjects, otherwise their functions are thrown away upon them: first, the Hukum Shera [religious law]; second, the Hukum Akl [principles of natural justice]; third, the Hukum Faal [principles of right conduct]; and fourth, the Hukum Adat [custom and customary law]. This done, they may be termed men'.[11] Though in practice the order of these requirements might well be reversed, and seldom find realisation in one man, they point, as an ideal, to the great importance of the penghulu in Malay village life. The link between the peasants and their local chief, he belonged sometimes to the ruling class, more often to the peasantry, but in either case was rooted in the small community it was his task to oversee. Appointment of penghulus was made nominally by the Ruler, but the office was usually hereditary within one of the founding families of an area, and reflected personal prestige within the village or group of villages, economic status, piety and force of character, as well as (and essentially) the approval of the district chief. His duties were manifold, ranging from keeping the peace, arbitrating in disputes, and surrendering serious offenders to his chief, to tax collection, organisation of kerah labour, and keeping the district chief generally informed about village affairs. He also had the important responsibility of allocating new land to arrivals from outside the area. For the purpose of law enforcement, he sometimes had the assistance of a village constable, but in the main a penghulu proceeded by influence or persuasion, rather

[11] Chapter XXXVIII of the Malacca Code, as given in T.J. Newbold, Political and Statistical Account etc., (London, 1839), Vol. II, pp. 275-6.

than by coercion. In the small world of the village, social sanctions are easy to apply.

Other, though lesser, figures of authority at the village level were those associated with religion and magic. The Malays were, and are, Sunni Muslims of the Shafi'i school, but this statement must be qualified with the recognition that Islam in Malaya, with its roots in a syncretist past, was much influenced by local tradition. Religious belief and practice accordingly showed a strong predilection for that blend of indigenous and Sufi (Islamic) mysticism which is found throughout the Malaysian world,[12] and frequently spilled over into avowed magical beliefs in the supernatural. Magic proper, with at most only a superficial veneer of Islam, was the province of the _pawang_, who performed the seasonal rituals necessary to placate the forces of nature, to ensure good crops or catches, or cleanse a village of accumulated malignant spirits, and the _bomoh_, or spirit doctor, who had an esoteric knowledge of physical and mental illness, together with its causes and remedies.[13] The possession of magical properties (rather than powers), capable of influencing the fortunes of a state and its subjects, was an attribute of the Malay Ruler, and eighteenth century Perak is said to have had a state

---

[12] For a discussion of the role and character of Sufism in the spread of Islam in the area, see A.H. Johns, 'Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History', _Journal of Southeast Asian History_, II, 2, (July, 1961), pp. 10-23. _Cf_. also G.W.J. Drewes, 'Indonesian Mysticism and Activism', in G.E. von Grunebaum (ed.), _Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilisation_ (Chicago, 1955), pp. 284-310. The only study of Sufism in Malaya is Sayyid Naguib al-Attas, _Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised Among the Malays_ (Singapore, 1963), which though informative lacks adequate historical perspective.

[13] The terms _pawang_ and _bomoh_, and also _dukun_, are variously used in different parts of the country, but some such distinction as this is fairly general.

shaman (spirit medium) who was 'head of all the magicians in Perak'.[14] There was, however, no organized class of magicians corresponding to this notion, and though the efficacy of magic was an important and ever-present factor in village, as in personal, life, its practitioners were of and from the community to which they ministered.

Institutional Islam, as embodied in the ulama, those learned in religion, was generally tolerant of magic, not least because its functionaries sprang from the same village milieu and shared the same basic beliefs in the nature of the physical universe. The focus of village religious life was the mosque, or surau,[15] where the menfolk congregated for prayers, met nightly during the fasting month (and at other times) to recite the Kuran,[16] and held the religious exercises (ratib)[17] associated with the Sufi orders of mysticism. It was frequently also the sole place of education for Malay youths, where young boys learned

---

[14] R.O. Winstedt, The Malay Magician (Rev. ed., London, 1951), p. 10. The 'state shaman' had the title Sultan Muda, or Junior Sultan.

[15] A small building used in villages for religious purposes, but not a mosque of general assembly for Friday prayers. In the early 1880's, Isabella Bird said that in the vicinity of Malacca 'scarcely any kampong [village] is so small as not to have a mosque' [The Golden Chersonese (London, 1883), p. 140], and McNair remarked that in Perak whenever a village increased to more than forty houses, a mosque was formally built and consecrated [Perak and the Malays (London, 1878), p. 5.].

[16] Described by the sailors of HMS Hyacinth, anchored at the mouth of the Kedah River in 1838, as 'the Quedah opera' [Sherard Osborn, Quedah (London, 1857), p. 65.].

[17] 'ratib' or 'dzikir', the repetition in chorus of certain prayer formulae, most commonly the Muslim confession of faith, often used by the Sufi orders to achieve a kind of religious ecstasy.

by rote to recite the Kuran in a language they did not understand, and were taught in a rude form the basic tenets of their faith. If the intensity of Malay religious life varied from place to place,[18] it did so chiefly in response to particular individuals, from within the village itself, who through force of piety or possession of esoteric knowledge communicated their enthusiasm or ardour to others, for there was neither hierarchy nor system to impose it from without. Village mosques of assembly had as a rule only a small number of officials, chosen from among the villagers themselves. The principal functionary was the imam, who led public prayers, had the responsibility of running the mosque, might be called in as an arbiter in disputes concerning religious law or practice, and was probably in addition the village religious teacher. Other officials were the khatib, who gave the admonitory address (in Arabic) at the Friday prayers, the bilal, who made the daily calls to prayer, and the lebai, though the last two ordinarily had small pretensions to religious learning. Many imam and khatib had performed the haj, the pilgrimage to Mecca, a recognised means in Malay society of enhancing one's status,[19] and perhaps stayed there long enough to study for a while with a religious teacher. This, and a small knowledge of Arabic, sufficed to ensure them recognition as ulama, a standing shared with those itinerant Malay, Indonesian and Arab divines who throughout the

---

18 Certain parts of the peninsula, especially Kelantan and Patani on the east coast, and Kedah on the west, were noted for the number and quality of their religious teachers.

19 See J.M. Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems, pp. 140-41, for a brief discussion of this point; and cf. also C. Snouck Hurgronje, Mekka in the Latter Part of the Nineteenth Century (London/Leyden, 1931), pp. 242-3.

peninsula found respect, and sometimes veneration, in village society for their saintly qualities and necromantic skills.[20] The authority wielded by traditional religious leadership of this kind, though persuasive within its terms of competence, was essentially derived from the peasant community itself, of which the ulama were a part, and was devoid of external sanction except where the ruling class found interest in enforcing it. In theory, as we shall see, the Ruler of a state, and through him the traditional ruling class, might be accounted responsible for the religious and spiritual wellbeing of the state and its people, as for all else, but in practice this went much by default.[21]

At the base of the social system was the ordinary Malay cultivator, owing loyalty and obedience to his local chief, and with little knowledge of a world beyond his own and nearby villages. Early British administrators, for obvious reasons, liked to describe the life of the Malay peasant before their arrival as one of mute acceptance of unmitigated oppression at the hands of an arbitrary and self-indulgent aristocracy. Swettenham, for example, says 'The people had no initiative whatever: they were there to do what their chief told them - no more, no less',[22]

---

[20] A distinction should be made, however, between those who had some claim to be regarded as knowledgeable in religious law and doctrine, and the large number of local 'saints' who had acquired their charisma in other and less orthodox ways. Only the former might properly be regarded as ulama. Examples of both may be found in Dato' Sedia Raja Abdullah, 'The Leading Saints in Rembau', J.M.B.R.A.S., III, 3 (1925), pp. 101-104.

[21] See below, Chapter Three.

[22] F. Swettenham, British Malaya (rev. ed., London, 1948), p. 141.

and elsewhere refers to the despotic rule of petty chiefs, compounded by the predatory irresponsibilities of roving bands of young aristocrats.[23] Though this picture was often overdrawn, especially where it suggested either systematic or motiveless tyranny, it finds some support in the few extant Malay accounts of the time,[24] and there can be no question that the determining characteristic of the relationship between _ra'ayat_ and ruling class was submission. The importance of this as an institutionalized value expressed in custom and ritual (and indeed, as practical common sense) is evidenced in a host of Malay customary sayings, rueful and realistic: 'Whoever becomes _raja_, I'll touch my forehead', 'When elephant fights elephant, the mouse deer gets caught in between', to try to help someone who has incurred the wrath of _raja_ is 'like helping a cow catch a tiger', and a commoner standing up against his betters is 'like a soft cucumber fighting a prickly durian fruit'. The subordinate position of the _ra'ayat_ was held in question by neither side, nor the right of members of the ruling class to receive on demand a wide range of goods and services, in return for protection and the perpetuation of general welfare. The Malay peasant commonly held rights to his land only in terms of occupation and use, and though in practice this conferred reasonable security of tenure, these rights were revocable at will by chief or Ruler.

---

[23] F. Swettenham, _The Real Malay_ (London, 1900), p. 260. And _cf_. Hugh Clifford, _In Court and Kampong_ (London, 1897), pp. 186-7.

[24] _E.g._, Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir, _Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah_ [The Voyage of Abdullah], (various editions), which contains numerous descriptions of the relationship between chiefs and people in the east coast states; and the articles on Patani by a correspondent to the newspaper _Jawi Peranakkan_, Nos. 515 and 516, Jan. 31 and Feb. 7, 1887.

Accumulation of property, where it occurred, was prone to be visited by envious expropriation on the part of the _raja_, and indebtedness frequently led to the form of personal servitude known as debt-bondage.[25] The system of _kerah_ labour, while ensuring the maintenance of the ruling class, and the upkeep of such communal facilities as village paths, landing stages and mosques, was often onerous and demanding.

Clearly, in a society such as this, in which control over all aspects of life tended to be concentrated in the ruling class, custom-sanctioned privilege might easily be abused. It is not difficult to find instances of cruelty, oppression and injustice. At the same time, there were a number of checks on the arbitrary power of the aristocracy which served to meliorate this situation. In the first place, it must be remembered that ruler and ruled alike were living a common rural life, in which differences of status were reflected to only a limited extent in difference of material welfare. If there were many who were very poor, there were few who were very rich. Secondly, the scale of village life was such that systematic oppression, as distinct from individual acts of injustice, was rendered difficult. A chief who attempted to treat his peasants too harshly was liable to meet growing lack of co-operation in production of goods and services, in addition to incurring an obloquy which made it impossible for him to increase the numbers of his people, and hence his own wealth and security. Finally, there was the ultimate protest open to peasants faced with insupportable conditions - departure to another area. There was little shortage of suitable land, houses were simple and easily built or destroyed, peasants possessed little movable property,

---

[25] For a full discussion of debt-bondage, see Gullick, _op. cit._, pp. 98-104.

and they could always be sure of a welcome somewhere else. One of the striking contrasts between nineteenth and early twentieth century Malaya is the marked decrease in the geographical mobility of the Malays after the institution of British rule. Though there are few figures, fragmentary evidence makes it abundantly clear that migration in the unsettled conditions of the nineteenth century was frequent and of some magnitude. Selangor was virtually depopulated during the period of the civil wars,[26] to be filled up later with peasant settlers from Sumatra and Java. In Pahang, villagers fled from the constant internal strife in the nineteenth century across the borders to the west and north.[27] Kelantan peasants, faced with famine during the disasters of 1887, came in droves to the west coast states.[28] More casual and smaller scale migration was constant. By no means all of this movement was prompted by discontent with the exactions of the ruling class, for natural calamities and widespread civil unrest played a large part, but it is reasonable to suppose that a considerable proportion was.

Sir Hugh Clifford, returning to Malaya as High Commissioner in 1927,

---

[26] See, e.g., W.H. Treacher, Notes of Visits to Districts in Selangor, 1894 (Kuala Lumpur, n.d.), *passim*; and *cf*. Sadka, *op. cit*., p. 7, fn. 7.

[27] W. Linehan, 'A History of Pahang', *J.M.B.R.A.S.*, XIV, 2 (1936), pp. 89 and 123.

[28] Accounts of the conditions in Kelantan, and of the arrival of refugees on the west coast, are contained in *Jawi Peranakkan*, Nos. 543 and 548, 22 Aug. and 26 Sept., 1887. Numbers mentioned include 'more than a thousand couples' to Muar, 70 or 80 to Selangor, and more than two thousand people to Kedah.

after an absence of twenty-five years, said in his first address to the Federal Council: 'These States were, when the British Government was invited by their chiefs and Rulers to set their troubled houses in order, Muhammadan Monarchies: such they are today, and such they must continue to be. No mandate has ever been extended to us by Rajas, Chiefs or people, to vary the system of Government which has existed in these territories since time immemorial.'[29] This classically misleading and often quoted statement has an interest far beyond historical piquancy, not least because it was genuinely felt (certainly by Clifford, and by other British officials as well) to depict an ideal if temporarily abeyant reality. It reflects, on the one hand, the manner in which the British were wont, for nearly seventy years, to represent their presence in Malaya, and on the other draws attention to the official policy of maintaining intact, so far as was compatible with other aims, the internal structure of Malay authority and social organisation, however irrelevant much of this had become to the economic and social life of the country in other respects. With the first of these, the nature of British intervention in Malaya, we are not here concerned; it is a subject that has been exhaustively treated by other historians in recent years.[30] The practical trends of British policy, once colonial protectorate rule was established, are more germane.

---

[29] Federal Council Proceedings (1927), p.B113.

[30] See, esp., C.N. Parkinson, British Intervention in Malaya, 1867-1877 (Singapore, 1960) and C.D. Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya: the Origins of British Political Control (London, 1961).

For the officials on the spot, the primary end and purpose of British control was the creation of political stability and ordered government of a Western type, as a necessary pre-condition of and context for rapid economic and commercial development of the country's natural resources. Secondary to this, but providing a moral rationale for the whole, was an expressed concern for the maintenance of traditional Malay society, and within the framework of this for the welfare and advancement of the Malay people. The contradiction inherent in these aims, the one impossible of realisation in terms of existing Malay institutions, and the other dedicated to their preservation, led to a fundamental dichotomy in British policy, evidenced at every turn in Malaya's brief colonial history. The masquerading of direct political and administrative control under the fiction of 'advice', the insistence that in signing the federation agreement of 1896 the Rulers would not 'in the slightest degree be diminishing the powers and privileges which they now possess nor be curtailing the right of self-government which they at present enjoy',[31] the acceptance of Malays into the administrative service together with their relegation to a minor role in rural administration, the largely fictitious 'restoration of states' rights' in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the refusal to recognize the changing

[31]Swettenham was asked to emphasise this point to the Rulers when obtaining their signatures ('Draft Instructions to Mr. F.A. Swettenham, C.M.G., Resident of Perak', Encl. III to Confidential Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, CO 273/203, 1 May 1895.)

demographic structure of the resident Chinese, all testify to the schizoid character of British Malay policy and practice between 1874 and 1942.

The first thirty years of British rule saw rapid and far-reaching changes in the Protected States, which cumulatively left Malay life behind like a prahu in the wake of an ocean liner, rocking slightly, but otherwise left to pursue its own way. The ready availability of virtually unlimited supplies of cheap labour from South China and India permitted the exploitation and expansion of the mineral and agricultural resources of the western states without obliging the Malays themselves to share significantly in either the task or its rewards.[32] Between 1875 and 1900, the total revenue of the states under British protection rose from well under half a million Straits dollars to 15½ million, and the value of exports from three-quarters of a million dollars to more than sixty million.[33] The two decades before 1901 saw an increase in the combined population of Perak and Selangor alone from round about 130,000 to nearly 600,000, the larger part of this growth representing alien, predominantly Chinese, immigration.[34] By the turn of the century, more than 300 miles of trunk railway, and some 1,500 miles of

---

[32] See, e.g., R.N. Jackson, Immigrant Labour and the Development of Malaya, 1786-1920 (Kuala Lumpur, 1963).

[33] A. Wright and T.H. Reid, The Malay Peninsula (London, 1912), p. 139.

[34] From H. Marriott, 'The Population of the Straits Settlements and Malay Peninsula During the Last Century', J.S.B.R.A.S., 62 (1912), pp. 31ff; and Census of the Federated Malay States, 1901, p.21

metalled road, traversed the western side of the peninsula, built largely out of revenue.[35] Administratively, Government burgeoned into an elaborate bureaucracy, first of all in the separate Protected States, and after 1895 in the new federation, with its centralised departments for such matters as Finance, Public Works, Lands and Mines, Agriculture, and Police. The executive ranks of this bureaucracy were wholly European, and in effect all departments of public life passed under European administrative control. Writing in 1902, the Resident-General of the Federated States said, 'The British, on arriving here, found no Native Civil Service ... which could gradually be reformed and disciplined. On the contrary, an English Civil Service had to be created, and many years must elapse before any appreciable numbers of Malays will be fitted to take their due or any prominent place in the labours of Administration'. 'The desire of the Government', he went on, 'is to encourage the entry of natives into the Government Service as much as possible. A few members of the aristocracy in Perak are showing aptitude for Government employment, and Malays are being employed as settlement officers, demarcators, forest rangers, and in similar positions'.[36] In all practical terms, the Malays came to play little part in the shaping of their lives, though side by side with Western structure of economic and administrative growth, the form and some of the substance of the pre-colonial world were preserved in

---

[35] See, e.g., A. Wright and H.A. Cartwright (eds.), Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya (London, 1908), pp.304 and 316.

[36] Annual Report of the Resident-General on the Federated Malay States for 1902, p. 24.

sufficient degree to ensure that traditional life could, to all appearances, go on much as before.

During the early years of assumption of administrative control in the western states, promise, prudence and practicality alike dictated, and the scale of administration permitted, the association of Malays in the processes of government. For the most part the British liked the Malays as a people, while holding a low opinion of their ability to govern themselves, and after the initial and disastrous neglect of local susceptibilities by Jervois and Birch in 1875,[37] a genuine attempt was made to secure the participation as well as the co-operation of the traditional elite in the introduction of administrative reforms and the conduct of public affairs. Though real participation became increasingly impracticable towards the end of the century, as the pace of administrative development outran the capacities of Malay chiefs untrained except in the traditional order, the special position of the Malay ruling class in this respect was maintained, in relation both to other Malays and 'other Asiatics', with the creation early in the new century of a junior administrative cadre, drawn almost wholly from the younger generation of Malay aristocrats.

The original settlement with the Malays, based on conciliation of the ruling class, had the somewhat ironic effect of rendering <u>de facto</u> a system of authority which had previously existed only <u>de jure</u>. Faced with the need to create order and stability out of nineteenth

---

[37]See below, footnote 44.

century Perak and Selangor, the British, who in any case found it difficult to conceive of a ruler who did not rule, elevated the Sultans to positions of real as well as ritual authority within Malay society, by effective centralisation of power within each state, and by emasculation of the independent authority of district chiefs. Maintaining the nominal role of 'advisers', the Residents came to fulfil a position analogous, as one writer has described it,[38] to that of the present-day British Prime Minister, in relation to a sovereign who acted as Head of State, as the source of legislative and executive authority, and as the final court of appeal. Though the Rulers had little control over the content of the state documents to which they affixed their seal, the Residents were careful to give them a sense of participation in government by consulting them on matters affecting the state as a whole, and by applying to them for advice on Malay matters in particular. They were provided with a privy purse and with substantial personal allowances, increased from time to time as the prosperity of the state grew,[39] and lived in elaborate palaces erected

---

[38] Sadka, 'The Residential System', p. 209.

[39] In Selangor, for example, the Sultan's personal allowance, fixed at $15,000 per annum after intervention, was increased to $18,000 in 1889, to $20,000 in 1903, and to $24,000 in 1904. He had in addition a Privy Purse of $6,000. (Desp. High Commissioner to Colonial Office, CO 273/445, 1 Sept., 1904). In 1894, the Sultan of Perak was receiving $46,000 in personal allowances, with a Privy Purse of $12,000. (Conf. Desp. Governor to Colonial Office, CO 273/198, 30 Oct. 1894). Something of the change in the position of the Sultans is seen in the frequent use of the term 'salary' for their remuneration, as in the despatch last cited.

at state expense.[40] Within the traditional Malay elite itself, adjudication on allowances and pensions, and appointment to rank and title, came increasingly to lie in the hands of the Sultan and his palace advisers,[41] as perhaps befitted the British promise to observe 'Malay custom'. It is not difficult to discover in what sense the Governor was enabled to say with confidence in 1893 that 'The status of the Native rulers has not only been maintained but has been strengthened'.[42]

The task of winning the allegiance of the Malay aristocracy to the new regime was perhaps less easy, but was accomplished in similar ways, by the provision of an income commensurate with their previous rank and influence, and by their engagement in some of the tasks of administration. Writing in 1899, Swettenham said, 'The rulers and their chiefs do not feel that they have been set aside or ignored; indeed, as a matter of fact, there are a good many more Malays holding high office of State than there were in 1874. It is not only an honour and distinction to be nominated to such office, but besides a title, it gives the holder a sense of power, of having a part in the government of the country, and

---

[40] In 1902, Raja Bot, one of the senior Selangor chiefs, reported that the Sultan wanted a European private secretary, 'to live with him and arrange all the interviews and matters with officials after the custom of the white man as now that the new Istana (Palace) is finished, it is fitting that things should be done in a becoming manner befitting the position of a Raja'. (Letter from Raja Bot to G.C. Bellamy, quoted in Bellamy to Secretary of State, encl. in Desp. High Commissioner to Colonial Office, CO 273/281, 11 Sept., 1902).

[41] Swettenham, The Real Malay, p. 49.

[42] Desp. High Commissioner to Colonial Office, CO 273/189, 2 Aug. 1893, transmitting the Annual Reports.

and that is a Malay's highest ambition'.[43] This remark, characteristic of the frequently patronising attitude of Malaya's new administrators, who were not themselves above rejoicing in titles, leaves a good deal out of account. The murder of J. W. Birch in 1875, followed by the so-called Perak War, and the apprehension and trial of the chiefs responsible,[44] made it quite clear, had there been any doubt on the matter, that it was of little use making open resistance to British power, even were it desirable to do so. The later disturbances in Pahang, in the years following the establishment of the Protectorate there, though of a slightly different character, made the same point.[45] In the atmosphere of acceptance so engendered, it is less surprising or

---

[43] Swettenham, op. cit., loc. cit.

[44] Birch, the first Resident of Perak, was murdered on November 1, 1875, while attempting to introduce more direct forms of British control. The state was promptly occupied by troops brought from the Straits Settlements, Hongkong and India, and an enquiry into responsibility for the 'Perak Outrages' set in train, which resulted in the hanging of the Maharaja Lela and three of his followers, and the exile to the Seychelles of Sultan Abdullah, the Mantri of Larut and two other senior chiefs. Ismail and three of his followers were removed to Johore, where they could be kept under the eye of the Colony government. These operations, it has been pointed out, 'cleared Perak of both Sultans and nearly every chief of the first and second rank' (Sadka, op. cit., p. 153). Cf. also Enquiry as to the Complicity of Chiefs in the Perak Outrages (Singapore, 1876); and C.D. Cowan, Nineteenth Century Malaya: the Origins of British Political Control (London, 1961), pp. 232-37.

[45] The Pahang rebellion was directly associated with discontent on the part of several influential chiefs about the scale of allowances fixed for them. See W. Linehan, 'A History of Pahang', J.M.B.R.A.S., XIV, 2 (1936), pp. 129 and 134.

discreditable that the Malay chiefs should, on the whole, have settled for the best that they could get out of the new order. From the first, the Residents had under their direction the primary administrative and judicial functions of the state - revenue collection and disbursement, customs and other dues, lands and mines, police, and courts. Deprived, accordingly, of their customary means of deriving support and maintenance, and prevented by law from making exactions upon the peasantry, district chiefs and their dependent kin had in some way to be compensated for these lost rights. Article IX of the Pangkor Engagement, providing for the establishment of a Civil List to regulate the income of the 'officers of state',[46] indicated the manner in which it was proposed this should be done, and similar arrangements were made in the other states as British protection was extended. Two broad categories of payments were made: pensions to those who held no office in the state, but who had a claim by reason of rank or past service; and allowances paid to those who held titles or were given government appointments.[47] As a general principle it was held that no-one should suffer a reduction of income as a result of the new measures.[48] But previous incomes, based on fluctuating tax and toll, and on tribute and service, could be estimated only in the most general way, and the records of the early (and later)

---

[46]The text of the Engagement is in W. G. Maxwell and W.S. Gibson, Treaties and Engagements affecting the Malay States and Borneo (London, 1924) pp. 28-9.

[47]Sadka, 'The Residential System', p. 199.

[48]Swettenham, British Malaya, p. 225.

years of the protectorate system are full of petitions, pleas and remonstrances by Malay aristocracy sho felt that their claims had been inadequately recognised.[49] The British were well aware of the attachment to the new regime that naturally followed. Chiefs who had until recently been highly competitive specialist politicians, relying on traditional authority, on their ability to manipulate the elements of Malay life, and in some measure on popular support, now found themselves eligible for relatively secure and non-competitive pensions and appointments, still based on distinctions of rank, but depending on the approval and support of the protecting power for their continuance.

Actual association with government and administration was afforded in two principal ways, by participation in the State Councils set up shortly after British intervention,[50] and by appointment to administrative posts. The first of these, the instrument of government of a Malay

---

[49]As one instance only, in 1909 Raja Abdul Mallec [sic], together with eight other children of ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak, petitioned the Secretary of State in Whitehall for a monthly allowance similar to that enjoyed by other members of the waris negeri (including two of his brothers), pointing out that he had 'a Ranee and two children to maintain'. (Desp. Colonial Office to High Commissioner, FMS., XXVII, No. 92, Apr. 27, 1909.) It may be added that claims of this kind continued to be made until 1941.

[50]The Perak and Selangor State Councils were set up in 1877, those for Negri Sembilan and Pahang in 1889.

state, concerned only the Rulers and senior chiefs,[51] who sat in it as 'heirs to the inheritance', and were enabled by this association with the new order to maintain prestige and influence. The Councils also included the Resident and Assistant Resident, and (in Perak and Selangor) leading members of the Chinese community, who did not, however, hold formal state office. Conceived initially as advisory bodies to assist the Residents by acting as sounding boards for local feeling about proposed reforms, and to link traditional authority with the acceptance of these reforms, the Councils early assumed legislative and executive roles as well, and became the principal vehicle of British authority in each of the states. A recent and detailed study of the workings of the Perak and Selangor Councils up to 1895[52] has made abundantly clear the manner in which direct control over every aspect of government was exercised by the Residents, with the Governor of the Straits Settlements standing behind them as the final source of authority, while the form and appearance of an independent Malay initiative was preserved.

The range of business dealt with by the Councils was extensive, embracing everything from mining leases, tariff regulation, taxation

---

[51]The Malay composition varied. In Perak in 1877, there were three Malays on the Council (the Regent, his prospective successor and one major non-royal chief), in addition to the Resident and Assistant Resident and two Chinese. By 1895, there were seven Malays (three of royal blood and four major chiefs), plus the two British and three Chinese. In Selangor, there were four Malay members in 1877, and six in 1895, predominantly from the royal house, plus the two British and first one, later two, Chinese. In Pahang in 1889 the Sultan and the Resident sat with nine of the major chiefs (and no Chinese). In Negri Sembilan in 1895, the Yam Tuan and the Resident sat with four major chiefs and a British District Officer. There was a separate council for Sungei Ujong.

[52]Emily Sadka, 'The State Councils in Perak and Selangor, 1877-1895', in K.G. Tregonning (ed.), Papers on Malayan History (Singapore, 1962), pp. 89-119.

and public works, to the appointment and jurisdiction of <u>penghulus</u> and the consideration of Muslim personal law. They decided claims for allowances and pensions to chiefs and dependent kin, legislated for the abolition of debt-bondage, and discussed the scales for the first railway charges. In all this variegated activity, initiative for the most part rested entirely with the Resident,[53] though the Ruler formally presided over Council meetings, and decisions acquired the force of law by virtue of the formal assent granted by 'the Ruler in Council'. Genuine Malay participation was restricted: in the case of the Sultan by the obligation to accept 'advice', in that of the others by their dependence on official appointments and allowances, and in the case of all the Malay members by unfamiliarity with many or most of the administrative, fiscal and judicial principles and issues involved. Where purely Malay matters were concerned, affecting village life and custom, the claims of individual chiefs for title or reward, or the determination of religious law, the Malay members were understandably more vocal, and exercised a more vital influence on decisions reached. The assistance they gave to the Residents in the early years of the system (in providing a touchstone of public feeling, and in transmitting his authority) was of the greatest importance in the smooth transition to British rule, but it was an assistance that, of its very nature, afforded them less and less of a real share in the determination of public policy as the complexity of Malayan government grew.

---

[53] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 108 and <u>passim</u>.

The experience gained by senior chiefs, or those of royal blood, through participation in the proceedings of the State Councils provided, no doubt, some insight into western systems of government. But its usefulness in this respect diminished as pressure of administrative detail increased, and the Councils turned increasingly to the application of established principles to minor problems;[54] a process which culminated in 1895 in the creation of the federal system, and the relegation of the Councils in 1909 to rubber stamps for a substantially non-Malay central legislature.[55] Before the end of the century, the Councils had ceased to be an important means of equipping traditional Malay leadership to share in the determination of policy. What, then, of the remaining mode of conciliation and attachment, the employment of Malays in the government service itself?

At a time when European officials in a state might number no more than four or five, including the Resident, the practical advantages, in cost and tact, of using established Malay leadership in local administration were obvious enough, and as we have seen this became at an early stage a stated principle of British administrative control. The rapid expansion of European personnel in Perak and Selangor as the Protectorate system settled down, together with Malay acceptance of the new regime, made the need for locally recruited administrative assistance less pressing, but the principle

---

[54] See Ibid., pp. 117-18.

[55] The four Rulers sat on the Federal Council of the F.M.S., but took practically no part in the proceedings.

remained. Its practical application is reflected in the development of the penghulu system, and to a much lesser (indeed, decreasing) extent in the provision of administrative and judicial appointments of other kinds. The *penghulu*, or local headman, had been a key figure in traditional Malay society, the mediator at the village level of the authority of the district chiefs, though often belonging himself to the lower ranks of the aristocracy. From the first in Perak and Selangor, and in the other states as protection was extended, the British found in *penghulu* appointments both a means of satisfying the aspirations of Malays accustomed to exercise some measure of influence, and an extraordinarily valuable instrument for carrying out the donkey work of rural administration. Those selected for *penghulu* appointments on the government Establishment List were ordinarily the previous incumbents of the position in their locality, though use was often made of the office to reward connections of the royal house (notably in Selangor) or ranking chiefs.[56] They received a moderate salary, and were given administrative charge, under the European officer responsible for the district as a whole, of a sub-division called a *mukim*, often likened to the English parish. Their principal duties were to keep the peace in the villages of their *mukims*; to try, and fine, petty offenders; to report on the general progress of the *mukim*; and to undertake the enforcement of government regulations. With the passage of time, and

---

[56]Sadka, 'The Residential System', pp. 199-203.

of additional legislation concerning lands and crops, revenue, health, schooling, and much else besides, the tasks of the penghulu increased enormously in extent, though not in general character, so that he became the hardest-worked and, in relation to his responsibilities, the poorest-paid,[57] of all government officials. The British had good cause for gratitude, and often expressed it - in public statements. As one Resident wrote in 1900,

> A word of praise is due to the Penghulus; many of them are old men accustomed to the old regime of the Malay rajas; but the energy and interest these officers display in their multifarious and responsible duties is remarkable. A Penghulu is expected to administer and explain to the Malays in his mukim such intricate laws as the Land and the Mining Enactments, the Procedure Codes and the Forest and Timber Rules. By no class of officer is the Government better served ...[58]

With all this, the penghulu, though identified with the new regime as the agent of Government, remained socially a member of the rural village community, bound to it by kinship and landholding ties. He possessed at most, in later years, an elementary vernacular education, and was given no formal administrative training for his office, which continued to lie in the gift of the Ruler and did not

---

[57] In the debate on the Estimates in the Federal Council in 1909, one of the European unofficial members, J.M. Robson, entered a plea for higher rewards to penghulus, pointing out that their salaries were often only $20-$30 a month. He was thanked by the Sultan of Perak for taking up this cause. (Federal Council Proceedings (1909), p. B 17.)

[58] Annual Report on Perak for 1900, p.24. In 1911, J.M. Robson told the Federal Council that there seemed to be a lack of incentive for 'the smaller nobility and Malay penghulus'. In the absence of an honours list for conscientious officers, he proposed that at intervals 'a gold kris or gold watch might be given to any meritorious penghulu, and those who render good service, as an incentive to further effort'. (Federal Council Proceedings, (1911), p. B 33.)

become a part of the general administrative service.

The provision of administrative responsibility for Malays of higher rank, though often talked of,[59] proved less easy. From the point of view of the British, the principal families clearly had a place in the consultative machinery of state during the settling-in period, but with the chiefs removed from the direct line of authority in the districts, it was difficult to give additional recognition to their status by the allocation of administrative tasks. In the event, they were classified as 'Native Magistrates' or 'Judges', or 'Superintendents of Penghulus',[60] gave general assistance to the Residents and European district officers in Malay affairs, and helped keep them informed about conditions and opinion in the areas with which they were familiar. As Native Magistrates and Judges, they sat in the district and Residency courts with European officers, but with few exceptions had no independent

---

[59] E.g., 'In any attempt which may be made - and I hope it will be made - to unify and classify the government service of these states, great care must be taken to leave full scope for the employment of natives, especially of the native aristocracy' (Minute by Lucas on Desp. Governor to Colonial Office, CO 273/189, 26 Oct. 1893); and 'Responsibility is a factor of the utmost value in any scheme for developing the capacity and character of native Chiefs and Headmen' (Annual Report on Perak for 1902, p. 14).

[60] E.g., in Perak in 1879, Raja Dris, the prospective heir to the throne, and the Temenggong, the only surviving member of the four chiefs of the first rank, were made 'Judges of the Supreme Court'; in Selangor in the 1880's, two sons of the Sultan, Raja Musa and Raja Kahar, and a brother-in-law, Raja Laut, were classified as 'Native Magistrates' (Sadka, 'The Residential System', p. 207, fn. 7.) In 1900, the Orang Kaya Mentri of Perak (one of the first four chiefs) and the Orang Kaya2 Sri Adika Raja and Dato' Sri Maharaja Lela (both of second rank), were appointed Superintendents of Penghulus. (Annual Report on Perak for 1900, p. 3.) In Negri Sembilan, there were five 'Malay Magistrates' in 1899, and eight in 1902, drawn from the aristocracy (J.M. Gullick, 'The Malay Administrator', The New Malayan, Vol. I, No. 1 (May, 1957), p. 74).

jurisdiction at a higher level than the penghulu court.[61] As the complexity of administration grew, based on the provision of services to the rapidly expanding Chinese mining and commercial community, with attendant specialised functions relating to finance, land alienation, communications and urban growth, the part that chiefs of the old school could play, untrained except by informal association in rural government, correspondingly diminished. Their traditional status intact, they nevertheless found themselves confined to assistance with the minor incidents of Malay life itself.

Simultaneously, the ranks of the European administrative and specialist services expanded, a process accelerated still further by the federation of the Protected States in 1896, and the establishment, 'in the interests of efficiency', of a unified Malayan Civil Service. By the turn of the century, the Federated Malay States, with a population less than a fifth the size of the Crown Colony of Ceylon, had twice as many European administrative officers,[62] and an uncounted number in the professional and specialist departments. This situation gave rise to some anxiety, the High Commissioner writing in 1898 that '... if India were officered with Europeans on the same scale as the Malay States, it would be necessary for India to considerably retrench

[61] Ibid., pp. 207-8.

[62] The population of Ceylon in 1901 was 3,576,990, that of the F.M.S. 678,595; Ceylon had 81 Civil List appointments (including 10 Cadets), the F.M.S. 159 (including 42 Cadets). (Annual Report of the Resident-General on the F.M.S. for 1903, p. 33.)

salaries'.[63] Referring, a few years later, to 'the prodigality with which Cadets have been appointed in the last nine or ten years', he pointed out that, including four junior officers appointed just prior to the introduction of the Cadet system, 'no fewer than seventy-one officers have been appointed since the beginning of 1896'.[64] The Cadet appointments in particular were those which might have been, but were not, filled by Malays in training. Stating that still too little was being done in this direction, for 'Malays of good birth', one Resident warned that,

> ... in my opinion we shall fail in our duties if we do not make every effort to encourage and develope [sic] the capabilities of those who, had not the States been brought under British protection, would now be in sole and absolute control of every district.[65]

Nor was his a lone voice, for in the first echelon of British administrators were several who showed real concern at the situation which had developed by the close of the century.[66] But the claims of the bureaucratic machine

---

[63]Despatch High Commissioner to Colonial Office, CO 273/197, 9 Dec., 1898.

[64]Desp. High Commissioner to Colonial Office, CO 273/201, 4 May, 1905.

[65]<u>Annual Report on Selangor for 1896</u>, p. 3.

[66]Symptomatic of this concern was the decision made in 1902 to prepare a series of <u>Papers on Malay Subjects</u>, which would 'contain as much as possible of the early history of each State, and of its conquest or colonisation by the present dynasty or present inhabitants', and 'show what is due not only to those Rulers who are now in authority, but also what is due to those who have lost authority'. The Memorandum of Proposal said: 'The question of how to ensure for the Malays that their customs shall not lack support from the Government has not so far been settled. ... <u>But it is very desirable that more open recognition should be accorded to Malay sentiment and susceptibility on this subject than is afforded at present</u>' [italics in original]. [Statement circulated to Residents by E.W. Birch, quoted in the Preface to <u>Papers on Malay Subjects</u>, ed. R.J. Wilkinson, Ser. I (Singapore 1907) pp. iii-iv.] The <u>Papers</u>, intended for the information of the rising generation of European officials, were published in two Series and 23 parts, between 1907 and 1927.

were too insistent to be ignored. 'Generally speaking', wrote another official,

> it is only from those officers of the service who have that affectionate regard for Malays which is the natural outcome of intimate acquaintance with them that they really get any degree of preferential treatment. It is laid down by the Government as a general maxim that the Malays should be encouraged. But the desire for departmental efficiency is generally so strong that the maxim is more honoured in the breach than in the observance.[67]

The crux of the matter was, of course, appropriate education, upon which all recruitment into the administrative service must in the long run depend. Sporadic attempts had been made, from an early stage in the British connection with the peninsula, to provide special elementary schooling for the sons of chiefs and Rajas. Shortly after the founding of Singapore, Raffles's intense interest in every department of indigenous life had led to the establishment of an Institution designed, among other things, 'to educate the sons of the higher order of natives'.[68] In the 1830s, at least two attempts were made to persuade the Rulers of the peninsular and Borneo states to send their children to Singapore for this purpose,[69] but though these schemes had the support of the Temenggong of Johore, and received initially favourable replies from Kelantan and

---

[67] B.O. Stoney, 'The Malays of British Malaya', in A. Wright and H.A. Cartwright (eds.), Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya (London, 1908), p.228.

[68] Quoted in 'The System of Education in the Federated Malay States', (G.B.P.P., Cd 2379, 1905), p. 136.

[69] D.D. Chelliah, A Short History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements, 1800-1925 (Kuala Lumpur [1947]) p. 44.

Trengganu, a combination of lack of funds and malfeasance on the part of the administrators,[70] and lack of interest on the part of the Malays, brought them to nought. Later attempts fared little better, and though a few members of the Malay ruling class received some elementary public instruction from time to time at the first Government Malay Schools in the Colony, these schools themselves were haphazard in operation, and accomplished little of the task that Raffles had envisaged.[71] With increasing British involvement in the states after 1874, the need to produce both a new generation susceptible to British influence, and the rudiments of an administrative cadre, became more pressing. Alongside the system of vernacular education which was developing,[72] some uncoordinated efforts were made to make special educational facilities available to the sons of Rulers and chiefs, as part of the general policy of conciliation and utilisation of the traditional elite. The separate state administrations reserved places for selected Malays of good birth at Government English Schools in the rapidly expanding towns of Perak, Selangor and the Straits Settlements,[73] where they were taught English

---

[70] 'The System of Education etc.,', pp. 136-7.

[71] The chequered history of Malay vernacular education in the Straits Settlements is described in Chelliah, op. cit., pp. 42-4, 58-79, and passim.

[72] See below, pp. 39-41. The first Government Malay School in the Protected States was established in Klang in 1875 (Report of Superintendent of Police and Treasurer to Resident, 28 April, 1880, Selangor Secretariat Papers No. 108 of 1880).

[73] In 1884, two sons of ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak were sent to an English school in Malacca, and two sons of major Perak chiefs were being educated at the Central School, Taiping, [E.W. Birch, 'The Federated Malay States', United Empire, N.S. Vol. III (1912), p. 445]. The so-called 'Raja School' in Kuala Lumpur, opened about 1890, had as pupils in 1892 nine Malays of Royal blood (including the Raja Muda), and two Sheikhs. [J.M. Gullick, 'Kuala Lumpur, 1880-1895', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXVIII, 4 (Aug. 1955) p. 102.]

and sat for Junior Cambridge School Certificates. In addition, some practical training in land administration was given in state Lands and Survey Offices.[74] In sum, however, as the proceedings of Residents' and Rulers' Conferences at this time show,[75] these stop-gap measures met neither British requirements of administrative expertise, nor the muted demands of the Malays themselves for more Malay officers in Government. To meet these objections, the new century was to see the development of a new and more purposive policy, based on the old, but designed unashamedly to create from the traditional elite a new class of colonial civil servants, whose association with the British might on the one hand satisfy the myth of continued Malay sovereignty, and on the other serve as a bulwark against possible political encroachment from the resident Chinese population in the future.

The problem of Malay participation made itself felt also at the subordinate level of government service, and here again the nature both of the problem and of its treatment reflects the fundamental dichotomy in British Malay policy, split between preservation for the Malays and innovation for the rest. In 1894, W. H. Treacher, at that time Resident of Selangor and later to be Resident-General, made a tour of the districts in his state, and published a series of notes on their progress. In the course of these notes, he laid stress on the special attention now being

---

[74] Annual Report on Selangor for 1896, p. 3.

[75] See below, Chapter Four.

given in Selangor to Malay vernacular education, and went on:

> It is to be hoped that results will soon be seen in a supply of <u>native</u> subordinate officers to take up appointments which now, not without difficulty, are filled by youths educated in India and Ceylon. It may be put forward that as the vernacular schools afford no education in the English language, their scholars are not eligible for the majority of Government appointments. This would be a strange argument to use in a Malay "Native State"...[76]

Strange argument or not, a knowledge of English had become, and was to remain, an indispensable qualification for minor clerical appointments, effectively excluding the great majority of the Malay population. But was it in fact ever intended that any substantial number of Malays should be so equipped? Ten years later, the Perak Annual Report noted that of the 2,900 boys who left the State vernacular schools in 1903, only one found employment as a clerk.[77] Commenting on this with approval, the Resident, E. W. Birch, said later:

> It is very satisfactory to know that this system does not overeducate the boys ... [who] almost all followed the avocations of their parents or relations, chiefly in agricultural pursuits.[78]

By 'over-education', the bogey of all colonial administrators, was meant chiefly the creation of an educated class of malcontents who might

---

[76] W.H. Treacher, <u>Notes of Visits to Districts in Selangor, 1894</u> (Kuala Lumpur, n.d.), p. 19.

[77] <u>Annual Report on Perak for 1904</u>, p. 11. In 1896, a return of 4,365 past pupils gave 2,070 employed as 'padi-planters or gardeners', 2,177 'variously employed as shop-keepers, miners, etc.', and 118 employed as 'clerks and orderlies'. (<u>Annual Report on Perak for 1896</u>, p. 23.)

[78] E.W. Birch, 'The Federated Malay States', p. 444.

challenge colonial authority, but in fairness it must be said also that many Englishmen, as well as Malays, felt a genuine affection for the values and virtues inherent in Malay rural life, and were reluctant to see it radically disturbed, holding that this was against the best interests, as well as the wishes, of the peasants themselves.[79] Even where this was not so, it was widely, almost universally, believed that the Malay, despite his charm, was indolent and shiftless, and resistant to change and progress. For the compiler of an official report on education published in 1905, the curriculum at the vernacular schools, confined to little more than the achievement of literacy and the teaching of simple arithmetic, was admittedly limited, 'but sufficient for the ordinary requirements of Malay boys, who will become bullock-wagon drivers, padi growers, fishermen etc.'[80]

Initial experience, for a variety of reasons, tended to bear out this conviction about the manifest destiny of the great majority of Malays. The introduction of free Government Malay Schools in Perak and Selangor in the late 1870s and the 1880s was met, not indeed with active hostility, but with a good deal of unpopularity and suspicion, and at best with indifference. It is worth noting that at the

---

[79] Cf. Swettenham, '[The Vernacular Schools] do not attempt too much, but if they succeed in imparting the knowledge they profess to teach that is all that is required of them, and probably as much as is good for the children who attend them'. (Annual Report of the Resident General on the F.M.S. for 1898, p. 7.)

[80] 'The System of Education etc.', p. 9.

discussion which took place in the Perak State Council in 1882 about the introduction of vernacular education, the Malay members were unanimously of the opinion that schools teaching 'elementary English, Malay by books in the Roman character, and elementary arithmetic on European lines', would be more popular than purely vernacular schools.[81] It is, however, doubtful whether at this stage instruction in English would have provided any added inducement for Malay peasants, though later, it is true, elementary English education came to be looked on as a passport to higher status and rewards through the medium of government employment. Indeed, the reverse is more likely, for much of the distrust evidenced by village Malays for government-sponsored education lay in the fear that their children would be seduced from Islam to the alien faith with which the British were associated.[82] To counteract these fears, Government adopted a system of appointing Kuran teachers of the old-fashioned kind to take afternoon classes in Kuran reading following the morning's lessons in Malay, a measure which, says one observer, was 'quite as useful as the playground in English schools' in popularising education.[83] Attempts were made also to associate the schools with the more desirable attributes of

---

[81] Perak Council Minutes, 20 October, 1882, in Papers on Malay Subjects, ed. R.J. Wilkinson, Ser. I, 'History', Pt. IV (Kuala Lumpur, 1907), pp. 54-5.

[82] See below, Chapter Three, footnote 71.

[83] 'Quarterly Report on Education in Perak', Perak Government Gazette, May 11, 1894.

progress by using them as centres for the distribution of anti-malarial and other medicines. When all is said and done, however, education of their children offered to a great many Malays no readily ascertainable advantages, and some disadvantage in the loss of their labour to home and field, and it was only by patience and persuasion (in which, it may be said, the traditional elite often played an important part)[84] that school rolls were built up, and attendance made more regular.[85] Perhaps the most important single factor in this process, varying in intensity from place to place, was the extent to which the outside world, in the shape of thriving and highly competitive Chinese mining communities, contiguous urban development, or British administrative control, impinged on the rural Malay, and made possible for him some comparison with his own world of tradition and acceptance. By the close of the century, there were 169 Malay vernacular schools in the Federated Malay States (mainly in Perak and Selangor), with a total enrolment of 6,494 pupils, the great majority boys.[86]

---

[84] Sultan Abdul Samad is said to have built and maintained at his own expense the Malay school at Bandar, in Selangor (Treacher, Notes on Visits, etc., p.26; Cf. also Annual Report on Selangor for 1898, p. 38); and Sultan Idris of Perak was noted for his interest in Malay education.

[85] Compulsory education for Malay boys aged between 7 and 14, and living not more than two miles from a school, was introduced in Selangor in 1891 (Sel. Reg. V of 1891), and in Negri Sembilan in 1899 (N.S. Ord. in Counc., 6 Apr. 1899, and Enactment III of 1900.) Neither Perak nor Pahang had similar legislation.

[86] 'The System of Education, etc.', pp. 7-8. There were 6,494 boys to 234 girls. In the absence of adequate census information it is difficult to estimate the proportion this represents of all Malay boys of school age (7-14), but it was undoubtedly very much lower than the two-thirds that J.S. Furnival seems to suggest [Educational Progress in Southeast Asia (New York, 1943), pp. 33-4].

The standard of instruction in the village schools was extremely low, teachers (drawn for the most part from Colony schools) were ill-trained and poorly paid,[87] and only a small proportion of state budgets was devoted to educational ends.[88] Until 1896, when a Federal Inspector of Schools was appointed, there was no uniform educational code, and both organisation and standards varied from state to state and place to place.[89] Neglect and incompetence among teachers often vitiated a system already handicapped by a gross shortage of teaching materials. Text-books suitable even for elementary curricula based on reading and writing did not exist, and there was a reluctance to use for teaching purposes such Malay material as was available.[90] Simple arithmetic was often taught in terms

---

[87]Until 1898, no provision at all was made in the Malay states for teacher training. In that year, a small teachers' training college was opened in Taiping, which in the two years before it closed produced 10 teachers. (Annual Report on Perak for 1898, p. 29, and for 1900, p. 19.) It was replaced by a combined training college for the Colony and the F.M.S. at Malacca in 1900, with an enrolment of about 50 students. ('System of Education, etc.', p. 10). A new 'Scheme for the Salaries of Teachers in Government Schools' (printed under this title) was introduced in 1902, but prior to this time, a Malay Assistant Teacher had been paid less than a Tamil peon. (Wright and Cartwright, Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya, p. 226.)

[88]Perak in 1895 allocated $39,000 to expenditure on Malay schools, or approximately 1.25% of the state revenue. Actual expenditure was expected to be rather less than this, in the neighbourhood of 1%. (Perak Government Gazette, January 4th, 1895.) Swettenham remarked a few years later, 'A critic might say that the Protected States have spent, and continue to spend, too small a proportion of their revenues on education. This may be so, but the results are not unsatisfactory, and the Government has never desired to give the children a smattering, or even a larger quantity, of knowledge which will not help them to more useful and happy lives than they now lead. To the Malay the principal value of school attendance is to teach him habits of order, punctuality and obedience'. (The Real Malay, p. 258.)

[89]As late as 1902, in Negri Sembilan, vernacular schools were the responsibility of an unpassed Cadet. A State Inspector was appointed in that year. (Desp. High Commissioner to Colonial Office, CO 273/389, 29 July, 1903.)

[90]R.J. Wilkinson, Papers on Malay Subjects, Ser. I, 'Literature', p. 61.

of English currency and weights and measures. 'The whole unreal atmosphere of public instruction in the East', wrote R.J. Wilkinson round about 1900,

> is deadening to literary taste. A private enquiry to investigate this point led, some years ago, to the discovery that very few of the vernacular school teachers had ever read a single work except the school-books and prayer-books that they were actually compelled to study. ... The destruction of the old Malay literary instinct - even more than the loss of so much of the literature itself - is a painful feature of the change that has come over Malay letters since they have been entrusted to European guidance.[91]

Subsequent reforms of structure and content, though applied only gradually and in the face of clamorous and competing demands from other sectors of Malayan life, did something to lift vernacular education out of these doldrums. But in the words of the man, who, more than any other, is associated with the later stages of the Malay school system, it was to remain designed essentially 'to educate the rural population in a suitable rural manner and equip them to continue to live a useful, happy rural life'.[92]

---

[91] Ibid. Wilkinson was Inspector of Malay Schools for the F.M.S. from 1903 to 1906. Of all the British officers serving in the Malay States, he was perhaps the most sympathetic to and understanding of the Malays, and the most far-sighted. In 1902, he had written: 'We are, at best, creating an Asiatic governing class rather than Asiatic races capable of self-government. Can such a system be considered natural, and is it the end which its founders had in view? The study of the people themselves will best supply the answer'. ['The Education of Asiatics', in Special Reports on Educational Subjects, No. 4, (G.B.P.P., Cd 835, 1902), p. 694.] See also below, Chapter Three.

[92] Personal communication from O.T. Dussek, 1 May, 1960. Dussek had a longer association with the Malay vernacular school system than any other man, from 1912 to 1936. In 1922 he became first Principal of the Sultan Idris Training College (see below, Chapter Five), and from 1925 was in addition Assistant Director of Education in charge of Malay Schools.

Faced with a growing demand, both from their own bureaucracies and from private business, for English-educated clerical and subordinate staff, the state administrations, which took no responsibility for vernacular education other than in Malay,[93] opened a number of Government English Schools in Perak and Selangor in the 1880s and '90s, attended mainly by Chinese and Eurasians. At the end of the century, however, as a means of restricting the financial burden about to be imposed by education, they turned to the Christian missions to supply much of this need. Originally excluded from the peninsular states for fear of arousing Malay-Muslim antagonism, the missions continued to be forbidden to proselytize among the Malays, and turned naturally to the provision of educational facilities for the other ethnic communities, who in any case predominated in the nascent towns of the Protected States, where all such English and 'Anglo-Vernacular' schools were set up. One effect of this, perhaps not wholly intended in spite of the peasant bias deemed desirable for Malay education, was to place instruction in English even further beyond the reach of Malays than might otherwise have been the case. For though the mission schools (most of which received Government grants-in-aid) were prepared to give

---

[93]Except in a few rare instances. It was felt that provision of vernacular education to Chinese and Indians would be both difficult and costly, and in addition would strengthen rather than break down the barriers of race, hinder rather than help the various alien races in commercial and other intercourse with each other. ('System of Education', p. 11.) In 1902, however, the Conference of Residents passed a resolution in favour of providing vernacular education to the children of Tamil immigrants, 'with the object of making the F.M.S., from the point of view of the Indian immigrant, an outlying part of India'. (Quoted in <u>Ibid</u>., p. 11, footnote.)

ordinary secular schooling to Malay pupils, few Malay parents were prepared to take the risk that this presented of alienation from Islam. By the year 1900, there were 24 English schools of all descriptions in the now Federated Malay States, all but seven of them under mission control, with a total enrolment of 1,629, overwhelmingly non-Malay.[94]

It is true, of course, that some purely secular Government English schools remained, but these, like the others, were located in the towns, and catered principally for the Chinese, Eurasians and Indians. The 1901 Census of the Federated States showed that of the total population of the three towns each numbering more than ten thousand inhabitants (Kuala Lumpur, Taiping and Ipoh), fewer than ten per cent were Malay.[95] In Kuala Lumpur, with a population of 32,381 (of whom more than 23,000 were Chinese), there were only 3,727 Malays; in Taiping, with a population of 13,331, there were only 727.[96] Some attempt was made to counteract the effects of the distribution of population (perhaps more correctly the distribution of schools) by providing scholarships and hostel accommodation for rural Malays prepared to come into the towns, provided that they had already completed four years at a Malay vernacular school. This system did not work very satisfactorily; village children

---

[94] 'System of Education, etc.', pp. 12-15.

[95] Report on the Census of the F.M.S., 1901 (London, 1902), p. 28.

[96] Ibid.

were unhappy in the towns, away from their own homes, and often neglected;[97] parents were reluctant to let them go; and even when they did go they suffered as a rule the handicap of being some three or four years older than the other children. There is some evidence that increasing numbers of west coast Malays were, by the end of the century, desirous of obtaining an English education (and hence government jobs) for their children, but in the face of these obstacles, the number who actually did grew only slowly. Treacher's wish to see a local production of clerical and subordinate staff was indeed to be fulfilled, but from the ranks of the immigrant Chinese and Indian communities, not in any significant degree from among the Malays.

The Malay, for the most part then, remained a peasant cultivator, and in this role may justly be said to have benefited considerably in the years following the imposition of British control, more particularly in contrast with the circumstances of life which had been his lot immediately previous to this. The establishment of internal peace and ordered government removed from him the constant fear of embroilment in the rivalries of Malay aristocratic or Chinese mining factions. The emasculation of the power of the chiefs to require and exact tribute and service no doubt lightened the burden of toil, debt-bondage was eradicated, and the introduction of a system of law based neither on power nor on social status, but on the rights of the individual, removed many of the

[97]Personal communication from O.T. Dussek, 1 May, 1960.

uncertainties of life from both wrong-doer and wronged. Though the Malay gained little from the vast public expenditure of the states in the latter part of the century, he was equally asked to contribute little. The annual quit-rent he was now required to pay on his land, in recognition of occupancy and use, was a small price to pay for the indefeasible title obtainable after the introduction of the first effective land legislation in the 1890s. Encouragement given to 'foreign Malay' settlers to take up agricultural land attracted to the western states in the last quarter of the century substantial numbers of Sumatran and Javanese immigrants, who joined the indigenous population in tilling the soil. Ethnic and cultural similarities made it easy for the newcomers to assimilate to Malay peasant life and to find acceptance there. Though they might well have their own headman or _penghulu_ in areas where they were sufficiently numerous, this late nineteenth century migratory flow participated strongly in age-old patterns of intra-Malaysian migration, and the new settlers fitted unobtrusively into the social and political organisation of the states to which they came. Malay and foreign Malay peasants alike continued to live a rural life characterised by the social organisation of the village, by traditional forms of religious belief and practice, and by habits of allegiance and deference to the traditional ruling class. Changes in the Malay environment, even in the circumstances of Malay life itself, were already under way, but it was only in the towns, and particularly those of the Straits Settlements, the chief area of contact with alien races and

and other ways of life, that the first stirrings were evident of Malay discontent at the role they had been allocated in the modern world.

CHAPTER TWO

The Malayo-Muslim World of Singapore

Much attention has been devoted, by scholars and others, to the dramatic growth of Singapore in the latter part of the nineteenth century, as a great commercial entrepot, as a flourishing city of tens of thousands of Chinese migrants, and as the maritime focus of two economic empires, the British and the Dutch. The direction and the intensity of this interest are, of course, understandable, but they have done much to obscure the role of Singapore as a focus also for the cultural and economic energies of the Malaysian[1] world which existed alongside but in many ways separate from the world created by the West. While the comparison cannot be pressed too far, Singapore in the nineteenth century may be likened to Malacca in the fifteenth, in its role as metropolis for an area that embraced the whole Malay Peninsula and Archipelago, from Kedah and Acheh to the Celebes. Island trade in Malaysian or Arab hands,

---

[1]The term is used here, without present-day political connotations, to refer to the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago as a whole, and its related peoples.

Indonesian migration to the Peninsula, the pilgrimage to Mecca and its subsidiary activities in the fields of Islamic teaching and publication, brought together in Singapore a great variety of Malaysian and Muslim peoples from differing social and economic backgrounds but sharing a lingua-franca and important elements of a common culture, and freed, often, from the more hampering restraints of traditional social systems. Urban life has in all places and times been an important breeding ground for new ideas and new ways, and to this general pattern Singapore at the close of the nineteenth century conforms.

In 1819, when the Temenggong of Johore, in his own name and that of Sultan Husain, signed the Singapore Agreement with Sir Stamford Raffles,[2] the island was inhabited by only a handful of the Temenggong's followers and Malay and Chinese fishermen. Eighty-two years later, in 1901, it was the home, temporary or permanent, of 23,060 Peninsular Malays,[3] 12,335 'other natives of the Archipelago',[4] almost a thousand

---

[2]See e.g., R.O. Winstedt, 'A History of Johore', J.M.B.R.A.S., X, 3, (1932) pp. 81-2.

[3]Census of the Straits Settlements, 1901, p. 28, Tab. III. The census category 'Malays' included, without distinguishing, Malay-speaking Sumatrans. The term 'Peninsular Malays', when used here, refers to Malays born in the Peninsular States or the Straits Settlements.

[4]Ibid. The larger proportion of these were Javanese (8,519), and Boyanese (2,712), with in addition Bugis, Philipinos, Dyaks and Achehnese. The complexities of regional and ethnic groupings presented British census takers at this time with considerable difficulties of classification.

Arabs,[5] and about 600 Jawi Peranakan.[6] The total population of all races was 228,555, of whom 72 per cent were Chinese.[7] Of the 36,080 Malaysians in Singapore, more than 26,000 lived within the limits of the Municipality, including the greater proportion of the Javanese and other immigrants from the Archipelago.[8] The main Malaysian residential area in the city was Kampong Glam, an aggregation of Malay-style wooden houses and shops fronting the river and surrounding the Jamiah Mosque and the rather dilapidated istana (palace) occupied by descendants of Sultan Husain. On the fringe of Kampong Glam were similar areas occupied predominantly by Bugis, Boyanese, Javanese and other immigrants, together with most of the Arabs and Jawi Peranakan. In the west of the city was a Malay area, Telok Belanga, settled in the first instance by connections of the Temenggong of Johore, whose original istana was there, and in the north Kampong Malacca, mainly inhabited initially, as the name suggests, by Malays from that Settlement.

Little is known in detail of the provenance of the Peninsular Malay element of the population at the turn of the century. Most were probably Colony Malays, either locally born or from Penang or Malacca, but many certainly came from Riau and Johore, from the Federated States on the west coast of the peninsula, and to a lesser

---

[5] Ibid. See below, pp. 62-63, for a discussion of the term 'Arab' in this context.

[6] Ibid. 'Jawi Peranakan' ('local-born Muslims') were the offspring of South Indian Muslim and Malay unions (see below, pp. 73-74 and n.66)

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 29, Tab. III.

extent from the east coast states of Pahang, Trengganu and Kelantan. Throughout the last quarter of the century, Singapore, as the seat of the Straits Settlements Colony government, had been a centre of activity for Malay rivalries, intrigues and negotiations attending the assumption by Britain of protectorate rights over the western states and Pahang. Malay chiefs and their followers came frequently to Singapore to ask for aid, to confer with their legal advisers or government officials, to make business deals or to borrow money. Many found there a convenient refuge from Rulers or rival chiefs, and others an enforced place of exile for long or short periods. Ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak lived in Singapore from the time of his return from the Seychelles in 1894 until his death in 1922, and the Mentri of Larut, the Dato' Bandar of Sungei Ujong, and Rajas Mahdi and Mahmud of Selangor were among those who found a place of retirement in Singapore after turbulent careers in the peninsular states. Sultan Ibrahim of Johore, who had been born in Kampong Glam, kept an establishment at Telok Belanga and mixed regularly in polite European society. The conclusion of the negotiations with Pahang in 1888, in which Ibrahim's father Abu Bakar had materially assisted, were extensively reported in the vernacular press of the time, together with the movements in and out of Singapore of the Malay leaders involved.[9]

---

[9]And see, e.g., the Malay newspaper Jawi Peranakan, 540 and 542, 1 and 15 August 1887, which gives a long account of Governor Weld's visit to Pahang in July, and the circumstances attending it. Details of all Malay periodicals cited in this thesis may be found in William R. Roff, Guide to Malay Periodicals, 1876-1941 (Singapore, 1961)

And Sir Hugh Clifford was probably not drawing wholly on imagination when he portrayed, in one of his novels, the Malay Raja Tuakal plotting with his English friend in Kampong Glam to assist the Achehnese in their war against the Dutch.[10]

In addition to those Malays who first came to Singapore as part of the following of a chief or other notable, many came to seek employment, or simply out of curiosity and adventurousness. They found a city overwhelmingly Chinese, to an extent unknown in even the larger towns of the Native States, in which, below the level of Government and the big trading houses, all departments of life were dominated by Chinese. The popular stereotype of the time was of the immigrant who arrived from Hongkong or the South China Coast with nothing but a sleeping mat, a pair of shorts and a singlet, and within a few years, as the result of incomparable industry, became a land-owner and millionaire.[11] The typical Malay situation was rather the reverse, one writer complaining that as land values had risen, Malays had been forced to move from the centre of the city to the poorer areas. Where is it all to end? he asked. 'Soon we shall be in Papua, where everyone is stark naked'.[12] And indeed, the contrast between Malay and Chinese fortunes was all too apparent, and little improved by what vernacular education was provided. Most Malays found employment only in menial roles, as policemen, watchmen, office-boys, drivers and house-servants. Some made a living from petty trading as street hawkers or

---

[10]Hugh Clifford, A Freelance of Today (London, 1903) pp. 1-8.

[11]See e.g., article 'Menuntut Ketinggian akan Anak2 Negeri' ['In Pursuit of Greatness for Our People'], Al-Imam, II, 1 (July, 1907).

[12]Ibid.

as small shop-keepers in the Malay areas of the city, and a few became religious teachers or mosque officials. Malay schools, run by the missions or supported by Government, had been spasmodically in existence for half a century and more,[13] but it was said in 1894 that not one graduate from the vernacular schools could be found employed as a clerk, interpreter or translator.[14]

But if in many ways Singapore at the close of the century represented for Malays an alien world increasingly controlled by an alien and highly competitive people, there was to set against this the richly variegated and socially more familiar life of Kampong Glam and the other Malayo-Muslim areas of the city. Free movement between the Indonesian Archipelago and the Peninsula was of very long standing. Malacca, home of one of the most diverse communities in the East, had been the trading centre for the whole Malaysian world; Negri Sembilan and the hinterland of Malacca were substantially populated by people from Minangkabau in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries; Bugis adventurers had achieved a dominant position in what is now Johore and in Selangor; even the Javanese had formed settlements in the southern and western parts of the peninsula. In the nineteenth century, however, the nature of this rather random movement, chiefly related to trade, piracy and war, changed and acquired two new defining characteristics. Traders and adventurers there still were,

---

[13] D. D. Chelliah, A Short History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements, 1800-1925 (Kuala Lumpur, 1947).

[14] Bintang Timor, 103, 30 October 1894.

though perhaps in fewer numbers, but for the first time, and increasingly in the last quarter of the century, large numbers of Indonesians, especially Javanese, came to Malaya to work as indentured or free labour or as peasant settlers, and others came as sojourners for a purpose often bound up with the first, the pilgrimage to Mecca. For many of these people, Singapore was to be at the very least a stopping place, and often a permanent home.

One of the biggest lacunae in the social and economic history of nineteenth century Malaya is that concerning the trading life of the indigenous peoples. Casual references abound to Malaysian traders in the Straits Settlements of the mid-century, but there is little detailed information about its organisation or conduct, and we are left with only a shadowy reflection of what must have been the substance.[15] One observer, writing of Singapore in 1838, refers to thousands of Malay <u>prahus</u> lying off the town, with traders 'from every port of the Archipelago' holding a constant floating fair for the disposal of their cargoes.[16] No fewer than 4,000 of these vessels were said to have arrived during the previous monsoon, and 'but for the Dutch interference and jealousy, many more would visit Singapore yearly'.[17] Thirty years

---

[15] The recent publication, long delayed and out of sequence, of Wong Lin Ken's 'The Trade of Singapore, 1819-69', <u>J.M.B.R.A.S.</u>, XXXIII, 4 (December, 1960), has done much to repair this situation. See, especially, Chapter IV, on 'Singapore and the Malaysian Traders'.

[16] [Captain] Sherard Osborn, <u>Quedah; or Stray Leaves from a Journal in Malayan Waters</u> (London, 1857), p. 4.

[17] <u>Ibid</u>.

later, John Cameron described Singapore harbour as notable less for its fine foreign merchantmen than for 'the extraordinary variety of non-descript native craft that swarm its shoaler waters', with Malay prahus second in number and size only to the South China Sea junks.[18] Every year, from May to October, fleets of boats arrived from Sambas, Pontianak and Brunei, followed in October and November by the Bugis traders from Bali and the Celebes, with at all times a concourse of Arab vessels from Java, sailing under the Dutch flag.[19] The Bugis, the Phoenicians of Malaysia, were particularly notable as traders, and the family business of Haji Embok Suloh, a leading figure in the Singapore Malay community in later years, was probably typical of its kind. Originally from the Celebes, Haji Embok's father and uncles owned pepper and gambier plantations in Borneo and Sumatra in the late nineteenth century, and conducted a regular trade in their own ships between Singapore and the archipelago. Haji Embok himself, as a young man at the turn of the century, was made to divide his time between the plantations and the big family house in Bugis Street from which the business was carried on.[20] The Minangkabau, from West Sumatra, also

---

[18] John Cameron, Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India (London, 1865) p. 21.

[19] G.W. Davidson, Trade and Travel in the Far East (London, 1846), pp. 53-65.

[20] Interview with Haji Embok Suloh, Singapore, 1961. A.B. Ramsay, 'Indonesians in Malaya', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXIX, 1, (May 1956), p. 120, refers to Haji Embok as 'at one time a considerable owner of house property in Singapore'.

had a special reputation as astute and able businessmen. In Kuala Lumpur in the 1890s, the greater part of the Malaysian merchant community was said to hail from Minangkabau,[21] and it is likely that they formed an important section also of the shop-keepers and small traders in Singapore.

Large-scale Indonesian migration to the Straits Settlements and the Peninsula, independent of trade, seems certainly to date from after the opening up of the western states in the 1870s,[22] and the encouragement of settlement by way of land grants and sometimes loans to immigrants, though both Selangor and Perak had 'foreign Malay' settler communities prior to this date. The early movement was predominantly Sumatran (Minangkabau, Rawa, Mandiling, Korinchi), partly for reasons of accessability, partly because most Sumatran peoples had a closer cultural affinity with the Malays than others had (and often family ties in the peninsular states), and probably took place mainly by way of Penang and Malacca, and other west coast landing points.[23] Already,

---

[21] W. H. Treacher, Notes of Visits to Districts in Selangor, 1894 (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, n.d.)

[22] Cf. J.M. Gullick, Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya, (London, 1958), p. 26.

[23] There are no statistics relating to immigrant Indonesians. As an indication of Sumatran predominance on the west coast before 1900, see W.H. Treacher, op. cit., pp. 12, 14-5 and passim. In 1886, Selangor was estimated to have a migrant Indonesian population of 12,000, out of a total Malaysian population of 18,000 (Emily Sadka, 'The Residential System in the Protected Malay States, 1874-95', Australian National University Doctoral Thesis, Canberra, 1960, p.7, n.8, citing Selangor Annual Report for 1886). The migrant Indonesian element in Perak was much smaller, in 1879 only 9,724 out of 56,632 (Ibid, citing Perak Annual Report for 1881), but was also predominantly Sumatran (see, e.g., Kinta Monthly Report for April 1894, in Perak Government Gazette, May 25th 1894).

however, by the 1890s, the flow of Javanese had begun, initially as a labour force rather than as settlers. In the five years between 1886 and 1890, some 21,000 Javanese labourers signed contracts with the Singapore Chinese Protectorate, and though most of these were for service in Borneo and elsewhere outside Malaya, Singapore acted as a staging house, and the government indicated its desire to encourage the importation of Javanese labour to Malaya.[24] Even before this, Indonesian '_shaykhs_', engaged in inter-island trading, were bringing to Singapore many _orang tebusan_, or 'mortgage men', from Java, who then redeemed their passage money by working for an employer specified by the _shaykh_.[25] The sudden and rapid growth of the rubber plantation industry on the mainland in the first decade of the century greatly stimulated the demand for labour of all kinds, and Singapore became the main exchange point for the Javanese indenture system.[26] In addition, it provided a pool of free labour, drawn either from new immigrants prompted by overcrowded conditions in Java, or from time-expired contract men, prepared to undertake any task from clearing forest to domestic service. It is impossible to say what proportion of Singapore's 14,000 urban 'Malays of the Archipelago' in 1901 were

---

[24] R.N. Jackson, _Immigrant Labour and the Development of Malaya, 1786-1920_, (Kuala Lumpur, Government Printer, 1961), p. 127.

[25] I am indebted for this information to an M.A. Thesis prepared for the Department of Malay Studies, University of Malaya, by Sayyid Hussin b. Ali, in 1961.

[26] For details of Javanese indentured labour in Malaya, which persisted until 1932, see Chapter XI, 'Javanese Labour', in Jackson, _op. cit._, pp. 127-31; also J. Norman Parmer, _Colonial Labor Policy and Administration: A History of Labor in the Rubber Plantation Industry in Malaya, c.1910-1941_, (New York, 1960), pp. 108-13.

labourers in transit, and what proportion were employed locally, and either temporarily or permanently resident. What is certain is that Singapore at this time represented a complete cross-section of the Malaysian world.

Probably the greatest single stimulant to Indonesian migration, apart from the general lure of economic advantage in the peninsula, was the desire to undertake the _haj_, the pilgrimage to Mecca. In the mid-nineteenth century, some 2,000 pilgrims travelled annually to Mecca from Indonesia; by the end of the century, the number had risen to more than 7,000.[27] The great majority took passage from and returned to Singapore. There were several reasons for this. Throughout the century, the Netherlands East Indies Government was distrustful of what was thought to be the subversive social and political influence exercised by returned _hajis_, and attempts were made to discourage the pilgrimage by imposing restrictive regulations requiring, amongst other things, a means test before departure and an examination upon return.[28] The easiest way to avoid these regulations was to travel by way of Singapore, where British requirements were less

---

[27] J. Vredenbregt, 'The Haddj', _Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde_, 118, 1 (1962), p. 93, and Appendix II, pp. 148-9, where the Indonesian statistics annually from 1878 are given.

[28] For details of the regulations, see Vredenbregt, _op. cit._, pp. 98-100. For an account of the Netherlands East Indies Government attitude towards _hajis_, see Harry J. Benda, _The Crescent and the Rising Sun_ (The Hague/Bandung, 1958), pp. 19-20.

stringent.[29] On top of this, in spite of the considerable numbers of Indonesians living in or passing through the Hejaz, Holland did not establish a consulate in Jeddah until 1872, and Dutch shipping companies played no part in the carriage of pilgrims until late in the century.[30] Although the official attitude began to change after 1889, with the advent of C. Snouck Hurgronje as Adviser on Arabic and Native Affairs, it was not until 1902 that the restrictive policy was finally abandoned, and the first decade of the twentieth century continued to see Indonesian pilgrims still for the most part travelling by way of Singapore.[31] Nor was this simply a matter of spending a few days or weeks in the city en route to or from Jeddah. Would-be pilgrims frequently lived for several years in Singapore or the Peninsula earning sufficient money to take them to the Middle East, and others either settled in Malaya on their return, or worked there from a time to pay off passage debts incurred in Jeddah.[32] Some failed, for reasons of irresolution or incapacity, to carry out their original intention, remaining permanently in Singapore, and the ironic title '_Haji Singapura_' is still understood in Indonesia today to refer to someone who falls short of his own expressed ideals.

---

[29] Before 1895, a small fee was levied on pilgrim passports in British Malaya, after that date none at all. Passports were required to show only the nationality, native country, place of domicile, profession, age and appearance of the pilgrim, together with the name and birth-place of his father. (_Perak Government Gazette_, 22 November, 1895.)

[30] Vredenbregt, _op. cit._, p. 130.

[31] _Ibid._, p. 117, n. 86.

[32] _Ibid._, p. 137. For an instance of the kind of arrangement whereby an Arab firm in Singapore acquired labour for estate development by advancing money to Indonesians in the Hejaz, see _ibid._, pp. 127-8, and _Jawi Peranakan_, 877, 2 July 1894.

The pilgrimage industry in Singapore, and other activities associated with it, were largely in the hands of the Arab community. Recruitment of intending hajis was carried out by pilgrim shaykhs, or brokers, who, working independently or on behalf of Meccan shaykhs, arranged passages for a premium from the shipping agents, escorted the pilgrims to Mecca, and there passed them over to the highest bidding Meccan shaykh or to the shaykh on whose behalf they had been acting.[33] Itinerant recruiters operated also from Singapore throughout the peninsula and archipelago. Though undoubtedly there were rogues among the pilgrim shaykhs, the business was on the whole a respectable and necessary one, particularly well adapted to those Malaysian Arabs who had local knowledge of, and contacts in, the Hejaz.

The Dutch scholar L.W.C. Van den Berg described Singapore in 1886 as 'the most flourishing, though not the largest, Arab colony in all the Indian Archipelago', and said that its numbers were increasing year by year, 'as the point by which all Arabs pass who go to seek their fortunes in the Far East'.[34] The Arab connection with the Malay world was of long standing, going back at least to the ninth century.[35] The earliest permanent settlements, at Siak in Sumatra and Pontianak in Borneo, date from the late seventeenth century, and wandering Arab traders,

---

[33] For details of the shaykh system in Mecca, as it applied to pilgrims from Malaysia, see C. Snouck Hurgronje, Mekka in the Latter Part of the 19th Century, (London, 1931), pp. 222-4.

[34] L.W.C. Van den Berg, Le Hadhramout et les colonies Arabes dans l'Archipel Indien, (Batavia, Government Printer, 1886), p. 122.

[35] See, e.g., G.R. Tibbetts, 'Early Muslim Traders in South-East Asia', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXX, 1, (1957), passim.

adventurers and religious scholars had been a feature of Malay life for many hundreds of years. In the nineteenth century, however, with the arrival of more stable and economically advantageous conditions in the peninsula and on its periphery, and better sea communications with the Middle East, the Arab element in the population began to increase. By far the larger part of the movement was from a single area, the Hadhramaut, of whose people one authority has said 'there are few countries in the world where a larger proportion ... lives abroad'.[36] By 1936, between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of all Hadhrami Arabs were estimated to live in the East Indies, East Africa, and the Red Sea countries,[37] and the majority of these in the Indies. The connection with the Straits Settlements, and with Sumatra and Java, was of such great importance, both for these areas and for the Hadhramaut itself, that some account is necessary of its main features at the close of the nineteenth century.

There were 1,508 Arabs in the Straits Settlements in 1901, 919 of them in Singapore.[38] Of the latter, rather less than half the 380 adult

---

[36] W.H. Ingrams, A Report on the Social, Economic and Political Condition of the Hadhramaut (Colonial Paper No. 123, London, 1936), p. 141

[37] Ibid. Though this statement refers to 1934, there is no reason to suppose that the proportions, as distinct from the numbers, which of course had risen, were markedly different from those of thirty years before.

[38] Census of the Straits Settlements, 1901 p. 15 Tab. II, and p. 28, Tab. II. Berg, op. cit., p. 110, n. 1, refers to a Straits Settlements Government census of 1884, which gives a figure of 1,637 for the Settlements as a whole, and 835 for Singapore. He considers the Singapore figure for adult males, 445, 'much too high', and says that there are 'at the most 200 adult [male] Arabs actually settled at Singapore'. He attributes the alleged excess to Arabs in transit to the Netherlands Indies. His own figure of 580 male and female Arabs in Singapore includes children only if more than ten years old.

men, and only a handful of the 183 adult women, were born in the Hadhramaut, the remainder having been born in Singapore of part Malaysian (or in a few cases Chinese) parentage. These proportions reflect one of the most marked demographic characteristics of the Arab community - the ethnically mixed population consequent upon local intermarriage as a result of a strict embargo on female emigration from the Hadramaut. It is impossible, from the available figures, to say how many of the locally born 'Malay-Arabs' were themselves descendants of mixed parents, but there is no doubt that a fair proportion of Malaya's 'Arab' community had only a nominal claim to that title.[39] Possession of an Arabic honorific (usually Sayyid or Shaykh), did not, necessarily mean more than a rather tenuous Arab descent, nor any personal acquaintance with Peninsular Arabia. It did, however, denote membership of the 'Arab' community, with all the advantages of respect, prestige, favour and influence that this status conferred.

The Malays had for centuries tended to look upon all Arabs, whatever their origins, as the direct inheritors of the wisdom of Islam, and on Sayyids in particular (kinsmen of the Prophet) as possessed of unexampled piety and religious merit. Many of the Hadhramis who came to the East in the nineteenth century were, in fact, cultivated and scholarly men in an ancient tradition, with their roots in a

[39]The proportion of 'Malay-Arabs' was highest in Malacca, where a well established Arab colony had existed for many years, and probably rather higher in Penang than in Singapore, which was where most of the newcomers settled.

literary and religio-legal society which has been likened, in its institutions and manners, to those prevailing in the centres of medieval Islam.[40] In the East Indies, as in their own land, the Sayyids and Shaykhs of the Hadhramaut, and those descended from them, formed a respected, influential and often wealthy class, somewhat set apart from their fellows. They wore, as a rule, the loose flowing robe (jubbah) and turban of the Arab world, men kissed their hands in greeting, took their opinion in matters of Muslim law and tradition, and received religious instruction from them. Best known as traders and merchants, they formed the elite of the Islamic community in Malaya and Indonesia. Up to the beginning of the twentieth century much of the inter-island sailing ship trade was in their hands,[41] especially in batik and other cloth products, but also in a wide range of other goods, from the spices and tobacco of the archipelago to the brassware and haberdashery of Birmingham and India and the honey and religious literature of Arabia. Some Arabs owned tea, pepper and gambier estates, others ran merchandising or shipping concerns in the towns, and a few of the wealthiest owned very substantial house and land property in the Straits Settlements and elsewhere.[42] In Singapore, the leading members of the community were active in charitable and

---

[40] R.B. Serjeant, 'Historians and Historiography of Hadramawt', Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, XXV, 2, (1962), p.238.

[41] Report on 'Hadhramis in the East Indies', by L. de Vries, Deputy Adviser for Native Affairs in the Netherlands East Indies, in Ingrams, op. cit., p.147.

[42] Ingrams, op. cit., p. 150, says that the Arab community is, for its size, the wealthiest in Singapore, 'owing to its large holdings in house, land and estate property'. Cf. also G. Lee-Warner, 'Notes on the Hadhramaut', Geographical Journal LXXVII, (1931), p. 220, who says that 'whole streets in Singapore and Penang are owned by wealthy Hadhramis'.

social welfare work among Muslims, helped endow hospitals, built mosques, gifted land for a burial ground, and sponsored large public gatherings on the main Islamic feast days which were attended by several thousands of their co-religionists.[43]

If the marked improvement of communications with the Middle East, resulting from the increasing predominance of the steamship and the opening in 1869 of the Suez Canal, had done much to stimulate Hadhrami emigration to the Indies,[44] it also enabled the connection to be maintained. Though the Arabs in Malaysia formed close and lasting relationships with their countries of domicile, they seldom broke their bonds with the homeland. For most, economic necessity alone had driven them overseas,[45] and they both preserved emotional and spiritual ties with Arabia (manifested in dress, language and intensity of religious life), and periodically returned there to visit families, to make the pilgrimage, and often, ultimately, to die. Through remittances they contributed very largely to the internal economy of the Hadhramaut,[46] and the wealthier among them sent sons born in Malaya back to the Wadi to be educated. Those who could not afford this gave their children private religious instruction, or put them to 'Arab schools', or madrassah, in the Straits Settlements and the Peninsula.

---

[43] Buckley, op. cit., vol. II, pp. 563-5, where brief life histories are given for several leading Singapore Arabs; cf. also A. Wright (ed.) Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya (London, 1908) pp. 705-7 and 710-12.

[44] Cf. R.B. Serjeant, Prose and Poetry from Hadramawt, (London, 1951), p. 4, n. 8.

[45] Ingrams, op. cit., pp. 141-2. Cf. also Richard H. Sanger, The Arabian Peninsula (New York, 1954), p. 225.

[46] There are no figures for the earlier period. By 1934, remittances amounted to £630,000 annually from all overseas sources, and to about £40,000 a month from Java alone. Ingrams, op. cit., pp. 142 and 70.

Singapore's reputation as a centre of Islamic life and learning in the late nineteenth century was widespread, though it rested less on possession of a school of religious thought (or even on particular teachers) than on its position in relation to the pilgrimage and Arab migration, and not least on its role as a publication and distribution centre for religious writings. Students from all over the archipelago, wishing to further their studies in doctrine or law, went either to Mecca or to the Straits Settlements,[47] where they met and sat at the feet of itinerant scholars from the Hadhramaut, and from Patani, Acheh, Palembang and Java - most of whom had themselves studied in Mecca. The city thus stood at the heart of a communications network which fed a constant stream of revivified 'orthodox' Muslim thought from the Hejaz into the peninsula and archipelago, embodying in its comparative rigour implicit criticism of the syncretism and eclecticism of indigenous religious life. It formed the nucleus of an urban, mercantile society, with a way of life and thought significantly different, in its insistence upon fundamental Islamic values untainted by innovation or the impurities of customary belief and superstition, to that of either peasant or aristocratic Malaya. The efforts of the religious to live and to promulgate an Islam of this kind, to further the ideal of the Dar-ul-Islam, were greatly helped by the publishing facilities which now sprang up in Singapore, and ultimately by the gradual spread of literacy.

For centuries Malay had been not only the lingua franca of the port kingdoms of maritime Malaysia, but the vehicle in particular for a

---

[47] Cf. C. Snouck Hurgronje, The Achehnese, vol. II, p. 21.

religious and philosophical, as well as an historical and romantic literature. The great Sumatran mystics of the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Hamzah Pansuri, Shamsu'l-Din of Pasai, and 'Abd al-Ra'uf of Singkel wrote in Malay (for the benefit, said Hamzah, 'of those without knowledge of Arabic and Persian'),[48] as did numbers of other scholars and missionaries not native born. The Gujerati Shaykh Nur al-Din ibn 'Ali al-Raniri, for example, was one of the latter, a man of part Hadhrami descent, whose Bustan as-Salatin ('Garden of Kings'), written in Acheh towards the middle of the seventeenth century, is possibly the best known of Malay religio-historical compendia, achieving wide circulation in the following two hundred years. And Winstedt has pointed out that the appearance by the early sixteenth century of a Malay translation of the Book of the Thousand Questions (Kitab Masa'alah Sa-Ribu), the first Arabic account of Islam to become known in Europe, is a reminder that Malay has for long been one of the important languages of Muslim culture.[49] First Malacca, then Acheh in the heyday of that state's dominion, with Palembang and later Riau as subsidiary centres, acted as a focus for the intellectual and religious life of a small and pious Malay-educated class, from whom, together with the obiquitous itinerants from overseas, came an intermittent stream of manuscript translations of authoritative Arabic works on doctrine, law, exegesis and commentary,

---

[48] Quoted in R.O. Winstedt, 'A History of Malay Literature', J.M.B.R.A.S., XVII, 3 (1939), p. 93.

[49] Winstedt, op. cit., p. 101. A Latin translation of The Book of the Thousand Questions was made atToledo in 1143 A.D.

Sufi mysticism, prayer and catechism, and 'a rich popular-religious literature, independent of the Arabic'.[50] In the nineteenth century, the role of literary and publication centre for the Malayo-Muslim world came increasingly to be assumed by Singapore, with the added stimulus of more frequent and intensive communication with the Middle East, and the growing use first of the lithograph and then of the printing press.

A number of hand-lithograph presses were established in Singapore in the latter part of the century,[51] owned mainly by Jawi Peranakan and publishing a growing body of both religious and secular writings in Malay, together with some in Arabic and regional languages. The setting up of a Government press in Mecca in 1884, with a Malay section under the supervision of Ahmad b. Muhammed Zein from Patani (described by Hurgronje as 'a savant of merit'), together with publications in Malay from Cairo and elsewhere in the Middle East,[52] undoubtedly helped to encourage this activity. On the purely religious side, publications

---

[50] Hurgronje, Mekka, p. 264. He is referring here to both Javanese and Malay.

[51] Details of these are still deficient. The Mission Press, started by B.P. Keasberry round about 1840, published material in Malay (including some of the writings of Munshi Abdullah), and trained Malays in printing under a kind of apprenticeship scheme (Buckley, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 321). In 1876, an association of Jawi Peranakan opened a printing establishment which, in addition to publishing the newspaper Jawi Peranakan also printed other material in Malay, and with Government assistance trained Malay printers (E.W. Birch, 'The Vernacular Press in the Straits', J.S.B.R.A.S., 4, (December 1879), p. 4.) There were at least three other lithograph presses in the 1880s, printing newspapers and probably books. Haji Siraj, the leading Malay bookseller in Singapore, owned a press in the 1880s and '90s, and Hurgronje refers to 'the lithography establishment of Haji Tirmidi in Singapore' (The Achehnese, vol. II, pp. 185-6). Sayyid Mahmud b. Sayyid Abdul Kadir established a press known as the Alwi Ikhwan, probably in the late 1880s (Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad, 'Modern Developments', in R.O. Winstedt, op. cit., p. 145.)

[52] See Hurgronje, Mekka, pp. 165 and 286-7.

included editions of familiar texts like the Kitab Masa'alah Sa-Ribu, Marzuki's Abdau (a Malay version of a rhymed catechism widely used in religious teaching),[53] and Baidawi's commentary on the Kuran, along with Sufi tracts such as the Sabil al-Muhtadin ('Way of the Guided') by Mohd. Arshad b. Abdullah of Banjar, and translations of parts of Ghazzali's Ihya Ulum ad-Din ('Renovation of the Religious Sciences') by Abdul Samad al-Djawi al-Palembangi under the titles Sayr us-Salikin and Hidayat us-Salikin, and numerous hortatory and homiletic works for use by teachers. Mention may also be made of the revivalist tracts known as Wasiat al-Nabi ('Testamentary Admonitions of the Prophet'), which, circulated in many parts of the Muslim world during the past two hundred years, had always been accompanied, according to Hurgronje, by episodes of local fundamentalist revival and religious intolerance.[54] In the early 1890s, one Wasiat at least appeared in profusion throughout Malaysia, printed and reprinted in Malay at Singapore and Palembang.[55] And finally, in Arabic, there were collections of khutbah (addresses) for delivery in mosques during the Friday prayers, excerpts from Hadith,[56] with explication in Malay, and stories from the life of the Prophet and his Companions, to be recited at length during maulud[57] ceremonies.

---

[53] Ahmad Marzuki, Akidat ul-Awwam, translated into Malay as Naadzam Abdau, or Naadzam Che Marzuki.

[54] Hurgronje, The Achehnese, Vol. II, pp. 182-3.

[55] Ibid.

[56] The collections most widely used in Malaya were taken from the Sahih al-Bukhari.

[57] One of the most popular collection of maulud readings was that published in Cairo by Hasan at-Tochi. Cf. Hurgronje, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 212.

In addition to these manifestly religious publications, Singapore's lithographers produced an increasing spate of other material in Malay, ranging from old and new translations of classical romances and legends of Arabic or Persian origin and Islamic flavour, traditional folk tales, and poetry, to the modern autobiographical chronicles of Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir Munshi's Hikayat Abdullah and its successors,[58] and reams of topical shaer on recent and current events. The importance of Abdullah's work for modern Malay literature has been the subject of frequent comment, which is familiar enough to need no repetition here.[59] The directness and spontaneity of his observation, and the independence of his comments on people and events, contrast with the stylised characterisation common to more traditional forms of writing, and provided a lively model for later Malay literary reflections on the contemporary world. Apart from this new genre in reportage, however, which is echoed also in the topical verse of the time, another kind of literary activity now pursued for the first time, the study of Malay linguistics, is of particular interest in the late nineteenth century context of Singapore.

Language has a peculiarly intimate relationship with cultural identity, both as the most expressive vehicle for a society's beliefs, values and sentiments - for its innermost spirit - and as a means of

---

[58] The Hikayat Abdullah ('Abdullah's Story') was first published in Singapore in 1849, and the same author's Kesah Pelayaran Abdullah ('The Voyage of Abdullah') a few years later. One of his sons published a Kesah Pelayaran Mohd. Ibrahim Munshi ('The Voyage of Mohd. Ibrahim Munshi') in 1872.

[59] See, e.g., Winstedt, 'A History of Malay Literature', pp. 117-18, or Mohd. Taib b. Osman, An Introduction to the Development of Modern Malay Language and Literature (Singapore, 1961), pp. 1-4. For the view that Abdullah's marked pro-Western bias constitutes a serious criticism of his work, see Kassim Ahmad (ed.), Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah (Kuala Lumpur, 1960), pp.1-14.

self-recognition. It is not surprising that in Malaya, as elsewhere, one of the first signs of a conscious ethnicism ignoring local political boundaries is a concern for the nurture of the language as symbol and expression of the group. Munshi Abdullah, upbraiding the Malays in 1849, says that while they have 'so far forgotten their own language as to have no place at all where that language is taught, ... other races of this world have become civilized and powerful because of their ability to read, write and understand their own language, which they value highly'.[60] The first known lexicographical work by a Malay, Raja Ali Haji's Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa ('Book of Linguistic Knowledge'), though not published until seventy years later, was in fact compiled in 1858. A kind of Johnsonian dictionary, in which definition is made the occasion for comment, Pengetahuan Bahasa illustrates clearly the importance attached to the language as an integral part of Malay culture, the fate of one mirroring that of the other. Taking as texts, as it were, the words he is defining, Raja Ali comments critically upon the ways in which Malay life is changing: traditional articles of clothing influenced by Chinese and European fashions, customs decaying, language becoming debased with the increasing prevalence of bazaar usage - all themes which were to recur repeatedly in the ensuing years. The Pengetahuan Bahasa was followed in 1878 by the first published Malay word-book, the Kitab Pemimpin Johor ('Guide for Johore') by Munshi Abdullah's son Mohd. Ibrahim Munshi, and in 1894 by Sayyid Mahmud b. Abdul Kadir's Kamus Mahmudiyyah ('Mahmud's

---

[60] R.A. Datoek Besar and R. Roolvink (eds.), Hikajat Abdullah (Djakarta/Amsterdam, 1953), pp. 426-7.

Dictionary'), perhaps the most ambitious of the early Malay vocabularies. The concern for the growth and development of the language was also reflected in other ways. Confronted on a basis of everyday familiarity with a host of new and alien institutions and ideas originating in Western Europe, the Middle East and elsewhere, users of Malay, particularly in the towns, were forced to seek new expressions with which to refer to, use and describe these innovations. In 1888, the first of what was to be a long succession of Malay cultural-welfare associations was formed by leading Johore and Singapore Malays, in Johore Bahru. Called the Pakatan Belajar Mengajar Pengetahuan Bahasa ('Society for the Learning and Teaching of Linguistic Knowledge'), it devoted itself mainly, in the course of its brief life, to determining Malay equivalents for English terms in the field of government and administration.[61] At all times, of course, many expressions were taken into the language direct from English, but often not without dispute over the propriety of this procedure, which seemed to many to detract from the autonomy and dignity of Malay language and culture. A heated controversy was carried on in the correspondence columns of the Malay weekly newspaper Jawi Peranakan in 1894, over whether the clubs and associations newly being formed should

---

[61] Za'ba[Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad], 'Modern Developments', in Winstedt, op. cit., p. 144, gives as examples 'setia-usaha' for 'secretary', 'pejabat' for 'department' and 'kerja raya' for 'public works', all of which came into general use. A major reason for the direction taken by the P.B.M.P.B.'s interest was the autonomy in government and administration retained by Johore, compared with the other states.

use the word 'club' or '*persekutuan*' in their titles.[62] Less antipathy was felt by the self-consciously Malay to the adoption of Arabic terms, which became, indeed, a feature especially of newspaper journalism,[63] itself a wholly new phenomenon. For the urban intelligentsia, whether Malay, Indonesian, Arab or *Jawi Peranakan*, Arabic was the language of the true civilisation, and of that wider Islamic world of which they felt themselves increasingly to be a part.

Malay journalism, like book publication in Malay, owes its origins very largely to local-born Indian Muslims in Singapore,[64] or to be more exact to the community known as *Jawi Peranakan*. There has already been frequent occasion to refer to this community, and in view of its contribution to Malay intellectual life, especially in the latter part of the nineteenth century, it is unfortunate that it has been so little described.[65]

---

[62] *Jawi Peranakan*, 873, 875, 877, 4 June-2 July 1894. The controversy related mainly to the Muslim Recreation Club in Penang (so named), but the principle involved was discussed at length.

[63] Mohd. Taib b. Osman, 'The Language of the Editorials in Malay Vernacular Newspapers up to 1941', (B.A. Honours Exercise, Department of Malay Studies, University of Malaya, 1958), pp. 11-20, gives a list ofArabic words occurring in the Malay press, most of them dating from about this time. *Cf.* also R.J. Wilkinson, *Papers on Malay Subjects*, Series I, Part 1, *Literature*, (Kuala Lumpur, 1907), p. 20.

[64] The only existing historical study of the Malay press is Nik Ahmad b. Nik Hassan, 'The Malay Vernacular Press' (B.A. Honours Exercise, Department of Malay Studies, University of Malaya, 1958). I have in preparation a History of Malay Newspapers, based in part on a series of five talks prepared in 1961 for Radio Malaya, and reproduced by them in mimeograph. *Cf.* also my *Guide to Malay Periodicals, 1876-1941*, (Singapore, 1961), an annotated search-list, and Mohd. b. Dato' Muda, *Tarikh Surat Khabar* [History of Newspapers], (Bukit Mertajam, 1940).

[65] Not at all described, if we except a few scattered references in the contemporary literature.

Comprising in the main the locally-born offspring of unions between Malay women and South Indian (chiefly Malabari) Muslim traders, merchants and settlers, migrant to Malaya in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries,[66] the Jawi Peranakan lived for the most part in Penang, though the growth of Singapore attracted many to the south. While retaining some South Indian customs and modes of life, the community seems rapidly to have assimilated itself to Malay society, spoke Malay as its first language, and identified itself with Malay concerns. With a reputation for intelligence and language ability, Jawi Peranakan were frequently employed by the British as clerks, translators and interpreters, a role in which they were found also at the courts of the Native States. Many acted as munshi, or Malay teachers, to the European community, particularly in Government, and others were among the first school-teachers in the Straits Settlements. As merchants and shopkeepers in Penang and Singapore, some of the Jawi Peranakan possessed considerable wealth, and they ranked next to the Arabs in leadership and authority within the Malayo-Muslim community.

In 1876, a group of Jawi Peranakan formed an association in Singapore, in order to open a printing office and publish a weekly

---

[66]The term 'Jawi Peranakan', or 'local-born Muslim', was in practise used to signify only the offspring of South Indian Muslims and Malay women, and their descendants. It is possible that, in addition to the traders mentioned here, some of the Muslims among the Indian convicts brought to the Straits Settlements in the nineteenth century also married locally. Those Indian Muslims who did not marry Malay women remained a separate community, unassimilated to the Malays, as is the case today. The term Jawi Peranakan later went out of use, to be replaced by Jawi Pekan, or 'town Muslim', especially in Penang, where the bulk of the community lives.

newspaper in Malay, under that name, which would provide the latest foreign and local news, foster vernacular education, and help to give some regularity to the changing Malay language.[67] During the next thirty years, no fewer than sixteen Malay-language journals were established, seven in Singapore, five in Penang and four in Perak.[68] With few exceptions, they were edited and printed, first in manuscript lithograph and later in moveable type, by members of the Jawi Peranakan community,[69] writing as Malays and identifying themselves with Malay interests. Most of the journals were weeklies, and though, apart from Jawi Peranakan itself, which was published without interruption for the remarkable period of nearly twenty years, few had a very long or secure existence,[70] they represent the first attempts of a section

---

[67] E.W. Birch, 'The Vernacular Press in the Straits', J.S.B.R.A.S., 4, (1879), pp. 51-2. This is the only extant contemporary record of the origins of the first Malay newspaper. Present holdings of Jawi Peranakan date only from 1887.

[68] Only two Penang papers (Jawi Standard and Tanjong Penegeri) were started before 1900, to six in Singapore (Jawi Peranakan, Nujumu'l-Fajar, Shamsu'l-Kamar, Sekola Melayu, Bintang Timor, and Warta Malaya), and two in Perak (Sri Perak and Jajahan Melayu).

[69] The most notable exception was the Singapore Bintang Timor which, sponsored by the Straits Chinese Association and edited by Song Ong Siang, ran for twelve months in 1894-5. Bintang Timor has the added distinction of being the first Malay-language daily (for the first nine months of its life). Other periodicals were weekly, with one fortnightly and two monthlies.

[70] Next to Jawi Peranakan, the longest lived was Chahaya Pulau Pinang, which ran from 1900 to 1906. Inadequacy of holdings (eight periodicals have disappeared without trace, and others are only fragmentarily represented in existing collections) makes certainty difficult, but of the other periodicals prior to 1906, only Sekola Melayu (August 1888-c. November 1890) and Sri Perak (June 1893 - at least November 1894), seem to have lasted for more than a year, and many probably for only a few months. The only holdings which are at all adequate are of Jawi Peranakan (511-915),(1887-95), Sekola Melayu (1-84, 1889-90, with gaps), Bintang Timor (vols. I-II, 1894-95, complete), and Chahaya Pulau Pinang (vols. IV-VI, 1904-06, with some gaps). With the exception of Bintang Timor, which was printed in the romanised script, all are in the Jawi, or modified Arabic, script.

of the Malayo-Muslim community to report and comment on the circumstances of their lives in a manner not wholly dictated by either the traditional past or the alien-dominated present, though inevitably partaking of both. The journals were modelled in the first instance on the English-language press in the Straits Settlements (upon which, indeed, most of them relied for much of their material), but came increasingly to use the Egyptian and Arabic press as sources of news and articles of general interest, and as determinants of journalistic style. Towards government they were seldom critical and never hostile, and their frequently self-deprecatory tone indicates a fairly general acceptance, at least for public consumption, of an estimate of the Asian, and particularly the Malayo-Muslim, peoples based on categories and standards derived from the West.[71] For all that, there is much that is positive and stimulating in their emphasis on the potentialities of education, and an acquaintance with the wider world, as a means of individual and communal self-improvement, and on the importance of their own role in this process. When, in 1906, Al-Imam listed 26 different virtues of newspapers, among them that they were 'the light of the mind, the talisman of the thoughts, the mirror of events, the servant of the wise, the prompter of the forgetful, a guide to those who stray, a prop to the weak, the guardian of the community, and the forum for all discussion',[72] it was doing no more than summarise, if somewhat

---

[71] It has been suggested to me by Malays that the absence of any marked criticism of Government, or of colonial rule in general, was due to fear of reprisals. I doubt if this was the case to any significant extent. It is true that many of the Jawi Peranakan held minor official posts of one kind or another, but in a much more profound sense than simple fear of losing their jobs, or incurring official displeasure, they were impressed by the material and educational superiority of the West with which they were familiar, and by a corresponding sense of their own shortcomings.

[72] Al-Imam, vol. I, No. 5, (November, 1906).

grandiloquently, the ideals which its predecessors from Jawi Peranakan to Khizanah al-Ilmu ('Treasury of Knowledge') had set before themselves for the past three decades. Taman Pengethahuan, the 'Garden of Knowledge', in a 'sample issue' published in 1900, promised to cultivate for the benefit of its readers 'flower beds full of perfumed, fragrant blooms such as may entice the bee to sip',[73] and both the sentiment and the rhetoric are entirely characteristic of the time.

At least three-quarters of the Malaysian population of Singapore, if not more, were unable to read or write their own language.[74] The literacy figures for Penang and Malacca were probably similar, and those for the Native States certainly much lower. It follows that the early vernacular newspapers in no sense constituted a popular press. Their readers were drawn, in the main, from the small elite-group of literate Jawi Peranakan, Arabs and Malays in the towns, with in addition some of the Malay-speaking Straits Chinese. There was, however, one important exception to this. In the almost complete absence of suitable readers or text-books, newspapers were widely used as a teaching medium in the

---

[73] Quoted in Mohd. b. Dato' Muda, Tarikh Surat Khabar, p. 123.

[74] A.C. Hill, Inspector of Schools in the Straits Settlements, in a prize-giving address delivered at Kampong Glam Malay School, Singapore, reported in Jawi Peranakan, 881, 30 July 1894.

Malay vernacular schools.[75] One, Sekola Melayu [sic] ('The Malay School'), was started expressly for this purpose, and both government and non-government schools subscribed to others. Referring to this practise, R.J. Wilkinson, at the time Inspector of Schools, and one of the more sensitive and intelligent of contemporary observers, said that the vernacular press, together with education in general, was likely to prove decisive in the intellectual and material improvement of the Malay people. It must certainly be supposed that exposure to newspapers at school both helped to create a wider reading public for them later, and, more specifically, served to introduce several generations of vernacular school pupils to the wider issues affecting Malay life.

---

[75] Birch, op. cit., p. 52, says in 1880 that Jawi Peranakan 'appears to fulfil the useful function of a "highest reader" in all the vernacular schools'. There are numerous evidences of this in the periodicals themselves. See, e.g., Sekola Melayu, I, 1, 1 August 1888; also an interesting report in the Straits Chinese Bintang Timor, which was printed in the romanised (Rumi) script, that the teacher in Batu Gajah (Perak) Malay School subscribed to it, in order to give his pupils practice in Rumi, then being introduced to the curriculum (Bintang Timor, 125, 26 November 1894). The (Keasberry) Mission Press had been the first to produce school texts in Malay, translated from the English, but these and similar mission products later tended to have proselytising aims, and were unsuitable in other ways also. Towards the end of the century, Sayyid Mahmud b. Sayyid Abdul Kadir (a Jawi Peranakan) was assiduous in producing translations of English primary school text books (for details see Za'ba, op. cit., p. 145), and the Government Press also brought out a few. The crying need for good local readers and text books, however, remained. In 1902, R.J. Wilkinson, then Inspector of Schools, criticised both 'the unsympathetic view' of indigenous literature which was unnecessarily impoverishing the reading matter of schools, and the waste of time and effort involved in obliging Malayan children to read 'tales of Christmas trees and robins playing in the snow'. ('The Education of Asiatics', in Special Reports on Educational Subjects, Cd 835, G.B.P.P. vol. 26, 1902, p. 690. Cf. also the same author's Papers on Malay Subjects, Series I, Part 1, Literature, (Kuala Lumpur, 1907), p. 61.)

The extent to which the press reflected the totality of the Malaysian scene was, however, limited.[76] The mercantile interests of the majority of its readership ensured the regular publication of commercial information about shipping movements, commodity prices and currency exchange rates, but local news of a general kind, particularly that relating to public life, was rather haphazardly dealt with, and only rarely accorded analytical comment.[77] With few exceptions, political matters were entirely avoided, and until the advent of Al-Imam in 1906 there was a marked absence of serious discussion of religious and related social and economic questions. Where the late nineteenth century press did most, perhaps, to foster a knowledge of the Malaysian world and a sense of community, was in the often lengthy and detailed reports from other places, and in its

---

[76]The remarks which follow refer mainly to Jawi Peranakan, which in addition to being the best organised and longest lived Malay newspaper of the period, is also one of the few of which there are extant holdings.

[77]Bintang Timor (95, 20 October 1894) said scathingly of its contemporary Tanjong Penegeri (of which no copies are known to exist today), that it might as well be published in Java as in Penang, for all the local news it contained. The haphazardness of local news in the Malay press must often have been due to the inadequacy of their news-gathering resources. Almost all newspapers appear to have relied heavily, with or without acknowledgement, on the English-language press, which perhaps helps to explain the marked emphasis on the reporting of petty crime, always one of the chief interests of the European community where its Asian neighbours were concerned. A Benggali who had created a public disturbance by beating his wife, or a series of robberies by a Chinese gang, were infinitely more likely to be reported in English newspapers, and hence probably in Malay, than more important but less comprehensible matters concerning the Asian communities.

flourishing correspondence columns. Jawi Peranakan, the paper best equipped in this respect, listed representatives (wakil) in most parts of the Peninsular States, in Medan, Deli, Padang and Singkel in Sumatra, and in Riau and Sarawak,[78] and published long reports descriptive of conditions and events in most of these areas.[79] Some of the reports constitute the only extant indigenous accounts of life in the places they describe, and may still be read with interest today.[80] At the time, they must have assisted in the development of a general consciousness of the unity as well as the diversity of the contemporary Malaysian world.

The correspondence columns were among the most popular features of the newspapers, so popular in fact that editors pressed for space often had to make special pleas for brevity.[81] The repository of a wide range of letters, usually written in traditional epistolary style, they

---

[78] Also in Paris.

[79] See, e.g., in 1887, reports in Jawi Peranakan from Sandakan and Patani (515, 516, 30 January and 7 February), Selangor (524, 526, 4 and 18 April), Kelantan (543, 22 August), Pahang (540, 542, 1 and 15 August), Kedah (548, 26 September, and Perak (555, 14 November).

[80] Of particular interest in 1887 were the reports (cited above, n. 79) from Patani, describing the system of government and the condition of the inhabitants; from Kelantan, describing the famine of that year; and from Kedah, describing the immigration into that State consequent upon the East Coast famine.

[81] Many letters were in fact short articles, in which the writers discoursed at length on all the implications of the topic under discussion. See, e.g., a letter on the value of newspapers, written from Labuan Island, and published serially in two issues of Jawi Peranakan, 896, 897, 12 and 19 November 1894.

represented a means of public expression and exchange of opinion not previously available, and of considerable value in discussing issues of the day. It is noteworthy, for example, that when in 1894 the Government proposed to discontinue adult education evening classes and close many Malay schools in the Straits Settlements, as a measure of financial retrenchment, the matter was discussed at some length both editorially and in the correspondence columns.[82] Many letters were published on less controversial topics which were nevertheless of much current interest to the Malays, from the pronunciation of Arabic words and correct Malay spelling to the need for the destruction of predatory wild pigs in Perak and Selangor, and reference has already been made to the dispute over the terminology to be applied to the newly formed study and recreation clubs.[83]

---

[82] Jawi Peranakan, 890, 10 October; 903, 30 December; Bintang Timor 22, 26 July; 99, 25 October; 100, 26 October; 103, 30 October; 118, 17 November; and 125, 26 November. The proposals followed upon the report of the Isemonger Committee, set up in 1893 to inquire into vernacular education with a view to determining possible financial economies held to be necessary as a result of the increase in the Military Contribution required from the Straits Settlements by the British Government. All Malay evening classes were stopped, and 22 boys' schools (together with the Malay College in Singapore) closed at the end of 1894. (See D.D. Chelliah, A Short History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements, 1800-1925, p. 71.)

[83] See above, p. 72. In its editorial for 8 August, 1894, (32), Bintang Timor says that this year the Malays in Singapore 'have delighted in starting clubs like the Europeans and Chinese'. The first study and recreation club ('tempat pelajaran dan bersuka2') appears to have been the Persekutuan Dar-ul-Adab, formed in the early 1890's (Bintang Timor, 34, 10 August 1894, gives the membership of the Committee for that year). At about the same time, an association called Harbab Ashkedan (or Hasbab Askedan) came into being. (The name appears to be a corruption. I have references to it, in both variants, only from Bintang Timor, whose Malay spelling was notoriously idiosyncratic.) A third club, the Perseketuan Dar-ul-Taadzim was formed in August 1894 (Jawi Peranakan, 883, 13 August 1894), and a fourth, the Persekutuan Jawa Almasakin, in October 1901 (Sayyid Hussin Ali, 'Pertubuhan Bahasa dan Sastera Melayu Di Singapura Selepas Perang Dunia II' ['The Growth of Malay Language and Literature after the Second World War'], Bahasa, II, 2, (Singapore, March 1960), p. 8, n. 5). Penang at this time had the [footnote continued on next page]

In quite another connection, the press, and in particular letters to the editor, formed a useful adjunct to one of the principal activities of the clubs, by suggesting topics for formal debate. In 1894, for instance, a Malay reader wrote to Bintang Timor expressing concern that young girls should be employed to sell sweetmeats on the city streets late at night, and proposing that some of the clubs debate the propriety of this.[84] In the same year, newspaper correspondence led to a full-scale debate in the Persekutuan Dar-ul-Adab on whether or not it would be proper for the parents of bride and groom to send written wedding invitations to both male and female guests, a practise completely at variance with Malay custom and social usage. The question created wide interest, and a summary of the debate, which was well attended and recorded by three short-hand reporters, was later published in the press.[85]

But if, under the leadership of the Arab community and the Jawi Peranakan, the Malays had started out on the road to social change and economic adjustment, there was still most of the way to go. In October

---

[83] [footnote continued from previous page]

Muslim Recreation Club, and at least one other association, with the name Jamshid. Purely sporting, particularly football, clubs pre-dated the study clubs by some years. It is of interest to note that the first Malay industrial combination was organised in 1894, the Club Kapitan2 dan Injinir2 Melayu (Malay Captain's and Engineers' Club), by ships' crews. A report in Jawi Peranakan (890, 10 October 1894) says that a meeting had been held to discuss the formation of such a club, 'because everyone else is doing it' and to make it easier for members to confer about raising their wages ('supaya senang ia bermeshuarat darihal menaikki gaji mereka-itu kelak'); the first General Meeting was held at the end of November, with more than a hundred members. Amongst the rules of the Club was one stipulating that 'no-one desiring to become a Captain shall be permitted to accept a wage of less than $50' (Jawi Peranakan, 889, 3 December 1894).

[84] Bintang Timor, 43, 21 August 1894.

[85] Ibid., 43, 21 August; 53, 1 September; and 82, 5 October, 1894.

1894, the Straits Chinese Bintang Timor published, over the pseudonym 'Senex', a series of eleven articles entitled 'Mengapa Melayu Layu?', or 'Why are the Malays Withering Away?'.[86] Written ostensibly in a spirit of friendly criticism, 'for the good of the Malays', the articles offered a scathing analysis of the alleged reasons for Malay economic and educational backwardness: their slavish adherence to outmoded custom, the dissoluteness of their traditional leaders (interested only in opium, women and gambling), their lack of industry and ambition, their hostility towards anyone who showed exceptional talents, and their inability to practise mutual self-help. As was no doubt expected, the articles were very ill received by Bintang Timor's contemporary and rival Jawi Peranakan, which, however, found little to say in reply except to hurl abuse at the Straits Chinese.[87] The whole affair degenerated on both sides to a rather unedifying exchange of sneers and taunts, before finally fizzling out.

But however objectionable the tone of the articles, and however little understanding they showed of the problems facing traditional peasant societies confronted with the vigour and aggressiveness of the West, they came for many Malays uncomfortably near the truth. It could hardly be denied that in the Colony the Malaysians, with few exceptions, formed an economically depressed and educationally inferior class, and that there appeared to be no prospect of rapid improvement. Urban Singapore and Penang, with their thriving and highly competitive Chinese majorities,

---

[86] Bintang Timor, 81-5, 87, 89-92, 5-17 October 1894.

[87] See, especially, editorial in Jawi Peranakan, 892, 15 October 1894.

threw this situation into particularly sharp relief. The attempt to understand it and to remedy it was to be the principal preoccupation of many thinking Malays for decades to come.

CHAPTER THREE

Kaum Muda - Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction

In July, 1906, a new periodical in Malay, entitled Al-Imam ('The Leader') made its first appearance in Singapore. Its aims, as expressed in Shaykh Mohd. Salim Al-Kalali's introductory editorial were 'to remind those who are forgetful, arouse those who sleep, guide those who stray, and give a voice to those who speak with wisdom'.[1] One of its first articles consisted of a kind of colloquy on 'The Proper Task: What is Most Needed for Our People'. Beginning by asserting that it is the job of a people's leaders to diagnose and prescribe for their ills, the writer goes on: 'Perhaps it may be said that we are most in need of skills of craftsmanship and agriculture, or knowledge of how to preserve our country from its enemies, or that we need education to rescue us from the slough of apathy and indolence, or that we must learn to unite for the

---

[1]Al-Imam, I, 1 (July, 1906). Mohd. b. Dato' Muda, Tarikh Surat Khabar (Bukit Mertajam, 1940), p. 128, incorrectly attributes this introductory article (reproduced in full) to Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi.

common good. ... All this is true. But the one thing that will strengthen and realise all our desires is knowledge of the commands of our religion. For religion is the proven cure for all the ills of our community.'[2] These few lines embody, in essentials, the message which Al-Imam and its successors were to preach, with great persistence and at considerable length, during the next quarter of a century. An analysis of the message, and of those groups in Malay society which either espoused or contested it, holds the key to much of importance during the period covered by this thesis.

Al-Imam's first concern was with religion, and not directly with social, even less with political, change. At the same time, this distinction would have been in some measure foreign to the editors and writers of the journal, who shared the traditional Islamic concept of the undifferentiated umat, or community, in which spiritual, social and political well-being and ends are subsumed under the one head - the good and profitable life lived according to Divine Law. Their attention was turned in the first place, therefore, to the state of Malay society. Almost all of its thirty-one issues[3] contain at least one article (often more) analysing the ills of the community. In an orgy of self-vilification and self-condemnation, Al-Imam points to the backwardness of the Malays, their domination by alien races, their

---

[2] Ibid., article 'Sa-elok2 Pekerjaan Itu: Barang yang bersangatan hijat umat kepada-nya'.

[3] The only set of Al-Imam to which I have had access (one of two in existence) contains thirty-one issues, the last published in December, 1908. This is a bound volume, and though the end papers are missing, seems to be complete. Mohd. b. Dato' Muda, op. cit., p. 127, gives the terminal date of the journal as 1909, probably in error.

laziness, their complacency, their bickering amongst themselves and inability to co-operate for the common good.[4] Nor are the Malays alone in this situation - it is one shared by the whole Islamic world. The root cause of the decline of the Islamic peoples from their past glory is that they have ceased, in their ignorance, to follow the commands of God as expressed through the mouth and the life of His Prophet Muhammad. As an instrument for discovering and understanding the Divine Law, Man has been gifted with intelligence (akal), an intelligence it is incumbent upon him to use and to develop. Islam is not, says Al-Imam, as its detractors allege, hostile to knowledge and progress such as is exemplified by the West. On the contrary, a proper understanding of and submission to the law and the spirit of Islam is our only means of competing successfully with those who now rule and lead us.[5]

Following upon its diagnosis, Al-Imam goes on to practise, so far as it can, what it preaches - though it must be said that there is in its columns more exhortation than prescription. The Malays, and more especially the Rulers and traditional leaders (Raja2 dan orang2 besar) are urged to form associations to foster education, economic development

---

[4]See, e.g., Al-Imam, II, 1, (July 1907), article 'Menuntut Ketinggian akan Anak2 Negeri' ['The Pursuit of Greatness for Our People']. This article by Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi, though particularly notable for its forceful writing, is in other respects typical of the genre.

[5]See, e.g., Ibid., I, 2 and 3 (August and September, 1906), articles 'Kadza dan Kadir' ['Destiny and the Power of God'] and 'Angan2 yang Berbetulan dengan Hakikat' ['Thoughts Corresponding with the Truth'].

and self-awareness.[6] The traditional practice of Islam in Malaya, adulterated by impurities of custom and belief derived from adat and from other religions, and inimical to progress, must be cleansed of these elements, and the ulama who transmit the imperfections brought to a sense of their errors and obligations.[7] In addition to itself providing numerous articles expounding the true Islam, Al-Imam proposes a reformed system of religious education, in which, upon a sound basis of doctrinal instruction, Arabic and English and modern educational subjects shall be taught,[8] and students encouraged to go overseas for further study. Long series of articles, often taken in entirety from Arabic originals, inculcate proper moral conduct, the elements of child-rearing, the duties of all members of society according to

---

[6]The responsibilities of rulers towards their peoples are given in some detail in an article entitled 'Nasihat al-Emir Abdul Rahim ia-itu Raja Afghanistan kepada anak-nya al-Emir Habib al-Khab' ['Advice from Emir Abdul Rahim, Ruler of Afghanistan, to his son Emir Habib al-Khab'], Ibid., II, 5 (November, 1907). Cf. also Ibid., I, 3 and 9 (September, 1906 and March, 1907).

[7]For the situation in Malaya, see especially Ibid., I, 2 (August, 1906), article 'Kadza dan Kadir' ['Destiny and the Power of God']. For the responsibilities of ulama more generally, see II, 6 (January, 1908), article 'Tegoran' ['An Address'], translated from the Arabic of Shaykh Mohd. Abduh (late Grand Mufti of Egypt, and leader of the modernist movement there), and III, 1-7 (July-December, 1908), series 'Ilmu dan Ulama' ['Knowledge and the Ulama'], translated from the Arabic of Shaykh Mohd. b. Ibrahim Al-Mahdi (a leading alim at Al-Azhar).

[8]As a practical measure in this direction, Al-Imam organised support for a madrasah of the new style (the Madrasah al-Ikbal al-Islamiyyah) opened in Singapore by an Egyptian, Othman Effendi Rafat, under the patronage of Raja Ali Kelana of Riau.

status and role,[9] the exemplary history of Islam,[10] and much else of this kind. A regular section of the journal is devoted to readers' questions and answers, and to fatwa (legal opinions) on disputed matters of religious interpretation, with a strong emphasis throughout on the need to return to the Kuran and hadith, the basic texts of Islam, and to practise ijtihad (informed independent investigation) rather than taklid buta (blind acceptance of intermediate authority) for their understanding. Finally, there is a good deal of attention given to news from the Islamic countries of the Middle East (especially Turkey), and almost as much to Japan - the two areas which together represent Islam and Asia on the march.[11]

Al-Imam was a radical departure in the field of Malay publications, distinguished from its predecessors both in intellectual stature and intensity of purpose, and in its attempt to formulate a coherent philosophy of action for a society faced with the need for rapid social and economic change. For a parallel to the new journal one has to

---

[9]The series of articles 'Pemileharaan dan Pelajaran' ['Upbringing and Education'] (compiled by Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi) was published separately under this title in 1909, by the Al-Imam Printing Company.

[10]Describing history (by which was meant the history of Islam) as 'the key that opens the door of the mind', Al-Imam published a serial history of Islam ('Al-Tarikh ul-Islam') in every issue. Subsequently, few serious Malay periodicals did not feature articles of this kind.

[11]Most issues contain a selection of news items from the Middle East, and there are articles on the Turkish navy (I, 7), the Hejaz Railway (II, 1), the Turkish system of government (II, 4), and so on. Many of the reports from Japan concern Islam in that country (see, e.g., I, 8, 10), but there are also more general articles (see, e.g. 'Matahari Memanchar' ['The Rising Sun'] , in I, 12).

turn to the Egyptian periodical Al-Manar, first published in Cairo eight years earlier,[12] which in many ways Al-Imam closely resembles. Nor is this surprising, for it was from the Egyptian modernist movement that the writers and sponsors of Al-Imam derived, almost in totality, their reformist ideas. One of the many names given to the reformist group in Malaya was, in fact, 'Kaum Al-Manar', the Al-Manar faction. An examination of the contents of the Cairo journal, as detailed by Charles C. Adams in his Islam and Modernism in Egypt,[13] makes clear the extent to which Al-Imam was modelled on it, and the Malay journal contains an abundance of references to and excerpts from its predecessor.[14] Prominent among the small group of men who started Al-Imam in 1906 were four members of the urban Malayo-Muslim community of Singapore, who had had extensive contacts with the Middle East. They were Shaykh Mohd. Tahir b. Jalaluddin Al-Azhari from Minangkabau, the first editor; Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi, a Malacca-born Malay-Arab who was a frequent and pungent contributor; Haji Abbas b. Mohd. Taha of Singapore, the second editor; and Shaykh Mohd. Salim Al-Kalali, an

---

[12] On Al-Manar, see Charles C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt (London, 1933), p. 180.

[13] Ibid., pp. 181-2 and passim.

[14] A good deal of Al-Imam is obviously translated from Arabic works of one kind or another, but the source is rarely specified. It seems probable that some of the articles described as being in translation are in fact from Al-Manar. More specifically, I, 12 contains a piece by Shaykh Mohd. Abduh on riba (usury), together with comments by Al-Manar; II, 6 contains an article by Abduh on the importance of mutual self-criticism among the ulama; III, 5 quotes extensively from Al-Manar in the course of a discussion on Sufi tarekat. More casual and less controversial references abound. And starting with III, 3, Al-Imam published a 'Tafsir al-Kuran' ['Exegesis of the Kuran'] in its last five issues which may be that by Mohd. Abduh published in Al-Manar from 1905 onwards, though I have been unable to verify this.

Achehnese merchant who was Director of Al-Imam during its first two years.

Mohd. Tahir b. Jalaluddin,[15] of all the reform group probably the most notable in intellect and scholarly achievement, was born near Bukit Tinggi, West Sumatra, in 1869. Orphaned as a child, he was brought up by maternal relatives until the age of twelve, when he was sent to study in Mecca. There he lived with his first cousin[16] Shaykh Ahmad Khatib, who held the office of Shafiee Imam at the Mesjid al-Haram, and was a noted teacher among the Jawah (Malaysian) community.[17] Mohd. Tahir lived for twelve years in Mecca (with three brief visits back to Sumatra and Malaya), and then early in 1893 went to Cairo to study astronomy (ilmu Falak) at the School of Al-Azhar Mosque (otherwise known as the

---

[15] The principal published source for Shaykh Tahir's life is a short autobiographical article which appeared in the Malay magazine Al-Atakwi (Taiping), I, 10 (October, 1947), pp. 6-8. This article was condensed from a much longer manuscript which was given to a printer shortly before Shaykh Tahir's death in 1957, but subsequently lost. For permission to examine some of Shaykh Tahir's personal papers, I am greatly indebted to his son, Hamdan b. Shaykh Tahir.

[16] The Atakwi article uses the term 'abang' ('elder brother') to describe the relationship. Their mothers were, however, sisters born of the same parents ('bersaudara kandung') (Hamka, Adat Minangkabau Menghadapi Revolusi (2nd ed., Djakarta, 1963), p. 24, fn. 1). And cf. also Hamka, Sedjarah Islam Di Sumatera (2nd ed., Medan, 1950), p.39.

[17] Shaykh Ahmad Khatib, originally from Bukit Tinggi in the Minangkabau region of Sumatra, went to Mecca at an early age, and later married the daughter of a rich Kurdish merchant who was friendly with the Sharif. This alliance perhaps helped in his selection as Imam for the Shafiee Muslims in Mecca, an unusual distinction for a foreigner, (see Hamka, op. cit., p. 38). Many Indonesians have testified both to his scholarship and to his influence among the Malaysian community (see especially Hamka, op. cit., loc. cit., and Ajahku: Riwajat Hidup Dr. Abd. Karim Amrullah dan Perdjuangan Kaum Agama ['My Father: The Life of Dr. Abd. Karim Amrullah and the Religious Struggle'] (Djakarta, 1950), pp. 24-30, also Mahmud Junus, Sedjarah Pendidekan Islam di Indonesia ['The History of Islamic Education in Indonesia'] (Djakarta, 1960), pp. 45, 80 and passim.), and it is curious that Snouck Hurgronje, who was in Mecca at this time (1884-5) does not include him among the well known Indonesian ulama there.

University of Al-Azhar). In Cairo, where he was for four years, he was introduced to the teachings of the celebrated and controversial Egyptian modernist Shaykh Mohd. Abduh (Grand Mufti from 1899 until his death in 1905), and formed a close friendship with the most enthusiastic of Abduh's adherents, Mohd. Rashid Rida.[18] Later, in 1898, when Rashid Rida founded the periodical Al-Manar, Mohd. Tahir contributed articles to its columns,[19] and it is clear that he was profoundly influenced by the reformist ideas current in 'the Al-Manar Circle' in the last years of the century. Of his religious allegiances prior to this time, little is known in detail, but the ground for later developments had already been prepared during the years in Mecca. Shaykh Ahmad Khatib, his guardian and principal teacher there, was himself a Minangkabau who, in the tradition of the earlier 'Kaum Paderi' or Wahhabi movement, felt strongly concerning the long-standing conflict between adat (in all its complexity) and Islam in West Sumatra, and is said to have urged upon his students 'revolutionary' ideas about the need to purify indigenous Islam from, on the one hand, elements of custom at variance with revealed law, and on the other the excesses associated with the innovatory tarekat, or mystic orders, widespread in the region.[20] Among others of his students, contemporary with Mohd. Tahir, were men like the young Mohd. Djamil Djambek and Karim Amrullah, later the centre of reformist activity in Minangkabau, and a lively if somewhat attenuated picture of their teacher appears in the notes made by Karim Amrullah at the

---

[18] Hamka, Ajahku, p. 48.

[19] Interview with Inche Hamdan b. Shaykh Tahir, Kuala Lumpur, 1961. I have been unable to verify this by inspection of Al-Manar.

[20] Hamka, Sedjarah Islam Di Sumatera, pp. 38-9.

time and reproduced in the biography of the latter written by his son Hamka.[21]

Mohd. Tahir may be said, then, to have combined both the reformist spirit evident among a section of the _Jawah_ community in Mecca in the 1880's and '90's, and something of the more sophisticated modernism of contemporary religious thought in Cairo. After qualifying in astronomy at Al-Azhar, Shaykh Tahir, as he was subsequently known, spent a further two years teaching in Mecca before returning to Southeast Asia in 1899. From then until 1905 he spent much of his time travelling between Malaya, Riau-Lingga, Sumatra and the Middle East, as a religious teacher and scholar.[22] In 1903, he was engaged, along with Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi, to accompany the sons of the Sultan and Raja Muda of Riau to Mecca and Egypt. Though married (and divorced) several times previously, he married in 1901 a Malay girl from Perak, and in 1906 settled permanently in the Peninsula.[23]

---

[21] Hamka, _Ajahku_, pp. 28-30.

[22] In 1900 he was commissioned by Sultan Idris of Perak to examine all mosques and _suraus_ in the State, to correct the _kiblat_ (the direction faced in prayer).

[23] From 1909-11, Shaykh Tahir held several offices in Perak and Johore in connection with the religious (_shariah_) courts, and in the latter year accompanied Sultan Idris of Perak to the coronation in London. Between 1914 and 1918 he taught at the Johore Bahru religious school, and became Inspector of Religious Schools for the State. In 1920 he joined the staff of Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi's _Madrasah al-Mashhor_ in Penang, and later taught at the _Sekolah Arab_ (religious school), Parit Jamil, near Muar. He was associated with Sayyid Shaykh in the publication of the newspaper _Saudara_ (1926-41), editing it for a time in 1934. During a visit to Bukit Tinggi in Sumatra in 1927, he was imprisoned by the Dutch for suspected Communist activities. A prolific writer, Shaykh Tahir published numerous translations from the Arabic, a number of works of his own (in addition to journalistic writings) and a considerable volume of astronomical material. He died only in 1957.

Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad Al-Hadri, who next to Shaykh Tahir is the most striking figure associated with Al-Imam, was born in Malacca about 1862, of a Malay mother and a Malay-Arab father of Hadhrami descent.[24] As a boy, he attended for some years a well known religious school in Kuala Trengganu, and then at the age of fourteen was taken to Pulau Penyengat in Riau, where his father had connections with the royal house. There he was adopted by Raja Ali Kelana b. Raja Ahmad, half brother of the Sultan and also Raja Muda (Heir Apparent), and brought up with the royal children. Pulau Penyengat, which already had a reputation as a centre of Malay learning, largely as a result of the literary work of Raja Ali Haji b. Raja Ahmad and other members of his family,[25] was at this time a place of frequent recourse for itinerant religious scholars. As a young man, Sayyid Shaykh was put in charge of the rumah wakaf, the hostel in which travellers were accommodated while visiting the court. Here he had the opportunity to meet on terms of familiarity with many noted alim, and to further his own religious knowledge and interests through discussion and debate. In the early 1890's he assisted in the

---

[24] Sayyid Alwi Al-Hadi, 'Almerhum Syed Sheikh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi dan bahagian yang telah di-ambil-nya didalam peredaran agama Islam di-Semenanjong Tanah Melayu' ['The Late Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi and his part in the religious revolution in the Malay Peninsula'] (Unpublished MS, c. 1958). The information in this document has to be treated with caution, as it is full of factual inaccuracies.

[25] See above, Chapter Two. In the early part of the nineteenth century, Pulau Penyengat had a reputation also as a centre for the study of Islamic mysticism (R.O. Winstedt, A History of Malay Literature, J.M.B.R.A.S., XXXI, 3 (June, 1958), p. 126). Cf. also S.H. Tan, 'The Life and Times of Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi' (Unpublished B.A. Honours Exercise, History Department, University of Singapore, 1961). The biographical material in this is based largely on material supplied by Sayyid Alwi Al-Hadi (see fn. 24 above).

formation of the Perseketuan Rashidiyyah, a study club similar to those set up in Singapore at about the same time,[26] and took an active interest in its activities. On several occasions he accompanied the sons of the Sultan and Raja Muda on the pilgrimage to Mecca and to Egypt and the Levant, travelling in 1903 with Shaykh Tahir, with whom he already had a close friendship. It is unlikely that Sayyid Shaykh received much formal religious instruction during these visits to Mecca and Cairo, which were brief and occupied in travelling, but evidence on this point is uncertain, and there is no doubt that he became familiar, probably through the agency of Shaykh Tahir, with the ideas current in the metropolitan centres of Islam at this time. In 1901, his adoptive father, Raja Ali Kelana, took over a brickworks on Batam Island, just off Singapore, and installed Sayyid Shaykh first as Agent and then as Manager in the Singapore office. From this time until he moved to Johore Bahru in 1909, he lived in Singapore, where he rapidly became prominent in the Malayo-Muslim community, active in the affairs of the Clubs, and instrumental in the founding and running of Al-Imam. Not an alim of the calibre of Shaykh Tahir, Sayyid Shaykh nevertheless had a very lively and able mind, eminently suited to the polemicist and propagandist role in which he cast himself. Though in the course of his long and varied career he became shariah layer, educationist, merchant, and publisher, it was in journalism and literature that he excelled, and for which he is best remembered today. His role in the formation of

---

[26]See above, Chapter Two.

Al-Imam's policy has perhaps been over-estimated, owing largely to his later reputation as a writer, but there is no question that many of the most vigorous and outspoken articles in its columns came from his pen.

Rather less is known about the background of the others prominent in connection with Al-Imam. Haji Abbas b. Mohd. Taha, who succeeded Shaykh Tahir as editor, was born in Singapore in 1885, probably of Minangkabau parentage, and spent much of his youth as a student in Mecca before returning to Singapore in 1905.[27] Here he worked as a religious teacher, and in 1906 published a collection of homiletic excerpts from Egyptian and Syrian educational works, under the title Sempurnaan Pelajaran ('The Perfection of Education'). Assistant editor of Al-Imam from its early days, he became editor in March 1908, at the time of its reorganisation.[28] When the journal ceased publication in December that year, he was appointed Kathi for the Tanjong Pagar district of Singapore, and remained active in the reformist cause, founding and editing in 1911 a weekly newspaper Neracha ('The Scales'), followed in 1913 by a companion monthly journal Tunas Melayu ('The Malay Revivalist'),[29]

---

[27] Nik Ahmad b. Nik Hassan, 'The Malay Vernacular Press', (Unpublished B.A. Honours Exercise, Department of Malay Studies, University of Malaya, 1958), p. 12, fn. 13.

[28] In March, 1908, the 'Al-Imam Printing Company' was formed, with a share capital of $20,000. Shaykh Mohd. Salim Al-Kalali and Shaykh Tahir ceased to be Director (Murad) and Editor, respectively, of the journal, and a new board of directors was formed, consisting of Sayyid Mohd. b. Akil, Sayyid Hassan b. Shahah, and Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi. Haji Abbas replaced Shaykh Tahir as Editor. (See Al-Imam, II, 9 (March, 1908).)

[29] For details, see Roff, Guide to Malay Periodicals, p. 5. The word 'tunas' means, literally, 'a young shoot sprouting from a branch', or secondary growth in the forest.

both of which were dedicated to the goals elaborated by Al-Imam in 1906. His later career, as a religious teacher in Selangor, was unremarkable.

It remains only to mention the trio of Malay-Arab merchants who shared in the conception of Al-Imam, and gave it financial and editorial support. Shaykh Mohd. Salim Al-Kalali, though a resident of Singapore, was in fact an Achehnese of Hadhrami descent, with extensive trading interests throughout the Archipelago and with Arabia. Despite the designation 'Shaykh', it is probable that his importance to Al-Imam was less as a scholar or writer than as a businessman (though several major articles are attributed to him),[30] and this is certainly true of his friends Sayyid Mohd. b. Akil and Shaykh Awadh Al-Saidin, of whom practically nothing is known except that they were well-to-do and shared a common interest in the furtherance of the well-being of the Malayo-Muslim community through religious reform. Together these three may be said to have represented the pious, economically enterprising townsmen, linked by trade with a wider Islamic world, who must in the first instance have made up a considerable proportion of the new journal's readership.

It will be observed that of the principal figures associated with Al-Imam, only one, Haji Abbas, born in Singapore of Sumatran parents, could in any sense claim to be a 'Peninsular Malay'. Shaykh Tanir was from Minangkabau, and Sayyid Shaykh, though born and bred in Malaya (and culturally Malay), was of Hadhrami descent, as were the Achehnese Shaykh Mohd. Salim and, as far as is known, his fellow entrepreneurs. Belonging,

---

[30] See, e.g., the article 'Al-Umat ul-Watan' ['The Community and the Homeland'], Al-Imam, I, 11 (June, 1907).

as they did in one sense or another, to a socio-economic group significantly different in allegiances and values from the Malays of the Peninsular States, they were themselves conscious of this difference, and seem to have felt that it might be held to affect their right to criticise and comment. The point was raised in the very first issue of Al-Imam. 'It is true', wrote Shaykh Mohd. Salim in his preface, 'that though peranakan we are not of the same direct descent as the people here, but we love this country as our homeland, have drunk its milk, used its products to increase our flesh and blood, received from it the good things of life. Are we not therefore indebted to it, and to its children?'[31] It was a debt that could be repaid only by awakening the Malay people, as a people, to their present situation and to the means lying at hand for its future remedy.

The range and catholicity of Al-Imam's ideas and interests represented incipient movement and growth within almost every facet of Malay life. Though it would be a mistake to regard its concern for the Malayo-Muslim umat of the Peninsula and beyond as an explicit form of political nationalism, in a Malaya where for the next thirty years few were to recognise allegiances outside their State and Sultan, this concept of a wider unity based on religion and a common experience of colonial rule was to become increasingly symptomatic of Malay unease at the absence of effective forms of association for undeniably common ends. Like many another venture of the kind, Al-Imam preached initially

---

[31] Ibid., I, 1 (July, 1906).

to the persuaded, and though there is no clear evidence about the size and nature of its audience, there is little doubt that a majority of its readers came from the intellectually and socially more sophisticated element of the towns, and from those religiously educated who had received some introduction to Muslim polemics in Mecca. It was written on the whole in good Malay, but in a style much influenced by Arabic, and with a high incidence of Arabic words and expressions, which pre-supposed some familiarity with that language. The sort of difficulty it could present to the ordinary literate Malay (of whom there were in any case few), is illustrated by the reader who wrote to ask what the word '*tarikh*' meant, in the important series of articles '*Al-Tarikh ul-Islam*' ('The History of Islam').[32] Nor, perhaps, was the bulk of its readership within British Malaya. The high proportion of correspondence from the Netherlands Indies, principally Sumatra, is very marked, and we know that Shaykh Tahir, for example, sent copies to friends and pupils in Minangkabau, where, as Hamka has testified, it exercised considerable influence on reformist thought and led directly to the establishment in 1911 of a similar journal, *Al-Munir*.[33]

These reservations made, it is still possible to draw some conclusions about *Al-Imam*'s influence within the peninsula. Representatives (*wakil*) were listed for most parts of the Malay states, and it is noteworthy that

---

[32] *Ibid.*

[33] Hamka, *Ajahku*, p. 48.

some of the most cogent contributions, especially on the topics of education and Nakshabandi Sufism, came from Malay correspondents in Johore, Perak and Pahang.[34] And though subscribers may have been few in number, Al-Imam came into the hands of religious teachers, particularly those in the new-style madrasah, where its views on such diverse and controversial questions as the validity of hadith, payments for burial prayers, certain of the practices associated with Nakshabandi Sufism, the wearing of European clothing, and interest on savings bank loans, led to much discussion and debate.[35] It is, in fact, in the field of the new education that the immediate impact of the reformist group may be most clearly seen, both in its encouragement of religious schools of a more ambitious and elaborate kind than had hitherto existed, and in the formulation of a system of education which, ideally, would take account of the need not only for a purified Islam, but for modern secular knowledge as well. Al-Imam itself assisted in the establishment in Singapore in 1908 of the Madrasah al-Ikbal al-islamiyyah, run by an Egyptian, Othman Effendi Rafat, who returned to Egypt to engage some of his teaching staff.[36] This school, which borrowed much (at least in its prospectus) from Egypt and the West, was the forerunner of many others organised on similar lines, and throughout the peninsula, during the

---

[34] See, especially, Al-Imam, I, 6 (December, 1906) and 8 (February, 1907) on education; and III, 2 and 5 (September and November, 1908) on the tarekat.

[35] See e.g., Mohd. Yusop b. Sutan Maidin, Kejatohan Kaum2 Islam dan Pergerakan Bahru ['The Decline of the Muslim Peoples and the New Movements'] (Penang, 1931), p. 101.

[36] Al-Imam, II, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 12.

next few years.[37] Drawing their students from village communities as well as from the towns, the new madrasah acted as effective agents for the dissemination of the ideas characteristic of the reform group. It was the innovatory, and potentially disruptive, character of this teaching that brought the reformists, known pejoratively as 'Kaum Muda', the 'Young Faction' into conflict with other groups in Malay society - the official religious hierarchy, the traditional Malay elite, and the rural ulama, collectively the 'Old Faction', or Kaum Tua.[38]

Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah remarked in 1916 of the Mufti[39] of Johore, 'To become a Government Mufti in Malaya is a great glory. You have an official uniform, with a whole banana-comb of epaulettes on the shoulder, a jubbah embroidered with gold thread, a silk turban, and your own car. The ra'ayat fear and obey you, eat the scraps from your table, your spat-out sireh. And if you want to get married ... Bismillah!'[40] Despite Despite its rather specific reference, this comment is an indication not

---

[37] Al-Imam, in the course of 1907-8 refers to the establishment of madrasah at Telok Anson (II, 4), Penang (II, 9), Kuala Trengganu (II, 11), and Muar (III, 2), and there were certainly many others in the years following.

[38] For a discussion of the terms 'Kaum Muda' and 'Kaum Tua', see my article 'Kaum Muda - Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction Amongst the Malays, 1900-1941', in K.G. Tregonning (ed.), Papers on Malayan History, (Singapore, 1962), pp. 162-65.

[39] The Mufti in Islam is a jurisconsult, empowered to give formal legal opinions (fatwa) on matters submitted to him. Shaykh ul-Islam is a title of honour given to jurists of more than usual standing. One or other of these titles was often used in Malaya, to refer to the chief religio-legal authority of a state, appointed by the Sultan.

[40] Quoted in Hamka, Ajahku, p. 59.

only of Kaum Muda feeling about established religious authority, but also of the nature of this authority in the Malay states. Prior to the protectorate period, Islam in Malaya had not, in any effective sense, been a 'state religion'. There was a general awareness that all Malays were Muslims, and that this distinguished them from, for example, Chinese or Siamese. To undergo conversion to Islam was, in fact, to masok Melayu, 'become a Malay', but this identification of ethnic group with religion was of future rather than of present significance. In the realm of religious belief, as in that of political organisation, the Malay state as a rule lacked the resources necessary for centralisation of authority. Such religious 'officials' as existed were those members of village communities who, for reasons of exceptional piety or other ability, had been chosen by the community to act as imam of the local mosque, or the court imam of chiefs or Sultan, who commonly possessed no authority beyond their immediate responsibilities, and belonged to no separate or organised class. The absence of a 'priesthood' in the Malay states was often puzzling to Europeans, who persisted in finding one where it did not exist.[41]

Nevertheless, there certainly did exist a clear, if frequently inactive association between the secular power and the religious life of the people. Indeed, to speak of 'secular' power in this context is

---

[41] See, e.g., T.J. Newbold, Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca (London, 1839), Vol. II, p. 58; and J.F.A. McNair, Perak and the Malays (London, 1878), p. 276.

a misnomer, for the relationship between ruler and ruled was one which did not admit of simple classification, and certainly embraced the spiritual as well as the material wellbeing of the State as an entity. At the installation of a new Ruler in Perak, for example, it was usual at a certain point in the proceedings, for an official of the court mosque to invoke God's blessing upon Yang di-Pertuan and State, and to recite the Kuranic text, 'Lo, We have set thee as a Viceroy upon the Earth', as a warranty of the Ruler's responsibilities as defender and arbiter of the Faith.[42] And though in practice formal means for discharging these responsibilities were often absent, or allowed to decay because of lack of interest or of adequate piety on the part of particular rulers, this was not always the case. In Rembau in the 1830s there appears to have been a State Kathi, responsible to the Ruler, who had general oversight of all the mosques in the state,[43] and in Kelantan in the 1880s the chief minister of the state, Maha Menteri (himself a fervent Muslim), was successful in enforcing restrictive Islamic legislation upon a large proportion of the population, in the name of the Ruler.[44] In Perak, at a much earlier date, an office corresponding to that of State Mufti was exercised by one of the eight major hereditary chiefs, the Orang Kaya2 Imam Paduka Tuan. In 1818, the then holder of

---

[42] R.J. Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', J.M.B.R.A.S., X, 1 (1932) p. 79. The passage occurs in Surah 38, Verse 7 of the Kuran.

[43] Newbold, loc. cit.

[44] See, e.g., H. Clifford, Studies in Brown Humanity (London, 1898) p. 24.

the title was promoted to higher rank, and the office of Imam Paduka became a non-hereditary title, disposable of at will by the Sultan. In theory, the Imam Paduka (together with the Raja Bendahara, second-in-line to the throne), held religious jurisdiction over the subject class, and the Raja Muda (the heir to the throne) over the aristocracy,[45] though in practice it is likely to have been exercised, if at all, only when the incumbents were themselves markedly devout. The assimilation of religious authority to customary political authority is shown also in the treatment accorded to zakat and fitrah taxation.[46] According to Islamic law, zakat and fitrah taxes should be collected by mosque officials, and disbursed by them for certain specified ends, among which are the bestowal of gifts upon wayfarers, indigent Muslims, and converts to Islam. In practice, says Wilkinson, 'the Malay chiefs, by identifying themselves with Imams and by a liberal interpretation of the term "pious poor", succeeded in securing the tax for themselves'.[47] But this, of course, is an overstatement, for the putative right to religious revenues carried with it a corresponding obligation to serve at least some of the needs of Islam, by contributing to the building and upkeep of mosques,

---

[45] I am indebted for this information on Perak to a B.A. Honours Thesis by Mohd. Khalil b. Hussein, 'The Department of Religious Affairs in Perak' (University of Malaya, 1958), pp. 4-6.

[46] Zakat is an alms tax levied on different kinds of property (not simply on agricultural produce, as has usually been the case in Malaya), and distributed to eight categories of deserving persons. The zakat al-fitr, known in Malaya as fitrah, is an obligatory gift of provisions made at the celebration of the end of the fasting month (Id ul-fitr). For details, see Gibb and Kramer, Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, art. 'zakat'.

[47] R.J. Wilkinson, Malay Beliefs (London, 1906), pp. 112-13.

the payment of mosque officials, and occasional employment of itinerant teachers or scholars. In sum, for the Malay peasant, as for his overlord, custom and religion - adat (by which was meant customary law, ceremonial procedures, and the norms of behaviour between individuals and classes) and ugama - were related parts of the one whole, together ensuring the proper functioning of society and preventing its disintegration. Of this complex of values, the prescribed caretakers were the ruling class, the traditional elite.

The Pangkor Engagement with the Chiefs of Perak, which became the model for all subsequent treaty arrangements with the Malay states, explicitly excluded from compulsory Residential 'advice' questions touching upon 'Malay religion and custom'.[48] In only Kelantan, Kedah and Johore was this formula preserved intact (in the remaining states, Islam alone was specified), but the principle of non-interference in 'custom' and religion was accepted throughout, and the link thus posited between them was to be of profound significance. In part, of course, it reflects acceptance by the British of a state of affairs which, however vaguely, was held to exist by the Malays themselves. In part also it signifies a recognition that 'custom' (however loosely defined) and religion were the two institutionalized expressions of Malay life in which interference was most likely to arouse resentment, and hence unrest. Where 'custom' was concerned, the principle of non-interference (indeed, of preservation), though often stated, was in practice reserved mainly for those ceremonial and ritual

[48] Clause VI of the Pangkor Engagement. The full text of the Engagement is in Maxwell and Gibson, Treaties and Engagements pp. 28-9.

aspects of Malay public life which least affected colonial administration. A brief but clear example of this may be seen in connection with an incident in Pahang in 1897, less than ten years after the protectorate there was established. The Sultan had expressed a desire to confer titles on his two sons, the elder to be Tengku Besar, a traditional title carrying with it a claim to be regarded as heir apparent, and the younger to be Tengku Muda, and thus heir presumptive to his brother, who was childless. The Malay political system required only that the granting of these titles be approved by the major chiefs. Reporting the matter later, the Resident of Pahang noted: 'This proposal having received the sanction of the High Commissioner, the titles were duly conferred on the two young Rajas in the Sultan's Balai, all the forms and ceremonies prescribed by Malay custom being rigorously observed'.[49] Had the rigorous observance of Malay custom required recognition of heirs apparent not acceptable to the colonial power, it would, of course, have been overridden, as in fact was threatened in Selangor a few years later, and accomplished there (in the face of considerable Malay opposition) during the succession dispute of the 1930s.[50] In the same way, 'customs' abhorrent to contemporary

---

[49] Pahang Annual Report for 1897, p. 22 (italics mine). In passing, it may be noted that the Resident was Hugh Clifford.

[50] The first occasion concerned the secret appointment by British officials, in 1898-9, of Raja Laut (a putative son of Sultan Mohamed of Selangor) as Raja Muda, which came to light when confirmation was pressed for in 1903. The decision was finally reversed, in the face of implacable opposition on the part of several major chiefs. In 1936, the then British Resident of Selangor, T.S. Adams, was directly responsible for forcing Tengku Musa'eddin to surrender the title of Raja Muda, and appointing Tengku Alam Shah in his stead. There were Malay factions on both sides, but the Sultan and many senior chiefs were opposed to this course of action.

English social mores, or ideas of justice and propriety, were not regarded as coming within the restriction upon compulsory advice, so that debt-slavery, corvee labour, seigneurial right, excessive punishment for adat offences, and the like, were progressively restrained or eradicated, though usually, it must be said, with tact and discretion. The effect of this was to set a high premium, especially for those members of the ruling class who remained traditionally oriented, on the formal and ceremonial side of Malay customary life, with a corresponding diminution in real content or in relevance to the contemporary social and political situation.

Where religion was concerned, British policy was more genuinely and less conditionally one of non-interference, a policy made possible by the small extent to which Islam impinged on public and political (as distinct from private) life, and by the already existing identification of religious with political authority. In the absence of a distinct or organised class of ulama, there was little fear of a Muslim 'fanaticism' capable of acting as an independent focus for political discontent at rule by infidels, and the rumours of Pan-Islamic agitation in the southern states at the time of the Pahang disturbances in 1892 were discounted as unimportant, if perhaps not wholly improbable.[51]

[51] In July, 1892, the Dato' Mentri of Pahang had a conversation in Singapore with Sir Cecil Clementi Smith, the High Commissioner, in which he alleged that the cause of the present Pahang disturbances lay with a certain Arab Sayyid, who had toured the southern states asking the chiefs to sign a document asking for the assistance of the Sultan of Turkey in ridding the Malay states of the British. Smith reported the matter in a letter to Edward Fairfield of the Colonial Office. See Smith/Fairfield, CO 273/181, 6 July, 1892, minutes and enclosures, which include a memorandum of the conversation and comments on similar previous reports. Cf. also Negri Sembilan Annual Report for 1892, p. 84.

British colonial officials, though sharing the prevailing view of returned hajis as 'leeches on the toil of their fellow men',[52] seldom thought them, as did the Dutch in nineteenth century Indonesia, to be sources of serious social unrest, and far from attempting to restrict the pilgrimage, actually did much to assist it.[53] Care was taken also to avoid offending Muslim susceptabilities, by wholly prohibiting Christian mission proselytizing among the Malays, and attempts were made to render Government vernacular schools more attractive to parents (who feared a Christian bias in teaching) by arranging for the appointment of special Kuran teachers,[54] a measure which resulted in secure employment for many village ulama.

But to say that in general the principle of non-interference in religious affairs was a characteristic of British rule in the Malay states is not to say that British rule was without its effects on Islam in Malaya. On the contrary, the preservation and reinforcement of the traditional bases of authority and social organisation implicit in this policy, together with greatly improved means of communication and centralisation, and backed by the effective sanctions now open to British-supported Sultans, combined to produce an authoritarian form of religious administration much beyond anything known to the peninsula before. The Rulers, and the traditional elite, much of whose real power to influence the destiny of their states had been

---

[52] Bird, The Golden Chersonese, p. 362; and McNair, Perak and the Malays, p. 226.

[53] See above, Chapter Two.

[54] '... a never-failing remedy for a poorly attended school is the appointment of a Koran teacher on a salary of $8 a month.' Annual Report on Education in Perak for 1893, in Perak Government Gazette, 25 May, 1894.

stripped from them by the circumstances of British rule, not unnatrually turned to the only fields now left to them, religion and 'custom', to express what remained. A direct effect of colonial rule was thus to encourage the concentration of doctrinal and administrative religious authority in the hands of a hierarchy of officials, directly dependent on the Sultans for their position and power. The introduction of an alien system of civil and criminal law to regulate all departments of life other than those held to come under the description 'Malay religion and custom' resulted in pressure to establish a more formal system of Islamic law than had hitherto existed. Islamic legislation was enacted in State Councils, courts and legal procedures were established, and a legal bureaucracy created to run them. Many of these developments, in addition in some cases (notably that of the regulation of courts) to responding to a real need, may also be seen as a reflection of the desire to emulate Western administrative systems, in a field the Malays felt to be peculiarly their own. Few of the measures were wholly innovatory in themselves (there had been kathis, shariah law, and restrictive Islamic regulation, at various times and places before); what was new was their systematic application, and the organisation that lay behind it.

The author of one of the very few Malay memoirs of the early British period, Wan Mohd. Amin, tells us[55] that Raja Muda Suleiman of Selangor,

---

[55] Wan Mohd. Amin b. Wan Mohd. Sa'ad, Kenang-Kenangan Selangor ['Memories of Selangor'], ed. by Abdul Samad b. Ahmad (Klang, 1933), p. 68. Wan Mohd. Amin was a court official to Sultan Suleiman of Selangor. His memoirs, put together shortly before his death in 1932, from diaries kept at the time, constitute the only known Malay account of life in Selangor at the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth.

some time before the death of his grandfather (whom he was to succeed as Sultan in 1898), was given full charge of all the affairs of the State, 'especially concerning religion'. 'At that time His Highness put into order all the articles [pasal] about marriage and divorce, and prepared register books and certificates. At the same time Kathis and Assistant Kathis were appointed for all the larger districts, in order to carry out properly the religious law'. The detailed story may be seen in abbreviated form in the Minutes of the Selangor State Council. In June of 1884, the Council decided to appoint a State Kathi, 'to decide disputes involving Mohamedan Law and Custom',[56] and the appointment of Assistant Kathis for the Districts was ratified in the following year.[57] In 1894, Regulation XI of the Council provided penalties for the offence of adultery by Muslims,[58] and the Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Enactment was passed in 1900.[59] In 1904, the Council passed a Mohamedan Laws Enactment, providing penalties for a variety of offences against Muslim Law,[60] and used by Amendment thereafter to delineate further offences. The Federated Malay States Courts Enactment of 1905 included provision for religious courts, and legislated for their composition and jurisdiction.[61] Although the

---

[56] Abstract of Minutes of the Selangor State Council [S.C.M.], 14/6/84. The phrase used here to describe the duties of the Kathi highlights the ambiguity of any such prescription as 'Malay religion and custom'. In this case, it was clearly 'Mohamedan custom' that was intended.

[57] S.C.M., 22/10/85.

[58] S.C.M., 17/12/94.

[59] S.C.M., 10/5/1900; Sel. [Law] VII, 1900.

[60] S.C.M., 29/2/04; Sel. III, 1904.

[61] F.M.S. [Law] XV, 1905.

initiative for some of this activity in the State Council came from the Resident (who had an obvious interest in getting the situation concerning Muslim Law tidied up), this was by no means always the case, and the committees of Council which deliberated on religious matters were formed from the Malay members - who were, it may be noted, nearly all members of the royal house.[62]

Much the same sort of process was taking place at the same time in Perak (which in fact appointed its first State Kathi in 1880, four years before Selangor),[63] and was repeated subsequently in the other states. By the second decade of the twentieth century, Malaya was equipped with extensive machinery for the governance of Islam. Most states possessed a central organisation of some description, whether in the form of the Council of Chiefs and Ulama in Perak, or the Council of Religion and Malay Custom in Kelantan, to exercise overall control of religious matters, and where, as in Selangor, they did not, a series of committees of the State Council performed the same functions.[64] In Johore, one of the

---

[62]On this last point, see Emily Sadka, 'The State Councils in Perak and Selangor, 1877-1895', in Papers on Malayan History, ed., K.G. Tregonning (Singapore, 1962), p. 99; cf. also my 'Kaum Muda - Kaum Tua' in ibid., pp. 174-5, and R.J. Wilkinson (Gen. ed.), Papers on Malay Subjects, 'Law', Pt. I (Kuala Lumpur, 1908) p. 59.

[63]See Perak State Council Minutes, 1877-82, printed in R.J.Wilkinson, op. cit., 'History' Pts. III and IV (Kuala Lumpur, 1907 and 1909), passim. The Perak Council Minutes themselves were destroyed during the Japanese occupation of Malaya.

[64]The Selangor State Council had Committees for the Appointment of Kathis, for Appeals from the Courts of Assistant Kathis, for the Supervision of Religious Instruction, for the Supervision of Mosques and Mosque Funds. In addition, ad hoc committees were formed to deal with specific issues concerning proposed legislation on Muslim matters, the examination of religious publications, the collection of zakat and fitrah taxes, reported irregularities in public worship, and so on. For details, see especially S.C.M. 21/10/97; 20/6/04; 28/1/18; 7/11/18; and 22/9/23.

responsibilities of the Council of Ministers was 'to consider all matters connected with or concerning the State Religion in its Great Teachings, and to endeavour to improve the condition of Our State Religion amongst those who profess it'.[65] The Councils of Religion and Custom and their counterparts were appointed by the Sultan and advisory to him, and commonly had a majority of non-theologian members drawn from the royal household and senior chiefs, with the addition, _ex-officio_, of the State _Mufti_ (or _Shaykh ul-Islam_) and the Chief _Kathi_. These last functionaries were the principal religious officers of state, the _Mufti_, as jurisconsult, determining by _fatwa_ (legal opinion) correct law and doctrine, the Chief _Kathi_, as senior magistrate, at the head of the state system of religious courts, _kathis_ and assistant _kathis_. The task of the Council and its committees in the field of religion were varied and far-reaching, encompassing as they did the appointment of _kathis_ and certification of religious teachers, the consideration of points of Islamic law and practice, appeal cases from the lower courts, the oversight and approval of religious publications, prior consideration of statute law concerning Muslim matters, and much else besides. The rigidity with which the establishments operated varied considerably between the states, and from time to time, according to the religious temper of those in authority. One writer refers, for example, to a teacher of mysticism who received the royal favour in one state, and was arrested later just across the border in another, for

---

[65] _Lembaga Atoran bagi Perentahan Majlis Raja, Majlis Istana dan Agama_ [Statutes of the Court, Palace and Religious Establishments] (Johore, Government Printer, 1342 [1923]), 'Functions of Council of Ministers', para. 10.

preaching the same doctrine.[66] Similarly, their nominal control over all aspects of religion within the state was to some extent limited by the isolation of the rural areas, and determined by the relative efficiency of district kathis and sub-officials. Nevertheless, the alliance they represented between the forces of the traditional elite and 'orthodox' Islam was powerful and pervasive, not least in the eyes of the Malay peasant.

Although, in general, the reformists had perforce to attack the establishment from without, some attempt to infiltrate the system from within may be detected, especially in the early years before its elaboration was complete and attitudes had hardened. Shaykh Tahir, who continued to be widely respected as a scholar, even within the strongholds of the Kaum Tua, endeavoured to obtain the post of Mufti in Johore, but was found unacceptable to the Mentri Besar (Chief Minister), allegedly because of the modernist trend of his ideas.[67] He was, however, appointed inspector of religious schools in Johore, a post he held during the first World War. Earlier, he had gained the confidence of Sultan Idris of Perak (d.1916), and though he never held high titular rank, he accompanied Idris to London in 1911 as a religious adviser, and was appointed Muslim Adviser to assist the Magistrates' Courts in Taiping and Ipoh.[68] In 1918, when Sultan Iskander came to the Perak throne, Shaykh Tahir was put forward for the post of Shaykh ul-Islam, but was again passed over, the appointment going to Shaykh Mohd. Saleh, who had been Iskander's religious teacher in

---

[66] R.J. Wilkinson, 'Some Malay Studies', J.M.B.R.A.S., X, 1 (1932), p. 105.

[67] Interview with Tuan (now Dato') Haji Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad (Za'ba), Kuala Lumpur, November 1960. Za'ba was later a close friend of Shaykh Tahir.

[68] Al-Atakwi (Taiping), I, 10 (October, 1947).

the Kuala Lumpur Police Barracks. One version of this story says that Shaykh Tahir was in fact appointed '_Mufti_' of Perak, but resigned because of opposition to his _fatwa_ by the old-fashioned _ulama_.[69] As the most distinguished theologian among the _Kaum Muda_, it is not surprising that Shaykh Tahir should have come nearest to being able to work from within the establishment. Haji Abbas b. Mohd. Taha was _Kathi_ at Tanjong Pagar (Singapore) for a number of years, but when he moved to Selangor round about 1915, upon the demise of his newspaper _Neracha_, it is noteworthy that he lived by teaching only. Sayyid Shaykh worked as a _shariah_ court lawyer in Johore from 1909 until 1914 or '15, when he went to Malacca to start a _madrasah_ in company with Haji Abu Bakar b. Ahmad.[70]

It was through the medium of the new _madrasah_, therefore, and, indirectly, by their publication of newspapers and other literature used in these schools, that the _Kaum Muda_ made most of its impact on Malay society. Religious education of all degrees of refinement, from the old-fashioned _pondok_ schools to reformist _madrasah_, had received a tremendous impetus as a result of foreign rule and all that followed in its train. The profound shock to the Malays, brought face to face with, or at the very least living alongside, alien and aggressive communities possessed of infinitely greater wealth and power, is evidenced in the anguished debate

---

[69] Hamka, _Pengaruh Muhammad Abduh Di Indonesia_ [The Influence of Muhammad Abduh in Indonesia] (Djakarta, n.d. [1961]), p.10. This version is plausible, but untrue.

[70] Sayyid Alwi Al-Hadi, 'Almerhum Syed Sheikh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi etc.', p. 6.

that took place among the more articulate, about the causes and remedies for Malay backwardness. The panacea most frequently prescribed was 'education', but this was clearly a prescription that could be filled in many ways. For the peasantry, to whom the social and economic change going on about them brought, perhaps, some amelioration of material condition, but also much uncertainty, it meant a re-affirmation of traditional values within a framework of Islamic conservatism, in an attempt to re-assert the bases on which life was customarily lived. For the more purposive *Kaum Muda* it meant an attempt to re-think Islam in terms of the demands made by the contemporary situation, to participate, as it were, in induced social change, the dynamic of which would be provided by a reformed Islamic ideology. For only comparatively few, initially, did it mean an uncritical and holistic acceptance of all that the West had to offer.

Government-provided vernacular education had been available to Malays in the western and southern states since the 1880s, but many parents were reluctant to entrust their sons to the Government schools, fearing their assumed foreign and Christian bias, and turned instead to Islam.[71] Writing

---

[71]Innumerable examples of this mistrust of Government-sponsored education might be cited. See, e.g., 'Monthly Report on Lower Perak and Batang Padang', in *Perak Government Gazette*, March 15, 1895; and 'Quarterly Report on Education', in *ibid*., May 11, 1894, where it is stated that in attempting to overcome resistance 'The Koran class in Malay schools is quite as useful as the playground in English schools'.

in Pahang in 1905, the District Officer at Temerloh complained:

> 'The natives are as apathetic as ever regarding secular education, though they will send their children miles to learn to recite the Koran. There is a well-patronised Koran school at Lipat Kajang, to which youths flock from all over the country. There is annually an exodus of the youth of the district to Petani and Kedah to seek that religious instruction which is not, apparently, to be found to any extent in Pahang.'[72]

From the point of view of utility alone, many Malays saw little advantage in vernacular education, for unless it led to further instruction in English (an urban amenity seldom available to the rural Malay), it was of small assistance in obtaining even subordinate Government jobs. It may be noted, for example, that of the 2,900 boys who left Perak vernacular schools in 1903, only 24 became office or domestic servants, ten Malay schoolteachers, one a policeman, and one a clerk, the remainder following ordinary peasant pursuits.[73] With the great increase, however, in minor religious offices, as a result of the creation of the state establishments, and in the growth of the religious schools themselves, religious education acquired a practical as well as a moral value, in preparing boys for a calling which carried considerable status within the Malay community itself. Reference has already been made to the establishment of numbers of _madrasah_ in the Straits Settlements and throughout the Federated States after 1906. By 1913, a correspondent to _Neracha_ was able to point to '_berpuloh2_' ('tens upon tens') of _madrasah_ now operating in Perak alone,[74] turning out a steady

---

[72] _Pahang Annual Report for 1905_, p. 11.

[73] _Perak Annual Report for 1904_, p. 11; eight years earlier, a return of 4,365 past pupils gave 2,070 employed as 'padi-planters or gardeners', 2,177 'variously employed as shopkeepers, miners etc.', and 118 employed as 'clerks and orderlies', _Perak Annual Report for 1896_, p. 23.

[74] _Neracha_, 20 August, 1913.

stream of potential teachers and religious officials. By no means all the new *madrasah* were in any sense *Kaum Muda*, but a significant number of the teachers were, and the use of the Malay press and other publications as teaching media greatly stimulated controversial discussion on *Kaum Muda* principles.

The roots of the conflict between *Kaum Muda* and the *Kaum Tua* alliance of religious conservatism and traditional elite, though expressed in doctrinal and ritual controversies of varying substance, may be seen in the threat offered by the former to the very basis of customary authority. Cardinal among the principles of the reformists was the contention that man must use his reason (*akal*) to determine the truth about religion as about all else, and abjure the blind acceptance of intermediary authority. 'The *Kaum Tua*', wrote *Al-Ikhwan* ('The Brotherhood') in 1929,

> behave as though it was obligatory to believe all the law books of the *Ulama*, and every word in them, as though they were the Kuran itself ... while the *Kaum Muda* hold that the Kuran and *Hadith* alone have this authority, and that as none of the *Ulama* are free from error, God has given us reason, or intelligence, with which to examine what the *Ulama* say.[75]

In the last analysis, the perfection and purification of Islam was for the *Kaum Muda* not simply an end in itself, but a means for the acceleration and direction of social and economic change for the betterment of Malay society, a process at present retarded by traditional Islam as practised in the states. 'In other parts of the Islamic world', said one writer, 'the *Kaum Muda* become the instrument of progress, shaking the *Kaum Tua* out of

---

[75] 'Perchayaan Ulama: Pertengkaran Diantara Kaum Tua dengan Kaum Muda' [Belief in the *Ulama*: The Dispute between *Kaum Tua* and *Kaum Muda*], *Al-Ikhwan*, III, 12 (August, 1929).

their senility and stupidity. ... [In Malaya] the ulama desire, like Saint Peter of the Roman Church, to hold the only key to the gates of heaven.'[76]

In attempting to wrest the key from the grasp of the establishment, the reformists came into direct conflict with the state religious authorities on a wide range of ritual, doctrinal and social questions. As fundamentalists and purists, they attacked customary and 'superstitious' accretions to orthodox Islam; as modernists, they proposed rationalised reformulations of Islamic practice which would better enable them and their co-religionists to compete in the modern world. In the first category, such questions as those concerning the propriety of reciting the talkin[77] over the dead at burial, and whether or not the formulation of intention before prayer should be made aloud or inwardly, occasioned widespread and persistent debate among the religious. In the second category, the Kaum Muda fought a long drawn out battle for the acceptance of savings-bank and co-operative society interest as non-usurious (and

---

[76] Abu Al-Murtazi, 'Kaum Muda dan Kaum Tua: Dunia Islam' [Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua: The Islamic World], Al-Ikhwan, III, 2 (October, 1928). Abu Al-Murtazi seems to have been a Malay student in Cairo.

[77] Talkin (Ar. = 'instruction'), a short address recited over the grave at the close of the funeral service, consisting of advice to the dead man on how to reply to the questions of the Interrogators of the Dead. Disapproved of by the Kaum Muda as bida'ah (erroneous innovation), it is still widely practised in Malaya, and was so, for instance, at the funeral of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong in 1960.

therefore falling outside the proscription upon riba),[78] and advocated greater freedom for women to receive education and participate in social affairs.[79] The pattern of the disputes is clear. They represent, on the one hand, an attempt by those Muslims with a more intensive experience of Metropolitan Islam to purify ritual and belief from purely local innovations, and on the other an attempt by urban-centred Muslims to reformulate Islam in response to the economic and social pressures of contemporary life.

In addition to, or it might be said as a result of, these attacks by the Kaum Muda upon established religion, their ideas were regarded as also attacks upon the traditional elite, who stood behind and were involved with the religious hierarchy. Some weight was lent to this by the continual, if muted, criticisms of the Malay 'Raja2 dan orang2 besar' (Rulers and traditional leaders), both for their allegedly dissolute and self-indulgent way of life, and more positively for failing to provide

---

[78]In the 1920's the Yang di-Pertuan Besar (Ruler) of Negri Sembilan refused to allow the Co-operative Societies Department to set up societies in the state, on the ground that its credit and interest mechanism was haram (canonically forbidden). 'No fatwas from "Religious Authorities" produced by the Department could move him ...', The Modern Light, I, 1 (July, 1940), p. 65. This was only one instance among many. The Kaum Muda were accustomed to citing in support of their argument Shaykh Mohd. Abduh's famous fatwa on interest (see C.C. Adams, Islam and Modernism in Egypt, p. 80). Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi was retained by the Co-operative Societies Department to prepare a booklet on the question, which, however, I have been unable to see.

[79]The most active proponent of greater freedom for women was Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi, in a series of articles in Al-Ikhwan, translated from Kasim Amin Bey's Tahrir ul-Mara'ah [The Emancipation of Women] and published collectively under the title Alam Perempuan [Women's World] (Penang, 1930). Cf. also, Marina Merican, 'Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi Dan Pendapat2-nya Mengenai Kemajuan Kaum Perempuan', (B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Malaya, 1961).

a leadership which would enable their people to strive more effectively in an alien-dominated world.[80] Again, Kaum Muda's criticisms of adat, though confined to what were thought to be its ill effects upon the practice of Islam,[81] and their insistence upon the equality of all men before God (and upon a more individualistic ethic) could be seen to have implications subversive of the existent social and political as well as religious order.

Official Islam reacted both by argument and by the direct use of authority. Periodicals such as Pengasoh ('The Educator') (1918-37), a fortnightly magazine produced in Kelantan by the Council of Religion and Malay Custom,[82] which circulated throughout the peninsula, urged opposing points of view, and condemned the Kaum Muda as irreligious. The section of the Muhamedan Laws Enactment of 1904 which forbade any person 'except in his own home, and in the presence of members of his own family only, [to] teach any religious doctrine unless he shall previously have obtained written permission to do so from His Highness the Sultan',[83] enabled a certain control to be maintained over religious

---

[80] See, e.g., Al-Imam, II, 1 (July, 1907), pp. 25-9; Neracha, June 19, 1912; Seruan Azhar, II, 22 (July, 1927), pp. 421-5; and Al-Ikhwan, IV, 4 (December, 1929) pp. 120-3.

[81] See articles 'Manusia dan Kebiasaan' [Mankind and Custom], in Pilehan Timour, I, 3 (December, 1927); and 'Bagi Pendengaran Ketua2 Ugama Lagi' [More for the Ears of Religious Leaders], in Al-Ikhwan, II, 6 (February, 1928).

[82] For details of the establishment of Pengasoh, see Kelantan Administration Report for 1918, p. 13.

[83] Section 10 of Selangor III, 1904, with identical enactments in Perak and Negri Sembilan in the same year.

teaching, though it was much evaded. State Mufti and Shaykh ul-Islam issued fatwa condemning the new ideas as kafir (infidel) or Kadiani,[84] and reformist leaders were refused permission to speak in some mosques. When Haji Abdulkarim Amrullah, one of the principal Kaum Muda figures in West Sumatra, visited Malaya in 1916 and gave addresses throughout the west coast states and Johore, he succeeded, says his biographer, in bringing many people round to his point of view in spite of official opposition, and was threatened with expulsion as a result of reports made by religious officials to the Malay Rulers.[85]

Kaum Muda periodicals and other publications were denied entry into some states,[86] and an Amendment to the 1904 Enactment, passed in 1925-26, provided severe penalties for anyone printing or publishing

---

[84]The reference is to the adherents of the Ahmadiyya movement, founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Kadian in the Punjab. The Mirza died in 1908, and when his son succeeded him as second Khalifa in 1914, the movement split in two, Khwaja Kamal ad-Din and Maulvi Mohd. Ali seceding to form what became known as the Lahore party, the original group being the Kadian party. The most important difference between the two groups was that while the Kadian party regarded the Mirza as a Prophet (a claim that, in the light of the explicit Kuranic description of Muhammad as the last of the Prophets, was clearly heretical), the Lahore party looked on him mainly as a reformer. The Lahore party had some influence in Malaya among the English educated. The Kadian party seems to have had comparatively little influence, but for those who were hostile to the forces of modernism and reformism, the term Kadiani was used simply as a vituperative term implying heresy. This is still so today; see Hamka, Tegoran Suchi dan Jujur terhadap Mufti Johore (Singapore, 1958), Introduction.

[85]Hamka, Ajahku, p. 59.

[86]See Al-Ikhwan, III, 7 (March, 1929).

literature concerning the Islamic religion without the written permission of the Sultan in Council,[87] and was used both to provide a prior check on publication within the states, and in some cases to proscribe publication or force withdrawal.[88] There was even, in 1929, an unsuccessful attempt to have legislation passed in all State Councils wholly banning the import of newspapers and journals 'of the new style'.[89] These measures seem certainly to have been taken and proposed in the hope of stemming the increasing flow of reformist literature from the Straits Settlements, particularly Penang, in the early 1920's.

As British colonial possessions (and predominantly non-Malay and non-Muslim communities) neither Singapore nor Penang had authoritarian religious

---

[87] Section 12 of Selangor III, 1904, as Amended by I, 1925. Identical enactments to the principal Enactment were passed in Negri Sembilan in 1925, and Perak in 1926.

[88] Three works by Ahmad Nawawi b. Mohd. Ali, a graduate of the Madrasah Al-Mashhor, Penang, were refused permits by the religious authorities of Perak (for details, see Za'ba, 'Recent Malay Literature', J.M.B.R.A.S., XIX, 1 (February, 1940), pp. 3-4). Za'ba himself published a collection of articles translated from the Islamic Review (Woking), under the title Umbi Kemajuan [The Roots of Progress] (Penang, 1932), which came under suspicion. He was at that time on the staff of the Malay Translation Bureau at Tanjong Malim. As a government servant he was approached by the Resident, and required to apologise to the Sultan, in addition to withdrawing the book from circulation in Perak.

[89] See the Abstract of Minutes of the Selangor State Council for October 29, 1929, and May 15, 1930, at which meetings the question of prohibiting the importation into the F.M.S. of 'papers debating the Muhammedan religion' was raised. The matter was referred first for discussion by the other Rulers, and then to the Conference of Residents. The Conference held that 'no Amendment to the Muhammadan Laws Enactment is required, but that in any particular case action may be taken under the Seditious Publications (Prohibition) Enactment, 1919' (Abstract of Proceedings of the Conference of Residents, 81st Conference, 12-13 May, 1930, Item 11). The argument of those who desired the measure was that publications 'of the new style' were endangering the peace and order of the states. For a discussion of the whole question in the Malay press, see Semangat Islam, I, 6 (April, 1930), pp. 101-5, which quotes extensively from Saudara and Majallah Guru.

establishments comparable to those in the peninsular states. Muslim Advisory Boards in both settlements possessed no authority beyond that of providing Government with advice on matters touching the general interest and welfare of the Muslim community (which, it will be recalled, contained many non-Malay elements), and statute law concerned itself solely with marriage and divorce, and religious endowments.[90] Pressure from some quarters in the 1920's to appoint Muftis and other officials to act as censors met with a marked lack of response, described by one reformist writer as 'one of the major benefits of British rule'.[91] In these circumstances, both cities became sanctuaries or sniping posts for those who were in conflict with the religious authorities in the states, and in addition, of course, as the only sizeable urban concentrations of Muslims. provided a ready audience for doctrines 'of the new style'.

The assumption by Penang in the 1920's of the role that Singapore had played at the beginning of the century, as the centre of reformist thought and literature, may be attributed mainly to one man, Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi. Sayyid Shaykh, it may be recalled, after teaching for some years in his own Madrasah Al-Hadi in Malacca, moved to Penang in 1918 or '19 to found, in combination with some of the Arab community there,

---

[90] See Ahmad Ibrahim, 'The Legal Position of Muslims in Singapore', Intisari (Singapore) I, 1, 1962, pp. 4-5 and passim; and M. Suffian Hashim, 'The Relationship Between Islam and the State in Malaya', ibid., p. 12.

[91] Al-Ikhwan, III, 2 (October, 1928)

the Madrasah Al-Mashhor, destined to become perhaps the most distinguished of religious schools in Malaya.[92] In 1922, he published the first portion (never subsequently completed) of his Al-Tarikh ul-Islam [The History of Islam], made up in large part of articles which had previously appeared in Al-Imam. Finding, however, that the pill unsweetened did not sell satisfactorily, he turned instead to more popular forms of writing, and in the ensuing decade produced a remarkable stream of romantic novels and thrillers (adapted from Egyptian and Turkish originals), a variety of homiletic literature and two periodicals, and established a printing press, which together changed the whole face of Malay literary life. The first, and still the most widely known, of Sayyid Shaykh's novels, Hikayat Faridah Hanum [The Story of Faridah Hanum] appeared in 1925.[93] Based on a modern Egyptian romance, it tells of the faithful but much-thwarted love between two young, upper-class Egyptians, separated by a traditional forced marriage, but after many vicissitudes finally reunited. In the course of the story, opportunity is taken to stress the importance of education and greater social freedom for women, as well as the more customary virtues of faithfulness and purity. A later novel of a similar kind, Hikayat Puteri Nurul'ain [The Story of Princess Nurul'Ain],[94] deals with the perils of easy

---

[92] Among its graduates are numbered Dr. Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, now Chairman of the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party, and Haji Abu Bakar Ashaari, now Chief Kathi [?] of Perlis, and widely regarded as the most liberal of the state religious authorities.

[93] Hikayat Faridah Hanum, atau Setia Ashek kepada Ma'ashok-nya [The Story of Faridah Hanum, or Loyalty of a Lover to Her Loved One] (Penang, 1925; reprinted by Qalam Press, Singapore [1958]).

[94] Hikayat Puteri Nurul'Ain, atau Bahaya Bercherai Talak Tiga dan Berchina Buta [The Story of Princess Nurul'Ain, or The Dangers of Hasty Divorce and Interposed Marriage] (Penang, 1926; reprinted by Qalam Press, Singapore, 1959). Under Islamic law, a man who divorces himself [Footnote continued on next page.]

divorce, and in particular with the practice of interposed marriage known as berchina buta. It appeared in a series of serially published stories under the general title Angan2 Kehidupan [Reflections on Life], subtitled, significantly enough, 'The Moral Trainer'.[95] In all, some six books appeared in this series, and a further seven in a series of detective stories (with no didactic intent) known as Cherita Rokambul [Rokambul Stories].

In 1927, Sayyid Shaykh, who had left the Madrasah Al-Mashhor to go into business, started his own printing establishment, the Jelutong Press, which now became the focus of reformist publishing activities. In addition to Angan2 Kehidupan and Rokambul series, Jelutong Press published Sayyid Shaykh's translations of Muhammad Abduh's Kuranic exegesis,[96] and part of Kasim Amin Bey's work on the emancipation of women, under the title Alam Perempuan [Woman's World],[97] together with his own Ugama Islam dan Akal [The Islamic Religion and Reason], and numerous works by other modernist

---

[94] [footnote continued from previous page.] irrevocably by uttering the three revocations may not re-marry her unless and until she has been married and divorced by someone else. The practice of engaging an intermediary to perform this marriage and divorce is known in Malay as 'China buta', literally 'blind Chinaman'.

[95] Za'ba suggests that Sayyid Shaykh may have derived this title from that used by Sayyid Ahmad Khan for similar publications in India in the nineteenth century, Tahdzib ul-Akhlaq ('Modern Developments', in R.O. Winstedt, 'A History of Malay Literature', J.M.B.R.A.S., XVII, 3 (1938), p. 154).

[96] The Tafsir al-Fatihah (Penang, 1928) and Tafsir Juz Amma (Penang, 1927), being the first Surah and last Section respectively, of the Kuran.

[97] See above, fn. 79.

and reformist writers.[98] In 1926, he had founded, with himself as editor, the monthly journal Al-Ikhwan, which, as previous citations have shown, was devoted principally to the discussion of controversial religious and social questions, and in 1928 started a daily newspaper called Saudara ('Brother').[99] Though it is not, of course, possible to say with certainty who formed the audience for this array of publications, or what size it was, their existence alone indicates the spread of literacy among the Malays. In 1911, a special enquiry carried out in selected areas during the F.M.S. Census had shown that the literacy rate among males of all ages in Kuala Kangsar (Perak) was only 27.93 per cent, and in Temerloh (Pahang) 6.59 per cent.[100] In the same year, however, 44 per cent of all boys of school age (5-15) in Perak were receiving vernacular education, and 29 per cent in Pahang.[101] By 1921, almost half the 30,000 'urban' Malays in the F.M.S. could read and write their own language,[102] and though no

---

[98] Of these may be mentioned Hadiah Kebangsaan [The National Gift] (Penang, 1933), edited by Sayyid Shaykh, which contained two essays by Mohd. Abduh, and two by Za'ba on 'The Poverty of the Malays' and 'The Salvation of the Malays'; Za'ba's Umbi Kemajuan [The Roots of Progress] (Pehang, 1932), a translation of articles from the (Woking) Islamic Review (which was suppressed by the religious authorities in Perak); and numerous works by Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin, among them Perisai Orang Beriman tentang Madzhab Orang Kadian [The Shield of the Faithful against the Kadiani School] (Penang, 1930).

[99] The first editor of Saudara was a recent Minangkabau immigrant Mohd. Yunus b. Abdul Hamid, who had founded the weekly reformist paper Idaran Zaman [Signs of the Times] in Penang in 1925.

[100] Census of the Federated Malay States, 1911 (Kuala Lumpur, 1912) p.85. Literacy was defined as ability 'to read and write the [Malay] Arabic character'. The remaining areas were Ulu Selangor, 17.22 per cent, and Kuala Pilah (Negri Sembilan), 18.35 per cent.

[101] Ibid. The figures forSelangor and Negri Sembilan were 51 per cent and 54 per cent.

[102] Census of British Malaya, 1921 (London, 1922), pp. 41-2 and 109. Unfortunately this Census does not give figures for the areas used in 1911. My figure is a generalisation from those given for Malays in the principal urban areas in the F.M.S. The definition on this occasion was 'the ability to read and write a letter'.

figures were recorded for the rural areas, there had certainly been a corresponding increase there also. In 1931, 48.3 per cent of all adult Malay males, rural and urban, in the Federated States could read and write Malay.[103] Though these figures should be treated with some caution, it is safe to say that by the mid-1920's a fair proportion of urban Malays, and those rural Malays who were teaching in or attending vernacular and religious schools, were becoming increasingly familiar with books and newspapers in their own language. The alarm felt by the traditional elite - religious hierarchy alliance at the possible effects of this literature is shown in the attempts made to control its content.

But if the conflict between the reformists and religious officialdom was one aspect of the _Kaum Muda_ - _Kaum Tua_ dichotomy, their opposition to rural-centred Islam in the persons of the village _ulama_ was another, of equal importance and of the same general characteristics. Indeed, one might say that it was from this class that religious officialdom was drawn. Prior to the coming of the British, as we have seen, 'education' in Peninsular Malaya had been entirely in the hands of village religious teachers, who in their homes or in the _surau_, and sometimes in the larger _pondok_ schools, taught the Islam with which they were familiar: uncomprehending recitation of the Kuran, some elementary exegesis of the

---

[103] _British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census_ (London, 1932) pp. 93 and 330-46. The figures given for Kelantan and Trengganu were 8 per cent and 7.9 per cent; that for Malays in Kuala Lumpur 62.8 per cent.

Kuran and _Hadith_, and Malay-Muslim ethical and behavioural precepts. Often, particularly in more recent times, these teachers had completed the pilgrimage, which gave them additional status and authority, but very few could claim more than the most rudimentary and dogmatic knowledge of Islam, clouded in a haze of traditional Malay spiritual beliefs. Many of the most respected and venerated teachers belonged to, and led local manifestations of, one or other of the Sufi mystic _tarekat_, which have so coloured the practice of Islam in the Malay world. For the vast majority of Malay peasants, the transmission of their religion, where it existed systematically at all, was through the village _ulama_, and this remained true - was, indeed, intensified - after the provision of Government vernacular schools in the rural areas.

In addition to their role in this more or less formal didactic situation, the _ulama_ were culturally important in other and pervasive ways. As _imams_ of village mosques, as the chief religious functionaries at all important junctures of life concerning birth, circumcision, marriage and death, and at the frequent _kenduri_ (feasts) given to mark special occasions; as the companion to the _bomoh_, or spirit doctor (and sometimes combining the two roles), in the physical and spiritual crises of life, the ulama were regarded as the arbiters of all questions of religion, and much else besides. Their relationship with the peasant community of which they were a part was a close and complex one, not easily assailed by those who subscribed to a different system of ideas and values.

As might be expected, it was upon the rural _ulama_ that the full wrath

of the Kaum Muda descended. Describing them as 'hawkers of religion',[104] obstacles to progress, and destroyers of the true faith, Al-Ikhwan, for example, could write that while for the ulama themselves 'their teaching is aimed only at wordly wealth, ease of living, large houses ... and not at the true Islam, ... at the same time they say that those who are ragged, live in dilapidated hovels, have no money and take little trouble to accumulate it, are the sort of people our religion demands'.[105] Ahmad Lutfi, then a Malay student at Al-Azhar, writing in Seruan Azhar, refers sarcastically to ulama who 'remain docile out of respect for the orang2 besar [traditional leaders] - and in the hope of gaining reward and office thereby. They collect Kuranic dicta [ayat] and Hadith which serve only to strengthen their own position. ...'[106] In short, he says, they are fit only to filch from the pockets of the rich and suck the blood of the poor. In their passion to defend Islam against the allegations of obscurantism made by the West, to promote both a more liberal system of education and a more individualistic approach to religious authority, the reformists, in article after article, castigated the village ulama as the chief hindrances to the attainment of a new world.

But it was not mainly, or most importantly, through the columns of newspapers and journals that the Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua conflict was fostered at

---

[104] The common allegation was that the village ulama 'sold' their religion, against Kuranic precept. The reference was mainly to the practice of receiving money or other gifts for functioning at religious ceremonies, and for teaching.

[105] 'Bagi Pendengaran Ketua2 Ugama Lagi' [More for the Ears of Religious Leaders], Al-Ikhwan, II, 6 (October, 1927), pp. 172-3.

[106] Ahmad Lutfi, 'Kewajipan Ulama Islam' [The Duties of Islamic Ulama], Seruan Azhar, I, 5 (February, 1926), p. 99.

village level. More often it arose as the result of the interests of the villagers themselves. It needed only one haji to return from the Middle East fired with reformist ideas, one religious teacher to study at a Kaum Muda madrasah in Singapore, Perak or Penang, to divide a village temporarily into two rival factions.[107] And while the main disputes were centred ostensibly round those religious questions already referred to, social questions related to them became easily involved, both as a result of independently arising social change (through the extension of popular, Western-oriented education, the introduction of rubber growing for cash and a changing economy), and as a result of the wider implications of Kaum Muda ideas. Arguments about whether it was permissible for a Muslim to wear trousers and a tie, and whether the taking of interest from post-office savings banks and rural co-operatives was lawful or not, divided people along the same lines as arguments about whether it was proper to pray at the local keramat (spirit shrine), or what was the correct interpretation of a verse of the Kuran. As Schrieke said of Western Sumatra at the same time,[108] the terms Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua came to refer to unanalysed social conflict of considerable complexity.

---

[107] In theSelangor Village of Jeram in the late 1920's, a dispute developed between Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua factions over the question of whether or not participants should stand up at the mention of the Prophet's name during the Maulud Nabi ceremony. (Literally 'Prophet's Birth', the ceremony, which consists mainly of readings from biographical works about Muhammad, is used very widely on occasions other than that of the birthday proper). The disruptive effects of the dispute were considerable, the adherents of each side refusing to pray with the others in the mosque, or to attend weddings and other ceremonies held by the opposition. Though such faction fights were often, as in this case, patched up after a time, they were not uncommon in Malay villages, as one of the unsettling effects of new ideas.

[108] B. Schrieke, 'The Causes and Effects of Communism on the West Coast of Sumatra', in his Indonesian Sociological Studies, Pt. I (The Hague/ Bandoeng, 1955), p. 150.

To be Kaum Muda was to espouse modernism in any form, and go against tradition; to be Kaum Tua was to be in favour of all that was familiar, unchanging and secure.

In a volume of essays originally published in the Police Magazine, and collected in 1935 under the title The Malayan Kaleidoscope, Haji Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin wrote that there was hardly a village in Malaya where the Malays did not argue and discuss the teachings of Kaum Muda, and went on: 'The Kaum Tua or Old Party, from among whom have been recruited the religious officials of the country, try to insinuate in revenge that the Kaum Muda are undesirable Communists, which they decidedly are not'.[109] The politicization of the image of Kaum Muda began to make itself evident only in the mid-1920's, notwithstanding the political implications inherent in reformist ideas prior to this time. Other writers have referred to the role played by Islamic reform in Indonesia as a kind of pre-nationalism.[110] The same may be said of reformism in Malaya, but with the important qualification that, unlike the Indonesian movement, it never succeeded in elaborating, either organisationally or programmatically, a political nationalism capable of attracting mass support. That in other circumstances

---

[109] Haji Abdul Majid b. Haji Zainuddin, The Malayan Kaleidoscope (Kuala Lumpur, 1935), p. 23. Abdul Majid was educated at the English public-school-type Malay Residential College, Kuala Kangsar, later becoming Malay language teacher there. In 1923, he was appointed Malayan Pilgrimage Officer at Jeddah, spending part of the year there and the rest in Malaya as a Liaison Officer with the Political Intelligence Branch of the F.M.S. Police, posts he held until the mid-1930's. For further information, see below, Chapter Six.

[110] Notably W.F. Wertheim, Indonesian Society in Transition (The Hague/Bandoeng, 2nd ed. 1959), p. 215; and H.J. Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun (The Hague/Bandoeng, 1958), pp. 43, 46, 57 and passim. Cf. also B. Schrieke, loc. cit.

it might have done so, that there was, in short, a political edge to the knife, is clear from an examination of the writings of the polemical wing of the reformist movement in the 1920's. These are to be found primarily in two periodicals published, it may be noted, outside Malaya, by Malay and Indonesian students at the University of Al-Azhar in Cairo, Seruan Azhar ('Voice of Azhar) (1925-28) and Pilehan Timour ('Choice of the East') (1927-28).

Malay students had, of course, been sent for study to both Mecca and Cairo for some years, but it was only after the first World War, and particularly in the early 1920's with the rise in incomes resulting from the boom in rubber prices, that they travelled to the Middle East in any numbers. The cost of keeping a student in Cairo at this time was estimated at about $500 annually, often more, plus travelling expenses of some $300,[111] so that only well-to-do or well-connected families could afford an education of this kind for their sons. The peak years, corresponding to the most intensive pilgrimage years from Malaya, were probably 1924-27. In 1925, 27 Malay students arrived in Cairo, bringing the total number there to about 100, with some 300 or so from Indonesia.[112] Three years earlier, in 1922, the first association of Indonesian and Malay students had been formed at Al-Azhar, Al-Jam'iah Al-Khairiah [The Welfare Society][113] with an Indonesian

---

[111] Seruan Azhar, III, 28 (January, 1928), p. 578; and cf. H.U.W. Stanton and C.L. Pickens, 'The Mecca Pilgrimage', Moslem World, XXIV, 3 (July, 1934), p. 233.

[112] Seruan Azhar, I, 1 (October, 1925), and interview with Haji Othman b. Abdullah (Kuala Lumpur, December, 1950).

[113] Seruan Azhar, II, 13 (October, 1926)

as President, and in October 1925, with the financial backing of a wealthy Malay student, Haji Othman b. Abdullah, the Society started the monthly journal Seruan Azhar, 'to bring radiance and light to our homeland'.[114] Two years later a second monthly, Pilehan Timour, was started, and both continued publication until lack of funds forced their closure in 1928. The two journals were banned by the Dutch in Indonesia, but found free entry into the Straits Settlements throughout their life.

As with earlier newspapers and journals, Seruan Azhar and Pilehan Timour were much concerned with those topics of a primarily religious kind already dealt with at some length. What now made its appearance for the first time in Malaya was a new and aggressive spirit of overt political discussion. This centred round three main concepts, Pan-Islamism, Pan-Malayanism (union between Indonesia and Malaya), and anti-colonial nationalism. The first of these was the least realistic in political terms, and the shortest-lived, hinging as it did on the hopes aroused by the conquest of the Hejaz by the Wahhabi ruler Ibn Saud in 1924, and the ill-fated attempts to resurrect the Caliphate and organise a rejuvenated Islamic world, which finally came to grief with the failure of the proposed Islamic World Congress at Mecca in 1926. A representative was sent to Mecca by a committee of the Welfare Society of Malaysian students, which called itself Al-Difa' Al-Watani, or the National Guard, and at least two delegates travelled from Malaya.[115] International Islamic

---

[114] Ibid., I, 1 (October, 1925).

[115] Sayyid Hassan b. Ahmad Al-Attas and Sayyid Abu Bakar Al-Attas represented the Sultan of Johore. See ibid., I, 9 (June, 1926).

unity as a political ideal to be expressed in Pan-Islamism had little force or influence in Malaya, in spite of an undoubted interest in the progress, welfare and government of the Middle-Eastern countries, but there was, nevertheless, at this time, among the reformist-oriented element, a certain amount of excitement about the possibilities held forth by the idea of a common Islamic renaissance which would command the respect of the West.

More important, in the long run, was the growth of the idea of a closer union between Malaya and Indonesia. Though not worked out in any detail, or indeed proceeding beyond sentiment and exhortation, some sort of political association between the two areas became a recurring theme in the columns of Seruan Azhar. The journal's first editorial, written by Mahmoud el Jounousij, made an appeal for the peoples of Sumatra, Java, Borneo and Malaya to 'unite with one heart for progress and prosperity'.[116] Much was made of the possession of a common religion and a common language, and numerous articles compared the present state of economic development, education, and political life under the separate colonial regimes.[117] From this developed discussion of colonial rule as the major obstacle to true progress and reform, and it is in this area of discourse that the most outspoken political protests against the status quo occurred. In an article entitled 'What is the Advantage of Freedom?', the Malay writer Abdullah Ahmad

---

[116] Ibid., I, 1 (October, 1925). Cf. also ibid., I, 4 (January, 1926), article 'Perhatikan-lah 1925-26' ['A Look at 1925-26'].

[117] See, e.g., ibid., II, 17 (February, 1927), pp. 245-6; II, 20 (May, 1927), pp. 383-5; II, 21 (June, 1927), pp. 403-6, and III, 25 (October, 1927), pp. 490-1.

wrote, concerning the educational systems of Malaya and Indonesia, 'We do not deny that education is necessary for freedom, but we do not believe that education which is given in countries under colonial rule can contain the seeds of freedom. The knowledge that is given to peoples under foreign influence has no purpose other than to impoverish their intellects and teach them to lick the soles of their masters' boots'.[118] This is a far cry from the carefully apolitical reformism advocated by Al-Imam twenty years earlier, with its emphasis on the real or imagined sins of the Malays themselves. 'It is not that we say that [the British] are indifferent to our welfare', Sayyid Shaykh had written in 1906, discussing colonial rule, 'just that they don't do all that they should do, especially in the field of education'.[119] Reformism was becoming more militant, but in doing so it was losing, or shedding, much of its explicitly religious basis. A new generation of nationalists was appearing, who, though they might have obtained their introduction to nationalism in the wider world by way of the Islamic renaissance, were to pursue their goals largely independent of any avowedly religious framework of ideas. In a review of the year 1927 (which, it will be recalled, saw the suppression of the Communist revolt in Sumatra), Seruan Azhar said that the most striking change to come over the homeland during the past year was the transformation

---

[118] T[engku] Abdullah [Ahmad], 'Apa-kah Faedah Merdeka?' [What is the Advantage of Freedom?], Seruan Azhar, III, 25 (October, 1927), pp. 492-3. Cf. also Radin Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism, 1900-1945', Journal of Southeast Asian History, I, 1 (1960), pp. 8-9.

[119] Al-Imam, I, 3 (September, 1906), p. 80.

of the Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua dispute, concerned as it was with religious trivia, into a Communist and non-Communist dispute.[120] While this referred to Indonesia, and not to Malaya, the secularisation of reformism was proceeding there also, though in a much less dramatic and clear-cut fashion. The term Kaum Muda, though it never wholly lost its connotations of challenge to traditional religious authority, came more and more to take on a purely secular meaning. A decade later, in 1960, it was possible for the Sultan of Perak to speak of Malay society as divided into three distinct groups, Kaum Tua, Kaum Muda and Orang Muda2: 'Those who come under the first category devote their time mostly to the spiritual side of life, those under the second category to the material side of life, while the third may be said to waver between the two'.[121]

---

[120] Seruan Azhar, III, 27 (December, 1927), article 'Selamat Tahun Bahru 1928' [Welcome New Year 1928].

[121] Message for the Fasting Month from the Sultan of Perak, in the Malay English-language monthly The Modern Light, I, 6 (Ramadan, 1859) [October, 1940], p. 254.

CHAPTER FOUR

The Malays and the British: the Middle Years

So far as is known, the first person to use the term 'British Malaya' as a geographical and political expression for the peninsular states as a whole was Sir Frederick Weld, Governor of the Straits Settlements Colony, in an address to the Royal Colonial Institute in 1883.[1] It did not at that time, however, pass into general use. Twenty years later one of Weld's successors, Sir Frank Swettenham, on his retirement as Governor of the Straits Settlements and High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States, used the expression again, and allowed himself on that occasion to dream 'in the somewhat distant future, [of] the possibility of a Malay Empire of the British Crown, comparable in some respects with the British Indian Empire, and comprising Burma, the Malay Peninsula, the Straits Settlements and North Borneo'.[2] Where Malaya itself was concerned, the 'distant dream' was already, in 1903, approaching reality. Within seven years the remaining

---

[1] Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute, XV (1883-4), p. 267.

[2] W.H. Treacher, 'British Malaya, With More Especial Reference to the Federated Malay States', Journal of the Society of Arts, LV, 2,835 (March 22, 1907), p. 492.

Malay states of the peninsula,[3] two of which had been prepared for the experience by Siamese-appointed English advisers, and a third by contiguity with Singapore, had been drawn into the now familiar protectorate system and had accepted British administrative officials with powers analogous to those of the Residents in the Federated States.[4] That they did not immediately

---

[3]That is to say, Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan, Trengganu and Johore. The ethnically Malay states under direct Siamese provincial control at no time came under British protection.

[4]Under a treaty signed in 1909, the Siamese Government transferred to the British Government 'all rights of suzerainty, protection, administration or control whatsoever they possess' over Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu (Maxwell & Gibson, Treaties and Engagements, p. 89). The relationship between Siam and these states prior to 1909 had differed [see, esp., Eunice Thio, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1909' (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis: University of London, 1956)], but in the case of the first three, Siamese-appointed English advisers had been in residence since 1903 (in Kelantan, with powers similar to those of British Residents elsewhere) and 1905 (in Kedah and Perlis, with powers confined to advice on finance). In 1910, Kelantan signed a treaty with Britain, undertaking to receive a British Adviser on terms substantially the same as those governing the relationship in the F.M.S. In the same year, Kedah and Perlis also received British Advisers, whose powers were not, however, formally defined until agreements in 1923 (Kedah) and 1930 (Perlis) assimilated their position to that of the other Advisers and Residents. Trengganu, which in 1910 had appointed to it only a British Agent, with powers 'similar to those of a Consular Officer', signed a second treaty in 1919 which provided for the appointment of a British Adviser on existing models. Finally, Johore, which in 1910 had obtained British assistance in the re-organisation of government, signed a treaty in 1914 by which a General Adviser was appointed, 'whose advice must be asked and acted upon in all matters affecting the general administration of the country'. For a discussion of the juristic relationships involved in the foregoing, see Emerson, Malaysia, pp. 197-235.

join the federation, and form one political unit, was due, perhaps, to a combination of factors, amongst which two predominate. The first, applicable particularly to the east coast states of Kelantan and Trengganu, was that geographical isolation, difficulty of access and lack of immediate economic potential, made the matter less pressing from the British point of view. The second, applicable particularly in Kedah and Johore, but to some extent in all states, was that the Malay rulers showed a strong disinclination to see their states absorbed in the federal structure, with the consequent loss of independence and authority that this seemed likely to bring in its train.

That this fear was reasonable was obvious enough. Many years earlier, in 1875, a British surveyor anxious to make an exploratory traverse of the peninsula, had been refused passage up the Muar river by the district chief, who is said to have remarked, 'If we let the needle in, the thread is sure to follow'.[5] The truth of this polite, though only temporarily effective rebuff must have impressed itself many times over on the minds of Malay chiefs in Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang during the first thirty years of the protectorate system. By the beginning of the century, in the first three states, Chinese and Indian immigrants far outnumbered ethnic Malays;[6] a complex legal and economic system, unrelated to traditional Malay society, had

---

[5]D.D. Daly, 'Surveys and Explorations in the Native States of the Malayan Peninsula, 1875-82', Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, VII (July, 1882) p. 399.

[6]The total population of Perak, Selangor and Negri Sembilan in 1911 was 918,291, of whom 408,957 were Chinese, 165,844 Indian, and 333,731 Malay. Census of the Federated Malay States, 1911, p. 21.

been brought into existence to serve Western economic enterprise; and all four states were administered by a numerous and proliferating European bureaucracy increasingly centralised in the chief town of one of them, Kuala Lumpur. The separate State Councils, which if not exactly traditional Malay organs of government at least had affinities with the practice of consultation between ruler and chiefs, and afforded Malays some share in policy deliberation, had been virtually superseded in 1909 by the central Federal Council, in which the four Rulers alone played a part, and that mainly a decorative one. Even the British Residents, who in each state had been looked to by their Rulers to safeguard the special interests of the state and of its Malay inhabitants, had begun to take second place to the more remote figure of the Resident-General and to the newly created Federal Departments of government.

It is true that in the course of this cumulative process the four federated states had become rich, in terms both of vastly increased revenues and of a wide range of public works and embryo social services. And though for the most part the ordinary Malay peasant had gained little material benefit from these developments, the rulers and the upper ranks of the aristocracy had been compensated for the loss of all but the symbols of power by the award of substantial regular incomes befitting their status, and led a court life in some ways more splendid than that which had been their lot before. But the general level of wealth of a state was by no means a reliable index of the personal fortunes of its traditional rulers. In Johore, for example, which in 1905 had an annual revenue estimated at only 1½ million dollars, compared with Perak's twelve million or so,

Sultan Ibrahim, by virtue of low expenditure on public works and government services, drew a personal allowance nearly five times as large as that permitted to Sultan Idris in Perak.[7] The Malay elite in the states coming under British protection in 1910 were certainly not unaware of the potential advantage to them of economic development. They desired, indeed, or most of them did (the exception was perhaps Trengganu), to see their own territories developed, but they wanted in the process to make a better bargain with the protecting power, and more especially to retain a greater measure of real participation for themselves and their people.[8] In Johore and Kedah in particular, in close proximity to the Straits Settlements and with nearly forty years of observation of British intervention and its effects to draw on, the rulers were careful to insist that the position of the Malays be rigorously safeguarded, and were successful in securing formal or informal undertakings designed to prevent European or other alien usurpation of Malay authority.[9]

Though the disinclination of the unfederated states to share the blessings of federation was quite apparent, there is in fact little evidence that at this juncture much pressure was put upon them to join. Undoubtedly a time was foreseen when all nine states would form component

---

[7]Swettenham, British Malaya, p. 309.

[8]For discussion of this and related points, see Thio, op. cit., pp. 481-3.

[9]See, e.g., 'Correspondence between the Sultan of Johore and the High Commissioner for the Malay States [1914]', Maxwell and Gibson, Treaties and Engagements, pp. 134-5.

parts of a neatly and economically administered whole, but from the British point of view there was little to be gained by prematurely offending Malay susceptabilities. Once the needle was in, the thread was sure to follow. In the meantime, the protecting power was content to see established in each state, but particularly in the two with the greatest economic potential for Western economic enterprise, the basis of modern governmental and administrative systems on the pattern formed in the individual federated states during the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

By 1910, Johore and Kedah, and to some extent Kelantan as well, had already begun to wed modern bureaucratic organisation to traditional systems of state government. Though centralised administrations of this kind were still only in infancy, they were staffed almost entirely by Malays, and it was no longer possible to claim, as Swettenham had claimed for the 1870s, that 'The British, on arriving here, found no Native Civil Service ... which could gradually be reformed and disciplined'.[10] British Advisers moving into the newly protected states found not only the nucleus of an administrative cadre, but strong sensitivity by ruling groups to all attempts to overstep the boundaries of advice and guidance. The modified version of the Resident system which resulted, reflecting more accurately ideals of 'indirect rule', was made possible partly by the absence of strong pressures for rapid

---

[10]See above, Chapter One.

modernisation, partly by the convenient utilisation in the unfederated states of existing federal institutions. The unified Malayan Civil Service (M.C.S.), European in composition, transferred officers on formal 'secondment' to the separate administrative services of the unfederated states; specialist and technical officers from Federal Government departments were made freely available; and over all, the several Advisers of the unfederated states (themselves M.C.S. officers) were, like the Residents and Resident-General of the F.M.S., responsible on all major policy matters to the High Commissioner for the Malay States as a whole.

British readiness to compromise in the unfederated states over the matter of visible Malay autonomy, though obviously due in part to the ability to gain their ends in other ways, was almost certainly conditioned by recent concern in the F.M.S. at the increasingly minor role now played by Malays in all aspects of the life of their states. Some fifteen or so years previously, as plans for the federation of the west coast states and Pahang had matured in the minds of Colonial Office and local officials,[11] various measures had been considered for the reassurance of the rulers of these states, who, it was felt, might see in the proposals a threat of further diminution of their prestige and powers. Because the federation scheme was conceived very largely as an administrative convenience for the British, it was a little difficult to explain convincingly to the rulers

---

[11] The only published contemporary material bearing on this may be found in Correspondence Respecting the Federation of the Protected Malay States, May 1893-December 1895 (Government Printer: Taiping, Perak, 1896).

why it should also appeal to them. It was therefore determined that first among the 'main features of the scheme' should be regular meetings of the rulers in a joint Council, to be set up 'to discuss and settle matters of common interest'.[12] The Governor of the Straits Settlements suggested that this Council, to be held annually, should be attended by all rulers and senior chiefs, together with their British administrators; that it should be a consultative and advisory body, without legislative powers; that it should be accompanied by 'as much pomp and circumstance as possible'; and that 'no effort should be spared to show the Malay Rulers that the Federal bond would not have the effect of lowering the dignity and prestige which now attaches to each Sultan and Chief'.[13] Swettenham, deputed to undertake a persuasive mission to each of the rulers in turn, was asked to make clear to them that in binding themselves to the Federation Agreement, they would not 'in the slightest degree ... be curtailing the right of self Government which they at present enjoy', and to emphasise in addition the advantages that must accrue from the proposed annual Council, 'to discuss and advise upon -- under the Presidency of the Governor of the Straits Settlements -- matters for the well-being of the different communities'.[14]

The first of the councils, described variously as a 'Durbar', as 'the

---

[12] 'Memo for the Private Information of Sir Charles Mitchell', encl. in draft letter, Buxton to Mitchell, 22 December 1893, CO. 273/190.

[13] Confidential Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 1 May 1895, CO. 273/203.

[14] 'Draft Instructions to Mr. F.A. Swettenham, C.M.G., Resident of Perak', Encl. III to the Confidential Despatch just cited.

Federal Council', or more frequently as the 'Conference of Rulers', met in Kuala Kangsar (Perak) in July, 1897, the year following federation. It was attended by all four rulers, by the Malay members of the State Councils, and by the Resident-General and Residents, with the High Commissioner as President. The Resident-General (Swettenham), in his report later, waxed lyrical over the momentousness of this meeting, remarking that so far as he knew it was the first time any ruler had visited another with friendly and peaceful intentions, and declaring that 'the occasion was so great a success from every point of view, that it would be difficult to overestimate the value of that meeting as tending to further the objects of Federation and the real union of the Malay chiefs for their own welfare'.[15] All proceedings were conducted in Malay, and were accompanied by a full measure of the 'pomp and circumstance' recognised to be desirable if the aims of the gathering were to be achieved. There are, unfortunately, no minutes or verbatim reports of the proceedings,[16] but after formal opening speeches on each side (during which, Swettenham says without apparent irony, Sultan Idris of Perak 'spoke of British protection, which he did not hesitate to describe as control'),[17] the Conference seems to have gone on to deal mainly with matters of specifically Malay concern relating to religion, custom and general welfare. 'Nothing', said the Resident-General, 'could be decided at the conference, which is only one of advice', but several matters on which there was unity of opinion

---

[15] Annual Report by the Resident-General of the F.M.S. for 1897, pp. 1-2.

[16] An account of the conference is said to have been published as Colonial Office Eastern Pamphlet 24A (Thio, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula', p. 228).

[17] Swettenham, British Malaya, p. 290, quoting from 'the Resident-General's Official Report of the proceedings'.

were referred to the State Councils for further action.[18] There seems little doubt, from what description is available (all British), that the conference was in general a pleasurable and interesting experience for the participants, and perhaps went some way towards soothing what Malay fears there were that the control of their states was slipping even further from their grasp.

The second Conference of Rulers was not held until six years later, in Kuala Lumpur in 1903. The reason for this lapse of time, in view of the original intention to convene such meetings annually, is obscure. It may have been that in the British view, the first conference having done all that was necessary to win Malay allegiance to the federation scheme, Malay interests in the interim were not thought to require more frequent meetings. Certainly, these years bridged a period heavily pre-occupied with administrative elaboration of the new, centralised system of federal government, and with laying the groundwork for the second wave of Western economic expansion in Malaya, based on the rubber plantation industry. None of this had much, specifically, to do with the Malays. When the High Commissioner came to describe the 1903 conference to the Colonial Office, he wrote: 'The principal feature of this assembly of Malay Sultans, their Chiefs and Advisers, was that from Perak in the North and Negri Sembilan in the South, all the representatives of these states reached Kuala Lumpur by train'.[19] But the conference was notable in other

---

[18] Ibid.

[19] Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 25 September, 1903, F.M.S. 517/1903.

ways as well. Malay uneasiness at the effects of six years of federation in depriving the states of individuality, and in emphasising in particular the increasingly alien and non-Malay character of government, was growing. During the conference, Sultan Idris of Perak, at once the most able and the most articulate of the rulers, ended a long speech praising the wisdom and justice of British protection in the past by protesting mildly at the trend towards amalgamation in the present.[20] This, he said, was not what he had originally understood to be involved in federation; and reminding the British that under the Pangkor Engagement the Residents and not the Resident-General were to advise the rulers, he expressed the hope 'that the affairs of each State may be managed by its own officers, so that governments may be separate entities'.[21] Something of the same anxiety was reflected in the topic of principal importance discussed at the conference sessions: the question of extending the employment of Malays in government service. The answer found to this question, both at the conference itself and in the years immediately following, was to be of profound significance for the future of the Malay people.

The situation as it then existed was clear enough. Even before 1895 the governments of the protected Malay states had been staffed by Europeans on a scale much greater than that found in, for example, either

---

[20]Emerson, Malaysia, p. 143.

[21]Ibid., quoting from T. Lister, Report on the Administration of the Federated Malay States (Government Printing Office: Rangoon, 1920). I have been unable to consult the account of the 1903 conference said to have been published in Colonial Office Eastern Pamphlet 43, and the Minutes of the conference said to have been bound in with the Selangor Government Gazette for 1903 could not be located while I was in Malaya. Both these sources are referred to by Thio, op. cit., p. 229.

Ceylon or India.[22] With the creation in that year of the Malayan Civil Service (M.C.S.) as a unified administrative corps for the states as a whole, the way had been opened for further expansion. During the first ten years of federation 67 new cadets took up junior appointments in the M.C.S., through competitive examinations conducted in London.[23] In addition, extra professional and specialist officers were recruited for the new federal government departments -- of health, public works, railways, police and much else. The distinction between the M.C.S. (the territorial and general administrative service) and the specialist services of government was an important one. Members of the M.C.S., the 'heaven-born' administrative elite, staffed the territorial divisions and sub-divisions of the component states, from Residency to District Office, forming a chain of authority running downwards from the Resident-General's Office through the State Secretariats to district and sub-district level. Their job was government-in-general -- a task which included ultimate responsibility for policy, and co-ordination at each administrative level of the technical or functional services, which were formally regarded as their agents and advisers. The M.C.S. in 1904 numbered 159 (including 42 cadets),[24] almost all of whom were European. Two Malays, sons of ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak and educated in Malacca, had been admitted to the lower ranks of the M.C.S., and were serving respectively as District Officer of the remote district of

---

[22] See above, Chapter One.

[23] Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 4 May, 1905, F.M.S. 201/1905.

[24] <u>F.M.S. Civil List, 1904</u>,

Upper Perak, and as Second Assistant Secretary to the Resident of that state. Another five Malays, not members of the M.C.S., held minor administrative posts as Settlement Officers in the states of their birth, and two chiefs of the old school were classified as Superintendents of Penghulus.[25] No Malays held professional or technical posts of any kind.

This situation could not be regarded as satisfactory from the point of view of either the British or the Malays. For the Malays, it contrasted unfavourably with that existing in the as yet unprotected states, especially Johore and Kedah, where (though the tasks performed by government were certainly less complex and demanding) Malay administrators were still substantially in control of both policy and its execution. For the British, it was open to both practical and moral objections. The proliferation of expatriate staff, however much it might promote that most cardinal of all virtues for the nineteenth century Englishman, administrative efficiency, was expensive and uneconomical. 'Nothing but the most urgent necessity', wrote the Resident-General in 1902, 'will justify any further increase of European officers in any department, and it is the policy of Government to train and employ natives and residents of the country in all subordinate positions in the service'.[26] Thus ran the argument from expediency. But moral obligations were recognised too. The creation myth of the British presence in Malaya was that they had been

---

[25] Ibid., p. 18.

[26] Resident-General's Office, Circular No. 68, 1902.

invited there by the rulers in order 'to teach them a better form of administration', something which must necessarily involve sharing government with those who were to be taught. Alluding to this at the 1903 conference, the High Commissioner regretted that the Malays seemed to find it difficult to take full advantage of 'the opportunities which now came begging to their doors', and asked the conference to seek some means of 'awakening the dormant energies of the Malays', and of persuading them to 'sustained effort of work'.[27] The criticisms implicit in these remarks, though apparently accepted by Sultan Idris and the other rulers, were hardly fair. Apart from the convenient and politic use of the traditional authority system during the early years of Residential control (a practice now maintained very largely only in its symbolic aspects), previous attempts to train selected Malays to take part in specifically modern administrative tasks had been sporadic and unco-ordinated, and the rewards for participating small. It was scarcely necessary to seek an explanation of the woeful lack of success of these half-hearted endeavours by positing an innate lack of aptitude or energy on the part of the Malays. And so, although the 1903 conference began by considering the problem as primarily one requiring administrative reorganisation, it found itself forced to re-examine the whole question of 'the provision of special facilities to instruct Malays to become useful public servants'.[28] The results, though they are to be sought more in the deliberations which took place immediately after the

---

[27]Emerson, op. cit., p. 142.

[28]F.M.S. Annual Report on Education for 1903, p. 5.

conference than in the conference itself, were to leave an enduring impression on the shape of modern Malay society.

In February of the following year, R.J. Wilkinson, recently appointed Inspector of Schools for the F.M.S., wrote to the Resident-General to propose 'the establishment at a suitable locality in the Federated Malay States of a residential school for the education of Malays of good family, and for the training of Malay boys for admission to certain branches of the Government service'.[29] The locality suggested was Kuala Kangsar, the royal capital of Perak, where a day school already existed to train a small number of local boys for government employment, and where Sultan Idris had already promised his interest and encouragement. In a second letter a few weeks later, Wilkinson thought it desirable to clarify his original proposal:

> In explanation of the wording of my letter, I may say that the limitations suggested in the preamble [i.e. 'certain branches of the Government service'] refer to the present function of the Kuala Kangsar School which is designed to supply Malay civil servants, interpreters and clerks, but not (as yet) surveyors, draughtsmen, foresters, engineers etc. In the same way the phrase 'Malays of good family' refers to the secondary function of the school which may be utilised for educating boys not destined for Government employment.[30]

It is clear from this that Wilkinson envisaged a departure from the previous policy of reserving what special educational opportunities there were exclusively for Malays of royal or aristocratic birth. Ambiguity on this point, however, dogged the scheme from the beginning, and except for

---

[29] H. Drennan, 'A Short History of the Malay College', Malay College Magazine II, 5 (1955), p. 8.

[30] *Ibid*.

Wilkinson himself, who expressed these views more clearly elsewhere,[31] it is not known how much acceptance they found among other British administrators or among the Malay rulers, who might well have been disposed to raise some objections. The idea in general, however, of a central residential school designed to produce a Malay cadre of civil servants, had an enthusiastic reception from the Resident-General, W.H. Treacher, and a conference of Residents 'expressed their entire concurrence in the proposals contained in the Inspector's letter'.[32] Treacher, who had shown himself particularly sympathetic to the cause of Malay education while Resident of Selangor in the 1890s, saw in the 'Malay Boarding School' the keystone of a new era in the history of the progress of the Malays.[33] Sir John Anderson, however, the recently appointed Governor and High Commissioner, who had come out to Malaya fresh from Whitehall without previous colonial experience, was less optimistic. Only after long discussion with Treacher and Wilkinson, and upon their 'urgent recommendations', was he persuaded to agree to provision being made in the 1905 Federal Estimates for the expenditure necessary to establish the proposed school 'on a modified scale as an experiment for three years'.[34] 'Personally', he wrote home, 'I have some doubts as to the ultimate success of the scheme, but it is the

---

[31] See below, p. 153.

[32] Drennan, op. cit., p. 9.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 17 September, 1904, F.M.S. 480/1904.

urgent wish of those more intimate with the Malays that such a school should be given a trial and the Sultan of Perak is particularly anxious that it should be established at Kuala Kangsar so that he may give his personal attention to its organisation and management.'[35] An English headmaster, William Hargreaves from the Penang Free School, was engaged, and the 'Malay Residential School' opened its doors for the first time on January 2nd, 1905.

From the outset, Malay social distinctions were made an integral part of the new school, though Wilkinson's democratic ideals died hard. In his Annual Report on Education compiled at the end of 1905 he wrote hopefully:

> It was at one time suggested to confine the privileges of the school to young Rajas and a select few of the sons of Native Chiefs, but a more liberal view prevailed, and its doors are open to other youths also, the more promising boys of English and vernacular schools.[36]

It is true that among the 79 pupils (including 54 boarders) who enrolled in the first year a handful came from commoner families. For the most part, however, royalty and nobility predominated, as they were to continue to do. Twenty-six of the boarders were direct descendants of one or other of the royal houses -- including 'the son of His Highness the Sultan of Perak, two or three near relatives of His Highness the Sultan of Selangor, two brothers of the Yam Tuan of Negri Sembilan, the son of the late Raja Muda of Perak, and the son of the Raja Muda of Selangor'.[37] Designated

---

[35] Ibid.

[36] F.M.S. Annual Report on Education for 1905, p.6

[37] Ibid.

'Class I' boarders, these boys lived in the Headmaster's own house, and received a maintenance allowance of $20 a month. Class II boarders, in receipt of an allowance of $12 a month, consisted of boys of royal blood somewhat more remote from the throne, together with sons of major chiefs. The most senior of these in status lived with the Assistant Master, a Mr. Vanrennan, and a group of well-born boys from Negri Sembilan (also in Class II) occupied a separate house of their own. Class III boarders, consisting of the sons of less important chiefs, together with a negligible number of commoners, received an allowance of $7 a month and were quartered in unused railway bungalows.[38] To begin with, indeed, with the grudging finance available, most of the accommodation, whatever the standing of its occupants, was pretty makeshift, and classes were held either in a long _attap_ shed built for the purpose or in the respective residences. Towards the end of the year, however, with the school firmly established, permission was given for a start to be made on the construction of permanent buildings. E.W. Birch, the Resident of Perak, looking to the future, remarked that 'As this school is exclusively for boys of gentle birth, all the surroundings should be substantial and attractive', and went on to add that 'to become an undoubted success the school should be run on the lines of an English public school'.[39]

Wilkinson's original intention of distinguishing between the two

---

[38]It would appear that these allowances went largely for feeding costs, on a differential scale. See Raja Haji Kamarulzaman, 'Some Early Impressions at College, 1905-1908', _Malay College Magazine_, II, 1 (1950), p. 60.

[39]_Annual Report on Perak for 1905_, p. 12.

functions of the school (the provision of English education for the traditional elite, and the larger one of training Malay boys of any origin for the government service) was clearly not to be pursued. Wilkinson himself was transferred in 1906 from the Federal Inspectorate to a general administrative post,[40] and though there is no evidence that this reflected more than current M.C.S. exigencies, it effectively removed from direct influence the chief advocate of the liberal view. From this time forward, there was to be no pretence amongst either British or Malays that Kuala Kangsar was not in fact the preserve of the traditional elite. Often referred to in later years as 'the Malay Eton', the Malay Residential School rapidly acquired the manners and ethos of the English public school system, attributes which served to reinforce its appeal to the Malay ruling class, increasingly faced with the need to seek symbols of their status in the modern as well as in the traditional world. The boys were organised in 'Houses' (named after Malay sultans), and the 'monitor' or prefect system was introduced. One of the first tasks of the junior boys was the clearing of a playing field, and though to begin with association football was the only team game played, the School XI (captained by a grandson of ex-Sultan Abdullah) rapidly gained a formidable reputation in Perak state.[41] The spiritual welfare of the boys was looked after by a Kuran teacher, whose classes, though limited to the traditional recitation of the text, seemed to the

---

[40]He became District Officer at Batang Padang, in Perak.

[41]Kamarulzaman, op. cit., pp. 63-4.

British (according to one boy) 'exactly like the Bible classes they had in their schools'.[42] And the Headmaster strove to inculcate in his pupils the values (by no means always alien) of loyalty to school and side, diligence, fair play, and sportsmanship. Academically, he and his two assistants faced a difficult task, for the first batch of boys were of greatly varying ages and previous attainments, and there was a tendency for the school to be used 'as a reformatory for princelings of whose discipline their fathers had despaired.'[43] The solution found was to arrange them in three groups, irrespective of age, according to their knowledge of English and corresponding roughly to Standards I-III, IV-V, and VI-VII. The results, at the end of the first two years, exceeded all expectations. In what was said to be the stiffest Standard VII examination yet set in the F.M.S., 21 boys ('including six Rajas') passed with flying colours, and Wilkinson, who had conducted the examination as one of his last tasks as Inspector of Schools, commented in a letter to a friend:

> ... [W]hatever happens the results now obtained will eventually dispose of the fiction that the Malays are not capable of being instructed. That 21 boys in a small school of 80, badly housed and ill-equipped should pass a very stiff seventh standard examination shows that a few good schools could soon supply our Government offices with every clerk we need and make us independent of theJaffna Tamil.[44]

The special function envisaged by Government for the Malay Residential

---

[42] Manuscript autobiography of Haji Abdul Majid b. Haji Zainuddin, a pupil and later a teacher at the school.

[43] R.J. Wilkinson, cited by J.M. Gullick, 'The Malay Administrator', The New Malayan [some copies entitled Merdeka]I, 1 (May, 1957), p. 77.

[44] W.H. Treacher, 'British Malaya, With More Especial Reference to the F.M.S.', Journal of the Society of Arts, LV (March 22, 1907), pp. 503-4.

School was not, however, the production of clerks, but the production, in accordance with the wishes of the 1903 Conference, of embryo administrative civil servants. In May 1909, the school moved into new and more imposing quarters specially built for it in Kuala Kangsar, and changed its title to one better fitting its status, the 'Malay College'. Early in the following year, the Federal Government decided to embark on its first coordinated plan for establishing a Malay administrative cadre. Styled the 'Scheme for the Employment of Malays (Higher Subordinate Class)', later the 'Malay Probationer Scheme', it was specifically designed to recruit a special service of Malay administrative officers from amongst the ranks of the more promising College pupils. One of the most important consequences of the scheme, in the light of the composition of the school, was in effect to limit entry to 'higher administrative posts' to Malays who already belonged to the traditional elite. Under the scheme,[45] which operated unchanged for seven years and was then altered only in inessentials, the four Residents, upon advice from the headmaster, nominated annually from among the boys who had passed the Standard VII examination, those who were thought to possess administrative potential. Final selection was made by the Resident-General, after which the boys chosen were admitted as 'Probationers' to a further three-year course at the College, consisting of the ordinary secondary-school curriculum leading to the Junior Cambridge Certificate, with in addition

---

[45]No copy of the 1910 Scheme could be located during the period of my field work in Malaya. Details may be found, however, in a Memorandum on the principal differences between the 1910 and 1917 Schemes, enclosed in Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 18 June, 1917, F.M.S. 182/1917.

special training related to 'official correspondence, Treasury work, and other prescribed subjects'.[46] Upon satisfactory completion of this course, graduates were appointed as Malay Assistants, Class III, to a separate Malay Administrative Service (M.A.S.). The M.A.S. formed, as it were, a very junior branch of the M.C.S., though it was envisaged that M.A.S. officers might, in time, be admitted to the ranks of the Civil Service proper.

By 1913, the total enrolment at Malay College was 138,[47] a figure which was to remain more or less constant until the 1930s. Though a special Preparatory School (also on the English pattern and also in Kuala Kangsar) was opened in that year, most boys still came to the College aged about nine or ten, after some years spent at Malay vernacular schools in which they had had no opportunity to learn English. They were, accordingly, anything up to three or four years behind those of their non-Malay compatriots who attended English schools from the start of their education, at the age of six or seven. Beginning in Standard I at the College, those who stayed the course usually completed the Government Seventh Standard Certificate in their sixteenth or seventeenth year of age. This was the basic educational qualification in the English-language school system, and most pupils (between twenty and thirty a year) left at this stage to find employment. In 1914, for example, it was noted that 164 Kuala Kangsar boys had taken the Certificate since the inception of the school, and that of

---

[46] J.M. Gullick, 'The Malay Administrator', The New Malayan [some copies entitled Merdeka], I, 1 (May, 1957), p. 78.

[47] Imperial Education Conference Papers: III - Educational Systems of the Chief Colonies not Possessing Responsible Government, Federated Malay States (London: H.M.S.O., 1913), p. 7.

these very many were to be found in the ranks of the lower subordinate government services, as clerks, translators, medical dressers, surveyors assistants and the like.[48] There they joined the small number of Malays passing out of other English schools at the same level, and the larger number of Chinese and Indians.[49] Of the boys who stayed on at the College in the 'Special' class, a few did so in order to obtain additional qualifications in such subjects as typing, surveying or technical drawing, (which gave them access to rather better positions) but for the most part they consisted of the Probationers destined for the M.A.S. The three years taken for this course meant that when they finally passed out, with formal qualifications still relatively low on the educational scale, most were already at least 20 or 21 years old.

The prestige of the M.A.S., as an elite corps recruited from the traditional ruling class and sharing in addition the aura of authority which belonged to the M.C.S., was markedly greater than either the rewards or the responsibilities of office. The level of education and training of Malay Assistants (whether among Probationers newly admitted to Grade III or among the small number in the two higher grades who had received administrative appointments prior to the inauguration of the Kuala Kangsar scheme), made it difficult to give them tasks in any way comparable to those performed even by the Cadet ranks of the M.C.S. A further difficulty arose

---

[48] F.M.S. Annual Report on Education for 1914, cited in Drennan, 'A Short History of the Malay College', p. 11.

[49] See below, pp. 169-171.

simply because they were Malays, for it was held inadvisable to appoint them to posts which would place them in authority over 'other Asiatics'. The ostensible ground for this was that the Malays were not equipped by experience to move in or to understand any society other than their own, but it may of course be seen also as a reflection of the role that the British had conceived for themselves, that of holding the balance between the separate and functionally disparate communities of plural Malaya.[50] This, together with the fact that the work of the M.C.S. itself still lay principally in territorial government and land administration (especially during the pre-war rubber booms), meant that effectively the new Malay officers were excluded from the work attached to the growing central bureaucracy and confined to district administration among their own people. As assistants to M.C.S. officers in the rural areas, as Settlement Officers attached to Land Offices, and occasionally as 'Malay Assistant Secretaries' in state secretariats, they undertook a host of minor routine duties, more nearly clerical than administrative, in the course of which it was intended

---

[50]'In districts where the Malay population largely preponderates, the District Officer, who is the chief executive officer of the Government in the district, may delegate some of his functions to a Malay Assistant District Officer or Malay Penghulu (headman) and some of these officers have been trained to take a very useful part in district administration. But in the numerous districts where mining and planting by foreigners, e.g. British and Chinese, are carried on, and where thousands of Chinese or Indian labourers are employed, the Penghulu's activities are restricted, and matters of administrative detail affecting these people must be handled by the District Officer himself', [J.R. Innes, 'The Protectorate System in the Malay States', National Review, LXVIII (1921-22), pp. 400-401. Innes was an M.C.S. officer employed in the Legal Service.]

that they should receive training to fit them for somewhat more responsible posts. Promotion through the grades was, however, slow and irregular, depending as it did not only upon ability and additional examinations but on the creation of 'vacancies' in the upper levels of the M.A.S. establishment -- something which in turn depended upon the readiness of the M.C.S. to concede positions of responsibility. In addition, salaries were low, comparing unfavourably in many cases with those afforded to English-educated clerks of similar age and experience.[51] In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that the prestige value alone of the M.A.S. did not always prove sufficient to retain its members. In 1916, for example, it was noted that the two sons of the ruler of Negri Sembilan had left the service, one 'without permission or reasonable excuse' and the other on the ground that the pay was inadequate for a man of his rank.[52]

Towards the end of the 1914-18 war, it was decided to revise the Malay Administrative Service scheme, both to make it more attractive to its members and to permit the allocation to them of more responsible work. To some extent this revision was the product of a situation brought about by the war itself, for the demand for local subordinates had increased as the younger members of the M.C.S. and government departments went off to fight in Europe and recruitment from England ceased. In part, however, it reflected a genuine concern over the shortcomings of the 1910 scheme as they had revealed

[51] Memorandum on the principal differences between the 1910 and 1917 Schemes (see footnote 45 to this Chapter).

[52] Report enclosed in Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 15 September 1916, M.S. 293/1916.

themselves in practise. As the writer of a memorandum comparing the old scheme with the new one now to be put into effect wrote in 1917,

> ... the practice of relegating for a period of three years a probationer, who has completed a special training for an administrative career, to the work and status of a third class clerk, results in producing, not unnaturally, a sense of dissatisfaction or even a distaste for further service with the government.[53]

In most respects, however, though the new scheme made a number of token concessions which helped to raise the status of the M.A.S., and to reduce the frustration suffered by its more able members, it did not attempt to alter radically the basis of Malay participation in government. Malays entering the service were henceforward entitled 'Malay Officers' instead of 'Malay Assistants', salaries were raised slightly, and promotional arrangements were made less cumbersome. Promotion from Grade III to Grade II became automatic on passing the requisite examination, the examination for promotion to Grade I was dispensed with, and the M.C.S. Cadet's examination in Law inserted as a test of eligibility for the Special Grade.[54] A Schedule to the new scheme gave an indication of the number and character of established posts now open to Malays in the various grades. In Grade II it was thought that there might be 34 appointments as Settlement Officers, and five as Assistant Malay Secretaries; in Grade I, six Assistant District Officers and one Malay Magistrate; and in the Special Grade a probable total of nine posts, including five A.D.Os., two Magistrates, and one

---

[53] Memorandum on the principal differences between the 1910 and 1917 Schemes.

[54] Scheme for Malay Officers, 1 July 1917 (Government Printer: Kuala Lumpur, 1917).

Supervisor of Customs.[55]

A special problem arose with those two or three Malays who, even before the 1917 reorganisation, were at the top of the Special Grade, had been given greater responsibility as a result of the exigencies of war, and might now be expected to graduate into the M.C.S. It was recognised that the original 1910 scheme had accepted the desirability of this at some time in the future, but now that the moment was upon them the British found it difficult to devise a solution which would take due account of the subordinate relationship which, it was thought, must necessarily exist between European and native officers. The matter was considered at a conference of Residents in February 1917, at which 'It was decided that the principle could most conveniently be carried into effect by the appointment of Malays possessing the requisite qualifications to be Supernumerary Officers of Class V ...'[56] Class V was the lowest M.C.S. administrative grade, into which European Cadets were appointed upon satisfactory completion of their probationary period. Malay officers receiving this promotion, it was decided, would like their European counterparts receive a sterling and not a dollar salary, and would be considered eligible for subsequent promotion to the higher Classes, 'but always as Supernumeraries and not to rank with Cadets for seniority'.[57] The first to be so appointed was Raja Said Tauphy, a son of ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak. Raja Said, now aged 39, had been given

---

[55]Memorandum on the principal differences between the 1910 and 1917 Schemes.

[56]Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 5 April 1917, M.S. 108/1917. It should be made clear that the grade 'Supernumerary Officer' was created specifically for Malays, and had not previously existed.

[57]_Ibid_.

his first administrative appointment as a Settlement Officer in 1900, had passed the Cadets' examination in Law in 1911, had acted as an Assistant District Officer during the war (in what was nominally a Class IV post), and was at present serving as a Malay Magistrate in Perak.[58] The appointment was hardly a daring or generous one, and the principle of employing Malay administrators only in an assistant capacity and in the rural areas was not affected. But the stronghold of the European administrative service had been breached, and four years later in 1921 it was decided to admit qualified Malays to the M.C.S. without reservation as to status. The posts were not numerous -- only ten were created in the next decade[59] -- and they were still confined to district administration; but they served to establish the M.A.S., and through that the M.C.S., as the principal avenue by which Malays might acquire in the modern world the authority which was slipping from them in the old. It is important to remember that this was an opportunity which could be conferred only by the British, and that they in turn confined it for the most part to members of the traditional elite. The result was the emergence of a new Malay leadership group, English-educated and increasingly influenced by Western ideas of government and social organisation, drawing its authority in part from inherited social status, in part from its association with the British colonial regime. The

---

[58] Ibid.

[59] Malay Administrative Service List, 1932. The List gives the service records of all Malays in the M.A.S. and M.C.S. at the date of publication.

potential strength and privileged position of the group was thrown into relief by the traditional mould in which so much of the rest of Malay society was retained, and by the exclusion from administrative or political authority of members of the other Asian communities domiciled in the states.

Some years later, in 1936, the then High Commissioner, Sir Shenton Thomas, giving short shrift to a request by the Malayan-born Indian community for a share in administrative appointments, was to remark to the Federal Council:

> This is the sixth country in which I have served, and I do not know of any country in which what I might call a foreigner -- that is to say, a native not a native of the country or an Englishman -- has ever been appointed to an administrative post. ...[60]

This definition of what, in Malaya, constituted a 'foreigner', though politic for both the British and the Malays where administrative authority was concerned, paid little heed to changing demographic realities, and was not in any case reflected in the subordinate government services, which were markedly non-Malay in composition. The manifestly transient nature of the majority of Chinese and Indians, the principal non-Malay groups, tended to obscure the steady growth among them of settled and stable communities, permanently domiciled in the peninsula and commited to making it their home. Between 1911 and 1921, for example, though a million and a half Chinese arrived to work in Malaya and almost a million left to return to China, the proportion of the community resident in the F.M.S. and born

[60] Federal Council Proceedings, (1936), p. B18.

either there or elsewhere in the peninsula increased from eight per cent to seventeen per cent.[61] By the end of the next decade this figure reached 29 per cent, plus an additional and uncounted number who had spent most of their adult lives in the country and were to all intents and purposes permanently domiciled there.[62] During the same period, the sex ratio of the Chinese in the F.M.S. improved from fewer than two women to every ten men in 1911, to nearly five to ten in 1931,[63] with a consequent increase in stable family life. Further, among the Malayan-born and settled Chinese the majority were manifestly not industrial or agricultural labourers, but urban shopkeepers, businessmen, and clerical workers,[64] with financial and other stakes in the country which could not readily be transferred elsewhere. Despite this kind of evidence to the contrary, however, the British persisted in looking officially upon the Chinese as exclusively a transient labour force, and warned in 1931 that it would be dangerous to infer from figures such as those just cited 'a tendency to permanent settlement'.[65] Similarly, they chose to ignore the one-fifth of the Indian community recorded in 1931 as locally-born, and the substantial number of long-domiciled South Indian and Ceylonese Tamils brought in a generation earlier to staff the railways and other government

---

[61] Census of British Malaya, 1921, p. 93.

[62] British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census, p. 69.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid., p. 50.

[65] Ibid., p. 70.

establishments, and pointed instead to the brief periods of residence which characterised the numerically predominant rubber estate labour.[66]

This apparently genuine failure to recognise tendencies towards permanent settlement had a number of advantages. In the first place, because the peninsular states remained, constitutionally and juridically, autonomous 'Malay monarchies', any attempt to take into account the changing status of Chinese and Indians by granting citizenship or other rights beyond the normal safeguards to life and property might have been expected to arouse considerable Malay opposition. In the second place, the essential British role in Malaya, as arbitrator and adjudicator within the plural society was to a large extent dependent upon preserving the distinctions between the separate communities. These distinctions were based (in fact, if not in theory) not upon a division between immigrants and non-immigrants (Sumatran, Javanese and other Indonesian migrants, in large number, were automatically given legal status as 'Malays') but on criteria of economic function, ethnic origin and cultural similarity or dissimilarity. And finally, the series of popular stereotypes of 'unassimilable' Chinese (and to a lesser extent Indians) which portrayed them as irrevocably wedded to their homeland, as uninterested in government provided they were able to make money, and as preferring to educate themselves in their own fashion, made it possible to avoid expensive and troublesome responsibility for integrating even the locally-born and domiciled Asians

---

[66] Ibid., pp. 70-71. Cf., also, K.A. Neelakhanda Aiyer, Indian Problems in Malaya (Kuala Lumpur, 1938) pp. 10-11.

within a larger Malayan society.

The combination of these factors, together with the obligation recognised by the British to look after the special interests of the Malay ruling class, resulted, then, in the exclusion of non-Malays from positions of administrative or political authority. The situation with respect to the subordinate ranks of the government service was, however, very different. The same paternalism and protectionism which prompted the nurture of the traditional ruling class also required (as did the need to maintain rice production for the population as a whole) that the Malay peasant should as far as possible be left in undisturbed enjoyment of his customary way of life. This requirement could be met, in effect, only by engaging non-Malays in most occupations ancillary to the urban world of centralised government and the export economy, as these activities expanded in the federated states during the first two decades of the century. During the early stages of growth, employment needs were met by bringing in English-educated Jaffna Tamils and other Indians,[67] to staff the Railways, Postal, Public Works and similar departments of government. Later, when it became possible to increase the proportion of locally-trained subordinates, the marked disparities in the availability of English education, as between rural Malays and urban non-Malays, further accentuated the 'alienisation' of the public services. As a result, by 1920 Indians

---

[67] The Jaffna Tamil came from Jaffna Province in northern Ceylon, and was not strictly 'Indian'. It is convenient here to use the latter term for all persons from the Indian sub-continent. For fuller discussion, see Usha Mahajani, The Role of Indian Minorities in Burma and Malaya (Bombay, 1960), pp. 101-2.

and Chinese together, immigrant and locally-born, comprised the great majority of subordinate clerical and technical workers in all departments of government.

As with the employment of Malays at administrative levels, everything turned upon the provision of suitable training and education. Though there is some evidence that Government, as well as private European business, preferred the 'industrious' Chinese and Indians to the 'lazy' and 'unreliable' Malays, there was in general no objection to employing qualified Malays who might offer themselves for subordinate clerical and technical jobs. Relatively few Malays, however, were in a position to do this. The fact was that they did not, for the most part, live in the towns, where alone there were opportunities both for acquiring the necessary English education and for utilising it, while Chinese and Indians did. In 1921, only 5.8 per cent of the Malay population of the F.M.S. lived in towns containing more than one thousand inhabitants, representing an actual decrease over the previous decade of 0.5 per cent.[68] In the seven towns each with more than ten thousand inhabitants, fewer than ten per cent of the total population of 190,606 were Malay, the rest being predominantly Chinese or Indian.[69] Of the thirty English boys' schools in the F.M.S. in the same year (nineteen run by Christian missions and ten by Government) all were in urban areas. Their total enrolment of just under ten thousand included only six or seven hundred Malays, the

[68] Census of British Malaya, 1921, p. 43. The absolute number rose slightly, from 26,397 to 29,651, but this increase was more than offset by the natural increase of the Malays as a whole and by Malaysian immigration from the Netherlands Indies.

[69] Ibid., pp. 39 and 42.

majority, again, being Chinese and Indian.[70] In 1922, a mere 45 Malay boys passed the Junior Cambridge examination (eight of them from Kuala Kangsar Malay College), and only nine the Senior Cambridge (including three from Kuala Kangsar).[71] Though it was true that Malays who had successfully completed four years at a Government vernacular school were entitled to scholarship and hostel assistance to attend English school in town, this did little to remove the handicaps to which they were subject. The fact alone that the majority of English schools were Christian institutions damned them in the eyes of many Malay parents. In addition, those Malays who actually lived in town were often too poor to take advantage of what opportunities were offering, and those who did not were reluctant to permit their children to brave the perils of urban life. The four-year lag in age, and problems arising from switching in mid-stream from one language medium to another, meant that Malay children were inevitably backward in relation to those of the other communities whose education from the first was usually in the English language. And finally, it was scarcely clear to most Malays, prior to the first world war, that the principal avenue of success for their children, in their own states, lay in the acquisition of English education.

These circumstances, together with the prevailing British belief that teaching English to Malays on any large scale would be 'unsettling in the

---

[70] Annual Report on the F.M.S. for 1920. And cf., H.R. Cheeseman, 'Education in Malaya, 1900-1941', Malayan Historical Journal, II, 1 (July, 1955), p. 33.

[71] The Muslim (Singapore), II, 5-6 (May-June, 1923), pp. 83-4. The total number of certificates obtained in 1922 is not known, but for purposes of general comparison it may be noted that in 1923 323 boys of all races passed the Junior and Senior Cambridge examinations (Federal Council Proceedings (1924), pp. B145-6).

rural areas', produced the situation in which, by 1920, only 10.5 per cent of the 1,001 clerks of all grades in the General Clerical Service of the F.M.S. were Malay, the remainder being either foreign-born or local-born aliens.[72] The non-Malay character of the specialist services was even more marked. In 1924, for example (after remedial action had begun) it was estimated that of the more than 5,500 subordinate officers in the Railways, Postal and Medical Departments, fewer than 1,500 were locally born, and only a small proportion of these Malays.[73] Attention was first drawn to this situation, which contrasted with that in the U.F.M.S., by the need to reduce Government expenditure following upon the slump of 1921 and the ensuing crisis in federal finances, though as early as 1919 the High Commissioner, Sir Laurence Guillemard, had drawn attention to the desirability of equipping the Malays 'to take their proper place in the administrative and commercial life of these States'.[74] In February, 1922, persuaded that the centralisation and bureaucratisation of the F.M.S. had outrun the resources available from revenue, the Government appointed a Retrenchment Commission to examine in detail the administrative and fiscal structure of the federation, and to recommend economies. During the

---

[72] Report of the Committee on General Clerical Service Salaries (Council Paper No. 18 of 1919, Federal Council Proceedings (1919), p. C215).

[73] Federal Council Proceedings (1924), p. B98, in answer to a question by Raja Chulan. At the beginning of the previous year, clerical workers in the Postal Department included 215 Jaffna Tamils, 101 Indian Tamils, 63 Chinese, 22 Eurasians, 26 'other nationalities', and 11 Malays. Abstract of Proceedings of the Conference of Residents, 50th Conference, 24 January 1923, Item 1.

[74] Annual Address of the High Commissioner, Federal Council Proceedings (1920), p. B65.

following twelve months, the Commission held a long series of hearings, and produced more than fifty Interim Reports, published together as a Federal Council Paper early in 1923,[75] followed by a Final Report, presented in March of that year.[76]

For the most part, the Retrenchment Commission was concerned with the larger questions of administrative and financial 'decentralisation' of the federation which were to dominate political discussion in Malaya for more than a decade.[77] Its reports also contained, however, a good deal of material bearing directly on the need to employ more people locally-born in the subordinate ranks of the Government services. Of special interest in this respect was its Interim Report No. 41, which presented the report of a special committee set up to enquire into the employment of Malays. In view of the influence this report was subsequently to have, it is worth looking at its findings and recommendations in some detail.[78]

---

[75]Council Paper No. 15 of 1923, Federal Council Proceedings (1923), pp. C1-151.

[76]The Final Report of the Retrenchment Commission, though listed as Council Paper No. 16 of 1923, was printed separately. No copy of the report could be located while I was in Malaya.

[77]For further discussion of decentralisation policy, see below, Chapter Six. Emerson, Malaysia, pp. 157-9, gives an account of the general recommendations of the Retrenchment Commission.

[78]All quotations, in the summary that follows, are from the 'Report of a Committee on Employment of Malays in the Government Service', in Interim Reports of the Retrenchment Commission, 1922, Report No. 41, Council Paper No. 15 of 1923 (Federal Council Proceedings (1923) pp. C126-31). The chairman of the committee was T. S. Adams, then a District Officer in the M.C.S. and subsequently noted for his strong Malay sympathies, and the remaining members Malays: Hamzah b. Abdullah, the first Malay to be promoted to the M.C.S. under the new order (in 1921), Raja Aznam Shah and Mohd. Eusoff.

Taking an 'educated Malay' to be one holding a fifth standard certificate from a vernacular school and any certificate above the fourth standard from an English school, the committee proceeded to examine, under a number of heads, the problems and practicalities of Malay employment. From the point of view of efficiency, it held that greater efficiency could be obtained by employing Malays rather than Tamils in all branches of the public service except those requiring a knowledge of Tamil or Chinese or involving the supervision of non-Malay labour. Though Malays were held to be slower than Tamils on book-work, and to require additional practical training, they were in general thought to show more intelligence in carrying out work once its principles had been explained. 'We get at present', the committee said, 'the inferior men from India and Ceylon, both in character, social status and intelligence; we can obtain the best Malays in this country'. Concerning Malay recruitment, it was thought that not enough parents were being made aware that interesting and rewarding careers could be had in the public service, not simply in the clerical branches but in specialist and technical departments as well. Complaining that 'The lack of training facilities, both technical and literary, is appalling and constitutes another important reason for the failure of Malays to take up technical and professional work', the committee drew particular attention to the failure of the Public Works, Railways and Postal Departments to make any provision for the local training of Malays. It conceded that for various reasons Malays did not take kindly to 'monotonous routine work' and were reluctant to further their studies

at home, but pointed out on the other hand that few could afford to look beyond clerkships to more specialised pursuits, because of the additional expense in training and the need to assist the family as soon as possible. Referring to difficulties experienced in keeping Malays once they were employed, the report gave as 'a most important reason' for this failure 'the lack of sympathy and understanding shown by some European officers -- generally technical men who have made no study of the Malay temperament'. And finally, it pointed out that an additional handicap for Malays was the scarcity of text-books in Malay, for 'persistent thought in a foreign language is an excessive strain on the mind'.

Moving to its recommendations, the committee proposed that preference to local-born candidates, and to Malays in particular, should be made an absolute rule in the Government services. Where the absence of educational facilities prevented a sufficient supply of Malay candidates, the committee recommended that special apprenticeship and other training programmes be instituted. Pointing to the fact that 25 per cent of boys attending English schools in Kuala Lumpur were of foreign birth, it proposed that State-aided schools should not be allowed to accept pupils not born in Malaya unless local boys were not available. The report asked that 'a real knowledge of Malay' be required of all European officers, whether technical or professional, as a condition of promotion, and suggested that it should be remembered that Malay, not English, was the language of the country. It suggested, further, that all European officers be instructed that 'personal sympathy is an essential condition of their receiving efficiency certificates', and that staff training,

especially for Malays, must be an integral part of their duties. It recommended that a record be kept in each state of Malays about to leave English or vernacular schools, together with notes on their abilities, and that no appointments of persons not on these lists be made except for special reasons and with special sanction. Finally, the committee recommended that the ultimate goal should be a public service composed of Malays and local-born non-Malays in the proportion of seven to three -- though it conceded that for some years there should be a minority of Malays, except in special departments such as Agriculture.

This very outspoken report was received with 'strong sympathy' by the Retrenchment Commission,[79] which recommended adoption of the measures advocated. It was, however, by no means the only voice raised on the Malay behalf at this time, together pressing the Government to re-shape policy in favour of the indigenous inhabitants of the states. There was a strong feeling among a significant section of the M.C.S. -- on the one hand, those who felt their 'Malay state' establishments to have been shouldered aside by the centralised F.M.S. bureaucracy and the specialist departments, and on the other, those with long service in the U.F.M.S., who had a fondness for traditional Malay life -- that Malay interests had been lost sight of in the scramble for development. One of the latter, Meadows Frost, a member of the M.C.S. since 1898 and for long British Adviser in Perlis, had said in evidence to the Retrenchment Commission that although the existing system of administration might be 'agreeable

[79] _Ibid._, p. 131.

to lawyers and Europeans engaged in commerce, mining and planting and probably to the Westernized Chinese', it was not so 'to the great bulk of the population who are Asiatics and not Western in their ideas, [and] especially is it not aggreeable to the Malays for whose benefit we profess to administer the country'.[80] A more direct concern about the exclusion of Malays from the public services was expressed by the combined Residents of the F.M.S., who at their conference early in 1923, for example, gave special consideration to the 'Preparation of a Scheme for more rapid absorption of Malays into the Railways Department and the Postal and Telegraph Department'.[81] Rather more surprisingly, and certainly from different sorts of motives, the Association of British Malaya in London (representing mainly commercial interests), appealed to the Secretary of State 'to secure an earlier and more definite employment of Malays than seems to be contemplated by the Retrenchment Commissioners'. There could be no doubt, the Association wrote, 'that the Malay is alive to matters dealt with in the Commissioners' report, he sees the extravagant expenditure in great works and the enormous increase of European officials to fill newly created offices, and he has learnt that his Country's comfortable financial position has gone'.[82]

---

[80] Cited in Emerson, op. cit., p. 157, fn. 25.

[81] Abstract of the Proceedings of the Conference of Residents, 50th Conference, 24 January, 1923, Item 1.

[82] Letter, Association of British Malaya to Under-Secretary of State for Colonies, 27 June 1923, in 'Despatches re Correspondence with the Association of British Malaya on the Administration and Finances of the Federated Malay States', Appendix No. 4 to Federal Council Proceedings (1924), pp. C94-5.

The Government's reply to these and similar criticisms was only cautiously optimistic. The High Commissioner, Sir Laurence Guillemard, told the Colonial Office at the end of 1923 that 'every effort is being made to bring forward the people of the country to take part in the various departments of Government', but added that in the absence of adequate training facilities or of the finance to provide them, this process 'must necessarily be gradual'.[83] One may, however, be forgiven for supposing that Sir Laurence's heart was not in any case really in the task. In the address already quoted in which he had referred to the duty felt by Government 'to afford the full measure of English education which is required to enable the Malays to assume their proper place in the administrative and commercial life of the country', he had spoken also, with obviously greater enthusiasm, of the role that purely vernacular education could play in breeding 'a vigorous and self-respective agricultural peasantry such as must form the backbone of every nation'.[84] In his autobiography, published some years later, he admitted to doubts, 'which I could not when in office publicly avow, as to how far Western religious and education and political systems are really suitable for Eastern nationalities', and added, 'In the special matter of education, we have bred too many clerks. This was certainly true in Malaya, when I arrived. ...'[85]

Despite the High Commissioner's qualms, however, and despite the

---

[83]Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, No. 682, 11 December 1923, in ibid.

[84]Annual Address of the High Commissioner, Federal Council Proceedings (1920), p. B65.

[85]L. Guillemard, Trivial Fond Records (London, 1937), p. 109.

evidênt desire of Government that most Malays should be educated only to follow agricultural pursuits, the early 1920s saw the introduction of an avowedly 'pro-Malay' preferential policy in recruitment to the lower ranks of the F.M.S. public services, designed to cut down expenditure on overseas staff, to 'restore' to the Malays a more active role in the affairs of their own states, to persuade the U.F.M.S. that federation was not such a bad thing after all, and to fulfil obligations seen to have been incurred in the original protectorate agreements. To this end, many of the recommendations made by the committee on Malay employment were adopted, though often with modifications and in the face of difficulties presented by reluctant departmental heads, by the absence of adequate training facilities and sometimes by apparent Malay indifference to opportunity. Most importantly, though for long not very effectively, it was laid down in General Orders that Malays must receive preference in filling all vacancies in the subordinate ranks of Government employment.[86] Pressure was put upon the larger departments, and on the Railways in particular, to engage more Malay staff, if necessary at the temporary cost of some loss of efficiency, and some attempt was made to institute or improve on-the-job training programmes. Belatedly, in 1929, after repeated criticisms of the Education Department

---

[86]Clause 12 (viii) of the General Orders for F.M.S. Government Establishments as amended in 1923, provided that posts requiring a knowledge of Malay but of no other language, preference should be given to Malays. Subsequently, this preference was extended to all subordinate appointments requiring either Malay or English, though Clause 12 (viii) appears not to have been amended to this effect until early 1931.

from within and without government circles,[87] and much official dilatoriness, a Technical School was opened in Kuala Lumpur to train local boys, with preference for Malays. Malay Appointments Committees were set up in Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Taiping, to register the names and qualifications of English-educated Malays desiring Government employment, and Heads of Departments were instructed to appoint no non-Malays without first consulting the appropriate local committee.[88] Accepting that some extension of English education for Malays was inevitable, the F.M.S. Government in 1924 opened the first non-urban English schools at Bagan Serai and Lenggong, in Perak, though the wisdom of this departure from previous policy was questioned by Raja Chulan, the Unofficial Malay member of the Federal Council.[89] Shortly afterwards, it was made possible for Malays to obtain free English education after only three, instead of four years at a vernacular school, and Special Malay Classes were instituted at English schools to make the transition from one language medium to the other less painful.[90]

---

[87] See, esp., the discussion initiated in the Federal Council on 29 June, 1925, by one of the European Unofficial members, J.M. Robson, who spoke scathingly and at length about past attempts to provide technical instruction. In reply, the Chief Secretary said it appeared that the Education Department 'takes no interest whatever in vocational education'. (_Federal Council Proceedings_ (1925), pp. B75-6). Three years later, R.O. Winstedt, Director of Education throughout this period (1924-31), defended himself against similar criticisms by pointing to the high cost of technical schools, on the one hand, and to difficulties experienced in getting students, on the other. (_Federal Council Proceedings_ (1928), pp. B147-8)

[88] _F.M.S. Circular No. 14, 1931_.

[89] _Federal Council Proceedings_ (1924), p. B57. His main fear seems to have been that there would not be employment for graduates, but there is other evidence that he thought that English education in rural areas would be detrimental to Malay peasant life (see below, Chapter Six).

[90] See, e.g., H.R. Cheeseman, 'Education in Malaya, 1900-1941', p. 37.

As a result of these efforts, the number of Malays enrolled at English schools in the F.M.S. rose from perhaps seven or eight hundred in 1923 to 2,464 in 1933,[91] though the great majority were still receiving only elementary schooling, up to Junior Cambridge (Standard V) level. During the same period partly as a result of the depression (which, though it halted recruitment to the public services and led to large-scale retrenchment, affected more non-Malays than Malays),[92] the proportion of Malays to others in the subordinate services of government slowly improved. The increase was not, however, sufficient to satisfy the Malay members of the Federal Council,[93] and as late as 1938 (the last year for which figures are available) Malays in seven key government departments still numbered only 1,742 as against 4,938 from the other communities.[94] Few Malay youths with English education sought jobs outside government offices or agencies.

---

[91] Annual Report on Education in the F.M.S. for 1933, Appendix III.

[92] See below, Chapter Six.

[93] Dato' Abdullah of Rembau remarked in 1934: 'It is, no doubt, pleasing to see so many Malay peons, Malay messengers, Malay punkah-pullers, Malay sailors, Malay police constables and Malay gentlemen in the employ of the Railway but, Sir, the Malays also desire to have a fair share of the higher appointments' (Federal Council Proceedings (1934), p. B58).

[94] The figures in full are as follows:

	Tamils	Chinese	Malays	Others
Clerks in General and State Services	537	465	336	97
Public Works O'seers and Sub O'seers	175	3	55	7
Teachers, Gov't English Schools	102	64	24	35
Technical Assistants	419	73	329	78
Asiatic Employees, Railways *	1,277	302	485	263
Asiatic Employees, Post and T'graph *	414	175	408	81
Dressers and Hospital Assistants	257	87	105	27
	3,181	1,169	1,742	588

* Excluding menials

Source: Federal Council Proceedings (1938), p. B21.

In part this was a reflection of the small role played by Malays as employers in the business and commercial life of the country, where other opportunities might have lain. European concerns tended to prefer what were generally regarded as the more efficient and reliable Chinese or Indians, and firms owned and run by members of the other communities employed their own people almost exclusively. Malays themselves showed little desire to work for non-Malay, or non-Muslim, Asian employers, and there was much discussion in the vernacular press from the end of the 1920s concerning the need for wealthier Malays to start up in business, not only to compete with the alien races, but to provide employment opportunities in the urban areas.

At least as important, however, in determining the Malay predilection for 'a job with the Government' was the pro-Malay policy itself (as a form of job insurance), the status and prestige attaching to this kind of employment, and the means it afforded of emphasising Malay rights as against those of the other communities. Thus by the early 1930s there had appeared among the Malays a group, still extremely small but growing, of English-educated government servants, intensely conscious of the threat offered to their position by non-Malay competition, but looking to the British to safeguard their interests while the slow process of modernising Malay society proceeded. At the top of this group were the administrators educated at the Malay College, still largely aristocratic in social origin despite some liberalisation of entry to the College during the 1920s. On the next level were the handful of Malay officials in those departments,

such as Customs, Police, Agriculture and Co-operatives, which had special schemes of Malay recruitment and training, often by way of the Malay College. And at the base of the pile were those in clerical and semi-technical occupations. In sum, the group as a whole numbered fewer than 1,500 at the time of the 1931 Census,[95] with perhaps another 600 or so in non-government clerical jobs requiring some English education.

The vast majority of the 241,754 working Malays in the F.M.S. in 1931 remained peasant cultivators living in rural village communities of a traditional kind. No fewer than 204,644 were recorded in that year as following 'agricultural pursuits', the majority directly or indirectly associated with wet-rice cultivation.[96] Of the remainder, a large proportion were engaged in rubber planting on small-scale holdings usually only a handful of acres in extent.[97] Though the growing of rubber for cash, and the increasing monetization of the

---

[95] British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census, Tab. XXXVI, pp. 281-4.

[96] Ibid. 126,149 Malays were listed as 'Rice Planters' and a further 56,205 as 'Agricultural Coolies'. Precisely what was meant by the second of these classifications is not clear. As the number of Malays working as commercial estate labour was very small -- not much more than 7,000 -- the assumption must be that most members of this group were non-land-owners working either in the rice fields or on Malay small-holdings.

[97] The 1931 Census (loc. cit.), which lists 10,948 'Estate Owners and Managers' and 5,553 'Planters (unspecified)', does not refer directly to rubber, but it is reasonable to suppose that most were involved in rubber planting. Though there were only 23 Malay-owned 'estates' of more than 100 acres in the F.M.S. in 1932 (D.H. Grist, Nationality of Ownership and Nature of Constitution of Rubber Estates in Malaya (Kuala Lumpur, 1933), Tab. 6 and 15), the total area of small-holding rubber (under 100 acres) amounted to more than half a million acres, most of it in Malay hands (Emerson, Malaysia, p. 184).

peasant economy, certainly instituted marginal changes in Malay village life, and prepared the way for other changes, most Malays continued to lead an existence not far removed in material condition from that of their forebears in the nineteenth century, and one coloured by similar economic attitudes to production, savings and wealth.[98] The protection of Malay lands, and the preservation of Malay peasant life, had been a frequently declared aim of British policy since the beginning of protectorate rule. The achievement of this aim, which had strong political connotations in so far as it made for a quiescent peasant base to Malaya's plural society, was much assisted by the plenitude of unoccupied cultivable land available for alienation to commercial enterprise without trespassing on peasant lands, and by the ready supply of immigrant labour for industrial planting and other forms of economic development, without calling upon the Malays. Much work still remains to be done in analysing the precise effects of colonial rule upon the Malay peasant economy.[99] For the present, all that can be attempted is some brief generalisation, in illustration of the main contention that the great bulk of Malays remained locked within the framework of a traditional society which was changing only slowly.

---

[98] For a recent discussion of Malay economic attitudes, see Michael Swift, 'Malay Peasants', in R. Firth (ed.), <u>The Role of Savings and Wealth in Southern Asia and the West</u> (London, 1964), pp. 219-224.

[99] <u>Cf.</u>, for example, the studies undertaken in a comparable society by W.F. Wertheim and The Siaw Giap, 'Social Change in Java, 1900-1930' <u>Pacific Affairs</u> (Fall, 1962); and Clifford Geertz, <u>The Social Context of Economic Change</u> (Massachusetts, 1956), and <u>Agricultural Involution: The Processes of Ecological Change in Indonesia</u> (Berkeley, 1963). Enquiries of this kind have yet to be undertaken for Malaya.

Early land legislation in those states which first came under British protection (later used as a model in the remaining states) gave to the Malay a secure form of title for his land, and a simple means of effecting and recording transactions in that land.[100] When, at the beginning of the twentieth century, the boom in rubber cultivation led to large-scale alienations of land to European and other foreign entrepreneurs,[101] concern was felt (by the administration itself and by the Malay rulers) that the Malay, succumbing to the lure of high prices, might divest himself entirely of his patrimony.[102] Accordingly, in 1913, a Malay Reservations Enactment was passed by the Federal Council, giving the Residents power to set aside certain areas of land (primarily, but not solely, rice lands) for exclusive Malay ownership, and limiting the ability of the Malay to charge or lease land held within such Reservations

---

[100] A brief discussion of the system (which was modelled on the Torrens system of land registration) and of its introduction may be found in H.P. Bryson, 'Land Tenure and Documents of Title in Malaya', Malaya (January 1963), pp. 26-7; and cf., also, J.R. Innes, 'Registration of Title in the Federated Malay States', Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation, N.S. XIV (1914), pp. 386-9. Later developments are outlined in J.V. Cowgill, 'System of Land Tenure in the Federated Malay States', Malayan Agricultural Journal, XIV (May 1928) pp. 181-193.

[101] Between 1906 and 1913, the area of land planted in rubber in Malaya as a whole increased from less than 100,000 acres to an estimated 685,000 acres, in the hands mainly of European planting concerns. In the F.M.S. alone, there were 408,000 acres under rubber in 1913, and a further 400,000 acres had been alienated for rubber and cocoanut planting. C.R. Akers, The Rubber Industry in Brazil and the Orient (London, 1914), pp. 171-3.

[102] See the debate on the introduction of the Malay Reservations Bill, Federal Council Proceedings, 9 July 1913.

to non-Malays.[103] Four years later, prompted by threats of food shortage towards the end of the first world war, and by anxiety over the extent to which Malays were turning to the cultivation of small-holding rubber rather than rice, additional legislation was passed empowering Residents to impose upon Malay-held lands conditions of tenure which prohibited the cultivation of products other than rice.[104] In the following year an amendment to the principal Land Enactment of 1911 laid down that no state land suitable for wet-rice cultivation (or capable of being made suitable by irrigation) might be alienated for any other purpose.[105]

Legislation of this kind illustrates the desire of the F.M.S. Government to keep the Malay on the land, and as far as possible employed in cultivating his traditional staple. The provisions of both the Malay Reservations Enactment and the Rice Lands Enactment of 1917 were much evaded -- by Malays anxious to dispose of reservation

---

[103] 'An Enactment to provide for securing to Malays their interests in land', Enactment No. 15 of 1913, in A.B. Voules (ed.), The Laws of the Federated Malay States, 1877-1920 (London, 1921), Vol. II, pp. 505-8. In passing it may be said that there is much need of a full-scale study of the application and effects of this enactment. A brief discussion, by a Malay with legal training, may be found in Raja Mohar b. Raja Badiozaman, 'Malay land reservation and alienation', Intisari, I, 2 (? 1964), pp. 19-25.

[104] Rice Lands Enactment, 1917 (Enactment No. 2 of 1917), in Voules, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 125-27. Concern about the need to maintain rice cultivation was of long standing among the Malays themselves. See, e.g., the historical resume given in A.S. Haynes, 'Memorandum on Extension of Rice Cultivation in the Federated Malay States: Need for a Definite Policy', Council Paper No. 28 of 1933, Federal Council Proceedings (1933); and cf., also E.J. Butler, 'Report on the Agricultural Department', Council Paper No. 19 of 1919, Federal Council Proceedings (1919). A recent study of British policy on rice production has been made by Ding Eing Tan Soo Hai, The Rice Industry in Malaya, 1920-1940 (Singapore, 1963).

[105] Amending Enactment No. 41 of 1918 to the Land Enactment, 1911, in Voules, op. cit., pp. 75-127.

land or use it as security for loans, and by those who wished to cultivate on 'rice land' more profitable and less arduous crops, particularly rubber.[106] In general, however, their aim was achieved, and the Malay peasant remained firmly embedded in rural village society. Nor was Government action confined solely to restriction of one sort or another. One of the chief handicaps under which the peasant farmer with his small surpluses laboured was indebtedness of a variety of kinds to non-Malay rice millers, rubber marketing agents, village shopkeepers, and money lenders. In 1917, the first of a number of Government-owned rice mills was set up in north-western Malaya, and a few years later a Co-operative Societies Department was formed, with the task of helping the Malay peasant to provide his own credit facilities.[107] Agricultural research and extension programmes to help the peasant cultivator were started in the 1920s, irrigation projects were accelerated, and elementary agricultural science was introduced as a teaching subject in the training college for vernacular teachers.[108] Indeed, the whole vernacular education programme was revised and

---

[106] See, e.g., the Report of the Rice Cultivation Committee (Government Printer: Kuala Lumpur, 1931) Two Vols., *passim*. This report was listed as Federal Council Paper No. 24 of 1931, but printed separately. *Cf*. also below, Chapter Six.

[107] The Department was set up in 1921, after A.J. Cavendish, an official of theAgricultural Department, had spent two months in Burma studying rural credit institutions (see his report, published as Council Paper No. 31 of 1921, Federal Council Proceedings, 1921). *Cf*., also, C.F. Strickland, 'Report on Co-Operation in Malaya', Council Paper No. 26 of 1929, Federal Council Proceedings (1929). Rural co-operative societies were only very moderately successful, owing partly to the fact that, as an American observer commented later, they were provided 'with constitutions but not with initial funds to carry on their work' (W.J. Ladejinsky, 'Agricultural Policies of British Malaya', in Foreign Agriculture (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington), V, 4 (April, 1941), p. 160).

[108] See below, Chapter Five.

re-shaped after the first world war, with the express aim of producing 'a vigorous and self-respecting agricultural peasantry such as must form the backbone of every nation'.[109]

The effect in general of these policies and practices was to reduce the impact and the rate of socio-economic change at the village level, and substantially to prevent any serious disorganisation of rural Malay life. At the same time, however, they acted to isolate the Malay from economic and social stimuli which might, with other forms of guidance and help, have done more to assist peasant society to move towards a gradual evolution of social structure, and new patterns of living, more in keeping with the demands of the modern world. The advantages as well as the disadvantages of British Malay policy are both implicit in remarks made by the Director of Agriculture in 1934:

> Our trusteeship for the Malay people demands that we administer the country on lines consistent with their welfare and happiness, not only for today but for the future ages. That end will be attained rather by building up a sturdy and thrifty peasantry living on the lands they own and living by the food they grow than by causing them to forsake the life of their fathers for the glamour of new ways which put money in their pockets today but leave them empty tomorrow, and to abandon their rice-fields for new crops which they cannot themselves utilise and the market for which depends on outside world conditions beyond their orbit.[110]

Already, however, by the end of the 1920s, numbers of Malays -- even among the peasantry themselves -- were beginning to make a larger

---

[109] Annual Address of the High Commissioner, Federal Council Proceedings (1920), p. B65.

[110] A.S. Haynes, 'Memorandum on Extension of Rice Cultivation', p. C293.

acquaintance with 'the outside world', in several of its manifestations, and to desire to play some part in its affairs. To adapt the Malay customary saying, the frog beneath the coconut shell[111] was shortly to seek wider horizons.

[111] A frequent Malay expression for someone who knows no other world beyond his immediate surroundings, and is amply content with them.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Growth of an Autocthonous Intelligentsia

If 'Arabic' education in early twentieth century Malaya had produced a small but challenging group of religio-social reformists, located mainly in the peripheral cities, and English education a not much larger group of pro-British administrators and subordinate government servants, it was left to the vernacular school system to give birth in the 1920s to the nucleus of a politically more radical, Malay-educated intelligentsia primarily of teachers and journalists. As the third determinable elite group to appear within modern Malay society, the radical intelligentsia were notable for their specifically Malay (and Indonesian) orientation, for their cultural vigour, and ultimately (in common with the religious reformists) for their failure to achieve in political terms anything approaching organisational coherence or mass popular support. The reasons for this failure, which will be discussed in greater detail in due course, relate closely to the traditional matrix in which for the most part Malay society remained enclosed prior to the second world war,

despite the changes taking place both within the Malay community itself and in its environment. The persistence of traditional forms, whether expressed in continued allegiance to customary leadership and authority, in the durability of peasant modes of economic behaviour, or in adherence to characteristically Malay religious beliefs and practices, was seen by many Malays as a safeguard against the destruction of their cultural and personal identity. The desirability of selective adaptation was certainly recognised by some groups, but anxiety over the subordinate and inferior role in which the Malay appeared to have been cast in the modern world -- governmentally in relation to the British, economically in relation to the Chinese, and culturally (in the widest sense) in relation to practically everybody -- while it produced increasingly widespread uneasiness for the future resulted in no agreed idea of where the remedy lay. The attempts of the reformists to posit a purified and revivified Islam as the necessary dynamic of 'progress' had, in making too direct a challenge to customary religious (and by implication secular) authority, foundered on the rock of traditionalism. In the long run, it was the metamorphosed traditional elite itself which alone was to prove capable of organising large-scale support for a 'Malay rights' type of programme, which however did little more than exaggerate existing British Malay policy. But in the late 1920s and the 1930s, the appearance of a more radical group concerned neither with Islamic blue-prints nor with Western-sponsored administrative skills, but with pan-Malayan anti-colonialism, seemed briefly to provide a third leadership alternative.

It was in some ways ironic that this radical Malay intelligentsia should have been the product of a vernacular education system which saw the Malays as the quiescent peasant base of the plural society, and which was designed, while contributing to their moral and material improvement, to secure the perpetuation of this state of affairs for the foreseeable future. As the Director of Education was reported as saying in 1920:

> [T]he aim of the Government is not to turn out a few well-educated youths, nor a number of less well-educated boys: rather it is to improve the bulk of the people, and to make the son of the fisherman or peasant a more intelligent fisherman or peasant than his father had been, and a man whose education will enable him to understand how his lot in life fits in with the scheme of life around him.[1]

Between the years 1900 and 1920, Malay vernacular schools in the F.M.S. increased in number from 168 to 400[2] and the average enrolment rose from just over six thousand to 20,319.[3] The corresponding figures for the unfederated states (where the majority of Malays lived) were naturally very much lower, owing both to their late start and to the slow development of the east coast states. Nevertheless Johore and Kedah at least had between them 129 Malay schools by 1920, with a total enrolment of more than nine thousand.[4] Looking at 'British Malaya' as a whole in that year, there were approximately 46,000 pupils attending

---

[1] Annual Report on the F.M.S. for 1920, p. 13.

[2] Annual Report on the F.M.S. for 1900, p. 20; Annual Report on the F.M.S. for 1920, p. 12.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Annual Report on Johore for 1920, p. 14; Annual Report on Kedah for 1920, p. 7.

757 Malay schools, or roughly twelve per cent of the total Malaysian population aged between five and fifteen.[5] Such success as this represented in drawing peasant Malay children (principally boys) into the Government vernacular schools reflected, in addition to growing enthusiasm among the Malays themselves for secular education, the special position given by the British to specifically Malay education in all states and settlements. In this it contrasts markedly with the position within the other major communities, which were either left to provide vernacular education for themselves (as in the case of the Chinese),[6] or had a small number of inadequate schools provided for them on the rubber estates (as in the case of the Indians).[7] It was, in short, with few exceptions, Government policy to use public funds for no vernacular education other than in Malay. Expenditure on education of all kinds formed only a small part of Federal and State budgets (seldom rising above 1.5 per cent of revenue) but the bulk of what was available went to the Malay vernacular schools. Legislation in some states and settlements provided that all Malay children aged between seven and fourteen and living within two miles

---

[5] Annual Reports on the F.M.S., Johore, Kedah and Trengganu for 1920; on Kelantan for 1918, Perlis for 1919, and the Straits Settlements for 1922 (extrapolating); and Census of British Malaya, 1921, pp. 18 and 66.

[6] See, e.g., V. Purcell, The Chinese in Modern Malaya (Singapore, 1960), pp. 21-2. By 1921, it was estimated that there were 90 private Chinese schools in the F.M.S. alone (Annual Report on the F.M.S. for 1921).

[7] See, e.g., J. Norman Parmer, Colonial Labour Policy and Administration (New York, 1960), pp. 124-5.

of an existing school should be compelled to attend for up to four years,[8] and even where these regulations did not apply the demand for education in the more developed areas of the peninsula increased steadily after the turn of the century.[9]

Statistics of enrolment and attendance, however, mean little by themselves, except to suggest that a growing proportion of Malay children, especially in the F.M.S. and the Straits Settlements, were gaining basic literacy in their own tongue. The efficiency of teaching, and the quality and content of the educational experience, were other matters again. The Malay vernacular schools were essentially village elementary schools, housed in simple and often makeshift quarters, possessing little teaching equipment or skills, and providing at best only four years of rudimentary drilling in the three Rs. By no means all the pupils

---

[8] The first such legislation was introduced in Selangor in 1891 (Sel. Regulation V of 1891), followed by Negri Sembilan in 1899 and 1900 (N.S. Order-in-Council, 6 April, 1899; and Enactment III of 1900). Neither Perak nor Pahang had corresponding legislation, though in Perak *penghulus* were occasionally found making their own arrangements to enforce attendance (see, e.g., *Perak Government Gazette*, 25 May, 1894). In the Straits Settlements similar regulations were provided for by Ordinance in 1902, but were enforced only partially -- in Malacca in 1902, in Province Wellesely in 1904, and in Penang outside the municipality in 1908 (D.D. Chelliah, *A Short History of The Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements*, p. 75).

[9] R.J. Wilkinson noted that in Perak in 1904 (where there was no compulsory attendance) the enrolment and attendance figures 'indicate a certain confidence in education for its own sake, and certainly no native race shows this confidence except the Malays'. He added that the most remarkable feature about Malay students was their readiness to continue or resume studies after leaving school. (*Annual Report on Education*, quoted in *Annual Report on the F.M.S. for 1904*, p. 18.)

completed the four-year course, and of these only a very few were able to take advantage of the possibility this opened up of receiving free English education in the towns. Many lasted for only a year or two at the village school, and then drifted away to work in the fields or perhaps to study the Kuran and kitab at a religious pondok. In these circumstances, whatever the aspirations of individual pupils, teachers or administrators, standards were inevitably low and fitfully maintained, and this, coupled with the prevailing official attitude to vernacular education, based on the reconciliation of the peasant to his 'lot in life', meant that the Malay school system necessarily achieved only limited and somewhat spasmodic success.

The history of the vernacular school system during the first quarter of the century is marked by three periods of energy and interest on the part of those directing it, each associated with an administrative head of more than ordinary concern for the Malays and Malay education. One of the principal causes of the irregularity to which this points was that administrative control of education was vested in the Malayan Civil Service and not in the professional Education Service attached to it. Though this perhaps had some advantages, in that education of an illiterate peasant population may be said to be primarily an administrative problem, requiring 'an intimate knowledge of the people rather than scholastic experience',[10] it meant also, because of the vicissitudes of civil service

---

[10] J.S. Furnivall, Educational Progress in Southeastern Asia (New York, 1944), p. 65.

postings, a lack of continuity in planning and supervision, and no assurance of close interest on the part of administrative incumbents. Thus, although on two occasions prior to 1920 some of the more obvious shortcomings of the vernacular school system were recognised and plans made to improve it, on each occasion the system was allowed to run down in one respect or another in the years following.

The first educational administrator of distinction in Malaya was R.J. Wilkinson, whose interest in vernacular education as an instrument of Malay progress has already been referred to.[11] Wilkinson possessed one of the most able intellects among British Malayan officials of the time, allied to a real love for and sympathy with the Malay people. Discovering early in his career an enthusiasm for Malay culture in general, and its language and literature in particular, his work in vernacular education was to give him an opportunity to exercise this in practical as well as in scholarly ways. His direct association with public instruction began when he was made Acting Superintendent of Education, Penang, in 1896, and culminated in his appointment as Federal Inspector of Schools for the three years between 1903 and 1906. It

---

[11]See above, Chapter Four. Richard James Wilkinson, b. 1867, was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge, before joining the Straits Settlements Civil Service in 1889. During 25 years in Malaya he filled a large number of administrative posts, and made his influence particularly felt upon Malay education. In 1911 he became Colonial Secretary, Straits Settlements, and for two periods (November-December 1911 and July-August 1914) was Officer Administering the Government of the Straits Settlements and Malay States. In 1916, he was appointed Governor of Sierra Leone, from which post he retired in 1922, to live in Greece. He died in December, 1941. An obituary of Wilkinson, written by R.O. Winstedt, was published in the J.M.B.R.A.S. XX, 1 (June, 1947), pp. 143-4.

seems clear from the evidence of his writings that this was the most stimulating and rewarding period of his service in Malaya. During it he published the first edition of his Malay Dictionary,[12] still the largest and most comprehensive English-Malay lexicon, organised as General Editor the first series of Papers on Malay Subjects[13] (laying at the same time the groundwork of his own contributions to this collection of monographs), and wrote at some length on the problems of education in Asian societies.[14] Though his writings have been somewhat overshadowed by those of more prolific or publicist contemporaries, they manifest qualities rare for the time in their relative freedom from ethnocentricity of judgement or moral patronage.

---

[12] R.J. Wilkinson, A Malay-English Dictionary (Singapore, 1901-3). The genesis of this work is described in the preface to the second and revised edition (Mytilene, 1932), pp. i-iv.

[13] R.J. Wilkinson (Gen. Ed.), Papers on Malay Subjects, Series I (Kuala Lumpur, 1907-11). Wilkinson himself contributed eight out of the twelve monographs: Literature, Pt. 1, 'Romance, History, Poetry and Modern Developments' (1907) and Pt. 3, 'Malay Proverbs on Malay Character' (1907); History, Pt. 1 'Events Prior to the British Ascendancy' (1908), Pt. 2, 'Notes on Perak History' (1908), Pt. 4, 'Council Minutes, Perak, 1880-1882' (1909) and Pt. 5 'Notes on the Negri Sembilan' (1911); Law, Pt. 1 'Introductory Sketch' (1908); and Life and Customs Pt. 1, 'The Incidents of Malay Life' (1908).

[14] His most notable paper was 'The Education of Asiatics', in Special Reports on Educational Subjects, Vol. 8, published as Cd 835, Great Britain Parliamentary Papers, 1902. See also his monograph, Literature, Pt. 1, in Papers on Malay Subjects, and his Annual Reports while Federal Inspector of Schools, F.M.S., especially that for 1903.

In particular, where education was concerned, he showed a grasp of the basic social predicament facing the Malays such as one finds nowhere else. Writing in 1902, for example, he observed that

> The sudden establishment of a modern settlement in an old-world community such as that of the Malays brings about great social changes. To the people as a whole it brings a certain amount of economic prosperity. To some individuals it brings evil. It destroys many native handicrafts, and so ruins men deservedly held in good repute for skill and industry. It establishes a demand for people willing to serve the foreigner, and disproportionately benefits such persons as compared with the independent worker and the peasant proprietor. Thus the men respected by the old community are not those who acquire the most wealth by the change. In the words of a Malay author (who wrote prior to the establishment of our educational system), the founding of Singapore 'made worms out of dragons and dragons out of worms'. The effacing of the old social landmarks brought about a demoralisation which it should be the object of public instruction to combat.[15]

That vernacular education was not fulfilling this task seemed clear. Lamenting that 'no highly educated class has sprung up among [the Malays] to lead them on to further improvement',[16] Wilkinson sought to establish the reasons for this in so far as they lay with the educational system itself. Though administrative reorganisation, based on the combination of the separate state services and the provision of uniform curricula and examination standards, had begun shortly after federation in 1896, Wilkinson found the atmosphere surrounding Malay vernacular education at the turn of the century stifling and unreal. The natural gifts and abilities of pupils seemed often to be suppressed rather than encouraged by the dull processes of learning by rote which were a feature of most

---

[15] 'The Education of Asiatics', p. 686.

[16] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 687.

schools. Teacher training was wholly inadequate, despite the establishment of a vernacular training college in the F.M.S. in 1898, and teaching was for the most part poor and unimaginative, and hampered by lack of suitable books. This first college, at Taiping, in Perak, was supported jointly by Perak and Selangor, and took only ten students in a two-year course, chosen from among 'picked scholars who have passed in the Fourth or highest Malay school Standard'.[17] The numbers were ridiculously insufficient and the quality of training dubious, and two years later in 1900, urged on by Wilkinson and others, Government decided to establish a larger and more ambitious college at Malacca, to serve the whole of the Federated States and Straits Settlements. Taiping was, however, closed at the same time, so that Malacca, which had accommodation for only sixty students in a two-year course, was left to supply some thirty trained teachers annually for the 227 Malay schools in the combined territories (as in 1902) and the 15 or so new schools opened each year. Early in the new century the pay and status of vernacular teachers were marginally improved, by the introduction of the first graded salary scheme,[18] which, though it left Malay assistant teachers on a wage less than that received by a Tamil <u>peon</u>,[19] and benefitted

---

[17] <u>Annual Report on Perak for 1898</u>, p. 29.

[18] <u>Scheme for the Salaries of Teachers in Government Schools</u> (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 7 August 1902). The salaries ranged from $360 per annum 'for a few teachers of tried worth and experience', in charge of schools with eighty or more pupils, to $108 per annum for assistant teachers without training other than as pupil teachers. This compared with, for example, $900 - $1260 for Grade I and $420 - $720 for Grade II 'Eurasian and Native Teachers' in English Schools -- promotion between these grades being dependent only on passing the Cambridge Local Junior Examination at Standard VII level.

[19] B.O. Storey, 'The Malays', in A. Wright and H.A. Cartwright, <u>Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya</u> (London, 1908), p. 228.

the others correspondingly, offered a more secure income than had previously been available, and some promise of regular, if slow, promotion.

Wilkinson was aware of the potential advantage to be derived from these administrative and pedagogic reforms, and had indeed had a hand in most of them. He remained acutely sensitive, however, to the persistent and depressing intellectual and literary poverty of the system, necessarily a function not of form but of content. His own real respect not merely for the Malay cultural past (a familiar enough form of European patronage) but for its possibilities of future development, led him to seek solutions within the indigenous culture itself, and particularly in Malay literature. 'The destruction of the old Malay literary instinct', he wrote, ' -- even more than the loss of so much of the literature itself -- is a painful feature of the change that has come over Malay letters since they have been entrusted to European guidance'.[20] Noting that old Malays, whether literate or not, were 'not unappreciative of literary work', and that 'in a country where the ravages of termites necessitate the frequent copying of books ... the ancient literature has been handed down for centuries',[21] he asked why it was that in the present time 'the power to read and write does not seem to be accompanied by any desire to do so'.[22] Even among Malay teachers, he observed, few were accustomed to reading books other

---

[20]Papers on Malay Subjects: Literature, Pt. 1, p. 61.
[21]'The Education of Asiatics', pp. 688-89.
[22]Ibid., p. 687.

than those used in their work or for devotional purposes, and personal enquiry elicited the information that only three out of fifty questioned on the point 'possessed more than a shillingsworth of literature in their private libraries'.[23] First among the causes of the deterioration in the Malay literary impulse he placed 'the unsympathetic and even pedantic view of native books' taken by many Englishmen, which had helped to set up 'a certain antagonism between the new schools and the old learning'.[24] In order to remove this antagonism, and to make it possible for Malays to participate in a continuing tradition, Wilkinson thought that Government ought to take responsibility for supplying to schools not only text-books, but editions of Malay classical romances, histories and popular stories, which might lead the Malay to the creation of a modern literature of his own. Books of the latter kind, he said, might not appeal to the present-day Englishman, but they represented the road along which his own culture had travelled, 'and the destruction of this road will hardly expedite the progress of our Asian fellow-subjects'.[25]

Under Wilkinson's direction, therefore, a start was made at publishing (with Government funds) a number of the more popular Malay folk tales, and encouraging the production and purchase of text-books and readers in Malay suitable for school use. Wilkinson was himself responsible, with the assistance of Raja Hayi Yahya b. Mohd. Ali of Perak and R.O. Winstedt (at that time a junior M.C.S. Officer) for the inauguration of the 'Malay

---

[23] Cf., also Papers on Malay Subjects: Literature, Pt. 1, p. 61.
[24] 'The Education of Asiatics', p. 688.
[25] Ibid., p. 689.

Literature Series' of folk romances which began publication in 1906.[26] Aware that 'the Asiatic peasant is a poor man ... little disposed to put money into the pockets of publishers', he began also the practice of setting up small libraries in village schools to contain this and other general literature beyond the limitations of text-books. Though there is no direct evidence on the point it seems probable that arrangements of this sort, together with the increasing emphasis given to the literary side of Malay education at the time, created an expanding market also for some of the early products of modern Malay writing. Haji Mohd. Said's Hikayat Queen Victoria ('The Story of Queen Victoria': 1904-5) and Hikayat Johor ('History of Johore': 1908), and Sulaiman b. Mohammad's Kitab Gemala Hikmat ('The Magic Bezoar Stone': 1907) were doubtless among the works which found a wider audience by way of the Malay schools.[27] Where text-books were concerned, innovation was less apparent. The pioneering school books produced in the Straits Settlements in the 1880s and '90s by Sayyid Abdul Kadir Al-Hindi, most of them translated from elementary English texts on a variety of subjects ranging from hygiene and everyday science to geography and history,[28] were certainly given wider currency under the reorganised federal system. They were not, however, replaced by

---

[26] See Za'ba, 'Modern Developments', in R.O. Winstedt, 'A History of Malay Literature', J.M.B.R.A.S., XVII, 3 (1939), pp. 148 and 149; and Mohd. Taib Osman, An Introduction to the Development of Modern Malay Language and Literature (Singapore, 1961) p. 11.

[27] Another work of some interest published at this time was Abdullah b. Abdul-Rahman's Matahari Memanchar ('The Rising Sun'), a history of the Japanese translated from the Arabic of Mustafa Kemal of Turkey, which, according to Za'ba (op. cit., p. 148) 'helped to stimulate among its readers a feeling of pride and hope for the renascence of Oriental peoples, even the Malays'.

[28] Details of several of these are given in Za'ba, op. cit., pp. 144-5.

books better suited to Malayan life and environment, despite Wilkinson's own criticisms of their often incomprehensible Western bias.[29] But doubtless everything could not be done at once. Much depended on time and money, and particularly upon the continuing interest and energy of others. It was largely the absence of this, in the years after Wilkinson's departure, that allowed the system to run down again, almost to the point at which it had been before.

Wilkinson was removed from the Federal Inspectorate in 1906 to a district administrative post in Perak state.[30] In the same year a further administrative reorganisation of education resulted in the union of the F.M.S. and Straits Settlements systems (English and vernacular) under a joint Director of Education. This officer was resident in Singapore: most of the Malay schools and the bulk of the Malay educational task lay in the peninsular states. In addition, with the increasing demand from Government and private business alike for English-trained subordinate staff, the greater part of the organisational effort turned in any case towards the English schools. The Malay school system was as a result left very largely to look after itself. When, six years later, a young English school-teacher, O.T. Dussek, came out to join the Educational Service, he found the Malay village schools, the training given to teachers, the Code and the curricula 'all utterly bad'.[31] Attendances were irregular,

---

[29]See, e.g., Papers on Malay Subjects: Literature, Pt. 1, p. 61.

[30]He became District Officer at Batang Padang.

[31]Personal communication from O.T. Dussek, March 1960.

and it was difficult to retain the poorly paid staff. Many of the boys and junior teachers found it more profitable and pleasurable, in the circumstances of the pre-war rubber boom, to leave school and work on the estates or on small-holdings. There was once again a serious shortage of books in the schools, and often teaching was done almost entirely from the Hikayat Abdullah, the Sejarah Melayu, and the newspaper Utusan Melayu. The Malacca training college still trained only thirty teachers a year, and when Dussek joined it as headmaster in 1914 he thought the standard of training appalling. Some of the student teachers could scarcely read or write, and their own pupils, Dessek felt, could hardly be any better equipped. Instruction in the teaching of reading in the practice school was carried out by arranging the schoolboys in a circle and getting them to bellow out the text in rotation. The student teacher, supervised by the headmaster, walked round 'the outside of the magic circle -- and would tap another boy when he wanted a change'.[32] There was no proper mathematics teaching at the college, though a senior master who knew some English used Pendlebury to teach stocks and shares, and compound interest, all in pounds, shillings and pence.

Disquiet about the low and deteriorating state of Malay education seems to have begun to make itself felt in a number of ways round about 1913. In that year the Perak state authorities, strongly supported (or perhaps prompted) by Sultan Idris,[33] expressed their dissatisfaction by breaking away from the Malacca college training programme, and setting

---

[32] Ibid.

[33] Dussek (ibid.) says that Sultan Idris took the lead in this.

up a teaching training college of their own at Matang. This, however, could train only fifteen teachers a year, still far short of the required number. Late in 1913 the F.M.S. Government, referring to the difficulty experienced 'in securing competent Masters for Malay schools', decided to raise the level of salaries in the hope of getting 'a good class of student by offering more liberal rates of pay'.[34] In 1915, R.H. Kenion, an unofficial member in the Federal Council expressed doubts about the vernacular education system which were apparently shared by the Residents of Perak and Pahang, and suggested that the time was ripe for the appointment of a commission of inquiry.[35] One of the effects of the low standard in Malay education, combined with its lack of utility in obtaining Government employment except as a low-paid schoolteacher, was that there was increasing pressure from Malays, especially in the developed areas, to be given greater opportunities to receive English education. In general this was not approved of, though it was accepted as desirable that a small proportion of Malays should graduate into white-collar occupations in the towns. Something of the current view of the aims of vernacular education, as held by Europeans, was expressed in Kenion's accompanying remarks. 'The great object of education', he told Council, 'is to train a man to make his living. ... You can teach Malays so that they do not lose their skill and craft in fishing and jungle work. Teach them the dignity of manual labour, so that

---

[34] Annual Address of the High Commissioner, 25 November, 1913 (Federal Council Proceedings (1913), p. B49).

[35] Federal Council Proceedings (1915), p. B67.

do not all become kranies [clerks] and I am sure you will not have the trouble which has arisen in India through over-education'.[36] This was a far cry from the practical idealism of Wilkinson a decade previously. What the peasant required, it now seemed, was perhaps an improved vernacular education, but one that above all else should prevent or discourage him from leaving the land. This was to be the tone of British policy in the F.M.S. for at least the next twenty years.

Kenion's proposed commission of inquiry was not long postponed, despite an initially cautious response from the Chief Secretary of the F.M.S.[37] It was, however, preceded by an administrative reorganisation of some significance for the future of vernacular education. Early in 1916 Government decided to appoint an Assistant Director of Education (Malay), with special responsibility for Malay schools in the F.M.S. and the Straits Settlements. In his despatch to the Colonial Office requesting approval for this appointment, the High Commissioner noted that 'the officer selected would be chosen on account of his knowledge of Malay literature, and Malay matters generally, and would be in charge of the publication of Malay school-books'.[38] In addition, he was to have special responsibility for the training colleges for Malay teachers at Malacca and Matang. The prescription for the post fitted exactly only one man, R.O. Winstedt, previously associated with Wilkinson in the

---

[36] _Ibid_.

[37] _Ibid_.

[38] Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 2 December 1915, F.M.S. No. 456 of 1915.

'Malay Literature Series' and other publications, and himself a Malay scholar of some reputation.[39] Immediately upon taking up his appointment, in the middle of 1916, he was asked to inquire into and make recommendations concerning Malay vernacular education. To assist in this he was sent to Java and the Philippines to study the systems of vernacular and industrial education in force in the 'native schools' of other colonial territories. It was Winstedt's report,[40] made on his return in 1917, that led to what was described as the 'New Education' for Malay schools, and indirectly and quite unintentionally to the growth of the radical intelligentsia.

The problem for the British in the F.M.S. was essentially one of holding a proper balance between a moderate proportion of English education for non-agricultural employment and an elementary but rejuvenated and suitably 'practical' education in Malay for the great bulk of the people destined (and required) to remain in peasant occupations. The growing realisation by Malays that in higher education lay their only hope of

---

[39]Richard Olof Winstedt, b. 1878, was educated at New College, Oxford, and joined the Malayan Civil Service as a Cadet in 1902. Early association with R.J. Wilkinson stimulated in him a close interest in Malay culture, and throughout his career in Malaya (which lasted until 1935) and subsequently he published a very large number of books and articles on Malay literature, history and related subjects. From 1916 until 1923 he was Assistant Director of Education (Malay), and from 1924 until 1931 (when he was appointed General Adviser, Johore) Director of Education. A brief biography of Winstedt, and a bibliography of his writings, may be found in J. Bastin and R. Roolvink (eds.), Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his eighty-fifth birthday (London, 1964) pp. 1-23.

[40]'Report by Mr. R.O. Winstedt, Assistant Director of Education S.S. and F.M.S., on Vernacular and Industrial Education in the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines', S.S. Legislative Council Proceedings, Council Paper No. 22, 1917 [Hereafter cited as Winstedt, 'Report on Vernacular Education'].

competing successfully in the colonial plural society, and the recognition by the British that clerical and technical jobs had in fact been largely pre-empted by urban Indians and Chinese, led, as we have seen, to a greater appreciation on the part of both that English educational opportunities for Malays would have to be increased. At the same time, or so the British argument ran, they could not be increased too much, or the peasant base of the plural society would be disrupted. The resulting dilemma, which reflects familiar uncertainties in British Malay policy -- divided between preservation and innovation, and often doing scant justice to either -- is clearly illustrated in two policy statements made at about this time in successive annual addresses to the Federal Council by the High Commissioner. When in 1919 His Excellency expressed the concern of Government that 'special attention should now be given to the provision of adequate facilities for technical and literary education of Malays [in English] to enable them to take their proper place in the administrative and commercial life of these States ...',[41] this was not held to prejudice the other (and for the most part more purposive) view, that

> It is no real education that qualifies a pupil in reading, writing and arithmetic and leaves him with a distaste, or perhaps even a contempt, for the honourable pursuits of husbandry and handicraft. It will not only be a disaster to, but a violation of the whole spirit and traditions of, the Malay race if the result of our vernacular education is to lure the whole of the youth from the kampong to the town.[42]

---

[41] Federal Council Proceedings (1919), p. B45.

[42] Federal Council Proceedings (1920), p. B65.

Thus though circumstances after the First World War forced upon the British a rather half-hearted expansion of English educational facilities for Malays, it was thought much more important to strengthen and develop the vernacular school system, within prescribed limits, to make it a fit instrument with which 'to breed a vigorous and self-respecting agricultural peasantry such as must form the backbone of every nation'.[43]

Winstedt's report in 1917 laid the foundations for this policy, introduced the concept of what came to be known as 'Rural Bias', and determined the course of Malay vernacular education for nearly a quarter of a century. Much of the approval with which Winstedt's role in this respect has been almost consistently regarded (by many Malays as well as Britishers)[44] seems misplaced. In his way, he did more to circumscribe Malay educational progress, and to ensure that the Malay peasant did not get ideas above his station, than anyone else before or since. It was his accomplishment of this within a greatly improved organisational framework that appears to have given rise to a persisting illusion that real educational reform dates from 1917. In so far as this is true, it is true only in a very limited sense, and the unforeseen results were of immeasurably greater importance than those intended by Winstedt and other British administrators. A man of very different calibre from Wilkinson, Winstedt

---

[43] Ibid.

[44] See, e.g., Mansur b. Sanusi, Sejarah Perkembangan Pelajaran Melayu ('History of the Growth of Malay Education') (Penang, 1955), pp. 47-8.

showed a fundamental lack of concern for Malay intellectual development remarkable in one engaged at the same time in building a personal reputation by writing about Malay literature and history. At heart an administrator and an analyst rather than a creator or a true scholar, he showed little real understanding of the Malay spirit and its strivings, despite his undoubted knowledge of the language and his enormous corpus of writings on a variety of Malay subjects. Nothing in his 1917 report strikes one more than the absence of any thoughtful reflection on the aims and effects of vernacular education (such as had been envinced by Wilkinson), or of any concern at all beyond the practical aims of British colonial rule. It is difficult, indeed, to discern amid the plethora of comment and recommendation anything approaching a guiding principle for the educational process other than that expressed in a stray assertion that it should be 'designed to develop the mind and not to deaden it with half-understood detail'[45] -- in the context of which remark he goes on to praise the ommission of history teaching from the curricula of Netherlands East Indies village schools, and to suggest that this practice be followed also in Malaya.[46]

---

[45]Winstedt, 'Report on Vernacular Education', p. C97.

[46]Ibid. Winstedt said, 'It is useless to try to teach [the kampong boy] European history; to teach him the fairy-tales that stand for history in Malay chronicles is futile, and, for teaching him scientifically the history of his own land our books are founded on evidence too debatable and arrive at conclusions calculated too often to wound his susceptabilities'. This did not, however, prevent him writing a brief History of Malaya the following year, which he had translated into Malay for school use.

Well aware that, under existing conditions, which he himself accepted, comparatively few Malays could (or should) proceed to English schools, Winstedt regarded the vernacular schools as essentially vehicles for only the most elementary instruction. A small and privileged group might go on from this to higher, but still elementary, education in English.[47] For the mass of the peasantry what was important was to reduce, indeed, the number of years spent in receiving education, and to give vernacular instruction a strong manual and agricultural bias. Obviously impressed with what he had seen of the three-standard _desa_ schools in the Netherlands Indies, and their strictly limited but 'practical' curricula, he remarked that it might be regretted that Malaya had started providing education superior to this in village schools, 'but we can hardly come down from the position we have taken'. He recommended, however, that the fifth standard in Malay schools be abolished,[48] and that instruction in drawing, horticulture, 'and at least one other industry' be given a central place in the syllabus. The other industry he thought, drawing on his experience in the Philippines, might most suitably be basketry, which

---

[47] It ought, however, to be said that Winstedt was critical of the system which required most Malay boys desirous and capable of attending English school to complete four or five years of Malay school first. Somewhat inconsistently with the rest of the Report, he thought that some Malay schools might give a grounding in English (as in the 'Dutch-Vernacular' schools of the N.E.I.), or better still that classes in Malay for Malay boys might be attached to some of the English schools (_Ibid._, p. C96). Neither suggestion was elaborated or pursued.

[48] On the ground that 'Standard V merely produces boys who think they ought to be Malay Clerks but are insufficiently educated' (_Ibid._, p. C118).

together with practical experience in gardening would help teach teachers and pupils alike 'the dignity of manual labour'. Basketry, in fact, became the sign and symbol of the 'new learning'.[49] It could, of course, be argued that Winstedt's revised vernacular education was eminently suited to a people whose future necessarily lay in peasant agriculture: equally, however, it had to be conceded that it fitted them for very little else.[50]

These observations made, it must also be said that Winstedt, like others before him, was highly critical of some of the pedagogically more unsatisfactory features of the vernacular schools and their administration. In the course of his report he made numerous sensible and practical recommendations for improvement, many of which were carried out during the course of his association with the Education Department. Stating uncompromisingly that the unsuitable text-books of the past should be scrapped,[51] he recommended and himself set in train the preparation of new series of Malay readers, and of text-books dealing with hygiene, physiology, geography, arithmetic and agricultural science.

---

[49] See, e.g., J. Stewart Nagle, Educational Needs of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States (Baltimore, 1928), p. 142; 'A new world of vision has been opened to the Malay. Gardening in Perak and basketry in the other States has already led him to recognise that manual work has an educational value and is not to be despised'. Official reports were full of references to the miracles wrought by basketry.

[50] In a pamphlet prepared for the Wembley Exhibition in 1924, Winstedt wrote: 'There can be little doubt that the bulk of the inhabitants must turn to agriculture and other industries, and that the Education Department will have to equip them for those paths of life. Any ideal of education, not adjusted to local wants, must lead to economic dislocation and social unrest'. (British Empire Exhibition: Malayan Series - Education in Malaya [London, 1924], p. 15). He was speaking here of all Malayan children: the argument was held to apply a fortiori to the Malays.

[51] 'Report on Vernacular Education', p. C118.

Equally important, perhaps, he helped remove one of the worst evils which had beset Malay schools -- the spasmodic ordering of small lots of books and other teaching aids by individual school inspectors in separate states -- by bringing the purchase of these materials under central control, with all the consequent advantages of large editions and more efficient distribution that this made possible.[52] Administratively, he pressed for the creation of a Malay School inspectorate distinct from though subordinate to the English School inspectorate, which was in time staffed largely by Malays familiar with vernacular needs and standards. In addition, he replaced the old system of Visiting Teachers (which had been subject to much abuse) by a Group Teacher system, under which a senior grade Malay teacher, while remaining headmaster of his own central school, took responsibility for a number of other schools in his own area. Together, these measures undoubtedly helped to make Malay education more efficient than it had been before, and a more effective instrument of policy. The expense involved in carrying them out was not great, as Winstedt had been careful to point out in a passage of the report which does much to reveal the quality of thought that was to characterise the development of Malay education in ensuing years:

---

[52] Ibid., p. C120. Cf., also, Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 2 December 1915, F.M.S. No. 456 of 1915, which had drawn attention to some of the previous shortcomings.

> I venture to submit that the new appointments, new books, new equipment of tools, seeds, and so on here recommended are not costly, when the extent of the population to be affected is considered; and that in a few years the Government should reap a reward in the increased industrial efficiency of the Malay and in the increased output of goods of economic value.[53]

The success of Winstedt's vernacular education system depended very largely, as all education must do, on the quality of its teaching staff. Recommending, rather reluctantly, that teachers' salaries be raised, in order to offset competing demands from other occupations and higher costs of living,[54] Winstedt nevertheless realised that the crux of the problem lay in the inadequate training now given to too few teachers. Central to his plans, therefore, was a new and enlarged central teachers' training college, with a more specialised staff of instructors and a lengthened course of three years.[55] It is in relation to this college, in the later years of the 1920s and in the 1930s, that many of the most important effects of the 'new learning' were felt, though mostly not in ways envisaged by either Winstedt or other British administrators. It was this institution, in short, appearing at a time when problems of economic, social and political change were impinging increasingly on Malayan life, that gave birth to an autochthonous Malay intelligentsia as the third component elite

---

[53]'Report on Vernacular Education' p. C121.

[54]Ibid., p. C120. He suggested that, as an economy measure, it might be possible to distinguish two classes of native teacher, with a lower salary for those teaching in the remoter villages and not subject to transfer.

[55]Ibid., p. C118.

group in modern Malay society.

Sultan Idris Training College (S.I.T.C.), named in honour of the late Sultan Idris ibni Raja Iskandar of Perak, was opened at Tanjong Malim, a small town just north of the Perak-Selangor state boundary, late in 1922. It had been some three years in construction but the result was striking -- a fine set of teaching buildings and residential quarters accommodating 200 students and their teachers, and set in eighty acres of grounds. During the next year or two additions were made until the college reached its maximum enrolment of nearly 400. The first teaching staff consisted of four Europeans (including the headmaster, two general teachers and an instructor in agriculture), nine Malays, and one Filipino who had been engaged in 1917 to teach basketry at the old Malacca and Matang colleges, now closed. The students were drawn, by competitive examination, from village vernacular schools -- the sons for the most part of peasant farmers and fishermen. In this the Sultan Idris College contrasted markedly with the only comparable educational institution in the country, the Malay College at Kuala Kangsar, whose pupils, as we have seen,[56] came mainly from the ranks of the aristocracy. The antithesis between S.I.T.C. and Kuala Kangsar, though it can be exaggerated, is an instructive one, for the schools belonged in every sense to two different worlds, both old and new. On the one hand, at Kuala Kangsar,

[56] Above, Chapter Four.

there were the sons of the traditional ruling class and the wealthy, undergoing training for entry into the English-speaking world of government and administration and occasionally the professions; on the other, at S.I.T.C., the sons of the peasantry and the poor, undergoing training for return to the Malay-speaking world of the rural village school. Yet equally there were striking resemblances which set the Malay College and S.I.T.C. apart, as elite-producing institutions of a special kind. As residential schools based broadly on the English public school pattern they shared many features of organisation and esprit de corps; they both gave a secondary-level education (in the case of S.I.T.C. the only secondary education available in Malay); and perhaps most important of all they drew their students from every quarter of the peninsula and subjected them alike to a common and unifying experience.

When, in 1939, O.T. Dussek (who had been headmaster of the college from its inception until 1936) described S.I.T.C. as 'a Vernacular University in embryo',[57] he may well have been indulging in pardonable exaggeration, based on his own vision of the future. Yet it could hardly be denied that at S.I.T.C. 'every activity that is genuinely cultural and genuinely Malay has flourished in an astonishing manner',[58]

---

[57] O.T. Dussek, 'Growing Points in Native Education: The Sultan Idris Training College' (Roneo, May 1939).
[58] Ibid.

and that Tanjong Malim had become in the course of the preceding seventeen years something like the focus of Malay intellectual life. The explanations for this, in an institution purportedly devoted to the mundane values of basketry and gardening are several, complex and inter-related. Some concern the virtues of S.I.T.C., some its vices, and others are incidental to either, sharing rather in the ferment which was beginning to work in Malay society at large. But at the very least, S.I.T.C. is a useful and instructive vantage point from which to view the growth and the activities of the radical and nationalist Malay intelligentsia, to which it did so much, wittingly and unwittingly, to give birth.

The task of S.I.T.C., as originally conceived, was to train teachers for the vernacular schools of the F.M.S. and the Straits Settlements alone, in the proportion of two to one.[59] Annually recurrent expenditure was divided in the same ratio. From the first, however, a number of students came also from the U.F.M.S., particularly Kedah, Trengganu and Perlis, and before long the need was felt to put this on a more regular footing. Accordingly, a specific quota was allocated to the remaining states, which they could fill by taking financial responsibility for their own students. By the mid-1920s, therefore, S.I.T.C. was receiving some 120 new students a year from all parts of the peninsula,

---

[59]See, e.g., Federal Council Proceedings (1927), pp. B130-31, which gives also graduate figures for the first five years.

selected by internal examination from among the nominees of the separate states. Great pains were taken by the headmaster and staff to avoid state groupings or identifications within the college, and to emphasise to the boys that they were all, essentially, Malays, engaged in the joint task of raising the standard of Malay vernacular education in particular, and of Malay cultural life in general. The day they arrived at the school new boys were lined up according to size and distributed arbitrarily into 'Houses' by the headmaster, who walked along the line naming each of the college's residential Houses in turn. It is true that this procedure served the useful purpose also of securing an equitable distribution of good footballers and athletes, but its primary intent was to prevent the substitution of state for wider loyalties.[60] Too much can hardly be made of this point (which was emphasised in many other ways) for though graduates customarily returned to their own states to teach, and often to their own districts, they did so with a new consciousness of the wider unity of the Malay world, its people and problems.

Early in the career of the college, Dussek decided that because of the low standard of education among the boys, all of whom had come from village schools, it was as important to educate them as to teach them how to teach.[61] Therefore despite the highly utilitarian role conceived by Winstedt and others for vernacular education in general, and despite

[60] Personal communication from O.T. Dussek, May 1960.
[61] Ibid.

a strong practical bias within the curriculum, S.I.T.C. itself turned increasingly to the study, use and development of Malay language, literature and history. What were termed 'Western urban subjects', such as mathematics, geography and science, were given relatively little prominence, but in terms of the indigenous culture itself the students received something very like a liberal-humanities education. In addition, they were taught physiology and hygiene, nature-study, and elementary agriculture, and given practical instruction in drawing, handicrafts and gardening. All teaching was entirely in the Malay language -- where text-books did not already exist, they were either acquired by Dussek from the Netherlands East Indies (a point not without significance in drawing the attention of students to the more rapid development of the Indonesian variant of the Malay language) or prepared by the Translation Bureau attached to the college after 1924.[62] The

---

[62]The Bureau was set up, under Dussek's direction, mainly to provide text-books for the vernacular schools. Dussek's aim, and that of his principal translator, Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad (Za'ba), was to model the Bureau on the Netherlands Indies Balai Pustaka (see below, pp.230-32), with a large staff and an organisation capable of publishing a wide range of general literature (including original works of fiction) as well as translations from European languages. A proposal to this effect was, however, turned down by Winstedt, allegedly on the ground that 'we can't appear to be simply following in the footsteps of the Dutch' (interview with Za'ba, March 1960, confirmed by personal communication from Dussek, May 1960). With a staff which, at its peak in the early 1930s, consisted of eight translators and adaptors, the Bureau produced some 48 text-books in a 'Malay School Series' between 1924 and 1937, and in 1929 began a 'Malay Home Library Series' of classical Malay stories and translations of popular English literature ranging from Shakespeare to Sherlock Holmes. In view of the slenderness of its resources, and of increasing demands from Government for routine official translating, the achievement was considerable. For details of the work of the Bureau, see Abdullah Sanusi b. Ahmad, 'Peranan Pejabat Karang Mengarang dalam Bidang2 Pelajaran Sekolah2 Melayu dan Kesusasteraan di-Kalangan Orang Ramai' (The Role of the Translation Bureau in the Fields of Malay Education and General Literature) (B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Malaya, 1960).

staff of the college, apart from its most senior members, was almost entirely Malay. European staff were few in number, and except for Dussek himself, seldom stayed for more than a year or two at a time.[63] The Malay staff, recruited originally from the old Malacca and Matang colleges, was drawn increasingly from among the best graduates of S.I.T.C. itself.[64] Some of the latter, in particular, were among those who first fired the minds and imaginations of the students with the task that lay before them in the world outside.

A good deal of the credit for this must in the first instance, however, go to Dussek himself, who did so much to shape the college and to make possible the growth of an autochthonous intelligentsia, during his fourteen years as headmaster. The part played by him in this respect, as '_the_ teacher of all teachers of the Malays',[65] has frequently been acknowledged by the Malays themselves. As recently as 1961, in an appeal for funds with which to erect a monument to Dussek in the grounds of S.I.T.C., the Secretary of the Former Pupils Association wrote that, 'Throughout the time he held his job, Mr. Dussek showed the qualities not of a colonialist but of an educator whose real responsibility

---

[63] According to Dussek (personal communication, May 1960), most European teachers preferred teaching in English at non-residential town schools to living at Tanjong Malim, with the additional language work involved.

[64] Between 1924 and 1941, nineteen graduates appear to have been re-engaged on the teaching staff (Ahmad Abdullah, 'Kenang2an di-College Tanjong Malim' (Memories of Tanjong Malim College) (M.S., 1956, in possession of the present writer). Ahmad Abdullah, who wrote a number of novels and other works under the name 'Ahmad Bakhtiar', was on the staff of S.I.T.C. from 1923 until 1956, with the exception of the war years. He died in 1961.)

[65] Interview with a former student at S.I.T.C., Mohd. Amin b. Salleh, October, 1960.

was to our own people'.[66] Ormonde Theodore Dussek came out from England to join the Education Service in Malaya as a young man in 1912, and after two years spent in the Malacca (English) High School, asked for and received the appointment of Acting Headmaster of Malacca Training College for Malay vernacular teachers. The reasons for this request, as he has described them since, were that he had been 'bitten by the language bug', and in any case preferred to teach in residential schools.[67] Certainly, like a number of Englishmen before and since, he had come to acquire a passionate affection for the Malay people, and a strong desire to be of service to them. An outspoken critic of the vernacular school system as he found it in 1914,[68] he took what steps were open to him to improve the training of teachers at the Malacca college, and when Winstedt was appointed Assistant Director of Education (Malay) in 1916 discussed with him his own ideas for the reform of vernacular education. Prominent among these was the need he saw for a greatly enlarged, and preferably central, teachers' training establishment, giving extended and more efficient tuition. It seems probable that he was in part responsible for the recommendation

---

[66] Berita Harian (Kuala Lumpur), 9 December 1961. The same issue contains an article about Dussek and H.A.R. Cheeseman, who was in the Malayan Educational Service from 1907 until after the second world war.

[67] Personal communication from O.T. Dussek, April, 1960.

[68] See above, pp. 202-3.

to this effect in the Winstedt report, and when S.I.T.C. was opened in 1922 he was the natural choice for the post of headmaster.

To begin with, Dussek seems to have shared most of Winstedt's ideas about the kind of education desirable for the Malay rural population. As an educator with a mission, however, he found it impossible in practice to restrict the intellectual content of teacher training to the level envisaged by the Winstedt report. Despite the emphasis on practical pursuits in S.I.T.C.'s curriculum, therefore, he encouraged the growth alongside these of a more literary education, based on Malay language and culture. In this he resumed, one might say, what Wilkinson had begun. His aims, as he came to develop them, were to educate teachers as well as train them, to raise gradually the standard of vernacular schools until secondary education also was possible, and to press for Malay as the language of Government at the local (and ultimately at the state) level, in order to provide a suitable outlet for the brighter boys from rural schools.[69] Defeated in the last (which was in any case visionary for the time and the political circumstances), he achieved very considerable success in educating the teachers, and by means of this and in other ways did much to improve the vernacular schools -- though not one Malay secondary school was to be opened in Malaya until after the second world war.

Under Dussek, S.I.T.C. became the hub of the whole vernacular

---

[69]Personal communication, May 1960.

education system. In 1924, he was appointed Assistant Director of Education (Malay), a post he held jointly with his headmastership until 1936. S.I.T.C. as a result became the administrative centre for the Malay schools of the F.M.S. and S.S., reinforcing the links which were already being formed as graduates returned to village schools to teach. One of the principal tasks of the Assistant Director (but one which seems to have gone largely by default after Winstedt's secondment to an additional post in 1921)[70] was the preparation, publication and distribution of elementary school text-books. Dussek's incumbency saw renewed activity in this respect, and in the year of his appointment he was successful in establishing a Malay Translation Bureau, attached to the college, to translate, commission and edit school texts. The Translation Bureau had a separate staff, but most of them also taught their own subjects to the senior pupils. From 1929 onwards, the Bureau produced, in addition to its Malay School Series, a Malay Home Library Series, consisting largely of translations of (English) works of fiction and essays, for general reading by the increasingly literate peasant Malay population.[71]

---

[70] Winstedt was seconded to act as Principal of Raffles College, then in the planning stage. Though he remained A.D.E. (Malay), it seems likely that he was unable to give as much attention to the Malay work as hitherto. When Dussek became A.D.E. (Malay) in 1924, he claims to have inherited only one translator and a half-prepared manuscript of a Romanised Reader for Standard I (personal communication, 1960).

[71] See above, footnote 62.

These varied responsibilities, undertaken under Dussek's direction, helped to make S.I.T.C. a forum for modern Malay literary activity, even if one somewhat didactic in tone. Dussek himself, ambitious for the people amongst whom he was working, communicated to the students something of his own sense of the urgent need for peasant Malay development and the manner in which that might be accomplished. A strict disciplinarian, and a man of uncertain temper, he nevertheless had a great love for his pupils, and used, it is said, to weep when they left the college to return to their homes at the end of the teaching year.[72] There can be little doubt that his own spirit did much to breed in S.I.T.C. the strong sense of common identity and purpose which came to characterise it from its early years.[73]

At the same time, given that Dussek provided many of the necessary conditions for the growth of a nationalist intelligentsia -- access to higher education and to a literary tradition, subordination of state to ethnic loyalties, and a common view of the Malay predicament -- the sufficient cause must be sought elsewhere, among the students themselves and in their environment. The 1920s were years of considerable political change and political discussion, directed for the most part towards a re-definition of the relationship between the British and the Malays. The development of the explicitly 'pro-Malay' policy in the early years

---

[72]Interview, January 1960, with Buyong b. Adil, a student at S.I.T.C. 1924-27, and on the staff from 1927-41.

[73]Dussek resigned from the Malayan Educational Service in 1936, while on leave in England, after a dispute concerning promotion.

of the decade had been marked chiefly by attempts to allocate to Malays a greater proportion than hitherto of subordinate administrative, clerical and technical jobs in Government, and correspondingly to extend English-educational facilities among, on the one hand the traditionally privileged and on the other the urban Malay groups. In 1924, as a result of organised representations, the first Malay had been appointed to the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, following the seating of an 'Unofficial' Malay member in the Federal Council of the F.M.S. in the previous year.[74] Throughout the decade there was much discussion, at high political levels, of the 'decentralisation' of the federation, couched in terms of a restoration of the powers of the Sultans and their 'Malay States'. In the course of this, comparisons were frequently made between the federated and unfederated states, in which attention was drawn to the greater degree of Malay participation in the government and administration of the latter. The late 1920s saw also the first overt expressions of discontent by the Straits-born Chinese in the F.M.S., at their virtual exclusion from the apparatus of government. Economically, growing numbers of Malays, especially in the western states, were being drawn into involvement with world markets through small-holding rubber, and into increasing dependance on a cash economy with all its rewards and penalties as boom succeeded slump, and slump boom. Outside Malaya in the Netherlands East Indies, among the ethnically and culturally related Indonesians, political discontents were exploding in organised and violent attempts to overthrow the Dutch colonial regime.

---

[74] See below, Chapter Six.

Successive generations of S.I.T.C. students were made acutely aware of accelerating social and political change, and its attendant problems for the Malays, through their own experience in different parts of the peninsula, through increasingly wide reading of the local vernacular press and Indonesian literature, and through contact with each other and with the younger and more and more radical of their teachers. To the bonds of common Malayness and a shared social and intellectual experience was added the knowledge that they were all alike being systematically denied the means to participate fully in the foreign-dominated society of modern Malaya. No secret was made by Government of the ends intended to be served by vernacular education: to keep the Malay peasant on the land and hence to avoid 'economic dislocation and social unrest'.[75] It was incumbent upon graduates when they left S.I.T.C. to return to the village to teach in vernacular schools. Though many saw in this an opportunity to raise the standards and the sights of their people, the elementary character of the school curriculum precluded real progress in pursuit of this aim. From their own point of view the vernacular system effectively excluded them from the more lucrative employment open to those with other sorts of education, and from the interest and excitement of urban life. In the training college itself, the narrowness of the formal syllabus was felt by many, and perhaps most, of the students (who were, by definition, among the intellectually more able of their people) to be wholly inappropriate and

---

[75]This was the standard phrase used in Annual Reports.

inadequate for the modern world. They were being fobbed off, it seemed to them, with a sub-standard education fit only for tillers of the soil, while more privileged or more fortunate Malays, and large numbers of other races, were proceeding from education in English to comfortable and rewarding jobs, and ultimately to positions of influence in a world in which every transaction of importance was conducted in the English language.[76]

The reaction at S.I.T.C. took the form initially not of direct protest but of critical analysis of Malay society and of a quickening interest in the development of a modern Malay literature, polemical and didactic as well as imaginative, which could act both as a stimulant to progress and as a means of self-expression. Direct protest was ruled out for a number of reasons. Discipline at the college was strict, and questioning attitudes of mind, which might have led students to challenge the status quo, were not encouraged. Open participation in public controversy was particularly frowned upon, and though some teachers and students contributed articles and correspondence to the vernacular press, they were forbidden to do so and had perforce to write under pseudonyms. More important than either discouragement or suppression,

---

[76]For these and subsequent impressions of student reactions to S.I.T.C. I am indebted to a large number of graduates and staff, interviewed during 1959-60. Chief among them were Ahmad Abdullah (see above, footnote 64); Buyong b. Adil (see above, footnote 72); Harun b. Mohd. Amin, a student from 1924-27 and on the staff from 1927-40, novelist and writer during this period (see below, pp.234-5); Abdullah Sidek, student from 1929-31 and a prolific novelist in the 1930s; and Ibrahim b. Haji Yaacob, student from 1929-31, and later joint founder of the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malay Union) (see below, Chapter Six).

however, was the underlying conviction held by so many Malays that as a people they were politically incapable, economically inept, and culturally inferior to others, and therefore not in a position -- yet -- to speak. In an article entitled 'The Poverty of the Malays', published in November 1923 shortly before he became chief translator at the Malay Translation Bureau, Zainal Abdin bin Ahmad (Za'ba) wrote that,

> The Malays, as a whole, are a particularly poor people. Poverty is their most outstanding characteristic and their greatest handicap in the race of progress. Poor in money, poor in education, poor in intellectual equipment and moral qualities, they cannot be otherwise but left behind in the march of nations. The word 'poverty' as applied to them does not merely mean destitution of wealth or riches. It means terribly more. The poverty of the Malays is an all-round poverty. It envelops them on every side. That they are poor people in money matters goes without saying. But what is more distressing is the fact that they are also poor in all other equipments which can lead to success and greatness. They are not, however, naturally of poor intellect, or incapable of high morals. Potentially, they possess such qualities as much as do any other people. But the actualised part of this potentiality is still too poor to bear comparison with what we find in other progressive peoples in the country.
>
> Intellectually, the Malays are poor in knowledge, in culture, and in the general means of cultivating the mind. Their literature is poor and unelevating; their domestic surroundings from childhood are poor and seldom edifying; their outlook on life is poor and full of gloom; their religious life and practice is poor and far removed from the pure original teachings of the Prophet. In short, the Malays cut poor figures in every department of life.[77]

---

[77] 'Z' [ainal Abidin b. Ahmad], 'The Poverty of the Malays', Malay Mail 1 December, 1923. Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad (now entitled Dato') was born in Negri Sembilan in 1895, and educated first in Malay and then in English. In 1916 he was appointed an English teacher at the Johore Bahru English School, and in 1918 a Malay teacher at Kuala Kangsar Malay College. Transferred to the Translation Section of the Education Department in 1923, he moved to S.I.T.C. when the Translation Bureau was started there in the following year, and remained there until 1939. For some account of his life, see Zabedah bte Awang Ngah, 'Pandangan

[Footnote continued following page.]

Za'ba's gloomy picture had its counterpart in countless articles of similar kind appearing in the vernacular press in the 1920s. Though for the most part diagnostics of this sort were simply the prelude to exhortation and appeal to the Malays to do more to better themselves, they evidence also a real confusion about underlying causes and ultimate remedies. Throughout one senses strongly behind these discussions the element of fatalism in the face of preternaturally determined forces which has lain, and still often lies, at the heart of much Malay endeavour.[78] Remedies of a kind were certainly canvassed, proposed and urged: greater devotion to education, more economic co-operation, increased participation in trade and commerce, greater industry -- and, of course, among the religious reformists, the purification of Islamic belief and practice. But even in the last case, as we have already seen, little success had been achieved in the course of two decades in devising, either programmatically or organisationally, a workable formula for Malay advancement into the modern world. Advocates of other and more partial solutions were even less able to cast them in the form of a coherent system of action.

---

[77] [continued]
dan Kritik Za'ba Mengenai Soal Sifat2 Kemiskinan dan Sa-tengah2 Aspek Chara Penghidupan Serta Juga Shor2-nya atas Jalan Keselamatan bagi Orang Melayu' ['Za'ba's Views and Criticisms Concerning the Poverty of the Malays and Several Aspects of their Life, together with His Recommendations for the Salvation of the Malays'] (Unpublished Academic Exercise, Malay Studies Department, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1960).

[78] For a recent discussion of this point, see Michael Swift, 'Malay Peasants', in R. Firth (ed.), <u>The Role of Savings and Wealth in Southern Asia and the West</u> (London, 1964).

Intellectual activity of the sort described impressed itself upon the mind of the S.I.T.C. student, whether from Singapore, Kelantan, Kedah or Selangor, when he looked round upon his own society and found it to have been left behind in the modern world. It contributed very largely, despite its somewhat negative ambience, to the often unfocussed but increasingly inquiring and revolutionary spirit which came to characterise the college, and which found its first expression in literary experiment. Debating and literary societies were formed at an early stage, and from the end of 1923 onwards a college magazine was published twice a year. Though concerned mainly to report college activities, Chendera Mata (Souvenir)[79] contained also some of the first literary effusions by students. Staff and graduates contributed also to the monthly Majallah Guru[80] (Teacher's Magazine), the journal of the Association of Malay Teachers, which was started in 1924. Under the editorship of Muhammad b. Dato' Muda (until 1932), the Majallah Guru interested itself widely in public affairs, particularly where they

---

[79] The first issue of Chendera Mata was published in November 1923, the last (No. 37) at the end of 1941.

[80] The Perseketuan Guru2 Melayu (Malay Teachers' Association) in Penang (founded ca. 1922) had published an earlier journal, Panduan Guru (Teachers' Guide) quarterly from mid-1922. The Majallah Guru was published jointly by similar associations in Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Malacca. In 1924 the Penang association stopped publication of its own journal and joined this group, which was later joined also by Kelantan (1930), Pahang (1931), Singapore and Brunei (1938) associations. From 1924 until the end of 1932 it was edited by Mohd. b. Dato' Muda (and published in Seremban); from January 1933 until 1938 it was edited by Mohd. Yasin b. Ma'amor (and published in Kuala Lumpur). For bibliographical details, see Mohd. b. Dato' Muda, Tarikh Surat Khabar, pp.148-50, which also gives in extenso the shaer (Malay verse) which was used to introduce the first issue, containing exhortations to its readers to unite as one people, one family, whose members must act and not just talk in the pursuit of learning and of greatness for the Malays.

affected the Malays, and in addition from 1925 onwards published in each issue a short story depicting some aspect of modern Malay life. Referring to these stories the editor wrote in 1926 that they could be 'an education, an example and a model' for their readers.[81] They were not, he said, old-fashioned folk-romances or magical tales bearing no resemblance to the present time, but were concerned rather with events illustrating the backwardness and the depression of the Malay people today.[82] Their realism and colloquialism were, indeed, new departures in Malay literary style, and their subject matter -- dealing mainly with the ordinary life of the people -- was equally unfamiliar. But if the Majallah Guru is regarded now as the originator in Malay of the modern short story, its writers drew much of their inspiration, as did literary activity at S.I.T.C. itself, from similar developments in the Netherlands East Indies.

The flowering after the first world war of the N.E.I. Balai Pustaka (Hall of Literature) under the directorship of D.A. Rinkes, led during the 1920s to the publication of an extensive literature in Malay (Bahasa Indonesia) ranging from translations from the Dutch of vocational training manuals and books on infant care to original fiction by Indonesian writers.[83]

---

[81] Majallah Guru, III, 1 (January 1926)

[82] Ibid., and cf. also Omar Mohd. Hashim, 'Perkembangan Cherpen Melayu Sa-belum Perang' ('The Growth of the Malay Short Story before the War'), Dewan Bahasa, V, 8 (August 1961), pp. 347-8.

[83] For an account of the founding and early years of the Balai Pustaka, see G.W.J. Drewes, 'D.A. Rinkes: A Note on His Life and Work', in Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde, 117, 4 (1961), pp. 417-35. Cf. also Zuber Usman, Kesusasteraan Baru Indonesia (New Indonesian Literature) (Djakarta, 1959), pp. 27-30.

Much of the pioneer work in adapting the Malay language for use in a variety of technical and specialist fields of discourse not previously conceived of was undertaken by this institution, and as early as 1922 and 1923 O.T. Dussek had been able to take advantage of this to purchase text-books for use at S.I.T.C. The first Indonesian novel, Mirari Siregar's Azah dan Sengsara Anak Gadis (The Trials and Tribulations of a Young Girl) was published by the Balai Pustaka in 1920, and followed by a succession of works of a similar kind, dealing in particular with the problems of Indonesian youth in the modern world.[84] Among the more notable of these, and among those destined to be of most influence in Malaya as well as the Indies, were Marah Rusli's Sitti Nurbaja [a girl's name], (published in 1922), and Melati van Agam (Jasmine of Agam) (1924), Nur St. Iskandar's Salah Pileh (The Wrong Choice), and Abdul Muis' Salah Asohan (Wrong Upbringing) (both 1928). Most of the novels had themes which reflected and attempted to explore conflicts arising within Indonesian society as a result of the meeting between East and West, seen especially in terms of marriage and of the moral perils of urban life. From 1918 the Balai Pustaka had published also a popular literary monthly, Sri Poestaka, which was succeeded in 1923 by a weekly magazine of a similar kind called Pandji Poestaka.[85]

---

[84] See, e.g., John M. Echolls (ed.), Indonesian Writing in Translation (Ithaca, 1956), pp. 2-3.

[85] Zuber Usman, op. cit., p. 31.

These journals published short stories, poems, and articles of general and literary interest, and were either sold on subscription or sent to the many circulating libraries set up by the Balai Pustaka. In addition, in the course of the 1920s, numbers of small publishers in different parts of the Indies -- particularly in Medan and West Sumatra -- began publishing 'penny novelettes' (roman pichisan) in the Malay language. And despite the fact that in 1920 only some ten per cent of the population of the Netherlands East Indies were literate in any language, and that one estimate of those literate in Malay put the number at only one million,[86] the Indonesians managed to support in that year no fewer than 53 periodicals printed wholly or partly in the Malay language.[87] The Bahasa Indonesia variant of Malay had already become the principal means of communication among the Indonesian intelligentsia, a status no more than confirmed when the Pemuda Indonesia (Young Indonesia) youth congress in 1926 declared it to be the language of nationalist Indonesia.[88]

Developments such as these in the Netherlands Indies created a kind of osmotic pressure upon the Malays. The barrier between Dutch and British controlled territories was nothing if not a porous membrane -- indigenous traffic within the area was continual, particularly in

---

[86] S. Zwemer, 'The Native Press of the Dutch East Indies', in The Muslim World, XII (1923), p. 40. The estimate was made by the Zendings Bond (Mission Union) of Java.

[87] Ibid., pp. 43-5. Zwemer gives here a complete list of all newspapers and periodicals in Indonesian published in the N.E.I., supplied to him by the Adviser for the Department of the Interior. I have not included trade papers in Malaya (14), or Chinese-Malay newspapers (17).

[88] See, e.g., A.K. Pringgodigdo, Sedjarah Pergerakan Rakjat Indonesia (History of the Indonesian Peoples Movement) (4th ed., Djakarta, 1960) p.117.

the direction of Malaya, and many of the 'Malays' of the peninsula were either recent immigrants from the archipelago or the immediate descendants of immigrants. Ideologically there was a steady seepage from the stronger and more active solution to the weaker. In Malaya, the vernacular teaching profession in general, and S.I.T.C. in particular, were much impressed by the self-confidence and militancy of Indonesian intellectual and political life. 'We ourselves', one S.I.T.C. graduate who was also a novelist has said, 'were not greatly interested in politics -- though we admired the Indonesians for their political ability. What we wanted to do, like them, was to write, and to help our people raise their standard of living'.[89] It is impossible to determine at all accurately the extent to which Indonesian publications entered Malaya, but it seems clear that at S.I.T.C. many enjoyed a wide readership from about the middle of the 1920s.[90] Balai Pustaka novels and other modern literature were bought for the college library, where they looked embarrassingly prolific alongside the attenuated shelves of classical Malay fables, romances and poetry.[91] Individual teachers and students subscribed to Indonesian periodicals, which they read in

---

[89] Interview with Abdullah b. Sidek, January 1960. Abdullah graduated from S.I.T.C. in 1931. He published his first novel, Berchinta Yang Ta' Berfaedah (Unprofitable Love) in 1932, and several others between then and 1942. For some details, see Za'ba, 'Recent Malay Literature', J.M.B.R.A.S., XIX, 1 (February, 1941), pp. 9-10.

[90] Harun b. Mohd. Amin (interview, January 1960) mentioned, however, that several of the Malay staff disapproved of Indonesian literature because of the 'coarseness' and neologistic qualities of the language. Many Malays continue to feel this today.

[91] Harun b. Mohd. Amin, interview January 1960.

conjunction with the new Malay newspapers and journals also coming out at about this time.

The first S.I.T.C. graduate to publish a full-scale novel (rather than short stories) was Harun b. Mohd. Amin, who wrote under the pseudonym Harun Aminurrashid. Harun, from Singapore, had been a student at the college from 1924 until 1927. Graduating in the latter year, he was taken onto the staff and became one of the chief formative influences within S.I.T.C. upon the succeeding generation of students. His novel Melor Kuala Lumpur (Jasmine of Kuala Lumpur) was published in 1930, in order, as he said in the foreword, 'to augment the general literature available to my people, which is at present very sparse'.[92] Closely derivative, even to the title, from Indonesian novels of similar kind,[93] Melor tells the love-story of Sulaiman and Nurisa. When the book opens, Sulaiman is in his last weeks as a student at a large residential high school in Perak (clearly modelled on S.I.T.C.). He is depicted as a young man of unusual ability and force of personality, known to his friends by the affectionate nickname 'Professor'. An early scene in the novel portrays a discussion of a kind that must have been familiar at S.I.T.C., with a group of students arguing about the 'progress' of the Malays. As Sulaiman arrives they call out,

> 'Ha! What does the "Professor" think? We're talking about Malay progress, and why the Malays don't get on in life, until we've nearly run out of ideas. But we still haven't found the secret. Maybe you'd be kind enough to explain your own thoughts about all this.'[94]

---

[92] Melor Kuala Lumpur (2nd ed., Singapore 1962), Foreword from original edition, dated 15 April, 1932.

[93] E.g., Rose van Batavia (Rose of Batavia) and Melati van Agam (Jasmine of Agam).

[94] Melor Kuala Lumpur, p. 4.

Sulaiman, the author says, proceeds to answer them at great length, ending passionately, 'like a political leader', with the injunction: 'We Malays must work with the utmost sincerity and zeal so that our people may come to attain whatever they desire'.[95] The rest of the novel exemplifies this, through the person of Sulaiman himself. Leaving school, he takes a job in Kuala Lumpur with a successful Malay merchant, and by dint of industry and honesty rises (despite vicissitudes) to a position of trust and responsibility. He falls in love with the merchant's daughter, Nurisa, a comparable figure of progressive Malay womanhood, who, when we first meet her, is discovered reading a recent Indonesian novel. But alas, Nurisa's father desires her to wed another, Sulaiman's best friend Hashim, and bowing to customary parental authority Nurisa prepares to obey her father's wishes. Torn between love for Nurisa, loyalty to his friend and submission to custom, Sulaiman decides sadly to leave the country of his birth and travel to Germany, where he is last seen addressing a 'Nationalist Club' on the progress of the Malays. Throughout there are many passages which reflect changing times and point to the duties and responsibilities of the Malays in the modern world.

Harun's was not the first novel exploring the problems of modern Malay youth to find publication in Malaya. It had been preceded by Perchintaan Kaseh Kemudaan (Young Love's Sorrows), published in 1927 by Ahmad b. Kotot, formerly a graduate of the Malacca Training College, and by Ahmad Rashid Talu's Ia-Kah Salmah? (Is that Salmah?) and

---

[95] Ibid., p. 5.

Kawan Benar (Good Friends) in 1928 and 1929. It was, however, the first of a stream of novels, short stories and poems published in profusion by S.I.T.C. graduates and staff during the 1930s,[96] pointing to the part played by this institution in arousing and chanelling social awareness of changing times within an important section of the Malay intelligentsia -- the vernacular school teachers. Political ideas were seldom expressed in this literature, though a small number of S.I.T.C. students, as we shall see, espoused a more overt political nationalism in other ways.[97] But it formed, nevertheless, an important strand in the incipient national self-consciousness which struggled from the late 1920s onwards to find expression in Malay life. The teachers from Sultan Idris College, alive at least to many of the problems facing the Malays, if by no means always certain about how best to solve them, took with them when they returned to the villages not simply a new spirit of confidence and endeavour, but new ideas about personal, social and ultimately political relationships. Though their influence was often tempered by the inertia of traditionalism, and frustrated by the strength of competing authority-figures in village society, they served to introduce a new generation of Malays not only to modern Malay literature but to the wider problems of social change with which that literature and its practitioners were concerned.

But if the Malay schools, and even more the vernacular teachers,

---

[96]See Za'ba, 'Recent Malay Literature', pp. 8-10.
[97]See below, Chapter Six.

became agents of much that was new and revolutionary in Malay life, the ideas they fostered found clearest and most frequent expression in newspaper journalism, which in the late 1920s and the 1930s came to play a leading role in shaping the Malay intelligentsia, training its leaders and disseminating their influence. The history of Malay journalism in the first forty years of this century affords a useful commentary on the changes taking place in Malay society during this time. For the first two decades, from the turn of the century until after the first world war, Singapore, with its large, urban Malayo-Muslim community, continued to be the centre of Malay-language journalistic activity, as it had been since the founding of Jawi Peranakan in 1876.[98] Of the thirteen newspapers and periodicals started between 1900 and 1918, eight were published in Singapore, three in the similar urban environment of Penang, and only two (both very short-lived) in the federated states, with a third in Kelantan. For most of these years, between 1904 and 1917, not one vernacular periodical was published in the mainland states.[99]

The Singapore press of the first two decades falls naturally into contrasting groups, based on sponsorship and interest: on the one hand the religious reform journals, of which the chief exemplars were Al-Imam (1906-08) and Neracha (1911-15), and on the other the 'secular' weekly and daily newspapers Utusan Melayu (1907-21) and Lembaga Melayu (1914-31),

---

[98]See above, Chapter Two.

[99]For details, see my Guide to Malay Periodicals, 1876-1941 (Singapore, 1961), pp. 1-6.

published in association with two of Singapore's English-language dailies. The religious reform journals have already been discussed at some length.[100] They circulated mainly among the educated mercantile classes of the Straits Settlements, and religious teachers and other pious persons scattered throughout the peninsula. Neracha, unlike Al-Imam, appeared weekly instead of monthly and contained a correspondingly greater proportion of straight news, but its editorial policy under Haji Abbas b. Mohd. Taha, who had been the last editor of Al-Imam, was exactly the same. Though local affairs were reflected to some extent in its correspondence columns and in editorial comment, the great bulk of its news (particularly in the early years of the paper) came from the Middle East, and had a strong Pan-Islamic flavour. During 1912, for example, rather more than half, on the average, of every four-page issue was given over to reports on the Italo-Turkish war culled mostly from the Egyptian press. In 1913, Neracha began publishing a companion illustrated monthly magazine, very similar in character but rather lighter in tone. Both stopped publication, for financial reasons, in mid-1915, but the assistant editor K. Anang, whose reformism seems to have been Ahmadiyyah in character, started a short-lived Majallah Al-Islam in Singapore in 1918, which consisted largely of translations from the Woking Islamic Review.[101]

---

[100] See above, Chapter Three.

[101] Mohd. b. Dato' Muda, Tarikh Surat Khabar, p. 140, citing Al-Hikmah (Kelantan), 13 October, 1938. In the absence of extant holdings it is not known when the Majallah Al-Islam stopped publication. In 1931, Anang was living in Djakarta and editing a version of the Islamic Review in Indonesian.

The aims, objects and general approach of these papers, supported by and catering to what in the Indonesian context has been called the santri element of society,[102] differed significantly from those of the contemporary Utusan Melayu and Lembaga Melayu, which were modelled on the local English press and sought to provide uncontentious presentation of the news for the generality of literate Malays. Both these papers are inextricably associated with the man who edited first one and then the other for almost a quarter of a century, and who in consequence is still referred to as 'the father of Malay journalism'. Mohd. Eunos b. Abdullah was born in Singapore in 1876, the son of a well-to-do Minangkabau merchant from Sumatra.[103] Receiving his early education at the Malay school in Kampong Glam, he went from there to Raffles Institution, where he was educated in English, graduating from the commercial class round about 1893 or 1894. On leaving school, he took a job in the office of the Master Attendant of Singapore Harbour, later becoming Harbour Master on his own account at the little port of Muar in Johore. He seemed destined for a worthwhile if perhaps rather humdrum career in government service. And then, in 1907, when he was still only 31, Eunos was invited by William Makepeace, owner of Singapore's oldest English newspaper, the Free Press, to edit a Malay edition of that

---

[102] See, e.g., Clifford Geertz, The Religion of Java (Illinois, 1960) pp. 125-6 ff., and Harry J. Benda, The Crescent and the Rising Sun (The Hague and Bandung, 1958), pp. 14-17.

[103] A short biographical article appeared in Penyuloh (Singapore), I, 1 (30 May, 1924), p. 10.

paper. Though Makepeace in his account of early Singapore[104] does not refer to this occasion, it seems likely that he had recognised the growing audience that existed for vernacular publications. There was at this time no other Malay newspaper in circulation. The long-lived Jawi Peranakan had finally stopped publication in 1896, and its only effective replacement, Chahaya Pulau Pinang, after publishing successfully between 1900 and 1906 had also lapsed. The new Utusan Melayu would have the advantage not only of the financial backing and printing facilities of the Free Press, but of its highly developed distributive organisation, and might be expected to reach an increasingly wide public.

For the first eight years of its life Utusan Melayu was published three times a week. Each issue consisted, ordinarily, of four pages, three in the Jawi (or modified Arabic) script used for virtually all Malay publications until after the Second World War, and one in the Rumi (or Latin) script. The Rumi page, at the back of the paper, reproduced the main news (and the editorial) given in Jawi on the front, and was designed, one assumes, to cater mainly for the Baba Chinese who must have made up some part of its readership. Though often spoken of as a 'Malay edition' of the Free Press, and drawing heavily on the cable news and other reports published in that paper, Utusan Melayu nevertheless

---

[104] W.E. Makepeace, G.E. Brooke and R. St. J. Braddell (eds.), One Hundred Years of Singapore (London, 1921). Makepeace himself is named as author of the section on 'The Press' (Vol. II, pp. 278-286), but his only reference to Utusan Melayu is to give 1911 instead of 1907 as its starting date.

developed under Eunos Abdullah a distinct personality of its own. Unconcerned for the most part with the wider issues which agitated Al-Imam and Neracha, it published a generous selection of local (mainly Singapore) news, obviously chosen with urban Malay interests in mind, and editorially provided intelligent but always moderately expressed comment on a wide range of public issues. Occasionally mildly critical of the government, where its Malay policies were involved, it was equally anxious to place upon the Malays the responsibility for helping themselves. Illustrations of this are not hard to find, but one will suffice. Noting with approval in June 1913 that the Persekutuan Islam Singapura (Singapore Islamic Association) had decided to seek government assistance in setting up an agricultural and trade school similar to those already in existence in Java, Utusan said it was sure that the government, 'which always likes to encourage effort on the part of the Malays', would not let this plea go unheeded.[105] A later editorial in the same month made a stronger and more outspoken request for official action, but the paper also took the Association to task for talking too much and doing too little.[106] This habit of studied impartiality and balanced criticism gave to Utusan Melayu its chief character as a 'responsible' Malay organ, acceptable to the British but not afraid occasionally to advocate awkward Malay causes when occasion seemed to require.

---

[105] Utusan Melayu, 7 June, 1913.

[106] Ibid., 10 and 19 June, 1913.

Utusan Melayu was used with official approval as a teaching medium in Malay vernacular schools,[107] and Eunos Abdullah himself came to assume informally the role of confidant and adviser to the government on Singapore Malay affairs. Within the Malay community his influence was considerable, and recognition was given to this by his appointment first as a Justice of the Peace, then in 1922 as a Municipal Commissioner, and ultimately in 1924 as the first Malay member of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council. He was active in Malayo-Muslim social and welfare organisations, a member of the Muslim Advisory Board set up during the war, and co-founder and first President of the Singapore Malay Union.[108] He became, in short, the accepted leader of Singapore's Malay community -- a position more easily assumed in the Straits Settlements than in the peninsular states by one not of aristocratic birth.

In 1914 Eunos was appointed editor of Lembaga Melayu, a new paper started in August of that year by the proprietors of the English-language Malaya Tribune. Lembaga Melayu, often mistakenly referred to as the first Malay daily,[109] began life as a single news-sheet containing translations of war news from the Tribune. Though it later expanded in size, it continued to mirror its English sponsor, to a greater extent than Utusan had ever done. For reasons that are not clear, it published no editorials until 1929, and in the early years in particular its news columns were dominated by the anonymous prose of the Tribune's overseas

---

[107] Personal communication from O.T. Dussek, May 1960.

[108] See below, Chapter Six.

[109] This distinction belongs, properly speaking, to the Singapore Bintang Timor, published daily by the Straits Chinese Christian Association between July 1894 and March 1895.

wire services. In general, however, its policy and its attitudes paralleled those of Utusan Melayu before it: in tone co-operative with Government, mildly critical when occasion seemed to demand it, anxious to see Malay interests, as conceived by itself, prosper, but always acutely aware of the official point of view. After the cessation of Utusan in 1922,[110] Lembaga Melayu was the only Malay daily in circulation anywhere in Malaya. For nearly ten years, until publication stopped in 1931, it represented for many urban, middle-class Malays, and for British officialdom, the voice of moderate, progressive Malay opinion.

The demise of Lembaga Melayu, controlled as it was by the English-language press and edited by a 'loyalist' Malay in the confidence of the government, marked the end of one era in Malay journalism and the beginning of another, a transition heralded by the founding a year earlier of Onn b. Ja'afar's Warta Malaya, the first of the independent Malay dailies of the 1930s. The preceding decade had, however, seen two developments in Malay-language periodical publication which are worth looking at a little more closely for the light they throw on the growth of the Malay intelligentsia. The first of these was the marked decline in the relative importance of Singapore as the focus of Malay-language journalistic activity, and the second the appearance in the

---

[110] Utusan Melayu had become a daily in September 1915, in response to pressure of war news, and perhaps also to compete more effectively with Lembaga Melayu. In 1918 it was taken over from the Free Press by a group of Indian businessmen. Its career ended after a sensational libel case (Raja Shariman v. C.A. Ribeiro & Co., Singapore Suit No.264 of 1921), in which heavy damages were awarded against the paper, crippling it financially.

peninsular states of a host of small magazines run by Malays and discussing Malay concerns. Between 1920 and 1930, 34 new vernacular newspapers and periodicals were started in Malaya, compared with seven in the previous ten years. Of these, Singapore published only three, Penang eleven, and the peninsular states no fewer than twenty.[111] This change in journalistic balance reflected, on the one hand, the re-establishment, in Penang rather than Singapore, of religious reform journalism, in the wake of the indefatigable Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi; and on the other the mainland Malay awakening which took place with increasing momentum from about 1920 onwards, as a result of changing patterns in vernacular education, changing policies concerning Malay employment in government, growing recognition by Malays of their social and economic backwardness in relation to other communities, and the increasing impact of Indonesian affairs on Malay intellectuals.

Among the first signs of the new Malay self-consciousness was the rash of small, usually ephemeral periodicals which appeared at widely scattered points in the peninsula, often as an extension of the organisational and intellectual life of Malay clubs and societies. These associations themselves, set up in response to the need to provide in urban or semi-urban environments forms of social and economic relationships taken for granted at the village level, or in order to defend and promote the interests of the ethnic or language group, already

---

[111] Guide to Malay Periodicals, pp. 8-17. In addition, the Singapore English-language monthly of Qadiri persuasion, Real Islam, may have been edited by Malays.

had a long history. From the late 1880s onwards, study, literary and debating clubs, devoted to self-improvement, economic self-help, language preservation and similar ends, had been a feature of Malay town life.[112] Club affairs had long been reported in the vernacular press, and the press in turn, by its very existence, had done much to foster within the clubs debate and discussion on matters affecting the interests of the Malays and on public affairs generally. 'Newspapers' and 'associations' were regarded by many literate and aspiring Malays as essential pre-requisites for membership of the modern world, and as a kind of twin key to the betterment of the Malay community.

In the early 1920s, some of the clubs began to publish journals of their own, intended in the first instance perhaps for club members only, but obviously seen in many cases as a means of serving the wider Malay community. Broadly speaking, the 'little magazines' of these years fall into two groups: those produced by cultural-welfare or 'progress' societies of a general kind, and those produced by educational institutions or teachers' associations. One or two examples of each will suffice to suggest their scope and nature. In June 1920, the <u>Persekutuan Perbahathan Orang2 Islam</u> (Muslim Debating Society) of Muar, in Johore, began publishing a fortnightly paper called <u>Lidah Teruna</u> (The Stripling Tongue), which appears to have run for just under a year. It was well, if cheaply printed (in the <u>Jawi</u> script, as with all Malay

---

[112] For further discussion of club activity, as a forerunner of Malay political organisation, see below, Chapter Six.

periodicals of the time) and contained in each issue a variety of 'educational' articles on 'right conduct', health and hygiene, the history of Islam, geography and general knowledge. In addition, as a regular feature, it included a selection of brief news items from Malaya and overseas calculated to interest its readers, and probably drawn from the metropolitan Malay press. The editors, whose names are unknown in any other context, were doubtless leading members of the Debating Society, and may well have been religious or vernacular school teachers.[113] The circulation of the journal (which cost twenty cents a copy) was certainly very small, perhaps only a hundred or so, but the topics it discussed seem to have been of sufficient interest to lead a number of enthusiasts outside Johore to subscribe to it, and odd copies still turn up in widely separated parts of the peninsula today.[114] Explicit nationalism, certainly of a political kind, was wholly absent from its pages, but it did stress (as did others of its kind) the unity of the Malays as a people, and draw attention to the need for common endeavour to meet common problems.

In 1925, another group of Malays, also in Muar, formed an organisation called the Maharani Company,[115] the expressed aims of which illustrate clearly the somewhat diffuse and unfocussed energies which lay behind much Malay associational activity at this time.

---

[113] There were two editors, Abdullah b. Mohd. Taib, and Abdullah b. Abdul Wahab.

[114] It is seldom possible to obtain any indication at all of the circulation of Malay ephemera, or indeed of the larger newspapers. Frequently the only index, though not perhaps always a reliable one, is the extent to which they can be discovered still existing in the cupboards of elderly school-teachers scattered throughout the country.

[115] Bandar Maharani is an old name, still occasionally used, for the port of Muar.

Primarily economic in intent, it equipped itself with a board of directors and an elaborate constitution which empowered the Company to start a trading concern, buy a rubber plantation, or run a newspaper 'to advance the interests of the Malay people'.[116] There is no record of how its proposed commercial enterprises fared, if indeed they came to anything at all, but for a period in 1925, the company was successful in publishing a fortnightly paper, probably much like Lidah Teruna, called Perjumpaan Melayu (Malay Meeting). Two years later, having transformed itself in the meantime into the Matba'ah al-Khairiah (Welfare Press), it brought out for a time a successor to this, called Panji2 Melayu (Malay Banner). Neither paper lasted for long, and no copies are known to exist today, which suggests that their circulation was very limited. But the attempt made to run them points to the importance increasingly given by small groups of literate Malays to periodical journalism, as a forum for the discussion of Malay problems and as a means for the dissemination of knowledge. During the 1920s, at least five other associations of the same general kind, in Negri Sembilan, Selangor, Johore, Kelantan and Singapore, contrived to bring out, for longer or shorter periods, publications of the same sort.[117]

The second group of little magazines sprang directly from the educational world, Malay and Islamic. The most notable of these, the monthly Majallah Guru, has already been referred to, in connection

---

[116] Peratoran Maharani Company, Muar (Rules of the Maharani Company, Muar) (Muar, 1925). There is a reference to the Company, without indicating its fate, in The Modern Light, I, 6 (October, 1940).

[117] For details, see the Guide to Malay Periodicals, pp. 7, 10, 12 and 14.

with the Sultan Idris Training College.[118] Started in 1924 by the combined Malay Teachers' Associations of Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Malacca, it provided vernacular teachers in particular, and literate Malays in general with a medium of expression perhaps second to none in importance in the 1920s. Most Malays of intellectual or literary pretensions contributed to it at one time or another, and a detailed study of its contents would certainly shed much light on Malay thought and life at this time. Strongly didactic in character, and very conscious of its role as educator, Majallah Guru seldom expressed radical views, or touched directly upon political matters, but was nevertheless always concerned to emphasise the need for Malay emotional and spiritual unity as a prelude to economic and social progress. As with most other vernacular periodicals, any estimation of the extent of its circulation is impossible, but there can be little question that it exerted a considerable influence upon a whole generation of Malay schoolteachers.

The largest ventures in Malay publishing in the mid-1920s were, however, undertaken not in the peninsular states but in Penang, where Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi and a number of others of like mind became extremely active in the second half of the decade in the production of popular literature and periodicals, all with a strong religious reformist or Kaum Muda bias. Sayyid Shaykh himself, now

---

[118] See above, p.229, and footnote 80.

more than sixty years old, published his first novel (adapted from the Arabic) in 1925, and followed this up with a stream of romantic novels, stories and thrillers, all published (after 1927) by his own Jelutong Press, which rapidly became the largest Malay publishing house in Malaya.[119] The first of the Penang reformist newspapers (Idaran Zaman [March of Time], 1925-30) was founded and edited by a close friend of Sayyid Shaykh, Mohd. Yunus b. Abdul Hamid, who had emigrated to Malaya in 1924 from Langkat in East Sumatra.[120] Idaran Zaman, which appeared weekly, was a newspaper rather than primarily a religious publication, but the strong reformist interests of its editor, doubtless developed by association with Sayyid Shaykh, were frequently evidenced in its columns. It circulated fairly widely throughout the peninsula, especially in the northern and western states. In 1926, Sayyid Shaykh, returning to journalism for the first time for nearly twenty years, began to publish, and himself edit, the monthly journal Al-Ikhwan (The Brotherhood) (1926-31), which as we have already seen,[121] propagandised energetically in a variety of reformist causes. It is worth noting that Al-Ikhwan bore a strong resemblance to the

---

[119] See above, Chapter Three.

[120] Mohd. Yunus was born in Langkat in 1889, and educated first in Malay and then in Dutch. Though not an Islamic scholar, he is said to have had a 'strict religious upbringing' which much influenced his life (Mohd. Taib b. Osman, 'The Language of the Editorials in Malay Vernacular Newspapers up to 1941' (B.A. Honours Thesis, University of Malaya, 1958), Appendix B).

[121] Above, Chapter Three.

earlier _Al-Imam_, not merely in style and general content but to the extent of re-publishing several long series of articles which had previously appeared in that journal -- on Kuranic exegesis, the history of Islam, 'Religion and Reason', and a number of other topics. It is tempting to see in this a tendency on the part of Sayyid Shaykh, already advanced in years, to live in the past and to fight old battles again. Whether this is true or not, it is certainly the case that the connotations of the term '_Kaum Muda_' were changing, and that a younger generation of Malays was becoming more concerned with the practical problems of social, economic and political development than with the niceties of religious dispute.

Two years after starting _Al-Ikhwan_, Sayyid Shaykh, perhaps recognising the force of the changes which were taking place, turned to the publication of a second and rather more secular paper, which was to appear weekly and contain a greater proportion of news and general comment to religious polemic. Choosing for it, significantly enough, the name _Saudara_ (Brother), which expressed in Malay the same idea as that contained in the Arabic _Al-Ikhwan_, he appointed as editor Yunus b. Abdul Hamid, from _Idaran Zaman_, who ran the paper until Sayyid Shaykh's son Sayyid Alwi took over in 1932. Under Yunus's editorship, _Saudara_ became one of the most influential newspapers in Malaya, and a powerful and uncompromising critic of Malay life.[122]

---

[122] Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad, 'Malay Journalism', _J.M.B.R.A.S._, XIX, 2 (October, 1941), p.247

During the 1930s, the steady stream of Malay-language periodical publication swelled to a flood. In the course of the decade 81 new periodicals were started in Kota Bahru, Kuala Pilah, Singapore, Kepala Batas, Muar, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Batu Pahat, Kuala Trengganu, Malacca, Kuala Kangsar, Johore Bahru, Ipoh and Seremban.[123] The years 1935 and 1936 alone saw 25 new newspapers and magazines in the Malay language. The chief characteristic of this vigorous activity was perhaps the increasing commercialisation and professionalisation of journalistic enterprise, in response to a growing audience for cheaply-priced popular reading matter. To those who, earlier, had started newspapers or journals for ideological reasons, or as a by-product of associational activity, were added the Malay (or more often the Malayo-Muslim) businessmen who saw in periodical publication a potential source of return on capital. Monthly, fortnightly and weekly magazines were produced to provide light entertainment for the generality of Malays, and to cater for the special interests of such groups as young people, women and children. Illustrated journals made their appearance, and magazines devoted wholly or mainly to locally-written short stories or to humorous material. Clubs and associations continued to publish organs of more serious intent, of the kinds already described. And newspapers proper, from dailies to fortnightlies, increased in number and in the range and depth of their treatment

---

[123] Guide to Malay Periodicals, pp.17-37.

of contemporary affairs. Journalism was taken up as a full-time or part-time career by young Malays with literary aspirations, and many others became accustomed to contributing to the vernacular press occasional articles or 'letters to the editor', discussing topics of current interest. Literate and intellectually or politically inclined Malays -- schoolteachers, government servants and others -- probably bought or read two or three periodicals a month, in addition to one of the principal newspapers, and even below this level periodical journalism seems to have commanded a surprisingly wide audience. In 1931, it was estimated that almost one third of the adult male Malaysian population of Malaya was literate in Malay,[124] and the proportion must have risen considerably during the ensuing decade, as vernacular education facilities expanded.[125] Figures of this kind can, of course, refer only to potential newspaper readership, but it may be noted that, as Za'ba pointed out just before the war, the clientele for Malay publications was not confined solely to the literate:

---

[124] British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census, pp.93, 330, 337 and 345-6. The figures showed a very wide range, from 57.4% in Negri Sembilan to 7.9% and 8.0% in Trengganu and Kelantan, and were of course markedly higher in the urban than in the rural areas. In Kuala Lumpur, 62.8% of adult male Malaysians were literate in Malay.

[125] By 1947, when the next census was undertaken, the literacy rate for the same group had risen to 50.2% for Malaya as a whole, and to well over seventy per cent in Penang, Negri Sembilan, Malacca and Perak. Malaya: A Report on the 1947 Census of Population (London, 1949), p.91.

> To say nothing of the towns where [vernacular] papers are always available at every Malay bookshop and some of them at the various Malay clubs, and read even by the motor cars [sic] drivers, one notices that the peasant folks of the kampongs are also taking keen interest in what is said in the _surat khabar_ about other parts of Malaya and the world. Often, of an evening, one sees at the wayside Chinese shop some lettered man, perhaps an old _guru_ of the local school or perhaps the local penghulu, reading one or other of these papers, and a little crowd of elderly people less literate than he eagerly listening, questioning, and commenting around him.[126]

Malay journalism in the 1930s was dominated by a series of metropolitan daily newspapers, the most important of which were _Warta Malaya_ (1930-41), _Majlis_[127] (1931-41), _Lembaga_ (1935-41) and _Utusan Melayu_ (1939-41). The first of these, _Warta Malaya_, was started in Singapore in January, 1930, by the wealthy Arab family Alsagoff,[128] and edited for its first four years by Onn b. Ja'afar. Onn, a son of the _Mentri Besar_ (Prime Minister) of Johore, had been educated first at a Malay school in Johore Bahru, then in England, and finally at the Kuala Kangsar Malay College.[129]

---

[126] Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad (Za'ba), 'Malay Journalism in Malaya', _J.M.B.R.A.S._, XIX, 2 (1941), p.249. Za'ba also remarked (_loc.cit._), 'There is no doubt the Malay newspapers and magazines are exerting a strong influence in shaping public opinion among their Malay readers, in spreading general knowledge of the world, and in awakening and shaking off the apathy of the Malays towards progress'.

[127] _Majlis_ was actually published twice-weekly from 1931-35, three times weekly from 1935-39, and daily only from 1939-41, but in most respects it must be classified with the others here mentioned.

[128] For some brief remarks concerning the business relationships involved, see Nik Ahmad b. Nik Hassan, 'The Malay Vernacular Press' (B.A. Thesis, University of Malaya, 1958), p.24.

[129] Onn was born in Johore Bahru in 1895. At the age of eight he was sent with three sons of Sultan Ibrahim of Johore to a school in England, where he stayed for some eight years, before returning to the Malay College to prepare for entry into the Johore Civil Service.

Possessed of a somewhat unruly temperament, he had failed to settle down as expected in the Johore Civil Service, and spent most of the 1920s drifting from one job to another and enjoying himself in the fashion of well-to-do young men. With the rise to prominence at the end of the decade, however, of a number of crucial issues affecting the Malays -- centred mainly round the decentralisation question and Malay political rights[130] -- his attention was turned increasingly to the need to defend Malay interests in the plural society, and to campaign actively for a larger Malay share in the governance of their own states. The offer of the editorship of _Warta Malaya_ gave him the opportunity to do this, and under his control the paper rapidly became the leading proponent of a 'new deal' for the Malays. With a pungency and spirit new to Malay political journalism, _Warta Malaya_ discussed editorially a wide range of issues affecting the Malays, from the vexed question of the restoration of powers to the State Councils in the F.M.S. and the dangers inherent in locally-domiciled non-Malay demands for increased rights, to higher education for Malays and the development of the Malay economy. Often critical of the British where the details of policy or its implementation were concerned, _Warta Malaya_ was less 'anti-colonial' than 'pro-Malay', and sought, for example, to gain a more generous allocation of senior administrative posts to Malays, rather than to oust the British altogether. Acutely

---

[130] See below, Chapter Six.

sensitive to the fact that the Malays had as yet, for educational and other reasons, produced only a very small group capable of taking over the reins of government and administration, Onn was principally concerned to earn a breathing space for the Malays while this group was enlarged and greater tutelary responsibility given to it, and in the meantime to keep non-Malays out of positions of administrative or political authority. At the end of 1933, for reasons that are not clear to the present writer, Onn relinquished the editorship of Warta Malaya,[131] and a year later started another paper (also backed by Arab money),[132] the weekly Lembaga Malaya, following this in 1935 with the daily Lembaga, both of which he edited until 1936. The policy and the attitudes of the Lembaga papers seem to have followed closely those of Warta Malaya.[133] In 1936, Onn was offered Unofficial (i.e., not ex-officio) membership of the Johore State Council, a position he accepted subject to the

---

[131] He was succeeded by Sayyid Alwi b. Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi, and then, in 1934, by Sayyid Hussein b. Ali Alsagoff, the paper's proprietor. In 1936, the Warta Malaya Press began publishing a companion Sunday paper, Warta Ahad, and a year later a humorous weekly called Warta Jenaka.

[132] The proprietor appears to have been Sayyid Alwi b. Omar Albar, head of another well-known Singapore Arab family.

[133] Both papers were published from Singapore between 1934 and 1938, and after that from Johore Bahru. Though there are no known holdings of the daily Lembaga, it has been suggested to me that it concerned itself rather more with Johore than with national affairs.

explicit proviso that he should have complete freedom of speech. During his tenure of this office (which lasted until the Japanese occupied Malaya) he became a frequent and outspoken critic of colonial authority and the colonial relationship, especially where the state of Johore itself was concerned.[134]

Though Onn's subsequent careers as the leader of the post-war Malay nationalist movement makes his activities in the 1930s of special interest,[135] he cannot be regarded, by reason of his education and upbringing, as a wholly typical figure of the period before the war, at least where newspaper journalism is concerned. More representative in this respect was Abdul Rahim Kajai, who from 1931 to 1935 edited the second metropolitan paper of importance in the 1930s, the Kuala Lumpur _Majlis_. Kajai already had considerable experience in newspaper work, and was without question the leading member of the small group of professional Malay journalists who in

---

[134] See, e.g., Radin Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism, 1900-1945', _J.S.E.A.H._, I, 1 (1960), p.13. Despite intensive search by the present writer and others, the Minutes of the Johore State Council appear to be irretrievably lost.

[135] In January 1946 Onn established in Johore a Peninsular Malay Movement, with the declared aims of uniting the Malays, defending their special position and privileges, and opposing the Malayan Union scheme. At a congress of forty Malay associations convened by Onn in March of that year, the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) was brought into being, with Onn as Chairman. He left the party in 1951, after a long drawn out dispute concerning the admittance of non-Malays to UMNO, and though he subsequently formed two other political parties, effectively spent the rest of his life in the political wilderness. He died in 1962. For a detailed official account of the immediate post-war period, see esp., _UMNO Sepuloh Tahun, 1946-1956_ (Ten Years of UMNO, 1946-1956) (Penang, 1957), _passim_.

the decade before the war moved from one senior editorial post to another as opportunity opened up. Born in Setapak, near Kuala Lumpur, in 1894, Kajai was educated in Malay in the local village school.[136] On completion of the fourth or fifth standard in 1905, he was selected to receive free English education in the town, an offer which was, however, turned down by his parents, who preferred that he should go to Mecca to study Arabic and religion. This he did, from 1906 to 1909, returning to Malaya in the latter year to take a job as a compositor with the Government Printer in Kuala Lumpur, later following the same trade in Singapore. In 1913, his father, who had been a pilgrimage _shaykh_ in the Hejaz, died, and Kajai went to live in Mecca to carry on the business. Returning to Malaya again in 1917, he appears to have lived there for some seven years, during which time he demonstrated his first interest in journalism, by contributing to _Utusan Melayu_ and _Lembaga Melayu_. When he went back to Mecca for three years from 1924, he acted as special correspondent there for the Penang _Idaran Zaman_, and on his final return to Malaya in 1927 became the Kuala Lumpur correspondent

---

[136] A discussion of Kajai's life and work, on which the present account is based, may be found in Ismail Hussein, 'Abdul Rahim Kajai', _Dewan Bahasa_, III, 12 (1959), pp.585-97, which reprints an obituary article originally published in _Semangat Asia_, II, 1 (1944). In passing, it may be noted that the name Kajai, which he used as a surname, was that of the Minangkabau village from which his forebears originally came.

of Saudara. During 1930 he moved to Penang, and became assistant editor and editor of that paper, before transferring to Majlis. Though apparently Kaum Muda in sympathies in the course of his early journalistic career, Kajai seems for most of his writing life to have been less interested in the doctrinaire elements of religious disputation than in more general ideals of Malay political and economic advancement, and as early as 1926 had applied, while still in Mecca, to join the first quasi-political Malay association, the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura, or Singapore Malay Union.[137]

Under Kajai's direction, Majlis (which began publication, twice weekly, in December 1931)[138] took up with energy and enthusiasm the wide range of questions already agitating many Malays. Declaring itself in its first issue to be a 'national' paper, striving for 'national unity' among the Malays,[139] Majlis

---

[137] Ismail Hussein, op.cit., p.591. The request is said to have been turned down, allegedly because only Malays who were British subjects (i.e., those born in the Colony of the Straits Settlements) were permitted to join, though this last point seems doubtful. Kajai became a member of the KMS in 1936, when he joined the staff of Warta Malaya in Singapore, and was at one time on the committee. For a full discussion of the KMS, see below, Chapter Six.

[138] The owner was Mohd. Amin b. Mohd. Yusoff, described by Nik Ahmad ('The Malay Vernacular Press', pp.28-9) as a 'landed proprietor and well-known Kuala Lumpur businessman'. It is not clear whether he was a Malay, but the probabilities are that he was either an Indian Muslim or Jawi Peranakan.

[139] Majlis, 17 December 1931.

in an early editorial plunged directly into the central point at issue between the Malays and their colonial rulers in the 1930s, the extent to which people of other Asian races could be permitted to usurp the rights of the Malays in their own land. Pointing out that the British had a solemn obligation to put Malay interests first, whether others liked this or not, the editorial went on:

> If they're still dissatisfied, the government can inform these foreigners that the 'protection' of the Malays isn't like the protection of the deer in the forest by the game warden, who sees to it that the deer isn't killed by hunters but allows it to be preyed upon by other enemies such as the tiger and other carnivorous animals living in the same forest. 140

The tone was hardly that of the militant nationalist, but the writing was clever and pointed, as always with Kajai, and the moral was not lost. Majlis was frequently referred to and quoted by the Kuala Lumpur English-language press,[141] which, though it did not always agree with the 'extreme' Malay position taken up, in general welcomed the appearance of 'an intelligent vernacular press'.[142]

In 1935, after a difference of opinion with the owner of the paper, Kajai left Majlis, but continued in journalism, first as a special correspondent in the federal capital for the Singapore

---

[140] Ibid., 4 January 1932. A translation of this editorial, which dealt mainly with English education for Malays, was published in the Malay Mail, 12 January 1932, entitled 'Enforcement of age limit — Plea that it should be raised to 13 for Malay lads'.

[141] See, e.g., Majlis, 4 & 8 January, and 10, 21 & 24 March, 1932.

[142] Ibid., 10 January, quoting the Malay Mail.

Warta Malaya, and later as editor of the new Utusan Melayu.[143] His place at Majlis was taken successively by two other Malay journalists of note in the 1930s, Othman Kalam (editor from 1935-39) and Ibrahim Haji Yaacob (1939-41). Othman Kalam had been born at Padang Rengas, in Perak, shortly after the turn of the century, and educated first at Malay school and then at an English school in Kuala Kangsar. On leaving school he became an English teacher at the reformist Madrasah Al-Mashhor in Penang, where he is said to have learnt Arabic and later taught in that language.[144] While working

---

[143] See below, p.267. In addition to his reputation as a journalist, Kajai acquired considerable fame as a writer of short-stories, several dozens of which were published in the vernacular press of the 1930s. It was perhaps this more than anything else that made his name a household word in countless Malay homes. Two collections of these stories have been published posthumously in recent years: Banyak Udang Banyak Garam (Lots of Prawns, Lots of Salt) and Lain Padang Lain Belalang (Other Fields, Other Grasshoppers) (Singapore, 1959 and 1962). Kajai also published a novel, translated from the Arabic, in 1930-31, Cherita Dzu'l-Ruhain (The Story of Dzu'l-Ruhain); and in 1941 a Panduan Wartawan (Journalists' Handbook). A collection of his miscellaneous writings (which I have been unable to see) was published in Singapore in 1949, under the title Pusaka Kajai (The Kajai Heritage).

[144] Mohd. Taib b. Osman, 'The Language of the Editorials in Malay Vernacular Newspapers', Appendix B.

at the _madrasah_, he acted as assistant editor of _Idaran Zaman_, and in the early 1930s turned to full-time journalism, editing two short-lived Malay papers published in Penang in 1932 and 1933-4.[145] From there he moved to _Warta Malaya_, and then in January 1935 was offered the editorial chair at _Majlis_. During his incumbency (which lasted until 1939), the paper increased its frequency from two to three issues a week, and continued to provide for its readers a percipient and strongly pro-Malay commentary on national affairs.

The third editor of _Majlis_, Ibrahim b. Haji Yaacob, came from a background somewhat different to that of either of his predecessors, and was of decidedly more radical temper. Born in 1911 near Temerloh, in central Pahang, he was educated in Malay at the village school, and in 1929 was admitted as a student to the Sultan Idris Training College in Tanjong Malim. During his three-year stay there, he became the acknowledged leader of a group of students, some 35 in number, who found political inspiration in the Indonesian nationalist movement, and sought to reproduce it in Malaya. Strongly 'pan-Malaysian' in ideology, the group (which called itself _Belia Malaya_ [Young Malaya] after similar youth movements in the N.E.I.)

---

[145] _Bahtera_ (twice-weekly; January 1932 - early 1933), and _Bumiputera_ (daily; January 1933 - late 1934).

subscribed to Indonesian periodicals,[146] discussed ways of organising political nationalism among the Malays, and joined individually Sukarno's Partai Nasional Indonesia (Indonesian Nationalist Party), which had been formed in Bandung in 1927.[147] Upon graduating from S.I.T.C. in 1931, Ibrahim was employed for three years as a village schoolmaster in Bentong, rural Pahang, where his circumstances allowed him little opportunity to pursue revolutionary ideals. In 1934, however, he obtained a posting as a Malay instructor in the F.M.S. Central Police Depot, which brought him to Kuala Lumpur and to the centre of political and public life in the federation. This job he held for a further three or four years, despite the fact that on more than one occasion he was warned by his superiors for suspected political activities of an undescribed kind. During this period he contributed political articles from time to time to the vernacular press, and in 1938 left teaching altogether, to become an assistant editor of Majlis. In the same year, he formed with a number of others of like mind the nucleus of

---

[146] The one most frequently mentioned, in interviews with Ibrahim Yaacob and others, was Fikiran Rakjat (The People's Thought). So far as I can judge, this must have been the paper published in Bandung, from about 1928 onwards, by the Partai Nasional Indonesia.

[147] On the founding of the PNI, see G. McT. Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia (New York, 1952), p.90.

Malaya's first left-wing Malay political organisation, the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malay Union).[148]

Ibrahim Yaacob became editor of Majlis (which at the same time started publication daily) round about November 1939, and continued there until late in 1941, when, with money supplied to him by the Japanese, he purchased the daily Warta Malaya for use in anti-British propaganda.[149] The absence of extant holdings of Majlis for the period of Ibrahim's editorship[150] makes it impossible to say to what extent his anti-colonial and pan-Malaysian views (and those of his assistant editor Ahmad Boestamam) found expression in the paper, though fragmentary evidence suggests that the combined effect of wartime press regulations introduced early in 1940, control by the proprietor, and the generally pro-British sentiment evident among the Malays after the outbreak of war in Europe, seriously restricted editorial freedom in this respect. It is worth noting that though, in December 1940, Majlis reported at some length the proceedings of

---

[148]For a full discussion of the Kesatuan Melayu Muda, usually abbreviated to KMM, see below, Chapter Six.

[149]See below, Chapter Six. About two months after this, Ibrahim and other leading members of KMM were arrested by the British and jailed.

[150]See Guide to Malay Periodicals, p.23. I understand, however, that since I left Malaya in 1961 a more recent file of Majlis has been located in the Public Records Office, Kuala Lumpur. I was myself able to see only a few stray post-1939 copies, in private hands.

the second national conference of Malay associations, there appears to have been no editorial comment on them.[151] One may, in fact, suspect that Majlis' heyday as a radical paper had gone even before Ibrahim Yaacob took over editorial responsibility.

Until the late 1930s, despite the large and increasingly important role played by the Malay intelligentsia on the editorial and literary sides of Malay-language journalism, all the principal metropolitan newspaper concerns (Saudara, the Warta and Lembaga papers, and Majlis) were financed, and to that extent controlled, by non-Malays -- Arabs, Malay-Arabs, and Jawi Peranakan. Concern at this state of affairs, at the absence of a truly autochthonous organ of opinion, had been felt by Malays for some years -- especially in Singapore, where relations between the Malays (or Malaysians) and other elements of the local Muslim community had been strained since the 1920s.[152] Early in 1938, a meeting of some twenty Malays was held in the house of Daud b. Mohd. Shah,[153]

---

[151] Majlis, 25 & 26 December 1940. The conference was held, in Singapore, on these dates.

[152] On this, see below, Chapter Six.

[153] Daud was born in Singapore in 1885, and educated at Siglap Malay School and then at the Victoria Institute in Kuala Lumpur. He joined the General Clerical Service of the F.M.S. in 1903, and in 1910 was promoted to the Malay Administrative Service. He retired as A.D.O. Kajang (Selangor) in 1932, and returning to Singapore was active in the KMS, becoming President in 1937.

president of the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS -- Singapore Malay Union) to discuss the possibility of starting a national daily which would be owned and financed, as well as staffed, solely by 'Malays of the Archipelago'.[154] As a result of this meeting, Yusoff b. Ishak, a young Malay journalist on the committee of KMS and currently working for Warta Malaya,[155] was delegated to inquire into the feasibility of such a scheme. Problems of finance were, of course, of central importance, but as Ishak described the occasion later, the immediate task, if the paper were to have any real chance of success, seemed to be to find a first-rate editor. Accordingly, he approached Abdul Rahim Kajai, at that time with Warta Malaya in Singapore, and only after extracting from Kajai an undertaking to run the new paper did he go on to try to enlist

---

[154] The term was defined to include anyone born in the Peninsula or Archipelago whose male parent was of pure Malaysian stock. The following account of the founding of Utusan Melayu is based on that given by Yusoff b. Ishak in the anniversary publication Utusan Melayu Sepuloh Tahun (Ten Years of Utusan Melayu) (Singapore, 1949), and on interviews conducted in 1960-61 with Daud b. Mohd. Shah and Haji Embok Suloh b. Haji Omar, the principal backers of the paper.

[155] Yusoff Ishak was born in 1911, the son of a minor official in the Fisheries Department of the F.M.S., and educated at Malay school and then at the Raffles Institution in Singapore. Leaving school in 1929, he joined the F.M.S. Police briefly, and then obtained a job with a short-lived English magazine called Sportsman. In 1932 he joined the Warta Malaya Press as assistant manager, and remained there until 1938. Yusoff was arrested by the Japanese in February 1942, but released shortly afterwards. After the war, he resumed his connection with journalism, and in 1957 was appointed Singapore's first Yang di-Pertuan Negara, or Head of State, a position he continues to

(footnote continued next page)

financial support. First promises seemed to offer a reasonable chance of success, and about the middle of the year the *Utusan Melayu* company was formally registered, with an initial capital of $2,000. To comply with company regulations, an undertaking was given to find a further $10,500 within the next three months.

There followed many weeks of hectic share-pushing by the supporters of the scheme, in an endeavour to raise the remaining capital. Haji Embok Suloh and Yusoff Ishak spent every Friday travelling to villages and towns in southern Johore, and talking to mosque congregations after the weekly prayer. Yusoff has said that during this time he himself visited no fewer than thirty *kampongs* in and around Singapore, and addressed more than 5,000 people. Daud b. Mohd. Shah went to Kuala Lumpur to try to enlist support there, though not with great success. Ishak b. Haji Mohd.,

---

(footnote continued from previous page)

[155] hold today. An account of some incidents in Yusoff's life, and of the early history of the family, is given in the autobiography of his brother Abdul Aziz b. Ishak (Minister of Agriculture in the Federation of Malaya until 1963), *Katak Keluar dari bawah Tempurong* (The Frog Comes out from under the Coconut Shell) (Kuala Lumpur, 1959).

a young writer on the staff of Warta Malaya,[156] toured Pahang and the east coast states, talking about the project, and later wrote a brilliant series of articles describing Malay life there, and the condition of the people.[157] Emotional response to this series of appeals seems to have been strong and enthusiastic, but the money was slow in forthcoming. Three days before the time limit was due to elapse, some 400 Malays -- many of them taxi drivers, hawkers and small farmers -- had bought shares in the company, but the required sum was still short by more than $8,000. At the last moment, Daud and Embok Suloh, at considerable personal sacrifice, subscribed the remaining amount, and the Utusan Melayu company came finally into being.

---

[156] Ishak b. Haji Mohd., born near Temerloh, Pahang, 1910, educated at Malay school and then at the Government English School in Kuala Lipis, passing Senior Cambridge examination 1929. Ishak was recommended for the Malay Administrative Service, and spent a year at Kuala Kangsar Malay College, before taking up junior administrative posts in Pahang. Disliking the atmosphere surrounding the Civil Service, he left it temporarily after less than a year, and then again, finally, in 1933. The next few years were spent travelling round Malaya, doing odd jobs, writing for the vernacular press, and writing the first of his many novels, Puteri Gunong Tahan (The Princess of Mount Tahan) (1st ed., 1937; 2nd ed., Singapore, 1957), a satirical story concerning the British in Malaya. In September 1937 he joined the staff of Warta Malaya, and remained there until he moved to Utusan Melayu in 1939. In 1938 he was a founder member with Ibrahim Yaacob and others of the Kesatuan Melayu Muda. For details of his later career, see below, Chapter Six.

[157] Utusan Melayu, 29, 30 & 31 May, and 1 June, 1939.

Yusoff was sent to Hongkong early in the new year to arrange for the purchase of moveable _Jawi_ type, a press was acquired from England, and premises were rented in Singapore. Malay clerical, printing and editorial staff were engaged -- among the journalists, Yusoff himself, Ishak b. Haji Mohd., and Zainal Abidin b. Haji Alias,[158] all from _Warta Malaya_ -- and on the 29th of May, 1939, the first issue of _Utusan Melayu_ appeared on the streets. From the beginning, _Utusan_ was presented to the public as a purely Malay enterprise, in which ideas, composition and production were to be entirely in Malay hands.[159] In its first and subsequent issues it set aside a special section of the paper for news and

---

[158] Zainal Abidin b. Haji Alias (also known as Zabha) was typical of the working Malay journalist below editorial level. Born in Muar, Johore, about 1919, he was educated only in Malay, leaving school in 1935. For two years he tried, while living in Muar, to obtain a job in Singapore, but was unsuccessful because, by his own account, he lacked English education. Finally obtaining work as a kind of solicitor's clerk, he set himself to become a journalist, writing local news material and sending it to _Warta Malaya_. In 1937 he was invited to join the staff of that paper, and remained there until _Utusan Melayu_ was started. Zabha was still working as a journalist for _Utusan Melayu_ when I interviewed him in Singapore in 1960.

[159] Statement by Embok Suloh, _Utusan Melayu_, 29 May, 1939. Most of the description in the following paragraph is based on the first few issues, the only file available at the time I was in Malaya. Extant holdings of the paper are seriously deficient.

information about the affairs of the Malay Associations being set up in each of the states in turn (making it clear that these pages were not solely for the KMS) and exhorted Malays throughout the country to join their local branch. In most ways, however, it differed relatively little from its contemporaries. Its news services were perhaps, at first, less well developed, but as with the other dailies it published numerous diagnostic and 'progress' articles addressed to the Malays as a whole, and concerned itself particularly with Malay economic welfare at the village level, and with education for Malays.[160] In political matters it was careful, even timorous, for as one of its leading journalists said, 'Everyone was afraid of talking politics. You couldn't go against the Sultans, and the Sultans all had British advisers'.[161] In religion it was mildly progressive, despite the allegations levelled at it by its chief rival and competitor, the Arab-owned Warta Malaya, that it was dangerously Kaum Muda and out to subvert Islam. It was, however, strongly chauvinistic on the Malay behalf, beyond any other paper of the time, and attacked particularly the Chinese, and

---

[160] See, esp., editorials and articles on Malay unemployment, in ibid., 30 May and 2 June, 1929.

[161] Interview with Zabha, January 1960.

somewhat less directly the Arabs and other non-Malay Muslims.[162]

For the first few months, Utusan Melayu had a bitter struggle for existence, against the competition of Warta Malaya and Lembaga, the reluctance of advertisers, the need to refund on unsold copies, and the difficulties of attracting new readers. The 1,000 copies printed daily during the first month fell to 700 and then to 600, and the paper was kept going only by the faith of its founders and additional monetary loans.[163] But it was assisted also by its strong Malay personality, which turned it from a paper into a cause.

---

[162] For anti-Chinese feeling, see, e.g., articles 'Orang Melayu di-perbuat seperti lembu' ('Malays treated like cattle'), and 'Negeri Besar - Ra'ayat Miskin' ('Great Country - Poor People'), 31 May and 1 June, 1939, both by Ishak b. Haji Mohd. With respect to anti-Arab feeling, Zabha told me a story that well illustrates this. Sent to report a large public repast organised by Arab religious leaders in honour of the Prophet's Birthday, Zabha arrived to find the hall empty. Seeking out one of the organisers, he asked why. 'All the people have been and gone', said the Arab; 'It's typical of the Malays: when there's food about they flock to it, come prayer time they all go home'. Returning to the office, Zabha wrote a brief account of the proceedings, and took it to the editor, Kajai. 'This is dull stuff', said Kajai, 'can't we do anything else with it?'. Zabha told him of the conversation with the committee man. Thumping the table with delight, Kajai said: 'We'll run it like that!', and re-wrote the story himself, putting it under banner headlines.

[163] Utusan Melayu Sepuloh Tahun, p.14.

Readers wishing to help were encouraged to write for it, to sell it, to extoll its merits, or to read it to the illiterate, and no effort was spared to link its fortunes with those of the Malay people as a whole.[164] Gradually circulation improved, until by late 1939 it was selling about a thousand copies daily, and had gained sufficient confidence to publish a companion Sunday paper, Utusan Zaman.[165] It was in some ways the fitting culmination of a whole generation of Malay journalistic enterprise. By 1941, Utusan Melayu, firmly established, had a daily circulation of 1,800, and was beginning to fulfil the promise seen in it by an early and enthusiastic reader, who had remarked in June 1939 that it was the first real sign of a national Malay movement, 'the first to be undertaken without interference or assistance from foreigners'.[166]

---

[164] 'Utusan Melayu was always characterised as "The Champion of the True Sons of the Soil" ... /and/ it used to be said that "The Malays will be victorious in the world only if Utusan Melayu succeeds in its own struggle"', Yusoff Ishak, Utusan Melayu Sepuloh Tahun, p.4.

[165] In June, 1941, it also began publication of a notable literary monthly, Mastika. All three survived the war years, and are still in existence today.

[166] Letter to the Editor, Utusan Melayu, 1 June, 1939.

CHAPTER SIX

Political Change and the Growth of Malay Organisations

The need to form group associations of a modern kind was first felt by Malays and Malayo-Muslims in the urban areas of the Straits Settlements towards the end of the nineteenth century. The circumstances of urban life -- its heterogeneity, competitiveness and relative freedom from customary sanctions and traditional authority -- produced for individuals an often confusing sense of personal insecurity and newly defined group awareness. As pressures to participate in the larger social and economic life of the city grew in intensity, primordial loyalties to religion, language and ethnic affinity, as the determining characteristics of social personality, came to assume increasing importance and to seek new modes of expression.

During the first half-century of Singapore's existence (and

over much the same period in Penang and Malacca) much of the need for social identification seems to have been met by the perpetuation among the immigrant Malaysian communities, whether from the peninsula or the archipelago, of previously existing communal patterns of residence and association. Few visitors to Singapore in its formative years failed to mark the division of the 'native' part of the town into contiguous _kampongs_, each named after the place of origin of its principal inhabitants: Kampong Jawa, Kampong Sumbawa, Kampong Bencoolen and others.[1] In Kampong Glam, in the centre of this area, the Malay followers of the Sultan of Johore lived clustered round the latter's _istana_, as did the followers of the Temenggong in Telok Blanga to the west of the city. Bugis Street in Kampong Glam was the merchandising centre for the Bugis maritime traders from the eastern archipelago, and Arab Street, close to the Jamiah

---

[1] As early as 1822, Raffles appointed a committee consisting of three Europeans and representatives 'from each of the principal classes of Arabs, Malays, Bugis, Javanese and Chinese', to mark out the quarters of the Asian population. (Song Ong Siang, _One Hundred Years History of the Chinese in Singapore_ (London, 1923), p.21.)

Mosque, was the principal place of residence of Singapore's Arab community. Often, as in the last two instances, patterns of residence coincided with specialisation of economic function, which provided an additional link between members of the same community. Kampong Bencoolen, occupied originally by families from the erstwhile British settlement in South Sumatra, was for some time a market garden, supplying vegetables to the town; Kampong Jawa contained many of the Malaysian quarter's eating houses and coffee shops, together with flower shops kept by the Javanese womenfolk.[2] Other communities with localised residence established certain marked occupational preferences in the city at large. Very many of the 'Boyanese', for example, from the island of Bawean, became grooms and coachmen, and later, with the advent of the motor car, chauffeurs.

---

[2] See, e.g., W. Makepeace et al, One Hundred Years of Singapore (London, 1921), Vol.II, p.468.

The institutional means by which Singapore's immigrant communities, drawn mainly from peasant village societies, learned to adapt to urban life are relatively little known, especially when compared with those of the Chinese, whose clan and locality associations and secret societies have often been discussed.[3] A recent study of one such Malaysian community, however, has pointed to forms of social organisation which seem likely to have been adopted by other groups of similar culture and social structure.[4] Baweans coming to Singapore, it appears, organised themselves in _pondok_, consisting of one or more houses in which people from the same village lived together in 'a microscopic reflection of the Bawean _desa_'.[5] Families occupied separate small rooms in the _pondok_, and each _pondok_ had a _serambi_, or front verandah, where visitors were received and unmarried Bawean males lived. The _pondok_ was at once a lodging house, a place of transit for Baweans temporarily in Singapore or seeking work, and a mutual social welfare institution which could be turned to for assistance in time of need. It gave

---

[3]See, e.g., Maurice Freedman, 'Immigrants & Associations: Chinese in Nineteenth Century Singapore', _Comparative Studies in Society and History_, III (1960-61), pp.25-48.

[4]J. Vredenbregt, 'Bawean Migrations: Some Preliminary Notes', in _Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde_, Deel 120, Afl.1 (1964), pp.109-37.

[5]_Ibid._, p.125.

Baweans a place where they could mix with their fellow-countrymen, eat, live and pray in the manner to which they were accustomed, and seek advice or guidance. The sense of social and moral security thus conferred, in an environment otherwise unfamiliar, assisted in the retention of social and personal identity, and played an important part in the induction of Baweans into Singapore life.

The two main Peninsular Malay concentrations, though in one sense as wholly immigrant as those from Java, Bawean and other parts of the archipelago, recreated even more distinctly social organisms of a traditional and familiar kind. In Kampong Glam and Telok Blanga respectively, the Sultans and Temenggongs of Johore formed village communities of a customary sort, centred round istana, mosque and market.[6] Here, their inhabitants led a life which, in the eyes of early European observers, was notably distinct in social character from that of their fellows in other parts of the city. G.W. Earl remarked in 1837 that 'The Malays in the vicinity of the abodes of these grandees and their satellites are generally idle in the extreme, while the settlers from other states, who are not under the control of the chiefs, form the most industrious portion of the Malay community'.[7]

---

[6] A description of Telok Blanga in 1848, published in the Free Press of that date, may be found in C.B. Buckley, An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore (Singapore, 1902), Vol. II, pp.495-6.

[7] G.W. Earl, The Eastern Seas (London, 1837), pp.373-4.

But if communal organisation of the kinds described satisfied most associative needs for the Malayo-Muslim population in the formative years of the Colony, it became increasingly inadequate towards the end of the century as urban life grew in complexity and intensity. Already by 1864 John Cameron had noted that 'Though the Campongs Java, Bugis &c., were probably first occupied by the races whose name they bear, no such distinction appears now to exist'.[8] Natural population growth, vastly increased immigration, rising land values and house rents, combined in the latter part of the century to push a significant proportion of the Malaysian population out of the inner city, and to diversify and confuse original patterns of residence and occupation.[9] Large numbers of Malaysians sank to the level of hired servants of other races in what was, effectively, a Chinese city governed by Europeans. Malaysian commercial and business life declined, in the face of active and intense Chinese competition. Traditional forms of social organisation, while helping to cushion the disintegrative effects of urban individualism, became less and less relevant to the quest for status and prestige in the totality of the

---

[8] J. Cameron, Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India (London, 1865), p.69.

[9] For Malay descriptions, see Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi, 'Menuntut Ketinggian akan Anak2 Negeri' ('The Pursuit of Greatness for Our People'), Al-Imam, II, I (July, 1907); and Sayyid Alwi Al-Hadi, 'The Malays of Singapore', The Modern Light, I, 7 (Shawal, 1939), pp.332-5.

urban social structure.

As the influence of traditional leadership waned,[10] new forms of leadership emerged, in particular from the English-educated Jawi Peranakan, who were closest to the administrative life of the city, and from the Arabs and Malay-Arabs, who were most affected by Chinese economic competition. This new leadership appealed not to communal allegiances of the old kind, but to the larger primordial loyalties of language and religion. Highly sensitive to the disadvantaged position of the Malayo-Muslim community, they were quick to emulate the organisational forms from which the West, in particular, seemed to derive so much strength. Together with the handful of Malaysians who had been at English, or at Western-type Malay schools, they urged the establishment of community organisations of a modern kind, which aimed at unification, solidarity and social exchange along linguistic and religious lines. When the Jawi Peranakan association itself was founded in 1876 specifically to publish the newspaper *Jawi Peranakan*, one of the principal aims of the paper was 'to give uniformity to the various dialects of Malay',[11] the root language of the Malayo-Muslim

---

[10] A process probably accelerated, as far as the Malays were concerned, when the Temenggong (soon to be the Maharaja) of Johore opened a new capital in Johore Bahru in the early 1860s, taking 'most of the Malay gentility' with him. See, e.g., Sayyid Alwi Al-Hadi, *op.cit.*, p.333.

[11] E.W. Birch, 'The Vernacular Press in the Straits', *J.S.S.B.R.A.S.*, 4 (December, 1879), p.52. And *cf.*, above, Chapter Two.

community as a whole. The Arabs, as already noted, were active in charitable and welfare work among their co-religionists, sponsored large public gatherings on the principal feast days, and promoted the recognition of Islam as a primary nexus transcending other social groupings and setting the Malayo-Muslims off from the Chinese, Europeans and others.[12] It is not without significance that the first Malayo-Muslim clubs in Singapore, the Persekutuan Dar ul-Adab and the Persekutuan Dar ul-Taadzim were given Arabic names, nor that there was much dispute upon the question of whether this or the English language provided the proper terminology.

In August 1894, the Chinese-run Malay-language daily Bintang Timor remarked, rather superciliously, that during the past year 'the Malays in Singapore have delighted in starting clubs like the Europeans and Chinese'.[13] The two principal clubs or associations were the Dar-ul-Adab and the Dar-ul-Taadzim, but there were in addition numerous football clubs and at least one industrial combination, the Club Kapitan2 dan Injinir2 Melayu.[14] Local Indian Muslim and Arab leadership seems to have been marked in the Adab and Taadzim associations, but the committees also included one or two

---

[12]For more detailed discussion of the Arabic community in Singapore, see above, Chapter Two.

[13]Bintang Timor, 8 August, 1894.

[14]The Captains and Engineers referred to formed the staff of local shipping.

Malays, Javanese and Buginese,[15] and much of their activity (in the form of set debates and discussions, for example) centred round predominantly Malaysian concerns -- the improvement of the Malay language, the furtherance of education in Malay, changes in Malay customs in response to urban conditions of life, and so on.[16] The importance of language was reflected in particular in the *Persekutuan Belajar Mengajar Bahasa Melayu*, started in Johore Bahru by leading Johore and Singapore Malays in 1888, primarily to evolve Malay terms for new political and administrative institutions. A branch of this society, or perhaps simply a similar society, was formed in Malacca around the turn of the century. In Penang, a Muslim Recreation Club (so named) was started in the early 1890s, followed shortly by the *Penang Peranakan Club*, for 'local-born Muslims'. The *Persekutuan Islam Singapura*, destined to be of some importance later, and still in existence today, seems to have been founded, under Arab and Muslim Indian leadership, round about the year 1900.

Membership of the clubs was voluntary, and most were open to all Malaysians and Muslims upon payment of a small annual

---

[15] The names of the 1894 committee of the *Persekutuan Dar-ul-Adab* are given in *Bintang Timor*, 10 August, 1894.

[16] For details, see above, Chapter Two.

subscription. They acquired (or in some cases built) their own premises, elected office bearers and committee members, and were punctilious in their observance of Western-style rules of association, setting out constitutions, holding annual general meetings, receiving reports of chairmen, secretaries, and treasurers, and organising programmes of activity. The general term used to describe the new associations was '_tempat pelajaran dan bersuka2_', loosely translatable as 'places for study and recreation', and though all had in common a socially integrative function in the urban environment, most showed marked preferences for either cultural or recreational activities. The tendency was for the division to take place down lines of economic and educational status, and hence between the generality of Malays and Malaysians on the one hand, and Arabs, _Jawi Peranakan_ and educated Malays and Malaysians on the other.

The sports clubs were the preserve of 'working class' Malays and Malaysians, who, to the persistent disgust of the reformist press, had discovered in football one very easily emulated facet of Western, and therefore modern, cultural life. By 1913 there were no fewer than forty such clubs in Singapore alone,[17] organised after 1910 in a Malay Football Association or League. The reformist journal

---

[17] _Neracha_, 2 July, 1913.

Neracha, which was perpetually exhorting the Malays to unite with each other in more purposive fashion for the common good, ran a campaign against football in the former year.[18] To claims from one of its defenders that 'most of our young Malays don't want to be rich like the Chinese, with hard work like mining, or becha pulling or vegetable gardening',[19] and that football clubs helped keep youngsters off the streets and taught them teamwork, Neracha retorted that the same poor Chinese immigrants were already becoming 'our masters, our rich merchants, our rulers', and that spare time was better employed in study, teamwork better encouraged by congregational prayer. 'To stop football', wrote one correspondent, ' would be like smashing the medicine of the people': on the contrary, said Neracha, 'we smash the poison bottle that intoxicates them'.[20] But despite Neracha's strictures, it seems clear that the football clubs did provide for poorer Malays, young and old alike, an associative interest which helped to combat the uncertainties of urban life.

The cultural, welfare and study clubs were organised mainly by the small, aspiring middle class of educated Malayo-Muslims, who sought in them a means of self-improvement, a progressively-minded reference group with which to identify themselves, and a forum for

---

[18] See especially the issues for 4, 11 and 18 June, 1913.

[19] Neracha, 11 June, 1913.

[20] Ibid. Utusan Melayu, 19 and 26 June, published similar correspondence and editorial comment.

the discussion of common social problems. Though Malays and other Malaysians were members, and sometimes officials, leadership lay for the most part with the wealthier and better-educated Arabs and Jawi Peranakan. It is important to emphasise the extent to which both the latter (most of whom were born in Malaya) identified themselves with the Malays, and assumed the role of spokesmen for the Malayo--Muslim community as an undifferentiated whole, the boundaries of which were defined by religion and language. The newspapers they published and contributed to, the associations they organised and led, all used the Malay language as the medium of intellectual and social exchange, and the principal concern of both was with the economic and educational backwardness of most Malays and Malaysians which was seen to reflect discredit on the larger Islamic umat, and on the Islamic religion itself.

The beginnings of Malay associations of a modern kind in the peninsular states cannot be dated accurately, but from at least 1910 onwards, and increasingly after the first world war, clubs and societies similar to those in the Straits Settlements sprang up in profusion in and around the towns, and even in the larger kampongs.[21]

---

[21]For some contemporary Malay observations on this phenomenon, see the articles by Za'ba (Zainal Abdin b. Ahmad), 'Pelajaran Ugama pada Umat Melayu' ('Religious Education and the Malay Community'), first published in Pengasoh between 15 April and 30 June, 1919, and reprinted in his Asohan Budi (The Nurture of Character) (Kuala Lumpur, 1958), especially pp.290-300.

As in Singapore and Penang, sports and social clubs were legion, with football clubs well to the fore but including also such prestigious organisations as the Kastam Zaria Club in Kuala Kangsar, whose members were mainly local Malay aristocracy and government servants, and which included in its activities football, tennis, croquet, chess and cards.[22] More interesting from the point of view of the present discussion were the cultural and progress associations of one sort or another, created in response to growing awareness among urban and economically competitive Malays of the need to find new vehicles for personal and social self-improvement. Little is known of most of these associations, beyond perhaps their names and an occasional reference in the vernacular press. Nor would a simple list be of much relevance or use. Some, however, are worth referring to in a little more detail for the light they shed on some sections of the Malay community at this particular time.

Perhaps the most notable feature of the cultural-welfare and progress associations was the way in which, despite their almost invariably local origins and circumscribed membership, and their lack of direct contact with each other, they all practically without exception recognised the larger Malay society of which they were a

---

[22] Haji Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin, in his unpublished manuscript autobiography (ca. 1942). The President of the Club in 1915 was Raja Chulan b. ex-Sultan Abdullah, and other leading members were the Dato' Panglima Kinta, Raja Abdullah (penghulu of Kota Lama Kanan), and Abdul Majid (at that time Malay teacher at the Kuala Kangsar Malay College), who was Honorary Secretary.

part, and spoke in holistic (if not necessarily nationalistic) terms of the task of improving the educational and economic status of the Malays within the plural society. Under the leadership of English-educated government servants, vernacular or religious school teachers, or Islamically-oriented small businessmen, each with their private vision, the associations set out to create a new and better Malay society. The Persekutuan Keharapan Belia (New Hope Society), founded in Johore Bahru in 1916; the Persekutuan Indra Kayangan (Heavenly Land Society) of Alor Star, in 1918; the Persekutuan Perbahathan Orang2 Islam (Muslim Debating Society) of Muar, in 1919; the first of the Persekutuan Guru2 Melayu and Persekutuan Guru2 Islam (Malay and Islamic Teachers' Associations), set up in the early 1920s -- each alike discussed at length the problems of living, as Malays, in the modern world, and canvassed educational and self-help programmes which would enable them to contribute to Malay advancement. In 1924, Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad (Za'ba) invited a score or so of English-educated government servants from other states to come to Kuala Lumpur to help start a pan-Malayan Malay Literary Society, whose chief aims were to unify the variant systems of Malay spelling, and to advance the cause of a modern Malay literature.[23] The English title of the society was apparently unacceptable to some, and when the leadership changed in the following year it became the Persekutuan Kemajuan Pengetahuan (Society for the Advancement of Knowledge), and began to publish, like many of the others, its own journal.

---

[23] Interview with Za'ba, June 1960.

One of the most acute problems for peasant Malay society was economic poverty and indebtedness. Urban and well-to-do Malays felt keenly their inability to compete effectively in business with Chinese and Indians. Several of the new societies therefore incorporated primarily economic aims. As early as 1913, Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin,[24] at that time a teacher at the Kuala Kangsar

---

[24] Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin was born in 1887 at Pudu, near Kuala Lumpur, and educated at the local Malay school and then in English at the Victoria Institute, where he took his Junior Cambridge Certificate in 1902. Though he wished to continue his education, and had ambitions to study medicine, his father wanted him to become a clerk, with a view to saving enough money to study in Mecca. He worked in the Selangor Government service for two years, and was then encouraged by R.J. Wilkinson to return to school at the Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, where in 1905 he became one of the first pupils. In 1907 he was appointed an Assistant Master at the College, teaching Malay, and in 1917 became one of the first Malay Assistant Inspectors of Schools, under the new Winstedt scheme. In 1922 or '23 he was made a Liaison Officer with the Political Intelligence Bureau, and at the same time Malayan Pilgrimage Agent at Jeddah, where he lived during the pilgrimage season. During the off season he carried out political intelligence work amongst the Malays in Malaya. Throughout his life he was active as a writer, contributing frequently to the vernacular and English press, preparing books on the teaching of Malay and Malay school texts, and publishing two collections of essays, <u>The Malays of Malaya</u> (Singapore, 1928), and <u>The Malayan Kaleidoscope</u> (Kuala Lumpur, 1935). In 1924 he helped to found, and later became president, of the <u>Persekutuan Kemajuan Pengetahuan</u> (Society for the Advancement of Learning), and during 1925 edited the Society's journal. Shortly before the second world war he founded and was effective editor of <u>The Modern Light</u>, a monthly journal addressed primarily to English-educated Malays. He died in 1943. I am indebted to his son-in-law, Haji Mohd. Zain b. Ayob, for allowing me to see Abdul Majid's manuscript autobiography.

Malay College, attempted to organise a pan-Malayan business enterprise called the Sharikan Perniagaan dan Pertukangan Melayu (Malay Trading and Craft Company) by inviting contributions of capital through the columns of one of the Malay papers.[25] In the course of a month or six weeks he collected over a hundred subscribers, but there is no record of the company coming into existence, and evidence suggests that it failed before it started, for lack of adequate expertise. On a smaller scale, several savings and burial societies, perhaps patterned on Chinese models, were started in the western states,[26]

---

[25] Neracha, 1-29 October, 1913.

[26] One of the first of the burial societies was set up with 24 members in Kampong Ayer Molek, Johore, in 1914. Printed rules of association set out the powers and duties of President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer and committee members, and the rules governing meetings. Members paid annual subscriptions for themselves and their families, graded according to age, into a fund which provided financial assistance when any member or member's dependant died. Special arrangements were made for the notification of deaths to the proper authorities, and for other sorts of practical assistance. (Undang2 Jemaah Ikhwan Al-Muslimin, Simpulan Kampong Ayer Molek, Johor, bagi Khairat Kematian (Johore, 1914).) A similar society formed in Selangor in 1923, the Persekutuan Kebajikan Arwah (Burial Welfare Society), under royal patronage, undertook to conduct the appropriate funeral rituals, in addition to providing financial assistance.

and in the mid-1920s Dato' Abdullah of Rembau (an English-educated member of the Federal Council) was successful in starting in Negri Sembilan the first of several 'Better Living Societies', designed to reduce customary (and allegedly wasteful) Malay expenditure on wedding and other ceremonial. In 1925, a Maharani Company was started in Muar, 'to found a newspaper or any other enterprise which will improve our lives without transgressing the laws of the Government'.[27] Capital was to be raised among Malays (and with the permission of the committee, among other Muslims) in five thousand shares of one dollar each, with provision for payment by instalments. Under the articles of association, which were elaborate and detailed, the company was empowered to use the money to open a trading concern, buy a rubber plantation, or start a madrassah for the furtherance of learning.[28]

Until the mid-1920s, Malay and Malayo-Muslim organisations in the Straits Settlements and the peninsular states were purely social, cultural and economic in character and intent. Though some, like the Persekutuan Islam Singapura occasionally made representations to Government on matters of concern to Malays and Muslims, none sought to exercise direct political influence or suggested that they spoke

---

[27] Peratoran Maharani Company, Muar (Rules of the Maharani Company, Muar) (Muar, 1925), p.2. For the newspaper, see above, Chapter Five.

[28] Ibid., p.5.

for a political as distinct from a socio-cultural group. Many societies, and most vernacular newspapers, when they came into being, took care at the outset to disclaim explicitly any desire to contravene or act outside the laws of the state,[29] and contrived to give the impression that, while they were anxious to see their own community prosper, most of the responsibility for this lay with themselves, and that they were well content with official paternalism. In part this self-restraint and self-deprecation undoubtedly reflected fear of British repressive attitudes towards 'secret societies' in general, and towards anything savouring of political activity in particular. In part, however, it seems also to have sprung from a deep-rooted peasant-Malay deference to established authority, and a recognition that politics was a dangerous, and even an improper, pursuit, better left to others with greater knowledge of how to go about it.[30]

---

[29] See, e.g., the 'Kehendak' ('Aims') of the Sharikat Suloh-Menyuloh (Torchlight Society) set out in the first issue of the magazine Penyuloh (The Torch), 30 May, 1924, p.1.

[30] A typical enough, if slightly exaggerated expression of views of this kind was contained in an article in the monthly Tanah Melayu (Malay Land) in 1934. Headed 'Satu Hal yang Dahshat dalam Tanah Melayu' ('An Alarming Development in Malaya'), it ran in part: 'One of the cries we hear is about politics. We're surprised that Malays should want to waste their time on such profitless matters. We all know that Malaya is ruled by the English, who are clever and experienced at this sort of thing. Their government is very fair, and within their strength and justice we can live indefinitely until life is peaceful and safe. What more do we want? Are we cleverer than the English? What's more, forbidden politics is a dangerous game, for all it causes is trouble. For these reasons, talk about politics is just not wanted in this country'.

Attitudes of this kind were slow to change, and then did not do so radically, but in Singapore in 1926 a new and specifically Malay organisation was formed, dedicated to improving the political as well as the social and economic status of the Malay community. It is significant that in part the birth of this organisation reflected tensions within the Malayo-Muslim community itself, as well as an increasing Malay desire to play a larger role in the political determination of their future.

Leadership of Singapore's Malayo-Muslim community had resided for half a century and more with its non-Malaysian members, mainly the Arabs and Jawi Peranakan, but including also a number of the more wealthy Indian Muslims. The Arabs and Malay-Arabs in particular, by reason of their presumed (and sometimes actual) piety and religious knowledge, their wealth, their zeal in Muslim charitable welfare and religious education, and the relatively high regard in which they were held by European officials and businessmen, saw themselves and were seen by most Malaysians as the natural spokesmen for the Islamic community as a whole. Fewer than half the 'Arab' males were of pure Arab descent (and a very much smaller proportion of the women)[31] but

---

[31] There were 1,282 'Arabs' resident in Singapore in 1921. Of the 788 males, only 268 were born in Arabia; of the 544 females, only 31. (J.A.E. Morley, 'The Arabs and the Eastern Trade', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXII, 1 (1949), p.175.)

this made little or no difference to the respect and near-veneration accorded to them by a large proportion of their less well-endowed co-religionists. Well-to-do Hadhrami Sayyid families, like the Alsagoffs, Al-Juneids and Al-Kafs (among the richest people in Singapore)[32] played a leading role in the life of the city as merchants and public benefactors, and as municipal commissioners and justices of the peace. Some of the Indies and Malaya-born, like Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi and Sayyid Mohd. Al-Kalali, had played an important and partisan role in Malayo-Muslim causes through the reformist press. The Jawi Peranakan, English-educated for the most part, and often government servants, clerks, or teachers, had played a similar part in the founding and running of the first vernacular newspapers, though their real strength lay not in Singapore but in Penang. The principal institution through which the authority of these groups was expressed, within the Malayo-Muslim community itself, was the Persekutuan Islam Singapura (Muslim Association of Singapore), founded around the turn of the century.

After the first world war, a small number of young,

---

[32] Some account of the Alsagoff and Al-Kaf families, and the extent of their wealth, may be found in A. Wright and H.A. Cartwright (eds.), Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya (London, 1908), pp.705-7 and 710-12.

English-educated Malays, notably Mohd. Eunos Abdullah,[33] the editor of Lembaga Melayu, Dr. Abdul Samad,[34] the first Malay doctor, and Tengku Kadir,[35] a scion of the old Sultanate house of Kampong Glam, began to challenge the right of non-Malaysian Muslims to speak on behalf of the Malay community. The history of this challenge is not altogether clear, but it seems to have centred at first round the Persekutuan Islam. Though this institution seems in fact to have been active from time to time in advocating the Malay as well as the Muslim cause, it was nevertheless primarily social in its activities, and came to be regarded by many Malays as 'a sort of rich man's club',[36]

---

[33]For details of Mohd. Eunos' early career, see above, Chapter Five.

[34]Dr. Samad, a Singapore-born Malay, was a graduate of the King Edward VII Medical College in Singapore. Though prominent in the formation of the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (Singapore Malay Union - KMS), he held no office subsequently, for reasons of which I am not aware.

[35]Tengku Kadir was the leading Malay of royal birth in Singapore, and a lineal descendant of Sultan Ali of Johore.

[36]Interview, 21 January, 1960, with Osman b. Hassan and Daud b. Mohd. Shah. Osman, a government clerk, was Secretary of the KMS from the late 1920s until the Second World War, and compiler of the official history of the movement, published in 1937 (see below, fn.39). Daud entered the Selangor Government service as a clerk in 1903, and in 1910 became one of the first Malays (and one of the few not from the Malay College) to become a Malay Assistant in the M.A.S. He served in a number of administrative posts in the F.M.S. and S.S., and was instrumental in founding the Muslim Institute in Singapore in 1921. He was later the first Malay Secretary of the Kampong Bahru 'Malay Settlement' in Kuala Lumpur (where he has one of the principal streets named after him), and retired from Government service in the early 1930s. He was President of the KMS from 1937 until the war.

and to be thought to pay insufficient attention to the kind of practical social welfare needed by the economically depressed Malaysian community. After trying for some time to work through the Persekutuan Islam, Eunos Abdullah, Dr. Abdul Samad and others decided, in 1921, to found a rival Muslim Institute, whose functions would concern primarily the poorer members of the Malayo-Muslim community, effectively the Malaysians. The Institute was particularly interested in the furtherance of education, and helped, for example, to find accommodation in the city for peninsular Malay boys who came to Singapore to study. The rivalry between the two groups crystallised round the question of the appointment of additional nominated Asian representatives on the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, as decided upon by Government in 1921.[37] The Muslim Association, Arab-led group wanted a specifically Muslim representative (and hence, almost certainly, an Arab), the Muslim Institute wanted a Malay.[38] The British, for their part, seemed to have been anxious to avoid purely religious partisanship, and for this

---

[37] Prior to 1924, there was only one Asian in the Legislative Council, a Chinese. The reconstitution in that year resulted in the appointment of two additional Chinese members (on the basis of one from each Settlement) and one Malay.

[38] Early in 1921, Daud b. Mohd. Shah (interview, 21 January, 1960), wrote to leading Malays in Penang and Malacca to invite them to attend a meeting at the Muslim Institute, for the purposes of discussing this issue. Several delegates came from Penang; the Malaccan Malays gave prior assent to whatever should be decided.

and perhaps other reasons chose Eunos Abdullah, who had already been appointed the first Municipal Commissioner of Malay race in 1922. He took his seat on the Council in 1924. It was this appointment, and the need felt by Malays to provide Eunos with organisational support, which led to the formation in 1926 of the first Malay association with explicitly political aims, the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura, or Singapore Malay Union.

On the 4th of March in that year, a letter appeared in the English-language Malaya Tribune, signed by Dr. Abdul Samad and headed 'Malay Association'.[39] In it, Dr. Samad addressed the Malay peoples of Singapore, 'who are, it is believed, backward, because they possess no association of their own', despite the fact that they formed the largest part of the Muslim community. Creating such a body, said Dr. Samad, would certainly run into opposition from other Muslim groups, who had always been antagonistic to suggestions of this sort, for fear that their Islamic associations should be supplanted. Nevertheless, whatever the difficulties the attempt must be made, and he appealed to leading Malays to give it their full and energetic support. On the following day a second letter was published in the same paper, commending Dr. Samad's proposals in enthusiastic terms, pointing again to the way in which the Malays had fallen behind

---

[39] A Malay version of this letter is reproduced in Osman b. Hassan, Berita Pergerakkan Kesatuan Melayu, 1926-1937 (The Story of the Malay Union Movement, 1926-1937) (Singapore, 1937), p.2. I have not been able to see the original.

'in the struggle for knowledge and for a better livelihood', and concluding with the words '_Setia itu Jaya_' -- 'Loyalty is Victory'.[40]

In the weeks that followed, negotiations took place to find a suitable leader for the proposed association. The person first approached, Tengku Kadir, declined in favour of Eunos Abdullah, who agreed to act as President, and under their joint signatures an invitation was sent to some thirty or so Malays and Malaysians to attend an inaugural meeting at the _istana_, Kampong Glam, on May the 14th. The significance of the meeting place, the one time residence of the old Sultan of Johore, was not lost upon the compilers of the official account, who remarked that it served to remind those invited of the Malay _raja_ who had once ruled Singapore.[41] It was a decorous rather than a stirring occasion, with rows of tables and chairs set out in the _istana_ garden, and subdued conversation among the guests before the proceedings began. But once started, they came to a head quickly. 'The question is', said the first speaker, Abdul Manan b. Mohd. Ali, 'should we Malays form an association to take the lead in playing some part in politics, in the affairs of government, so that our rights and our welfare shall not be surrendered to non-Malay Muslims?'.[42] Upon general assent being expressed, Eunos Abdullah

---

[40] _Ibid_., p.3. The writer, Mohd. Azhari, is unknown to me in any other connection.

[41] _Ibid_., p.5.

[42] _Ibid_., p.6.

spoke at some length concerning the aims and objects of the association, membership of which, he said, should be confined to persons of Malay stock indigenous to the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago.[43] It was decided to call it the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura, or in English the Singapore Malay Union, and to approach the Government for the necessary official registration under this title.[44] The purposes of the KMS, as set out in the proceedings, were to encourage members to play a greater role in public and Governmental affairs; to sponsor Malay progress and interest in politics and education; to make representations to Government on behalf of the Malay community in all matters concerning the rights and freedoms of the Malays; and to foster higher and technical education, with a view to stimulating Malay children to obtain new skills.[45]

In this way, then, Malaya obtained its first quasi-political Malay movement. The leadership came for the most part from English-educated journalists, government servants and merchants, typified by men like Eunos Abdullah, Daud b. Mohd. Shah, and Embok

---

[43] Ibid., p.7.

[44] Daud b. Mohd. Shah (interview, 21 January, 1960) says that when first approached the Government objected to the word 'Union' in the title, though this was eventually accepted.

[45] Osman, op.cit., p.7.

Suloh,[46] together with an admixture of traditional secular and religious authority, in the persons of Tengku Kadir and Imam Haji Mohd. Yusuf b. Haji Said,[47] the Chief Kathi of Singapore, both of whom became Vice-Presidents. Throughout its history the KMS was markedly co-operationist and loyalist in its demeanour towards Government, giving tea parties to greet and farewell arriving and departing Governors, presenting loyal addresses and organising appropriate functions to mark such British royal occasions as the Silver Jubilee of King George V, the death of that monarch, and the coronation of King George VI. The latter event prompted an enormous Malay procession, organised by the KMS, a description and detailed account of which occupied 78 out of the 119 pages of the official history of the movement, published in 1937.

---

[46] Haji Embok Suloh b. Haji Omar, a wealthy merchant of Bugis descent (see above, Chapter Two) became the first Treasurer of the KMS. When Eunos Abdullah died in 1934, Embok Suloh succeeded to his seat on the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, and also to the Presidency of the KMS.

[47] In the Straits Settlements, under direct colonial rule, kathis were appointed by the British (in consultation with the Muslim community), an arrangement which in its early years had given rise to some objections (see, e.g. Editorial in *Jawi Peranakan*, 16 May, 1887). Imam Haji Mohd. Yusof, who appears to have been a Singapore Malay, was regarded by the British as the principal representative of the Muslim community (presumably because of the numerical preponderance of Malay over non-Malay Muslims), and was so appointed, for example, to the multi-racial committee set up in 1918 to report on a Scheme to Commemorate the Centenary of Singapore (Legislative Council Paper No.16 of 1918, *Legislative Council Proceedings* (1918), p.C 62).

One of the first 'political' tasks undertaken by the KMS was to prove in fact to be its most enduring memorial, and emphasises its strong social-welfare bias and essentially conservative character. Malays in Singapore had felt concern for many years at the way in which, as land values in the municipality rose, they had been bought out of the areas originally leased to and built on by them in and around Kampong Glam, and forced either to seek sub-standard rental housing in scattered parts of the same area, or to move out to the fringes of the city. This situation was, indeed, at the root of many Malay grievances against the Arabs, into whose hands much previously Malay property had fallen.[48] Overcrowding and poor living conditions were endemic, and worsened by continuing Malay immigration from both the peninsula and the archipelago.

At the monthly committee meeting of the KMS in August, 1926, Abdul Manan b. Mohd. Ali proposed that the Union appeal to Government to set aside an area of land within the Municipality for exclusive and undisturbed use as a Malay *kampong*, on the model

---

[48] See, e.g., J.A.E. Morley, 'The Arabs and the Eastern Trade', p.170.

of Kampong Bahru in Kuala Lumpur.[49] Here, it was suggested, Malays could build their own houses, plant round them a few fruit trees, and live among their own people in the manner to which they were accustomed. Though the proponents of the scheme did not say so in so many words, it is clear that they looked to the re-establishment of the kind of social unit which had characterised early Singapore, and which was itself a reproduction in the urban environment of traditional rural patterns of life.

---

[49]The 'Malay Agricultural Settlement', better known later as Kampong Bahru, was established in 1899, on some 224 acres of land lying at what was then the north-eastern edge of Kuala Lumpur. Its aim was to create, close to the town, a sort of model village, in which traditional Malay agriculture and crafts might be pursued and developed, while children of the settlement were given literary or technical education to enable them to find Government employment. Half-acre lots of land were leased to settlers on what was effectively a permanent tenancy, a school and other facilities were built, and a committee composed of British officials and leading Malays was formed to run the settlement. From the start it seems to have suffered from a superfluity of ideals insufficiently attached to reality. A scheme to grow <u>padi</u>, undertaken against the advice of the Malay members, failed utterly, and plans for co-operative live-stock rearing did little better. Craft instruction in wood-carving, silversmithing, tailoring, mat-making and the like was poorly attended by youths who drifted off to take other jobs in the town. In some respects, however, the settlement was a notable success, enabling, as the <u>Annual Report on Selangor for 1902</u> said (p.28) 'many families of respectable Malays of the Peninsula to live their natural village life almost within the precincts of a large town'. By 1924, Kampong Bahru, which had been absorbed completely within the town area, had 544 houses and a population of 2,600. For some account of the settlement's history, see John Hands, 'Malay Agricultural Settlement in Kuala Lumpur', <u>Malayan Historical Journal</u>, II, 2 (1955), pp.146-62; and <u>cf</u>., also, Suleiman b. Daud, 'The Malay Settlement in Kuala Lumpur', <u>Modern Light</u>, I, 9 (Zulhijjah, 1359), pp.430-33.

The 'Kampong Melayu' proposals found a ready reception among KMS members, and a sub-committee was formed to visit existing Malay villages around Singapore, and Malay clubs and societies, to test public opinion. The committee reported favourably in December, 1926, and after further full discussion the President, Eunos Abdullah, who was also the Malay member of the Legislative Council, was empowered to put the matter to the Government.[50] This he did early in 1927, supported in the Council Chamber by the principal Chinese member, Tan Cheng Lock.[51] The initial response from the Government was cautious. The Colonial Secretary said that the proposal for a 'Malay Settlement' would have due consideration,

> although I am afraid we cannot hope for very much, because the pushing out of the Malays is really an economic matter; as the town grows, no doubt the Malay does tend to get pushed out of town -- to get further afield. We will see whether we can do anything to make him comfortable.[52]

Despite this somewhat unpromising beginning, however, a committee of Council was set up, with Abdul Manan co-opted from the KMS, to inquire into feasibility. As a result it was decided to make the sum of $300,000 available to purchase suitable land, if any could be found. There was considerable difficulty about this, but late in 1928 620 acres of unoccupied land in the eastern part of the city was bought, and early the following year Kampong Melayu came into

---

[50] Osman, op.cit., pp.10-12.

[51] Legislative Council Proceedings (1927), pp.B24-5.

[52] Ibid., p.B35.

being, the names of its Malay progenitors commemorated in the names of the streets which sub-divided it.[53]

The energies of the KMS during its first three or four years were much taken up with the Kampong Melayu project, and other matters to which it turned its attention were for the most part of smaller moment. In December 1926, for example, it sought Government help in establishing a Malay-run ferry from the kampong at Telok Blanga to Pulau Berani, an island just off Singapore. In the following year it corresponded with Government with a view to opening a Malay cemetery at Kampong Betang Kusa. It adopted at one of its general meetings a KMS flag, designed by Embok Suloh; it donated trophies to the Malay section of the Singapore Volunteers and to Malay sports clubs; and it hailed and farewelled Governors in the manner already described.[54] One of its continuing interests, however, and one of more general moment for the Malay community, was education, and here, as in the case of Kampong Melayu, it was able to provide Eunos Abdullah, in his role as Legislative Councillor, with 'constituency' support for requests to give special assistance to Malays.[55] On several occasions during the late 1920s, Eunos spoke in Council on

---

[53] Osman, op.cit., pp.13-15. The land appears to have been bought entire from a Mr. Frankel.

[54] Ibid., pp.15-16, where the minutes of KMS meetings dealing with most of these matters are set out.

[55] See, esp., Legislative Council Proceedings (1926), p.B51, on which occasion Eunos raised the matter of age-limits for admission from Malay to English schools, a question of great concern to the Malay community.

educational matters where these affected the Malays, and he was perhaps in part responsible for hastening the opening of the Trades School for Malays in 1929.

The rise to prominence in Singapore Malay society of an English-educated, bureaucratic and commercial, largely non-aristocratic elite, of the kind represented by the leadership of the KMS, was not paralleled in the peninsular states, where British policy had resulted in reinforcing the prestige and authority of the Sultans and their establishments, where recruitment to the English-educated bureaucracy (despite some liberalisation after 1920) heavily favoured the traditional ruling class, and where no commercial or professional middle class comparable to that in the Straits Settlements had emerged. For the majority of peninsular Malays, most of whom remained peasant farmers, political loyalties still lay with their rulers and chiefs, whose immemorial duty it had always been to ensure the welfare of the state and its inhabitants. The British connection had, indeed, done no more than re-emphasise this, for despite the growth of the plural society the Malay peasant believed, and was encouraged to believe, that in the affairs of state the Malay interest was paramount. The first challenge to established patterns of leadership and authority came, as we have seen, from the 'Arabic'-educated, urban-centred, religious reformists, whose vision, springing from a metropolitan

'great tradition',[56] was of a rejuvenated and newly integrated Malay Islamic community responding creatively to the challenges arising from association with the West. Their disregard of state boundaries and insistence upon the essential unity of the Muslim umat, and their hostility to the syncretic religious experience exemplified in the 'little traditions' of Malay rural life, threatened both the religious and the temporal authority of the traditional elite, and brought them into sharp conflict not only with the elite itself but with that large proportion of the peasantry which looked for a defence against changing times, not a formula for adapting to them. Prior to the mid-1920s, the reformists were frequently instrumental in prompting discussion of new issues affecting Malay life, and in tapping the enthusiasms of those who, out of piety or because of various sorts of pressing acquaintance with the modern world, sought a revised system of beliefs and values. But they had had little success in gaining even the beginnings of a mass following, let alone in devising any kind of programmatic nationalism.

Of the other emergent elite groups in Malay society at this time, neither the English-educated bureaucracy nor the embryonic Malay-educated intelligentsia were in any stronger position to offer an alternative to traditional forms of leadership. Where the

---

[56] The terminology used here is borrowed from that elaborated by Robert Redfield, The Primitive World and its Transformations (Ithaca, 1954).

intelligentsia were concerned, vernacular-trained teachers and journalists, still relatively few in numbers and seriously lacking in confidence, organisational skills and higher education, had only just begun to recognise and take courage from the course of events in the Netherlands Indies. Rather than indulge in what seemed to be premature political action, most preferred to turn their attention to the self-strengthening of Malay society. Increasingly sensitive to Malay economic and educational backwardness, they nonetheless refused to accept the arguments of those (principally the religious reformists) who accused the traditional ruling class of neglecting the welfare of their subjects, and continued to look to that class for the determination as well as the safeguarding of Malay interests.[57] The English-educated bureaucrats, on the other hand, though in many respects better equipped to do so, were effectively inhibited from staking a claim to independent political leadership by reason of their close relationship (especially in the higher echelons) with the traditional elite, by their position and training as part of the machinery of British colonial rule and consequent financial and ideological dependence on Government, and finally by a strong sense of incapacity in the face of superior British abilities in so many

---

[57] See, e.g., Editorial in Majallah Guru (December, 1928), quoted in Radin Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism, 1900-1945', J.S.E.A.H., I, 1 (1960), p.12; but cf., also the article 'Kebebasan' ('Freedom'), in the same journal five years later (X, 1, October 1933), where a somewhat modified view is expressed.

fields. The result was a cramping powerlessness and inaction. 'Regardless of what others may think of their position', wrote one leading English-educated Malay in 1928,

> [the Malays] are quite satisfied with present arrangements, as they know full well that if they get rid of the British, they will be worse off under some other power who would be sure to overrun the country and trample down the Malays the moment they are by themselves. It is dangerous for fatherless young chicks like ourselves, they would say, to move about alone where there are hawks and eagles hovering about ready to pounce upon them. [58]

In the last years of the 1920s and in the early 1930s, however, a number of circumstances combined to throw into relief the exposed situation of the Malays, and to prompt from each of the new elites in turn responses which took the form of nationalist-type organisations with broad aspirations. These circumstances arose out of three issues, all of somewhat larger import, which were seen by the Malays vitally to affect their interests: the decentralisation controversies, the great depression, and Chinese claims for a larger share in government and administration. It is not proposed to discuss these issues at length here, except in so far as they reflect Malay concerns.

As far as the British were concerned, the 'decentralisation'[59] of

---

[58] (Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin), The Malays of Malaya, By One of Them (Singapore, 1928), pp.94-5.

[59] There is an extensive, if fragmentary, contemporary literature on decentralisation. The only detailed historical account is in R. Emerson, Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule (New York, 1937), pp.153-82.

the F.M.S., and the 'restoration' to its component states (in effect to the Residents) of some of the individuality and independence of action which had characterised the early years of British rule, was primarily a response to the needs of financial, administrative and constitutional rationalisation -- just as the federation itself had been a quarter of a century earlier. The post-war slump in commodity prices, and a serious world rice shortage, had led to a financial crisis in the F.M.S. and to much heart-searching about the top-heavy over-capitalisation and administrative centralisation which had accompanied the previous decade of booming rubber markets. Coupled with this was increasing political strain between the High Commissioner (who was also Governor of the Straits Settlements) and the Chief Secretary of the F.M.S. -- in short, between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur -- and a growing feeling that the presence in this small peninsula of eleven separate governmental entities[60] required some rationalisation, preferably by persuading the unfederated states to enter a looser and more simply structured federation of the whole. And finally, there was increasing uneasiness, on the part both of some British officials and of the rulers of the federated states, that specifically Malay interests had been lost sight of, and the Malays pushed too far into the background. The whole long and

---

[60] Those of the four federated states individually, of the five unfederated states, of the F.M.S. as a unit, and of the Straits Settlements Colony.

complex course of the decentralisation controversies occupied some thirteen years, from early in Sir Laurence Guillemard's Governorship (1920-27) until after the report of the Colonial Office arbitrator, Sir Samuel Wilson, in 1933.[61] But the salient points as far as the Malays were concerned can be summarised briefly.

In 1924, Sultan Iskandar Shah of Perak paid a visit to London, in the course of which he addressed a memorandum to the Colonial Office, referring to the Pangkor Engagement and requesting that 'the original treaty should be followed in its exact terms'.[62] The Ruler, he said, should be treated as the Ruler, with the Resident to advise and carry out on his behalf and with his co-operation policies decided upon in consultation with stronger State Councils.[63] Sultan Iskandar was well aware of the official discussions on decentralisation and restoration which had already taken place, and had to some extent been a party to them,[64] but this plea undoubtedly reflected independent anxieties about his status and powers, especially when these were compared with those of the rulers of the unfederated states, whose British advisers more truly advised (and were in addition not subject to the intermediate authority of a Chief Secretary in Kuala Lumpur),

---

[61] Report of Visit to Malaya, 1932, Cmd.4276, Great Britain Parliamentary Papers (1933). The report gives a useful official summary of events.

[62] Emerson, op.cit., p.61.

[63] Ibid.

[64] See, e.g., the remarks of the High Commissioner to the Federal Council in January, 1923 (Federal Council Proceedings (1923), p.B32).

and whose Malay State Councils had more genuine powers of debate, decision and financial control.[65] It seems clear that Sultan Iskandar in no way disputed or questioned British authority as expressed in the High Commissioner for the Federated Malay States, but wished to return to the position as he took it to have been at the beginning of his father's reign, with the Resident as an advisory and executive official of the Malay ruler, subject to no overriding authority other than that of the High Commissioner.[66]

Sultan Iskandar's visit to London was followed at the end of 1925 by the announcement by Guillemard of a far-reaching programme of constitutional and administrative reform which forecast the gradual elimination of the Chief Secretary and the devolution of his powers to the Residents and State Councils, and the withdrawal of the Rulers 'from the contentious arena of the Federal Council into the serener atmosphere of an Upper House or periodical Durbar', prior to

---

[65]That this comparison was being made is evident, though direct confirmation from sources close to the Rulers is hard to come by. See, however, Guillemard's memorandum on 'Decentralisation and the Political Development of the Federated Malay States', published as Council Paper No.39 of 1925 (Federal Council Proceedings, 1925), pp.C545-6, paras. 13 & 14.

[66]That the other F.M.S. Rulers agreed with these general views is indicated in, e.g., the Report of the Decentralisation Committee, published as Council Paper No.36 of 1923, which refers to widespread concern among the Rulers (Federal Council Proceedings (1924), p.C1).

an increase in powers for the State Councils.[67] The first of these reforms was long to be argued over, owing mainly to opposition from commercial interests and from certain sections of Government itself, but in 1927 the Federal Council was reconstituted to include three additional 'unofficial' Malay members[68] in place of the Rulers, while at the same time some very minor devolutions of power to the State Councils were effected.[69]

The four Malay members of Federal Council after 1927 were Raja Chulan, the Raja di-Hilir of Perak and a son of ex-Sultan Abdullah;

---

[67] Guillemard, 'Decentralisation and the Political Development of the F.M.S.', op.cit., pp.C544-7. It was decided, upon the recommendation of a committee set up to consider the reconstitution of the Federal Council (see Report, published as Council Paper No. 38 of 1926, Federal Council Proceedings, 1926) to hold regular Durbars rather than create an Upper House. The first Durbar under the new system was held at Kuala Kangsar in August 1927; and the first to include the Rulers of the Unfederated States, at Singapore in October 1930.

[68] One Malay 'unofficial' member had been appointed in 1923, Raja Chulan b. ex-Sultan Abdullah of Perak.

[69] For details, see Emerson, op.cit., p.172.

Tengku Musa'eddin,[70] the eldest son and heir apparent (Raja Muda) to Sultan Sulaiman of Selangor; Dato' Abdullah b. Haji Dahan, the Undang (Chief) of Rembau (one of the component states of Negri Sembilan); and Tengku Suleiman,[71] younger brother and heir presumptive (Tengku Besar) to Sultan Abdullah of Pahang. All were, as is apparent, of the highest royal or aristocratic birth. Two were probable heirs to the thrones of their respective states, and a

---

[70] Tengku Musa'eddin was born in 1893, and educated first at Malay school and then at the Malay College, Kuala Kangsar. In 1913 he was appointed as an Assistant Commissioner of Police. In 1920 he was created Raja Muda (heir apparent) by his father, and in 1924 accompanied the High Commissioner to London, to represent Malaya at the Wembley Empire Exhibition. He was succeeded as the Selangor Malay representative on the Federal Council in 1933, by Raja Uda b. Raja Mohd., and in 1934, as the result of an intrigue promoted by the then Resident of Selangor, T.S. Adams, was deprived of the title of Raja Muda, which went to the third son of the Sultan, Tengku Alam Shah. A brief factual account of his life may be found in Tengku Daeng Abdul Hamid b. Tengku Haji Mohd. Saleh, Sentosa Ketakhtaan Selangor (The Selangor Ruling House) (Klang, 1938), p.82.

[71] Tengku Suleiman was born in 1884, and educated in Malay up to Standard IV, later learning English from British officials stationed in Pekan. In 1910 he entered the government service as a Malay Assistant in the Land Office at Pekan, and in 1917 was appointed to the Pahang State Council. In 1929 he was created Tengku Besar (traditionally, heir apparent) by his elder brother Sultan Mahmud, the first-born son of their common father, Sultan Ahmad (d.1914). It had been assumed that Tengku Suleiman would in turn succeed to the throne, but in 1932 Sultan Abdullah obtained the assent of the major chiefs (and the British) to the appointment of his own son, Abu Bakar, as Tengku Mahkota (a new title in Pahang) and heir apparent. Tengku Suleiman was succeeded on the Federal Council in 1938 by a younger brother, Tengku Muhammad. A biographical account of Tengku Suleiman may be found in Ustaz Mohd. Mochtar Daud, Singghasana Negri Pahang (The Pahang Throne) (Pekan, 1957), pp.38-41.

third was a ruling chief. Raja Chulan, the oldest member, had been the first Malay aristocrat from the peninsular states to receive English education (in Malacca in the 1880s), and had recently retired after a career in government service. Both Dato' Abdullah and Tengku Musa'eddin had been educated at Kuala Kangsar Malay College, and had subsequently taken up appointments in the Co-operative Societies Department and the F.M.S. Police respectively. It is clear from this description that the term 'unofficial' as applied to the Malay members who replaced the Rulers in the Council was something of a misnomer, as the High Commissioner recognised in remarks made a few years later, in 1933:

> The 1927 Agreement for the reconstitution of this Council provided that at least four of the Unofficial Members should, if possible, be Malays selected one from each of the States. Now it is perfectly obvious that the Raja di Hilir of Perak, the Raja Muda of Selangor, the Undang of Rembau and the Tengku Besar of Pahang ... occupy positions under the constitutions of their respective States which are the reverse of 'unofficial', so that the term has in this connection been interpreted as a synonym for 'not _ex-officio_'. Although nobody could, I think, subscribe to the phraseological correctness of that interpretation, it was nevertheless the only possible one for my predecessors to adopt, if Malay interests were to receive adequate and proper representation on this Council. There were not, and there still are not, outside the constitutionally or administratively official ranks, Malay gentlemen of public standing and influence who possess the knowledge of English required of members of this Council. 72

---

[72] _Federal Council Proceedings_ (1933), p.B2. The occasion of these remarks was the appointment in the stead of Raja Chulan of Raja Abdul Aziz b. Raja Muda Musa, the Raja Muda and heir apparent of Perak, who had apparently drawn the High Commissioner's attention to 'certain difficulties which, he felt, stood in the way of his acceptance'.

The High Commissioner went on to refer to the difficulty that faced the Malay members, 'as the inevitably official spokesmen of unofficial Malay opinion', but said that while they could not, because of their status, vote against Government motions, they were completely free to express Malay views on any matter of public interest.[73]

These reservations constituted, it might be thought, a serious limitation upon the possible effectiveness of the Malay members, but it is questionable in any case whether their background and training, and the symbiotic relationship which existed between the traditional elite and their British rulers, could have permitted them to express, or indeed to hold, views markedly at variance with those of the Government. This was illustrated, especially, perhaps, in the kind of attention given by Raja Chulan (who, with Dato' Abdullah, was the only Malay member to speak at all frequently) to the related questions of Malay education and the employment of Malays in government. Raja Chulan, accurately enough reflecting official thinking, took up the somewhat anomalous position that English educational opportunities for Malays should be restricted, in the interests of peasant

---

[73] _Ibid._

agriculture,[74] but that at the same time more attempt should be made to find employment for Malays in government technical and clerical services, for which English education was required. It was a mistake, he thought, to extend English schools to the padi-planting areas, 'because Malay youths who gain a smattering of English at these schools do not take kindly to the pursuits of their forefathers'.[75] And he deplored the fact that there was 'a great reluctance on the part of those living near the towns to embark on agriculture when they see youths of other nationalities obtaining regular employment solely on account of their English education'.[76]

Nevertheless, within their limitations, Raja Chulan and Dato' Abdullah were outspoken advocates of such Malay causes as did not conflict seriously with official policies, and gained thereby in the

---

[74] In support of his arguments against the extension of English education, which seem to have been based mainly on a presumed lack of suitable employment opportunities, he quoted from an unnamed but highly typical English source, saying 'We have to avoid the mistakes committed in other parts of the world. History has taught us that under-education is not so serious an evil as over-education, especially education of a kind that does not provide the means to keep its young people occupied'. Winstedt, whose policy, in effect, Raja Chulan was expounding, remarked in reply that if Raja Chulan's views had been more general, education would be a much easier problem than it was, and added, 'They hardly seem in accord with the extreme eagerness which the Malay community has shown to gain entrance to English schools'. (Federal Council Proceedings (1930), p.B76; and cf., also, for Raja Chulan on education, ibid. (1924), p.B57; and (1930), p.B97.)

[75] Federal Council Proceedings (1930), p.B97.

[76] Ibid. Following these remarks, however, he went on to complain about the small number of Malay clerks employed in the Railways Department.

Malay community at large the kind of admiration accorded to Eunos Abdullah in Singapore. Clearly more free to speak than had been the Sultans (whose anomalous position as Rulers sitting in their own 'advisory' Council had contributed largely to their rarely broken silence)[77] at least two of the Malay members made frequent and pungent contributions in debate, thereby lending some colouration to the prevalent Malay belief that 'politics' could be left to the traditional elite. Dato' Abdullah in 1927 made a plea for more Malay Land Reservations, against the time when a class of Malays capable of running large estates might appear,[78] and proposed a systematic investigation of all areas suitable for rice cultivation, with a view to setting up a comprehensive development scheme.[79] In 1932, he repeated his earlier warning about land reservation, and made enquiries about the publication of a proposed

---

[77] See, e.g., Emerson, op.cit., pp.170-1, and the remarks of the Sultan of Perak on the occasion of his last attendance in Council (Federal Council Proceedings (1927), p.B[illegible]7).

[78] Federal Council Proceedings (1927), p.B99.

[79] Ibid., pp.B178-9.

Malay manual on rural co-operatives.[80] Both he and Raja Chulan (despite the latter's feelings about the extension of English education) asked frequently about progress made in government plans to employ more Malays in technical departments such as those of Public Works, the Post Office and the Railways,[81] urged the Government to speed up the promotion of Malay Administrative Service

---

[80] Federal Council Proceedings (1932), pp.B61-2 and B28. Dato' Abdullah had been appointed to the then newly formed Co-operative Societies Department on graduating from Malay College in 1921, and worked in it for several years. The manual he referred to had been prepared by Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi, but publication had been held up, 'owing to difficulties which arose in connection with the giving and receiving of "interest" in co-operative societies'.

[81] See, e.g., the speech by Dato' Abdullah in October, 1933, in which he made comparisons between the training and experience required from European and Malay officials in certain departments (Federal Council Proceedings (1933), p.B144). And cf. the remarks made two years earlier by Raja Chulan: 'I am not so stupid as to suggest that this country is yet in a position to supply all the highly qualified experts required by Government, but surely after fifty years of British administration large numbers of Malays should have been trained to undertake responsible work in the technical departments ...' (Federal Council Proceedings (1931), p.B54). By 1934, Dato' Abdullah was becoming a trifle sarcastic: 'It is, no doubt, pleasing to see so many Malay peons, Malay messengers, Malay punkah-pullers, Malay sailors, Malay police constables and Malay gatemen in the employ of the Railways, but, Sir, the Malays also desire to have a fair share of the higher posts' (Federal Council Proceedings (1934), p.B58).

officers to the Malayan Civil Service,[82] and questioned the practice of relegating all such officers to rural administration instead of giving them financial and other experience in headquarters' departments.[83]

One matter of particular concern to the Malay members arose out of the recommendations of the Retrenchment Committee set up in 1932 to consider and report on the financial economies necessary in order to combat the effects of the depression and of continually falling revenues. Amongst other things, the Committee recommended strongly that every effort should be made to reduce public expenditure, by curtailing the activities of most of the larger government departments, and by cutting down on their staffs.[84] As it was

---

[82]Raja Chulan drew attention in 1932 to the fact that since the first appointment of a Malay to the M.C.S. eleven years previously, only one such appointment had been made annually, though European Cadets were still being recruited in considerable volume. 'It seems to me', he said, 'that this is an opportunity for Government to take advantage of local "cheap labour" which my countrymen can supply' (Federal Council Proceedings (1932), p.B16). Cf., also, the next meeting of Council (ibid., pp.B57ff.) at which Raja Chulan raised the matter again, and received assurances from the Chief Secretary that the number of responsible posts held by Malay officers would be increased.

[83]Dato' Abdullah, in Federal Council Proceedings (1928), pp.B142-3. Of the 78 Malay Administrative Officers in that year, all but eleven were employed in District posts. Of the eleven, two were serving in state secretariats, two in Central Government departments, five in Land Offices, and one as Malay Secretary to one of the Rulers (ibid., pp.B104-5).

[84]Report of the Federated Malay States Retrenchment Commission (Kuala Lumpur, 1932). The Report was listed as Council Paper No.31 of 1932, but printed separately.

already declared policy to employ larger numbers of Malays in the public services, the conflict of interests was obvious, and the Committee's recommendations alarmed the Malay members of Council, in particular Dato' Abdullah. In July 1932, Abdullah asked for and obtained an assurance from the Chief Secretary that Malays should, whenever possible, be spared retrenchment,[85] and he returned to the attack in the following year.[86] The number of Malays so affected was not, in absolute terms, very large (only 541 were retrenched between July 1930 and February 1933),[87] but with growing numbers of English-educated Malays available for government employment (virtually the only kind they could get if their English education was to be used), and an increasing recognition of the competitive claims of Chinese and Indians, retrenchment seemed to urban Malays to constitute a serious threat to their attempts to enter more fully into public life.

The depression years also threw into relief a more serious problem for large numbers of Malays than urban employment, that of agricultural indebtedness. Broadly speaking, there were two

---

[85] Federal Council Proceedings (1932), p.B71.

[86] Ibid. (1933), p.B65.

[87] Ibid., p.B49.

principal forms of indebtedness among Malay peasant farmers -- that to Chinese shop-keepers, rice millers and others for advances in cash and kind to help satisfy consumption needs during the maturation of crops, and that which took the form of mortgages and other liens on land, owed mainly to Indian Chettiars. The first form, found especially in areas wholly or largely dependent on padi cultivation, was by far the more widespread. It could be, and no doubt often was, burdensome, but the Chinese shop-keeper or miller also performed a useful function at the village level, providing a ready source of short- and medium-term credit for padi farmers, most of who had little or no surplus income or savings. The second forms of indebtedness, more serious in its implications, related particularly to rubber lands. As has already been shown, few Malays had large holdings in rubber -- in 1933, of the 2,301 estates in Malaya of 100 acres and over, only 59 were owned by Malays, and all but two of these were below the 1,000 acre mark.[88] Malays also comprised an insignificant part of the rubber labour force -- in 1931, only 7,373 Malays lived on rubber estates, compared with 37,863 Chinese and 203,076 Indians.[89] On the

---

[88] D.H. Grist, Nationality of Ownership and Nature of Constitution of Rubber Estates in Malaya (Department of Agriculture Bulletins, Economic Series No.2: Kuala Lumpur, 1933), p.2 and Tables 14 & 16.

[89] British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census (London, 1932). Emerson, op.cit., p.5, points out that the Malay figure is misleading, as many Malays were permitted to live on estates without actually working there.

other hand, large numbers of Malays had from 1910 onwards planted small parcels of rubber, usually no more than two or three acres in extent, as a means of supplementing cash incomes. Those who owned rice land seldom surrendered it altogether, though a good deal of such land was, despite prohibitory regulations, turned over to rubber. New land, brought into production by immigrant or local Malays was, wherever possible, put into rubber, a much less arduous and much more profitable crop to grow. Rubber became, in fact, the most important form of wealth within the village,[90] and of the half a million and more acres of rubber small-holdings in all states in 1931, most were in Malay hands.[91]

Those Malays who took their livelihood mainly from padi cultivation, with small subsistence or cash crops of fruit, coconuts, tapioca and the like grown on house land, were least affected by the depression; those whose dependence on rubber was greatest suffered most. The characteristic response of the rubber small-holder to falling prices was to maximise his cash return by increasing tapping, or at the very least by maintaining it at previous levels, a phenomenon much commented on at the time. Bauer has pointed to the

---

[90] On this point, see, e.g., M.G. Swift, 'The Accumulation of Capital in a Peasant Economy', in T.H. Silcock (ed.), Readings in Malayan Economics (Singapore, 1961), p.28, where the author points also to the advantage gained by those able to plant rubber during the early years of the industry, before land-use restrictions became effective.

[91] Emerson, op.cit., p.184.

rationality of this procedure for the Malay peasant,[92] who could obtain more rice and other foodstuffs (also falling in price) by producing rubber, selling it for what he could get, and buying rice with the proceeds. Appeals and exhortations by Government to produce more rice, or to return rubber-land to rice, often fell on deaf ears.[93] Nevertheless, real incomes fell sharply, habits of high spending formed during times of good rubber prices were difficult to surrender, and widespread indebtedness was incurred. Small-holding land, outside and even inside the Malay Reservations, was mortgaged and sold on an increasing scale, and to an extent which aroused serious anxieties on the part of both British and Malays. It was estimated in 1931 that in Perak alone, small-holders had hypothecated their holdings to an aggregate sum of more than ten million dollars, with at least as much again owed as moneys advanced upon deposit of title.[94] The total 'debt-bondage' of Perak small-holders was estimated at 25 million dollars, and actual orders of sale obtained by (mainly Chettiar) creditors during the first nine months of 1930 amounted to 347, an increase of 48 per cent on the previous year.[95] Directly comparable figures for the other states are not available,

---

[92] P.T. Bauer, 'Some Aspects of the Malayan Rubber Slump, 1929-33' (reprinted from Economica, XI (1944), in T.H. Silcock, op.cit., pp.194-5).

[93] See, e.g. evidence given before the Rice Cultivation Committee in 1931 (Report of the Rice Cultivation Committee (Kuala Lumpur, 1931), pp.71-160 passim). The Report was listed as Council Paper No.24 of 1931, but printed separately.

[94] Federal Council Proceedings (1931), pp.B17-18.

[95] Ibid.

but registered and unregistered indebtedness in the F.M.S. on Reservation lands alone was said officially to total some five million dollars.[96]

The situation was not altogether a novel one, though compounded by the severity of the 1929-33 depression. During the 'little slump' of the early 1920s, European members in the Federal Council had tried to persuade the Government to protect Malay small-holders against themselves and against the presumed depredations of mortgagors and money-lenders.[97] The official response at that time had been to say that 'In the opinion of the Government it is neither possible nor desirable to intervene in private contracts between parties',[98] though an occasional voice was raised to warn that 'as a Government we have lost prestige owing to financial stringency resulting from the rubber slump'.[99] By the 1930s, however, the situation had so much worsened that, alarmed by growing evidence of Malay restiveness, and at the insistence of the F.M.S. Rulers themselves, the Government decided to take 'drastic action', '... not only in the interests of the Malay peasant himself', as the High Commissioner put it, 'but also for the sake of the political well-being of the country'. There was unquestionably an increasing

---

[96] Ibid. (1933), p.B132.

[97] R.C.M. Kindersley placed two questions on the order paper, and was supported in debate by J.H.M. Robson (Federal Council Proceedings (1927), pp.B25-6).

[98] Ibid.

[99] G. Lee-Warner, an F.M.S. Political Intelligence Officer, in a 1922 report quoted in M.L. Wynne, Triad and Tabut (Singapore, 1941), p.465.

feeling of discontent among the peasantry, he added,

> and what was worse, a feeling of injustice and a belief that the Government, in the person of the District Officer, was unwilling to take any steps to remedy what was considered a just complaint. 100

Consequently, in 1931, Government enacted in the Federal Council, upon the direct initiative of the Sultan of Perak,[101] a 'Small Holders (Restriction of Sale) Bill', providing that 'any sale, at the instance of creditors, of lands comprised in a small-holding, can only take place with the consent of the Ruler of the State in Council';[102] and two years later introduced a new 'Malay Reservations Bill', which sought to close the loopholes in the 1913 Enactment and

---

[100] Despatch, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 17 August 1934, FMS No.472 of 1934.

[101] Remarking that 'It is not very often that this Council is called upon to consider draft legislation introduced at the direct instance of one of Their Highnesses', the Acting Resident of Perak, in seconding the Bill, gave an account of its history. The Sultan of Perak, at the September 1932 Durbar, had proposed that the provisions of the Malay Reservations Enactment regarding sales should be applied to Malay-owned lands outside the Reservations. The High Commissioner said the question would first have to be considered by State Councils, but as there was no meeting of the Perak Council in the interim, the Sultan raised the matter again at the next Durbar. The High Commissioner again referred the matter to State Councils, whereupon the Sultan asked the Acting Resident to convene an emergency meeting of the Perak Council. This was done, and the Council recommended unanimously that federal legislation be prepared. The Bill was then drawn up and brought before Federal Council. (_Federal Council Proceedings_ (1931), p.B17.)

[102] Enactment No.8 of 1931, printed in W.S. Gibson (ed.), _The Laws of the Federated Malay States, and of each of them, in force on the 31st day of December, 1934_ (London, 1935).

to 'make dealings in land in Malay reservations as unhealthy as possible'.[103] Defending the Bill against allegations from one of the European members that the Malays desired a Bill that they did not understand, the Resident of Selangor tried to explain the Malay point of view:

> For several years, at almost every Penghulu's Conference, complaints have been brought forward by people that the existing Enactment was being evaded and they stated very clearly from time to time what they wanted. What they wanted was to prevent money-lenders making use of nominees to hold land in Malay reservations on behalf of the money-lender; what they wanted was to prevent the extravagant expenditure on weddings and such ceremonies that now takes place and is only possible because land can so easily be charged; what they wanted was to prevent the youngster who enters into his inheritance at the age of 18 wasting his inheritance before he has learnt sense. ... What they want is that if [land] has to be charged, it should be charged to a person who treats them fairly. What they want is that if it has to be charged it should be charged for a good purpose. That is the reason why charges are allowed. They can charge to a co-operative society, where every care is taken to see that the reason for the expenditure is a sound one. They can charge to other Malays who know all about that family and who would also be quite sure that the expenditure is one which they agree with and which they think that the borrower can repay. 104

The remaining cause for Malay anxieties in the late 1920s and early 1930s was the growing demand from permanently domiciled Chinese

---

[103] The Legal Adviser of the F.M.S., speaking to the Bill, Federal Council Proceedings (1933), p.B132. The Enactment, No.30 of 1933, is printed in Gibson, op.cit.

[104] Federal Council Proceedings (1933), pp.B136-7.

for equal rights and privileges with the Malays, for a greater share in government and administration than they had hitherto enjoyed, and, quite simply, for the right to regard Malaya as their home and not simply their halting place. Chinese immigration to Malaya had continued unabated and uncontrolled throughout most of the 1920s, until slowed by the depression. The Census of 1931 showed that by that year Chinese made up 39 per cent of the population of 'British Malaya' (compared with 44.7 per cent Malays)[105] and that in all except the four northern unfederated states they had come to outnumber the Malay population. In Selangor, there were only 13.1 per cent Malays to 45.3 per cent Chinese; in Perak, 35.6 per cent Malays to 42.5 per cent Chinese.[106] Most Chinese, however, remained labour in transit, and the crude figures just quoted, though striking enough, are of smaller sociological importance than the increase taking place over the same period in the proportion of Chinese born in Malaya or assuming permanent domicile there.[107]

The leadership of the permanently domiciled Chinese lay with

---

[105] British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census, p.36. The term 'Malays' is used here (and throughout, except where otherwise specified) to signify the census category 'Malays and Other Malaysians'.

[106] Ibid., p.37.

[107] See above, Chapter Four.

the English-educated Straits Chinese,[108] many of whose families had been in the Settlements for a century and more. Small in numbers, many of them were nevertheless among the wealthiest and best educated of all races in Malaya, and for the most part intensely pro-British. In the late 1920s and early 1930s a number of circumstances combined to isolate them and make them fear for their future. The British 'pro-Malay' policy, as expressed both in decentralisation and in the favouring of Malays for subordinate government employment, clearly militated against the best interests of the domiciled Chinese. The increase in intra-communal political activity and anti-British propaganda among other elements of the Chinese community, consequent upon the Kuomintang-Communist split in metropolitan China, was met by sharp repressive measures by the British,[109] from which the domiciled Chinese in particular were anxious to escape. And finally, the long-standing and continued exclusion of non-Malays from the administrative ranks of Government,

---

[108] Chinese (and others) born in the Straits Settlements Colony were British subjects by virtue of their birth, and citizens of the United Kingdom and Colonies. Chinese (and other non-Malays) born in the peninsular states were subjects of the respective Rulers (in a largely undefined sense) and 'British Protected Persons', but held no citizenship as provision for none existed.

[109] See, e.g., Png Poh-seng, 'The Kuomintang in Malaya', in K.G. Tregonning (ed.), Papers on Malayan History (Singapore, 1962), pp.219-20.

and substantially from most avenues of policy-making,[110] was becoming increasingly irksome.

The Chinese representatives in the Federal Council and particularly in the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements, attacked the decentralisation and pro-Malay policies, pressed for the inclusion of non-Malays in the Malayan Civil Service, and for more rapid political development in a unified Malaya.[111] Outside the house, one of the Legislative Council members, Lim Ching Yan, spoke to a Penang Chinese Association in terms scarcely calculated to soothe the Malay breasts. 'Who said this is a Malay country?', he asked,

> When Captain Light arrived, did he find Malays, or Malay villages? Our forefathers came here and worked hard as coolies — weren't ashamed to become coolies — and they didn't send their money back to China. They married and spent their money here, and in this way the Government was able to open up the country from jungle to civilisation. We've become inseparable from this country. It's ours, our country ... 112

---

[110] There were, of course, Chinese representatives in both the Federal Council and the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, but they formed in each case only a small part of what was in any case a minority of Unofficial members. Tan Cheng Lock pressed for a long time for the appointment of 'an Asian' to the Straits Settlements Executive Council, and was eventually rewarded by his own appointment in 1933. On this, see Soh Eng Lim, 'Tan Cheng Lock: His Leadership of the Malayan Chinese', J.S.E.A.H., I, 1 (1960), pp.32-4.

[111] Ibid.

[112] 'Orang China Mengaku Semenanjong Negeri-nya dan kata-nya Bukan Negeri Melayu' ('A Chinese claims the Peninsula to be his country, and not that of the Malays'), Al-Ikhwan, V, 6 (February, 1931), p.182. The journal quotes Lim at some length, and then goes on to quote other Chinese views reported in the English-language Malayan Daily Express and Straits Echo.

Malays, already well aware of their economic subservience to the Chinese,[113] reacted sharply to these claims and others like them. Arguing that when masons were engaged to build a house, and were well paid for doing so, they were not thereby entitled to a share in ownership,[114] Malay writers, while not disputing the right of Colony-born Chinese to become British subjects, strongly opposed the granting of citizenship or other political rights in the peninsular states.[115] Manifestations of Chinese competition, in all its ramifications, became a frequent topic of comment and discussion in the vernacular press, together with the discussion of appropriate remedies and checks. For the most part, the British were looked upon as the bulwark behind which the Malays might shelter until such time as they could compete on equal educational and economic terms, but there was a growing recognition that they must do more themselves to take charge of their own destiny.

It is, then, against a background such as this, of increasing Malay self-consciousness and self-assertiveness, prompted by the

---

[113]See, e.g., editorial in Temasek, I, 2 (April, 1930), which after attacking the Chinese for holding the Malays in economic subjection, goes on to praise them for their enterprise, courage and doggedness, qualities which the Malays are said to lack.

[114]This was a very frequently expressed Malay view right up until the war. See, e.g., The Modern Light, I, 8 (December, 1940), p.354.

[115]See, e.g., Majallah Guru, VIII, 8 (August, 1931), as quoted in Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism', p.11.

decentralisation controversies, by economic pressures, and most of all by existing or threatened alien encroachment on Malay rights, that the events of the final decade before the war must be seen. Between 1934 and 1941, three attempts were made by the Malays to create large-scale, pan-Malayan organisations capable of equipping the Malay people, as a people, to run their own affairs in the modern world. Each of the organisations, or types of organisation, was associated with one or other of the three 'contending' new elite groups already discussed at some length: the 'Arabic'-educated religious reformists, the Malay-educated radical intelligentsia, and the English-educated administrators recruited mainly from the traditional ruling class. Up to the time of the Japanese occupation in 1942, which was to give Haji Abdul Majid's 'Malayan kaleidoscope' a new and altogether more violent shake, none of these groups had been able to create or sustain a Malay nationalist movement, and only the last was in process of gaining a true mass following.

In March, 1934, the bi-weekly newspaper Saudara,[116] published in Penang by the religious reformists and edited at that time by Shaykh

---

[116] Saudara, founded by Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi in 1928 as a weekly, was published twice-weekly from the beginning of 1932 (see above, Chapter Five). For the sequence of editors, see my Guide to Malay Periodicals, p.15.

Tahir Jalaluddin, introduced a new feature to its younger readers. During the previous eighteen months, Saudara had been in the habit of running, at the rear of the paper, a special 'children's page', or 'Halaman Kanak-kanak', devoted mainly to educational and uplift articles of the familiar kind, with occasional contributions from readers. Towards the beginning of 1933, a young Kedah Malay, Arifin Ishak, had (by his own account)[117] suggested to the editor of the children's page that part of it be given over for the use of 'young journalists'. For various reasons, this suggestion was not adopted at the time, but early in 1934, following a change in Saudara's editorship, Arifin raised the matter again, having used the intervening months to enquire from friends throughout Malaya which feature in the vernacular press enjoyed the widest popularity. All agreed, says Arifin, that Pa' Pandir's[118] column in Lembaga Malaya was the most stimulating and useful, not least because of its wryly critical comments on Malay society and affairs.[119]

---

[117] Arifin Ishak, 'Tarikh Sahabat Pena' ('History of the Friends of the Pen'), Taman Paspam, I, 1 (1940), p.3. Hereafter this article will be referred to as 'TSP'.

[118] Pa' Pandir is the name of a legendary rustic simpleton, who figures largely in humorous folk tales (see, e.g., R.O. Winstedt and A.J. Sturrock, Cherita Jenaka (Farcical Tales), 3rd ed., Singapore 1917). Columnists writing under this and similar pseudonyms appeared in most Malay newspapers, and were widely popular. Pa' Pandir in Lembaga Melayu appears to have been written by Mohd. Amir Al-Manan.

[119] 'TSP', p.3.

Accordingly, Arifin proposed to Saudara that he write a similar column in their children's page, under the name Pa' Dollah, and at the same time use the column to invite contributions from budding Malay writers. The first of Pa' Dollah's articles appeared in the issue of March 31, 1934, and from this small beginning grew, beyond all the expectations of its sponsors, the first and one of the largest pan-Malayan Malay organisations to appear before the second world war.

The formula was initially a simple one. In his first article, after a folksy and humorous introduction, Pa'Dollah thanked a number of his grandchildren for 'visiting the page' — sending contributions — and urged others to do likewise. Pen-friendship, he said, was an excellent way of accustoming people to writing each other letters and exchanging ideas.[120] In the next issue, an article headed 'Berkenaan Sahabat Pena' ('More about Pen Friends') set out more clearly the aims of the scheme, intended primarily 'to prevent the disintegration of our Muslim brotherhood — already evident to those who have eyes to see'.[121] And then, on April 7, the Sahabat Pena, or 'Friends of the Pen', organisation was brought formally into being, with a special badge (designed by a Kelantan Malay) and an elaborate set of rules for members.[122] Among other things, the rules stipulated that

---

[120] Saudara, 31 March 1934.

[121] Ibid., 4 April 1934.

[122] Ibid., 7 April 1934.

members should wear the SP badge at all times, and greet one another on meeting; that they should read and contribute to the children's page in Saudara and take part in any competitions therein arranged; and that they should encourage each other to write for the page, and share the expenses involved in doing so. Membership was open to all, at a cost of fifty cents upon joining, and twenty cents a year thereafter.[123]

It is abundantly clear that at this stage Arifin Ishak and the staff of Saudara envisaged no more than a newspaper correspondence club for young people, with the special aims of promoting Malay literacy and the free exchange of ideas valuable to the Malay community as a whole. Arifin had, indeed, proposed to name the association after the Tuck's Correspondence Club of a popular magazine in England, and though the Sahabat Pena title was thought to be more appropriate, the organisation was modelled directly on the Teddy Tail League of the English Daily Mail and another, similar club run by the News Chronicle, to both of which Arifin belonged.[124] To begin with, there was some confusion about whether Sahabat Pena was intended mainly as a means of acquiring 'pen-friends', in the now accepted sense of the term, or as a forum for the publication of the views of its members. Both ideas were present, and the former led at an early stage to some embarrassment, confirming as it seemed to do the long-standing suspicion of old-fashioned Malays that teaching

---

[123] Ibid.

[124] 'TSP', p.4.

girls to read and write merely encouraged them to write love-letters. In May, 1934, Saudara felt obliged to warn members that boys should correspond only with boys and girls with girls, or the name Sahabat Pena would come to be abhorred in the eyes of all right-thinking people.[125]

Despite misunderstandings of this kind, however, Sahabat Pena flourished. During the first month, local representatives were appointed in Perak, Kedah, Kelantan and Singapore, shortly to be followed by others elsewhere in the peninsula and in Borneo.[126] At the end of May, the first list of members' names was published, 33 in all, including some from Labuan and Sarawak.[127] Every member was given a number, subsequently used to sign the contributions which began to flow in to the children's page. By the end of July, membership had risen to almost a hundred, and it was already clear that Sahabat Pena was outgrowing its original conception. In September, a staff writer signing himself 'Belia Sekarang', in an article outlining the brief history of Sahabat Pena, described its aims as 'co-operation, unity of thought, economic improvement and so on', all directed towards the progress of the Malay people.[128] Stressing its pan-Malayan character, he said, 'Now we have Sahabat Pena; shortly we shall have other associations, like the Perak Malay

---

[125] Saudara, 23 May 1934.

[126] Ibid., 11 April 1934. Arifin Ishak was the Kedah representative.

[127] Ibid., 30 May 1934. The members were distributed among twelve states and settlements.

[128] Ibid., 15 September 1934.

Association, or the Selangor Malay Association, and so on, which can unite to prevent Malay rights being stolen by other races, who claim to be Malayan'. 'Belia Sekarang' went on to refer to what was to be a recurring problem for Sahabat Pena in ensuing years, the accusation that it was a köngsi gelap, or 'secret society'. Disavowing all political or subversive aims for Sahabat Pena, he said that one might as easily suppose the Teddy Tail League to be communist inspired.[129]

But if Sahabat Pena was not a political organisation in the ordinary sense of the term, and still less a secret society, it was rapidly acquiring the characteristics of a national movement. The succession of Sayyid Alwi Al-Hadi[130] to the editorial chair of Saudara in September, 1934, seems to have marked a decisive stage in

---

[129] Ibid. The issue in which these accusations had been made or reported (14 or 15 August 1934) has not been available to me. Internal evidence makes it clear that the accuser was a Malay.

[130] Sayyid Alwi b. Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi, one of the leading journalists of the 1930s, was born in Malacca in 1893, educated in Malay in Riau and at the Kampong Glam school in Singapore, then in English at Victoria Bridge School, passing Standard VII in 1913. In 1914, sent to Beirut, where he attended the Arabic college Kuliah Othmaniah, and then the Syrian Protestant College. Served in the medical corps of the Turkish army for one year, then in the British army, which he left in 1919. Returning to Malaya, he taught at the Anglo-Chinese School, Penang, and later at the Madrasah Al-Mashhur. In 1930 he became editor of Saudara, and in 1933 editor of Warta Malaya, after Onn b. Ja'afar's departure (see above, Chapter Five). Edited Saudara again from 1934-35, and in 1936 moved to Lembaga Malaya, which he edited until the Japanese occupation.

this process. Sayyid Alwi, though not as impassioned a reformist as his father had been, nevertheless had a similar view of the needs of Malay society in the modern world, and had in addition inherited some of his father's flair for journalism. He recognised in Sahabat Pena, and in the enthusiastic response it was already receiving, the answer to what his father had for so long sought — a means of helping his people, through their own language and culture, to become self-confident members of a rejuvenated and modernised Malayo-Muslim community. That he should at the same time have seen in Sahabat Pena a means of improving the circulation and popularity of his paper, was perhaps not as discreditable as his detractors sometimes alleged.[131]

His first step was to regularise a change that was already under way. As Sahabat Pena had expanded in membership and ambitions during mid-1934, its exclusively juvenile origins and form had become increasingly inappropriate. Early in October, therefore, Sayyid Alwi began to shed them by dropping Saudara's children's page, the 'Halaman Kanak-kanak', and substituting for it a two-page 'Halaman Sahabat Pena', to accommodate the larger number of contributions now received, and to indicate their more adult status. At the same time, with the assistance of a new and enlarged committee comprising mainly

---

[131] For a suggestion that the organisation was simply a means of increasing Saudara's circulation, see, e.g., the issue of 13 July 1935.

Malay-Arab and Jawi Peranakan friends resident in Penang, Sayyid Alwi revised the constitution and rules of the association, in order among other things to restrict membership to those over sixteen years of age. From this time onwards, though Sahabat Pena remained predominantly an organisation for young people, it came increasingly under the control of older men, and at the Penang headquarters especially, of men with a pre-existing background of religious reformism. The religious bias, though never obtrusive, was always there, and it is worth noting that the first article on the new Sahabat Pena page concerned the old and oft-disputed question of taklid buta.[132]

On November 11, 1934, Sahabat Pena held its first national conference, at Taiping in Perak, in premises belonging to the 'Sunlight Muslim Association'.[133] Members attended (in what numbers is not recorded) from all over Malaya, 'from as far away as Pahang'. This was, in itself, a notable achievement: it was, in fact the first pan-Malayan Malay gathering of a non-official kind ever held. Among those present were several who were to become prominent in Sahabat Pena itself or in other Malay national movements, notably Sayyid Alwi, S.M. Zainal Abidin (a Penang Jawi Peranakan, shortly the association's

---

[132] Saudara, 3 October 1935. For earlier discussion of taklid buta (blind acceptance of intermediary religious authority), see above, Chapter Three.

[133] 'TSP', p.5. What this association was is not clear.

first President),[134] Shaykh Abdullah Al-Maghribi (a Penang Arab who was to become General Adviser to the association), Hamidun b. Mohd. Hashim (a Jawi Peranakan, later active in the Selangor branch), and Haji Kassim Adam Al-Rembaui (a Malay from Negri Sembilan). The day was spent in discussing the affairs of the organisation and its aims, and though there is no record of decisions made, the Taiping conference seems to have been instrumental in bringing about the great increase in membership which took place during the next six months.

By May, 1935, Sahabat Pena had more than a thousand members on its books, scattered throughout the peninsula and Borneo from Kuching to Kangar. Because of its increasing size, and because of persistent and widespread suspicions (mainly among Malays, but

---

[134] A notable figure in Penang life, S.M. Zainal Abidin, son of a well-to-do Jawi Peranakan merchant, was educated in English at the Penang Free School, and later at London University, where he obtained a B.A. degree. By profession he was a teacher. Interested in all Malay literary and cultural causes, Zainal Abidin was a frequent contributor to the press, and well known for his modernist religious views.

to some extent also in official circles)[135] that it was a 'secret society' or political organisation, the central committee thought it advisable to apply to the Government for formal exemption from registration under the Societies Ordinance -- in short, for a clean bill of health.[136] The application was made on behalf of the 'Persaudaraan Sahabat Pena Malaya' (PASPAM) -- officially translated

---

[135] In June, 1935, while in Taiping during a trip round the western states to beat up membership, Sayyid Alwi was called to the office of a senior police official and questioned for some hours about Sahabat Pena ('TSP', p.9). Taiping was close to Kuala Kangsar, the centre of operations of a Malay group known variously as the Perak River Secret Society (Perisoc), the Orang Dua-belas (Twelve Men), or the 'Perak reigning house intrigue' (because of its relationship to the dissenting parties to the disputed succession in Perak in 1874). This organisation, whose origins and ritual can be traced to the Red and White Flag Triad societies of the late nineteenth century, was pervasive in the area, and seems to have been a mixture of protection racket, gangsterism, and political intrigue round the Perak throne (for some details, see M.L. Wynne, Triad and Tabut (Singapore, 1941), pp.278, 444, 449, 455-6, 464-5, 480, 496 and 521; and cf., also, Annual Reports on the State of Crime in the F.M.S., for the years 1933, 1935 and 1936). No relationship existed between Perisoc and Sahabat Pena, but the British seemed to have been suspicious, and it is worth noting that most of the 'panic' resignations from the latter in 1935 (see below) occurred in Perak. On at least two other occasions at about this time, Haji Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin, in his capacity as a liaison officer with the Political Intelligence Bureau, visited S.M. Zainal Abidin in Penang to make enquiries about Sahabat Pena (interview with S.M. Zainal Abidin, Penang, 1960).

[136] The Societies Ordinance, 1913 (Enactment No.20 of 1913, printed in A.B. Voulles (ed.), The Laws of the F.M.S., 1877-1920 (London, 1921), Vol.II, pp.513-21) was directed primarily at Chinese 'secret societies'. Under it, all societies (being associations of ten or more persons) not either registered or exempted from registration were held to be unlawful, and subject to severe penalty. The process of 'exemption' necessitated a form of registration, which nevertheless differed from 'registration'. Historians cannot be held responsible for confusions of legal terminology.

as 'The Brotherhood of Friends of the Pen' -- and it was under this title that the association operated subsequently, though the old name Sahabat Pena remained in general and descriptive use. After careful enquiries by the Political Intelligence Bureau, PASPAM was granted its exemption certificate on May 20, 1935.[137] The central committee in Penang worked hard to make this known to members, and to Malays in general, but it is clear that the residual anxieties of many who might otherwise have been persuaded to join (and in some cases, even of those who were already members) were not fully assuaged,[138] and it was feared that numbers would suffer. In view of the persistence at the time of these 'secret society' rumours, and of more recent claims by Malay nationalists[139] that, despite outward appearances Sahabat Pena was really a political organisation, it must be said that there

---

[137] The letter of exemption was published in Saudara, 25 May 1935.

[138] See, e.g., the reassurances published in Saudara, 8 June, 13 & 20 July, and especially 14 August, 1935, in which issue the 'disclaimer' referred to below was published. Sayyid Alwi, in a report on his round-Malaya trip (ibid., 3 & 6 July 1935) makes it clear that he spoke frequently about the 'true purposes' of the organisation. 'TSP' (p.5) says that because of the 'secret society' allegations many Perak members, in particular, wrote secretly to withdraw their membership because their superiors ('ketua2-nya') did not approve, or to ask that their names be kept secret.

[139] See, e.g., the official publication of UMNO, UMNO Sepuloh Tahun, 1946-1956 (Ten Years of UMNO, 1946-1956) (Penang, 1957), p.7.

is today no evidence whatsoever of political activities at any stage of the movement's history.

Much, of course, depends on what is meant by 'political activity'. Significantly enough, the word most commonly used in the Malay of the 1930s to translate this term was '<u>siasat</u>', a word taken from the Arabic and used, generally, to refer to the policy-making or decision-making activities of Government -- in short, to Government 'business'. For the great majority of peasant Malays, everything coming under the description '<u>siasat</u>', or attempts to meddle in '<u>siasat</u>', were likely to be visited with punishment, or at the least with severe disapproval.[140] It was not one's own affair. This view was encouraged both by the highly authoritarian cast of traditional Malay political (and more recently religious) life, and by the fact, widely known in the 1930s, that the British were employing spies to hunt down persons designing to subvert the present order.[141] It followed, therefore, that to avoid the stigma

---

[140] <u>Cf</u>. <u>Majlis</u>, <u>7 August</u> 1939: 'Four or five years ago the term 'politics' /politik/ was understood by the Malays to mean 'treason'. It was in the nature of our people to be wholly loyal and submissive to the Government, to the authorities, to the Rulers: any unfamiliar movement was feared by them'.

[141] Among those known (or thought beyond reasonable doubt) to be employed in this capacity were Haji Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin (see above, footnotes 24 and 135 to this chapter); Captain Noor Hashim, a Malay Administrative Officer; and Pati Achir b. Dato' Mohd. Shah, a Co-operatives official.

attaching to 'politics' (and a consequent fall in membership) Sahabat Pena was anxious to foreswear all but purely social and cultural aims. The President, Zainal Abidin, in a widely publicised disclaimer of 'secret society' affiliations issued shortly after the Government certificate had been received, described PASPAM as a 'Malay Literary Association' whose sole objects were 'to promote a spirit of goodwill and co-operation among members; to infuse into the members a love of reading and a keen interest in Malay Language and Literature; and to establish a Malay Library'.[142]

There can be no doubt that the Sahabat Pena movement, as a movement, remained within the familiarly innocuous limits thus self-imposed. At the same time, though it obviously bore a close resemblance in this respect to earlier 'cultural-defence' organisations, it was radically different in several important respects. Most importantly, it was the first genuinely pan-Malayan Malay organisation, and drew to itself a very much larger number of members than had belonged to any of its predecessors. It provided, at a time of need, a shared and politically 'safe' outlet for a host of Malay anxieties and feelings of insecurity, hitherto either mute or expressed in scattered and ephemeral local societies. It helped bring together, in an atmosphere of positive endeavour and self-help numbers of individual Malays from widely separated parts of the

---

[142] Saudara, 14 August 1935. The statement was printed in both English and Malay, and is reproduced also in 'TSP', pp.6-9.

peninsula and from different backgrounds, to discuss common problems and common solutions. And finally, through its emphasis upon the primordial loyalty for all Malays to the living language, it elaborated for the first time the slogan which was to underlie the post-war nationalist movement a decade later: '*Hidup Bahasa! Hidup-lah Bangsa!*'-- 'Long live the Language! Long live the Nation!'.[143]

During 1935, *Sahabat Pena* succeeded in doubling its membership to over two thousand, and branch organisations were formed in all the states in turn.[144] Each applied for and obtained the necessary official permission. Most of those who joined appear to have been Malay teachers and government servants, with occasional traders and small businessmen and fewer peasant farmers. Membership tended to be concentrated in and around the towns, and in the larger centres of rural population. In June, 1935, Sayyid Alwi made an extensive, 26-day tour of all the western and southern states, to meet *PASPAM* members and to talk to public gatherings about the aims and objects of the association. On his return, he published in *Saudara* a glowing account of the earnestness and enthusiasm of members throughout the country, and said that it was clear that the Malays as a whole were

---

[143] See, in this connection, the remarks made in *UMNO Sepuloh Tahun*, *op.cit.*, p.7.

[144] See *Saudara*, 21 July, 10 & 28 August, and 28 December, 1935. The president of the largest state branch, in Kedah, was Tengku Abdul Rahman b. Sultan Abdul Hamid, now Prime Minister of Malaysia.

now on the march, and had ceased to 'bury their noses in the ground like rabbits'.[145] On August 4, 1935, Sahabat Pena's second national conference was held in Kuala Lumpur, attended by nearly a hundred members from all over Malaya.[146] Raja Aman Shah b. Sultan Suleiman, President of the Selangor branch, acted as chairman for the first meeting, and the long list of speakers included Sayyid Alwi, Shaykh Abdullah, S.M. Zainal Abidin, Tengku Hussin b. Tengku Yahya (President of the Negri Sembilan branch), and Mohd. Baginda Besar of Pahang. Extracts from the speeches, mainly exhorting members to make greater efforts in the cause of Malay progress, were published in the Sahabat Pena pages of subsequent issues of Saudara. A third national conference, of similar character, was held in Penang in 1936,[147] and early in the same year a long-term ambition of the association was achieved, with the opening, also in Penang, of a Malay Library, to which the headquarters of PASPAM were henceforth attached.

Membership continued to rise rapidly during 1936 and the early part of 1937, until by the middle of the latter year it totalled almost ten thousand.[148] As the association increased in size, however, tensions developed between the peranakan-dominated (Jawi Peranakan and Malay-Arab) headquarters in Penang, and the more purely

---

[145] Ibid., 3 July 1935. See also the issues for 6 & 13 July.

[146] For an account of the conference, see ibid., 10 & 14 August, 1935. Guests present by invitation included Haji Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin, Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad (Za'ba), and Othman Kalam, then editor of Majlis.

[147] Subsequent annual conferences were held in Singapore (1937), Ipoh (1938) and Seremban (1939).

[148] 'TSP', p.10. The figure of 9,867 given here probably represented cumulative rather than actual membership, and may therefore be inflated.

Malay state branches, culminating late in 1937 in an open rift[149] which was only partially healed by extensive re-structuring. Though these tensions were expressed mainly in the form of disputes over the degree of autonomy to be permitted to state branches (some of which, and Selangor in particular, resented having to refer all major business to Penang), they reflected also growing Malay sensitiveness to leadership by 'outsiders'. The part played by anti-Arab feeling in the formation of the Singapore Malay Union in 1926 has already been described. Sentiments of this kind were nowhere else so marked, but Penang, with its thriving and highly capable _Jawi Peranakan_ community and its Malay-Arabs, posed for Malays a similar problem in lesser degree. Members of both communities were observably better-off than most Malays, they were popularly thought to be _sombong_ (arrogant) in their ways, their easier access to higher education had made them better equipped for urban life, they held themselves often to be better or more enlightened Muslims, and they had, indisputably, taken the lead in many Malay causes in the Colony for half a century and more. The coining in the late-1930s by the most popular of Malay journalists and writers, Abdul Rahim Kajai, of a comic and slighting terminology with which to refer to Malayo-Muslims of Arab or Indian descent -- '_DKA_' and '_DKK_', respectively '_Darah Keturunan Arab_' and '_Darah Keturunan Kling_' -- though used polemically to draw attention

---

[149] _Ibid_.

to their 'usurpation' of leadership roles, was evidence also of the extent to which this was already recognised or felt. And on top of this, it seems likely that the forty-year-old association of the peranakan communities with religious reform, and their reputation as 'Kaum Muda', helped to antagonise those Malays more traditionally oriented in their religious beliefs and practices.

The principal results of the 1937 dispute between Penang and the branches, which lasted for several months and appears to have been fought on a number of issues, were the reconstitution, on two separate occasions, of the central committee, the resignation of Sayyid Alwi as Secretary-General and the subsequent severance of his ties with the association, the substitution of Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad (Za'ba) for Shaykh Abdullah as General Adviser, and finally, in April, 1938, an agreement to re-draft the constitution to give greatly increased autonomy to the state branches. At the same time, as will shortly be described, Malay energies began to turn away from the purely cultural to more overtly political interests, and from this point forwards the influence of Sahabat Pena began to wane, until by 1940 membership was said to have shrunk to only a quarter of the 12,000 or so which had marked its peak.[150] It continued, however, until the war, to play an active and by no means negligible part in

---

[150] The Modern Light, I, 6 (October, 1940), p.274.

Malay cultural life, if in a more subdued fashion. In mid-1938 it began publishing a monthly journal, PASPAM, which was distributed free to members, and the Singapore branch made two brief and rather abortive attempts to produce a literary magazine in 1938 and 1939.[151] At the end of 1938, the central committee of Sahabat Pena set up a 'Language Council' (Lembaga Bahasa) in Johore Bahru, which ran a national literary competition and had ambitious plans to publish books on Malay history and customs and a Malay dictionary, to regularise Malay spelling (a perennial goal), and to 'invent new words from English suitable for use by Malays'.[152] In 1940, the Council published what was intended to be the first of a series of 'annuals', Taman Paspam (Paspam's Garden), which contained, amongst other things, a history of Sahabat Pena, which has been extensively used in the present account.

While Sahabat Pena was expending its energies on internal wrangles in 1937 and early 1938, two other groups of young Malays, drawn respectively from the Malay-educated radical intelligentsia and the English-educated elitist bureaucracy, were moving towards the formation of organisations of a more patently political kind. Some time in

---

[151] Suara Pena (Voice of the Pen), Monthly, September 1938-January 1939; and Pancharan Pena (Literary Emanations), Fortnightly, May-(?)July 1939. The latter is said by Mohd. b. Dato' Muda (Tarikh Surat Khabar, p.200) to have been 'assisted' by Malay students overseas, and to have had as editor of its religious material the old reformist stalwart Haji Abbas b. Mohd. Taha.

[152] 'TSP', pp.13-14.

mid-1938, Ibrahim b. Haji Yaacob, recently appointed as assistant editor of Majlis,[153] formed with a number of others of like mind a body called the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM: 'Young Malay Union'), which 'neither professed loyalty to the Sultans and the British nor spoke of non-co-operation, but worked to promote nationalist feelings and teachings among its members, whose strength lay in the lower classes ...'[154] KMM, the outgrowth of a smaller and less formal group known as Belia Malaya ('Young Malaya') which had come together at Sultan Idris Training College in 1930, was modelled directly upon the Jong Java and Jong Sumatra leagues of the Netherlands Indies, was vaguely Marxist in ideology, and reflected both a strong anti-colonialist spirit and opposition to the 'bourgeois-feudalist' leadership of the traditional elite.[155] In most of their thinking and their activities, the members of the group were strongly influenced by the left-wing especially of the Indonesian nationalist movement.

Though Indonesian revolutionaries in the Netherlands Indies had never been sanguine about the possibilities of political action among

---

[153] See above, Chapter Five.

[154] Ibrahim Yaacob, Nusa dan Bangsa Melaju (Malay Country and People) (Djakarta, 1951), pp.59-60.

[155] Ibrahim Yaacob, Sekitar Malaya Merdeka (Concerning Free Malaya) (Djakarta, 1957), p.24.

the Malays and Malaysians of the peninsula, sporadic attempts had been made to maintain contact with groups likely to be sympathetic, and Singapore in particular, in the mid-1920s, had become the focus for the Southeast Asian activities of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). As early as 1924, Alimin, a prominent PKI leader, had visited Singapore on his way to the Profintern Conference of Transport Workers of the Pacific, held in Canton in June of that year.[156] The purpose of the Singapore visit is not clear, but he is said to have been successful in recruiting a number of adherents, and may perhaps have reported this fact to Tan Malaka, the Comintern's agent for Southeast Asia and Australia, at the Canton conference.[157] There seems little evidence to support the suggestion made by one historian that Alimin recruited mainly amongst the local Javanese;[158] it is in fact more likely, in the light of subsequent events and of later views expressed by Tan Malaka, that he found the Chinese more responsive. Alimin returned to Java towards the end of 1924, and in December a PKI Congress in Djogjakarta decided to set up a propaganda centre in

---

[156] J.H. Brimmell, Communism in South East Asia: A Political Analysis (London, 1959), p.92. For an official Netherlands Indies report on what took place at the conference, see 'Governor General's Report, January 1927', in H.J. Benda and R.T. McVey (eds.), The Communist Uprisings of 1926-1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents (New York, 1960), p.4.

[157] Brimmell, loc.cit.; and cf. also G.Z. Hanrahan, The Communist Struggle in Malaya (New York, 1944), p.6.

[158] Brimmell, loc.cit.

Singapore, for work 'in Indo-China and the islands of the Dutch East Indies'.[159] This was done early in the following year, and at the request of Tan Malaka, Canton sent a Chinese, known as Fu Ta-ching, to run it.

During the next two years, PKI leaders -- among them Tan Malaka, Alimin, Musso, Djamaluddin Tamin and Subakat -- passed frequently through Singapore and the F.M.S., held discussions in Singapore concerning the proposed rebellion in the Netherlands Indies, and may in addition have tried to organise a Communist movement among the Malays, though without success.[160] In mid-1926, Tan Malaka published his Massa Aksi ('Mass Action') in Singapore, arguing against premature insurrection in the Indies, and inter alia providing an analysis of types of imperialism, in which he characterised the British version as 'Half-liberal Imperialism', which maintained itself by giving limited powers to traditional elites.[161] After the disastrous failure of the 1926-27 risings in Java and Sumatra, the PKI apparently discussed the

---

[159] 'Governor General's Report', op.cit., p.8.

[160] Cf. Brimmell, loc.cit. For an analysis of the meetings arranged in Singapore before the PKI rebellion, see G.McT. Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia (New York, 1952), pp.81-3: and cf. also 'The Course of the Communist Movement on the West Coast of Sumatra, Part I (Political Section)', in Benda & McVey, op.cit., pp.154-8 and passim.

[161] Tan Malaka, Massa Actie (2nd ed., Djakarta, 1947), p.14. The first edition (Singapore, 1926) was entitled Massa Aksi. On 18 December 1926, Alimin and Musso, leaders of the 'insurrection now' wing of the PKI, were arrested in Johore on their way back from Moscow, via Canton and Bangkok (see 'Governor General's Report', op.cit., p.8, footnote 8).

possibility of re-organising in Malaya, but decided, according to Tan Malaka, 'that success could not be expected in Malaya generally on account of the diversity of languages, and also because the people appeared to be lazy and contented'.[162] A few years later, Tan Malaka singled out for criticism the 'Indonesian' community of Singapore, who, he said, 'take no thought for politics, and can't even keep our secrets as political refugees. British imperialism has succeeded in keeping them out of political struggles in any way radical, and turning their attention instead to coffee-shop chatter about football'.[163]

---

[162] Quoted in Rene Onraet, Singapore: A Police Background (London, n.d.), p.110. Onraet was Director of the Special Branch of the Malayan Police for almost ten years from some time in the mid-1920s. In October, 1932, Tan Malaka was arrested by the British in Hongkong (Kowloon) and Onraet went there to interrogate him, an account of this interview later appearing in Tan Malaka's Dari Pendjara ke Pendjara (From Gaol to Gaol) (Part I, Bukit Tinggi, n.d., 3 vols.; Part II, Djakarta, 1947), Part II, p.39. As this is the only known occasion on which the two met, Tan Malaka's remark must have been made at that time. Onraet (op.cit., pp.109-10) also gives an account of conversations in 1926-27 with 'two Javanese' captured 'in Singapore' at the time of the rebellion, one of whom was Alimin and the other, presumably, Musso.

[163] Dari Pendjara ke Pendjara, Part II, p.103. According to the account given here, Tan Malaka worked as a clerk with a German firm in Singapore in 1927. Returning to Malaya in 1937, he made a number of abortive attempts to renew old political associations amongst Malays and Indonesians, and then obtained a job teaching English in a Chinese school in Singapore. He remained there for two years, and was in Malaya right up until the Japanese occupation, though none of the politically active Malays seems to have been aware of this. See also his historical, social and political account of Malaya, in op.cit., pp.91-101.

Despite the general immunity to political appeals, however, small groups of Malays, both outside and inside the country, were becoming increasingly aware of the need to assert Malay rights and the identity of Malay interests, on the model of the Indonesian nationalist movement. The most radical of these groups, to begin with, was to be found amongst the Malay students in Cairo, who, together with Indonesian students there, had started two journals in 1925 and 1927 which, though religious reformist in inspiration, were, as we have already seen, openly and even violently anti-colonial in tone and expression. _Seroean Azhar_ and _Pilehan Timour_ looked to the growth of a closer, 'pan-Malayan' union between the freed peoples of the British and Dutch colonial territories, and noted with some satisfaction the transformation of the old _Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua_ controversies, based on the 'trivia' of religion, into a more vital political dispute between Communists and non-Communists.[164] Some of the Cairo students, notably Othman b. Abdullah, who had been financially responsible for starting the two journals, later played an important part in the formation of _KMM_.

Nearer home, student teachers at Sultan Idris Training College, fired by the nationalist movement in the Netherlands Indies and by what they saw to be the increasingly militant spirit of Indonesian political and cultural life, were making youthful plans to organise

---

[164] See above, Chapter Three.

a nationalist political party in Malaya. Some encouragement for this activity was given by contact with a number of Indonesian revolutionaries who had escaped to Malaya from Java and Sumatra after the PKI rebellion, and perhaps also with agents of Tan Malaka's Partai Repoeblik Indonesia (PARI) which had been formed in Bangkok in 1927 to train underground workers for return to the Netherlands Indies.[165] Djamaluddin Tamin, one of Tan Malaka's principal lieutenants, was certainly in Malaya from time to time at this period, and had some contact with SITC students.[166] Early in 1930, some 35 students at SITC, led by Ibrahim b. Haji Yaacob, formed an organisation which they called Belia Malaya (Young Malaya), on the

---

[165] Among those mentioned as having been in Malaya round about 1930 were Alimin, Djamaluddin Tamin, Budiman, Mohd. Arif and Ismaon, all members of PKI or PARI. None of my informants from the Belia Malaya group could tell me anything of their movements, beyond saying that they had met them or knew they were around, and actual contact seems to have been slight. Sutan Djenain, also a member of the PKI, was in Malaya throughout the 1930s, as a member of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP: a largely Chinese but nominally multi-racial organisation -- see, e.g., Brimmell, op.cit., p.94), and from 1938 onwards acted as liaison between the MCP and the KMM. The Annual Report on the State of Crime in the FMS for 1932 (p.9), reported that 'Little success was achieved in persuading Malays to interest themselves in Communism though it cannot be denied that some headway was made', and in the same year two 'foreign-born Malays' were arrested in Pahang and Negri Sembilan for Communist activities, as were two Negri Sembilan Malays in their own state ('Review of Affairs in the FMS, 1932', Council Paper No.33 of 1933, Federal Council Proceedings (1933), p.C325).

[166] Ibrahim Yaacob, Sekitar Malaya Merdeka, p.20; confirmed in an interview in Djakarta, April 1961.

model of similar youth groups in Java and Sumatra.[167] For some at least of its members, Belia Malaya was no more than another cultural-welfare association, dedicated particularly, in this instance, to the unification and joint advancement of the Malay and Indonesian languages. Others, however, were more politically minded, and several among them, including Ibrahim Yaacob, Hassan Manan, Abdul Karim Rashid and Isa Mohd. b. Mahmud (all later prominent in the KMM) joined Sukarno's Partai Nasional Indonesia (PNI), and subscribed to the party newspaper, Fikiran Rakjat (The People's Thought).

The Belia Malaya group did not extend outside the training college, and when most of its members (including the leadership) graduated in 1931, it seems to have died from inanition. The students themselves became village schoolteachers in scattered parts of Malaya, and though several continued to take an interest in political questions, and to read avidly and write for the increasingly chauvinistic vernacular press, it was not until some years later that there was any renewal of activity. In 1934, or early 1935, Ibrahim Yaacob, who had spent the intervening years teaching in rural Pahang, was transferred to Kuala Lumpur as a Malay Instructor at the F.M.S. Police Depot school. The federal capital at this time, though scarcely a hot-bed of nationalism, was a lively centre of Malay intellectual and literary

---

[167] The principal sources of information concerning Belia Malaya were interviews conducted in 1960-61 with Ibrahim Yaacob, Abdullah b. Sidek, and Harun b. Mohd. Amin.

life. The newspaper Majlis, under first Kajai and then Othman Kalam, was providing pertinent and strongly pro-Malay comment on a wide range of public issues, and sponsoring a variety of Malay causes. From mid-1935 onwards there was an active branch in Kuala Lumpur of the Sahabat Pena organisation, which in addition to its literary activities held frequent discussion meetings in the Sultan Suleiman Club, Kampong Bahru, on Malay educational and economic progress and allied subjects, with much talk of the need for a common Malay front in the face of the present difficulties.[168] This environment Ibrahim Yaacob found both stimulating and irritating: stimulating because here, at last, after more than three years in the placid backwaters of central Pahang, were to be found groups of young Malays arguing purposively about the future of their people; irritating because so much of the argument had so little political or anti-colonial an edge.[169] These discontents he shared with a number of friends of like mind, some from the Belia Malaya days at SITC, some newly acquired. Chief among them were Hassan Manan, Abdul Karim Rashid and Isa Mohd. b. Mahmud (all from SITC); Mustapha b. Hussin, a teacher at the Serdang School of Agriculture near Kuala Lumpur, and Onan b. Haji Siraj, an instructor at the Kuala Lumpur Technical

---

[168] Sahabat Pena's second national conference was held in Kuala Lumpur in August 1935.

[169] Interview, Djakarta, April 1961.

College; and Ishak b. Haji Mohd., a young Pahang Malay who had recently resigned from the Malay Administrative Service.

Though Ishak was not wholly typical of this Kuala Lumpur group, in that he had been educated in English as well as in Malay, his life and experience, which in some ways oddly parallels that of Ibrahim, is instructive for the light it sheds on the motives and feelings of the young men who were shortly to form Malaya's first radical Malay party.[170] Born in 1910, a year earlier than Ibrahim, in the same district of Pahang and from a similar peasant household, Ishak attended Malay school for four years and then, showing unusual intellectual ability, was awarded a scholarship to the Government English School in the little town of Kuala Lipis, the state administrative capital. Passing his Senior Cambridge examination in 1929 (the same year in which Ibrahim went to SITC) Ishak was recommended for the Malay Administrative Service, and after coming second in the Malaya-wide competitive examination that this entailed, entered the Malay College, Kuala Kangsar, in 1930, for probationary training. During the year that he spent there, he has said, he felt ill-at-ease and out of his element amongst all the _raja2_ and high-born, and began to question the course that his life was taking. On graduating at the end of 1930, he was appointed for short periods to junior administrative posts in his native state, first at Temerloh

---

[170]The following biographical information was obtained mainly during interviews with Ishak in February 1961.

and then at Bentong (where Ibrahim was shortly to take up his first teaching post after graduating from SITC), and finally at Rembau, Negri Sembilan. He found, during this first year, not only that he disliked administrative work, but that he resented the false distance that it imposed between himself and his people. Unable either to rationalise these discontents away, or to find some less dramatic solution, he took the only course open to him and fled the service, spending the next few months wandering round the western states.

In due course, however, the authorities, in the person of T.S. Adams, the British Resident of Selangor,[171] who had some kind of general oversight of young Malays in the M.A.S., caught up with him, and he was persuaded to return. This time he was given a post in Adams' own residency, as a 3rd Class Magistrate in Kuala Lumpur, and there began a further period of what Ishak called 'indoctrination'. Much was made of the social as well as the official responsibilities of the Malay Administrative Service, and no effort was spared to impress upon members the need to keep up their station in life. Ishak and his friends were regularly invited to the Residency, to

---

[171] Adams, it may be recollected (see above, Chapter Four), had been chairman of the Committee on Employment of Malays in the Government Service, in 1922, and was noted both for his strongly pro-Malay views and for his involvement in 1934, while Resident of Selangor, in the deposition as Raja Muda and heir apparent of the Sultan's eldest son, Tengku Musa'eddin, for alleged unfitness to rule (see above, Chapter Five).

play tennis, sip tea and generally behave like officers and gentlemen. Young Malay Officers had explained to them that if they wanted to join a club, they must, in order to maintain their status, join an expensive one; and Adams himself took Ishak to the Lake Club, Kuala Lumpur's most exclusive social institution, and paid his initial fees. They were warned that if they wanted to go to the cinema, they should patronise only the expensive seats. It was also thought desirable, especially perhaps for those of commoner origin, that they should make a good marriage, and Adams told Ishak on more than one occasion: 'If you want to get married, I can fix you up with the daughter of a Dato''.[172]

After some months of this, Ishak says, he felt more and more that he was being 'forced to change his personality, become one of the ruling class'. Oppressed by the artificiality and pretentiousness of civil service life, and disturbed by the need to sit in judgment, as a junior magistrate, upon his fellow men, he became increasingly cynical about the reasons for the colonial presence in Malaya. The British he regarded as fundamentally avaricious and unprincipled as a race, and he saw the relationship between the colonial bureaucracy and the Malay aristocracy as one mutually parasitic upon the Malay peasantry and Malaya's rich natural

---

[172] The persistence of the M.A.S.-M.C.S. elitist tradition is nicely illustrated in a passage from a recruitment speech made in 1939 which is quoted in Robert O. Tilman, _Bureaucratic Transition in Malaya_ (London, 1964), pp.112-3.

resources.[173] Reading Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, he saw in it an anti-capitalist tract, and regretted the lack of similar humanity and wisdom in the English in Malaya. He became increasingly interested in the cultural and especially the literary renaissance manifested by the Indonesian peoples in the Netherlands Indies, and read all the Indonesian books and periodicals he could lay his hands on. He formed friendships among Malay journalists, schoolteachers and others in Kuala Lumpur, and discussed at length with them the problems of Malay development in the colonial society. Finally, in August 1933, he decided to leave the M.A.S. for good, and devote the rest of his life to writing.[174]

During the next four years, Ishak spent much of his time travelling round Malaya, staying where he wished as the spirit moved him, contributing free-lance articles to the vernacular press, and writing the first of his satirical novels, Puteri Gunong Tahan, published in Singapore in 1936. While living in Kuala Lumpur,

---

[173] For some expression of these views, see his novel Puteri Gunong Tahan (Singapore, 1st ed., 1936; reprinted 1957). Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism, 1900-1945', op.cit., p.18, is incorrect in asserting that this was banned by the British.

[174] For details of Ishak's later journalistic career, see above, Chapter Five. He wrote a second satirical novel before the war, Anak Mat Lela Gila (Son of Mat Lela the Mad), published in Singapore in 1941, and has written a large number of romantic and 'social comment' novels since. In 1946, he published a political pamphlet entitled Bersatu Sekarang (Unite Now). Though he has never held a parliamentary seat, he has been active in left-wing politics in Malaya for many years, and until recently was Chairman of the Partai Buroh (Labour Party).

sometime early in 1935, he met Ibrahim Yaacob for the first time, and others of the radical group, and found that he shared with them many ideas and ideals. The group was still completely informal and unstructured, and wholly lacking in real leadership or in any sort of political expertise. Some of its members undoubtedly had dreams of forming a nationalist political party, but feared immediate proscription if they did so; others were content to see in their loose association the nucleus of yet another 'progress' movement, though one of somewhat more radical complexion than its predecessors or contemporaries. Their activities during these years of the middle 1930s are now shadowy and obscure, but probably amounted to very little once divested of the cloak and dagger of secrecy with which they liked to move. Sometimes they met in private houses, more often, the better they felt to avoid suspicion, in one of the cabarets in Bukit Bintang Park or elsewhere in the city. Here, over the brandy and across the dancing girls, they would discuss the economic plight of the Malays and its remedies, the need for Malay unity in the face of foreign capitalism and colonialism, and the more stirring revolutionary activities of other lands and times. Sometimes, as a result of these discussions, they wrote articles for the vernacular press and the journals, though seldom expressing directly their criticisms of the government and the traditional ruling class, for fear, says Ishak, that they should

lose their jobs or be suppressed.[175]

The real problem facing Ibrahim, Ishak and others of the radical group was that of trying to start a fire in damp wood, without the benefit either of the match of modern organisational know-how or the burning-glass of charisma. The largely peasant society in which they lived was still ordered by traditional social relationships, by separatist emotional allegiances to a series of petty states and sultans under lien to the colonial power, and by habitual and deep-rooted attitudes of mute obedience to ordained authority. By the mid-1930s, it is true, there was widespread Malay anxiety (expressed in the vernacular press, the progress associations and in other ways already described) about their low economic status and educational immaturity, and a real fear that their interests might be submerged beneath those of the Chinese and other aliens. But there was little crying distress, or none that could be heard, and the mass of the people waited faithfully for their traditional leaders to provide them with the weapons of modernisation (or the means of obtaining them) and to call them to arms. To move before this occurred was not only to court certain failure (this, indeed, though realistic enough as a probability, and unhappy in its likely consequences, was often also a rationalisation of deeper fears), but to invite an unnamed retribution for stepping outside one's own sphere

[175]Interview, Kuala Lumpur, February 1961.

of competence.[176] The weight of this sense of what was and was not fitting rested as heavily upon the young radicals as upon any other section of Malay society, and the example of the Indonesian nationalist movement, though stirring, did little to remove it: were not most of its leaders now languishing in exile in Boven Digul?[177] At this time, wrote Ibrahim later, the Sultans, royalty and the traditional elite would have nothing of democracy or equal rights, and did not agree with the creation of political bodies to uphold Malay interests.

---

[176] The most common response of Malays, when asked today why they did not take part in politics before the war, is 'pada masa itu, ta' patut orang Melayu champor politik' ('at that time, it wasn't fitting for Malays to get mixed up in politics'), or more briefly, 'takut kepada Raja' ('afraid of the Sultan'). The remarkable power of the traditional elite (assisted when necessary by the police) to command unswerving obedience from their subjects was demonstrated by an episode in Lower Perak in 1933. There existed in this area a Malay secret society, known as the _Orang Dua-belas_ (see above, footnote 135), which was causing some concern to the administration. In September, 1933, the Sultan made an appeal to the people to renounce membership of the society by public confession (_tobat_), an intensive police campaign was organised to publicise this, and emissaries of the Sultan were sent round to take the _tobat_. Before the end of the year, 5,000 people had made disavowals of this kind (see M.L. Wynne, _Triad and Tabut_, p.521). The _Orang Dua-belas_ was not a political organisation, but to the peasant the distinction was not always clear.

[177] The site of the Tanah Merah concentration camp in West New Guinea, in which a large number of Indonesian nationalists were incarcerated during the 1930s.

They took their monthly political pensions and said: 'Ordinary Malays mustn't meddle in politics, because the politics of the state and its people are in the hands of the Sultan and the traditional elite, who must be given complete loyalty. No Malay can betray his *Raja*'.[178]

Thus it was, that not until the formation of the first avowedly political (but still conservative) Malay Associations in the peninsula states in 1938,[179] under the leadership of westernised elements of the traditional elite (or as Ibrahim called them, 'the bourgeois-feudalist aristocrats and educated groups'),[180] did the young radicals gain sufficient confidence to translate their earlier imaginings into an avowedly left-wing political party. The *Kesatuan Melayu Muda*, formed about the middle of 1938, applied for and obtained exemption from registration under the Societies Ordinance[181] (the seal of associational respectability), but published no manifesto, no constitution

---

[178] Ibrahim Yaacob, *Nusa dan Bangsa Melaju*, pp.58-9. The last phrase occurs frequently in Malay literature, in stories illustrating Malay loyalty to their rulers, and in my own experience is frequently quoted by Malays anxious to extenuate or explain an absence of revolutionary fervour. For a characteristic utterance of the sentiment, see the *Sejarah Melayu* (Malay Annals), ed. by W.G. Shellabear (Singapore, 9th ed., 1960), p.124; and *cf.*, *J.M.B.R.A.S.*, XXV, 2 & 3 (1952), p.9.

[179] See below, this chapter.

[180] *Sekitar Malaya Merdeka*, p.21.

[181] Interview with Ishak b. Haji Mohd., 1961. I was unable to locate the files of the Registrar of Societies to check this.

and no list of officers. In intent a national organisation, its headquarters and most of its following were in fact in Kuala Lumpur, though a few members (including Ishak b. Haji Mohd., who was by this time on the staff of Warta Malaya in Singapore) lived elsewhere in the peninsula. It is impossible to obtain any accurate indication of its size, though in 1938 it could hardly have had more than perhaps fifty or sixty members. Most of them were vernacular schoolteachers, staff or students of the Kuala Lumpur Technical School,[182] Serdang Agricultural School[183] and SITC, or journalists. Its leading members, most of whose names are already familiar, were Ibrahim Yaacob, who was president; Onan b. Haji Siraj (Ibrahim's brother-in-law and an instructor at the Technical School) as vice-president;[184] Abdul Karim Rashid (schoolteacher, ex-SITC) as secretary; Haji Othman b. Abdullah (previously in Cairo) as treasurer; Hassan b. Manan (schoolteacher, ex-SITC);[185] Mustapha b. Hussin

---

[182] For a brief account of the chequered history of this institution, which was started in 1904 and then closed for eleven years from 1915 to 1926, see Higher Education in Malaya: Report of the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, June 1939 (London, 1939), pp.110-1. The school had about 135 students in 1938, but it is not known how many of these were Malay.

[183] Founded in 1931, a few miles from Kuala Lumpur, mainly in order to train Assistants for the Agricultural Department, Serdang in 1938 had a staff of three Europeans and three Malays, and eighty students, of whom 48 were Malay.

[184] Onan, born in Ipoh, was the son of recent Javanese immigrants.

[185] Hassan was of Javanese extraction, but it is not clear whether or not he was born in Malaya.

(a teacher at Serdang); Ahmad Boestamam (a young journalist on the staff of Majlis);[186] and Isa Mohd. b. Mahmud (schoolteacher, ex-SITC). Sutan Djenain, an Indonesian member of the largely-Chinese Malayan Communist Party, acted as liaison between that organisation and the KMM -- or more exactly, perhaps, with a small inner core of its leadership.[187]

In the absence of contemporary documents of any sort concerning the affairs of KMM, the historian is forced to fall back on the often vague recollections of such of its members as can be traced, or on

---

[186] Ahmad Boestamam b. Raja Kechil, one of the stormiest figures in post-war Malayan politics, was born of aristocratic parentage in Perak in 1920, and educated at Malay and English schools in that state. In 1945, he was active, with other members of KMM in the KRIS movement (Kesatuan Ra'ayat Indonesia Semenanjong: Union of Peninsular Indonesians) which attempted to declare joint independence for Malaya and Indonesia, and shortly after became a founder-member of the successor to this organisation, the Malay Nationalist Party. He was detained by the British from 1948 to 1955, and in the latter year founded the Parti Ra'ayat (People's Party), of which he is still president. He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1959, as a Socialist Front member, and detained again (this time by the Malayan Government) for 'pro-Indonesian' activities, late in 1963.

[187] Though Sutan Djenain is always described in this fashion (see, e.g., Ibrahim Yaacob, Sekitar Malaya Merdeka, p.25) the part played by him in the affairs of KMM is extremely shadowy, and it is probable that he did no more than encourage anti-British feelings among the members, and provide them with a certain amount of Marxist terminology with which to discuss their aims. For the confused affairs of the almost exclusively Chinese MCP during this period, see Brimmell, Communism in South East Asia, pp.146-50. Sutan Djenain remained in Malaya until 1949, when, according to Ibrahim (loc.cit.), he was expelled by the British and returned to Java.

brief accounts published many years later by Ibrahim Yaacob and one or two others. It may be said at once that these recollections do not always tally one with the other, and it seems clear that there was among the members considerable confusion of opinion about what they were trying to do.[188] KMM, in short, meant different things to different men. Ishak b. Haji Mohd. says today that the KMM had no desire to overthrow the Government, and would not have known how to go about this anyway. Their principal intention, he says, was 'to stop the Malays being exploited by other races', and to create 'nationalist feeling' among the Malays by writing exhortatory articles in the vernacular press.[189] Abdullah b. Sidek, the novelist and vernacular schoolteacher previously at SITC, says that when he joined KMM in 1938 he understood it to have as its main aim a closer cultural association between Malaya and 'Indonesia', and he left the movement two years later when he felt it to have been 'betrayed' into political radicalism by Ibrahim Yaacob.[190] Ibrahim himself has written that

---

[188] The whole question is also confused by the odium in which Ibrahim Yaacob (who 'collaborated' with the Japanese before and during the occupation, and -- more importantly -- fled to Indonesia after the British returned and has since lived there under the name Iskander Kamel) is held by large numbers of Malays, including many of his former colleagues. This, together with Ibrahim's own tendency to inflate KMM makes objective description difficult to obtain.

[189] Interview, February 1961.

[190] Interview, January 1960. Haji Othman b. Abdullah, treasurer of KMM for its first year, left at about the same time, for similar reasons (interview, January 1961).

KMM strove actively to throw off the foreign colonial yoke and create a free Malaya, and following this to bring about a political union between the erstwhile British and Dutch colonial territories in a united 'Indonesia-Raya' or 'Melayu Raya' (Greater Indonesia or Greater Malay/sia/), which would become a great nation in Southeast Asia.[191] Though at different times Ibrahim described the movement as 'non-co-operative' with Government, and as forswearing 'non-co-operation' (a terminology borrowed from the Indonesian nationalist movement),[192] there seems in fact to have been no clear policy on this, and little opportunity of exercising it if there had been. Emotionally, however, and in contrast with the political Malay Associations, which actively supported the Government, there can be no doubt of KMM's 'non-co-operative' stance, especially where the leadership was concerned. They had an abiding if frustrated hatred of colonialism in all its manifestations, from that of 'foreign capitalism' to the petty irritations brought about by the racial prejudice and assumptions of innate superiority shown by many British in Malaya, and an almost equal contempt for the 'lick-spittle' traditional elite who profited from colonial rule, and maintained

---

[191] Nusa dan Bangsa Melaju, pp.59-60; Sekitar Malaya Merdeka, p.21.

[192] Cf., also, Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, Sejarah Perjuangan Kita (History of Our Struggle) (Penang, 1955), p.24, for a similar transference of the terms 'Co and Non' to the Malayan scene. Basically, the distinction was one between evolutionary and revolutionary approaches to political nationalism (in the Indonesian context, see, e.g., Kahin, Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia, pp.94-5).

their own positions, at the expense of the peasantry and the urban proletariat. These feelings, however, seem to have been given vent to largely in private, and though this may have afforded some cathartic relief for the members, it did not lead to political action. A glimpse of KMM activities at this time is given in the autobiography of Abdul Aziz b. Ishak, later Minister of Agriculture in the government of the Federation of Malaya but at this time a junior official in the Fisheries Department of the F.M.S., stationed at Kuala Kurau in Perak. Aziz Ishak's first cousin, Mustapha b. Hussin, was a zealous member of KMM, and in its inner councils. As a result of the family connection, the two men struck up a close friendship, and whenever Aziz Ishak came down to Kuala Lumpur he was invited to meet other members of KMM and to attend some of their meetings, which were held at their headquarters, a government house in Pasar Road. Aziz Ishak comments that KMM consisted 'mainly of Malay schoolteachers', who had banded themselves together to foster feelings of dissatisfaction against British colonial rule, and adds: 'I myself, who had had some bitter experiences with my boss, a European, and with the European District Officer in Kuantan previously, was much attracted to the association. But I couldn't give it much in the way of help, because I was living in Kuala Kurau'.[193]

---

[193] Abdul Aziz b. Ishak, Katak Keluar dari bawah Tempurong, pp.42-3.

If Ibrahim Yaacob and KMM had hoped to create a mass movement, or even a large-scale political organisation (and this is open to some doubt) they failed utterly. Though there are no figures at all for membership, this seems likely never to have risen to beyond a couple of hundred. KMM's name alone helped to raise in many Malay minds the familiar bogey of '*Kaum Muda*', and its political beliefs, inchoate though these were, were too radical for the great majority of Malays, who continued to look for more familiar leadership. Some who might have joined were doubtless frightened off by the dangers believed to be inherent in all forms of political activity; others never heard of its existence. KMM itself seemed reluctant to relinquish its clandestine mode of operation, and in any case possessed neither the skills nor the money necessary if it was to extend its organisation much beyond Kuala Lumpur. At the same time, it did succeed in training, in however makeshift a way, a cadre of left-wing politicians, who were later to form the nucleus of more than one Malay radical movement. And in mid-1941, a few months before the first Japanese attack on Malaya, it established links, through Ibrahim Yaacob, which were to make it the focus of nationalist politics for the period of the occupation.[194] The details of these links, and of the negotiations which lay behind them, are still

---

[194] See, e.g., Radin Soenarno, 'Malay Nationalism, 1900-1945', pp.19-22.

obscure,[195] but as nearly as may be ascertained, the first approaches to Ibrahim were made after a conversation in Singapore with a man called Anwari, said to have been the head of the Singapore Muslim League. They spoke on that occasion of their belief that the British would be unable to defend Malaya should the Japanese attack, and of the advisability in consequence of co-operating with the Japanese beforehand in order to hasten this event and to secure a position of advantage for the nationalists when it arrived. Shortly after this, Ibrahim was approached by the Japanese themselves, either directly or through the Siamese Consul General, with an offer of money with which to purchase a Malay newspaper for the purposes of conducting anti-British propaganda. The daily _Warta Malaya_ was bought from its Arab proprietors in August 1941, and though the absence of extant holdings makes it impossible to be sure, it seems likely that Ibrahim did mount in its columns some sort of anti-British campaign. Two months later, Ibrahim and many of his colleagues in _KMM_ were rounded up by the Special Branch, charged under the wartime

---

[195] When interviewed in Djakarta in 1961, Ibrahim was reluctant to talk about the following episode, which he claimed took place without the knowledge of other members of _KMM_ up to the point at which _Warta Malaya_ came into his possession. I was unable to return to Malaya after seeing him, and hence unable to check what little information he did vouchsafe.

Defence Regulations, and sentenced to gaol for the duration of the war.[196] In fact, they became the first residents of the newly completed prison at Changi, on Singapore Island, and remained there until their release by the Japanese in February 1942, when the British took their place.

By 1938, when the KMM came into existence as a left-wing nationalist counterpart to the right-wing, quasi-political, state Malay Associations then in process of formation, relatively few Malays were prepared to think in terms of political unification of the separate states, let alone of any form of union with Indonesia. The concept of a Malay 'nation', though much discussed by the press and the intelligentsia, existed less as an ideal polity than as a defensive community of interest against further subordination to or dependence on 'foreigners', and in particular against the domiciled Asian communities now so firmly entrenched in the states and settlements: the Chinese foremost, the Indians, and even the Arabs and Jawi Peranakan. In this situation, the role in which the British were cast continued, paradoxically enough, to be that of guardian of Malay rights, just as the principal guarantee of Malay identity and

---

[196] Among those arrested were Ishak b. Haji Mohd., Ahmad Boestamam, Hassan b. Manan, Isa Mohd. b. Mahmud, Idrus Hakim and Sutan Djenain. Ibrahim says that a total of 150 arrests were made, but this seems extremely high for the 'leadership' of KMM, unless other persons under general suspicion were also held. He also says that he and other leaders of the movement were to have been sent to India, but that this was prevented by the rapidity of the Japanese conquest of Malaya. (Sekitar Malaya Merdeka, p.26.)

political initiative seemed to lie in the preservation intact of the Sultans and their establishments at the head of nominally autonomous, 'British protected' Malay states. Divide and rule had potentially as much meaning for the Malays as it had for the British. It was less that there was no criticism from below of the colonial power or the traditional elite -- on the contrary, the decentralisation and concomitant policies of the 1930s were clearly recognised and remarked upon by many Malays for what, in essence, they were: a prelude to further 'rationalisation' of the political structure of the peninsula and the creation of a common Malayan nationality which must inevitably threaten Malay interests -- than that criticism took the form of special pleas for continued Malay privilege, not of anti-colonial nationalism. Though the continuation and strengthening of Malay privilege was seen as affording advantage, in the long run, to the generality of Malays, the social group which stood to make the most immediate gain was the traditional elite itself -- or more exactly, the two mutually related parts into which the traditional elite had split: on the one hand those whose role lay within the indigenous Malay establishment, and on the other those who now held positions in the English-educated bureaucracy. It was from this second group in particular, by reason of its superior education and organisational skills, its more modern orientation, and its added sensitivity to non-Malay competition, that the first of the quasi-political Malay Associations in the peninsular states sprang early in 1938.

The way was led first by the formation of branches of the

Kesatuan Melayu Singapura in the remaining Straits Settlements, Penang and Malacca, during the previous year. And then in March 1938 a Persatuan Melayu (Malay Association) was founded in Pahang state, under the auspices of Tengku Ahmad, a close connection of the ruling house, who became first president, and Dato' Husain b. Mohd. Taib, one of the four major chiefs of Pahang and a member of the State Council, who had had a long and distinguished career as an administrator, first in the M.A.S. and then in the M.C.S. (where he was at this time one of only 22 Malay officers), as vice-president.[197] Other leading members were also prominent government servants, and the Persatuan had the blessing of the Sultan himself. It is this official and high-ranking complexion more than anything else which distinguished the organisation from earlier 'progress' associations elsewhere in the peninsula, for its stated aims -- the general advancement of the Malay people -- were remarkably similar. It did, however, and this was also something of an innovation for the peninsular states, undertake to make 'political' representations to

---

[197]Dato' Husain, father of Tun Abdul Razak, the present Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, was born in Pekan, Pahang, in 1897, and educated at the Malay College, Kuala Kangsar. He entered the M.A.S. as a Malay Officer in 1916, and served a variety of district administrative posts throughout the F.M.S. until his promotion to the M.C.S. in 1933. In 1930 he succeeded to his father's title as Orang Kaya Indera Shahbandar of Pahang, and in the same year was appointed to the State Council.

the Government on matters affecting the Malay interest, though as the Singapore Free Press commented, the role played in it by royalty and officialdom seemed likely to 'impose restrictions on the extent to which they can propose schemes to which the High Commissioner may be opposed, and must curtail criticism of Government action and policy'.[198]

A few months later, in November 1938, a Persatuan Melayu Selangor (Selangor Malay Association) was started in Kuala Lumpur under the presidency of Tengku Ismail b. Tengku Mohd. Yasin, educated at the Malay College and in England, who had recently resigned from the M.C.S. to become one of the very few Malay lawyers in private practice.[199] The Selangor Association was less

---

[198] Free Press, 24 March 1938, cited in Soenarno, op.cit., p.26.

[199] Tengku Ismail was born in Negri Sembilan in 1901, the son of the Tengku Laksamana of Sri Menanti, and a connection of the Negri Sembilan royal house. He was educated at the Malay College, and entered the M.A.S. in 1920, serving subsequently in Negri Sembilan, Pahang, Singapore and Selangor. In 1927 he was selected to go to England to read for the Bar, took his final examinations in 1929, and returned to Malaya in the same year, having in the meantime married an English wife. He resumed duties with the M.A.S., but decided after some years to practise law privately, and resigned from the service in 1936 or 1937 to go into partnership with Reginald P.S. Rajasooria, one of Malaya's best-known Indian lawyers. Tengku Ismail's death during the Japanese occupation cut short the career of the man who, it is often said, might well have pre-empted Dato' Onn's place as the leader of the post-war Malay nationalist movement.

overwhelmingly official in composition than the Pahang Association, but its leading members included several members of the traditional ruling class, and were mostly English-educated. Its vice-president, Raja Bon b. Raja Yahya, was a Selangor district chief, its secretary, Ramli b. Haji Tahir, was an official in the Agricultural Department, and the central committee included the three leading Malay newspaper editors, Abdul Rahim Kajai, Othman Kalam and Mohd. Yunus b. Abdul Hamid, and a prominent Malay-Arab merchant, Sayyid Abdul Ghani.[200] Raja Uda b. Raja Mohd., a close connection of the royal house, the second most senior Malay member of the M.C.S. and the Selangor Malay member of the Federal Council, attended a preliminary meeting of the association, but withdrew when he discovered that it was to be a 'political' body, because, he said, his senior position in the government service did not permit him to take an active part in political affairs.[201]

In his inaugural address to the first general meeting of the Association, held in the Sultan Suleiman Club, Kampong Bahru, on 22 November, Tengku Ismail referred to the crying need among the Malays for 'national leaders', and said that the principal object of

---

[200] Haji Othman b. Abdullah, the treasurer of KMM, was also on the committee. For a full list of names, see Mohd. Yunus Hamidi (i.e. Mohd. Yunus b. Abdul Hamid), Sejarah Pergerakan Politik Melayu Semenanjong (History of Peninsular Malay Political Movements) (Kuala Lumpur, 1961), pp.3-4. Despite his close acquaintance with the Selangor Association, Mohd. Yunus' chronology of the movement is here quite incorrect.

[201] Ibid., p.2.

the Association would be to prepare for the future, to send Malays to Egypt and Europe for higher education so that when they returned to Malaya they might become the leaders of succeeding generations of their people. 'Then only will we be free from this oppression and milking by these foreign races in our country'.[202] In the ensuing months, the Association made representations to Government on a variety of topics, though as Mohd. Yunus b. Abdul Hamid wrote subsequently, these requests could not be too strongly expressed, 'lest we should be branded as Communists or Kaum Muda ... and put in detention'.[203] In his account of the activities of the Association, Mohd. Yunus says that it criticised, for example, existing land policy, which set aside Malay Reservations 'as land traps, in which Malays are forced to seek a living, like sheep allowed to eat only the grass inside the pen, while non-Malays, like wild animals, are given complete freedom to take their will outside'. It suggested that the Malay Regiment (which was wholly Malay in composition) should be greatly increased in size,[204] and that a Malay

---

[202] Majlis, 23 November 1938, cited in Soenarno, op.cit., p.25.

[203] Mohd. Yunus Hamidi, op.cit., p.4.

[204] The Malay Regiment had been founded in 1933, to replace the Indian troops which had up to this time garrisoned the F.M.S. It was expanded to battalion size in 1934, and on the outbreak of war in 1939 was mobilised for action and further recruitment authorised. A second regiment was not fully established, however, until a week before the Japanese invasion in December 1941. For brief details, see Dol Ramli, 'A Note on the First Ten Years of the Malay Regiment', Malaya in History (previously The Malayan Historical Journal), IV, 1 (January, 1958), pp.4-6.

air-force be formed. It proposed that all alien immigration to Malaya should be completely stopped, and Indonesian immigration increased, 'because the Indonesians come from the same stock as the Malays'.[205] And it started an educational fund, named after Sultan Alam Shah of Selangor, to raise money with which to send young Malays overseas for higher education.

In all its public activities and pronouncements the Association remained unswervingly loyal not only to the traditional Malay establishment but to the British, particularly after the outbreak of war in Europe in September 1939. At a meeting convened by the Association in the Sultan Suleiman Club on 10 September, attended by about 500 people, Tengku Ismail made a rousing speech on the British behalf, and concluded by moving (as was recorded in the minutes of the meeting, communicated to London by the High Commissioner shortly afterwards):

> (1) That Selangor Malays back Britain through thick and thin. (2) That Selangor Malays maintain an unruffled and determined frame of mind, unmoved by rumour or fright. (3) That Selangor Malays give whole-hearted support in making preparations for the safety of Malaya. (4) That Selangor Malays hold constant prayers for the speedy victory of Great Britain and her allies and that all imam of Mosques in Selangor should be informed with requests to this effect. All present shout out their enthusiastic support. 206

[205] Mohd. Yunus Hamidi, op.cit., pp.4-5.

[206] Despatch and Enclosures, High Commissioner to Colonial Office, 22 September 1939, FMS No.205 of 1939. In a letter to the High Commissioner, enclosing the minutes of the meeting, Tengku Ismail wrote that as the Malays, unlike the other races in the peninsula, had no place to go but Malaya, they were anxious to take a larger share in the defence of the country, but he was careful to add that they were 'proud to be under the British protection and it is their indomitable belief that no country in the world could give them better protection than the British'. The High Commissioner made polite noises in reply.

Ramli b. Haji Tahir, the secretary of the Association, moved that a telegram of loyalty be sent to the High Commissioner, and Mohd. Yunus proposed that another telegram, of trust and confidence, be sent to the Commander of the Malay Regiment. A further series of resolutions was adopted, proposing that priority be given to Malays in the Volunteer Infantry, that three additional Malay Regiments be formed, and that 'one or two small battleships' be bought by the Malay States Governments, in which Malays could be trained as sailors. And finally, to round off the occasion, which seems to have been the largest and most enthusiastic ever held by the Selangor Malay Association, it was agreed that all Malays should be asked to contribute to the 'Lady Thomas Patriotic Fund' organised to help Britain's war effort.[207] Commenting on this appeal a month or two later, Utusan Melayu (edited by Abdul Rahim Kajai) remarked that though the sum raised in Malaya was bound to be small, in relation to the vast sums required in Britain for war expenditure, 'This gift will make them understand that we at the other side of the British Empire are not forgetting them'.[208]

By mid-1939, shortly before the events just described, state Malay Associations had been formed in Negri Sembilan and Province Wellesley, in addition to those already existing in Singapore (with its branches in Penang and Malacca), Pahang and Selangor. In August of that year,

---

[207] Ibid. Lady Thomas was the wife of the Governor and High Commissioner, Sir Shenton Thomas.

[208] Utusan Melayu, 10 November 1939, cited in Soenarno, op.cit., p.16.

upon the initiative of Selangor and Singapore, a 'national congress' of these associations was held in Kuala Lumpur, 'to seek ways of furthering and strengthening the efforts of the Malay race and the Malay associations'.[209] Delegates attended from all the associations named, observers came from Perak, which as yet had no association of this kind, and the Persekutuan Setiawan Belia (Union of Young Loyalists) in Kelantan sent a message of goodwill. From the outset, the congress ran into a credentials dispute which was symptomatic of one of the most vitiating features of early Malay right-wing nationalism: the problem of how to define 'Malay'. Penang at this time had two 'Malay' associations, only one of which had been invited, but both of which wanted representation -- the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura, Chawangan Pulau Pinang (Singapore Malay Union, Penang Branch) and the Persatuan Melayu Pulau Pinang (Penang Malay Association). The first of these (and the one invited) claimed to be 'Melayu jati' ('true Malay'); the second was largely Jawi Peranakan in origin and membership, and hence, to the sensitivities of Singapore and Penang Malays in particular, an unwarranted intruder. Judging from the report of the proceedings which later appeared in the vernacular press, an unconscionable time was spent in discussing the situation, which, though trivial enough in itself, had profound

---

[209] Majlis, 7 August 1939. The congress was held the previous day, and the account that follows is based on the report of proceedings given in Majlis, 7 and 9 August.

and highly characteristic implications for those who were most strongly chauvinistic. Settling the matter at length, apparently in favour of the 'KMS' or 'Melayu jati' faction, the congress was able to proceed to business, but not without leaving a legacy of dispute on this question which was to have repercussions later.

The congress had before it two principal questions for discussion, in addition to a number of topics (including the vexed one of the definition of 'Malay') set forth in a working paper prepared by the KMS but not dealt with in any detail.[210] The two main questions, obviously central to the future development of the associations, concerned on the one hand the problem of individual growth and recruitment, and on the other a decision about whether or not to combine to form a single, national organisation. In relation to the first, the leader of the Singapore delegation, Daud b. Mohd. Shah, spoke at some length listing many of the reasons for the relatively small membership of most of the associations, and for the

---

[210] The signatories to this working paper were Daud b. Mohd. Shah, President of the KMS, Abdul Manan b. Mohd. Ali and Ishak b. Haji Mohd., both of whom were committee members. Ishak was also involved at this time, of course, with KMM. The working paper proposed that the congress do four things: (1) Decide on the definition of 'Malay', (2) Make arrangements to raise funds for education, (3) Sponsor research into Malay life and customs, and (4) Create a union of Associations. (1) was dealt with indirectly at some length in connection with the Penang dispute, but not considered formally; (2) and (3) were apparently not discussed; and (4) provided the topic for the afternoon session.

reluctance of people to join. Most of these reasons related to what might be described as the intellectual and material condition of the Malay peasant: people were 'uneducated', 'not clever enough' to recognise the advantages of the associations, didn't understand their purpose, or were too poor to join. More importantly, however, for the present analysis, he pointed to a prevailing distrust of new leaders, to the absence of 'nationalist feeling' ('perasaan kebangsaan'), and to a widespread fear that the associations were subversive. 'Obviously [many people] are afraid because of wrong or unfounded beliefs that, amongst other things, the Malay Associations are Kaum Muda, intend treachery to the Government, are Communist, and so on'. These were serious problems, as we have seen in relation to movements of other sorts, and particularly so for organisations whose membership was still largely confined to educated, white-collar government servants, teachers and journalists. Though the associations clearly desired to extend their peasant base, discussion at the congress was inconclusive, and seems to have gone little beyond suggestions for additional information and education programmes, and increased emphasis on the loyalty of the associations to the traditional Malay establishment and to the colonial power.

The afternoon session of the congress was taken up with prolonged discussion of whether or not the separate associations could or should combine to form some sort of national organisation. Though there was general agreement among the associations that the Malays needed a

'national movement', there was a strong sense of the paradox implied (and the practical difficulties involved) in trying to create a national body from state associations committed individually to supporting and working through their own state rulers and to organising Malay popular feeling on a state basis -- the only basis thought likely to be acceptable to the traditional state establishments, or indeed to large numbers of Malays. In addition, there was almost certainly, even in the atmosphere of common endeavour generated by the congress, a residual element of jealousy between states, springing from long-standing rivalries and parochialisms which even the westernised elite could not altogether escape. The matter was settled at length, amicably enough, upon the motion of Ishak b. Haji Mohd. (representing the KMS), who proposed that a 'Union of Associations' be created, to be called the Persekutuan Persatuan2 Melayu Semenanjong Tanah Melayu (Union of Malay Associations of the Malay Peninsula), which would have its headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. This agreed upon, the congress broke up, having decided to refer in future to 6 August as 'hari kebangsaan Melayu' -- 'the Malay national day'.[211]

The second congress of Malay associations was not held until more

---

[211] There is, however, no record of the date having been recognised subsequently. Nor did the Persekutuan Persatuan2 Melayu Semenanjong Tanah Melayu ever acquire any existence except on paper.

than a year later, in December 1940. In the meantime, new state associations, under similar leadership, had been formed in Johore, Kelantan and Perak, and in Sarawak and Brunei, and there had been much discussion of the affairs of the associations and of the 'national movement' in the Malay press. A good deal of this discussion centred round the proper definition of the term 'Malay', which for Singapore in particular (and to a lesser extent Penang) continued to be a persistent irritant. In October 1940, the English-language Malay monthly _The Modern Light_, which had for some time been attacking the associations for their constant preoccupation with this question, to the exclusion of more important or more pressing problems,[212] addressed an 'Open Letter to the Malay Rulers, Chiefs and Councillors', headed 'Who is a Malay?':

> The Movement started by the Malay Union of Singapore, championed by _Utusan Melayu_, and now imitated by the Malay Unions or Associations in the various Malay States, in their so-called "Malay Blood Purity Campaign" has no doubt reached the stage to attract official attention.
>
> According to this Movement, a Malay is a man whose male parent is a native of this Malay Peninsula or of any of the neighbouring islands of the Malay Archipelago /thus excluding 'Malays of patrilineal Indian or Arab descent and including, for example, non-Muslim Javanese or Balinese/.
>
> It may be admitted in Singapore that there is some misunderstand--ing between the Malays and people of Arab or Indian descent due to rivalry in business or other personal causes; but those concerned in such misunderstandings have no right to preach anyone their "Doctrine of Hatred" against their own enemies, much less against those in the Malay States ... 213

---

[212] See, e.g., _The Modern Light_, I, 1 and 3 (May and July, 1940).

[213] _Ibid_., I, 6 (October 1940).

There can be no doubt that feeling was, in general, much less strong in the peninsular states than in the Straits Settlements. As 'A Pahang Malay' had written to The Modern Light a month or so earlier, it had long been common in the Malay states for Sultans, Rajas, Chiefs and others to take Arabs and Indians as sons-in-law and for the children of these unions to be regarded as Malays.[214] Nevertheless, even here, prompted by the furore raised in the Straits Settlements and by the campaign in the press, there was a growing tendency to look upon the *Jawi Peranakan* or the Malay-Arab with resentment or even hostility. Nor was this wholly due, as *The Modern Light* suggested, to economic rivalry or to personal antipathy arising out of other sorts of situational disadvantage, though both these played their part. It was, on the contrary, symptomatic of the fundamental problem facing the Malay in the plural society, that of self-recognition, of discovering himself and then retaining his identity amidst the plethora of alien cultural forces which had increasingly pressed upon him during the past half-century. The problem was felt most acutely in precisely those areas of urban living in which nationalism itself had its origin and its strength. As such, it was bound to affect, and even perhaps (as a distraction) for a time weaken the already fissiparous Malay nationalist movement. But in the long run its effect (as with that of the creation of the first defiantly all-Malay newspaper, *Utusan Melayu*, already described)

---

[214] *Ibid.*, I, 3 (July 1940).

was to open the way for a more equal and more dignified partnership negotiated from strength. For the first time the Malays were standing on their own feet -- or at least on one leg.

The second congress of Malay Associations, and the last before the Japanese occupation, was held in Singapore on 25 and 26 December, 1940,[215] and attended by 41 delegates from eleven state bodies: those of Singapore, Penang, Malacca, Pahang, Selangor, Negri Sembilan, Perak, Kelantan, Johore, Brunei and Sarawak. The premises of the _Persekutuan Guru2 Melayu Singapura_ (Singapore Malay Teachers' Union) were made available for the conference, and as the delegates arrived a choir of forty schoolchildren greeted them with a song specially written for the occasion. After an opening speech by Daud b. Mohd. Shah (_KMS_), the assembled delegates elected Tengku Ismail (Selangor) as President of the Congress, and Ishak b. Haji Mohd. (Singapore) as Secretary. During the next two days, the congress attempted to discuss seventeen major resolutions brought forward by the state bodies (far too many, as _Majlis_ pointed out, for the time available) but succeeded in passing only five. All point to the essentially conservative nature of the assembly, to its strong western-educated elitist bias, and to the absence of anything approaching political radicalism. Selangor proposed, and the congress resolved, that a Spitfire Fund should be established, to buy aeroplanes for the British

---

[215] The following account of the proceedings is based on reports given in _Warta Kinta_, 28 December 1940, and _Majlis_, 26 December 1940.

war effort. It was decided by a majority vote that the introduction of income tax in the F.M.S. (which had recently been legislated for) should be opposed. On the motion of Negri Sembilan, the congress decided to ask Government to include Malay representatives in all overseas missions, and it was also agreed, as proposed by Singapore, to press for the appointment of a Malay as Assistant Director of Education. And finally, one of the hardy annuals of concern to the associations, it was decided to make renewed requests that English education be made more readily available to Malays, more especially by raising the age limit above which Malay children could not proceed from Malay to English schools.

For the rest, the congress discussed inconclusively, and in the vaguest terms, a number of plans for Malay economic development, a suggestion from Sarawak that they choose a Malay national anthem, one from Kelantan that a central research committee be set up to inquire into 'the circumstances of Malay life', and several other proposals of similar kind and scope. But an answer to the largest question of all continued to elude them, and seemed indeed to be even further away than it had been in 1939. Amidst all the talk of unity, of common strength and of national endeavour, repeated in the press comments subsequently, a proposal for the amalgamation of the associations into a single, national movement failed utterly, at the hands of timorousness, state rivalries, and an inability to see beyond the traditional Malay political structure. Further consideration of the question was postponed until the next congress, planned for Ipoh

a year later but not held because of the then impending Japanese invasion, and in the meantime it was handed back to the individual state committees, 'each and every Representative being of the opinion that the Union or Association of each State should work separately for the improvement or progress of the Malays in their own State according to local conditions'.[216]

Defeated at the last in the attempt to create a genuinely Pan-Malayan organisation, the Malay Associations movement was nevertheless not without its successes, or its significance for the rapid growth of Malay political nationalism a few years later. In a modest claim made after the second congress had closed in 1940, Onn b. Ja'afar, the leader of the Johore delegation, said: 'The Malays as a race have not yet fallen and, with the existence of the Malay political associations they can regain the political and civil rights which have slipped from them'.[217] Notwithstanding the strong element of traditional elite leadership in the Malay Associations before 1941, the generality of Malays were prepared to give their final allegiance only within the state context and to their own rulers and their establishments. But the associations provided a potentially acceptable framework, and in the long run the only acceptable framework, for Malay political action, and when the traditional establishments themselves were threatened by the Malayan Union scheme immediately after the war, it was to the associations, and to the leadership they had generated, that the Malay turned.

---

[216] The Modern Light, I, 8 (December 1940).

[217] The Straits Times, 27 January 1948, cited in Soenarno, op.cit., p.16.

RETROSPECT

The purpose of this study has been to trace the slow growth of communal, ethnic and national feeling among the peninsular Malays in the first four decades of this century, and the expression of this feeling in voluntary associations of a predominantly modern and potentially political-nationalist kind. The study began with a brief examination of the social organisation of the traditional Malay polity as it was at the time of British intervention in the internal affairs of the separate states, and concluded with description and discussion of the growth in the 1930s of three pan-Malayan organisations or movements, each with its private vision of what Malay society should become and how it should comport itself in the circumstances which then existed. In the course of the enquiry, it has been possible to distinguish, more or less clearly, the development of three new elite groups in modern Malay society each offering an implicit challenge to the traditional status quo, and hence to the traditional elite, in the interests of a specifically Malay nationalism. The main aim of the study has therefore been to describe and analyse the social dynamics of each of these new

leadership groups, and of their relationship with the traditional elite and with the generality of peasant Malays. The context for the whole has been the continuing presence of British colonial protectorate rule, and the resulting rapid economic and social development of the peninsular states outside the peasant Malay sector.

The landmarks of change during Malaya's eventful, if brief, period of colonial rule stand out clearly enough. Firstly, and most obviously, there was the establishment in the 1870s of direct political and administrative control over the internal affairs of Perak and Selangor by means of the contractual Protectorate relationship and of the administrative device known contemporaneously as the Residential system. This process was repeated shortly afterwards in Negri Sembilan and Pahang, and later extended in varying degrees of intensity and thoroughness to the remaining Malay states. Though the Protectorate and Residential systems partook at first of much older patterns of suzerain relationship, and were seen by some at least of the Malay rulers as means of obtaining powerful and knowledgeable assistance in the profitable governance of their states or the validation of their right to rule against that of other claimants, they rapidly came to entail a great deal more than this, and to mark a radical and qualitative change in the political life of the states. Following this, there occurred in the three western states first protected, and later in Johore and Kedah, large-scale development of Western and Chinese entrepreneurial and extractive economic activity, and a consequent startling increase in alien

immigration associated with this. Though this process also shared resemblances with patterns of development which pre-dated direct British control (which had, indeed, contributed to British intervention), its rate and intensity from the late nineteenth century onwards, and the magnitude of the resultant demographic change, mark it off as an innovation of kind rather than degree. In addition, the development of the export economy required and itself stimulated the creation of modern transport networks and other forms of communication which gave to the peninsula the beginnings of an economic and social unity it had not previously possessed, and led also to the growth of large urban communities, which, though often similar in economic and administrative function to the port towns of earlier Malay states, bore little likeness to even the larger of these in size or in social structure. And finally, the establishment of a single European administrative service for the Malay States and the Straits Settlements as a whole, and of large centralised departments and specialised agencies of government lent an overlying uniformity of purpose, policy and practice to such diverse matters as popular education, land tenure, legislation and fiscal organisation.

Much of this change, however, despite its revolutionary and lasting character for the peninsula as a whole, did not immediately or directly affect Malay life. It was less that there was no change within this area -- for manifestly much happened to shift the Malay

view of the world -- than that the changes which did take place did not coincide with or take their direction solely from the incidents of British rule, and that change occurred within (or co-existed with) a remarkable persistence of traditional patterns of social organisation. British policy in the peninsula, throughout the period, was based on a mutually profitable alliance with the Malay ruling class, and more particularly with the individual rulers of the states and their aristocratic establishments. This symbiotic relationship, in which, in return for the right to develop a modern extractive economy within the states, the British undertook to maintain intact the position and prestige of the traditional ruling class, certainly deprived the Malay Sultan of much of his policy-making or decision-making power, but it was furthered with a tact which carefully preserved the fiction that the Sultans were autonomous rulers acting under advice from Residents who were in some sense their servants. The erosion of this position in the F.M.S. between 1910 and 1925 was, indeed, the principal motivation for the resanctification of old symbols which underlay the 'decentralisation' of the following decade. But to say that the Sultans lost all substantial powers of decision and control is in any case to take something of a Western view. For within Malay society itself, the rulers not only remained supreme but had their position considerably strengthened, by the improvement under the aegis of the British of the centralised apparatus of government, by the reduction

of previously competitive territorial chiefs to the status of titled pensioners or government-paid bureaucrats, and by the strengthening of their customary but previously frequented unexercised control over religion. The saving clause in the protectorate treaties concluded between the Malays and the British, while not to be taken altogether seriously by the historian, especially where 'custom' was concerned, operated to preserve and enlarge in the hands of the rulers a substantial authority over Islamic practice and belief.

Nor were the effects of British rule seriously disruptive of the role played in Malay society by the aristocracy, once the initial period of adjustment to the deprivation of taxation rights and other privileges of territorial independence had passed. It is true that they ceased for the most part to be politicians, and the importance of this should not be discounted. On the other hand, senior chiefs in particular, who stood to lose most, played a deliberative role in the State Councils (a more meaningful task in the unfederated states than in the federated, where, however, the process of modernisation proceeded much more slowly and permitted a smaller acquaintance with the organisation of a modern state), and the territorial structure of the traditional Malay aristocratic establishment was maintained alongside the new centralised bureaucracy in sufficient degree to afford district chiefs some continuing responsibility for Malay customary life. In return, they were rewarded with state pensions or salaries, and had by reason of their position and influence other economic advantages, in the way of access to the disposal or

acquisition of land, of mining rights and the like.

In the F.M.S. after the turn of the century (though in fact the process had begun before this), the younger generation of Malay aristocrats were given special education and training, reserved largely for the sons of the traditional elite, and recruited into the colonial bureaucracy. Though the positions they occupied were subordinate in relation to the European civil service, the Malay administrative cadre thus created had a double advantage, over their fellow Malays of commoner origin on the one hand, and on the other, and at least as important, over all non-Malays, who were debarred from the administrative ranks of the public service. Malay officers were almost invariably employed in rural administration, among their own people, where the tasks they performed, though vastly different in detail, were in essence comparable with those of the territorial Malay administration of an earlier time in so far as the nexus between peasant and prince was concerned. The prestige and authority conferred by traditional social status was little more than confirmed and sustained by administrative authority derived from the colonial regime. This pattern was repeated, and indeed intensified, in the unfederated states, where the incidence of direct British control was less. Only in Kedah was there something like a truly autonomous Malay administration, acting under British advice, but in Johore the strong Malay aristocratic establishment retained a firm hold on Malay life even as the direction of public affairs came to rest only nominally in

Malay hands, and in the eastern states, which approached the modern world only slowly because of their relative lack of promise for Western economic enterprise, the Malay aristocracy remained largely untouched.

The maintenance of the traditional Malay elite throughout the peninsula, either in its customary form or as the new bureaucracy, was paralleled by a striking absence of Malay peasant involvement in the mushrooming export economy, as a work force or as entrepreneurs, with one potentially important qualification which will be noticed shortly. Here again, there are echoes of an earlier period. The foreign trader -- Arab, Chinese, South Indian, Bugis or Sumatran -- was a familiar figure in the port towns and riverine states of the past, and during the first half of the century Chinese miners and plantation agriculturalists had been encouraged by independent Malay rulers to enter the western and southern states to develop the alluvial tin or to cultivate gambier or pepper, in return for tax on the proceeds. Malay peasant labour was seldom if ever involved in these operations, and though the aristocracy sometimes acted as private traders as well as tax-gatherers, this tended to be a dilettante and manipulative pastime rather than a characteristic pursuit.

British policy and practice during the colonial period sought actively to shield peasant Malay society from the disruptive effects of the new economic order, partly in the interests of the 'protectorate' relationship, partly as a means of avoiding 'economic unrest and social discontent' consequent upon the disorganisation of Malay village life.

An abundance of unoccupied land made it possible for state administrations to alienate large tracts to European and Chinese mining and plantation enterprises without trespassing seriously on Malay customary lands, and the problem of providing an adequate work force in circumstances in which the Malays were either too few in number or reluctant to become wage labour, was met by the wholesale introduction of immigrant labour from South China and the British possessions in India. Land policies were framed to keep the Malay peasant in possession of his patrimony and cultivating traditional crops, and to ensure an adequate supply of land suitable for Malay wet-rice cultivation in the future. These policies were reinforced by a vernacular education system which, though widespread and generous as far as it went, had as its principal objective the creation of a 'vigorous and self-respecting agricultural peasantry'.

Though the effect in general of these measures was to reduce the impact and the rate of socio-economic change at the village level, this is not to say that changes did not occur within peasant Malay society, merely that they were neither radical in extent nor structural in implication. The introduction of a system of individual, registrable and alienable title to land led to some use of Malay land as a capital resource, though efforts were made in the interests of the prevention and reduction of rural indebtedness to curtail transactions in certain types of land, or to make such transactions as unattractive as possible to non-Malays. The adoption by large

numbers of Malays after 1910 of rubber-smallholding as a means of earning cash income led to more intensive monetization of the peasant economy, and to modified patterns of land-holding and land-use. But the ubiquitous presence within the economy of non-Malay middlemen, in control of preparation, marketing and profit-taking, seriously reduced the stimulant effect this might otherwise have had upon Malay economic life.

One of the concomitants of the retention of the Malay peasant within the matrix of the traditional agricultural society was the small part played by the Malay in the urban life of the western states or the Straits Settlements, and his consequent insulation from social change arising within the urban environment. In numerical terms, Malays constituted in 1920 only some ten per cent of the urban population of the peninsula, a figure corresponding to perhaps four or five per cent of the total Malay population. These proportions rose only slowly in the course of the next two decades, despite the introduction of policies designed to lessen non-Malay predominance in the urban centred subordinate ranks of government employment, and though the small Malay component of urban society was to be of great significance for future nationalist-type movements, the great majority of Malays continued to find the town alien and strange, if indeed they had any acquaintance with it at all. In the vernacular fictional literature which sprang up in the late 1920s and the 1930s, the town was sometimes portrayed as a place of opportunity for those clever enough to thrive in its economically competitive life, but almost

always as a source of moral peril and cultural alienation for good Malays and Muslims.

Throughout the period under review, therefore, there is evidenced amongst the Malays a strong persistence of traditional patterns of social and economic relationships, in a context of rapid and far-reaching socio-economic change affecting principally Malaya's non-Malay inhabitants. The careful retention by the British of the state structure, the elaborate nurture of the myth that the Sultans were still independent and autonomous rulers capable of looking after the best interests of their subjects, the effective restriction of pan-Malayan experience (notwithstanding the vast improvement in modern communications systems) to small groups of Malay government servants and schoolteachers and some of the religious, all helped to further the involutionary and fissiparous concept of Malay development which resulted. Despite this, however, there did arise in the course of the first few decades of the twentieth century three new contending elite groups in Malay society, which refused to accept in its entirety the colonial-traditionalist status quo, and held to notions, in varying degrees radical, of more rapid social and political change. The first of these groups was the Arabic-educated religious reform movement, the second the largely Malay-educated autochthonous intelligentsia, and the third the English-educated bureaucracy, itself drawn mainly from the traditional elite metamorphosed.

The religious reform movement found its ideological origins in

the Islamic renaissance which took place in the Middle East, and particularly in Egypt and Turkey, around the end of the nineteenth century. Malay-Arabs, Peninsular Malays, Sumatrans from Minangkabau and others returning from sojourns in Cairo and Hejaz, brought with them a burning desire to renovate Islam in their own society, and to make it a fit vehicle with which to respond to the social and economic challenges posed by alien domination. In propagating doctrines of the essential unity of the Islamic _umat_, of the need to return to the purity of the original Islam cleansed of customary accretions which stood in the way of progress, and of the social equality of all Muslims before God, they came into immediate conflict with well-entrenched elements in traditional Malay society, and in particular with the rulers and their religious establishments and the rural _ulama_. Though the strength of the reform movement lay in the urban centres, and in Singapore and Penang in particular (where its more individualistic ethic proved attractive to those engaged in modern economic competition) it found adherents also among religious teachers and others at scattered points of the peninsula. The contest between the _Kaum Muda_ (the reformists) and the _Kaum Tua_ (the traditional establishment) was essentially an unequal one, but its many-faceted and long pursued argument acted as an important modernising force within Malay society, and provided a terminology for innovation and reaction controversies which extended far beyond the purely religious sphere. In the long run, the religious reform movement failed to create or to lead a mass movement among the Malays, for a

number of reasons which must be seen as acting in concert. It was violently opposed by the traditional establishment (religious and secular) which still held the loyalty of the majority of Malays. The issues over which it fought were of principal concern not to the generality of syncretist peasant Malays but to the small urban and trading communities which felt most in need of weapons with which to fight alien submersion and economic competition. The fires of dispute between reformists and traditionalists tended to die as improved Islamic and secular education removed many of the coals of contention. And finally, the reform movement was severely handicapped in the 1930s by its identification with non-Malay elements of the Malayo-Muslim community at a time when chauvinist Malay feelings were being strongly aroused, and by association of the term Kaum Muda with explicitly 'political' radicalism.

A decade before this, however, in the mid-1920s, a number of young Malays who had had an introduction to anti-colonialist ideas in Egyptian Islamic reform circles, were voicing overtly political, pan-Malayan nationalist sentiments with little religious content, in two journals published in Cairo. On their return to Malaya they joined forces with the secular, Malay-educated intelligentsia, which formed the second of the three new elite groups in Malay society. In large part the product of the central Sultan Idris Training College for vernacular teachers, and of two similar institutions for technical and agricultural education, the radical Malay intelligentsia was strongly

influenced, directly and indirectly, by the left-wing particularly of the Indonesian nationalist movement, and looked to the achievement of a united Malaya freed from colonial rule, and to an eventual political union of Malaya and Indonesia in a greater Malaysia Raya. With few exceptions, the radical intelligentsia was drawn from the peasant class in Malay society, and though its ideology was extremely confused, and often naive, it attacked (largely in private) the traditional Malay elite and the new English-educated bourgeoisie pari passu with the British colonialists. It attracted to its cause a number of English-educated Malay journalists and a few government servants, but its programme was largely unformed, and never really achieved organisational coherence. The Kesatuan Melayu Muda, formed by the radicals late in 1938, spent the last years before the war as a small, pseudo-political party, under cautious surveillance by the British, but distrusted or feared by the majority of Malays who came into contact with it for its radical social views, its 'Kaum Muda' connotations, and its Pan-Indonesian aims. Though it acted as a valuable training ground for left-wing nationalists later active, during the Japanese occupation and after the war, in radical Malay political movements, it failed utterly in the pre-war years to gain anything like a mass, or solidly peasant-based, following.

The leadership of the third and last new elite group in modern Malay society sprang for the most part from within the traditional elite itself, among the English-educated administrators and government servants. The Malay Associations movement of the 1930s arose in

response to Malay fears, especially among the English-educated in government employment, that specifically Malay interests were about to be lost by default to locally domiciled aliens, and particularly to the Chinese. The movement had had its origins some years earlier in the Malay community most sensitive to alien domination, that of Singapore, where there had for long been strong feelings within the larger Malayo-Muslim community against the Arabs and Indians. In the late 1930s, following upon years of discussion in the vernacular press and elsewhere of the threat offered to the Malays by Chinese claims for equal rights, the first quasi-political Malay Associations, of strongly conservative complexion, were formed in the peninsular states. The pan-Malayan conferences of these Associations, held in 1939 and 1940, demonstrated clearly the fissiparous character of the only large-scale movement which before the war showed any signs of gaining the approbation of appreciable numbers of Malays. Chauvinist, or ethnicist, rather than politically nationalist, the Malay Associations professed complete loyalty to the traditional Malay establishments, on the basis of the separate state structure, and an almost equal enthusiasm for British colonial rule, as the bulwark for the time being of Malay interests against the rapacious demands of Malayan-domiciled aliens. There is little doubt that the Associations movement and its leadership did foresee a time, in however distant a future, when the Malays might be in a position to claim 'national' independence from the British, and that they desired to work towards

this end. But the struggle, very politely and quietly, had just begun, and when the consummation arrived it would certainly be cast in such a form as to leave intact the Sultans and their States, the final and enduring symbol of Malay political authority and cultural identity.

NOTE ON SOURCES AND FIELD WORK

This study was made possible by the generous grant of eighteen months field research in Malaya (from October 1959 to April 1961). The collection of material has, however, been attended by some difficulty. The main sources in Canberra consisted of Parliamentary Papers (Great Britain), containing the annual State administration reports and other material listed in the Bibliography; the microfilm of the CO 273 series of official correspondence for the period 1876-1896; most of the censuses; and a small, very random collection of sundry official publications emanating from the Malay States during the period covered by the thesis. Towards the end of my research I was able to make use also of the microfilm of the Proceedings of the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, in the Department of History, Monash University.

All other material was consulted in Malaya, where the archival situation throughout most of 1959-61 was extremely confused. When I arrived in October, 1959, the Public Records Office had only recently been set up, was occupying temporary quarters of a makeshift kind, and had scarcely begun to build up its holdings, let alone organise or classify them. Elsewhere in Kuala Lumpur, in a number of government offices and godowns and often inadequately

housed and cared for, there existed other collections of official material, published and unpublished, mostly unclassified and seldom complete. The Raffles Library (now the National Library) in Singapore contained a quantity of published official material for the period, but use of this was restricted by lack of adequate guidance as to its contents, in the absence of either an archivist or an up-to-date catalogue. The Museum in Taiping, Perak, also contained a collection of published official material, though this had suffered to some extent from the war. Elsewhere in Malaya, though it was suspected that historical records existed in greater quantity than was generally supposed, the position was largely unknown.

In these circumstances, despite the ready and generous assistance of the staffs of all the institutions mentioned, and of countless officials elsewhere, the historian was forced, to a large extent, to become his own archivist. In the course of a number of visits to different parts of Malaya, I was fortunate enough to find substantial quantities of official material, both published and unpublished, much of which subsequently found a home in the Public Records Office in Kuala Lumpur.[1] Systematic work on this material and even on the material in the known repositories, was, however,

---

[1] _Report on the Public Records Office and National Archives (1958-1962)_ (Kuala Lumpur, 1962), p. 5. The Report gives an interesting account of the first years of the PRO, in addition to providing a List of Holdings as at October, 1962.

rendered difficult by its scattered nature and frequent incompleteness. To give only one example, incomplete sets of the Proceedings of the Federal Council (1909-41) -- one of the most important official sources for the period -- existed in Raffles Library, the PRO and the Taiping Museum. There was nowhere, however, a complete set, and in the PRO and Taiping (each of which had half of one original set) there was no collection of published legislation with which to compare the Council debates and committee reports. In addition to difficulties of this sort, the discovery of material out of sequence in time (either past time, or in relation to topics being examined in the present) made methodical work almost impossible, and I am conscious that the rather haphazard nature of the research is frequently reflected in the thesis, especially where official material is concerned.

The argument where it relates to British policy and administration has been documented mainly from the collections of correspondence between the Governor and High Commissioner and the Colonial Office (1897-1941, incomplete, Open Despatches only, and few Enclosures) which were deposited in the PRO shortly before I left Malaya; from the Proceedings of the Federal Council and the Straits Settlements Legislative Council, and the Papers tabled before these bodies; from the Minutes of the Selangor State Council and the (incomplete) Abstract of Proceedings of the Conference of Residents; from departmental and other official reports of various kinds; and from

books and articles published by official participants.

The position with respect to Malay-language material was, if anything, even more confused in 1959 than that concerning official material. There was, however, an excellent if patchy collection of Malay newspapers and periodicals housed (unclassified) in the Library of the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, and material from this has been used extensively. In addition, I conducted an intensive search throughout the country for Malay journals, which resulted in the discovery of a number of important and useful items in private hands (kindly lent to me by the owners), and in the preparation, as a basic tool of research, of an annotated bibliography of Malay newspapers and periodicals for the period 1876-1941, which was published in 1961. Malay books and ephemeral literature of the period were almost always published in small editions and on poor paper, which has limited their capacity for survival, but the Library of the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur has a fair Malay collection, which I was fortunate to be able to supplement in many respects from collections, or individual volumes, owned by private individuals.

Finally, I have made frequent and extensive use of verbal information supplied by countless Malays who lived through the period under study, and participated in its events. The importance of this source of material cannot be overrated, though it does not always achieve prominence in the text. I spent several months during the early

period of my research living with Malay families near Klang and in Kuala Lumpur, and later for briefer periods in other parts of the country. The names of some of my principal informants are listed in the bibliography. Many others, including some who contributed largely to my understanding of Malay life, cannot be so acknowledged.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. UNPUBLISHED OFFICIAL RECORDS

Great Britain (Public Records Office, London)

Correspondence between Governor, Straits Settlements, and Secretary of State for the Colonies, Open, 1876-96 (CO 273).

Correspondence between Governor and Secretary of State, Confidential, 1876-96 (CO 273).

Malaya (Public Records Office, Kuala Lumpur)

Correspondence between High Commissioner for the Malay States and Secretary of State for the Colonies, Open, 1897-1920, 1934-41 (Federated Malay States Series -- cited as F.M.S., with number of despatch, date and year).

Correspondence between High Commissioner and Secretary of State, Open, 1912-21 (Malay States Series -- cited as M.S.).

Correspondence between High Commissioner and Secretary of State, Open, 1921-41 (Unfederated Malay States Series -- cited as U.M.S.).

Malaya (Selangor State Secretariat)

Minutes of the Selangor State Council, 1877-1941.

B. UNPUBLISHED PRIVATE PAPERS AND MEMOIRS

Ms. Autobiography of Haji Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin (1887-1944), covering the years 1887-c.1925, and written in 1943 (copy in possession of the present writer).

Abdullah b. Ahmad, 'Kenang2-an Tanjong Malim' (Memories of Sultan Idris Training College, Tanjong Malim) (Ms. dated 1956, in possession of the present writer).

C. PUBLISHED OFFICIAL RECORDS

Parliamentary Papers (Great Britain)

Protected Malay States, Federated Malay States, Unfederated Malay States, Straits Settlements. Annual Reports, 1880-1919. (Title varies. From 1920 transferred to Non-Parliamentary Papers series.)

'The Education of Asiatics', by R.J. Wilkinson, in Special Reports on Educational Subjects, vol. 8, Cd. 835 of 1902.

'The System of Education in the F.M.S.', and 'The System of Education in the S.S.', in Special Reports on Educational Subjects, vol. 14, Cd. 2379 of 1905.

Report by W.G.A. Ormsby-Gore on his Visit to Malaya, Ceylon and Java in 1928, Cmd. 3235 of 1928-29.

Report of Sir Samuel Wilson on his Visit to Malaya, Cmd. 4276 of 1932-33.

Orde-Browne Report on Labour Conditions in Ceylon, Mauritius and Malaya, Cmd. 6423 of 1942-43.

Non-Parliamentary Papers (Great Britain)

Federated Malay States, Unfederated Malay States, Straits Settlements. Annual Reports, 1920-39. (Title varies.)

A Report on the Social, Economic and Political Condition of the Hadhramout, by W.H. Ingrams. (Colonial Paper No. 123, 1936.)

Higher Education in Malaya: Report of the Commission appointed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, June 1939 (Chairman, Sir W.H. McLean). (Colonial Paper No. 173, 1939.)

Vocational Technical Education in the Colonial Empire. A Survey. (Colonial Paper No. 177, 1940.)

Council Papers (Federal Council, F.M.S.)

(a) Papers printed with the Federal Council Proceedings

'Report of the Committee on General Clerical Service Salaries', No. 18 of 1919.

'Interim Reports of the Retrenchment Commission' (including especially the 'Report of a Committee on Employment of Malays in the Government Service'), No. 15 of 1923.

'Report of the Decentralisation Committee', No. 36 of 1923 (printed in Proceedings for 1924).

'Despatches re Correspondence with the Association of British Malaya on the Administration and Finances of the F.M.S.', No. 4 of 1924.

'Report of a Committee to consider (a) the transfer of certain expenditure from Federal to State estimates, (b) the question of changes in the format of revenue estimates, and (c) the apportionment of Federal revenue among the States', No. 18 of 1924.

'Decentralisation and the Political Development of the F.M.S.' A Statement by the High Commissioner. No. 39 of 1925.

'Report on the Popular Credit Institutions or "People's Banks" of the N.E.I.', by A. Cavendish. No. 21 of 1926.

'Report of a Legal Committee appointed to consider the subject of the Extension of the Legislative Powers of the State Councils', No. 37 of 1926.

'Report of a Committee appointed to make recommendations in regard to the present constitution of the Federal Council', No. 38 of 1926.

'Report of a Committee appointed to draw up a Scheme for a School of Agriculture as a joint institution for the F.M.S. and S.S.', No. 12 of 1927.

'Report of Alienation of Land Enquiry Committee', No. 8 of 1928.

'Recommendations for Co-operative Societies among Malay Smallholders for the preparation and marketing of their rubber', No. 9 of 1928.

'Report on Co-operation in Malaya', by C.F. Strickland, No. 26 of 1929.

'Excerpts from the Proceedings of the Durbar held at Sri Menanti on Tuesday 18th August 1931', No. 38 of 1931.

'Memorandum on the Need for a Definite Policy for the Extension of Rice Cultivation in the F.M.S.', No. 28 of 1933.

'Statement of Educational Policy', No. 31 of 1936.

'Reprint of Report on the Conditions of Indian Labour in Malaya by V.S. Srinavasa Sastri', No. 10 of 1937.

'Memorandum on the Report of the Committee appointed to inquire into the Incidence of Unemployment in Selangor', No. 5 of 1938.

(b) Papers printed separately

Final Report of the Retrenchment Commission (Kuala Lumpur, 1923: No. 16 of 1923).

Report of the Rice Cultivation Committee (Kuala Lumpur, 1931, 2 vols: No. 24 of 1931).

Report of the F.M.S. Retrenchment Commission appointed on 9 March 1932 (Kuala Lumpur, 1932: No. 31 of 1932).

Report on Vocational Education in Malaya, by H.R. Cheeseman (Kuala Lumpur, 1938: No. 39 of 1938).

Council Papers (Legislative Council, S.S.)

(a) Papers printed with the Legislative Council Proceedings

'Report by Mr. R.O. Winstedt, Assistant Director of Education, S.S. and F.M.S., on Vernacular and Industrial Education in the Netherlands East Indies and the Philippines', No. 22 of 1917.

'Report of the Committee appointed to Consider and Report upon a Scheme to Commemorate the Centenary of Singapore', No. 16 of 1918.

'Report by the Committee appointed to advise as to a Scheme for the Advancement of Education preparatory to a University in Singapore', No. 4 of 1919.

'Technical Education Committee, 1925: Report', No. 2 of 1926.

Proceedings of the Federal Council of the F.M.S., 1909-1940. (Annually.)

Proceedings of the Legislative Council of the S.S., 1915-1940. (Annually)

Minutes of the Perak State Council, 1879-1882. Published in Papers on Malay Subjects (see under R.J. Wilkinson), Malay History, 3 and 4 (Kuala Lumpur, 1907-08).

Abstract of Proceedings, Conference of Residents, 1905, 1907-09, 1911 and 1922-31 (Kuala Lumpur, 1931).

Index to Decisions of Residents' Conferences, 1897-1928, comp. by J.A. Harvey (Kuala Lumpur, 1928).

Annual Reports on Education, S.S. and F.M.S., 1901-04, 1920-38.

Annual Reports on the State of Crime and the Administration of the Police Force in the F.M.S., 1931-38.

Report on the Census of the S.S. taken on 5 April 1891, comp. by E.M. Merewether (Singapore, 1892).

Report on the Census of the S.S. taken on 1 March 1901, comp. by J.R. Innes (Singapore, 1901).

Report on the Census of the F.M.S., 1901 (Kuala Lumpur, 1901).

Report on the Census of the S.S., 1911 (Singapore, 1911).

The Census of the F.M.S., 1911, comp. by A.M. Pountney (Kuala Lumpur, 1912).

Report on the Census of the State of Johore, 1911, comp. by H. Marriott (Singapore, 1911).

Report on the Census of Kedah and Perlis, A.H. 1329 (A.D. 1911) (Penang, 1911.)

Census of British Malaya, 1921, comp. by J.A. Nathan (London, 1922).

British Malaya: A Report on the 1931 Census, comp. by C.A. Vlieland (London, 1932).

Malaya: A Report on the 1947 Census of Population, comp. by M.V. del Tufo (London, 1949).

Enquiry as to the Complicity of Chiefs in the Perak Outrages (Singapore, 1876).

Correspondence Respecting the Federation of the Protected Malay States, May 1893 - December 1895 (Taiping, 1896).

Report of the Committee on Romanised Malay (Kuala Lumpur, 1904).

'Report on the F.M.S. and Java', by Staniforth Smith, in *Parliamentary Papers, Commonwealth of Australia*, 1906, vol. II.

Imperial Education Conference Papers. III: *Educational Systems of the Chief Colonies not possessing Responsible Government. Federated Malay States*. (London, 1913.)

Report of the Committee on Malay Education (Chairman, M.L.J. Barnes) (Kuala Lumpur, 1951).

F.M.S. Civil Service Lists, 1904, 1920, 1938 (Kuala Lumpur, these dates).

Malay Administrative Service List, 1932 (Kuala Lumpur, 1932).

Scheme for Salaries of Teachers in Government Schools (Kuala Lumpur, 1902).

Scheme for Malay Officers, 1 July 1917 (Kuala Lumpur, 1917).

Scheme for Malay Inspectors of Police (Kuala Lumpur, 1917).

Scheme for Malay Officers in the Agricultural Department of the F.M.S., 1 June 1918 (Kuala Lumpur, 1918).

Scheme for Malay Officers in the Department of Agriculture, 1 January 1921 (Kuala Lumpur, 1921).

F.M.S. Reprint of Salary Schemes (Locally Recruited Officers) (Kuala Lumpur, 1940).

Circulars Issued by the Government of the F.M.S., corrected to 16 November 1925 (Kuala Lumpur, 1925)

General Orders (for F.M.S. Government Establishments), 1923 and 1932 (Kuala Lumpur, these dates).

Kitab Pemimpin bagi Pekerjaan Penghulu2 (Guide Book for Penghulus) (Taiping, 1931).

Panduan Di-Dalam Pekerjaan Pegawai2 Ugama Johor (Handbook for Johore Religious Teachers), prepared by the Pejabat Ugama Johor (Johore Religious Department) (Johore Bahru, 1933).

Pedoman Mengajar bagi Pergunaan Guru2 Sekolah Ugama Johor dan Daerah-nya (Teaching Guide for Religious School Teachers in Johore and District), comp. with authority, by Ahmad Yaacub (Johore Bahru, 1939).

An Illustrated Guide to the F.M.S., ed. by C.W. Harrison (published with permission, by the Malay States Information Agency, London). 1911 and 1923.

Handbook to British Malaya, comp. by R.L. German (published by authority, by the Malay States Information Agency, London), 1927 and 1936.

Department of Agriculture, S.S. and F.M.S., Bulletins:

(a) Special Series:

No. 18, Agriculture in Malaya, 1912, by L. Lewton Brain (Kuala Lumpur, 1914).

No. 20, Agriculture in Malaya, 1913, by L. Lewton Brain (Kuala Lumpur, 1914).

No. 33, Wet Padi Planting in Negri Sembilan, by D.H. Grist (Kuala Lumpur, 1922).

No. 35, Rice in Malaya, by H.W. Jack (Kuala Lumpur, 1923).

No. 103, The Economics of Padi Production in North Malaya, by T.B. Wilson (Kuala Lumpur, 1958).

(b) General Series:

No. 5, Report and Proceedings of the Second Inter-Departmental Agricultural Conference (held in Kuala Lumpur, 1930), (Kuala Lumpur, 1931).

Nos. 14, 19, 24, 26, Reports of the Research, Economic and Agricultural Education Branches, 1932, 1933, 1935, 1936 (Kuala Lumpur, these dates).

(c) Economic Series:

No. 2, Nationality of Ownership and Nature of Constitution of Rubber Estates in Malaya, by D.H. Grist (Kuala Lumpur, 1933).

Nos. 3, 5-11, Malayan Agricultural Statistics, 1932, 1933-39 (Annually).

Department of Statistics, Rubber Statistics Handbook, 1946 (Kuala Lumpur, 1948).

The Laws of the F.M.S., 1877-1920, by A.B. Voules (London, 1921) 3 vols.

The Laws of the F.M.S. and Each of Them in Force on the 31st Day of December, 1934 (Revised Edition), by W.S. Gibson (London, 1935) 4 vols.

Supplement to the Revised Edition of the Laws of the F.M.S.: State Legislation (Kuala Lumpur, 1940).

The Laws of the State of Johore in Force on the 1st Day of January, 1935 (Revised Edition) (Johore Bahru, 1935) 3 vols.

Supplement to the Laws of Johore (Johore Bahru, 1941).

The Laws of the State of Kedah (Alor Star, 1935), 5 vols.

Supplement to the Laws of Kedah (Alor Star, 1940).

Kelantan Enactments, 1910-1941 (Collection made in the Attorney-General's Office, Kuala Lumpur) (Kuala Lumpur, 1941) 6 vols.

The Laws of Trengganu in Force on the 20th Day of February, 1939 (Revised Edition) (Kuala Lumpur, 1939) 2 vols.

Lembaga Atoran bagi Perentahan Majlis Raja, Majlis Istana dan Agama (Statutes of the Court, Palace and Religious Establishments) (Johore Bahru, 1342 (1923)).

Certain Draft Regulations relating to Offences between Men and Women according to Islamic Law, by Raja Muda Suleiman of Selangor, translated into English by W.C. Kemp (Kuala Lumpur, 1894).

A Short Treatise on the Registration of Title in the F.M.S., with Reports of Cases decided in the Supreme Courts under the Land and Mining Laws from 1907 to 1913, by J.R. Innes (Kuala Lumpur, 1913).

The Federated Malay States Digest (of reported cases decided by the Supreme Courts of the F.M.S., Johore and Kedah, 1907-1935), by H.C. Willan (Kuala Lumpur, 1936).

D. NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS (MALAY)

(a) Read systematically for the periods indicated. Dates in brackets indicate life of journal. For full bibliographical details and extant holdings in Malaya, see my *Guide to Malay Periodicals, 1876-1941* (Singapore, 1961), submitted in association with this thesis. All journals printed in *Jawi* unless otherwise indicated.

Jawi Peranakan (Singapore, 1876-95) 1887, 1894.

Bintang Timor (Singapore, 1894-95) 1894. (Romanised.)

Al-Imam (Singapore, 1906-08) 1906-08.

Utusan Melayu (Singapore, 1907-21) 1907, 1913.

Neracha (Singapore, 1911-15) 1912-13.

Penyuloh (Singapore 1924-25) 1924.

Al-Ikhwan (Penang, 1926-31) 1926-31.

Saudara (Penang, 1928-41) 1934-36.

Seruan Azhar (Cairo, 1925-28) 1925-28.

Pilehan Timour (Cairo, 1927-28) 1927-28.

Majlis (Kuala Lumpur, 1931-41) 1932.

Utusan Melayu (Singapore 1939-41) 1939.

The Modern Light (Johore Bahru, 1940-41) 1940-41 (English).

(b) Read selectively only. Dates in brackets indicate life of journal. For bibliographical details and holdings, see Guide to Malay Periodicals. All journals printed in Jawi unless otherwise indicated.

Sekola Melayu (Singapore, 1888-90).

Chahaya Pulau Pinang (Penang, 1900-06).

Lembaga Melayu (Singapore, 1914-31).

Harapan (Johore Bahru, 1919-20).

Lidah Teruna (Muar, 1920-21).

The Muslim (Singapore, 1922-24) (English).

Al-Hedayah (Kota Bahru, 1923-26).

Majallah Guru (Seremban, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, 1924-40).

Kemajuan Pengetahuan (Kuala Lumpur, 1925).

Real Islam (Singapore, 1928-30) (English).

Warta Malaya (Singapore, 1930-41).

Temasek (Singapore, 1930).

Al-Johoriah (Johore Bahru, 1932).

Tanah Melayu (Singapore, 1933-36).

Berita Sekolah (Penang, 1934-35).

Chahaya Singapura (Singapore, 1934-35).

Wihdatul Madaris (Penang, 1935).

Persahabatan (Penang, 1936-37).

Genuine Islam (Singapore, 1936-41) (English).

Warta Kinta (Ipoh, 1937-41).

E. UNPUBLISHED THESES

Abdullah Sanusi b. Ahmad, (Peranan Pejabat Karang Mengarang dalam Bidang2 Pelajaran Sekolah2 Melayu dan Kesusasteraan di-Kalangan Orang Ramai' (The Role of the Translation Bureau in the Fields of Malay Education and General Literature). (B.A. Hons., University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, 1960.)

(Nik) Ahmad b. Nik Hassan, 'The Malay Vernacular Press' (B.A. Hons., University of Malaya in Singapore, 1958).

Merican, Marina, 'Syed Shaikh Al-Hadi dan Pendapat2-nya Mengenai Kemajuan Kaum Perempuan' (Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi and his Views on the Advancement of Women) (B.A. Hons., University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, 1961).

Mohd. Khalil b. Hussein, 'The Department of Religious Affairs in Perak' (B.A. Hons., University of Malaya in Singapore, 1958).

Mohd. Taib b. Osman, 'The Language of Editorials in Malay Vernacular Newspapers up to 1941' (B.A.Hons., University of Malaya in Singapore, 1958).

Rozhan b. Kuntom, 'A General Survey of Muslim Religious Schools in Malaya' (B.A. Hons., University of Malaya in Singapore, 1957).

Sadka, Emily, 'The Residential System in the Protected Malay States, 1874-1895' (PhD., Australian National University, 1960).

Swift, M.G., 'Rural Malay Social Structure in Jelebu, Negri Sembilan' (PhD., University of London, 1961).

Tan, S.H., 'The Life and Times of Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi' (B.A. Hons., University of Malaya in Singapore, 1961).

Thio, Eunice, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula, 1880-1909' (Phd., University of London, 1956).

Zabeda bte. Awang Ngah, 'Pandangan dan Kritik Za'ba Mengenai Soal Sifat2 Kemiskinan dan Sa-tengah2 Aspek Chara Penghidupan Serta Juga Shor2-nya atas Jalan Keselamatan bagi Orang Melayu' (Za'ba's Views and Criticisms Concerning the Poverty of the Malays and Several Aspects of their Life, together with his Recommendations for the Salvation of the Malays) (B.A.Hons., University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, 1960).

F. SELECT LIST OF BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Abbas b. Mohd. Taha, Sempurnaan Pelajaran (The Perfection of Education) (Singapore, 1906).

Abdul Aziz b. Ishak, Tengku Abdul Rahman: The Architect of Merdeka (Kuala Lumpur, 1957).

Abdul Aziz b. Ishak, Katak Keluar Dari Bawah Tempurong (The Frog Comes Out from under the Coconut Shell) (Singapore, 1959).

(Tengku Daeng) Abdul Hamid b. Tengku Haji. Mohd. Salleh, Sentosa Ketakhtaan Selangor (Peace to the Selangor Throne) (Klang, 1938).

(Wan) Abdul Karim b. Wan Abdul Hamid, Tawarikh Raja2dan Adat Istiadat Zaman Purbakala Negri Perak Darul Ridzwan (History of the Rulers and Ancient Customs of Perak) (Penang, n.d.)

Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin, 'A Malay's Pilgrimage to Mecca', J.M.B.R.A.S., IV, 2, (1924).

(Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin), The Malays of Malaya, By One of Them (Singapore, 1928).

Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin, The Malayan Kaleidoscope (Kuala Lumpur, 1935).

A(bdul) Talib b. Haji Ahmad, Sejarah Dato' Bahaman, Orang Kaya Semantan (History of Dato Bahaman, Orang Kaya of Semantan) Vol. I (Kuala Lumpur, 1959).

A(bdul) Talib b. Haji Ahmad, Perang Saudara di Selangor, 1868-1875 (The Selangor Civil War, 1868-75) (Kuala Lumpur, 1962).

Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir, Munshi, Hikajat Abdullah (Abdullah's Voyage), ed. by R.A. Datoek Besar & R. Roolvink (Djakarta/ Amsterdam, 1953).

Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir, Munshi, Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah (The Voyage of Abdullah), ed. Kassim Ahmad (Kuala Lumpur, 1960).

Abdullah Haji Musa, Sejarah Perak Dahulu dan Sekarang (History of Perak Then and Now) (Singapore, n.d.).

Adams, Charles, C., Islam and Modernism in Egypt (London, 1933).

Adams, T.S., 'The Malay in Malaya', Asiatic Review, N.S. XL, 141 (1944).

Ahmad b. Yaacub Al-Johari, Adab Perempuan (Women's Manners) (Muar, 1926 and 1928) 2 vols.

Ahmad Ibrahim, "The Legal Position of Muslims in Singapore", Intisari, I, 1 (1962).

Akers, C.E., The Rubber Industry in Brazil and the Orient (London, 1914).

Al-Attas, (Sayyid) Naguib, Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised Among the Malays (Singapore, 1963).

Al-Hadi, (Sayyid) Alwi, 'Almerhum Syed Sheikh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi dan bahagian yang telah di-ambil-nya didalam peredaran agama Islam di-Semenanjong Tanah Melayu' ('The Late Sayyid Shaykh b. Ahmad Al-Hadi and his part in the religious revolution in The Malay Peninsula') (Unpub. Ms., c. 1958).

Al-Hadi, (Sayyid) Shaykh b. Ahmad, Pemileharaan dan Pelajaran (Upbringing and Education) (Singapore, 1909).

Al-Hadi, (Sayyid) Shaykh b. Ahmad, Hikayat Faridah Hanum, atau Setia Ashek Kepada Ma'ashok-nya (The Story of Faridah Hanum, or Loyalty of a Lover to her Loved One) (Penang, 1925; reprinted Singapore, 1958).

Al-Hadi, (Sayyid) Shaykh b. Ahmad, Hikayat Puteri Nurul'Ain, atau Bahaya Bercherai Talak Tiga dan Berchina Buta (The Story of Princess Nurul'Ain, or The Dangers of Hasty Divorce and Interposed Marriage) (Penang 1926; reprinted Singapore, 1959).

Al-Hadi, (Sayyid) Shaykh b. Ahmad, Alam Perempuan (Woman's World) (Penang, 1930).

Al-Hadi, (Sayyid) Shaykh b. Ahmad Ugama Islam dan Akal (Islam and Reason) (Penang, 1931).

Al-Hadi, (Sayyid) Shaykh b. Ahmad, Hadiah Kebangsaan (The National Gift) (Penang, 1933).

Ali b. Haji Ahmad, Puisi Baharu Melayu (Zaman Permulaan) (New Malay Poetry (The Beginnings) (Kuala Lumpur, 1959).

(Raja) Ali Haji b. Raja Ahmad, Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa (Book of Linguistic Knowledge) (Singapore, 1928).

Allen, G.C. & A. Donnithorne, Western Enterprise in Indonesia and Malaya (London, 1957).

Archer, R.L., 'Muhammadan Mysticism in Sumatra', J.M.B.R.A.S., XV, 2, (1935).

Ayub, b. Abdullah Watan Kita dengan Orang2 Asing (Our Homeland and Foreigners) (Kulim, n.d.)

Bastin, J. & R. Roolvink (eds.), Malayan and Indonesian Studies: Essays presented to Sir Richard Winstedt on his eighty-fifth birthday (London, 1964).

Bauer, P.T. Report of a Visit to the Rubber Smallholdings of Malaya (London, 1948).

Bauer, P.T., 'Some Aspects of the Malayan Rubber Slump, 1929-33', reprinted from Economica, XI (1944), in T.H. Silcock (ed.) Readings in Malayan Economics (Singapore, 1961).

Bauer, P.T., The Rubber Industry (London, 1948).

Benda, H.J., The Crescent and the Rising Sun (The Hague/Bandoeng, 1958).

Benda, H.J. & R.T. McVey (eds.), The Communist Uprisings of 1926-1927 in Indonesia: Key Documents (New York, 1960).

Birch, E.W., 'Vernacular Press in the Straits', J.S.B.R.A.S., 4, (1879).

Birch, E.W., 'The Federated Malay States', United Empire, N.S. III, (1912).

Bird, Isabella, The Golden Chersonese (London, 1883).

Blythe, W.L., 'A Historical Sketch of Chinese Labour in Malaya', J.M.B.R.A.S., XX, 1 (1947).

Braddell, R., The Legal Status of the Malay States (Singapore, 1931).

Brimmell, J.H., A Short History of the Malayan Communist Party (Singapore, 1956).

Brimmell, J.H., Communism in Southeast Asia: A Political Analysis (London, 1959).

'British Malaya as a Mission Field', The Moslem World, XIII (1923)

Brown, C.C. (ed.), 'Sejarah Melayu', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXV, 2 and 3 (1932).

Brown, Edwin A., Indiscreet Memories (London, 1936).

Browne, L.E., Christianity and the Malays (London, 1936).

Bryson, H.P., 'Land Tenure and Documents of Title in Malaya', Malaya (January, 1963).

Buckley, C.B., An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore (Singapore, 1902).

Burhanuddin Al-Helmy, Sejarah Perjuangan Kita (The Story of our Struggle) (Penang, 1955).

Burridge, K.O.L., 'The Malay Composition of a Village in Johore', J.M.B.R.A.S. XXIX, 3 (1956).

Cameron, John, Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India (London, 1865).

Chelliah, D.D., A Short History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements, 1800-1925 (Kuala Lumpur, 1947).

Clementi, C. 'Malaya: Its Interests and Problems', Empire Parliamentary Addresses (London, 1930-31) No. 18.

Clifford, Hugh, 'A Journey Through the Malay States of Trengganua and Kelantan'. Georgraphical Journal, XIX, 1 (January, 1897).

Clifford, Hugh, In Court and Kampong (London, 1897).

Clifford, Hugh, 'Life in the Malay Peninsula: As it Was and As it Is', Proceedings of the Royal Colonial Institute, XXX (1898-99).

Clifford, Hugh, Studies in Brown Humanity (London, 1898).

Clifford, Hugh, 'A Lesson from the Malay States' Atlantic Monthly, 84 (1899).

Clifford, Hugh, 'Rival Systems and the Malayan Peoples', North American Review CLXXVII, (1903).

Clifford, Hugh, A Freelance of Today (London, 1903).

Comber, L., Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya (New York, 1959).

Cowgill, J.V., 'System of Land Tenure in the Federated Malay States', Malayan Agricultural Journal, XIV (May, 1928).

Daly, D.D. 'Surveys and Explorations in the Native States of the Malayan Peninsula, 1875-82', Proceedings of the Royal Georgraphic Society, VII, (July, 1882).

Darus, Ahmad, Orang Besar Tanah Ayer (Heroes of the Homeland) (Penang, 1959).

Daud b. Suleiman, Rengkasan Tawarikh Orang Kaya2 dan Penghulu2 Batu Pahat (Short History of the Chiefs & Penghulus of Batu Pahat) (Muar, 1955).

Davidson, G.W., Trade and Travel in the Far East (London, 1846).

Ding Eing Tan Soo Hai, The Rice Industry in Malaya 1920-1940 (Singapore, 1963).

Dixon, Alec, Singapore Patrol (London, 1935).

Djamour, J., Malay Kinship and Marriage in Singapore (London, 1959).

Drennan, H., 'A Short History of the Malay College', Malay College Magazine, II, 5, (1958).

Drewes, G.W.J., 'Indonesian Mysticism and Activism', in G.E. von Grunebaum (ed.), Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization, (Chicago, 1955).

Drewes, G.W.J., 'D.A. Rinkes: A Note on His Life and Work', Bidjdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde, 117, 4 (1961).

Dussek, O.T. 'Growing Points in Native Education: The Sultan Idris Training College' (Roneo; May, 1939).

Earl, George Windsor, The Eastern Seas or Voyages and Adventures in the Indian Archipelago in 1832-33-34 (with an account of Singapore and a dedication to Dr. Jose Almeida of Singapore) (London, 1837).

Echolls, John M., (ed.), Indonesian Writing in Translation, (New York, 1956).

Edrus, A.H., Amaran (Warning) (Singapore, 1950).

Edrus, A.H. (ed.), Pendita Dr Za'ba Dengan Persuratan Melayu (Za'ba and Malay Letters) Vol. I Prosa (Prose) (Singapore, 1960).

Emerson, Rupert, Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule (New York, 1937).

Firth, Raymond, Malay Fishermen; Their Peasant Economy (London, 1946).

Firth, Rosemary, Housekeeping among Malay Peasants (London, 1947).

Freedman, M., Chinese Family and Marriage in Singapore (London, 1957).

Freedman, M., 'Immigrants and Associations: Chinese in Nineteenth Century Singapore', Comparative Studies in Society and History, III (1960-61).

Furnivall, J.S., Educational Progress in Southeast Asia (New York, 1944).

Geertz, C., The Religion of Java (Illinois, 1960).

Geertz, C., 'The Javanese Kijaji', Comparative Studies in Society and History, II, 2 (January, 1960).

Ghazzali, (Dato) Muhammad, 'The Court Language and Etiquette of the Malays' J.M.B.R.A.S., XI, 2, (1931).

Gibb, H.A.R. (ed.), Whither Islam? A Survey of Modern Movements in the Moslem World (London, 1932).

Graham, W.A., Kelantan: A State of the Malay Peninsula (Glasgow, 1908).

Grunebaum, G.E. Von, Islam: Essays in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition (London, 1955).

Guillemard, (Sir) L., Trivial Fond Records (London, 1937).

Gullick, J.M., 'The Negri Sembilan Economy of the 1890s', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXIV, 1, (1951).

Gullick, J.M., 'Kuala Lumpur, 1880-1895', J.M.B.R.A.S. XXVIII, 4 (1955).

Gullick, J.M., 'The Malay Administrator', The New Malayan (some copies entitled Merdeka) I, 1 (1957).

Gullick, J.M., Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya (London, 1958).

Gullick, J.M., A History of Selangor, 1742-1957 (Singapore, 1960).

Hamka (Haji Abdul Malek b. Karim Amrullah) Ajahku: Riwajat Hidup Dr Abd. Karim Amrullah dan Perdjuangan Kaum Agama (My Father: The Life of Dr. Abd. Karim Amrullah and the Religious Struggle) (Djakarta, 1950).

Hamka (Haji Abdul Malek bin Karim Amrullah) Sedjarah Umat Islam (History of the Muslim Community) (Bukit Tinggi, n.d.).

Hamka (Haji Abdul Malek b. Karim Amrullah) Sedjarah Islam Di Sumatera, (The History of Islam in Sumatra) (Medan, 2nd ed. 1950).

Hamka (Haji Abdul Malek b. Karim Amrullah) Tegoran Suchi dan Jujur terhadap Mufti Johor (An honest and sincere address to the Mufti of Johore) (Singapore, 1958).

Hamka (Haji Abdul Malek b. Karim Amrullah), Pengaruh Muhammad Abduh di Indonesia (The Influence of Muhammad Abduh in Indonesia) (Djakarta, n.d. (1961).

Hamzah, Pertumbohan Novel2 Melayu (The Growth of the Malay Novel) (Singapore, 1962).

Hands, John, 'Malay Agricultural Settlement in Kuala Lumpur', Malayan Historical Journal, II, 2 (1955).

Hanrahan, G.Z., The Communist Struggle in Malaya (New York, 1954)

Hardinge, (Sir) Arthur, The Life of Henry Howard Molyneux Herbert, Fourth Earl of Carnarvon 1831-1890 (London, 1925)

Harun Aminurrashid (Harun b. Mohd. Amin), Melor Kuala Lumpur (Jasmine of Kuala Lumpur) (2nd ed., Singapore 1962; first published 1932).

Heine-Geldern, R., Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia (Ithaca, 1956).

Ho Seng-Ong, Education for Unity in Malaya (Penang, 1952).

(Sayyid) Hussin Ali, 'Pertubuhan Bahasa dan Sastera Melayu di Singapura, selapas Perang Dunia II' (The Growth of Malay Language and Literature in Singapore after the Second World War) Bahasa, II, 2 (Singapore, March 1960).

Ibrahim b. Abdullah, Kesah Pelayaran Mohd. Ibrahim Munshi (The Voyage of Mohd. Ibrahim Munshi) (Reprinted Johore Bahru, 1956).

Ibrahim Shukri, Sejarah Kerajaan Melayu Patani (History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani) (Pasir Puteh, Kelantan, n.d. 1960).

Ibrahim Yaacob, Nusa dan Bangsa Melayu (The Malay Archipelago and People) (Djakarta, 1951).

Ibrahim Yaacob, Sekitar Malaya Merdeka (Concerning Free Malaya) (Djakarta, 1957).

Idrus, Malayan Union: Suara Melayu Ka-Parlimen (Malayan Union: The Voice of the Malays in Parliament) (Singapore, 1946).

Idrus, Amaran: Kupusan Siasat Melayu Berterus-terang (Warning: A Clear Analysis of Malay Politics) (Singapore, 1950).

Innes, E., The Chersonese with the Gilding Off (London, 1885).

Innes, J.R., 'Registration of Title in the Federated Malay States', Journal of the Society of Comparative Legislation, N.S. XIV (1914).

Innes, J.R., 'The Malayan Civil Service as a Career', National Review LXXVII, (1921)

Innes, J.R., 'The Protectorate System in the Malay States', National Review, LXVIII (1921-22).

Ireland, A. The Far Eastern Tropics: Studies in Administration (London, 1905).

Ishak bin Haji Mohd., Puteri Gunong Tahan (The Princess of Mount Tahan), (1st ed., 1937: 2nd ed. Singapore, 1957).

Ishak b. Haji Mohd., Anak Mat Lela Gila (Son of Mat Lela the Mad) (1st ed. 1941; Reprinted, Kuala Lumpur 1957).

Ishak b. Haji Mohd., Bersatu-lah Sekarang (Unite Now)(Singapore, 1946).

Ishak bin Tadin, 'Dato Onn, 1946-1951', J.S.E.A.H., I, 1 (March, 1960).

Ismail Hussein, 'Abdul Rahim Kajai', Dewan Bahasa, III, 12 (1959)

Jackson, R.N., Immigrant Labour and the Development of Malaya, 1786-1920 (Kuala Lumpur, 1961).

Johns, A.H., 'Malay Sufism', J.M.B.R.A.S. XXX, 2 (1957).

Johns, A.H., 'Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History', J.S.E.A.H., II, 2 (July, 1961).

Jones, F.C., Japan's New Order in East Asia 1937-45 (London, 1954).

Jones, S.W., Public Administration in Malaya (London, 1952).

Kahin, G. McT., Nationalism and Revolution in Indonesia (New York, 1952).

Kajai, Abdul Rahim, Banyak Udang Banyak Garam (Lots of Prawns, Lots of Salt) (Singapore, 1959).

Kajai, Abdul Rahim, Lain Padang Lain Belalang (Other Fields, Other Grasshoppers) (Singapore, 1961).

Kamarulzaman, (Raja Haji), 'Some Early Impressions at College, 1905-1908', Malay College Magazine II, 1 (1950).

Khan, G. Mohd., History of Kedah (3rd ed., Penang, 1958).

Kirby, S.W., 'Johore in 1926' Geographical Journal, LXXI, (1928).

Labour Research Department, British Imperialism in Malaya (London, 1926).

Ladejinsky, W.J., 'Agricultural Policies of British Malaya' Foreign Agriculture (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C.) V, 4 (April, 1941).

Lake, Harry, 'Johore: Geography, Inhabitants' Geographical Journal, III (1894).

Landon, K.P., 'Malay Nationalism', Far Eastern Quarterly, II (1943).

Landon, K.P., Southeast Asia, Crossroad of Religions (Chicago, 1947).

Lee-Warner, G., 'Notes on the Hadhramaut' Geographical Journal, LXXVII (1931).

Li Dun-jen, British Malaya: An Economic Analysis (New York, 1955).

Lim Tay Boh, The Cooperative Movement in Malaya (Cambridge, 1950).

Linehan, W., 'A History of Pahang', J.M.B.R.A.S., XIV, 2 (1936).

Lovat, (Lady) Alice, The Life of Sir Frederick Weld (London, 1914).

McNair, J.F.A., Perak and the Malays: Sarong and Keris (London, 1878).

McNair, J.F.A., & W.D. Bayliss, Prisoners Their Own Warders (record of convict establishments in Malaya and Bencoolen) (London, 1899).

Mahajani, U., The Role of Indian Minorities in Burma and Malaya (Bombay, 1960).

Mahmud bin Mat (Dato'), 'The Passing of Slavery in East Pahang', Malayan Historical Journal, I, 1, (1954).

Mahmud Junus, Sedjarah Pendidekan Islam di Indonesia (The History of Islamic Education in Indonesia) (Djakarta, 1960).

Majlis Ugama Islam dan Istiadat, Kelantan, Jambangan Melayu (Malay Bouquet) (Kota Bahru, 1917).

Majlis Ugama Islam dan Istiadat Melayu, Kelantan, Kitab Semangat Kehidupan (The Book of the Spirit of Life) (Kota Bahru, 1918).

Makepeace, W.E., O.E. Brooke & R. St. J. Braddell (eds.), One Hundred Years of Singapore (London, 1921) 2 vols.

Mansur b. Sanusi, Sejarah Perkembangan Pelajaran Melayu (History of the Growth of Malay Education) (Penang, 1955).

Maxwell, (Sir) George, 'The Constitutional Problems of Malaya', Crown Colonist, (August, 1932).

Maxwell, (Sir) George, 'The Malay in Commerce', United Empire, XXXIX, 1 (1948).

Maxwell, (Sir) P.B., Our Malay Conquests (London, 1878).

Maxwell, W.E.,'Law and Custom of the Malays in Relation to the Tenure of Land', J.S.B.R.A.S., XIII, (1884).

Maxwell, W.E., 'History of Perak', J.S.B.R.A.S., IX and XIV.

Maxwell, W.E., 'The Law Relating to Slavery', J.S.B.R.A.S., XII

Maxwell, W.E. & W.S. Gibson, Treaties and Engagements affecting the Malay States and Borneo (London, 1924).

Meulen D. van der, 'The Mecca Pilgrimage and its Importance to the Netherlands East Indies', Asiatic Review, XXXVI, (1940).

Middlebrook, S.M., 'Yap Ah Loy', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXIV, 2, (1951).

Middlebrook, S.M. & A.W. Pinnick, How Malaya is Governed (London, 1940).

Miller, Harry, Prince and Premier (A Biography of Tunku Abdul Rahman) (London/Singapore, 1959).

Mills, L.A., 'A History of British Malaya, 1824-67' J.M.B.R.A.S., III, 2, (1925).

Mills, L.A., British Rule in Eastern Asia (London, 1942).

Mohd. b. Dato' Muda, Tarikh Surat Khabar (History of Newspapers) (Bukit Mertajam, 1940).

Mohd. b. Haji Alias, Tarikh Dato' Bentara Luar Johor (History of Dato' Bentara Luar of Johore) (Johore Bahru, 1928).

Mohd. Abdou (Cheikh), Rissalat al Tawhid: Expose de la Religion Musulmane (Traduite de l'Arabe avec une Introduction sur la Vie et les Idees du Cheikh Mohammed Abdou par B. Michel et le Cheikh Moustapha Abdel Razik) (Paris, 1925).

(Wan) Mohd. Amin b. Wan Mohd. Sa'ad, Kenang-Kenangan Selangor (Memories of Selangor) ed. Abdul Samad b. Ahmad (Klang, 1933).

Mohd. Hassan, Tarikh Salasilah Negeri Kedah (History of Kedah) (Penang, 1928).

Mohd. Ibrahim b. Abdullah, Kitab Pemimpin Johor (Guide for Johore) (Singapore, 1878).

Mohd. Junid Al-Naqshabandi, (ed.), Kalam Allah Ta'ala, Keputusan Bahathan Perkara Kalam Allah, Diantara Mohd. Jenih b. Al-Haji Ahmad, Penang, dan Asasaldin Sukoh Mubaligh, Sumatra (The Pen of God, Decision in the Debate on the Pen of God between Mohd. Jenih b. Haji Ahmad, Penang, and Asasaldin Sukoh, Lecturer, Sumatra) (Penang, n.d.).

(Ustaz) Mohd. Mochtar Daud, Singghasana Negri Pahang (The Pahang Throne), (Pekan, 1957).

Mohd. Radzi b. Puteh, 'Kota Kuala Muda', Malayan Historical Journal, III, 1 (July, 1956).

Mohd. Said b. Haji Sulaiman, Malaya - Ia-itu Negeri2 dalam Tanah Melayu dan yang Berkenaan-nya (Malaya: The States of Malaya and their Affairs) (Singapore, 1939).

Mohd. Said b. Haji Sulaiman, Hikayat Johor, dan Tawarikh Almerhum Sultan Abu Bakar Johor (History of Johore, and of the late Sultan Abu Bakar) (Johore Bahru, 1st ed. 1908; Reprinted 1950).

Mohd. Sufian Hashim, 'The Relationship between Islam and the State in Malaya', Intisari, I, 1 (1962).

Mohd. Tahir b. Jalaluddin, Shaykh, Perisai Orang Beriman tentang Madzhab Orang Kadian (The Shield of the Faithful Against the Qadian School) (Penang, 1930).

Mohd. Taib b. Osman, An Introduction to the Development of Modern Malay Language and Literature (Singapore, 1961).

Mohd. Yunus Hamidi, Sejarah Pergerakan Politik Melayu Semenanjong (History of Peninsular Malay Political Movements) (Kuala Lumpur, 1961).

Mohd. Yusop b. Sultan Maidin, Boria dan Benchana-nya (The Troublesomeness of the Boria) (Penang, 1922).

Mohd. Yusop b. Sultan Maidin, Kejatoham Kaum2 Islam dan Pergerakan Bahru (The Decline of the Muslim Peoples and The New Movements) (Penang, 1931).

Morley, J.A.E., 'The Arabs and the Eastern Trade' J.M.B.R.A.S., XXII, 1 (1949).

Mott, John R. (ed.), The Moslem World of Today (London, 1925).

Nagle, J. Stewart, Educational Needs of the Straits Settlements and Federated Malay States (Baltimore, 1928).

Nair, M.N., Indians in Malaya (Madras, 1938).

Neelakandha, Aiyer K., Indian Problems in Malaya: A Brief Survey in Relation to Immigration (Kuala Lumpur, 1938).

Netto, G., Indians in Malaya: Historical Facts and Figures (Singapore, 1962).

Newbold, T.J., Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements in the Straits of Malacca, with a history of the Malayan States (London, 1839) 2 vols.

(Tunku) Nong, 'Something about Kedah', Asiatic Review, N.S. XXXII (1937).

Norman, (Sir) Henry, People and Politics of the Far East (New York, 1895).

Omar Mohd. Hashim, 'Perkembangan Cherpen Melayu Sa-belum Perang' (The Growth of the Malay Short Story before the War) Dewan Bahasa, V, 8 (August, 1961).

Omar b. Raja Haji Hassan Riau, Ibu di-Dalam Rumah-nya (The Mother in her House) (Singapore, 1926).

Onraet, Rene, Singapore: A Police Background (London, 1947).

Osborn, (Captain) Sherard, Quedah; or Stray Leaves from a a Journal in Malayan Waters (London, 1857).

Osman b. Hassan, Berita Pergerakkan Kesatuan Melayu, 1926-1937 (The Story of the Malay Union Movement, 1926-1937) (Singapore 1937).

Palmier, Leslie H., 'The Javanese Nobility under the Dutch', Comparative Studies in Society and History, II, 2, (January 1960).

Parmer, J. Norman, Colonial Labor Policy and Administration: A History of Labor in the Rubber Plantation Industry in Malaya, c. 1910-1941. (New York, 1960).

Parr, C.W.C. & W.H. Machray, 'History of Rembau', J.S.B.R.A.S. LVI.

Peet, G.L., Malayan Exile (Singapore, 1934).

Peet, G.L., Political Questions of Malaya (Cambridge, 1949).

Pepys, W.E., 'A Malayan Side-show during the First World War', Asiatic Review, (October, 1950).

Png Poh-Seng, 'The Kuomintang in Malaya' in K.G. Tregonning (ed.), Papers on Malayan History (Singapore, 1962).

Pratt, Ambrose, Magical Malaya (Melbourne, 1931).

Pringgodigdo, A.K., Sedjarah Pergerakan Rakjat Indonesia (History of the Indonesian Peoples Movement) (Djakarta, 3rd ed., 1950).

Purcell, V., The Chinese in Malaya (London, 1948).

Purcell, V., The Chinese in Southeast Asia (London, 1951).

Ramsay, A.B., 'Indonesians in Malaya', J.M.B.R.A.S. XXIX, 1, (1956).

Rathbone, A., Camping and Tramping in Malaya, (London, 1848).

Rauf, M.A., A Brief History of Islam (with special reference to Malaya) (Kuala Lumpur, 1964).

(Read, W.H.) 'An Old Resident', Play and Politics: Recollections of Malaya (London, 1901).

Redfield, Robert, The Primitive World and its Transformations (Ithaca, 1954).

Redfield, Robert, Peasant Society and Culture (Chicago, 1956).

Rennie, J.S.M., Musings of J.S.M.R. - Mostly Malayan (Singapore, 1933).

Richings, Emily, Through the Malay Archipelago (London, 1908).

Robinson, A.G., 'Putting the Clock Back in Malaya', National Review, LXXXVII, (March, 1926).

Robson, J.H.M., Records and Recollections, 1899-1934 (Kuala Lumpur, 1934).

Roff, William R., Guide to Malay Periodicals, 1876-1941 (Singapore, 1961).

Roff, William R., 'Kaum Muda - Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction Amongst the Malays, 1900-1941', in K.G. Tregonning (ed.), Papers on Malayan History, (Singapore, 1962).

Roff, William R., 'The Malayo-Muslim World of Singapore in the Late Nineteenth Century', Journal of Asian Studies, XXIII, 5 (November, 1964).

Sadka, Emily, 'The State Councils in Perak and Selangor, 1877-1895', in K.G. Tregonning (ed.), Papers on Malayan History (Singapore, 1962).

Salim, H.A., Djedjak Langkah Hadji A. Salim: Pilihan Karangan Utjapan dan Pendapat Beliau dari Dulu Sampai Sekarang (The Path of Haji A Salim: Selections from his Writings, Speeches and Opinions from Early Times until the Present) (Djakarta, 1954).

Sanger, Richard H., The Arabian Peninsula (New York, 1954).

Schrieke, B., Indonesian Sociological Studies, Part 1 (The Hague/ Bandoeng, 1955).

(Dato') Sedia Raja Abdullah, 'The Leading Saints in Rembau', J.M.B.R.A.S., III, 3 (1925).

Serjeant, R.B., Prose and Poetry from Hadramawt (London, 1951).

Serjeant, R.B., 'Historians and Historiography of Hadramaut', Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, XXV, 2, (1962).

Shaharom Husain, Antara Pengarang2 Novel Melayu dan Karya-nya (Malay Novelists and their Works) (Singapore, 1963).

Shahrum b. Hussein, Tawarikh Johor (History of Johore) (Singapore, 1950).

Shellabear, W.G., (ed.), Sejarah Melayu (Malay Annals) (Singapore, 9th ed. 1960).

Sheppard, M.G., 'A Short History of Trengganu', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXII, 3, (1949).

Sidney, R.J.H., Malay Land (London, 1926).

Sidney, R.J.H., In British Malaya Today (London, 1927),

Silcock, T.H. (ed.), Readings in Malayan Economics (Singapore, 1961).

Silcock, T.H. & Ungku Abdul Aziz, 'Malayan Nationalism', in W.L. Holland (ed.), Asian Nationalism and the West (New York, 1953).

Skeat, W.W., Malay Magic (London/New York, 1900).

Smith, T.E., Population Growth in Malaya: A Survey of Recent Trends (London, 1951).

Smith, W. Cantwell, Islam in Modern History (Princeton, 1957).

Soenarno, Radin, 'Malay Nationalism, 1900-1945', J.S.E.A.H., I, 1, (1960).

Soh Eng Lim, 'Tan Cheng Lok', J.S.E.A.H. , I, 1, (March, 1960).

Song Ong Siang, One Hundred Years History of the Chinese in Singapore, (London, 1923).

Snouck Hurgronje, C., The Achenese (translated by A.W.S. O'Sullivan, Leiden 1906) 2 vols.

Snouck Hurgronje, C., Verspreide Geschriften (Selected Writings) (Bonn/Leipzig & Leiden, 1924-26), 6 vols.

Snouck, Hurgronje, C., Mekka in the latter Part of the 19th Century (London/Leyden, 1931).

Snouck, Hurgronje, C., Selected Works of C. Snouck Hurgronje, Edited in English and French, by G.H. Bousquet & J. Schacht (Transl. & eds.) (Leiden, 1957).

Stanton, H.U.W. & C.L. Pickens, 'The Mecca Pilgrimage', Moslem World, XXIV, 3, (1934).

Stoney, B.O., 'The Malays of British Malaya' in A. Wright and H.A. Cartwright, (eds.) Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya (London, 1908).

Swettenham, F.A., Malay Sketches (London, 1895).

Swettenham, F.A., The Real Malay (London, 1900).

Swettenham, F.A., Footprints in Malaya (London, 1942).

Swettenham, F.A., British Malaya, an Account of the Origin and Progress of British Influence in Malaya (London, 1906: revised ed. London, 1948).

Swift, M.G., 'The Accumulation of Capital in a Peasant Economy', in T.H. Silcock (ed.), Readings in Malayan Economics (Singapore, 1961).

Swift, M.G., 'Malay Peasant', in Raymond Firth (ed.), The Role of Savings and Wealth in Southern Asia and the West (London, 1964).

Tan Malaka, Dari Pendjara Ke Pendjara (From Gaol to Gaol) (Part I, Bukit Tinggi, n.d; Part II, Djakarta, 1947) 3 vols.

T.D.K., Shaer Zainal Abidin Yang Ketiga (Rhymed Chronicle of Zainal Abidin the Third (of Trengganu)) (Singapore, n.d.).

Terrell, A.K., Malayan Legislation and its Future (Singapore, 1932).

Thio, Eunice, 'The Extension of British Control to Pahang', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXX, 1 (1957).

Thompson, Virginia, Postmortem on Malaya (New York, 1943).

Thompson, Virginia, & R. Adloff, The Left Wing in Southeast Asia (New York, 1950).

Tibbetts, G.R., 'Early Muslim Traders in Southeast Asia', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXX, 1, (1957).

Treacher, W.H., Notes of Visits to Districts in Selangor, 1894, (Kuala Lumpur, n.d.).

Treacher, W.H., 'British Malaya, With More Especial Reference to the Federated Malay States', Journal of the Society of Arts, LV, 2835 (March 22, 1907).

U.M.N.O., U.M.N.O. Sepuloh Tahun (The First Ten Years of U.M.N.O.) (Penang, 1952).

Utusan Melayu, Utusan Melayu Sepuloh Tahun (Ten Years of Utusan Melayu) (Singapore, 1949).

Van den Berg, L.W.C., Le Hadhramaut et les colonies Arabes dans l'Archipel Indien (Batavia, 1886).

Van Neil, R., The Emergence of the Modern Indonesian Elite (The Hague/Bandung, 1960).

Vetch, R.H., The Life of Sir Andrew Clarke (London, 1905).

Vredenbregt, J., 'The Haddj', Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, 118, 1 (1962).

Vredenbregt, J., 'Bawean Migrations: Some Preliminary Notes', Bijdragen Tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde, 120, 1 (1964).

Watson, Malcolm, The Prevention of Malaria in the Federated Malay States (London, 1921).

Wertheim, W.F., Indonesian Society in Transition (The Hague/ Bandoeng, 2nd ed. 1959).

Wertheim, W.F. & The Siauw Giap, 'Social Change in Java, 1900-1930', Pacific Affairs, XXXV, 3 (1962).

Wheatley, Paul, The Golden Khersonese (London, 1962).

Wheeler, L.R., The Modern Malay (London, 1928).

Wijeysingha, E., A History of Raffles Institution (Singapore, 1963).

Wilkinson, R.J., Malay Beliefs (London, 1906).

Wilkinson, R.J., (ed.), Papers on Malay Subjects. Series I, 16 pamphlets, Kuala Lumpur, 1907-11; Series II (only partly edited by Wilkinson), 7 pamphlets, Kuala Lumpur, 1912-27.

The first series comprises:

1. Malay Literature, by R.J. Wilkinson and R.O. Winstedt, 3 vols, 1907.
2. Malay Law, by R.J. Wilkinson and W.J. Rigby, 2 vols, 1908.
3. Malay History, by R.J. Wilkinson and C.W. Harrison, 5 vols, 1908-11.
4. Malay Life and Customs, by R.J. Wilkinson and R.O. Winstedt, 3 vols., 1908-10.
5. Malay Industries, by R.J. Wilkinson and G.E. Shaw, 3 vols., 1909-11.
6. The Aboriginal Tribes, by R.J. Wilkinson, 1 vol. 1910.

The second series comprises:

1. Jelebu: Its History and Constitution, by A. Caldecott, 1912.
2. Sri Menanti, by R.J. Wilkinson, 1914.
3. A Vocabulary of Central Sakai, by R.J. Wilkinson, 1915.
4. Johol, Inas, Ulu Muar, Jempul, Gunong Pasir, and Terachi: Their History and Constitution, by J.E. Nathan and R.O. Winstedt, 1920.
5. The Sociology of Malayan Peoples: Three Essays on Kinship, Marriage and Inheritance in Indonesia, translated from the Dutch of G.A. Wilken by G. Hunt, 1921.
6. Perak Malay, by C.C. Brown, 1921.
7. Kelantan Malay, by C.C. Brown, 1927.

Wilkinson, R.J., History of the Peninsular Malays (Singapore, 3rd ed. 1923).

Wilkinson, R.J., 'Some Malay Studies' J.MB.R.A.S., X, 1 (1932).

Wilkinson, R.J., Malay-English Dictionary (2nd ed. Mytilene, 1932).

Willis, J.C., Agriculture in the Tropics (London, 1909).

Winstedt, R.O., Education in Malaya (British Empire Exhibition: Malayan Series Pamphlets: London, 1924).

Winstedt, R.O., 'A History of Kedah', J.S.B.R.A.S., LXXXI.

Winstedt, R.O., 'A History of Johore' J.M.B.R.A.S., X, 3, (1932).

Winstedt, R.O., 'A History of Negri Sembilan', J.M.B.R.A.S., XII, 3 (1934).

Winstedt, R.O. 'A History of Selangor', J.M.B.R.A.S., XII, 3, (1934).

Winstedt, R.O., History of Malaya (Singapore, 1935).

Winstedt, R.O., 'The Romance of Modern Johore', Asiatic Review, N.S. XXXIII, (1937).

Winstedt, R.O., 'A History of Malay Literature', J.M.B.R.A.S., XVII, 3 (1939).

Winstedt, R.O., 'Malaysia', in A.J. Arberry & Rom Landau (eds.), Islam Today (London, 1943).

Winstedt, R.O., The Malays: A Cultural History (London, 1950).

Winstedt, R.O., The Malay Magician (Rev. ed., London, 1951).

Winstedt R.O. & R.J. Wilkinson, 'A History of Perak', J.M.B.R.A.S., XII, 1, (1934).

Wong Lin Ken, 'The Trade of Singapore, 1819-69' J.M.B.R.A.S., XXXIII, 4 (December, 1960).

Wright, A. & H.A. Cartwright, Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya (London, 1908).

Wright, A. & T.H. Read, The Malay Peninsula (London/Leipsic, 1912).

Wynne, M.L., Triad and Tabut (Singapore, 1941).

Yaacub Lutfi, Pedoman Islam (Islamic Compass) (Penang, 1930).

Yahya Abdullah, Peperangan To'Janggut, atau Balasan Derhaka (To'Janggut's Rebellion, or Treachery Repaid) (Kota Bahru, 1955).

Za'ba (Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad), Umbi Kemajuan (The Roots of Progress) (Penang, 1932).

Za'ba (Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad), Asohan Budi (Nurture of Character) (Kuala Lumpur, 1958).

Za'ba (Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad) Sejarah Ringkas Tanah Melayu (A Brief History of Malaya) (Selected and translated from R.O. Winstedt, Malaya) (Singapore, 1961).

Za'ba (Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad) 'Malay Journalism in Malaya', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXX, 2 (1941).

Za'ba (Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad) 'Malay Festivals and Some Aspects of Malay Religious Life', J.M.B.R.A.S., XXII, 1, (1949).

Zainal Abidin Daud, Riwayat Tanjong Malim (History of Tanjong Malim) (Kuala Pilah, n.d.)

Zuber Usman, Kesusasteraan Baru Indonesia (New Indonesian Literature), (Djakarta, 1959).

Zwemer, S., 'The Native Press of the Dutch East Indies', Muslim World, XII (1923).

G. SELECT LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Unless otherwise indicated, all interviews were conducted in Malaya and Singapore, between October 1959 and April 1961. The information given is solely for the purpose of identifying persons interviewed and indicating their relavance to the subject of the thesis. No attempt has been made to give full biographical details. For those cited in the text, further information will be found in the footnotes.

Abdul Aziz b. Ishak: Fisheries Department official in 1930s; associated with KMM; brother of Yusoff b. Ishak (co-founder of Utusan Melayu (1939) and present Yang di Pertuan Negara of Singapore); Minister of Agriculture in Federation of Malaya, until 1963.

Haji Abdul Jalil Hassan: Present Mufti of Johore.

Haji Abdul Latiph b. Haji Abdul Majid: Son of Haji Abdul Majid b. Zainuddin (teacher, Malay College, 1907-17; official Pilgrimage Agent, Jeddah, and Liaison Officer in Malaya with Political Intelligence Bureau, 1923 - writer and editor).

Haji Abdul Malek b. Karim Amrullah (Hamka): Noted Indonesian religious reformist, writer and novelist. (Interviewed Malaya 1960, Djakarta 1961).

Tengku Abdul Rahman b. Sultan Abdul Hamid: Present Prime Minister of the Federation of Malaysia.

Abdul Samad b. Ahmad: Student, S.I.T.C., late 1920s; teacher, writer and editor in 1930s.

Abdullah b. Ahmad (Ahmad Bakhtiar); Teacher, S.I.T.C., 1924-41; writer and novelist in 1930s. (d. 1961).

Abdullah b. Sidek: Student, S.I.T.C., 1929-31; teacher and novelist in 1930s.

Dato' Haji Ahmad b. Ismail: Founder and editor of journals Al-Hedayah and Al-Hikmah in 1920s and 1930s; essayist and translator.

Sayyid Alwi b. Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi: Journalist, editor in 1930s of Saudara, Warta Malaya, Lembaga Malaya etc.; son of Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi (Leading religious reformist writer and propagandist, 1900-30).

Dato' Amar Wan Salleh b. Wan Mohd. Amin: Son of Wan Mohd. Amin b. Wan Mohd. Sa'ad (court official of Sultan of Selangor; author of Kenang2an Selangor); court official, Selangor, 1934-41.

Raja Ayob b. Raja Haji Bot: M.A.S. 1928-41; son of leading Selangor chief. (Interviewed Melbourne 1962).

Buyong b. Adil: Teacher, S.I.T.C., 1928-41; historian.

Daud b. Mohd. Shah: M.A.S. 1910-32; President K.M.S. 1937-41.

Haji Embok Suloh b. Haji Omar: Singapore merchant; co-founder K.M.S. (1926) and Utusan Melayu (1939).

Raja Hamid b. Tengku Mahmud Zohdi: Son of Tengku Mahmud Zohdi b. Tengku Abdul Rahman of Patani (religious adviser to the Sultan of Selangor, 1930-41; post-war Mufti of Selangor).

Hamdan b. Shaykh Tahir: Son of Shaykh Mohd. Tahir Jalaluddin (noted religious reform journalist and writer, 1900-41).

Dato' Hamzah b. Abdullah: M.A.S. 1910-21, M.C.S. 1921-41.

Harun b. Mohd. Amin (Harun Aminurrashid): Teacher, S.I.T.C., 1928-39; novelist and writer.

Tengku Hussein b. Yahya: Customs Department official in 1930s; first President Persatuan Melayu Negri Sembilan 1939-41. (d. 1960.)

Ibrahim b. Haji Yaacob (alias Iskander Kamel): Student, S.I.T.C., 1929-31; schoolteacher 1931-37; journalist and founder of K.M.M. 1938-41. (Interviewed Djakarta, 1961).

Ishak b. Haji Mohd.: M.A.S. 1931-33; novelist; journalist and co-founder of K.M.M. 1938-41; active in Malay Associations movement 1938-41.

Raja Kamarulzaman, Raja Di-Hilir of Perak: M.A.S. and M.C.S. 1920-41; Member of Federal Council 1936-41; State Treasurer, Perak, 1938-41. (d. 1962.)

Dato' Mahmud b. Mat; M.A.S. and M.C.S. 1920s and 1930s.

Raja Mohd. Nurdin b. Raja Deli: Student and teacher, S.I.T.C., 1923-28; Malay School Inspector 1928-41. (Interviewed Melbourne 1964).

Haji Mohd. Zain b. Ayoub: Malay Inspector of Schools in 1930s; writer and translator.

Raja Musa b. Raja Mahadi: Post-war head of Religious Affairs Department in Perak.

Tengku Nong Jiwa: Read History at Cambridge 1930s; post-war President of Kedah Historical Society.

Raja Nong: Private Secretary to Sultan of Selangor in late 1930s; post-war head of Religious Affairs Department in Selangor.

Dato' Sayyid Omar b. Sayyid Abdullah Shahabuddin: University of Hongkong, Kedah Civil Service 1924-41; present Mentri Besar of Kedah.

Dato' Onn b. Ja'afar: Journalist, editor in 1930s of Warta and Lembaga newspapers; Member of Johore State Council 1936-41. (d.1962.)

Osman b. Hassan: Secretary K.M.S. 1928-41.

Raja Razman b. Raja Abdul Hamid: M.A.S. 1914-15, Penghulu Service 1930-37; A.D.C. to Sultan Iskander of Perak, 1937-41.

Haji Salleh b. Haji Awang: Religious teacher in Trengganu in 1930s; author of three-volume history of that state.

Sufian b. Hashim: First Malay Queens Scholar to Britain, 1938; in 1960 Solicitor-General, Federation of Malaya.

Haji Othman b. Haji Abdullah: Financial backer in Cairo (mid-1920s) of Malay student newspapers; Treasurer of K.M.M. 1938-39; on committee of Persatuan Melayu Selangor 1939-41.

Dato' Haji Zainal Abidin b. Ahmad (Za'ba): Teacher 1916-23; chief translator Malay Translation Bureau, S.I.T.C., 1924-41; writer and man of letters.

Zainal Abidin b. Haji Alias (Zabha): Journalist with Warta Malaya and Utusan Melayu in 1930s.

Zainal Abidin b. Sultan Mydin (S.M. Zainal Abidin): Teacher in English schools, 1920s and 1930s; President of Sahabat Pena 1934-41.

Sayyid Zawawi: Present Mufti of Trengganu.

Ustaz Zulkifli Mohd.: Post-war Deputy President of the Pan-Malayan Islamic Party. (d.1964.)