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*General Editor:* WANG GUNGWU

THE WESTERN MALAY STATES

1850-1873

THE  
WESTERN  
MALAY STATES  
1850-1873

*The Effects of Commercial Development  
on Malay Politics*

KHOO KAY KIM



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Perpustakaan Negara  
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*To my wife, Rathi, and my  
son, Eddin*







## PREFACE

IN the third-quarter of the nineteenth century, certain important and complex events occurred in the Malay Peninsula. These have not been dealt with in sufficient detail by historians because they have been commonly presented merely as the background to the study of colonial expansion in this area. But many of these details are crucial to the understanding of the development of local society, and without them, the perspective obtained by students of Malaysian history is unavoidably blurred and misty.

This present study therefore concentrates on local events and personalities: Malay politics, as it was affected by the rapidly changing economic environment at that time, forms the basic theme, and emphasis is given to the increasingly significant role played by Chinese merchants and miners in the unfolding of events. Due reference is also made to the influence of international economics and British colonialism in the re-shaping of the existing situation, in particular the activities of Straits British merchants—those proprietors of Agency Houses who were representatives of Britain's industrial magnates—and colonial officials.

In describing the inter-connexion between European and Chinese merchants (as well as secret societies) on the one hand, and the Malay ruling class on the other, attention has been focussed on the subject of change as it occurred in the Malay states—not so much the shape and dimension of change but the mechanics of change. The whole process of change itself, of course, occupied a long time, for even today, Malay society has not entirely lost its traditional form. This work is merely a small contribution towards the study of this very broad subject.

This is, in effect, the revised version of a dissertation originally submitted to the University of Malaya for the degree of Master of Arts. Doubtless, in completing this work, I owed much to many people. To Professor Wang Gungwu, now of the Australian National University, I owe an eternal debt of gratitude, firstly, for giving me the opportunity to undertake this work and, secondly, for sacrificing much of his precious time to discuss with me the subject of study.

That I have profited immensely from those hours of discussion is an understatement. To many others, all my colleagues then, a special word of thanks for their constant encouragement and guidance: Professor Zainal Abidin bin Abdul Wahid, now of Universiti Kebangsaan, Dr. Cheng Siok Hwa, now in Nanyang University, Mr. Chan Ngor Chong, doing post-graduate work in Oxford University and Enche Mohd. Amin bin Hassan, an officer in Arkib Negara Malaysia. Above all, to my colleague and dear friend, Mr. R. R. Bonney, I express my warmest thanks. Much of the ideas in my work emerged from the lengthy and sometimes heated discussions we often had together. Finally, a special word of appreciation to the staff of Arkib Negara Malaysia—especially Mr. Yeoh Keng Lock, Mr. Teoh and Mr. Rasiah—for invaluable and kind assistance. Needless to say, all faults and defects in this work are entirely my own.

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May 1971

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# CONTENTS

	Page
<i>Preface</i>	vii
<i>Maps and Genealogies</i>	x
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xi
I BACKGROUND	1
1. TOPOGRAPHY AND POLITY	3
Topography	3
Political Systems	12
Factors Giving Rise to Conflicts	22
2. THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY: A SURVEY	29
Perak	29
Selangor	35
Negri Sembilan	41
II THE GROWTH OF COMMERCIAL AND MINING ACTIVITIES	51
3. EARLY DEVELOPMENTS	53
Peninsula-Straits Trade	53
The Entrepreneurs	58
The Mining Industry	67
Increasing Straits Interest in the Hinterland	79
4. EMERGENCE OF LARGE-SCALE ENTERPRISE	86
More Intensive Exploitation of Peninsular Resources	86
Formation of Joint-Stock Companies: Genesis	94
Joint-Stock Companies and the Peninsula	101
III POLITICS IN A NEW SETTING	109
5. GROWING DISORDER	111
Secret Societies	111
Disturbances in Negri Sembilan	118
Perak: Internal Dissension and Chinese Disturbances	124
Selangor: Rumbblings before the Storm	140

6. THE CONFLICTS SPREAD	144
Dismemberment of Negri Sembilan	144
The Klang War	151
The Perak Succession Dispute and 'Wars' in Larut	159
7. POLITICAL ALLIANCES AND PREDILECTIONS	176
8. STRAITS MERCHANTS AND THE PENINSULAR 'WARS'	201
CONCLUSION	226
<i>Bibliography</i>	228
<i>Index</i>	236

### MAPS

1. Sungai Perak	4
2. Krian-Larut	6
3. Selangor	8
4. Sungai Linggi	11

### GENEALOGIES

1. Perak	31
2. Selangor	37
3. Negri Sembilan	43
4. Long Jaafar	68

## ABBREVIATIONS

CO	Colonial Office
Col. Sec.	Colonial Secretary
<i>CMP</i>	Correspondence relating to the Malay Peninsula
Encl.	Enclosure
FO	Foreign Office
<i>GPMP</i>	Government Papers relating to the Malayan Peninsula
IO	India Office
<i>JIAEA</i>	Journal of the Indian Archipelago and Eastern Asia
<i>JMBRAS</i>	Journal of the Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society
<i>JSEAH</i>	Journal of South East Asian History
<i>JSBRAS</i>	Journal of the Straits Branch Royal Asiatic Society
<i>PMS</i>	Papers on Malay Subjects
<i>PP</i>	Parliamentary Papers
<i>PRCR</i>	Penang Riots Commission Report
PW1	Prince of Wales Island
SSF	Selangor Secretariat Files
SS	Straits Settlements
SSR	Straits Settlements Records



# I

## BACKGROUND

AT the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Malay Peninsula, as a whole, was very much the same as it had been in earlier times. This does not imply that it had experienced no change whatsoever, for even within the context of Malay culture itself, it is evident that traditional practices were being modified from time to time. The *adat perpatih* of Negri Sembilan, for example, although transplanted from the soil of Minangkabau, Sumatra, showed distinct characteristics of its own.<sup>1</sup> And, though to some extent Malacca might have inspired the creation of certain political institutions in the other Peninsular states,<sup>2</sup> there is no doubt that there were considerable local variations to be found in each territory. Therefore, any assumption that the Malay political systems were all similar could lead to a serious distortion of the perspective of Malay politics.

Nonetheless, at the commencement of the nineteenth century, the traditional Malay society, in general, had not been structurally altered.<sup>3</sup> Neither Portuguese nor Dutch conquest proved a sufficiently effective factor in steering the traditional society towards a new course. Conquering forces from Aceh and Celebes produced no radical change either. Aceh was, after all, a constituent part of the Malay cultural world and consequently had little that was novel to contribute. The Bugis who settled down here were quickly absorbed despite the existence of continual enmity between them and the Peninsular Malays.

However, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, attempts by alien powers to gain a controlling foothold in the Peninsula proved to be an eventful aspect of the history of the Malay states. Beneath that, of course, the traditional power struggles continued as before with sporadic efforts made to arrive at compromises and

<sup>1</sup>See Abdul Ghani Shamaruddin, 'Undang Luak Jelebu: Adat Pertabalan', *Bahasa*, vol.2, no.1, 1959, p.11.

<sup>2</sup>There is a tendency for students of Malay history to overrate the influence of Malacca on the other Malay states. In view of the fact that the founder of Malacca himself originated from Sumatra, it is more probable that many of the political institutions in the Peninsula in fact derived from Sumatra.

<sup>3</sup>See Josselin de Jong's review of J. M. Gullick's *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, London, 1958, in *Bijdragen*, Deel 116, 1960, p. 382.



accommodation without demolishing existing institutions.

But competition among the alien powers was coming to a close, with Britain emerging the decisive victor in the Straits of Malacca. The stabilizing of the international situation and the foundation of the Straits Settlements, in particular Penang and Singapore, as trading centres unleashed dynamic economic energies which began to penetrate ever more deeply into the Peninsula. If in the first quarter of that century, the Peninsula, in general, presented a dismal picture of undevelopment and political instability, the subsequent decades witnessed the steady dawn of a new era for some of the Malay states.

## TOPOGRAPHY AND POLITY

*Topography*

THE traditional Malay state was, in general, an agglomeration of river settlements.<sup>1</sup> Except for Negri Sembilan, every one of the Peninsular states derived its name from the river where the *kerajaan* (kingdom) was first established. From the original base, the political boundary was subsequently extended to incorporate other river settlements. Although existing records do not provide an elaborate account of this process of political expansion, that it had taken place can be inferred from the fact that the Malay state was more specifically referred to as *Negeri* (e.g. Perak or Selangor) *dengan segala jajahan ta'alok-nya*.<sup>2</sup> The term *negeri* by itself referred only loosely to the state as a whole; more precisely, it meant 'territory', for example, *Negeri Klang*, *Negeri Larut*, *Negeri Perak* (the territory of Sungai Perak), *Negeri Selangor* (the territory of Sungai Selangor) etc.<sup>3</sup>

PERAK. In the early nineteenth century, the principal settlements were concentrated along the river which gave its name to the state. They were to be found along almost the whole length of the river—from Kuala Dedap (a distance of about seven or eight miles from the sea) to the *hulu* (upper waters).<sup>4</sup> A large proportion of the population was also to be found in the numerous tributaries of the Perak river. The Malays of Perak once reckoned that the river had 999 tributaries. But, as it was explained a long time ago, this was probably 'a figurative way of conveying the idea of a vast number'.<sup>5</sup>

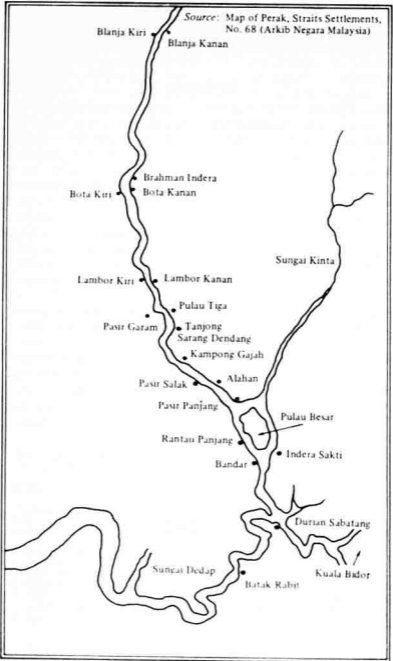
<sup>1</sup>See also J. R. Logan, 'Notes on Pinang, Kidah &c.', *JIAEA*, vol.5, 1851, pp. 63-4; W. E. Maxwell, 'A Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier in 1876', *JSBRAS*, no.9, 1882, p.36.

<sup>2</sup>Literally, all the districts that had been subjugated. In contemporary treaties, however, the English equivalent was 'dependencies'.

<sup>3</sup>See Raja Chulan, *Misa Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur, 1962, p.22; Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, Singapura, 1965, pp. 328, 329; Haji Muhammad Said bin Haji Sulaiman (ed.), *Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim Munshi, Johor*, 1956 (Jawi text), pp.45, 53, 63.

<sup>4</sup>The precise extent of territory encompassed within Hulu Perak is difficult to determine because, in the early nineteenth century, it had lost part of its territory to Siam. See CO 273/115, Weld to Kimberley, 3 June 1882; 273/120, Weld to Derby, 17 April 1883; 273/122, Weld to Derby, 14 Sept. 1883; Raja Razman & others, *Hulu Perak Dalam Sejarah*, Ipoh, 1963.

<sup>5</sup>J. Anderson, *Political and Commercial Considerations relative to the Malayan Peninsula &c.*, Prince of Wales Island, 1824, pp.191 (*JMBRAS*, vol.33, pt. 4, 1962).



1. SUNGAI PERAK

The larger tributaries were found on the right bank (ascending) of the river—Sungai Bidor, Sungai Kinta (both within a distance of forty to fifty miles from the sea), Sungai Plus and Sungai Temengor (both located much further to the interior). On the left bank, ascending, the first major tributary to be encountered was the Dedap. The next sizeable tributary was situated at a considerable distance from the Dedap, namely, Sungai Kenering in the region of Hulu Perak, its source being in the mountains on the Kedah frontier. Beyond this, there were other tributaries among which were Sungai Rui and Sungai Kendrong.<sup>1</sup>

Since the Perak river was the focal point of the *kerajaan*, it is to be expected that the capitals of the state were also located here. In the traditional Malay society, the capital was more properly the place of residence of the ruler. In Perak, it tended to shift with the accession of each new ruler. In the nineteenth century alone, from the reign of Sultan Ahmaddin until the reign of Sultan Ismail, covering a period of more than seventy years, no particular location was twice selected as the capital:<sup>2</sup>

<i>Ruler</i>	<i>Capital</i>
Ahmaddin (1786–1806)	Rantau Panjang
Malek Mansur Shah (1806–19)	Pasir Garam
Abdullah Muazzam Shah (1819–30)	Bota and Alahan
Shahabuddin Riayat Shah (1831–51)	Pasir Pulai
Abdullah Muhammad Shah (1851–57)	Tanjong Sarang Dendang
Jaafar Muazzam Shah (1857–65)	Pasir Panjang Indra Mulia
Ali Inayat Shah (1865–71)	Sayong
Ismail Muabidin Inayat Shah (1871–74)	Blanja

Outside Sungai Perak, there were numerous other river basins which also formed part of the domain of Perak. The most important of these were (from north to south): Krian (in earlier times Kedah territory),<sup>3</sup> Sungai Kurau, Sungai Gula, Sungai Kalumpang, Sungai Selinsing, Sungai Sangga Besar, Sungai Sapetang, Sungai Larut

<sup>1</sup>Maxwell, 'Journey on Foot to the Patani Frontier', p.34; A. M. Skinner, *A Geography of the Malay Peninsula*, Singapore, 1884, p.38.

<sup>2</sup>Raja Ali Haji, op.cit. p.243; R. O. Winstedt & R. J. Wilkinson, 'A History of Perak', *JMBRAS*, vol.12, pt.1, 1934, pp.64, 168; J. Low, 'Observations on Perak', *JIAEA*, vol.4, 1850, p.501 n.; T. J. Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account of the British Settlements & c.*, vol.II, London, 1839, p.23; W. E. Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources', *JSBRAS*, no.14, 1884; Wee Choon Siang, 'Ngal Ibrahim in Larut 1858–1874', B.A.Hons. Thesis, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1952, App.IIA (iv); SSR, G7, Temenggong of Perak to Gov., SS, 9 May 1872; C. D. Cowan (ed.), 'Sir Frank Swettenham's Perak Journals', *JMBRAS*, vol.24, pt.4, 1951, App.3, p.143.

<sup>3</sup>SSR vol.57, Sultan of Perak to Penang, 27 Aug. 1816.



2. KRIAN-LARUT

(sparsely populated until the 1840s), Sungai Trong, Sungai Jarum Mas, Sungai Bruas and Sungai Dinding, which collectively did not have more than 1,000 inhabitants in the early part of the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Sungai Bernam, though once a dependency of Perak,<sup>2</sup> had been annexed by Selangor in the early nineteenth century and was directly under the control of the Raja Muda of Selangor who frequently stayed there.<sup>3</sup>

SELANGOR. Sungai Selangor was the focal point of the *kerajaan* and here it was that the capital was located throughout the earlier part of its history. It was not until the reign of Sultan Abdul Samad (1857–98) that the capital was shifted to the Langat-Jugra area.<sup>4</sup> Selangor also had several widely dispersed major dependencies. To the north of Sungai Selangor was Bernam. To the south there was, firstly, Jeram. In the early nineteenth century, there were but a few *kampung* here with a population of about 500 under a *penghulu*. With the exception of Padang, a little south of Muar in Johor, this was the only inhabited coastal area between Penang and Singapore. After Jeram came Klang, economically the most productive district of Selangor. It had, according to contemporary report, a population of about 1,500 in the early nineteenth century. Sungai Klang, like Sungai Selangor, had a number of tributaries, but none of these was comparable in size to the major tributaries of the Perak river. Along both Sungai Selangor and Sungai Klang, however, human settlements existed. And, in effect, the greatest concentration of Selangor's population was to be found in these two districts. Below Klang, the next important territory was Langat-Jugra. The Sungai Langat bifurcated towards its lower reaches. The stream flowing to the right retained the name of Langat, that to the left was known as Jugra. From the point of bifurcation to the sea by the Langat river was about 35 miles, and by the Jugra, 7 miles. Jugra was of negligible importance. Langat and its tributaries, however, had a population of about 700. Below Langat came Sungai Sepang first, then Sungai Lukut and Sungai Raya. Sepang, with a population of about 200, was important for wood oil, damar and padi, while Lukut was fast becoming a Chinese settlement owing to the growth of the mining industry. By the second decade of the nineteenth century, Lukut

<sup>1</sup>Anderson, pp.174–9.

<sup>2</sup>Raja Chulan, p.22.

<sup>3</sup>Anderson, p.190. Since conquered by Selangor, it was peopled largely by inhabitants of Selangor.

<sup>4</sup>Anon., 'H.H. Sultan Abdul Samad, K.C.M.G., at Home' *Selangor Journal*, vol.1, no.1, 1892, pp. 5–6; Raja Ali Haji, pp.215–17; Anderson, *op.cit.* pp. 193–6.

Source: S.S.R., G7, Appendix to C.J. Irving's Memo of Affairs of Salangore & Perak, 1872.



already had a Chinese population of about 1,000. But Malays and *orang benua* (aborigines) continued to form important portions of Lukut's population. From Lukut, good paths led to Langat on the one side and Sungai Ujong on the other.<sup>1</sup> Sungai Raya, near the Malacca frontier, was, however, unimportant economically.

NEGRI SEMBILAN. This region was, geographically, as complicated as it was culturally complex. As its name indicates, it was a merger of nine *negeri* into one political entity. But it has never been clear which were the original nine *negeri*.<sup>2</sup> In the early nineteenth century, only four of them—Sungai Ujong, Rembau, Johol and Jelebu—were considered of any importance with the possible addition of a fifth, Sri Menanti, the official residence of the Yang Di-Pertuan Besar. But a contemporary account spoke of Sri Menanti as a district attached to Johol.<sup>3</sup>

However, on the basis of available evidence, it is possible to give a reasonably clear description of the four major territories as well as Sri Menanti. Sungai Ujong was by far the most important economically. Situated on the north bank of Sungai Linggi, it had long been well-known as a leading tin-producing district. The tin workings were to be found largely in the valley between Gunong Berembun and Bukit Tangga which was also the most inhabited portion of the territory. The village of Ampangan was the centre of activity. Sungai Ujong's indigenous population was estimated at slightly over 3,000 in 1832.<sup>4</sup> To the south of Sungai Ujong was the royal district of Sri Menanti. Its population in the 1830s was estimated at 8,000. Communication between the two territories primarily depended on a gap called Bukit Putus between Gunong Berembun and Gunong Angsi. But between Sungai Ujong and Sri Menanti stood Terachi, said to be partly subject to Sungai Ujong and partly to Sri Menanti. The land in Sri Menanti itself was chiefly flat except for a range of mountains

<sup>1</sup>Anderson, pp. 190–202; J. R. Logan, 'A Voyage from Singapore to Pinang', *JIAEA*, vol. 4, 1850; Swettenham Papers, Item 72, Report of H.B.M.'s Asst. Resident at Selangor, 1 Mar. 1875.

<sup>2</sup>For useful discussions on the subject, see, J. E. Nathan & R. O. Winstedt, 'Johol, Inas, Ulu Muar, Jempul, Gunong Pasir and Terachi, their history and constitution', *PMS*, 2nd Series, 4, 1941 (reprinted), pp. 1–2; P. E. de Josselin de Jong, *Minangkabau and Negri Sembilan: Socio-political Structure in Indonesia*, Leiden, 1952, pp. 148–50; Diane Lewis, 'Inas: A Study of Local History', *JMBRAS*, vol. 33, pt. 1, 1960.

<sup>3</sup>T. Braddell, 'Notes on Naning, with a Brief Notice of the Naning War', Appendix, 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling, Esq., Resident Councillor at Malacca, to the Governor, communicating information previous to the Naning War' *JIAEA*, new series, vol. 1, 1856, p. 222.

<sup>4</sup>See Isabella Bird, *The Golden Chersonese*, London, 1883, (reprinted, Kuala Lumpur, 1967), p. 157.



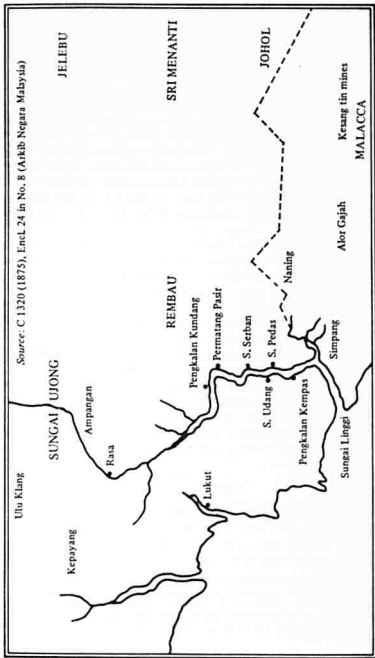
which served as the natural boundary between Sri Menanti and the *negeri* of Rembau, which was said to be as extensive as Sri Menanti. It consisted largely of an extensive plain to the east of the mountains, which was in great part occupied by padi fields, and in the mid-nineteenth century was said to have a population of about 9,000. Bukit Besar was the only elevated part of Rembau proper. Two major rivers ran through the state—Penajis and Rembau. At that time the two territories of Tampin and Keru were attached to Rembau.

The Minangkabau state furthest to the south-east was Johol. The whole of its population proper, said to number about 3,000 in the mid-nineteenth century, was concentrated in a valley covering a distance of six or seven miles within which were five principal villages—'Nury, Landang, Iney, Toman and Bennong'. But the smaller territories of Padang Pasir, Jempol and Gemencheh were, in the early nineteenth century, also attached to Johol. The major rivers in Johol were Sungai Jelai, Sungai Gemencheh, Sungai Johol and Sungai Inas.

Jelebu, the fourth major territory of Negri Sembilan, was situated to the north and east of Sungai Ujong. It occupied a rather central position between the western and eastern coast of the Peninsula. Though in the mid-nineteenth century it was the largest of the Minangkabau states with a population numbering about 3,000, it was relatively unimportant. The country was a succession of narrow valleys between very low hills except in the south where they culminated towards Gunong Berembun. The river Triang, of which the headwaters might be said to form the state of Jelebu, was an important feeder of Sungai Pahang. Both the Triang and its major tributary, the Kenaboi, were navigable for the greater part of the year. Since the larger part of Jelebu was situated in the Triang valley, its boundaries were primarily defined by hills, except towards Pahang. Between Selangor and Jelebu was Genting Pireh and between Sungai Ujong and Jelebu, Bukit Tangga. It was about two days' walk from Jelebu to Sungai Ujong but the mountains which separated the two territories made communication very difficult.<sup>1</sup>

By far the most important river in Negri Sembilan was Sungai Linggi which formed the principal channel of communication between Sungai Ujong, the chief mining state, and Malacca. It had its source in Gunong Berembun which might be said to be the key to the

<sup>1</sup>Information on the geography of Negri Sembilan is derived largely from Skinner, *op. cit.* pp. 42-9; Rev. P. Favre, 'A Journey in the Menangkabau States of the Malay Peninsula' *JIAEA*, vol.3, 1849. See also Braddell, 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling &c.', Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account etc.* vol. II, pp. 74-149.



Source: C 1320 (1875), Encl. 24 in No. 8 (Arkib Negara Malaysia)

4. SUNGAI LINGGI

whole of the area, for on the south side of this mountain flowed Sungai Muar and on the east, the river Triang. The river, in fact, had two branches meeting at a point—Simpang—about six miles from the sea. The one to Sungai Ujong was known as Batang Penar and the one to Rembau was called Batang Penajis. Ascending the Sungai Ujong branch, about three-quarters of a mile above Simpang was Pengkalan Kempas on the right bank. One-and-a-half miles up on the same bank was Sungai Udang and a mile further on Sungai Serban. Another mile and a-quarter away on the left bank was Pengkalan Kundang, and a short distance further was Pengkalan Durian, the residence of the Dato Muda of Linggi. The settlement of Linggi covered both Pengkalan Kundang and Pengkalan Durian. Up to Linggi the river was navigable for large boats. Beyond this, up to the Sungai Ujong tin mines, thirty miles away, only small canoes could be used.

The Rembau branch of the river had its source in the Rembau hills. Upstream from Simpang there were two important villages; about five miles from Simpang was Pedas and another eight miles further, Bandar, the chief village of Lower Rembau. Above Sungai Pedas the channel was shallow and so overhung and obstructed by trees that it was navigable for only very small canoes. In the *hulu*, the main village was Chembong where the Penghulu of Rembau traditionally resided. The people of Rembau claimed that the whole of the eastern bank of Batang Penar, above Simpang, and the land between that river and Batang Penajis as far up as Pengkalan Kundang and a little beyond, belonged to Rembau.<sup>1</sup>

In the early nineteenth century the westward bank of Sungai Linggi was crowned with jungle or uncultivated land as far up as Linggi.<sup>2</sup> This area, however, was claimed by Selangor.<sup>3</sup>

### *Political Systems*

Of the three western states, the Perak sultanate is by far the oldest. The early history of Perak is still shrouded in obscurity. Varying accounts of the foundation of Perak found in the well-known *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* and *Sejarah Melayu* are further complicated

<sup>1</sup>Descriptions of Sungai Linggi are to be found in Newbold, vol.II, pp.115-16; GPMP T. Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report on the Proceedings of Government relating to the Native States in the Malayan Peninsula', 1874.

<sup>2</sup>See Braddell, 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling & c.'.

<sup>3</sup>This subject will be discussed subsequently.

by local traditions such as the legend of the white Semang.<sup>1</sup> It is widely accepted, nevertheless, that the *kerajaan* was founded sometime in the early sixteenth century. But it is from about the eighteenth century onwards that a more coherent picture of its history is obtainable from known existing sources.

The sultanate of Selangor has a comparatively short history since it was established sometime in the mid-eighteenth century. The early history of the various territories which together made up the state of Selangor remains little known. It is even difficult to speculate on the origin of the name 'Selangor'.<sup>2</sup> There are of course references to Jeram, Langat and Klang in the *Sejarah Melayu*, but there is little in terms of historical data for the historian to work on.

The foundation of Selangor, as a political entity, owed much to the Bugis. Their renowned historian, Raja Ali Haji, informs us that the Bugis had arrived in Selangor long before the eighteenth century. However, despite the emergence of settlements, no *kerajaan* had yet been established until the arrival of the *Upu* brothers in the course of the war in Johor in the early eighteenth century. From Johor, they extended their influence to Selangor and Langat and were welcomed by the early Bugis settlers.<sup>3</sup>

It is generally accepted that the first person to be appointed Yang Di-Pertuan of Selangor was Raja Lumu, son of Daing Chelak. He adopted the title of Sultan Salehuddin after undergoing the ceremony of *pertabalan* (installation) which was performed by a Perak ruler.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For details see W. E. Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources', *JSBRAS*, no.9, 1882, pp. 85-108; 'Notes on Two Perak Manuscripts', *JSBRAS*, no.1, 1878, pp. 183-93.

<sup>2</sup>Abdul Samad Ahmad (ed.), *Pesaka Selangor*, Kuala Lumpur, 1966, p.xv.

<sup>3</sup>Raja Ali Haji, pp. 18, 54. The five brothers considered the founders of the Bugis royal house in the Peninsula were Upu Daing Perani, Upu Daing Menambon, Upu Daing Mariwah, Upu Daing Chelak and Upu Daing Kumasi, all of whom were sons of Upu Tandari Burong Daring Rilak who had been appointed by the Dutch ruler of the Bugis in Batavia and Java.

<sup>4</sup>Historians have disagreed as to which Perak ruler performed the ceremony. There are claims that it was Sultan Mahmud, the immediate successor of Sultan Iskandar Inayat Shah. [Raja Chulan, pp. 186-7; Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources' (1884), p. 308. In Maxwell's source the same ruler is referred to as Sultan Muhammadin]. Elsewhere, it is stated that the ruler concerned was Sultan Muhammad (Raja Bisnu) who reigned before Sultan Iskandar. (W. E. Maxwell, 'The Ruling Family of Selangor', *JSBRAS*, no.22, 1890, p. 322; R. O. Winstedt, 'The Origin of the Selangor Sultanate', *JMBRAS*, vol.12, pt. 3, 1934, p.114). It is pointed out that it was about this time that Daing Chelak attacked Perak and interfered in its politics. (See also Raja Ali Haji, pp. 95-6). And it was through Bugis support that Sultan Muhammad became ruler. It appears inconceivable, however, that the *Misa Melayu*, written in the eighteenth century, could have been mistaken.

He also received a *chap istimewa* or *chap mohor* and the *nobat*.<sup>1</sup> Apparently, the decision to grant the title of Yang di-Pertuan to the ruler of Selangor, until then known as Tengku Raja Selangor, was made by the Perak ruler in consultation with his *orang besar-besar*. Perak tradition claims that this was to glorify further the greatness of the Perak sultanate.<sup>2</sup>

The history of Negri Sembilan prior to 1800 is also vaguely known. It is clear, however, that there were several *negeri* in the Peninsula which were at one time dependencies of Malacca and, after 1511, of Johor. Various *orang besar* were, from time to time, appointed by Malacca or Johor to take charge of these territories. The coming of the Bugis in the early eighteenth century contributed to a decline of Malay power with the result that control from Johor became less and less effective, since the various dependencies, comprising a predominantly Malay-Sumatran population, were reluctant to offer allegiance to the Bugis. This was particularly true of the Minangkabau population steeped in their *adat perpateh* traditions. They therefore decided to invite an *anak raja* from Pagar Ruyong to rule over them and to arbitrate in their disputes.<sup>3</sup>

However, the attempt to secure a member of the Pagar Ruyong royalty to rule over the Peninsular Minangkabau *negeri* proved particularly eventful, for a division took place among the various *negeri* involved.<sup>4</sup> The approach was nevertheless made and, according to Negri Sembilan tradition, there were further difficulties. The first four *anak raja* to come proved unsuitable. Eventually, Raja Melewar was selected. A certain Raja Khatib was then sent ahead to make preparations for the arrival of Raja Melewar. But Raja Khatib betrayed the trust placed upon him by marrying the daughter, Warna Mas, of Na'am, Penghulu of Ulu Muar and allowing himself to be proclaimed ruler of Negri Sembilan. Meanwhile, Raja Melewar set off by way of Siak and Malacca, finally proceeding to Nanning and then Rembau. A war ensued in which Raja Khatib and Penghulu Na'am were defeated. Raja Melewar was then installed as Yang Di-Pertuan Besar at Penajis, Rembau. This probably occurred in about 1773.<sup>5</sup>

It is now well-known that every one of the Malay states in the

<sup>1</sup>Seal of the ruler and kettle-drum (included in the appurtenances of royalty).

<sup>2</sup>Raja Chulan, p.187.

<sup>3</sup>Abdul Samad Idris (ed.), *Negeri Sembilan dan Sejarah-nya*, Kuala Lumpur, 1968, pp. 180-1.

<sup>4</sup>Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account etc.*, vol.II, pp.151-2.

<sup>5</sup>Samad Idris, pp.181-3; Abdul Rahman bin Haji Mohammad, *Dogeng<sup>2</sup> Negeri Sembilan*, Kuala Lumpur, 1964, pp.59-70.

Peninsula shared basically the same political structure except that in the case of Negri Sembilan, the political system, established in the late eighteenth century, was, in effect, a superstructure erected upon an already existing elaborate social system based strictly on kinship ties. In the other Malay states, territory was the prime factor in political organization.

It is customary to look upon the typical traditional Malay society as being composed of two main divisions—a ruling class and a subject class, with the Yang Di-Pertuan occupying the apex of the political system.<sup>1</sup> This is generally valid but it is too much of an oversimplification, for within the ruling class itself, an elaborate system of gradation existed. Status-wise, the highest stratum of this class was occupied by the *anak raja*, that is, persons bearing the title of *Raja* or *Tengku*. Among members of this class, there was always a privileged section who might be referred to as *Kerabat Di-Raja*, comprising the ruler and those who were closely related to him. Political privileges were confined largely to this section because the *anak raja* as a class was numerically very large owing to the prevalence of polygamy.<sup>2</sup> As such the specific offices which could be conferred on them and the territories which could be apportioned to them for subsistence were necessarily limited in number. There were, therefore, always *anak raja* who held no specific political position and had no territory over which to administer. But it was always possible for them to gain special recognition through other achievements.

The next stratum in the socio-political hierarchy was occupied by non-royal members of the ruling class. Here again, there was further sub-division. There was an horizontal distinction made between the *orang besar-besar* and the *penghulu*. The *orang besar-besar* might be said to be those who held specific titles. Their functions, however, varied. Some were attached to the *istana* and therefore performed duties primarily of a ceremonial nature or served as immediate advisers of the ruler. Others were territorial chiefs, a function to some extent shared by the *penghulu* except that, as a general principle, the *orang besar-besar* controlled the larger territorial unit. It ranged from a whole river basin to a section of a tributary. The *penghulu's* jurisdiction was normally confined to a village (*kampong*) or clusters of

<sup>1</sup>See J. M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, London, 1958, p.65; F. A. Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, London, 1942, p.48.

<sup>2</sup>It is pertinent to cite, as an example, the case of Sultan Ibrahim of Selangor (d. 1826) who alone had sixty children (Anderson, *op.cit.* p.193). This was by no means an exception.

villages depending on the extent of his own personal influence. There were in fact more local variations in the Malay political systems than it is possible to deal with here. It must be emphasized, finally, that all authority in the Malay states (except Negri Sembilan) was derived from the Yang Di-Pertuan. But, in practice, power rested primarily with the territorial chiefs.

The first major difference between Negri Sembilan and the other Peninsular states is that it was a matrilineal society. But at the highest political level, succession was based on patrilineal descent. Authority, however, emanated from the people (*anak buah*), because

Bulat anak buah menjadi buapak,  
 Bulat buapak menjadi lembaga,  
 Bulat lembaga menjadi penghulu,  
 Bulat penghulu menjadi Raja.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the *buapak*, *lembaga*, *penghulu* and *Raja* were representatives of the *anak buah*.

The people of Negri Sembilan were vertically divided into twelve *suku* (clans): *Biduanda* or *Waris*, *Batu Hampar*, *Paya Kumboh*, *Mungkal*, *Tiga Nenek*, *Seri Melenggang*, *Seri Lemak*, *Batu Belang*, *Tanah Datar*, *Anak Acheh*, *Anak Melaka* and *Tiga Batu*.<sup>2</sup> The *suku* itself could be further divided into *perut*, *ruang* and *rumpun*.<sup>3</sup> Although kinship was the crucial factor in the socio-political system, there had to be territorial dimensions too. Hence, the *kerajaan* itself comprised basically nine negeri (commonly called *luak*). While the *buapak* and *lembaga* were heads of kinship groups, the *penghulu* was, in addition, a territorial ruler; hence, the saying goes:

Alam nan beraja,  
 Luak nan berpenghulu,  
 Suku bertua (berlembaga),  
 Anak buah berbuapak.<sup>4</sup>

Though the Negri Sembilan society was, in principle, more egalitarian, there was, nonetheless, a clear-cut hierarchical system. Among

<sup>1</sup>The *buapak* was elected by the consensus of the *anak buah*, the *lembaga* by the consensus of the *buapak*, the *penghulu* by the consensus of the *lembaga*, and the *Raja* by the consensus of the *penghulu*. It should be noted that in this context, the *penghulu* was head of a *luak* not a *kampong* and the term 'Dato' was usually prefixed to this title.

<sup>2</sup>Abdul Rahman Mohammad, p.28.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p.30.

<sup>4</sup>Loosely translated it means, the state was headed by a Raja, the *luak* by a *penghulu*, the *suku* by a *lembaga* and the *anak buah* by a *buapak*. The total number of *penghulu*, *lembaga* and *buapak* is difficult to determine for it obviously varied from time to time.

the Dato' Penghulu, those of Sungai Ujong, Rembau, Johol and Jelebu enjoyed a higher status for upon them fell the duty and privilege of electing each new Yang Di-Pertuan. They were, therefore, called *Penghulu Berlantek*. And of the four, the Dato' Penghulu of Sungai Ujong took precedence for he was considered as *abang* (elder brother).<sup>1</sup>

Although the Yang Di-Pertuan Besar undoubtedly enjoyed the highest status, his position was not identical to that of the other Malay rulers. His authority had been, from the beginning, clearly defined:

Adapun Raja itu tiada mempunyai negeri dan tiada boleh menchukai kharajat, melainkan berkeadilan sahaja serta permakanaan-nya duit saksu, beras dua gantang, nyior sa-tali.<sup>2</sup>

Hence, it was said that the ruler was 'without regalia, people or territory'.<sup>3</sup> He held the right, however, to confirm the election of each *penghulu* by the *lembaga*.<sup>4</sup>

The *Penghulu Berlantek*, on the other hand, wielded considerable influence for they

i) ...exercise individually all the rights of sovereignty ... levy fines, promulgate decrees, and inflict capital punishment...

ii) ...appropriate fines in cases adjudicated by themselves, and receive presents at births, marriages and deaths, and contributions on political emergencies.<sup>5</sup>

But, they, in turn

...bound themselves to furnish a certain complement of men, arms, ammunition, and provisions, in case of a war; also on occasions of deaths, marriages, circumcision, &c., in the royal family, to send, each of them, three heads of buffaloes, and to distribute a certain sum in *sadkeh* (alms).<sup>6</sup>

With this rapid survey of the basic political structures of the three states, it is now possible to take a closer look at the actual internal

<sup>1</sup>Braddell, 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling &c.', p.221; P. J. Begbie, *The Malayan Peninsula Embracing its History, Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants, Politics, Natural History, &c. from its Earliest Records*, Madras, 1834, (reprinted Kuala Lumpur, 1967), p.50.

<sup>2</sup>The Raja does not own the country, nor can he levy taxes on its produce but with him lies the final award of justice only and he obtains a maintenance of a *suku* (12 cents), two *gantang* of rice and a string (two) of coconuts (from every householder). (D. F. A. Hervey, 'Rembau' *JSBRAS*, no.13, 1884, p.248).

<sup>3</sup>Braddell, 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling &c.', p.221.

<sup>4</sup>Begbie, p.136.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. pp. 135, 136.

<sup>6</sup>Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account etc.*, vol.II, p.81.



arrangements.<sup>1</sup> In Perak, several titles were conferred on the *Kerabat Di-raja*. These were, in hierarchical order:<sup>2</sup>

- Raja Bendahara<sup>3</sup>
- Raja Di-Hilir
- Raja Kechil Besar
- Raja Kechil Tengah
- Raja Kechil Muda
- Raja Kechil Bongsu

The *orang besar-besar*, on the other hand, were divided into multiples of four. Here again there was a definite social gradation although, as it will be subsequently shown, in terms of the exercise of political authority, the element of rank was of little consequence. At any rate, the first two groups constituted the primary officers of state:<sup>4</sup>

- Orang Besar Berempat* (first rank)
  - Bendahara Paduka Seri Maharaja (later Raja Bendahara)
  - Temenggong Paduka Raja
  - Orang Kaya Besar Seri Maharaja Di-raja (also called Penghulu Bendahara)
- Menteri Seri Paduka Tuan
- Orang Besar Berlapan* (second rank)
  - Orang Kaya Balai Maharaja Lela
  - Laksamana Orang Kaya Kaya
  - Orang Kaya Shahbandar
  - Panglima Kinta Seri Amarbangsa
  - Sa'gor Di-Raja
  - Panglima Bukit Gantang Seri Amar Di-Raja
  - Seri Adika Raja
  - Imam Paduka Tuan

Below these were the *Orang Besar Enambelas* headed by the Seri Maharaja Lela followed by yet another group comprising thirty-two *orang besar* with specific titles.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Discussion here is confined to the nineteenth century situation generally.

<sup>2</sup>Raja Chulan, *passim*.

<sup>3</sup>This title was first conferred on a member of royalty during the reign of Sultan Iskandar Dzul-karnain (c. 1756-70). (Ibid. pp.92-3).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, pp. 26, 93, 98, 106-7, 132; SSR, G7, Temenggong to Gov., SS, 9 May 1872.

<sup>5</sup>It is not clearly known what were the actual titles conferred on the 16 and 32 *orang besar-besar*. A list of these titles appears in Winstedt & Wilkinson, pp. 134-58. But since this list followed the order assigned to the *orang besar-besar* by the Perak State Council of 1905 and modifications are known to have been made, its value is limited. (For a list of some of the possible titles, see also Aminuddin Baki, 'The Institution of Debt Slavery in Perak' *Peninjau Sejarah*, vol.1, no.1, 1966, p.11.)

The historical background of the various political institutions in Selangor is even more vague. As regards titles conferred on members of royalty, only two seem to have been established in traditional times. The first was *Yang Di-Pertuan Muda* or *Raja Muda*. The first holder was Raja Nala, brother of Raja Ibrahim (later Sultan Ibrahim after the death of Sultan Salehuddin). After Raja Nala's death in Aceh, the title passed to Ibrahim's eldest son, Raja Muhammad.<sup>1</sup> But when Muhammad became ruler in 1826, it does not appear that the title was conferred on anyone until shortly before his death (in 1857) when his youngest son, Raja Mahmud, was appointed to the title.<sup>2</sup>

The other royal title was *Tengku Panglima Besar*. It is known to have been held by Raja Abdullah, brother of Sultan Muhammad, and subsequently, Raja Abdul Samad, Abdullah's son, but only for a short time because the title was conferred on Abdul Samad at a meeting after Sultan Muhammad's death. And not long after that Abdul Samad was elected Yang Di-Pertuan upon which the title passed to Raja Berkat.<sup>3</sup> At this juncture, it appears to have been changed to *Tengku Panglima Raja*.<sup>4</sup>

The Selangor system of *orang besar-besar* presents even greater problems for the student of Malay history. It is certain that at the time when Johor's influence extended over the greater part of the Peninsula, a number of *orang besar* had been appointed to take charge of various territories which subsequently became *jajahan* of Selangor. The best known among them was the Dato' or Orang Kaya Kelang. As his title indicates, he held jurisdiction over the territory of Klang.<sup>5</sup> But it also appears that his administrative duties were shared by three other persons—To' Engku Kelang, Dato' Menteri dan Dato' Naga. One other title which probably antedated the Bugis *kerajaan* was Penghulu Selangor.<sup>6</sup>

With the establishment of the *kerajaan*, several new titles were apparently created. There is no clear information as to what these titles were especially since a number of them were allowed to lapse

<sup>1</sup>Raja Ali Haji, pp. 193, 195.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, F7, Tunku Puan of Selangor to Gov., SS, 15 June 1867.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.; CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 29 July 1871, Encl. Irving's Report on Selangor, July 1871.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/109, Weld to Kimberley, 13 Aug. 1881.

<sup>5</sup>See Abdul Samad Ahmad, p.74.

<sup>6</sup>Emily Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895*, Kuala Lumpur, 1968, p.14 n.1; R. O. Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', *JMBRAS*, vol.12, pt.3, 1934, pp. 112-113.

during the reign of Sultan Abdul Samad (1857-98). But the following (in hierarchical order) were said to have been reinstated during the installation of Sultan Sulaiman:<sup>1</sup>

Dato' Aru	Dato' Bentara Kanan
Dato' Penggawa Tua	Dato' Bentara Kiri
Dato' Penggawa Muda	Dato' Panglima Dalam
Dato' Maharaja Lela	Dato' Megat Penghulu Balai
Dato' Shahbandar	

Among these, six of them (Penggawa Tua and Muda, Maharaja Lela, Shahbandar, Panglima Dalam and Megat) were probably originally conferred on Bugis who had accompanied Raja Lumu to Selangor.<sup>2</sup>

Visitors to Selangor in the nineteenth century also observed the existence of a few other offices. In the 1830s, a certain Penggawa Permatang was described as one of the four principal officers of state. The others were Penggawa Tua, Penghulu Aru and Orang Kaya Kechil.<sup>3</sup> Together with the Penggawa Tua, the Penggawa Permatang held control over the lower part of the river and sea-coast while the Dato' Aru controlled the interior excluding Klang which was under the Orang Kaya Kechil.<sup>4</sup> In 1857, apart from the Dato' Aru, Dato' Penggawa and Dato' Kaya Kechil, one other *orang besar* known to have participated in the election of the Yang Di-Pertuan was *Dato' Jeram*.<sup>5</sup> In 1874, when Governor Clarke visited Selangor, among the *orang besar* present at a meeting were Dato' Aru, Penggawa Permatang, Penggawa Muda, Orang Kaya Kechil, Penghulu Jeram and Penghulu Dagang.<sup>6</sup>

Although it is difficult to see any clear pattern in the Selangor system of *orang besar-besar*, it is nevertheless possible to ascertain, even from the meagre data available, that at least those of higher rank were territorial chiefs during the early part of the nineteenth century. It is certain too that they played an important role in decision-making and in the election of the Yang Di-Pertuan. Available evidence indicates that the Dato' Aru was the highest ranking *orang besar*. A visitor to Selangor in 1874 remarked that he could even 'act as Regent in the absence of the Sultan'.<sup>7</sup> But this may have been an overstatement.

<sup>1</sup>Abdul Samad Ahmad, pp. 74-5.   <sup>2</sup>Ibid. pp. 76-7.

<sup>3</sup>Orang or Dato' Kaya Kechil was another version of Orang or Dato' Kaya Kelang.

<sup>4</sup>Newbold, vol.II, pp. 29-30.

<sup>5</sup>Anon., 'History of Selangor', *Selangor Journal*, vol.1, no.5, 1892, p.70.

<sup>6</sup>GPMP, T. Braddell, 'Report of Proceedings of Government relating to the Native States in the Malayan Peninsula, 18 Feb. 1874'.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

As mentioned earlier, the political structure of Negri Sembilan was even more complex. Being a type of federation, each of the component parts, especially the four major *luak*, enjoyed a high degree of autonomy. In Sungai Ujong, the Dato' Penghulu was more specifically styled Dato' Kelana Putra. His authority, however, was confined primarily to the land. Next in importance was the Sri Maharaja Di-Raja or Dato' Shahbandar (Dato' Bandar). The two offices were, towards the end of the eighteenth century, separated, and thereafter the Dato' Bandar became an increasingly prominent figure in Negri Sembilan politics, having jurisdiction over all matters connected with the river and the trade dependent on water carriage. There were various other groups of *orang besar* in Sungai Ujong which, however, need not concern us here. Suffice it to say that since about the mid-eighteenth century, the right to hold the title of Dato' Kelana was supposed to alternate between members of the two subdivisions of the Suku Waris—Waris Hilir and Waris Hulu. The principle, of course, was never strictly observed.<sup>1</sup>

The title of the Dato' Penghulu of Rembau was Lela Maharaja or Sedia Raja, depending on which sub-division of the Suku Biduanda (Jakun or Jawa respectively) to which the incumbent belonged, for, as in Sungai Ujong, the right to hold the title of Dato' Penghulu alternated between two groups of candidates. This practice, in Rembau, originated in the mid-sixteenth century. Geographically, Rembau was also made up of two divisions—*hulu* and *hilir*, and this was a vital factor in its politics. Traditionally, the council of Rembau consisted of the Dato' Penghulu and four *lembaga* but by the early nineteenth century, there were eight *lembaga* in the council—four representing the *hilir* and four the *hulu*. Those from the *hulu* were additions made to the original system.<sup>2</sup> It was said of the *lembaga* that they possessed important privileges:

Nothing of any public interest can be determined without their concurrence; and their unanimous vote on disputed points bears down that of the Penghulu. The signature of the [*lembaga*] is necessary to the ratification of every treaty, or other similar public document.<sup>3</sup>

Of the early history of Johol, even less is known than that of

<sup>1</sup>For more elaborate discussions of Sungai Ujong's socio-political system, see, R. N. Bland, 'Aturan Sungei Ujong', *JSBRAS*, no.28, 1895; R. J. Wilkinson, 'Sungei Ujong', *JSBRAS*, no.83, 1921; J. M. Gullick, 'Sungei Ujong', *JMBRAS*, vol. 22, pt.2, 1949; Abdul Samad Idris (ed.), pp. 50-91.

<sup>2</sup>Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account etc.*, vol. II, p. 122.

<sup>3</sup>Loc. cit.

Sungai Ujong and Rembau. Its Dato' Penghulu was, since the beginning, known as Johan Pahlawan Lela Perkasa Sitiawan. The first three holders were ladies, according to Johol traditions. In the exercise of authority, the Dato' Penghulu acted conjointly with four *lembaga*. Election of the Penghulu was by the *lembaga* and *Batin Duabelas* (twelve heads of Jakuns). The system of rotation here was slightly different and introduced only in the mid-nineteenth century when the title of successor to the Dato' Penghulu was changed from Dato' Muda to Dato' Baginda Tan Mas and those eligible to hold the office were thereafter elected alternately from Perut Gemenchek and Perut Johol—two sub-divisions of the Waris Biduanda.<sup>1</sup>

The Dato' Penghulu of Jelebu held the title of Dato' Mendika Menteri Akhir Zaman. In this case, succession to the title rotated among three sub-divisions of the *Waris*, namely, Waris Ulu Jelebu, Waris Sarin and Waris Kemin. The Penghulu was elected by eight *lembaga* and ruled jointly with them.<sup>2</sup>

### *Factors Giving Rise to Conflicts*

Succession was the major issue contributing to conflicts in the traditional Malay society—be it succession to the title of Yang Di-Pertuan or to lesser political offices. Succession, as a rule, was hereditary<sup>3</sup> but the candidates for a particular office were drawn from a wide circle of kinsmen of the deceased. The Perak succession system and its concomitants provide an apt illustration of the explosive nature of this aspect of traditional Malay politics.

Succession to the title of Yang Di-Pertuan in Perak, as in the other Malay states, was based on election. The exact composition of the elective body is not clearly known but there is no doubt that the *orang besar-besar* of the first and second ranks played an important role in this function.<sup>4</sup> There was no automatic right of succession in favour of any particular candidate. However, since at least the second half of the eighteenth century, it was usual for an *anak raja* to graduate from Raja Di-Hilir to Raja Bendahara and then Raja Muda

<sup>1</sup>Newbold, 'Johole and its Former Dependencies of Jompole, Gominchi' in J. H. Moor (ed.), *Notices of the Indian Archipelago and the adjacent countries*, Singapore, 1837, pp. 67-71; Samad Idris, pp. 128-43.

<sup>2</sup>Samad Idris, pp. 92-107.

<sup>3</sup>The successor of a 'Dato' Penghulu in Negri Sembilan was not his son but his nephew (son of his sister). This was in keeping with the *adat perpatih*.

<sup>4</sup>For an account of the election of Sultan Ismail in 1871, see SSR, G7, Temengong to Gov., SS, 9 May 1872. See also pp. 159-61.

before reaching the pinnacle of political authority. But this was merely a guiding principle to assist the elective body in arriving at a decision. The basic test of legitimacy was still the election.

But succession was a major political problem. The available data indicate that throughout the eighteenth century and the greater part of the nineteenth century, there was continual competition among the candidates often resulting in violent contests for power. In the early part of the eighteenth century itself, the succession of Sultan Alauddin Riayat Shah was challenged by the ruler's own brother, Raja Inu, who had been ruling at Bernam. The *Salasilah Perak* says:

And by the degree of God most high, who executes his will upon all his creatures by any means that he may choose, there was dissension among the Chiefs of Perak. And there was war between the Raja of Bernam and the Toh Bendahara and the Chiefs of Perak and all was fighting and confusion, one with another.<sup>1</sup>

Sultan Alauddin survived the challenge and was succeeded only twenty years later by the same Raja Inu who adopted the title of Sultan Mudzaffar Shah. He, in turn, faced opposition from another brother, Raja Bisnu, who went to the extent of establishing himself as the ruler with the title of Sultan Muhammad Shah. He chose Pulau Tiga as his capital and forced his brother to move north to Kuala Kangsar. Perak was hence divided: all those in the *hulu* down to Pachat owed allegiance to Sultan Mudzaffar Shah; between Pachat and the *hilir*, Sultan Muhammad held sway.<sup>2</sup>

The nineteenth century was equally a period of frequent succession disputes.<sup>3</sup> Every one of the rulers from 1806 to 1871 faced opposition from those who were in line for the throne. This occurred despite attempts to arrive at a compromise by the introduction of a system which favoured the principle of rotation among the members of three families descended from Sultan Ahmaddin (c. 1786-1806).<sup>4</sup> In almost every instance, the conflict directly involved the Sultan and the Raja Muda in opposing camps. This may be attributed to the constitution of the polity itself. For in the case of Perak, the Sultan reigned but the task of ruling was entrusted to the Raja Muda. This is quite clearly stated in the *Misa Melayu*. Referring to the appointment of Raja Iskandar as Raja Muda, it says:

<sup>1</sup>Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources' (1882), p.103.

<sup>2</sup>See Raja Chulan, pp. 22-3.

<sup>3</sup>The subject will be discussed in detail later.

<sup>4</sup>This system has been well explained by Gullick, pp. 55-7.

Maka anakanda baginda Raja Muda-lah akan memerintah paduka ayahanda itu, menjadi baik-lah kerajaan Sultan Mudzafar Shah. Maka Raja Muda-lah yang memerintah di-dalam negeri Perak ini dan di-ikut turut-lah akan segala orang besar-besar, dan anak raja-raja maka terserah-lah kepada Raja Muda.<sup>1</sup>

But this could have been an exception since Raja Iskandar is known to be a particularly strong personality. However, when Iskandar himself became the ruler, the same functions were entrusted to the new Raja Muda:

Ada pun Sultan Iskandar Inayat Shah, sa-telah menjadi raja, maka adinda baginda Raja Kechil Muda pun menjadi Raja Muda akan wakil kerajaan Sultan Inayat Shah dan Raja Muda-lah yang memerintah di-bawah takhta kerajaan kakanda baginda itu dan ikutan segala orang besar-besar dan turutan segala anak raja-raja dan perhimpunan segala hulubalang ra'ayat sakelian-nya....<sup>2</sup>

The key words are *memerintah* (to rule), *ikut* and *turut* (both meaning follow): that is, the Raja Muda ruled and was the source of all following.

The politics of Perak in the nineteenth century provide further evidence of the very powerful position of the Raja Muda. It is clear, therefore, that the position of the ruler was extremely weak and it was only if he was fortunate enough to enjoy the support of the *orang besar-besar* that he could hope to withstand the challenge of fellow *anak raja*. Indeed, the *orang besar-besar* of the first and second ranks wielded very wide influence, and members of royalty were greatly dependent on them to further their own political interests. In the eighteenth century, the Dato' Bendahara and Laksamana, for example, played prominent roles in the succession wars.<sup>3</sup> The degree of their power is also amply demonstrated in a letter written by the ruler of Perak in 1816:

Be it known to my friend that the cause of the King of Quida's anger towards me has not arisen from any fault of mine but that of the Laksamana of Pera, who took Kreean and gave it to Tunkoo Radin without making a word of communication to the King on the Subject and that I also know nothing of it. I swear by God and the Faith neither did I order or approve of it. He alone did it and I only lately heard of it. What can I

<sup>1</sup>Generally, it means that it was the Raja Muda who ruled, under the authority of Sultan Mudzafar Shah, to bring progress to the kingdom and he was the source of following of all the chiefs and members of royalty. (Raja Chulan, p.26.)

<sup>2</sup>After Sultan Iskandar Inayat Shah became ruler, his younger brother, Raja Kechil Muda, became the Raja Muda—the representative of Sultan Inayat Shah's kingdom. The Raja Muda ruled under the throne of his elder brother and was the source of following of all the chiefs as well as members of royalty, the commanders of the army and the common people. (Ibid. p.54.)

<sup>3</sup>See, Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources' (1882), pp.103-6.

say for the Laksamana is one of my Chiefs. If the Laksamana has committed this offence let him be the only sufferer—He is now at Dinding and Pangkor as for me I had no concern in this business. But I beg of my friend to attack Dinding at the furthest by the month of Mohurum ere yet he has established himself there. Even already 80% of my people have fled to him and further if he is allowed to settle at Dinding all my people will fly to him.... He did not tell me a word of his intention to occupy this place which he has taken by violence.<sup>1</sup>

There was yet another interesting feature of the *orang besar-besar* system in Perak. Each incumbent was given a territory to administer and he was independent of the control of a fellow chief irrespective of rank. And the fact that they could act with considerable latitude constituted a major factor of conflict in Perak politics.<sup>2</sup> But, despite the fact that they had the controlling power, they seldom acted in unison so that as a group they did not pose a serious threat to the position of the *Kerabat Di-Raja*.

The circumstances of the Selangor sultanate and the institution of *orang besar-besar* provide an interesting contrast to that of Perak. The succession system itself was simpler than Perak's. Though the title generally passed from father to son, the elective principle nevertheless applied. From the time of the establishment of the *kerajaan*, in the third-quarter of the eighteenth century, until 1826, succession did not give rise to political turbulence. And although in 1857 there was a departure from usual practice in the sense that the deceased ruler's nephew and son-in-law was elected instead of his son, no struggle for power ensued. It was succession to a territorial rulership which subsequently plunged Selangor into civil war. But the events of the time also reveal that there was concerted action on the part of

<sup>1</sup>SSR vol. 57, Perak to Penang, 27 Aug. 1816.

<sup>2</sup>This is the substance of what Muhammad Ibrahim Munshi wrote in 1872 as regards the Perak polity. His actual words are: 'Ada-pun orang besar<sup>2</sup> yang tersebut itu [those of the first and second ranks in particular] semua-nya ada-lah anak<sup>2</sup> buah masing<sup>2</sup> dengan hukum-nya dan masing<sup>2</sup> itu mena'alokkan anak<sup>2</sup> buah-nya sendiri tiada-lah boleh berchampur perintah satu dengan lain melainkan masing<sup>2</sup> dengan anak-buah-nya tetapi semua orang besar<sup>2</sup> itu terhimpun kepada raja belaka bukan-lah seperti aturan dan istiadat Inggeris masing<sup>2</sup> orang besar dengan pangkat-nya dan tiap<sup>2</sup> pangkat yang besar itu boleh memerintah orang yang pangkat terkecil daripada-nya demikian-lah hingga beberapa pangkat dan pemegang-nya. Maka sekarang dalam Perak itu dari-sebab yang tersebut itu-lah masing<sup>2</sup> orang besar itu boleh membuat apa<sup>2</sup> suka-nya atas anak<sup>2</sup> buah masing<sup>2</sup> dengan sa-kehendak hati-nya kerana pada ketika aku ka-sana itu dapat tahu hal orang besar<sup>2</sup> itu telah berselisih belaka ada yang telah menyebelah kepada Raja Bendahara dan ada yang di-sabelah Raja Muda Abdullah. Maka itu-lah bunga peperangan dalam tiap<sup>2</sup> negeri perintah Melayu yang belum mengubah adat itu.' (Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), *Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim*, pp. 74-5.)



the local royalty against outsiders who tried to acquire a foothold in the state. In fact, it was this element of solidarity which may be considered a feature of Selangor politics in the nineteenth century. And, unlike their Perak counterparts, the *anak raja* of Selangor were able to acquire increasing power over the years at the expense of the *orang besar-besar*. In the mid-nineteenth century, a number of the aristocratic titles were not filled and territorial chieftainships were transferred to members of royalty. By the early 1860s, all the major districts had come under the control of the *anak raja*:<sup>1</sup>

Sungai Bernam	under	Raja Hitam
Sungai Selangor	..	Raja Musa
Sungai Jeram	..	Raja Ali
Sungai Klang	..	Raja Abdullah
Sungai Langat	..	Sultan Abdul Samad
Sungai Lukut	..	Raja Juma'at
Sungai Raya	..	Raja Sulaiman

Although the *anak raja* of Selangor held no specific title, control of the major districts allowed them control of economic resources as well as manpower in the state. The existing *orang besar-besar* were therefore, in practice, reduced to the status of subordinate functionaries. They no doubt continued to play important roles in state rituals and ceremonies and sat in the council of state but their power had been almost completely undermined. To some extent, it also represented a final supersession of the authority of the Malacca-Johor *ancien regime* by the Bugis ruling house.

The overwhelming superiority and comparative solidarity of the *anak raja* in Selangor also tended to reduce the element of conflict, for unlike the situation in Perak where the *orang besar-besar* freely and frequently asserted their influence in favour of or against a particular ruler, thereby giving rise to political turbulence, in Selangor, the choice of the ruler was very much the prerogative of members of the royalty. This may be an explanation for the near absence of succession wars in Selangor.

In Negri Sembilan was to be found a third variation of traditional Malay power politics. Here, for many years, the *anak raja* proved to be the major factor of conflict. The system of inviting a member of royalty from Pagar Ruyong to act as judge and arbiter worked

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 14 July 1871; Encl. E. Irving's memorandum relative to the disturbances in the territory of Salangore (n.d.).

satisfactorily so long as the interests of local parties were not directly involved. But with the emergence of local family interests resulting from marriages between members of royalty and female members of local *suku*,<sup>1</sup> competition became the rule rather than the exception. The *adat perpatih* might have a strengthening effect on kinship ties at the lower level—from the *suku* downwards—but at the higher level, its sanction was certainly less forceful primarily because members of the upper social strata, being regarded as the guardians and interpreters of *adat* could, at the same time, more easily evade its control. Despite the original arrangement which allowed the *anak raja* but limited authority, in practice, the *anak raja* wielded considerable influence.

This is best illustrated in the case of Raja Asil who successfully made a bid for the creation of a new title—Yang Di-Pertuan Muda—which was conferred on him in 1798. This was achieved partly through the influence of his brother-in-law, Raja Hitam (successor to Raja Adil), and partly because the Penghulu, *Waris* and *suku* of Rembau were eager to avoid unnecessary trouble. To provide for the Yamtuan Muda's maintenance, Tampin was given over to his control and Bandar, in Hilir Rembau, became his residence. This was possible because Raja Asil's mother was a Tampin woman and the territory was then a *jajahan* of Rembau. Raja Asil had, in addition, assigned to him as a subsistence, one-third of the duty levied on the tin passing down Sungai Linggi from Sungai Ujong (the duty being then \$2 per *bahara*) as well as the revenue of Keru, also a *jajahan* of Rembau.<sup>2</sup> This was also a departure from the original arrangement which did not provide the Yamtuan Besar with any apanage.

<sup>1</sup>Raja Melewar is known to have married Che Sani, daughter of Penghulu Na'am and had a daughter called Tengku Aishah. Nothing more is known of his descendants. It was from the reign of Raja Adil, Raja Melewar's successor, that a distinct class of local *anak raja* emerged in Negeri Sembilan. Raja Adil married first a daughter of the Penghulu of Jelebu and then the daughter of an Inche of Tampin, both of whom belonged to the *suku* of Tiga Batu. By his Jelebu wife he had two sons, Raja Singkul and Raja Sabun also known as Tengku Ahmad Shah. By his Tampin wife, he had a daughter, Raja Sulong, and two sons—Raja Asil and Raja Kadim.

The information given here is derived primarily from Braddell (*GPMP*, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.' op.cit.) and Hervey (CO 273/119, Weld to Derby, 23 Feb. 1883, Encl. Hervey to Col. Sec., 25 Jan. 1883, App. 'History of Rembau as one of the 'Negeri Sembilan'). Braddell, on a mission to Negri Sembilan in 1874, interviewed one of the *orang besar* of Rembau whom he described as 'a very intelligent man' and Hervey, on a mission to Rembau in 1883, interviewed, among many others, the Maharaja Menteri, the headman of Tampin Tengah. It should be mentioned that the genealogy given here differs from published ones. For details see p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/119, Weld to Derby, 23 Feb. 1883 with enclosures; Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account &c.*, vol.II pp. 119-20.

The history of Negri Sembilan in the nineteenth century reveals that despite its significantly different political structure, relations among members of the ruling elite produced the same intensity of conflict as in the other western Malay states, and Negri Sembilan, as much as the others, failed to adjust to the new conditions created by the growth of mining and commercial activities.

## THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY: A SURVEY

THE early part of the nineteenth century was in many ways an important turning point in the history of the western Malay states. It was important because it marked the beginning of a process of change which subsequently saw the local economic and administrative system conforming to a pattern akin to that of the western world. Nonetheless, it was a period of dismal political unrest. In some cases, continual turbulence characterized the trends of domestic politics; in others, the threat from without gave rise to considerable anxiety and uncertainty. Perak, perhaps, faced the most severe tests but Negri Sembilan also experienced very difficult times because here mining activities, which had got under way more rapidly than in the other two states, proved to be an equally unsettling factor in local politics. Selangor alone enjoyed some amount of equanimity.

### *Perak*

Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, the state was torn by internal dissension. When Sultan Ahmaddin<sup>1</sup> died in 1806 at Chegar Galah, his body was brought to Sayong where it lay waiting for three months because Bendahara Raja Mahmud, son of Sultan Muhammadin, refused to be present for the burial ceremony. Eventually, it was Sultan Ahmaddin's own son, Raja Abdul Malek, who was appointed the successor but he received no recognition from Raja Mahmud. While Sultan Abdul Malek Mansor Shah ruled from Pasir Garam, the Bendahara held sway at Hulu Perak. But Raja Mahmud did not live long and after his death, the title of Raja Bendahara was given to his son, Raja Ngah Laut. This was possibly

<sup>1</sup>Sultan Ahmaddin was the youngest son of Raja Bisnu who, for a while, ruled at Hilir Perak with the title of Sultan Muhammad. Before his appointment as Yang Di-Pertuan, he was better known as Raja Kechil Bongsu. He succeeded to the throne after three of his brothers — Sultan Iskandar, Sultan Muhammadin and Sultan Alauddin — had successively preceded him. When Sultan Alauddin reigned, Raja Kechil Bongsu was conferred the title of Sultan Muda. It is Sultan Ahmaddin's posterity, except for the brief period (1871-4) when Sultan Ismail reigned, who have ruled Perak until to-day. (Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources' (1884), pp.307-21.)

by design for the new Bendahara had married Raja Aminah, daughter of Sultan Malek Mansor Shah.<sup>1</sup>

But the new ruler's troubles were not over for in later years he found himself in difficulties with the Laksamana and Raja Radin.<sup>2</sup> Worse was to befall him. In 1818, his country was overrun by Kedah and he died the same year to be succeeded by his son Raja Abdullah, the Raja Muda,<sup>3</sup> who had the good fortune to see the removal of Siamese and Selangor control over Perak.

However, Sultan Abdullah Muazam Shah also encountered opposition from within the state. One of his fiercest opponents was Raja Radin who was holding the title of Bendahara. But Raja Radin did not survive the ruler and his title passed to the Raja Kechil Muda, Raja Chulan, first cousin of Sultan Abdullah. Further political adjustments were to take place during the eventful years of the 1820s. As a result of British interference, Raja Muda Ngah Laut was raised to the dignity of Yang Di-Pertuan Muda and Bendahara Raja Chulan became Raja Muda. It does not appear that the office of Bendahara was immediately filled but Raja Ngah Ja'afar, nephew of Sultan Abdullah, having married a daughter of the Yang Di-Pertuan Muda, took the title of Raja Di-Hilir. The title of Bendahara eventually passed to Raja Abdullah, the Raja Kechil Muda, who was a cousin to both the ruler and the Yang Di-Pertuan Muda.<sup>4</sup> It is this period in Perak history which is said to mark the beginning of a new system of succession to the throne based on a rotation among members of three families.<sup>5</sup> If the intention was to effect an arrangement which would provide fair opportunities to members of the three families to become Yang Di-Pertuan, it worked successfully, though with considerable strain, until 1871. It did not however contribute sufficiently to internal peace.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p.312; Winstedt & Wilkinson, 'A History of Perak', p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, vol.57, Perak to Penang, 27 Aug. 1816.

<sup>3</sup>Raja Abdullah's position during the Kedah occupation was described by the ruler of Kedah in a letter to Penang in 1819: 'The Rajah Moods though not bearing the title exercises all the functions of a tributary Sovereign over the Country of Perak, Pulo Pankor and the Circumjacent shore appertaining to that Kingdom. Now Perak being subject to my dominion these places therefore are equally comprised within my Jurisdiction.' (See C. D. Cowan, 'Early Penang and the Rise of Singapore', *JMBRAS*, vol.23, pt.2, 1950, p.97).

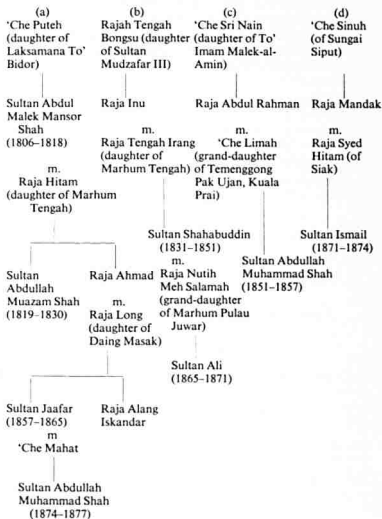
<sup>4</sup>Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources' (1884), pp. 314-15.

<sup>5</sup>The heads of the three families were Sultan Abdul Malek Mansor Shah, Raja Inu and Raja Abdul Rahman, all of whom were children of Sultan Ahmadin. Sultan Abdullah was the son of Sultan Malek Mansor Shah, Raja Chulan was the son of Raja Inu and Raja Abdullah (Raja Di-Hilir) was the son of Raja Abdul Rahman.

I. PERAK GENEALOGY  
(From Sultan Ahmaddin to Sultan Abdullah)

Sultan Ahmaddin  
(1796—1806)

m.



In 1828, Raja Muda Chulan defied Sultan Abdullah by letting the opium, gambling and spirit farms to certain Amoy Chinese although the farms had already been granted to another party. Force was required to remove the Amoy Chinese. When Raja Chulan succeeded his cousin in 1831 with the title of Sultan Shahabuddin, leading members of the Perak royalty were again split into two factions with the ruler and the Raja Muda (Abdullah) on one side and the new Bendahara, Raja Ngah Jaafar, on the other. This was to be a prolonged affair, for the enmity between Raja Abdullah and Raja Ngah Jaafar was especially bitter. Meanwhile, in 1848, Sultan Shahabuddin had to contend with the Laksamana who refused to remit to the ruler the revenue collected from duty levied on tin exported down the Perak river.<sup>1</sup>

External events also contributed to the chaotic state of affairs in Perak. Because of an attempt to offer allegiance to Sultan Mahmud, the anti-Bugis Yang Di-Pertuan of Johor, Perak was overrun by the Selangor forces in 1805.<sup>2</sup> Though Selangor's hold over Perak was brief, friendship being restored within the next few years, Perak continued to feel the dominating influence of its neighbour. For example, Raja Hassan, a Bugis of Selangor, established himself as the ruler of Dinding where he opened a tin mine on Pulau Talang. In effect, he was placed there by his uncle, Sultan Ibrahim, to collect tribute from Perak.<sup>3</sup>

Perak had resisted Selangor's dominance to the best of its ability, but as mentioned earlier, in 1818 it was conquered by Kedah and brought under the nominal rule of Siam.<sup>4</sup> It had perforce then to look to Selangor for assistance. By 1822, Selangor was able to help Perak expel the Siamese and a treaty was signed between the two states on 11 July 1823 which allowed Selangor a large share of Perak's revenue, hence Raja Hassan's presence there. He was in fact accompanied by Raja Muhammad, son of the Selangor ruler. But, for the next few years Perak continued to be a pawn in the Selangor-Siam struggle for supremacy in that state, with a third party, the British, eventually playing a positive role in safeguarding Perak's

<sup>1</sup>Winstedt & Wilkinson, pp. 74, 130.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. pp. 63-4; Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, pp. 238, 244.

<sup>3</sup>Anderson, *Political and Commercial Considerations...*, p.189; Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', *JMBRAS*, vol.12, pt.3, 1934, pp. 12-13.

<sup>4</sup>For an account of Kedah's invasion of Perak, see R. Bonney, *Kedah, 1771-1821: The Search for Security and Independence*, Kuala Lumpur, 1971, Chapter VI.

integrity. But between the 1830s and early 1840s, there was still fear that Selangor might renew its aggressive policy.<sup>1</sup>

However, trouble arose eventually not from the south but from the north, for relations with Kedah had become strained. In 1842, war appeared imminent. The source of dispute was the Krian territory—each state claimed it for its own. Again, Perak fell back on Penang for support.<sup>2</sup>

The effect of these disturbances on Perak's economy was particularly disastrous. The state was impoverished. Between 1826 and 1831, for example, several appeals were made to Penang for economic aid of one form or another. On 20 October 1826, Sultan Abdullah sent the Bendahara, Orang Kaya Besar, Laksamana and Sri Dewa Raja to Penang to borrow \$10,000 and acquire 400 muskets with ammunition on credit. He was given, in the following year, \$3,500, 200 muskets, two casks of powder, 500 bundles of ball cartridge and 1,000 musket flints. In 1829, Perak was still in need of assistance and Sultan Abdullah asked the Resident Councillor of Penang to induce Chinese ships to visit Perak annually to buy elephants, for this would provide a great relief to the distressed inhabitants. In 1831, the Laksamana was sent to Penang to report a rice famine and to obtain credit on ten guns with powder and ball, some cash and four or five *koyan* of rice.<sup>3</sup>

A contemporary report<sup>4</sup> throws further light on the economic situation in Perak in the 1820s. It pointed out that '... owing to the insidious and overbearing policy and encroachments of the Siamese, the cultivation and the population of this country have both been in a rapid decline'. Even daily necessities had become scarce. Most of the cattle, for instance, had been slaughtered by the Siamese and only a few goats, buffaloes and poultry were left. Places such as Kuala Bidor and Kampar which used to have a few hundred inhabitants employed in mining had become almost deserted. And all along Kuala Perak '[the] banks ... are closely invested by thick jungle and, owing to the swampy nature of the ground, not now inhabited, although in more prosperous times the soil was in a great measure under rice cultivation'. There were people in the Straits Settlements who believed that given political stability, Perak had good possibilities for agricultural development. So much rice might be produced

<sup>1</sup>Anderson, p.189; Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup>For a brief but effective comment on this issue, see J. R. Logan, 'Notes on Pinang, Kidah &c.', p. 64n.

<sup>3</sup>Winstedt & Wilkinson, pp. 71-4.

<sup>4</sup>James Low, 'Observations on Perak', *JIAEA*, vol.4, 1850, pp. 497-504.



that it could 'prove a valuable granary for Singapore and other Settlements'. The climate was also favourable for the cultivation of sugar, indigo and other tropical plants. Indeed '... coffee has been partially cultivated with success and the sugar cane seems to grow to a great size without more labor than that of merely turning the soil rudely up and inserting the cuttings'.

However, despite the evident lack of progress in its economy, Perak was still well-known for exports such as rattans, wax, timber (for boat building), ivory, rhinoceros' horns and scented woods. Gold was available in small quantities but 'an outlay of a little capital might render the mine much more productive'. Tin continued to be the most valuable item of export. Production, however, had declined substantially. It was estimated that at the turn of the century, the output was not overrated at 9,000 piculs annually.<sup>1</sup> In 1826, 6,000 piculs a year were said to be the quantity obtainable only 'in quiet times'.<sup>2</sup>

The principal mines in Hilir Perak were located in Bidor, Batang Padang, Chenderiang, Kampar and Kinta; in Hulu Perak, they were mainly found in Sayong, Budara and Bakau. Most of the miners were local inhabitants who worked all the year round but generally from 5 a.m. to 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Primary attention was still given to agriculture. Only after harvesting had been done did they devote more time to mining. And, as in the case of agriculture, both sexes and persons of various ages were engaged in the gathering of tin.<sup>3</sup>

The Chinese had yet to play a sustained role in the tin mining industry although they are known to have worked tin in Perak since at least the eighteenth century. But these early miners were geographically very mobile. They moved from one place to another when circumstances proved unfavourable or when offered more ample reward elsewhere. Hence, in one instance, probably sometime in the second half of the eighteenth century, when the ruler of Perak imposed heavy mining tolls on the Chinese, they immediately left the state. Then for the next several years, there was a decline in production of almost 2,000 piculs annually.<sup>4</sup> But, by the second decade of the nineteenth century there were over 400 Chinese in Perak 'engaged in working the Tin mines and as traders'.<sup>5</sup> They were pro-

<sup>1</sup>Anderson, p. 187.

<sup>2</sup>Low, p. 498.

<sup>3</sup>Loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup>See J. de Hullu, 'A. E. van Braam Houckgeest's memorie over Malakka en tinhandel aldaar (1790)', *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 76, The Hague, 1920.

<sup>5</sup>Anderson, p. 187.

bably more involved in trading than in mining activities. In Chendriang, for example, tin ore produced by the local inhabitants was bartered and smelted by the Chinese. They were also said to '... carry on most of the trade of the country and farm from the Rajah the opium and arrack used in the country, and most other lucrative concerns are in their hands'. The majority of these Chinese were concentrated in the village of Bandar (about 50 miles from the mouth of the river) where, out of a total of about 200 houses, about 50 were occupied by the Chinese.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1830s, a Kapitan China had been appointed in Perak and the person chosen was a Teochew called Tan Ah Hun. Though born in Perak, his influence was not confined to that state for he also became the revenue farmer of Singapore and Johor.<sup>2</sup> The appointment of a Kapitan China might be taken as evidence that the Chinese population in Perak was increasing in number, and indeed there is some indication that, at this stage, Perak's tin industry was gradually reviving, for it was estimated that it was beginning to produce, in the 1830s, an average of 7,500 piculs of tin annually, the largest amount produced by any state in the Peninsula.<sup>3</sup> But the major turning point in the history of tin mining in Perak had yet to come.

### *Selangor*

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, Selangor was a strong and aggressive state. Its ruler, Sultan Ibrahim, who began his reign 'long before Pinang was taken possession of' by the British<sup>4</sup> was an energetic personality. He had supported the Bugis attempt to conquer Malacca in 1784 and although as a result of the Dutch counter-attack, he lost Selangor and had to take refuge in Pahang, he was able to regain his country, with Pahang's assistance, within a year. But Dutch presence in Malacca always posed a threat to his position so that, at one instance, he was even prepared to allow the British to found a settlement in Selangor as defence against possible Dutch intrusion. Therefore the British occupation of Malacca in 1795 came as a great relief to him and he was able to interfere in

<sup>1</sup>Low, pp. 498n., 500.

<sup>2</sup>Song Ong Siang, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, London, 1923, p.21; C. S. Wong, *A Gallery of Chinese Kapitans*, Singapore, 1964, p.68 n.8.

<sup>3</sup>Newbold, 'Account of Sungie Ujong, one of the States in the Interior of Malacca' in Moor (ed.), *Notices of the Indian Archipelago...*, p.83.

<sup>4</sup>Anderson, p. 193.

affairs outside the state. In 1800, he went to Lingga and stayed two years there trying to settle differences between the Bugis and the Malays, after which he adopted an aggressive policy towards Perak.<sup>1</sup>

In his campaign against Perak in 1804, he was accompanied by his cousins — Raja Jaafar, Raja Idris and Raja Ahmad of the Bugis royal family of Riau — as well as his sons, Raja Muhammad, Raja Ismail and Raja Abdullah and his nephew, Raja Hassan. True to his aggressive nature, in 1806, he wrote to the British, 'The people of Pinang must not go to Perak at present, for Perak, from the River Korau, to Berting Bras Basoh, is my Country. This Country I have taken by force of Powder and Ball ....'<sup>2</sup>

However, despite its supremacy in Perak, Selangor faced anxious moments towards the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century for the alarming news soon arrived that the Dutch were returning to Malacca. In June 1819, Sultan Ibrahim wrote to the English, 'The Dutch oppressed me, wanting to oblige me by force to renew the Treaty of 1790'.<sup>3</sup> But growing British influence in the Straits of Malacca at this stage provided an effective check on the Dutch, thereby allowing Selangor a free hand to continue to make its presence felt in Perak.

In 1824, Selangor captured forty Siamese boats containing 25 *bahara* of tin from Perak. By this time, Perak itself had become exasperated because of Selangor's unceasing exactions and was even prepared to turn to Siam for help. Siam was therefore ready to attack and subjugate Selangor but Sultan Ibrahim was undaunted by Siam's superior strength and made preparations to resist. The attack, as is now well-known, did not materialize owing to British interference. At the same time, Selangor was compelled to give up its hold over Perak.<sup>4</sup>

The death of Sultan Ibrahim in 1826 undoubtedly had a telling effect on Selangor's foreign policy. Until then, despite pressure from the British, Sultan Ibrahim continued to make financial claims on Perak but his successor, Sultan Muhammad, was even prepared to admit a counter-claim by Perak which resulted in a balance of \$345 in favour of Perak.<sup>5</sup> A contemporary British official described him as 'indolent and sensual'.<sup>6</sup>

Although this may sound like one of the condemnatory statements

<sup>1</sup>Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', pp. 8-9.

<sup>2</sup>Anderson, p. 189.

<sup>3</sup>Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p. 12.

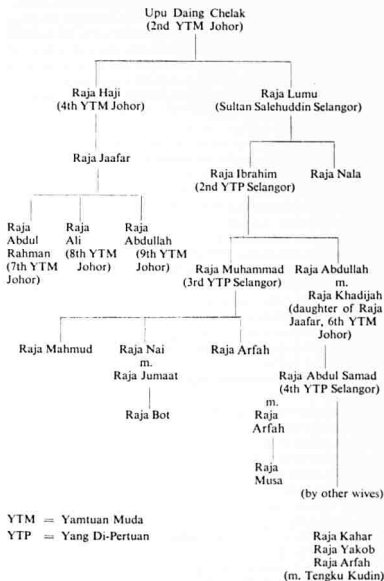
<sup>4</sup>L. A. Mills, 'British Malaya 1824-67', *JMBRAS*, vol. 3, pt. 2, 1925, pp. 137-49.

<sup>5</sup>Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', pp. 13-15, 16.

<sup>6</sup>Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account*, Vol. II, p. 32.

## 2. SELANGOR GENEALOGY

(to illustrate the link between the Johor and Selangor Ruling Families)



which flowed easily from the pens of British colonial officials, Selangor's politics, at that time, did take a different turn. It was no longer oriented towards external affairs. And increasing internal problems tended to weaken the state. About half a century had elapsed since the establishment of the *kerajaan* in Selangor. The *anak raja* as a class had increased in number very rapidly. The polygamous practices of the rulers ensured that recruitment into this class would always be at an accelerating rate. Owing to the close relationship between the ruling family in Selangor and the Bugis royal house in Riau, many of the Riau *anak raja* also settled in Selangor. The growing strength of this class was keenly felt in Selangor at the time when Sultan Muhammad reigned. And because Sultan Muhammad was weak, abuse of authority became increasingly common. Among those guilty of such practices were the ruler's own children who were responsible for heavy exactions made on the *raayat*. This led to depopulation. In August 1833, for example, there was a wholesale flight of the inhabitants from a village called Tempuni into Malacca territory. Half the villagers of Sungai Raya also left the state to escape the heavy demands of Raja Osman, son of Sultan Muhammad.

Throughout the greater part of Sultan Muhammad's reign, no Raja Muda was appointed. It led to speculation that upon his death there would be a struggle for succession. Raja Sulaiman, Raja Osman and Raja Yusuf were said to be likely successors, and of the three, Raja Sulaiman was the most popular candidate.<sup>1</sup> Subsequent events showed that this fear was unfounded, but weak central control did result in a wider dispersal of political power and hence, towards the second half of Sultan Muhammad's reign, several members of the royal family became extremely powerful and they successfully pressed for greater control of the major districts within the state.

Selangor's economy encountered fluctuating fortunes at this time. There were occasions when its trade flourished, and this is not surprising since a large proportion of its settlers were Bugis—the most successful indigenous traders in the Archipelago. In fact, in the mid-eighteenth century, Selangor was considered a significant threat to Malacca for, unlike Perak which had little direct contact with foreign traders, Selangor was one place from which tin from the neighbouring territories—Sungai Ujong, Sri Menanti, Penajis and Linggi—could be purchased by visiting traders.<sup>2</sup> Selangor, of course, also produced

<sup>1</sup>See *ibid.* pp. 27–40.

<sup>2</sup>B. Harrison (tr.), 'Malacca in the Eighteenth Century: Two Dutch Governors' Reports' (Memorandum by W. B. Albinus, 1750), *JMBRAS*, vol. 27, pt.1, 1954.

its own tin, the annual output amounting to about 4,000 piculs. The Chinese were already playing a leading role in the industry, but war with the Dutch in the 1780s adversely affected the tin trade because many of the Chinese miners left the state. And when peace was restored, Selangor was compelled to channel its tin through the port of Malacca, but since the Dutch were not prepared to pay a good price for the mineral, there was no incentive for the Chinese to want to work tin in Selangor. In 1788, Francis Light said of Selangor '... a River navigable for Ships chief Produce Tin—taken by the Dutch retaken by the King now restricted to Trade with Malacca, only very Poor and almost deserted'.<sup>1</sup> In 1790, only 189 piculs of tin were sent to Malacca.<sup>2</sup>

With the temporary absence of the Dutch between 1795 and 1818, Selangor's economy revived. In 1805, following Selangor's conquest of Perak, Raja Jaafar together with his brothers, Raja Idris and Raja Ahmad, were rewarded by Sultan Ibrahim for participating in the campaign. They were given the territory of Klang for subsistence ('akan jadi permakanaan-nya adek beradek').<sup>3</sup> Raja Jaafar and his brothers successfully built up a flourishing tin trade between Klang and Malacca. Raja Jaafar especially had close association with the Malacca merchants and was well-liked by them. However, he was not long in Klang before he was recalled to Riau to succeed to the office of Yamtuan Muda left vacant by the death of Raja Ali, for Raja Jaafar was the son of the famous Raja Haji.<sup>4</sup> To what extent Raja Jaafar's departure hampered the development of the tin industry in Klang is not known but it was Lukut which subsequently emerged as a thriving mining centre.

Lukut was first opened up by Raja Busu, a member of the Selangor royal family. His followers derived primarily from Sungai Selangor and Kedah. By 1815, Chinese miners are known to have been engaged in mining there. In 1818, it was estimated that of the 1,000 inhabitants resident in Lukut, about 200 of them were Chinese and a Kapitan China had been appointed by Sultan Ibrahim.<sup>5</sup> Raja Busu did not work the mines himself, but imposed a duty of 10 per cent on all tin exported from Lukut. However, as the industry grew, Raja Busu raised the duty from time to time and this antagonized the Chinese.

<sup>1</sup>A Letter from Captain Francis Light to Lord Cornwallis Dated 20th June 1788', *JMBRAS*, vol.16, pt.1, 1938, p.125.

<sup>2</sup>J. de Hulu, 'A. E. van Braam Houckgeest's Memorie &c.'

<sup>3</sup>Raja Ali Haji, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup>See *ibid.* pp.256-7, 259-60.

<sup>5</sup>Anderson, p. 202.

One night in September 1834, they visited Raja Busu at his residence to try to settle the question of duty on tin. They found the vicinity of the house stacked up with tin. Jealousy got the better of them and tempers became frayed. They asked Raja Busu to come down from his house failing which they would burn it. Raja Busu's reply was 'Orang Islam tidak takutkan mati, buat-lah apa yang kamu suka'.<sup>1</sup> As a consequence, they set fire to his house and massacred every one in it. They then attempted to make a retreat to Malacca but were ambushed by the Malays.<sup>2</sup> For a while, the tin trade of Lukut was dislocated for there is no doubt that Raja Busu's death was a terrible loss to Selangor. It was said of him that '[he was] universally respected and liked by the Malays, would have been elected [as ruler after Sultan Muhammad] and might have rescued this once powerful state [Selangor] from its present degraded condition. Unfortunately ..., he fell victim to a singular conspiracy of the Chinese miners in his employ....'<sup>3</sup> However, the brighter phase of Lukut's history had yet to come and it began in the 1840s when Raja Jumaat of Riau took charge of it.

In the second decade of the nineteenth century, tin was also worked at Sungai Selangor, Langat and Klang. Along Sungai Klang, the principal mining areas were Penaga, Petaling, Serdang, Junjong, Pantai Rusa, Kuala Bulu, Gua Batu and Sungai Lumpur. Sungai Lumpur was possibly the most productive. But the total yield from these mines was comparatively low. In 1818, it was estimated that the Selangor and Klang mines together produced about 2,000 piculs per annum.<sup>4</sup> And in the early 1830s, the figure given for the total output from Selangor, Klang, Lukut and Langat was 3,600 piculs a year.<sup>5</sup>

Some of the other products of Selangor at this time were coconuts, grown largely in Jeram, wood oil and damar obtainable at Sepang and rattan which was exported from Langat but for which Bukit Keruing (along Sungai Klang) was even more famous. Padi was cultivated at Kapar (below Jeram) as well as Sepang<sup>6</sup> and it was to become Selangor's leading agricultural produce during the reign of

<sup>1</sup>'Muslims are not afraid to die, do what you like.'

<sup>2</sup>For a general history of early Lukut, see Nasir Osman Abbas, 'Sejarah Lukut', *Minguan Malaysia*, 20 March 1966, pp. 2, 11. This article is based on information extracted from an album presented to the author by the present Sultan of Selangor at the Istana Alam Shah, Klang. See also L. D. Gammans, 'The State of Lukut', *JMBRAS*, vol. II, 1924, pp. 291-5.

<sup>3</sup>Newbold, vol. II pp. 32-3.

<sup>4</sup>Anderson, pp. 197-202.

<sup>5</sup>Newbold, 'Account of Sungie Ujong, one of the states in the Interior of Malacca', in Moor (ed.), p. 83.

<sup>6</sup>Anderson, pp. 197-202.

Sultan Muhammad when planting was concentrated largely along Sungai Selangor and Langat.

It was not entirely by choice that padi cultivation became the primary occupation of the native inhabitants of Selangor during the reign of Sultan Muhammad. According to one reliable source; '[The ruler] was himself very fond of planting padi and also rigorously imposed on all his subjects doing so too. There were tools, and men, moreover to work. Those who were slow or who did not toil at padi planting were punished'.<sup>1</sup> As a result, along both banks of Sungai Selangor, from Telok Penyamun to Kampong Kedah 'nothing but padi fields could be seen in those days'. And along Sungai Langat, from Pandamaran to Sungai Rambai, the Malays worked at their *ladang* (unirrigated rice field). There was no *sawah* (wet rice field) here. Because of the abundant supply of rice, no imported rice was consumed in Selangor at that time. But the situation was to change radically with the intensification of mining activities in the mid-nineteenth century.

### *Negri Sembilan*

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, there was continual political upheaval in this state. Although there were other strong divisive elements in the Negri Sembilan political system, one of the major causes of conflict at this time was the power struggle among the *anak raja* which inevitably involved the Penghulu and other *orang besar*. The local *anak raja* as a distinct class had been well established by the early nineteenth century and it became important for the political system to make adjustments to accommodate them by way of creating new offices for them commensurate with their social status. The process of adjustment, however, took place only slowly, mainly because the Penghulu, *waris* and other *suku* were not prepared to grant too much political power to the *anak raja*. But even where modifications were made to the existing *atoran* (arrangement), they did not always lead to expected results.

Raja Asil's successful bid for the title of Yamtuan Muda has been mentioned. It remains to point out that within a decade he found himself opposed by his nephew, Raja Ali, who was said to have 'concerted with a piratical chief' against his grand-uncle. This first

<sup>1</sup>Rice Cultivation in the States: Interesting Letter from Raja Bot', *Malay Mail*, 14 Nov. 1902. Raja Bot was the son of Raja Jumaat of Lukut. He was born sometime in 1847 and died in 1916. The full text of this letter also appears in *Peninjau Sejarah*, vol.1, no.2, 1966.



attempt to dislodge Raja Asil, however, did not bear fruit and Raja Ali retired temporarily to Sungai Nipah. Opportunity soon offered itself again when Raja Haji, a son of Raja Asil's, fell in love with the daughter of a well known *haji* who was related to Renneh alias Nganit, a *waris* of Rembau. It appears that:

The Hadjee refused to give up his daughter, and Rajah Hadjee succeeded in carrying her off to the Istana [in Bandar]... Kassip [also referred to as Kusil], the Penghulu of Rumbow, complained to Rajah Asil, who either could not or would not satisfy him. A rupture ensued. The Penghulus and Sookoos sided with Renneh.

In Negri Sembilan, as in the other Malay states, '... it is not considered correct to dethrone or fight against a chief, unless a chief of similar or equal rank leads the party'. In this particular instance, a deputation was therefore sent to invite Raja Ali to lead the opposition against Raja Asil. This opportunity Raja Ali welcomed. However, by negotiation he was able to prevail upon Raja Asil to retire for a while to Naning. It was believed that Raja Ali had promised to reinstate his grand-uncle once matters had quietened down. But when the Penghulu, *waris* and *lembaga* decided in 1812 to elect him Yamtuan Muda, he forsook Raja Asil. Thrown upon his own resources, Raja Asil died in Naning two or three years later.<sup>1</sup>

The history of Negri Sembilan in the 1820s was even more eventful. Raja Lenggang Laut, the fourth Yamtuan Besar from Pagar Ruyong, died in 1824 and for the next ten years there was fierce competition for the title of Yang Di-Pertuan Besar. In this period of intrigues, counter-intrigues and wars, two persons came into prominence—Raja Ali and his son-in-law Syed Shaaban.<sup>2</sup> Following the death of Raja Lenggang Laut, Raja Ali made a strong bid for the title. His claim, however, ran counter to traditional practice. Nevertheless, he occupied a strong position in Negri Sembilan. Quite apart from being the Yamtuan Muda, he had also interfered in Rembau politics which helped to augment his influence. Together with the Yamtuan Besar

<sup>1</sup>Braddell, 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling &c.', p. 230.

<sup>2</sup>Syed Shaaban was the son of Syed Ibrahim Al-Kadri, an Arab from Aceh. Syed Ibrahim, 'a zealous missionary ... had settled in [Rembau] to teach the people and convert the aborigines to Mahomedanism'. Syed Shaaban's mother was 'Sri Kamis, a slave girl, a *Khama-zada* of Zainuddin, formerly Capitan Melayu in Malacca'. He was, therefore, born in Rembau. As a *syed*, he had access to the royal families and he contracted matrimonial alliances with a princess from Johor and another from Siak. He also married the two daughters of Yamtuan Muda Raja Ali each of whom bore him a son—Syed Abu and Syed Hamid. In the Naning War (1831–2), he shrewdly supported the British from whom, in later years, he acquired an annual pension of £240. (Newbold, 'Account of Rumbow &c.', Moor (ed.), p. 66; *GPMP* Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.').

3. NEGRI SEMBILAN GENEALOGY  
(illustrating the two major ruling houses)  
Raja Adil



(Raja Lenggang Laut) he had brought about the appointment of four extra *lembaga* 'in order to lessen the influence of the Penghulu and former *sukus* [*lembaga*], and to increase their own'.<sup>1</sup> Then in 1819 when Penghulu Bogok died, his nephew, Renneh, from the Biduanda Jakun, was elected successor. But as Renneh was from Hulu Rembau, Raja Ali brought about the appointment of another Penghulu in the person of Pakat, also a nephew of To' Bogok, but he belonged to the Biduanda Jawa and was from Hilir Rembau. Pakat was, in fact, proclaimed Penghulu of Hilir Rembau.<sup>2</sup>

Despite his influence, Raja Ali failed to prevent the arrival of another *anak raja* from Sumatra, albeit there was a delay of about two years. In 1826, Raja Labu appeared in Negri Sembilan where he sought to consolidate his position by marrying Tengku Hitam, daughter of Raja Asil. But Raja Labu had been preceded by a favourite retainer, Raja Kerjan, who 'by his licentious proceedings' soon raised considerable opposition to Raja Labu. At this juncture, the situation was complicated by Raja Radin at Sri Menanti where he managed to prevail upon the Penghulu there to proclaim him as Yamtuan Besar. The Dato' Klana, on the other hand, supported Raja Labu. Together, they remonstrated to the Penghulu of Sri Menanti who then withdrew support for Raja Radin. Raja Labu took the opportunity to seize two *lela* (swivel gun) and other articles, altogether valued at about \$200, from Raja Radin's residence under the pretext that they were regalia. Raja Radin was compelled to look to Raja Ali for support. Choosing a time when Raja Labu was absent, the opposition entered Sri Menanti and recovered the property. By 1830 they forced Raja Labu to leave the capital, but he continued to enjoy the support of the Dato' Klana as well as that of the Penghulu of Johol and Sri Menanti, all of whom had not acquiesced in the appointment of Raja Ali as Yamtuan Muda. The odds against Raja Ali were, in fact, substantial, and at one stage he was besieged at Bandar, but peace was restored temporarily through negotiation. By 1832, however, Raja Labu found that he had, apart from Pakat (Pengkulu of Hilir Rembau) who had broken away from Raja Ali, no ardent supporter left. A concerted attack by Raja Ali, Syed Shaaban and Raja Radin finally forced him to return to Minangkabau in Sumatra.<sup>3</sup> With that the Pagar Ruyong regime in Negri Sembilan

<sup>1</sup>Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account & c.*, vol. II, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup>Braddell, 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling & c.', p. 229; Begbie, pp. 143-4.

<sup>3</sup>GPMP Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report & c'; Begbie, pp. 141-2.

came to an end. Henceforth, each succeeding Yamtuan Besar was elected from among members of the local *anak raja*.

But it did not solve the problems of the local *anak raja* for with the eclipse of Raja Labu '... the field was left open to Rajah Alli, who, in September of that year [1832], was declared by the Punghulu [Renneh] and Sukus of Lower Rumbowe, to be Eam Tuan Besar; and, at the same time, his son-in-law, Syed Sabban, was appointed Eam Tuan Muda.<sup>1</sup> Raja Radin, commanding influence in Sri Menanti, refused to recognize Raja Ali, who with limited support available felt that his position was insecure and proceeded to stockade himself at Pengkalan Pedas. His position was further weakened by the fact that his son-in-law, Syed Shaaban, whom he appointed Yamtuan Muda, proved too ambitious and eventually alienated all the neighbouring chiefs.

Following his assumption of the title in 1832, Syed Shaaban attempted to levy a duty of \$2 per *bahara* on tin going from Sungai Ujong to Malacca, a privilege originally granted to Yamtuan Muda Asil by Yamtuan Besar Raja Hitam. To fulfil his objective, Syed Shaaban built a stockade at Simpang which disrupted the tin trade between Sungai Ujong and Malacca, resulting in financial losses to the merchants at Malacca who had derived much profit by direct commercial dealings with Dato' Muda Katas,<sup>2</sup> ruler of Linggi.<sup>3</sup> Prevailed upon by Malacca traders, Katas waged war against Syed

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Muhammad Katas, who originated from Rembau, settled at Pengkalan Kundang at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Soon after, he married the daughter of Jeragan Abdul Rahman, the Dato' of Linggi. As Dato' Aman grew old, he left the management of his affairs in the hands of Katas, who in course of time became known as Dato' Muda Linggi. In this position he remained after the death of Dato' Aman in 1824 and the title of Dato' Linggi lapsed. (Ibid.; Gullick, 'Sungei Ujong', p. 61).

<sup>3</sup>The history of the origin of Linggi itself is not clear. Sungai Ujong traditions claim that the founder of the settlement was Dato' Awalidin who was offered the territory by Dato' Klana Leha. (Gullick, 'Sungei Ujong', pp.58-9.) The Sedia Raja of Rembau wrote in 1872: '... a son of the Rajah of Rhio begged it of one of my ancestors who reigned over Rambow, to dwell there and my ancestor permitted him to do so, after living there a short time, he return to Rhio, and an affair of his remained there (in charge) named Datu Aola, and to the present day it is the descendants of the Datu Aola who remain at Linggi. It has been the custom for a very long time ... since Datu Aola, that he and his descendants should bring a sign of their allegiance to the ruler of Rambow....' (SSR, F7, Letter to Tunku Dia Oodin, 2 July 1872). In view of the known early connexion between the chiefs of Rembau and the Bugis, the presence of Bugis in Kuala Linggi since the eighteenth century (Raja Ali Haji, op.cit. pp. 55, 114, 117-18) and the proximity between Rembau and Linggi, the Rembau version of the foundation of Linggi cannot be ignored.

Shaaban in 1833, with Klana Kawal<sup>1</sup> and Raja Radin supporting the cause of Linggi and Raja Ali together with the Penghulu of Rembau (Renneh) assisting Syed Shaaban.

Raja Radin's support for Linggi was obviously aimed at ousting Raja Ali from the position of Yamtuan Besar. Klana Kawal, at this stage, was very much under the influence of Katas.<sup>2</sup> The relationship between Rembau and Linggi had been strained for some time because Linggi refused to recognize the overlordship of Rembau for, owing to the proximity between the two territories, Rembau would then demand a substantial share of the revenue derivable from the Linggi traffic.

The war which ensued lasted until 1836, in the course of which, the Penghulu of Rembau, resentful of the ways of Syed Shaaban, changed sides and the formidable alliance formed forced Syed Shaaban and his father-in-law to withdraw from Rembau. They eventually took refuge at Tampin and Keru respectively.<sup>3</sup>

Raja Ali never recovered his influence and died in Keru in 1856, but Syed Shaaban was still able to find supporters for his cause. Between 1837 and 1842, he had moved from Tampin to Malacca where he stayed 'inoffensively if not contentedly'. He fell back on the British for financial assistance by virtue of the fact that he had rendered important services during the Naning War. He was accordingly given a pension, a house and a piece of land. But by 1842, he had been involved in intrigues with Raja Kerjan, Raja Labu's retainer,<sup>4</sup> and the mother of Raja Jaafar<sup>5</sup> against a certain Ungku Busu

<sup>1</sup>When Klana Leha died in the 1820s, his two nephews, Kawal and Bahi, were candidates for the title of Dato' Klana. The *adat* required that election of the successor must be carried out before the deceased could be buried:

Umor-nya pendek langkah-nya panjang,  
Sudah sampai kehendak Allah,  
Hendak berkubor di-tanah merah,  
Sa-hari hilang, sa-hari bertanam,  
Sa-hari bertumbuh, sa-hari pelihara.

Kawal, however, was absent at that time and Bahi was elected Klana. But part of the elective body dissented and a war ensued which terminated in 1828 with the majority of the *orang besar* giving their support to Kawal. (See Newbold, 'Account of Sungie Ujong &c.', pp. 84-5 where a translation of the verse is also given.)

<sup>2</sup>Newbold, who interviewed Klana Kawal in 1833, found that the Klana's principal adviser was undoubtedly Dato' Muda Katas. (Ibid.)

<sup>3</sup>GPMP Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'; Abdullah Sultan, 'Relations between Malacca and the Malay States 1832-1867', B.A.Hons. dissertation, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1957, pp. 18-20.

<sup>4</sup>After Raja Labu's defeat, Raja Kerjan fled to Pahang after which he moved to Johor.

<sup>5</sup>Raja Jaafar was a younger son of Sultan Hussain of Johor.

of Gemenchih. Towards the end of 1842, in the name of Raja Jaafar, Syed Shaaban and Raja Kerjan drove Ungku Busu from Gemenchih. Raja Jaafar, described as 'a fine open-hearted youth', allowed himself to be used because he was persuaded by Syed Shaaban that he had a right to exact a portion of the gold mines at Gemenchih. It was with British assistance that Ungku Busu recaptured Gemenchih. In the operation, Raja Kerjan was killed.<sup>1</sup>

No sooner was the Gemenchih affair settled than Syed Shaaban became involved in Rembau politics once again. In 1843, the Penghulu of Rembau (Renneh) died and Syed Shaaban at once manoeuvred to be elected to the title. In this he was unsuccessful but he was able to gain the confidence of the new Penghulu (Dato' Akhir) who was prepared to allow him to reclaim his former title of Yamtuan Muda. But British interference frustrated his plan.<sup>2</sup> For the next twelve years, Syed Shaaban remained quiet but his interest in Negri Sembilan did not fade. Nor did peace prevail in Negri Sembilan for with increasing commercial activities in subsequent years the traditional power struggle also increased in intensity.

Negri Sembilan's economy was basically similar to that of Perak and Selangor. Tin had long been a major item of export. Sungai Ujong, Rembau and Sri Menanti, in particular, were mentioned as important producers of tin in the eighteenth century.<sup>3</sup> But Sungai Ujong alone remained a productive tin-mining area right into the nineteenth century. Rembau, especially Chembong and its immediate vicinity, became better known for its trade in timber, damar and wax which were bartered for opium, cloths, iron utensils and tobacco.<sup>4</sup> Sri Menanti became primarily a political capital.

Tin in Sungai Ujong was obtained chiefly at 'Sala, Sa Maraboh, Battu Lobong, Kayu Arra, and Timiong'. Sungai Ujong's proximity to Malacca, an old commercial centre, explains the early spate of mining activities going on there. An early nineteenth century report said: 'There are many Chinese [in Sungai Ujong], and a large quantity of Tin annually obtained, which is all sent to Malacca, some of the Residents of that place being concerned in the Mines, and making large advances'.<sup>5</sup> Almost at the very beginning of the

<sup>1</sup>SSR, R11, Governor to Bengal, 30 Aug. 1844.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, R15, Governor to Bengal, 14 Sept. 1847.

<sup>3</sup>See B. Harrison (tr.), 'Malacca in the Eighteenth Century &c.': 'Trade in the Straits of Malacca in 1785, a Memorandum by P.G. de Bruijn, Governor of Malacca', *JMBRAS*, vol.26, pt.1, 1953.

<sup>4</sup>Newbold, 'Account of Rumbowé &c.', - Moor (ed.), p. 62.

<sup>5</sup>Anderson, p. 203.

nineteenth century, these Chinese made overtures to Dato' Linggi (Inche Aman) for tin to be worked in Sungai Ujong. The agreement was that the tin would be brought down to Linggi and then transhipped to Malacca, thereby allowing the ruler of Linggi to obtain substantial income from this trade. The then Dato' Klana of Sungai Ujong (Kawal) also gave his consent for the mines to be worked. Each time the tin was smelted, irrespective of quantity, he was to receive 3 *bahara* of tin worth about \$30 per *Bahara* and for each mine worked, the sum of \$6 was to be paid to the owner of the ground.<sup>1</sup> The Chinese commenced work on funds provided by the headman of Linggi who in turn obtained the capital from Malacca merchants. Tin from the interior was brought down Sungai Linggi and landed at Pengkalan Kundang, Pengkalan Durian and Pengkalan Mangis where it was deposited in warehouses and generally bartered for commodities which had demand in Sungai Ujong such as rice, opium, salt, tobacco, cloths, oil and shells for making lime. All items of import were brought up by boats which could not easily ascend higher than this part of the river. Tin, on the other hand, was conveyed by Malay labourers from the mines by land as far as Jeboi, a village situated about thirty miles from Linggi and from there down the river by small boats.<sup>2</sup>

In 1828, there were about 1,000 Chinese miners in Sungai Ujong divided into *kongsi* houses, each under a headman. But in consequence of their misconduct towards a woman at Terachi, clashes with the Malays followed and the Chinese miners were expelled.<sup>3</sup> By 1830, however, the mines were re-opened and the Chinese population reached 400. Their activities were once more disrupted by the disturbances of 1833 involving Raja Radin, Raja Ali, Syed Shaaban and Klana Kawal. Many of them therefore returned to Malacca.<sup>4</sup>

Jempul was perhaps the next important centre of trading activities. It produced some amount of tin. Sapan wood, rice, damar, rattan and a little gold were also conveyed to Malacca via Sungai Muar. What further enhanced its commercial importance was the fact that it was situated along 'the high road of the Pahang traders travelling across the peninsula to Malacca'. By way of Sungai Berah, Sungai Serting,

<sup>1</sup>Braddell 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling &c.', pp. 227-8.

<sup>2</sup>Newbold, 'Account of Sungie Ujong &c.', Moor (ed.), p.77; Newbold, 'Account of Rumbowé &c.', p.62.

<sup>3</sup>Braddell, 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling &c.', p.228.

<sup>4</sup>Newbold, 'Account of Sungie Ujong &c.', p.77.

Sungai Jempul and Sungai Muar, Pahang traders maintained a regular commercial intercourse with Malacca. The frequency of such visits by Pahang traders was clearly borne out by the number of durian and coconut trees planted by them along certain portions of this route. A customs house had also been erected where the territorial chief could levy duties on the opium, tobacco, cloths, iron utensils, salt and other commodities which passed through Jempul to Pahang as well as the gold dust and silk cloths of Pahang *en route* to Malacca. This trans-peninsular trade must have existed for a long time and continued to flourish even in the early decades of the nineteenth century. But increasing political disturbances and, possibly, the opening up of Singapore which saw the establishment of direct trading communication between that colony and the eastern Peninsula, adversely affected the traditional pattern of trade. By the mid-nineteenth century, it was reported that there had been a 'complete stoppage of the overland trade which once existed with Pahang and the other states in the Gulf of Siam'.<sup>1</sup>

Tin was also worked in Johol with about 300 piculs being produced annually. Fruits, rattans, jaggery and fowls were the other principal exports, all of which were sent in large quantities to Malacca.<sup>2</sup> But by far the most important was the gold mining industry of Gemencheh. The mining labourers comprised both Chinese and Malays. A contemporary report said:<sup>3</sup>

For each person working at the Gominche gold mines, the Punghulu receives a mayam (or 3-320th of a catty of gold). That chief visits the mines once or twice a year, and on such occasions he receives a small present from each. The Punghulu of Johol, who is the superior of the local chief, does not derive any settled revenue from the mines. He sends annually 2 or 3 buffaloes to the mines as a present and they return to him a tahl of gold for each.

Although trade was clearly an invaluable aspect of Negri Sembilan's economy, agriculture was even more important. A visitor in the 1820s found that many areas were cultivated with padi; in one locality he noted 'an excellent view of several paddy fields, to the extent of nearly 5 miles, all in a high state of cultivation'. In another, near the village of Pilah, there was 'an extensive paddy field of nearly

<sup>1</sup>See Newbold, 'Johole and Its Former Dependencies of Jempole Gominchi',—Moor (ed.), p.69; C. Gray, 'Journal of a Route Overland from Malacca to Pahang, across the Malayan Peninsula', *JIAEA*, vol.6, 1852; E. A. Blundell, 'Notices of the History and Present Condition of Malacca', *JIAEA*, vol.2, 1848, pp. 753-4.

<sup>2</sup>Newbold, 'Johole and Its Former Dependencies &c.', Moor (ed.), p.69.

<sup>3</sup>Braddell, 'Extracts from a letter from Samuel Garling &c.', p.228.



1,000 acres' also in good cultivation. In fact, the territorial chief of Pilah refused to allow the inhabitants to work a tin mine for fear that it might destroy the padi fields.<sup>1</sup> Twenty years later, another visitor to Negri Sembilan found the same extensive cultivation of padi. It was particularly so in Johol. Along the entire valley, a distance of six to seven miles, where the population was concentrated, padi was grown. In Rembau too the greater part of its extensive plain was occupied by padi fields. Even in Jelebu where development was minimal because the greater part of the country was mountainous, there were a few places where padi was cultivated.<sup>2</sup>

The available evidence, however, suggests that padi was grown largely on a subsistence basis. Although Jempul exported some rice to Malacca, in the important mining territory of Sungai Ujong, rice had to be imported.

By the 1830s, the increasing commercial activities had become a new factor of conflict in Negri Sembilan politics. The war which resulted from Syed Shaaban's attempt to collect duties at Sungai Linggi has been mentioned. In 1841, the close friendship between Klana Kawal and Dato' Muda Katas broke down because the latter was levying a duty of \$2 per *bahara* of tin at Permatang Pasir without giving a share of the revenue to the Dato' Klana. The Klana, therefore, went down personally to put a stop to the levy. A long-drawn-out dispute developed between these two *orang besar* although there was no open war.<sup>3</sup> But other difficulties emerged in the ensuing years and Simpang became the scene of perpetual political conflicts.

<sup>1</sup>Gray, p. 370.

<sup>2</sup>Rev. P. Favre, 'A Journey in the Menangkabau States of the Malay Peninsula', pp. 153-61.

<sup>3</sup>Abdullah Sultan, p. 30.

## II

### THE GROWTH OF COMMERCIAL AND MINING ACTIVITIES

It was in the nineteenth century that powerful new elements were introduced into the Malay society which eventually forced the existing systems to adapt themselves to the changing environment. There is ample evidence to show that it was the economic factor that first successfully undermined the old order, hence it is not surprising that the process of transformation occurred in the western Malay states where commercial and mining activities were gaining steady momentum by the second quarter of the century. And it is to be expected too that the first significant change to be seen was related to the system of commercial transaction.

The economic penetration of the Malay Peninsula occurred in distinct phases. In the early decades of the century, Chinese immigrants were beginning to move into the Malay states mainly to work mines owned by Malay territorial chiefs. Such mines were financed by these chiefs who, however, depended on advances from Straits merchants.

By the mid-nineteenth century, with the discovery of new tin fields, this trickle of Chinese labourers into the mining areas was beginning to develop into a flood. The increase in mining population led inevitably to an increase in the volume of trade between the Settlements and the hinterland. Straits merchants benefited most from this trade and were, therefore, eager to gain wider control of the Peninsular economy. The pressure they exerted finally broke the traditional monopoly of the ruling chiefs. Therefore beginning from the second quarter of the century, Straits merchants were increasingly allowed to invest directly in the tin trade.

The more intense concentration of interest of the Straits Settlements in the hinterland was actuated primarily by industrial developments in Europe which caused a growth of the international demand for Peninsular produce of which tin was, by far, the most important. Moreover, at the local level, commercial rivalry was mounting so that the returns from entrepot trade, upon which Singapore, in particular, had been mainly dependent until the mid-nineteenth century,

began to dwindle significantly. The resourceful Straits mercantilists quickly looked for new fields of investment. Apart from mining, agriculture was energetically pursued and here again only the hinterland could provide the much needed space for cultivation.

There followed attempts to secure concessions for the exploitation of the economic potentialities of the Malay states as well as efforts to improve the system of communication. A vital point to note is that during the third quarter of the century, a move was made to form public companies to develop the resources of the Peninsula. And, equally important, it was at this time too that business magnates in Britain itself began to participate directly in the attempt to foster the growth of the Peninsular economy.

In short, by the late 1860s and early 1870s, the economy of the western Peninsular states was being geared to the needs of the technologically advanced European nations, and production reached a point never before attained in the history of the Malay states.

This change in the economy of these states, however, had important political consequences, as will be subsequently shown. For the moment, suffice it to say that alterations to the political system occurred only after the traditional economic order had practically broken down.

## EARLY DEVELOPMENTS

*Peninsula-Straits Trade*

WHAT contributed increasingly to the growth of the economy of the Malay states in the nineteenth century was undoubtedly trade with the Straits Settlements. The Peninsula-Straits trade may be said, in a sense, to have existed since very early times for commercial intercourse between the Malay states and Malacca—from 1826, a constituent part of the Straits Settlements—dated back to the days of the Sultanate. Physical proximity rendered such a relationship inevitable. Klang, Selangor, Bernam, Perak, Manong and Bruas are known to have arrangements with Malacca by which they supplied Malacca with a certain amount of tin each year, the inhabitants conveying their products to Malacca in small *perahu*, in return for which Malacca supplied them with food. During the Portuguese occupation of Malacca, political upheaval had an adverse effect on the development of this trade. Nevertheless, the Portuguese captains were able to engage profitably in the tin trade, especially with the state of Perak.<sup>1</sup>

But the Malay states were by no means completely dependent on Malacca. When circumstances demanded it, direct transactions with foreign merchants took place. This became increasingly common after the Dutch had occupied Malacca, for their monopolistic policy made it unprofitable for the Malay states to have commercial dealings with Malacca alone. Kedah, in particular, and also Selangor, Pahang and Trengganu, began to receive frequent visits from foreign traders despite attempts by the Dutch to prevent this from taking place. Largely through the influence of Arabs of *syed* descent, Kedah even equipped ships of its own to convey goods to India and to bring back commodities which were in demand in the Straits of Malacca. And from 1748, when Daing Kamboja became Yang Di-Pertuan Muda of Johor, the Malay states were encouraged to trade with Riau.<sup>2</sup> Malacca's economy suffered as a consequence.

<sup>1</sup>See M. A. P. Meilink-Roelofs, *Asian Trade and European Influence in the Indonesian Archipelago between 1500 and about 1630*, The Hague, 1962, pp. 29, 165.

<sup>2</sup>See B. Harrison (tr.), 'Trade in the Straits of Malacca &c.', and 'Malacca in the Eighteenth Century &c.'

The Dutch conquest of Riau in 1784 failed to revive Malacca's trade with the Malay states, especially since Penang—later also a constituent part of the Straits Settlements—became in 1786 a newly established centre of trade in the Archipelago. Penang succeeded in capturing almost all the trade of the neighbouring countries because the English were prepared to offer higher prices for native produce.<sup>1</sup> Hitherto, British traders had been slow to concentrate their activities in the western Malay states. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, their activities were confined largely to Junk Ceylon, Tenasserim and Kedah, using Aceh as the intermediate port. But by 1737, they were beginning to voyage regularly to the Selangor and Linggi rivers.<sup>2</sup> By 1790, it was established beyond doubt that they were the masters of the Dutch in the tin trade of the Straits.<sup>3</sup>

British occupation of Malacca in 1795 further enhanced Penang's trade with the surrounding states, much of which involved the import of tin. By 1811, tin formed about 20 per cent of the total trade of the island and contributed substantially to the prosperity of Penang merchants. Apart from tin, pepper, spices, woods and edible birds' nests, many other local produce were also acquired from these places and shipped to Europe, China and India. On the other hand, textiles, iron and steel as well as manufactured goods from England, cotton and silk piece goods and opium from India were all in demand throughout the Peninsula and the Archipelago. So vital had the trade become that when the Dutch were allowed to re-occupy Malacca in 1818, the British immediately sent a representative (Cracroft) to conclude commercial treaties with Perak and Selangor 'designed primarily in the hope of retaining the trade of these states'.<sup>4</sup> And when the political situation again deteriorated, after Cracroft's visit, John Anderson was sent to establish an Agency in Perak and the surrounding states 'for the purpose of bringing to this port [Penang] the extensive produce of these countries'.<sup>5</sup> Private European, Chinese and local traders played the principal role in fostering this trade. Though the existence of Penang provided an important permanent

<sup>1</sup>J. de Hulu, 'A. E. van Braam Houckgeest's memorie &c.'

<sup>2</sup>D. K. Bassett, 'British Commercial and Strategic Interest in the Malay Peninsula During the late Eighteenth Century' in J. Bastin & R. Roolvink (eds.), *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, Oxford, 1964, pp. 122-3.

<sup>3</sup>C. D. Cowan, 'Governor Bannerman and the Penang Tin Scheme 1818-1819', *JMBRAS*, vol.23, pt.1, 1950, p.54.

<sup>4</sup>For more details, see *ibid.* pp.52-8.

<sup>5</sup>C. D. Cowan, 'Early Penang and the Rise of Singapore', *JMBRAS*, vol.23, pt.2, 1950, pp. 88-9.

outlet for the produce of the Malay states, there is no evidence that it stimulated greater production in any significant way.

A more important phase in the development of the Peninsular trade began with the establishment of Singapore as a trading centre and the evacuation of the Dutch from Malacca in the early 1820s. The Chinese population in the new settlements grew rapidly and they, more than the European merchants, engaged actively in the trade between the Peninsula and the Straits Settlements. By the 1830s, a well-defined pattern of this trade had emerged with Singapore as the nerve-centre of activities. Although Singapore was primarily 'a mart or entrepot for transshipment of the produce and manufacture of Asia, Europe and America', the value of its trade with the hinterland was in no way negligible even in the early half of the nineteenth century, for it ranked fifth on the list, after China, India (comprising mainly, Calcutta, Madras, Bombay and Junk Ceylon), Great Britain and Java.<sup>1</sup>

A graphic picture of the Peninsula-Singapore trade was given by a contemporary writer:

The imports from [the] eastern coast [of the Peninsula] are by far the most considerable. The value of gold-dust shipped thence, in the year 1835-6, alone amounted to 143,840 Spanish dollars, and that from the western coast to 1,200 dollars. The other imports are tin, black and white pepper, silk and cotton, Malay cloths, sugar and ratans; in return for rice, tobacco, opium, salt, salt fish, arms, iron tools and implements of agriculture, European, Indian and Malayan piece-goods, cotton, twist, &c. The chief ports on the east coast are Pahang, Tringanu, Kalantan, and Sangora. The gold-dust brought from Pahang is extremely pure, and fetches the high price of 28 to 28½ Spanish dollars the bunkal. The cloths, tin, and pepper, came principally from Tringanu and Kalantan, as well as a fair proportion of gold-dust. The imports from the west coast are principally tin from Lingie, Sungie-ujong, the states in the interior of Malacca, Lukut, Salangore, and Perak; bees'-wax, elephants' teeth, ebony, hides, ratans, sago, Lakka wood, specie (dollars), vegetables, fruits, cattle and poultry from Johore, Pontian, Umbai, Battu Pahat, Muar, Cassang, Sungie Baru, &c. The exports to these places are of the same nature as those to the eastern coast. The trade is carried on almost entirely by native craft, from one to eight coyans burthen, and small open boats called Sampan Pucats. The imports from the east coast of the Peninsula alone average more than 300,000 Spanish dollars annually, and the exports about the same sum.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account &c.*, vol.1, pp. 352-4.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. pp. 354-5.

Of the wide variety of articles, categorized as 'Straits Produce', which the Peninsula exported to other parts of the world via the Straits Settlements, tin, in subsequent years, rapidly outstripped the others in importance. For example, in the years 1835-6 tin was Singapore's most valuable item of trade apart from European and Indian piece goods which amounted to well over a million dollars. Tin imports totalled 313,368 Spanish dollars, and it was then exported mainly to China, Great Britain, Calcutta and Bombay, the first two countries being the largest consumers of tin exported from Singapore. The quantity exported to China amounted to 117,386 Spanish dollars and that to Great Britain, 101,204 dollars. Although the greater proportion of the tin exported from Singapore derived from Bangka,<sup>1</sup> contributions from the Peninsular mines were also substantial. In 1835-6, Singapore imported 4,616 piculs of tin from the eastern Peninsula and 2,560 piculs direct from the western Malay states. For the period 1836-7, it is known that Singapore imported 5,714 piculs of tin from Penang and 2,411½ piculs from Malacca. Since the greater proportion of the tin exported from Penang and Malacca came from the Western Malay states, it is clear that in the mid-1830s, the Peninsula was supplying about 15,000 piculs of tin to Singapore.<sup>2</sup>

Singapore's trade with Penang and Malacca formed, in effect, the major portion of its trade with the western Peninsula, for both Penang and Malacca were commercial dependencies of Singapore:

Much of the Straits produce which [Penang] collected was not sent directly to Great Britain, India and China, but was shipped to Singapore and forwarded from there. Similarly a great deal of the British and Indian manufactures which it required did not come to it by direct shipment, but was sent first to Singapore, and then transmitted to Penang.<sup>3</sup>

Malacca, long overshadowed by Penang itself as a trading centre, managed to maintain a small direct trade with India and China. But, by and large, like Penang, it was a depot where the produce of the adjacent territories, especially Selangor and Negri Sembilan, was collected for transmission to Singapore. A British administrator in the mid-nineteenth century said:

Fallen indeed is Malacca from her once high estate, when she not only

<sup>1</sup>Bangka tin at that time sold for 20 or 22 Spanish dollars while Straits tin seldom fetched more than 18 Spanish dollars.

<sup>2</sup>See Newbold, *Political and Statistical Accounts &c.*, vol. I, pp. 291-312, 342-50; Wong Lin Ken, 'The Trade of Singapore 1819-1869', *JMBRAS*, vol. 33, pt. 4, 1960, pp. 71-9.

<sup>3</sup>Mills, 'British Malaya, 1824-67', p. 193.

attracted, but commanded the whole trade, such as then existed, of these Eastern Seas....

About the middle and latter end of the last century, Malacca was still a place of great commercial importance, being the only European settlement in the Straits, and the sole depot for the produce of the Malayan states, and islands, but towards the close of the century the establishment of Pinang drew off the trade to the northern end of the Straits, and thirty years afterwards the more favourable position of Singapore completed her commercial downfall. She is no longer a depot of trade, and her Imports are wholly confined to articles required for the consumption of the population....

But besides this small maritime trade, Malacca has a constant trading intercourse with all the surrounding petty Malayan states, of which no returns are furnished nor indeed would it be practicable to obtain them with any degree of correctness. She may be said to feed the people of these states, for it is from Malacca that their supplies of rice are chiefly obtained in barter for Tin, Gutta Percha and other inferior articles. They might with ease grow all the rice required for their own consumption and more too, but in the state of anarchy and disorder into which they have fallen, the cultivation of the land is not much attended to, and were the supplies from Malacca to fail, starvation would ensue among them. As it is, rice is extremely dear among them, and when a Malacca trader succeeds in conveying his cargo in safety and obtaining payment for it (which often consists more in promises than hard money) his profits are considerable.<sup>1</sup>

An explanation for Malacca's decline, and therefore its inability to contribute substantially to the general revenue of the Straits Settlements, was given by Lt. Governor Cairns in the 1860s:<sup>2</sup>

This is to be traced to various causes, and mainly to its situation, which is too far removed from the convenient calling places of European commerce, and indeed unsuited by the natural obstacle of its shallow roadstead as a place of resort for merchant vessels of any considerable tonnage.

Had Singapore not passed out of Native hands it might have fared better with this fine old city, still selected as it is by the Straits Chinese as an agreeable retreat from business when once they have accumulated wealth at Singapore, but not as a money-making place, or in the morning of their shrewd and stirring life.

So much did Malacca's survival depend on its trade with the hinterland that in the mid-nineteenth century, its merchants continually reminded the Straits government that the 'chief and principal

<sup>1</sup>E. A. Blundell, 'Notices of the History and Present Condition of Malacca', *JIAEA*, vol.11, 1848, pp. 749-50.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/35, Lt. Gov. Shaw to CO, 2 Oct. 1869, Encl., Lt. Gov. Cairns to Sir Frederic Rogers, 31 Oct. 1868.



trade of Malacca' was in tin and that this trade 'has existed from time immemorial'.<sup>1</sup>

Penang's position was more fortunate. As a Dutchman observed in 1824:

Notwithstanding the proximity of Singapore, which is much better situated than Poeloe Penang for trading, the development and prosperity of this place ... during the years before and after the settlement of the English at Singapore has not adversely affected the population, nor the import and export of goods, and has only made very little impression on the arrivals of native vessels; whilst the latter more and more sail past our ports in Java and pick up their necessary requirements in the more distant English harbours.<sup>2</sup>

Leading Straits merchants, commenting on Penang in 1860, said:

The trade of Penang has no doubt been subject to vicissitudes from which that of Singapore has been exempt, and it has been usually alleged that the establishment of the latter port produced a serious check in the traffic of Penang. If there is any truth in this view, it has probably been exaggerated, as we find that in 1810 the annual trade of Penang is valued at a little over 1,000,000 *l.* [dollars], and that in 1819, the year in which Singapore was founded, it had reached no higher point than 1,263,000 *l.* There can, at any rate, be no doubt that the trade of Penang for the last ten years, the latter half of which is distinguished by a very marked increase, is much greater than it was at any time antecedent to the establishment of Singapore.<sup>3</sup>

Penang's commercial interests certainly covered a rather wide area for, apart from the Peninsula, it had close dealings with Burma, Thailand, Junk Ceylon and Sumatra, in particular Aceh. And by the mid-nineteenth century, it embarked successfully on agricultural development.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Entrepreneurs*

It is clear that the Straits merchants were the driving force behind the commercial developments which were taking place in the Malay states. They provided advances for the working of the mines and

<sup>1</sup>SSR, W21, Petition from Malacca Merchants to Gov. Blundell, 2 Oct. 1855; T. Chelliah, 'War in Negri Sembilan', B.A.Hons. dissertation, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1955, App.B (2), Petition of Malacca Traders to Gov. Cavenagh, Aug. 1860; App. B (4), Petition of Malacca Traders to Lt. Gov. Shaw, 19 April 1873.

<sup>2</sup>H. Eric Millier (tr.), 'Extracts from the Letters of Col. Nahujs', *JMBRAS* vol.19, pt.2, 1941, pp. 202-3.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/16, Correspondence relating to the Transfer of the Straits Settlements, Messrs. Guthrie & others to CO, 20 April 1860.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/24, IO to CO, 4 Sept. 1868, Encl. Col. H. Man to Sec. to Govt. of India, 29 Feb. 1868.

absorbed the produce of the Peninsula for export to foreign countries. Little attention, however, has hitherto been paid to the various personalities involved in these commercial activities.<sup>1</sup> The need to identify them is, in fact, very great because their role in the history of the Malay states was more than a purely economic one. Many of them were men of high social standing in the Straits and therefore wielded substantial influence with the colonial administration. As such, they were able to provide considerable political backing to members of the Malay ruling elite with whom they had dealings. A scrutiny of their connexions in the Straits commercial world would also help to unravel the intricacy of local politics.

As mentioned earlier, European and Chinese merchants were primarily involved in the Peninsular trade. Perhaps the best known among them were some of the members of old Dutch families in Malacca, for they were among the earliest financiers of the mines in Sungai Ujong, Lukut and, subsequently, Klang. One of the first to enter this business was undoubtedly John Bartholomeus Westerhout who was one of the Executors of the very wealthy Abraham de Wind.<sup>2</sup> In the 1830s, he was himself one of the principal landowners in Malacca.<sup>3</sup> Owing to his 'perfect knowledge of the Malay character, and his influence with the principal persons of the neighbouring independent states' he was appointed Superintendent of Naning at the conclusion of the war in 1832. It was in this capacity that he met the Rembau chiefs and signed an agreement with them on 9 January 1833. Although a government servant, he established, in 1833, several tin mines in Naning. He ceased working these in 1835 but continued to assist others in the tin trade. In 1837, he was Clerk in the Resident Councillor's office and also carried out duties with the temporary status of Acting Assistant Master Attendant, the post of Master Attendant, Malacca, having been abolished after March

<sup>1</sup>On 2 Oct. 1855 some Malacca merchants petitioned Governor Blundell (SSR, W21) about the disturbances at Linggi. Those who signed the petition were: J. H. Velge, G. L. Velge, T. Neubronner, Ls. Neubronner, Khor Seng Hoon, Yeo Kim Chong, Yeo Hood Ing, Yeo Hood Hin, See Moh Guan, Lee Qui Lim, Tan Ai Thak, Chan Hong Cheow, See Boon Tiong, Khor Eng Chiam and Wee Chwee Kwan.

<sup>2</sup>Abraham de Wind was the owner of large tracts of land in Malacca acquired during the time of Dutch administration. (See J. W. N. Kyshe (e.d.), *Cases Heard and Determined in Her Majesty's Supreme Court in the Straits Settlements 1808-1884*, Singapore, 1885, vol. I, pp. 303-13).

<sup>3</sup>See Map of Malacca Territory 1836 (showing owners of land in Malacca) in Abdullah Sultan, 'Relations between Malacca and the Malay States 1832-1867'.

1837 owing to the decline of the port.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter he rose to the rank of Assistant Resident and, as such, was also Senior Interpreter of the Court of Judicature. It was said that: '... no man has greater influence with the Natives of our Territories, as well as the surrounding States, than Mr. Westerhout....'<sup>2</sup> Again, one who undoubtedly knew him personally, wrote that he was not only well-known among the Malays but was also 'the person in Malacca to whom the Government looked for advice and assistance in dealing with the neighbouring Malay States'. From 1853, he became an intimate friend of Fred McNair who was then in command of the detachment of Madras Artillery stationed at Malacca and who subsequently became Straits Colonial Engineer. Together, they used to travel into the interior of the Peninsula.<sup>3</sup>

J. E. Westerhout, son of John Bartholomeus, also became a prominent resident of Malacca, being the Sheriff in 1873 and Acting Magistrate and Sheriff in the 1880s. Like his father, he also had a deep interest in the tin trade of the neighbouring territories in the 1840s.<sup>4</sup>

Possibly even more important as financiers of the Peninsular tin trade in the first half of the nineteenth century were members of the Neubronner family.<sup>5</sup> The active partners of Messrs. Neubronner & Co. were Tom and L. S. Neubronner. Joseph worked for the firm for a while but subsequently entered government service. Tom, a Justice of the Peace, was easily the most influential member of the family. He was, in 1871, the Secretary of the Municipal Commissioners, Malacca, and for nine months between 1871 and 1872, acted as Police Magistrate of the settlement. Messrs. Neubronner & Co. was

<sup>1</sup>C. A. Gibson-Hill, 'The Master Attendants at Singapore 1819-67', *JMBRAS* vol.33, pt.1, 1960, p.63.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, R11, Singapore to Fort William, 28 Aug. 1844.

<sup>3</sup>C. B. Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore 1819-1867*, Singapore, 1902, p.218. See also, SSR, R40, Singapore to Fort William, 16 Dec. 1861; Newbold, 'Some Accounts of the Territory and Inhabitants of Nanning in the Malayan Peninsula', Moor (ed.), p.246; Mills, p.151; W. Makepeace, G. E. Brooke, R. St. Braddell (eds.), *One Hundred Years of Singapore*, London, 1921, p.366; J. B. Westerhout, 'Notes on Malacca', *JIAEA*, vol.II, 1848; Abdullah Sultan, pp. 19, 25.

<sup>4</sup>Buckley, p.641; Makepeace et al., p.366; CO 273/65, List of Establishments, Straits Settlements, 1873 (no covering despatch).

<sup>5</sup>This was a rather large family, several members of whom entered the colonial service. In 1873, for example, A. D. Neubronner was Chief Clerk in the Lt.-Gov.'s office at Penang; Anthony was Chief Interpreter, Supreme Court, Malacca; A. Neubronner was Clerk in the Ecclesiastical Dept., Malacca; L. Neubronner was Asst. Overseer in the P.W.D. and Survey, Singapore (See CO 273/65, List of Establishments, SS, 1873.)

one of the major creditors of Sultan Muhammad of Selangor and, in later years, their activities were concentrated mainly in Sungai Ujong.<sup>1</sup>

There was also the Velge family of Malacca. John Henry, the senior member of the family, born on 19 December 1796, first became a sailor sailing his own ship, and he was married in Semarang. After leaving the sea, he chose to settle in Singapore but by the 1850s had returned to Malacca where he remained a prominent resident until his death on 14 April 1891. He was, in 1871, described as 'the largest and wealthiest proprietor in Malacca'.<sup>2</sup> A point to note is that he was a close friend of Dr. Jose D'Almeida and, in fact, a member of the Velge family, Abraham, served in the leading Singapore firm of Jose D'Almeida & Sons. Abraham was one of those actively involved in the campaign for the Transfer of the Straits Settlements to the Colonial Office. And he held shares in the Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. in the early years of the company's existence. In the early 1870s, however, he fell into dishonour.<sup>3</sup>

In view of the close connexion between the Velges and the D'Almeidas, it can be assumed that the former must have represented the firm of D'Almeida & Sons in Malacca. Apart from John Henry and Abraham, some of the known members of the family were G. L. Velge, a merchant, L. H. Velge, 3rd Clerk in the Malacca Land Office (1873), and Martin Velge of Durian Tunggal. Their precise relationship with John Henry is not known. Those known to be the sons of John Henry were Henry Velge and Charles Eugene Velge. Henry featured prominently in Sungai Ujong affairs in 1872. Charles Eugene, prior to 1871, had been employed in various capacities under the Straits Government. He studied law at Middle Temple and was admitted to the Singapore Bar on 12 October 1871. In November 1871, he acted as Sheriff, and in September 1872 as Senior Sworn Clerk

<sup>1</sup>SSR, W21, Petition of Malacca Merchants to Gov. Blundell, 2 Oct. 1855; CO 273/49, Anson to Kimberley, 22 Aug. 1871; CO 273/65, Ord to Kimberley, 24 March 1873; Anon., 'History of Selangor' *Selangor Journal*, vol. I, 18 Nov. 1892.

<sup>2</sup>Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, Tucson, 1965, p.35.

<sup>3</sup>See Buckley, p.773; CO 273/46, Anson to Kimberley, 25 April 1871 with encls.

It was remarked in an official report that Abraham Velge had escaped from Singapore 'forfeiting recognizances of a large amount, which he had given for his appearance to answer a serious criminal charge' and taken refuge in Sungai Ujong. The nature of the crime, however, was not mentioned. (See *GPMP*, C. J. Irving, 'Memorandum relative to the Affairs of the Native States on the Malay Peninsula—with reference to the Desp. of the Sec. of State No. 197 of 20 Sept. 1873, n.d.).

in the Supreme Court. In April 1873, he acted as Junior Magistrate and in October of the same year was again appointed Senior Sworn Clerk, which appointment he held until June 1874 when he became Deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court.<sup>1</sup>

The Chinese merchants of Malacca involved in the Peninsular trade were even more numerous than the European merchants, although they were less influential in the settlement itself. Possibly the most prominent among them were Chee Yam Chuan and See Boon Tiong.

Chee Yam Chuan was born in Malacca, the son of Chee Kim Guan<sup>2</sup> whose great-grandfather emigrated from China to Malacca. Chee Yam Chuan was a nutmeg planter at Malacca and Singapore but also speculated in land and buildings. He was one of the first partners in the firm of Leack, Chin Seng & Co., chop Hiap Hin, Market Street, Singapore (with a branch office at Malacca). The other partners were Lim Leack and Tan Chin Seng.<sup>3</sup> The firm was to play a leading role in the Klang War of 1867-1873. Chee Yam Chuan was undoubtedly the Malacca representative of the firm for he had extensive dealings with the Malay chiefs. He was one of the major creditors of Sultan Muhammad whose debts in 1846 amounted to \$169,000. So close was the relationship between Chee Yam Chuan and the Selangor ruling family that Raja Bot, grandson of Sultan Muhammad, stayed almost a year (1860-1) with Chee Yam Chuan

<sup>1</sup>See SSR, W21, Petition of Malacca Merchants to Gov. Blundell, 2 Oct. 1855; List of Establishments, SS, 1873, *op.cit.*; *CMP*, Jervois to Carnarvon, 29 Dec. 1875, Encl. C. B. Plunket to Jervois, 25 Dec. 1875; CO 273/76, Sir A. Clarke to Carnarvon, 18 Dec. 1874; Kyshe, pp. cxviii-cxix.

<sup>2</sup>Chee Kim Guan was one of the two Chinese (the other being So Guan Chuan) elected to sit in the first Committee of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce in 1837. He was also one of the thirty-six founder-members of the powerful Keng Tek Hoey. (Song, pp. 29, 406. For useful comments on the Keng Tek Hoey, see, CO 273/35, T. H. Gottlieb to CO, 28 Oct. 1869 enclosing Memorandum on the Chinese Secret Societies in Singapore.)

<sup>3</sup>Lim Leack was born in China and arrived in the Straits in 1825. He became a successful merchant and a great financier of tin-mining in the Peninsula, information on which, however, is lacking. He cultivated tapioca in Malacca and maintained close connexion with China, doing a large business there. His firm owned several schooners flying the British flag. He died in Hong Kong on 22 August, 1875.

Tan Chin Seng's background is somewhat obscure. He was born in Malacca and moved to Singapore to further his business interests. By 1853 he was considered one of the leading Chinese merchants there. He had three sons—Tan Hoon Chiang (eldest), Hoon Guan and Hoon Hin. Tan Hoon Chiang succeeded to the firm of Leack, Chin Seng & Co. while the other two became prominent businessmen in Malacca. (See Song pp. 179-80).

in Malacca. This is best described in Raja Bot's own words:

I was then given into the charge of Baba Chi Yamchwan, a merchant who had helped my people to open up the River Lukut. For eleven months I dwell in his house. I could then write Malay, and the letters which came from Lukut to Baba Yamchwan were always read by me. Sometimes also I wrote letters from Baba Yamchwan to my people. By these means I became acquainted with prices and other details of business. Soon afterwards I was required to keep the accounts of dealings between my people and Baba Yamchwan, so that I came to know all about the work.<sup>1</sup>

At the early age of twenty-one, Chee Yam Chuan was elected head of the Hokkien community in Malacca. After his father's death, he must have been admitted as a member of the powerful Keng Tek Hoey.<sup>2</sup> He died in July 1862.<sup>3</sup>

See Boon Tiong, born in Malacca in about 1807, went to Singapore in 1825 to make a start in business. He became an intimate friend of A. L. Johnston and James Fraser, both of whom were then leading British merchants in Singapore. He returned to Malacca in 1848 where he continued his business, and he also commenced tapioca planting at Linggi. In 1837, he was one of the Singapore Chinese who had large commercial dealings with the states of Pahang, Trengganu, Kelantan, Patani and Singora.<sup>4</sup> He retained his commercial interests in the Peninsular states until the second half of the nineteenth century.

Also a founder-member of the Keng Tek Hoey, he was made a Justice of the Peace in Malacca in 1860 and often sat with the Resident Councillor in Quarter Sessions when that officer had also to carry on duties as local judge. In the early 1870s, See Boon Tiong was Manager of the Malacca Opium Farm, which was operated by a large syndicate with its headquarters in Singapore, headed by Tan Seng Poh.<sup>5</sup> Much of See Boon Tiong's savings were invested in house property which realized valuable prices at auction in 1911. He died on 1 November 1888.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Malay Mail*, 'Rice Cultivation in the States: Interesting Letter from Raja Bot', 14 Nov. 1902.

<sup>2</sup>Recruitment into the society was possible only after an existing member had died in which case his sons would take his place. For example, when Cheang Teoh, once the Opium and Spirit Farmer of Singapore, died, his sons, Cheang Hong Lim, Hong Guan, Hong Choon and Hong Liap, succeeded him in the society. (Gottlieb's Memorandum, op.cit.)

<sup>3</sup>Chee Yam Chuan's grandson, Chee Swee Cheng, later also entered Leack, Chin Seng & Co. (Song p.406).

<sup>4</sup>See Kassim Ahmad (ed.), *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah*, Kuala Lumpur, 1966.

<sup>5</sup>Tan Seng Poh, born in Perak, was the son of Tan Ah Hun, Kapitan China of Perak in the 1830s. (See Song pp.21, 131-2, 159, 170, 193 and 202.)

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.* pp. 29, 70; *CMP*, Jervois to Carnarvon, 29 Dec. 1875, Encl.A, C. B. Plunket to Gov., 25 Dec. 1875.

Not so well-known but no less important were Yeo Hood Ing, Yeo Hood Hin and Lee Qui Lim. Like many other Chinese merchants they were of Malacca origin and either moved to Singapore to establish business houses or maintained close connexions with firms based in that island. Yeo Hood Ing, by 1828, had already embarked on the construction of houses in Singapore town. By 1840, his firm, Hooding & Co., was one of the major Chinese commercial houses there in company with the better known ones established by men like Tan Tock Seng, Tan Kim Seng and Whampoa.<sup>1</sup> The firm was shared by five brothers—Hood Ing, Hood Hin, Hood Keng, Hood Seng and Chi Guan. The family of Yeo Hood Ing and that of Tan Kim Seng were related.<sup>2</sup> And Kim Seng & Co., as will be shown subsequently, had significant interests in the Malay states. It is pertinent to note that there were also close ties between the family of Lee Qui Lim and that of Tan Kim Seng, for Lee Keng Yam, son of Lee Qui Lim, and head of the Singapore Opium Farm from 1885 to 1888, was, from 1872 to 1885, serving in the Shanghai branch firm of Kim Seng & Co.<sup>3</sup>

Of the merchants based in Penang who had commercial interests in the Malay states, two deserve special mention—George Stuart and Lawrence C. Nairne. Stuart, proprietor of Messrs. Stuart & Co., was undoubtedly one of the pioneering financiers of the Peninsular tin trade. Too little, however, is known about him. He was one of the Executors of David Brown<sup>4</sup> easily among the wealthiest of Penang residents. Stuart was a man of considerable influence. It is on record that in April 1832, there was fear in Perak that there would be

<sup>1</sup>More will be said about Tan Kim Seng and Whampoa later. For information on Tan Tock Seng, father of Tan Kim Cheng, see Song, p.66.

<sup>2</sup>In 1851, Hooding & Co. acquired 128 acres of land at Telok Blanga which came to be known as the Hooding Estate. This property was by a trust settlement made on 8 Nov. 1882 between Tan Geok Hup, daughter of Tan Kim Seng, on the one part, and Yeo Hong Tye and Tan Jiak Kim, grandson of Tan Kim Seng, of the other part, dedicated as a burial ground called Hiap Gun Sun for the burial, free of cost, of all Hokkiens of the surname Yeo. This is evidence enough that the two families were related. (See Song pp. 26, 46, 95, 302.)

<sup>3</sup>Lee Keng Yam also became holder of the Dutch farms in the neighbourhood and just before his death had secured a three-year contract for the Hong Kong Opium Farm. (Ibid. pp. 241-2.)

<sup>4</sup>David Brown came to Penang sometime in 1801, if not earlier, from Calcutta, in search of livelihood and fortune. Although he had some shipping experience, his interests were primarily in agriculture. He became one of the pioneer planters in Penang opening up Glugor Estate which remained in the Brown family until the death of his last direct descendant a few years ago. David Brown was a close friend of Stamford Raffles with whom he had common horticultural interests. (Special Correspondent, 'The Association's varied Collection of Historical Documents', *Malaysia*, Jan. 1969, p.7.)

another Selangor invasion but '... the advent in May of an English merchant, George Stuart, allayed the panic of the Perak people and the Sultan appointed Mr. Stuart his confidential agent in the Colony'.<sup>1</sup> Stuart was, of course, for some time a creditor of Sultan Muhammad of Selangor. In 1842, the Straits government sent a letter to the Malay ruler:

About 3 years ago I addressed my friend to his debt to Mr. George Stuart and my friend in reply promised to settle the amount. This Mr. Stuart informs me has only been partially done and that more than one half remains still due, notwithstanding that vessels have been sent to Salangore to receive Tin, which has caused much expense some of which have come back empty.

Mr. George Stuart has gone to England, and it is therefore of much importance that this account should be finally adjusted, so much so indeed that Mr. Nairne the partner of Mr. Stuart intends to visit my friend on the subject; I trust therefore that my friend will arrange the matter to Mr. Nairne's satisfaction agreeably to the promise contained in his letter of the 26th Rabial Awal 1255.<sup>2</sup>

In 1836 when there was a dispute between two Chinese firms, one accusing the other of having sold impure tin, Stuart was appointed one of the five 'respectable merchants' to examine the tin and certify as to the truth of the accusation. His own firm probably handled a wide variety of business, for in early 1842, he acted as agent for a certain Mrs. Durand in the sale of her house, 'Sans Souci', to F. S. Brown, and in 1846, through the agency of his company, J. Donnadieu, owner of Valder Estate in Province Wellesley, obtained a steam-engine and sugar mill constructed by Messrs. Scott, Sinclair & Co. of Glasgow.<sup>3</sup>

Lawrence Nairne had been a resident of Penang since at least 1834 and probably began business as a partner in Messrs. Stuart & Co. In 1846, after an alteration in the sugar duties in England, which put the British Indian produce on the same footing as that of the colonies, thus giving a great impetus to the development of the industry in Province Wellesley, he formed a partnership with Brown & Co. to open the Batu Kawan Estate, with the latter providing the initial funds. The manager of this estate, incidentally, was Thomas Braddell, later to become Attorney-General of the Straits Settlements. The estate, however, failed by 1849. But Nairne's interest in the industry continued. In the 1860s, the canes on many estates in Province

<sup>1</sup>Winstedt & Wilkinson, 'A History of Perak', p.74.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G5, Blundell to Raja of Salangore, 10 Feb. 1842.

<sup>3</sup>Kyshe, pp. 23, 43-51, 85-100.



Wellesley were severely affected by disease, planters replaced them with canes from Mauritius and Java, and Nairne himself introduced the 'Striped Bourbon' cane from Mauritius which proved immune to the disease.

Nairne's standing in Penang rose very rapidly. By 1855 he had been made a Justice of the Peace, and from 1855 to 1859, he served as a Municipal Commissioner. In 1860, he was the Foreman of Jurors for the Straits Settlements, and for some time before 1865, he was Vice-Consul for Italy at Penang. When a Commission was appointed to enquire into the Penang riots of 1867, he was appointed to that body. In the same year, his name was one of the ten submitted to the Secretary of State for selection to the first Straits Legislative Council, though he was eventually not chosen.<sup>1</sup>

Whether he continued to participate actively in the Peninsular tin trade after the 1840s is not known. But he certainly had commercial dealings with Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin of Kedah. When the ruler acquired a British barque, *Gratitude*, it was with Nairne that he made an agreement whereby the Penang merchant was to 'take entire management of the vessel and employ her in trade wheresoever or howsoever, either on their joint account, or by charter or in freight, or in any manner' that Nairne might deem advisable. Nairne, in addition, made advances for the usual disbursement and expenses of the vessel and for the purchase of cargoes. In 1857, however, the ship was lost off the coast of Indo-China, and Nairne unsuccessfully sued Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin for debts amounting to \$2,780.09.

In the early 1860s, Nairne was the Agent for the Raja of Acheh as well as the Yamtuan of Assahan. In 1863, he was described by the Resident Councillor of Penang as 'a gentleman much engaged in the Native trade', but it was more as one of the foremost planters of Penang and Province Wellesley that he was best known.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Kyshe, p.284; Buckley, p.696; SSR, W21, H.M.'s J.P.s to Gov. 19 Oct. 1855; W34, Nairne to Judges of H.M.'s Court of Judicature for P.W.I., Singapore and Malacca, 7 May 1860; W53, Letter dated 2 Jan. 1865; *PRCR, passim*; C. N. Parkinson, *British Intervention in Malaya 1867-77*, Kuala Lumpur, 1964, p.20; J. C. Jackson, *Planters and Speculators*, Kuala Lumpur, 1968, p.149.

<sup>2</sup>Kyshe, pp. 145-60; SSR, DD33, Resident Councillor to Gov., 12 April 1861; DD42, Resident Councillor to Gov., 27 July 1865, Encl.4, Yamtuan of Assahan to Baba Boon Keng, 18 July 1865; CO, 273/71, Sir A. Clarke to Sec. of State, 25 Dec. 1873 (enclosing *Penang Gazette*, 18 Dec. 1873, reporting a meeting of Planters and others interested in estates in Province Wellesley following reports of mal-treatment of Indian labourers, with Nairne in the Chair); CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances, Resident Councillor, Penang, to Deputy Sec. to Gov., SS, 30 April, 1863.

Little is yet known of Penang Chinese merchants who had commercial interests in the mining states in the early part of the nineteenth century. Their sphere of influence, at any rate, was confined to Perak, and the intensity of investments in Perak had not yet reached a stage comparable to that prevailing in Selangor and the Linggi-Sungai Ujong area, possibly owing to the uncertain political situation existing in Perak. Moreover, Penang had fewer merchants of the same influence and standing as those in Malacca and Singapore. Undoubtedly the leading commercial family among the Penang Chinese at this time was the Koh family. The head of the family, Koh Lay Huan, had an illustrious career until his death in 1826, and his success was emulated by his son Koh Kok Chye who, in 1837, was said to have sailed into Perak 'in a ship with 200 men to collect Siamese debts'.<sup>1</sup> It is clear, however, that both had little to do with the development of trade in Perak.<sup>2</sup>

The list of entrepreneurs given here is not exhaustive by any means but these men were clearly the most influential and prominent among those who may be said to have pioneered the growth of the Peninsula-Straits trade. The second half of the century saw the emergence of yet another generation of entrepreneurs, many of whom were descendants of those early pioneers. Many more, however, were newcomers to the scene, while a few of the pioneering group continued to play an active part in that trade even in the third-quarter of the nineteenth century.

### *The Mining Industry*

Possibly the most colourful story in the history of tin mining in the Malay Peninsula is that of the discovery of tin fields in Larut in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> The discoverer was, of course, the much spoken of but little known Long Jaafar bin Long Abdul Latif. He was the descendant of a certain Nyak Besating of Acheh. His grandfather, Pandak Jamaluddin, was probably the first in the family to be appointed one of the *Orang Besar Enambelas* of Perak with the title of Dato' Paduka Setia. His uncle, Alang Allaidin became the Dato' Panglima Bukit Gantang.<sup>4</sup>

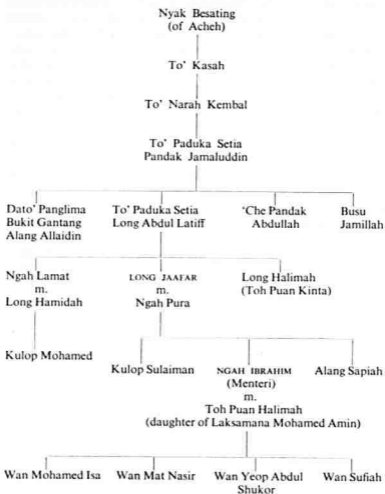
<sup>1</sup>Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p.17.

<sup>2</sup>C. S. Wong, *A Gallery of Chinese Kapitans*, Singapore, 1964, pp. 12-15.

<sup>3</sup>The story is told in J. M. Gullick, 'Captain Speedy of Larut', *JMBRAS*, vol.26, pt.3, 1953, pp. 19-20.

<sup>4</sup>See Genealogy of Long Jaafar attached.

## 4. GENEALOGY OF LONG JAAFAR



Source: Wee Choon Siang, 'Ngah Ibrahim in Larut, 1858-1874', B.A. Hons. dissertation, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1952.

Long Jaafar first became known during the reign of Sultan Abdullah Muazzam Shah (1819-1830). He was then commonly referred to as 'Long Ja'afar pusing langit' because it was said:

'... sangat besar tipu daya-nya serta cherdek'.<sup>1</sup>

He married his own cousin, Ngah Pura, the daughter of Alang Allaidin.<sup>2</sup> From his youth he was an inveterate gambler and was, therefore, not entrusted with any responsibility. He then left for Singapore where, owing to gambling, he became indebted to several Chinese. Caught in a desperate situation, he went to Telok Blanga to solicit the aid of Temenggong Ibrahim. The Temenggong obliged but arranged with the people of Pulau Damar to send him back to Perak so that he might not further misbehave himself in Singapore. For some time his character remained unchanged. He then decided to move to Larut which was very much a jungle and a hideout for robbers. Long Jaafar joined their company indulging in gambling and cock-fighting. Then he made some discoveries of tin which he worked for some time before accumulating sufficient capital to invite Chinese miners to come to Larut in about 1848.<sup>3</sup> With the increase of Chinese miners in the course of time he was able to collect revenue from opium and other additional sources. He travelled to and fro between Larut and Penang and became an active businessman.<sup>4</sup>

The earliest miners to come to Larut were the Chen Sang Hakka.<sup>5</sup> Their mines were located largely in Klian Pauh, including Asam Kumbang. A group of Fui Chew Hakka<sup>6</sup> began to move to Larut in the 1850s when new mining lands were discovered in Klian Bahru,

<sup>1</sup>Loosely translated, it means he was a knave.

<sup>2</sup>It has also been said that Ngah Pura was the grand-daughter of a Dato' Panglima Kinta. (See Winstedt & Wilkinson, p.145.)

<sup>3</sup>It is not certain when Long Jaafar first began mining in Larut. But, by 1844, Larut was already exporting tin to Penang. (*Straits Settlements Commerce and Shipping 1844*, cited by Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, p. 26, no.76). As regards the beginning of Chinese mining activities in the district, see Swettenham Papers, item 72, 'Blue Book of the District in the Native State of Perak for the year 1874'; *CMP*, Sir A. Clarke to Kimberley, 24 Feb. 1874, Encl. 1, A. Skinner's Precis of Perak Affairs, 10 Jan. 1874.

<sup>4</sup>The career of Long Jaafar as given here is based largely on the account given by Munshi Ibrahim (Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), pp. 75-6). Ibrahim's informant was a certain Syed Mohamed Zahad bin Abdul Rahman Al-Mashhor of Penang who had an intimate knowledge of affairs in Larut. However Ibrahim's account, as he himself realized, is not without error, but it is the most informative.

<sup>5</sup>Chen Sang was a district in Kongchow, a prefecture in Kwangtung province.

<sup>6</sup>Fui Chew was a prefecture in the province of Kwangtung with nine districts.

about a mile-and-a-half north-east of Klian Pauh, a hill lying between the two places.<sup>1</sup>

The majority of the Fui Chew mine-owners were China-born who had migrated to Penang in the 1830s where they married local-born Chinese. Although most of them owned mines in Klian Bahru, a few also mined at Tupai. By 1861, there were only about eleven mines in Klian Bahru owned by Fui Chew men.<sup>2</sup> Almost all of them were financed by Penang merchants, the most prominent of whom was Oh Wee Kee.<sup>3</sup>

Although, on the whole, the two groups of Chinese were to be found in separate territories, there was close mingling between them because many of the Fui Chew mine owners employed a majority of Chen Sang labourers. In one instance, out of 66 labourers, 50 of them were Chen Sang Hakka, and in another case, out of 100 coolies about 85 to 90 of them were Chen Sang. It is also known that one Fui Chew mine owner, Li Ah Foy, entered into a partnership for six years, prior to 1861, with a leader of the Chen Sang, Lee Kwan Kwi.<sup>4</sup>

The miners were very much dependent on Sungai Larut for obtaining their supplies from and for the export of their tin to Penang, although the interior of Larut was also accessible by several other routes. To the north of Sungai Larut was Sungai Sapetang, and both of these rivers met at the *kuala* (estuary). The Sapetang did not pass through the mines but a canal had been cut leading from the mines to the river and 'large supplies of provisions, as well as loads of tin, constantly pass up and down it'. The Sapetang then was navigable for a gunboat up to about twenty miles in the interior. At Ulu Sapetang, there was a village with a road leading to Larut but 'it was a very bad one and very dangerous to walk on, as there is a small tree that grows in the grass, that runs into the foot and causes awful agony'. Up one of the creeks, there was a village where large quanti-

<sup>1</sup>The documents on the Larut disturbances in 1861 make no mention of the territorial origins of the Chinese miners but the documents on the 1865 disturbances clearly state that the two major groups there were Chen Sang (in Klian Pauh) and Fui Chew (in Klian Bahru). (See, CO 273/15, Petition of Oh Wee Kee to Resident Councillor, Penang, 18 Oct. 1865.)

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/5, Documents on the Larut Disturbances: statements of Ghee Hin [Fui Chew] miners.

<sup>3</sup>Oh Wee Kee was a butcher, baker and general trader by profession. Although he financed the Larut miners in company with other traders, the advances he personally made, were, in 1865, said to be in the region of \$5,000. (CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances: Oh Wee Kee's petition of 18 Oct. 1865.)

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/5, Larut Disturbances: statements of Chun Ah Kew, Ham Lin, Yi Ah Sin and Li Ah Foy. Altogether over thirty Fui Chew miners made statements to the Penang Authorities but only the statements of twenty-four of them were considered credible.

ties of sugar-cane were grown. The people there apparently had little connexion with Larut. It was also possible by way of Sungai Krian and Sungai Kurau to import provisions into the interior of Larut. But in the case of a blockade of Sungai Larut, the people in the interior, through these channels could hold out without being starved for only a period of about four months. Only betel nut, siren and tobacco were grown in Larut itself. From the south, there were also other entrances to Larut. A path led from Kuala Kangsar to Larut which, by elephants, would take about two days to cover, and Kuala Kangsar was about five days by boat from the mouth of Sungai Perak. From Sungai Bruas, Larut could also be reached on elephants in twenty-four hours and from Sungai Trong in one hour. But both these rivers were not easily accessible from the sea. The Bruas river had large trees across its mouth and the Trong river had a large shoal at its entrance.<sup>1</sup>

With the development of mining in Larut the trade between Penang and Perak reached a significant proportion at this stage. In 1861-2, imports into Penang were worth \$416,249, of which tin amounted to \$291,989 and specie \$116,998. Exports reached a total of \$363,729 with Benares opium fetching \$63,464 and rice \$31,389. From May 1862 to February 1863, a period of ten months, imports into Penang totalled \$342,479, of which tin amounted to \$258,997 and specie \$74,000. Exports to the territories of Perak had increased to \$423,151, the main items of which were Specie (\$178,420), sundries (\$64,626), Benares opium (\$58,824) and rice (\$41,951).<sup>2</sup>

The brightest phase of Lukut's history also began about the same time when it came under the control of Raja Jumaat bin Raja Jaafar of Riau. This originated from the financial embarrassment suffered by Sultan Muhammad who was a bold businessman determined to develop the tin resources of his kingdom. But, for reasons unknown to us, all his endeavours failed miserably. From the 1830s until his death in 1857, he was deeply indebted to several Malacca and Penang merchants. In 1839, when returning from Riau, where he had been to visit some relatives, accompanied by the brothers,

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/5, Larut Disturbances: G. Smart to H. Man, 12 April 1862; Capt. G. T. Wright, Commdr. of *Hoogly* to Resident Councillor, Penang, 14 & 22 May 1862; J. W. Warwick, Commdr. of *Mohr* to Capt. Wright, 13 May 1862; E. Noyes, Commdr. of *Tonze* to Capt. Wright, 22 May 1862.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances: Encl., Statement exhibiting the Quantity and value of Imports and Exports from and to Perak and its dependencies &c. into and from the Port of PW1 during the official year 1861/2 and for 10 months of 1862/3 from May to February last.

Raja Jumaat and Raja Abdullah of Riau, who were also the nephews of his wife, Raja Asiah, the party stopped at Malacca. There, certain Chinese threatened to have Sultan Muhammad detained if he did not pay up his debts which amounted to \$169,000. Raja Jumaat, whose father had, in fact, settled at Lukut for some time, made himself responsible for the debts and hence Sultan Muhammad was allowed to proceed home to Kuala Selangor with all his followers. Shortly after, Raja Jumaat was married to Sultan Muhammad's daughter, Raja Nai or Senai, and the couple went to live in Lukut, which was already held by Raja Jumaat's father without a written title. In 1846, Sultan Muhammad again went to Malacca and again his creditors brought pressure to bear on him. Once more Raja Jumaat came to the rescue by promising to pay off the debts by degrees. In return Sultan Muhammad granted to him, by a written title, the territory of Lukut. The English translation of this *surat pemberian* (deed of gift) reads:<sup>1</sup>

Seal of Sultan Muhammad  
Shah Marhum Sultan Ibrahim  
1241.

In the year one thousand two hundred and sixty two on the tenth day of the month of Sha'ban (4th August 1846 A.D.). At this time a document was made by His Majesty the Yang de Pertuan of Salangore in the country of Malacca bestowing to Raja Jemahat bin Raja Jaafar of Riow the Country of Lookoot as far as Qualla Linggie for ever that Lookoot is under the Government of our son Raja Jemahat the same is to descend to the children and grandchildren of Raja Jemahat it became the gift of us the Yang de Pertuan, that our Heirs and Successors are not to claim it hereafter because it is thus in truth and in fact we have affixed our chop on this paper.

Raja Jumaat proved an able administrator. He provided the necessary political stability and security of life and property which induced Malacca merchants to advance money for the development of mines. Hence, Lukut grew into a prosperous district. Chinese businessmen were also attracted to the place and soon a township emerged with two rows of shop-houses constructed of bricks with tile roofs. There were about forty of them, all owned by Chinese, the majority of whom were Hailam.<sup>2</sup>

With a monthly revenue of \$10,000, Raja Jumaat was able to build modern roads and maintain a uniformed police force. In his

<sup>1</sup>The history of Raja Jumaat's connexion with Lukut is found in CO 273/95, Robinson to Hicks Beach, 2 Aug. 1878 with encls. and CO 273/98, Robinson to Hicks Beach, 31 Jan. 1879 with encls.

<sup>2</sup>Nasir Osman Abbas, 'Sejarah Lukut', p.2.

business transactions he relied a great deal on Chee Yam Chuan who had done much to help open up Lukut. He enjoyed not only the confidence of Chinese merchants but also that of Col. Macpherson, Resident Councillor of Malacca, who became his principal adviser and friend. In fact, sometime between 1857 and 1858, Raja Jumaat's son, Raja Bot, was looked after by Macpherson, who treated him as his own son and sent to the English school in Malacca. The growth of Lukut also contributed substantially to Raja Jumaat's rise in political status for he ruled Lukut without interference from Sultan Muhammad and, in fact, did not even share his revenue with the ruler.<sup>1</sup> In later years, it was believed that he was invested by Sultan Abdul Samad with supreme authority over the whole of Selangor although no formal notification was made to the Straits government.<sup>2</sup>

Lukut's success was not an isolated phenomenon in the history of nineteenth century Selangor. In about 1844 Raja (later Sultan) Abdul Samad, whose father Raja Abdullah was the brother of Sultan Muhammad, married Raja Anjang, daughter of the ruler, after which he was given Ulu Selangor to administer.<sup>3</sup> In later years, with the assistance of Raja Jumaat, Raja Abdul Samad proceeded to invest money in the tin mines at Kanching. These produced good results, and Kanching soon had a large Chinese population, the majority of whom had been brought over from the older mining centres of Lukut and Sungai Ujong.<sup>4</sup>

Between 1849 and 1850, Raja Abdullah, Raja Jumaat's brother, came into possession of Klang. The exact circumstances which led to this are best told in the words of Raja Ismail, son of Raja Abdullah:<sup>5</sup>

In the first place, my father paid a debt of \$27,000 to Baba Wah Kye on behalf of the Sultan Muhammad of Selangor, in addition Raja Lijah (niece of the Sultan and mother of my half-brother Raja Abdul Rahman) was given to him to wife.

In the year A.H. 1266 [1849-50] my father received a grant of the country of Klang from the Sultan of Selangor giving over to him and to his heirs for ever, a valid title in the country at great expense to himself.

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.; *Malay Mail*, 'Rice Cultivation in the States: Interesting Letter from Raja Bot'.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, R40, Singapore to Fort William, 16 May 1861.

<sup>3</sup>Abdul Samad Ahmad (ed.), *Pesaka Selangor*, p.2; J. M. Gullick, 'A Careless, Heathen Philosopher?' *JMBRAS*, vol.26, pt.1, 1953, p.89.

<sup>4</sup>Gullick, 'A Careless, Heathen Philosopher?', p.89. Raja Bot claimed that it was his father who opened up Ulu Selangor and Bandar Kanching. (See *Malay Mail*, 'Rice Cultivation in the States &c.')

<sup>5</sup>Cited by Mohd. Amin Hassan, 'Raja Mahdi bin Raja Sulaiman', *Peninjau Sejarah* vol.1, no.2, 1966, pp.53-4.



Before this, Klang had been placed under the administration of Raja Sulaiman bin Sultan Muhammad. He had passed away by this time.<sup>1</sup>

Raja Abdullah 'spent great sums of money and converted the place from jungle to a town'.<sup>2</sup> Much of this money was derived from Malacca. With the help of Raja Jumaat, an approach for an advance was originally made to Neubronner & Co., but, the firm was unwilling or unable to comply with the request. It was Chee Yam Chuan and Lim Say Hoe<sup>3</sup> who eventually provided Raja Abdullah with \$30,000 to develop the district as well as the mines.<sup>4</sup>

The most important mines in the Klang district were located at Ampang, and tin was first exported in about 1859. The prospect of further development of mining activities attracted some of the Chinese traders from Lukut. They provided the miners with rice, opium and arrack as well as daily necessities such as fowls and pigs, and in return obtained tin in payment which they in turn exported. The first trader to arrive in this area which subsequently grew into the town of Kuala Lumpur was Hiu Siew, a Fui Chew, accompanied by Yap Si who hailed from San On.<sup>5</sup> They had been joint owners of a mine in Lukut where they had commercial dealings with a Mendeling called Sutan Puasa who lived near the mining village of Ampang. It was he who induced them to do business with the Ampang miners.

The mining industry itself did not bring profits until about 1863,<sup>6</sup> but the mining population in Ampang and Kuala Lumpur, the majority of whom were Fui Chew Hakka, increased steadily. It soon became necessary to elect a headman and Hiu Siew was elected the first Kapitan. Hiu Siew died in 1862 and was succeeded by his right hand man, Liu Ngim Kong, who, a year previously, had arrived in Kuala Lumpur from Lukut. Prior to that he had been in Sungai Ujong where he was a *panglima* of the well-known Kapitan Shin On.<sup>7</sup> Liu Ngim Kong sent for Yap Ah Loy alias Yap Tet Loy who had been in Sungai Ujong for some time assisting one of the headmen there, Yap Ah Shak. In Kuala Lumpur, Yap Ah Loy soon acquired wealth and influence. Late in 1868, Kapitan Liu died. The late

<sup>1</sup>Abdul Samad Ahmad, p.7.

<sup>2</sup>W. Jalleh, Disorders in Selangor before 1874, B.A.Hons. dissertation, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1955, App.E, Translation of letter from Raja Ismail to Gov., SS, 28 Sept. 1876.

<sup>3</sup>Nothing is yet known about him.

<sup>4</sup>S. M. Middlebrook, 'Yap Ah Loy', *JMBRAS*, vol.24, pt.2, 1951, p.18.

<sup>5</sup>A district in the prefecture of Kongchow.

<sup>6</sup>See *Malay Mail*, 'Rice Cultivation in the States &c.'

<sup>7</sup>See p.78.

Kapitan had recommended Yap Si to Sultan Abdul Samad as his successor but Yap Si had declined, naming instead Yap Ah Loy as the more suitable candidate. It is recorded that: 'The headmen of the four races<sup>1</sup> assented, and Yap Ah Loi was then appointed Captain. The Sultan's wife arrived in Kuala Lumpur and Yap Ah Loy was invested with the office.'<sup>2</sup>

Chinese migration to the state of Selangor was not confined to the territories of Ampang and Kuala Lumpur. As mentioned earlier, there was also a growing Chinese population in Kanching, the majority of whom were Kah Yeng Chew Hakka. Here too the population was soon large enough for a Kapitan to be appointed, and a certain Tsin Kin was elected. But the man who soon became the wealthiest miner in Kanching was a certain Chin Ah Chan. Seven years after his arrival there, Kapitan Tsin Kin passed away and there was dissension among the Kah Yeng Chew themselves over the election of a new Kapitan. Chin Ah Chan made a bid for the position and when he was not elected, he decided to sell out his property and move to Ulu Langat where Sultan Abdul Samad gave him the whole area as a concession and lent him money for expenditure. His property in Kanching was bought over by Yap Si.<sup>3</sup>

The growth of the mining industry also produced other effects. It affected significantly the lives of the Malays in the state. As described by a contemporary observer: 'One district in Selangor, i.e., Sungai Lukut, was then putting out a large quantity of tin, and Selangor men came and traded in Lukut, getting \$3 and \$4 for goods usually sold at \$1. The natural result was that the art of *padi* planting was almost forgotten.'<sup>4</sup> With Ulu Selangor and Bandar Kanching also opened up, 'the *raia*s of Selangor forgot altogether about planting *padi*, preferring to engage in buying and selling'.

Commercial development also affected the traditional control of the economy by the ruling elite. Until the 1850s, it had been the custom for the Malay ruling class to forbid the direct export of tin.

<sup>1</sup>It is probable that the four races referred to Fui Chew, Cantonese, Hokkien and Kah Yeng Chew (a prefecture in Kwangtung province) Chinese who were all present in Ampang-Kuala Lumpur. (See J. M. Gullick, 'Kuala Lumpur 1880-95', *JMBRAS*, vol.28, pt.4, 1955, App.A, pp. 134-5.)

<sup>2</sup>C. K., 'Yap Ah Loi', *Selangor Journal*, vol.1, no.12, Feb. 1893, p.185.

<sup>3</sup>The above account of the early history of the Chinese in the state of Selangor is based on the following sources: Middlebrook, *op.cit.*; C.K., 'Yap Ah Loi', *op.cit.*; 'Translation of Extracts from a Record made in Chinese by Yap Ah Loy relating to the Wars in Selangor before the year 1874', *Journal of South Seas Society*, vol.13, pt.1, 1957 and Gullick, 'Kuala Lumpur 1880-95', App. A.

<sup>4</sup>'Rice Cultivation in the States &c.', *op.cit.*

All producers had to sell to them at the rate of \$30 per *bahara*. As Straits merchants became more eager to deal directly with the miners and since they wielded considerable influence because they were also creditors of the Malay rulers and chiefs, the traditional practice was eventually revised. It appears that Raja Jumaat was called upon to work out the new arrangements. He sought the advice of Col. Macpherson, and just before the death of Sultan Muhammad called a meeting of all the *orang besar-besar* as well as the Chinese merchants who had interests in the tin trade of Kanching, Ampang and Lukut.<sup>1</sup>

In allowing the miners to export the tin produced, it was proposed that there should be a duty of 20 per cent on all tin exported. It was possibly also realized that the new commercial arrangements would significantly affect the Malay chiefs, hence it was proposed that regular allowances should be paid to various members of the ruling class. And since with the more direct participation of Straits merchants in the mining industry the Chinese population was likely to increase rapidly, Raja Jumaat suggested that all gambling should be confined to one house at each centre to avoid trouble.<sup>2</sup>

Some time between 1858 and 1859, for the first time a duty was imposed on the export of tin. Nothing else was taxed. The duty was, as proposed, 20 per cent. But within the next two years, with the abolition of the truck system,<sup>3</sup> the Chinese merchants asked that the duty should be reduced to 10 per cent. It appears that the request was complied with. A tax was then placed on the import of opium (\$2 a ball) and rice (\$4 a *koyan*). These, however, were the only articles taxed.<sup>4</sup>

The indications are that the new arrangements were brought about quite smoothly in Lukut but some misunderstanding arose between Raja Abdullah and the Malacca merchants, Chee Yam Chuan and Lim Say Hoe. The Chinese withdrew from the earlier arrangement with Raja Abdullah in 1860. It has been said that 'Their complaint was that they wished Ulu Klang to be governed like an English country, while Abdullah insisted on governing according to Malay

<sup>1</sup>Among the Chinese present were Chee Yam Chuan, Kwek Ah Tong, Low Yam and Kay Ah Tat. With the exception of Chee Yam Chuan, nothing is known about the rest.

<sup>2</sup>See *Malay Mail*, 'Rice Cultivation in the States &c.'; Anon., 'History of Selangor', p.71.

<sup>3</sup>See Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, pp. 74-5, 76. The truck system was the practice of paying workmen in goods instead of money or in money on the understanding that they would buy provisions etc. from their employers.

<sup>4</sup>*Malay Mail*, 'Rice Cultivation in the States &c.'

laws and customs'.<sup>1</sup> The implications are clear. The traditional Malay system would allow the territorial chief monopoly of all items of trade within the area under his control and this was opposed to the idea of free trade to which the English subscribed.<sup>2</sup>

The traditional system of monopoly also broke down in Sungai Ujong but it occurred even earlier than in Selangor. The turning point seems to be about the 1830s. Until then, the Malay chiefs received cash, opium and rice from the Malacca merchants which they then advanced to the miners at high prices. The miners were obliged to sell their tin at an agreed price to the *orang besar* who in turn sold it to the Malacca merchants. The miners therefore had to pay interests for the cash advances and exorbitant prices for goods which they obtained from the Malay chiefs. In addition, they suffered the disadvantage of having to sell their tin at a price fixed by the purchasers. By 1840, however, Malacca merchants were able to make advances to the miners directly.<sup>3</sup> No longer needed as middlemen, the Malay chiefs looked to other means of sharing the wealth of the tin mines. Hence duties were imposed on the traffic along Sungai Linggi. It is not clear how significantly the new arrangements affected the development of Sungai Ujong's trade. There is evidence to show only that investments in the Sungai Ujong-Linggi trade from Malacca increased steadily. By 1855, most of the leading merchants of Malacca, both European and Chinese, were involved in this trade. It was said at that time that '... there is now upwards of 2,100 piculs of the metal of the value of \$50,000 for which advances of cash and merchandise have been made [by Malacca merchants] detained at the Lingey village'.<sup>4</sup> The situation in 1860 is also quite clearly known for, in a petition to the Straits government, the traders said:<sup>5</sup>

The chief and principal trade of Malacca being in Tin, you, Honorable Sir, are doubtless aware, that every considerable advances are in the habit

<sup>1</sup>Middlebrook, p.102, n.6.

<sup>2</sup>Another example of the traditional system is to be found in a letter which J. G. Davidson wrote to Shaik Mohamed Taib (a headman of Ulu Selangor) on 19 Jan. 1875: 'I have also had complaints that my friend's people at Kanching are not trading fairly meaning that they try to force other traders to sell goods to them at a low price and then to sell to the miners at a high price and do not pay the Traders. My friend will enquire if these complaints are true and will tell my friend's people that they must not prevent or hinder Traders from selling their goods to whomsoever they choose.' (SSF, No.2, 1875, ref. no. missing.)

<sup>3</sup>GPMP Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.:', Abdullah Sultan, p.30.

<sup>4</sup>SSR, W21, Petition of Malacca Merchants to Blundell, 2 Oct. 1855.

<sup>5</sup>Chelliah, App. B (2).

of being made to the traders, and others engaged in the Mining Districts of Sunghi Oojong, for the purpose of covering the necessary expenses in extracting Ore, and smelting the metal therefrom.

The Imports of Tin into the Settlement (from Sungie Oojong) average 20,000 (Twenty thousand) piculs per Annum, all of which are exported to Singapore at an average value of 600,000 (Six hundred thousand) Spanish Dollars, a full Fifth of which Sum ... is now out in the Mining Districts having been advanced for the above purpose.

It is clear that within a period of five years (1855-1860), there had been more than a two-fold increase in the amount of money invested in the tin trade.<sup>1</sup> Again, whereas in the 1830s<sup>2</sup> Sungai Ujong produced about 7,000 piculs of tin annually, in 1860 production averaged 20,000 piculs per annum, despite the fact that within the period the political situation at Sungai Linggi was never stable.

Comparatively little is known of the Chinese population in Sungai Ujong in the mid-nineteenth century. The closing of the Kesang mines in the 1850s<sup>3</sup> brought about an exodus of Chinese miners into Sungai Ujong. Appointed Kapitan of the Chinese in Sungai Ujong was Shin On or Shin Kap, whose wife was a Malacca-born Chinese. Kapitan Shin On was a Fui Chew. He had a son called Ah Sam and a daughter married to another prominent Chinese of Sungai Ujong called Lam Ma, who hailed from Hoi Fung or Loke Fung.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese population here was also primarily Hakka (Kah Yeng Chew and Fui Chew), with quite a large number of Cantonese and possibly a few Hokkien.<sup>5</sup> The size of the population is not known but at the end of 1860 after the situation had calmed down following a serious Sino-Malay clash, 5,000 Chinese were said to have returned to Sungai Ujong to work the mines.<sup>6</sup>

Although there is no doubt that the mining industry of Sungai

<sup>1</sup>Advances made to the miners comprised opium, rice, piece goods, China goods, salt and saltfish. Of these commodities, the value of opium amounted to more than that of the others put together forming, in effect, more than fifty per cent of the total value of the advances.

<sup>2</sup>Newbold, 'Account of Sungie Ujong &c.', Moor (ed.), p.83.

<sup>3</sup>The Kesang mines, situated in Malacca, were originally worked by the Malays but drew the attention of Chinese miners from the year 1844. Since then production increased rapidly from about 146 piculs in 1844-5 to a peak of 14,330 piculs in 1850-1. Thereafter, decline set in. (See, T. Braddell, 'Notes on a Trip to the Interior from Malacca', *JIAEA*, vol.VII, 1853, pp. 75-6).

<sup>4</sup>A district in the prefecture of Fui Chew.

<sup>5</sup>Sources which help to throw light on the Chinese in Sungai Ujong between 1850-60 are: C. Letessier, 'Si Sen Ta. A Chinese Apotheosis', *Selangor Journal*, vol.1, no.12, June 1893; *GPMP*, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.:', Gullick, 'Kuala Lumpur 1880-95', App. A, pp.133-4; Middlebrook, pp. 15-16.

<sup>6</sup>SSR, R38, Singapore to Fort William, 6 Oct. 1860.

Ujong also developed steadily by the mid-nineteenth century, the development was in no way as spectacular as that of Larut and Lukut.

### *Increasing Straits Interest in the Hinterland*

It has been mentioned that the opening up of the Malay states in the nineteenth century was, in large measure, attributable to the growth and success of Singapore as an international trading centre. Hence any significant development in the Singapore commercial world could be expected to have repercussions on the hinterland. Singapore's trade between 1855 and 1865 was subject to general fluctuations. Nevertheless, the period did witness a distinct increase in commercial activities and financial speculation.

Singapore's trade had attained the value of \$55,446,113 in 1857-8, the highest recorded since 1819. But almost immediately it declined, for a depression followed in 1858 which saw the collapse of several Chinese firms and the commercial situation remained bleak until 1861. The basic causes of this set-back were the trade depression of Europe, the Indian Mutiny of 1857, the Anglo-Chinese War of 1858-60 and, to a lesser extent, the American Civil War. In 1862-3, the overall value of trade rose again only to fall once more the following year, resulting in the failure of two European firms with liabilities of over a million dollars. In 1865, several more commercial houses failed unexpectedly, and this undermined the confidence of Chinese and Indian merchants in the banks.<sup>1</sup>

The prevailing trade depression had some affect on all classes of people in Singapore, and they were inclined to attribute the poor commercial situation to the growth of neighbouring ports. For example, it was pointed out to the Indian Government that:

The great value of the several stations in the Straits Settlements to Great Britain is as entrepots of trade; this is more particularly the case as regards Singapore which in itself produces nothing though it attracts the produce of all the neighbouring states; in former days much of the trade with the South of China was carried on at this Port but this must naturally suffer diminution from the establishment of the British Colony at Hong-kong whilst our trade with the Celebes and Sumatra is also on the decline ....<sup>2</sup>

Although the unfavourable effects of the growth of neighbouring ports on the trade of Singapore were more apparent than real,<sup>3</sup> the

<sup>1</sup>See Wong Lin Ken, 'The Trade of Singapore 1819-69', pp.159-75.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, R41, Singapore to Fort William, 31 Dec. 1863.

<sup>3</sup>Wong Lin Ken, 'The Trade of Singapore 1819-69', pp.35-108.

existing fear did have far-reaching consequences. This period, after about 1855, also saw growing commercial rivalry offered to the British firms especially from an increasing number of German ones, with the result that 'the rapid making of princely fortunes has given place to hard work and moderate returns' in the Straits entrepot.<sup>1</sup>

The unanimous opinion was that Straits capital had perforce to look for fresh pastures. In the words of the then Governor:<sup>2</sup>

... it is becoming day by day a matter of great importance to develop the resources of the countries in its immediate neighbourhood and thus to open up new fields for the extension of our commerce.

Slight as is our present intercourse with many of the States in the interior the value of our Exports last year to the Malayan Peninsula was estimated at Rs. 4,961,717, and of our Imports from the same Quarter at 4,245,294 Rs. or, in all, nearly a Million Sterling, this trade is doubtless capable of being largely extended....

Notwithstanding the fact that until the late 1860s even the coasts of the Peninsula had not been thoroughly surveyed,<sup>3</sup> there was no dearth of information on the rich natural resources of the Malay states. Contemporary writings and the data collected by officials between 1820 and 1860 were enlightening. And the existing commerce between Singapore and the hinterland, small though it was compared to the trade with the outside world, furnished ample proof that it was capable of 'almost infinite expansion'. One writer, for example, remarked, in 1856, that the Peninsula was 'a great magazine of tin, incomparably the greatest on the globe'.<sup>4</sup> Pahang was believed to have large gold deposits; iron and coal had been found in various places and it was felt that the fertile soil of the Peninsula was well adapted for plantations of sugar, rice and other agricultural products, some of which had already been rather extensively grown in Province Wellesley by the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> No wonder, at a time when there was more capital in the Straits than could be profitably employed in commerce, the declining yield on capital in trade drove Straits merchants to seek more lucrative outlets for their capital in the Peninsula.

<sup>1</sup>Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, p.31.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, R41, Singapore to Fort William, 31 Dec. 1863.

<sup>3</sup>C. M. Turnbull, 'The Origins of British Control in the Malay States before Colonial Rule' in J. Bastin & R. Roolvink (eds.), *Malayan and Indonesian Studies*, Oxford, 1964, p.167.

<sup>4</sup>J. Crawford, *A Descriptive Dictionary of the Indian Islands and Adjacent Countries*, London, 1856, p.254.

<sup>5</sup>See Mills, pp. 232-3.

The economic potentialities of the Malay states alone might not have been able to propel the commercial pendulum so strongly in the direction of the Peninsula had it not been for certain developments which took place in the western industrial world. In the 1860s there was a marked expansion of the tin-plate industry in Britain. This inevitably created a sharp demand for tin.<sup>1</sup>

But this was not the first occasion the Peninsula benefited from scientific inventions. In 1852, the *Singapore Free Press* commented:<sup>2</sup>

Scientific discoveries and developments in Europe have given an impulse to the settlement on more than one occasion. The application of Gambier to many useful purposes, especially tanning and dyeing, gave employment to thousands of Chinese settlers ... and more recently another vegetable production, Gutta Percha, has come into extensive demand, the Malayan inhabitants being the producers or rather collectors....

The rising demand for gambier materially benefited Johor which, from the mid-nineteenth century, became the foremost agricultural Malay state in the Peninsula. The Temenggong, Ibrahim, also derived substantial revenue from Chinese cultivation of gambier as well as pepper.<sup>3</sup>

By the early 1860s, therefore, even the major European firms in Singapore were beginning to lay out plans for more intensive development of the Peninsula. Ker, Rawson & Co. had shown the way by their business arrangements with Temenggong Ibrahim (whose residence was at Telok Blanga, Singapore), to which William Napier, the senior Law Agent of Singapore then, was a party. They managed the Temenggong's affairs to their own considerable profit.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Wong Lin Ken, 'The Malayan Tin Industry: A Study of the Impact of Western Industrialization on Malaya' in K. G. Treggonging (ed.), *Papers on Malayan History*, Singapore, 1962.

<sup>2</sup>Cited by Wong Lin Ken, 'The Trade of Singapore 1819-69', p.169. In about 1840, Dr. Montgomerie discovered that the sap of Gutta Percha had useful properties in preserving deep-sea cables in a good condition. Gutta Percha also had important domestic uses, for example, in the making of basins, buckets and jugs and in the practice of surgery. Between 1844 and mid-1848, about 21,598.68 piculs valued at \$274,190 were exported from Singapore. (See Loh Weng Fong, 'Singapore Agency Houses 1819-1900', B.A.Hons. dissertation, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1958, p.24; P. S. Sundram, 'Economic Development of Johore 1826-95', B.A.Hons. dissertation, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1958, p.11.)

<sup>3</sup>C. M. Turnbull, 'The Johore Gambier and Pepper Trade in the Mid-19th Century', *Journal of the South Seas Society*, vol. 15, 1959, pp.46-7; Sundram, pp. 10-11.

<sup>4</sup>Turnbull, 'The Origins of British Control &c.', in Bastin and Roolvink (eds.), p. 171.



It was W. W. Ker<sup>1</sup> who first advised Temenggong Ibrahim to open up Johor for cultivation<sup>2</sup> at a time when the pressure of increased immigration into Singapore and the closing of a large number of plantations there, from about 1830 onwards, forced Chinese farmers to look for alternative land to cultivate.<sup>3</sup> W. W. Ker made substantial advances to the Temenggong and, for many years, handled exclusively the growing business transactions of the family. In 1873, the Temenggong family still owed the firm about \$65,000.<sup>4</sup> Ker, Rawson & Co. were also pioneers in the export of Gutta Percha, 'the first consignment ever sent from Singapore reaching London through their instrumentality'.<sup>5</sup> In 1860, a certain Meldrum and two assistants, Rankine and Cameron, set up a saw-mill in Johor. Though business fluctuated, the venture proved profitable and in 1865 Meldrum's firm supplied many of the needed sleepers for the Indian Railway.<sup>6</sup> Timber was also regularly exported to India and again the export business was in the hands of Paterson, Simons & Co.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup>In 1828, the firm of Ker, Rawson & Co. was established by William Wemys Ker in Singapore, Thomas Sam Rawson in London and Christopher Empsen in China. Ker subsequently returned to London and established the firm of W. W. Ker & Co. at 21, St. Swithin Lane, London. In 1853, the firm had comprised Ker, Rawson, William Paterson and H. M. Simons—Paterson and Simons were earlier clerks in the firm. By the end of April 1859, the old name had been dropped and the firm (in Singapore) was re-named Paterson, Simons & Co. But to all intents and purposes W. W. Ker & Co. and Paterson, Simons & Co. were one. (CO 273/54, Ker to Kimberley, 28 Feb. 1871; CO 273/78, Tidman to Hope, 20 May 1874; Buckley, *op.cit.* pp.233-4.)

<sup>2</sup>Sir Peter Benson Maxwell (*Our Malay Conquests*, Westminster, 1878, p.21) wrote: 'Thirty years ago, the native chief of Johore had, under the counsels of the late Mr. Ker, an English merchant at Singapore, been brought to see the road to wealth and prosperity lay, not in mulcting trade and industry, but in protecting life and property; and in a few years, he found Chinese flocking into his country and his revenue increasing rapidly.'

<sup>3</sup>Turnbull, 'The Johore Gambier and Pepper Trade &c.', p.43.

<sup>4</sup>W. W. Ker wrote in 1871: '... members of our firm have for thirty years past, been agents for the Rajahs of Johore....' (CO 273/54, Ker to Kimberley, 28 Feb. 1871). And Abu Bakar, son of Temenggong Ibrahim, told Gov. Ord in 1873: 'You are aware of the long connection that has subsisted between that Firm and my family, of my respect for the members of it, and of my feeling that the Seniors of that Firm have on more than one occasion rendered important services to my Father and myself....' (CO 273/66, Ord to Kimberley, 24 April, 1873, Encl. Abu Bakar to Ord, 31 March 1873.)

<sup>5</sup>A. Wright and H. A. Cartwright, *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya*, London, 1908, p.664.

<sup>6</sup>Sundram, p.24.

<sup>7</sup>SSR, R41, Singapore to Fort William, 17 Jan. 1867. Cavenagh, in 1861,

Although there is no clear evidence that Ker, Rawson & Co. had any direct dealing with the tin-producing states in the early period of its existence, it is likely that it was one of the major agency-houses through which Straits tin was exported to China and India. Until about 1850, these two countries 'engrossed a larger proportion of the total Straits tin trade than Europe and the United States together'.<sup>1</sup> It is known that in 1836 Ker, Rawson & Co. purchased 158 blocks of tin from a Chinese firm in Penang, which is ample testimony that it was interested in the tin trade. However, it has been reliably established that the firm also exported all varieties of Straits produce.<sup>2</sup>

Quick to follow in the footsteps of Paterson, Simons was W. H. Read of A. L. Johnston & Co.<sup>3</sup> The development of Johor with the consequent increase in state revenue resulted in a personal conflict between Sultan Ali (son of Sultan Hussain) and Temenggong Ibrahim, each endeavouring to secure the lion's share for himself. There is no doubt that the Temenggong's attempt, at this stage, to obtain administrative control over the state was encouraged by his European advisers.<sup>4</sup> Read, clearly out of commercial considerations,

wrote of Temenggong Ibrahim: 'Had His Highness in the first instance been compelled to reside within his own territories, with the aid of the advice which the Government would always have been ready to afford, he might ere this have effected great improvements, to the benefit both of himself and of his people; as it is, he has fallen into the hands of European agents, whose sole idea is to benefit themselves through his influence ... there is not a road throughout the country, and the only signs of civilization ... are a house built for His Highness' accommodation whenever he may visit Johore, and a saw mill recently established, doubtless to enable his advisers to realize a handsome profit from the sale of the timber procurable in the forests on the mainland.' (Cited by N. Tarling, 'British Policy in the Malay Peninsula and Archipelago 1824-1871', *JMBRAS*, vol.30, pt.3, 1957, p.68. (Reprinted Kuala Lumpur, 1969.)

<sup>1</sup>Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>2</sup>Kyshe, pp. 22-7.

<sup>3</sup>A. L. Johnston & Co. was the earliest agency house to be established in Singapore (1820). The proprietor, Alexander Laurie, a Scotsman, was born and brought up in Dumfriesshire, Scotland. He first went overseas to India where he served the East India Co. From there he moved to Singapore where he enjoyed the friendship and confidence of Raffles. He left Singapore in December, 1841 and never returned. His successor was Christopher Rideout Read whose son was William Henry Read. W. H. (as he was usually called) left England on 18 March 1841 and arrived in Singapore on 12 September 1841 in a sailing vessel, *General Kyd*. He soon became the outstanding personality of Singapore, wielding considerable influence with Malay rulers and King Mongkut of Siam. His was truly a varied and colourful career. (For details, see Buckley, p. 62, 367-9.)

<sup>4</sup>In 1861, Wan Ahmad of Pahang, writing to the Resident Councillor of Singapore, said: 'The Tumonggong designs to become himself a sovereign of

decided to champion the cause of Sultan Ali. That he had plans to develop the resources of the Malay states there is no doubt for many years later he confessed:

There is no doubt that the Malay Peninsula would have been opened up in 1865 had Keppel been made Governor instead of Ord, as it had been a favourite scheme of mine since 1852-53; and I had talked the matter over with him.

When in 1852-53 Butterworth and Church were plotting to ask Sultan Allie for the benefit of the Tumonggong and I had taken up the Sultan's cause, I, having obtained the consent of the Bendahara, late of Pahang, proposed to the two plotters to reform the Kingdom of Johore with the Sultan as nominal head, the Bendahara and Tumonggong as Ministers, under a British Resident shifting the boundary of Malacca from Kessang to Muar, so as to give us more influence over the Peninsula. But the two worthies could not see the advantage of the scheme, or was it the 24 Grocers in Leadenhall Street?<sup>1</sup>

Penang merchants were equally impatient to move into the neighbouring Malay state of Perak. Commenting on Larut on 14 April 1860, the *Penang Gazette* said:<sup>2</sup>

The interior is exceedingly rich in tin, and the number of Chinese chiefly from Penang, engaged in extracting it has increased greatly within the last few years. The entrance to the richest tin tracts is by the Sungy Larut, which is under the control of Che Ngah Lamat. The quit rent payable to the Raja of Perak for the whole province [including Krian and Bagan Tiang], under the grant to Che Long Jaffar and his descendants, is only \$100 a year, and the revenue which they now receive from Larut alone is from \$5,000 to \$6,000 a month, i.e. \$4,000 from the duty of 20 a bhar on tin, and the remaining \$1,000 to \$2,000 from that on opium of 120 a chest, on rice imported of \$2 a coyan, with \$150 to \$200 from the gambling farm....

Its comments on the agricultural potentialities of Krian, Bagan Tiang and Kurau were no less favourable:

the whole Peninsula and will make Teluk Blanga his capital seat from which place, he is to issue mandates as he is taught by his lawyers.' Also, 'Now the Tumonggong of Singapore through the aid of his European friends has deprived their real owner and master of the whole revenues of Johore....' (CO 273/94, Robinson to Hicks Beach, 5 July 1878, with encls.; see also Turnbull, 'The Origins of British Control &c.', in Bastin & Roolvink (eds.), p.171).

<sup>1</sup>*Singapore Free Press*, 30 June 1899; Read's letter re: Notice of Admiral Sir Henry Keppel's book, *A Sailor's Life Under Four Sovereigns*. Whether Read was justified in his optimism that Keppel could have succeeded in implementing a forward policy is irrelevant here. The events of the 1860s and early 1870s were to reveal to us how elaborate and ambitious Read's schemes were.

<sup>2</sup>Cited by Wee Choon Siang, p. 7.

The broad alluvial tracts lying along the seaboard are noted for fertility, ... numbers proceed every year from Penang and Province Wellesley to Krian, Bagan Tiang and Kurow ... during the paddy season, to plant and reap a crop, returning to their homes as soon as they have gathered it. The head of each family pays to the Chief a poll tax or permit fee of one dollar. This entitles him to plant as much land as he can, and for it he pays a rent of a dollar and a half an orlong. Thirty years ago Bagan Tiang was uninhabited, and only known as one of the spots on this coast to which the Malay pirates repaired on their expeditions, to enjoy themselves. It has now a fixed population of about 200, which is increased by some hundreds in the rice months. During the season now closing from seven to eight hundred Malays resorted from our territory to Bagan Tiang to take a crop....

In short the commercial flood was just beginning to rise in the western Peninsula.

## EMERGENCE OF LARGE-SCALE ENTERPRISE

*More Intensive Exploitation of Peninsular Resources*

By the 1860s, apart from Chinese mining activities which were already in full swing in Larut, Klang and Sungai Ujong, there were also efforts made by leading Straits mercantilists to participate more directly in the commercial development of the Malay states. Again Paterson, Simons & Co. took the lead by investing in the Pahang tin-mining industry.

Before the middle of the nineteenth century, Pahang, under the administration of Bendahara Ali, had built up a valuable trade with Singapore through the Chinese. Kuantan, the principal mining centre had 'a flourishing Chinese community'.<sup>1</sup> Wan Mutahir, the eldest son of Bendahara Ali, succeeded to the title of Bendahara after his father's death in 1857. But Kuantan, together with Endau, had been left to a younger son, Wan Ahmad. Mutahir's attempt to take control of Kuantan and Endau was clearly the main cause of the prolonged civil war which broke out in 1857 with Wan Ahmad ultimately wresting the title from Wan Mutahir, and his son Tun Koris,<sup>2</sup> in 1863.<sup>3</sup> Temenggong Ibrahim, whose children had married the children of Bendahara Mutahir, was principally instrumental in encouraging Mutahir to oust his brother from Kuantan and Endau. Through the influence of Ibrahim, Paterson, Simons & Co. gained a foothold in Pahang. Late in 1860, the company assisted Wan Mutahir in settling the claims of Tan Kim Seng, who had been an important creditor of the Bendahara family, and who must have advanced capital for mining operations in Pahang. In an agreement

<sup>1</sup>Turnbull, 'The Origins of British Control &c.', in Bastin and Roolvink (eds.), p. 170.

<sup>2</sup>Tun Koris was also the son-in-law of Temenggong Ibrahim. In 1861 he became Bendahara when his father, Wan Mutahir, decided to retire owing probably to the strain of the war with Wan Ahmad.

<sup>3</sup>See Swettenham Papers, item 72, 'Narrative of the Proceedings of the Straits Government with regard to the recent operations on the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula'; also, SSR, G6, Cavenagh to Wan Ahmad, 7 Dec. 1866, where it is clearly stated that Wan Ahmad, until 1862, 'merely asserted that he was entitled to exercise authority over the Districts of Endow and Quantan'.

made between William Paterson and Tun Koris in November 1861 it was stated:

Whereas we, Datu Bandaharah Ton Koris Sri Maharajah of Pahang are desirous to give to Mr. William Paterson, Merchant of Singapore, the right and title to work tin in our territory adjoining the River Quantan and at workings there belonging to us, we willingly grant Mr. William Paterson the tin workings of that River, because he has done many good acts for us and our Country, and has brought peace to our subjects, he has also lent us money and enabled us to settle a bond due on account of our Grandfather, brothers, as well as ourself, to Tan Kim Seng of Singapore for the sum of \$11,800 and interest.<sup>1</sup>

Operations immediately commenced and two godowns were constructed. But the victory of Wan Ahmad in 1863 ruined the financial investment of Paterson, Simons & Co.<sup>2</sup> and the firm did not attempt to develop Pahang again until the 1880s.<sup>3</sup>

The next attempt by a member of the European agency-houses in Singapore to effect greater control of the Peninsular mining industry occurred in 1866. By early March that year, W. H. Read, in partnership with Tan Kim Cheng, had entered into an agreement with Raja Abdullah to take over the collection of revenue in Klang. The agreement was, initially, for a period of two years, during which time the Read-Kim Cheng syndicate would receive a commission of two-tenths of the revenue collected. The text of the actual agreement is not available, but the activities of the syndicate undoubtedly covered much broader ground than the mere collection of revenue, for it was said that 'they are guarding the above place [Klang] so that no person will disturb the traders' and that 'they will arrange our country until it may be well populated'.<sup>4</sup>

Until 1867 when disturbances broke out, the syndicate was able to control the trade of the territory. The value of the Klang trade is not known but it was claimed that just prior to the outbreak of hostilities, there was a trade in the territories belonging to the state

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/25, Paterson to Buckingham, 8 May 1868; Memo. of 16 May 1868 by E. Blake with copies of documents annexed.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>In 1888, the largest British Company in Pahang was the Pahang Corporation Ltd. with Sir Edmond Pontifex of the Copper Co. Ltd. as Chairman. The local agent for the company was Paterson, Simons & Co. (See, E. Thio, 'The Extension of British Control to Pahang', *JMBRAS*, vol.30, pt.1, 1957, pp. 68, 74.)

<sup>4</sup>SSR, F7, Sultan Abdul Samad to Cavenagh, 6 March 1866; Raja Abdullah to Cavenagh, 6 Mar. 1866.

of Selangor equal to about one million dollars.<sup>1</sup> This was possibly an accurate estimate, for a visitor to Klang reported: 'It [Selangor] has very rich mines at Kalang, which two years ago [i.e. 1866], when worked by European capital from the other end of the Straits, yielded about 21,000 piculs of tin'.<sup>2</sup> The price of Straits tin in Britain then was £88 per ton,<sup>3</sup> and 21,000 piculs<sup>4</sup> would fetch roughly over £100,000.

While the Singapore commercial world was making attempts to penetrate the Peninsula, Penang was not dormant. In fact, the development of Penang, as a whole, was proceeding at a more rapid rate than most people realized. The import and export trade of the colony for the official year ending 30 April 1865 showed an increase of 2 million rupees over the previous year, reaching a total of about £1,108,000. According to the Resident Councillor:

Its real expansion may however be set down at a considerable amount beyond that, as the depreciation in the prices of most articles of Produce returns a much smaller value than previous years. An illustration of this is to be found in tin, the most valuable of our Exports. The reduction in price upon the quantity shipped to Great Britain alone is fully equal to 300,000 Rupees....<sup>5</sup>

It was further stated that Penang's export of tin to London amounting to 45,000 piculs, was double that from Singapore. Though there was a slight decline in Penang's trade in 1868, it revived in 1869 and in 1871 reached £7,269,415. It is important to note that between 1869 and 1871, while in Singapore the increase in imports was only about 15 per cent, in Penang the increase was nearly 80 per cent. In exports, Singapore's increase was approximately 18 per cent, compared with Penang's over 52 per cent. While in

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/25, Read to Sec. of State, 9 May 1868, enclosing memorandum (n.d.) regarding the Malay states.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/24, IO to CO, 4 Sept. 1868, Encl., Col. H. Man to Sec. to Govt. of India, 29 Feb. 1868. Col. Man had been Resident Councillor of Penang for some time before the Transfer after which he acted as Lieut.-Governor until 7 June 1867 when he was relieved by Col. Anson. But while he was awaiting orders from the Government of India, he offered his services to the Straits Government and was sent on a mission to the countries of Perak and Selangor. (CO 273/24, IO to CO, 14 March 1868, Encl. Col. Sec., SS to Sec. to Govt. of India, 3 Jan. 1868.)

<sup>3</sup>Wong Lin Ken, 'The Malayan Tin Industry: A Study of the Impact of Industrialization on Malaya', Tregonning (ed.), *Papers on Malayan History*, p.36.

<sup>4</sup>1 picul = 133.33 lbs.; 112 lbs. = 1 cwt.

<sup>5</sup>SSR, DD42, Resident Councillor to Sec. to Gov., 6 June 1865.

1861 the ratio of Singapore's imports and exports to those of Penang was ten to three; in 1871, it was ten to five.<sup>1</sup>

Much of Penang's prosperity was undoubtedly due to its trade with Sumatra and the expansion of the tin trade. But the one real advantage which it enjoyed over Singapore lay in its agricultural development. Whereas, until the early 1870s, 'Singapore exports agricultural produce of her own to the amount of about £40,000, Pinang exports agricultural produce of her own amounting to upwards of half a million per annum'. The agricultural produce—sugar, rum, tapioca, rice, coconuts, (and their oil), pepper and coir—all derived from Province Wellesley. Some of the sugar estates there were very large, making, in each case, from 1,000 to 2,000 tons of sugar of excellent quality annually.<sup>2</sup> It was believed that 'This great and steady expansion of the trade of Pinang ... may yet equal if not exceed that of Singapore, unless some measures are quickly adopted for giving to this latter Settlement a considerable tract of agricultural land'.<sup>3</sup>

One can justifiably infer that the success of the Province Wellesley plantations must have created a distinct awareness that given more fertile land elsewhere, Penang's agricultural trade could be greatly expanded. Unavoidably, Penang began to cast covetous eyes on Perak. The first attempt to develop commercial agriculture on a

<sup>1</sup>Leonard Wray, 'Settlements on the Straits of Malacca', *Royal Colonial Institute*, 24 Mar. 1874, pp. 13-14. For sixteen years prior to 1848, Wray had apparently been a sugar planter in the Straits. In 1848, he published a book called *The Practical Sugar Planter &c.* (For the full title, see C. M. Turnbull, 'Writings on British Malaya, 1786-1867', in Mills, p.402.) In 1868 Wray was the owner of a plantation in Province Wellesley where vanilla from Mauritius, india-rubber from Ceylon and tea-seed from Assam were experimented with. The tea subsequently sold at a good price. In 1878, he was attorney of the Penang Plantations Co. In the same year, the company acquired 6,000 acres of land in Perak for cultivation. (C. W. Harrison (ed.) 'Perak Council Minutes 1877-1879' (proceedings of 25 Oct. 1878) in R. J. Wilkinson (Gen.-Ed.), *Papers on Malay Subjects: History*, Pt.III, Kaula Lumpur, 1907.) Leonard's son, Cecil Wray, later became British Resident of Pahang.

<sup>2</sup>In the Blue Book Report (Penang and Province Wellesley) for 1872, the Acting Lieut.-Governor said with regard to the sugar plantations in Province Wellesley 'The larger properties belong to the Right Honourable Edward Horsman....' (CO 273/74, G. W. R. Campbell to Kimberley, 28 June 1873 with enclosures). In 1872, Horsman was President of the Straits Settlements Association in London and a member of Parliament. Among the several estates he owned in Province Wellesley was the Krian Estate. (CO 273/70, Sir A. Clarke to Sec. of State, 25 Dec. 1875, Encl., *Singapore Daily Times*, 23 Dec. 1873.)

<sup>3</sup>Wray, p. 14.



comparatively large scale in Perak was undertaken in 1861 by William Thomas Lewis.<sup>1</sup>

W. T. Lewis, who had served in the Straits for about 54 years, retired in September 1860 with a pension of £500 a year. For several years prior to this, he had been the Resident Councillor and Commissioner of Police, Penang. He wielded considerable influence in Perak by virtue of his former position. Hence, in April 1861, he was able to persuade Sultan Jaafar to allow him to farm the territory of Krian. Apparently Sultan Jaafar had urged him 'to take the lands as a Rajah (in the same light as Sir James Brooke at Sarawak which he was well acquainted with and quoted Sir James Brooke's name to me)' but Lewis had refused. Still, the grant (dated 16 April 1861) which Lewis obtained allowed him control over 'the River Krian to the end of its inland boundary, to the south to Passir Gadaboo, as far as its boundary with Kurow'. It was further stated:

We ... grant to W. T. Lewis Esquire all mines, Rattans, Dammar, Shells and Hills and woods and Forests and every thing there, we make over to W. T. Lewis Esquire. We also make over our rights with regard to Punghuloos and ryots thereon.

This Agreement made between the Eang de Per Tuan and W. T. Lewis Esquire to farm the lands of Perak as stated under this seal, is for the term of 20 years and is to include all the lands within the above stated boundaries, its mountains, dry lands, low lands, lakes, waters, also river, rivulets, and all kinds of woods, Forests and everything in the bowels of the earth, such as Tin, all and every we grant to the said W. T. Lewis Esquire and all revenues and all duties of every kind we the Eang de Per Tuan and our Successors grant to be farmed to the said W. T. Lewis Esquire.

<sup>1</sup>This was the same man who has been described as 'the evil genius' behind the Nanning War of 1831-2. (See K. G. Tregonning, *A History of Modern Malaya*, Singapore, 1964, p.111.) His connexion with the Straits began in Penang. Late in 1826, he was sent to Malacca where he served as Asst. Resident. Subsequently, he spent the rest of his career as a government servant in Penang. Apart from the blunder which he made in Nanning, it appears that he was, in general, an inefficient officer. (See C. M. Turnbull, 'Governor Blundell and Sir Benson Maxwell: a conflict of personalities', *JMBRAS*, vol.30, pt.1, 1957; Kyshe, *op.cit.* p.144.) However, at the time of his retirement, Gov. Cavenagh had a good word for him: '... as far as I have been able to ascertain, by the zealous and efficient discharge of the duties of every office he has held, he commanded the esteem and respect of both of his superiors and of the Community at large. Within the last few months his once iron constitution has been much shaken by a succession of attacks of severe indisposition and it is doubtful whether his health will ever be completely restored.' (SSR, R.37, Singapore to Fort William, 16 June 1860; S28, Fort William to Singapore, 22 Sept. 1860.) On the whole, little is known about Lewis's career. In 1865, he was appointed Siamese Consul in Penang and in 1872, he was still in that settlement (Kyshe, pp.277-97, 284).

That Lewis was granted more than just commercial rights is also clear from the following portion of the grant:

... W. T. Lewis Esquire himself or his assigns in whater [sic] case in which persons may do damage to this farm or make resistance within the limits of the farm against the established laws of Perak shall be guilty of resisting His Highness the Eang de Per Tuan and resisting W. T. Lewis Esquire and shall be judged in the severest manner. If there shall arise any fines, or seizures for such offences, if they be levied with the assistance and by the Eang de Per Tuan the same shall be equally divided in two shares, but in all cases adjusted by W. T. Lewis Esquire only, the said fines etc. shall all go to him alone.

Lewis was not required to pay rent for the first year. For the subsequent nineteen years, the rent payable was \$5,000 a year. But this was liable to alteration because 400 *orlong* or *relong*<sup>1</sup> of the rented land had been farmed out to a Chinese named Ah Lok for fourteen years for the sum of \$2,000 a year. The rent of the farm was made over to Lewis. But should Ah Lok fail to fulfil his contract then Lewis 'or his successors or assigns' for three successive years thereafter would pay to the Yang Di-Pertuan only \$3,000 a year as rent and for each of the subsequent remaining years \$5,000 a year. Lewis, therefore, enjoyed exclusive and monopolistic privileges.

As for the commercial possibilities presented by the scheme, Lewis himself said:

In the 20 days I remained at Kreean 654 families none of which took less than 5 *orlongs* of Paddy land were Registered by me and more have been daily coming in, so that for the ensuing Paddy season of 1861/62 it may be fairly estimated that the number will exceed 1,000 families. The good effect of such a cultivation may be shown as not only being a gain to me but greater to the cultivators and to the public in general. These grounds are notorious for their great fertility yielding far more than what the lands of Penang do, estimated at least to be 1,000 *Gantangs* per *orlong*, to be on the safe side in such a calculation say that each family will have returns (for the 5 *orlongs* cultivated) of 3,600 *Gantangs* and allowing each family to average 5 souls (parents and children) that 600 *Gantangs* be struck off for their food it would leave 3,000 *Gantangs* to be disposed of equal for 1,000 families to 3,000,000 *Gantangs* of Paddy or say 75,000 *Piculs* of Rice which may be estimated to be worth 150,000 Dollars.

Lewis could also hope to derive profits from three major sources: the clearing rent of \$1 per family; rice rent, payable after the second year, of \$3 per *relong*; and duties on timber, rattan and tin.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>A Malay measurement of length and area: 1 *relong* = 1 1/3 acres.

<sup>2</sup>The above account is based on SSR, DD34, Resident Councillor, Penang, to Sec. to Gov., SS, 22 June 1861, Encl., Lewis to Resident Councillor, 19 June 1861 with five other documents annexed.

The available evidence indicates that this was Lewis's first venture into business and although it does appear that his was entirely an individual undertaking, the magnitude of the scheme would tend to suggest that Lewis probably had arrangements with one of the existing agency-houses in Penang, for he was clearly attempting to have padi planted as a cash crop and he undoubtedly had plans to commercialize other agricultural products as well.

The enterprise, however, had important political repercussions in Perak and ultimately it had to be abandoned.<sup>1</sup>

While there was marked enthusiasm in the Straits for a rapid expansion of commercial activities in the hinterland, the frequent outbreak of disturbances rendered all such ventures extremely risky. It is not surprising that at this stage a policy of intervention in the Malay states became more and more a reality. In June 1865, in the midst of political trouble in Perak, a Straits newspaper made the following statement:

We trust the complication of affairs in Perak will lead to the Rajah appealing to our government for assistance; we could scarcely interfere without. There is not the slightest doubt that the natives would hail our arrival with pleasure. For several years a civil war devastated the kingdom, since the rule of the present sovereign has been established, his efforts to restore order have been fruitless. Would not this be a favourable opportunity for us to offer to purchase the country? It would be a valuable acquisition to this Settlement; and we fancy the royal family of Perak would be delighted to get rid of it at any price.<sup>2</sup>

One year later, an attempt was, in fact, made to annex the Dindings. The reason for this move is not clear. Official reports of course claimed that it was because piracy was rife there.<sup>3</sup> Yet, even in such reports, the economic advantage of the move was clearly stressed. It was said, for example, that:

... directly my object was known, an official of rank from Kedah asked to join my party, offering to bring 2 or 300 followers to settle on the spot; numbers also volunteered from our own districts, and a large party from Kurow in Perak were, I heard, making preparations to follow me, while a considerable body from Batu Barah on the east coast of Sumatra intimated to their friends that they would join the settlement directly the

<sup>1</sup>See pp. 132-3.

<sup>2</sup>Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, p.723. Buckley failed to mention the source of his quotation.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/24, IO to CO, 4 Sept. 1868, Encl., Col. H. Man to Sec. to Govt. of India, 29 Feb. 1868. Col. Man wrote: 'In consequence of several petty piracies which had occurred along the Perak Coast, I proposed to our late Governor, General Cavenagh, that we should colonise the Dindings....'

British flag was hoisted. The above were all Malays, but the Chinese were equally ready to cast in their lot with us. A Chinaman, who has 4 or 500 coolies employed at the rich mines in Perak, volunteered to bring over the whole of his men to seek for tin within our limits, and an equal number to fell timber, and I had no doubt that within a month or so after landing I should have had at least 2,000 settlers on the new soil, and, if the hill had turned out fairly productive of tin, fully 3,000 within two or three years after founding the colony.<sup>1</sup>

A point to bear in mind is that at this time there was a serious shortage of land in Province Wellesley for cultivation. By 1860, the cultivated areas extended over about 70,000 acres, of which 41,000 were under padi, 10,000 under sugar-cane, 12,000 under coconut and the rest were divided among spice and fruit trees and tapioca.<sup>2</sup> Hence, many of the inhabitants of Province Wellesley were

... obliged to hire by the season paddy land beyond our frontier [especially in Krian]. As soon as they have prepared the soil and planted it, they return to their homes on our side, till the time of harvest approaches, when they visit their estates, reap the crops and return.<sup>3</sup>

It is not inconceivable therefore that the proposed annexation of the Dindings was intended to solve the problem of land shortage. From at least one source we learn that:

It is suspected in the Straits that the object of this acquisition is to please a wealthy planter who wants this plain for sugar or rice, and those who object to these proceedings say that he might as well apply directly to the Govt. of Perak instead of involving the Straits Govt. in this complication.<sup>4</sup>

When Governor Ord was confronted with the letter, he made no answer to the charge that the contemplated annexation was meant 'to please a wealthy planter' except to explain that '... the dangers and difficulties contemplated by Mr. Stanley have no existence, and that, on the contrary, very considerable advantages are likely to accrue to the Settlements therefrom'<sup>5</sup>

The name of the 'wealthy planter' was not mentioned but one may hazard a guess that it was Forbes Brown. He was, in 1867, a member

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>All the tapioca plantations there were almost entirely in the hands of two or three Europeans.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/24, IO to CO, 4 Sept. 1868, Encl., Col. H. Man to Sec. to Govt. of India, 29 Feb. 1868.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/35, H. Stanley to Granville, 26 April 1869.

<sup>5</sup>CMP, Sir A. Clarke to Kimberley, 24 Feb. 1874, Encl.3, Sir H. Ord to Granville, 14 July 1869.

of the Straits Legislative Council,<sup>1</sup> and a reliable source described him as 'The principal landowner and most important resident in Penang ... a particular friend of the Governor [Sir Harry Ord].'<sup>2</sup> It was also said of him that:

Besides the Glugor house—with its eighty-foot-long drawing room—and large Sugar Estates in the Province, Mr. Brown owned a charming place called Strawberry on Penang Hill. It was just below the Governor's bungalow and stood at a height of some eighteen hundred feet ....<sup>3</sup>

Although the suggestion to annex the Dindings was first made to Governor Cavenagh, it was Ord who, in 1867, really pushed the matter hard.<sup>4</sup> The attempt of course did not materialize because the Colonial Office then would not sanction any such policy. But the economic movement into the Peninsula continued to gain momentum.

### *Formation of Joint-Stock Companies: Genesis*

In view of the fact that in the late 1860s Straits merchants were inclined to form public companies to further their economic interests in the Peninsula, it would be useful here to make a rapid survey of the growth of such companies in Singapore—the centre from which almost all commercial endeavours radiated in this region.

The first merchants to set up business in Singapore established their stores and offices along the beach round the mouth of the Singapore River. Square-rigged vessels from various parts of the world anchored here. This was, therefore, the first commercial centre with a supplementary trading area for local craft at the junction of the Rochore and Kallang rivers. The greater part of the trade was done over Boat Quay where the major Singapore mercantile firms and commercial houses grew up. As the traffic of the port increased, congestion at the mouth of the river became the subject of frequent complaints by the 1840s. But the possibility of a substitute for the river appeared remote, for none of the important firms was prepared to move elsewhere.

The advent of steam vessels brought new problems. The need for

<sup>1</sup>Parkinson, *British Intervention in the Malay States 1867-77*, p.19.

<sup>2</sup>Swettenham, *Footprints in Malaya*, p.22.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>For more details, see *CMP*, Sir A. Clarke to Kimberley 24 Feb. 1874, Encl.1, Skinner's *Precis of Perak Affairs*, 10 Jan. 1874; Winstedt & Wilkinson, 'A History of Perak', p.77.

deep water and coaling depots became evident and the P. & O. Co.<sup>1</sup> were the first to see the advantage that would accrue to them from building a wharf in New Harbour and coaling their boats there. They bought land (about three miles from town) from Temenggong Ibrahim and established their wharves in 1852. By means of these wharves they were able also, at various times, to render services to the British Government, as for instance, in coaling the transports during the Indian Mutiny and the China War (1859).<sup>2</sup>

During the next ten years, other firms joined them in this area. Jardine, Matheson & Co., who ran Opium Steamers to China, erected wharves for the coaling of their own steamers about 2½ miles from town. On the immediately adjoining land, the Borneo Co. continued the line of wharves and constructed sheds for the accommodation of their trade in coal. Between 1855 and 1859, Capt. William Cloughton, who had previously commanded one of the famous Apear Line (Calcutta) of opium schooners, endeavoured to build a Graving Dock with appliances for the repair of ships at the eastern end of New Harbour, over three miles from town. At the end of December 1861, a seven-year partnership was concluded between Cloughton, W. Paterson, W. W. Ker and six others for the purpose of operating the dry dock and slip. The new company took the name of Patent Slip and Dock Co. The initial capital was Sp. \$130,000, subscribed in equal shares of \$100 each. Seventy-one of these shares were held by Paterson, Ker and H. M. Simons between them. The Patent Slip & Dock Co. enjoyed a monopoly of the trade and as their charges were very high, they derived a large profit from the undertaking.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The Peninsular & Orient Steam Navigation Co. This company was established in 1837 with a service between Great Britain and the Spanish Peninsula, extending to Alexandria in 1840. It began regular services between Bombay and Hongkong, via Point de Calle (Ceylon) and Singapore in Aug. 1845 and a feeder service from Singapore to Australia in 1853. (George Bogaars, 'The Tanjong Pagar Dock Company (1864-1905)', *Memoirs of the Raffles Museum*, No.3, Dec. 1956, p.119 n.5.)

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/54, Ker to Kimberley, 28 Feb. 1871, Encl., P.&O. Co. to Ker & Co., 28 Feb. 1871; CO 273/49, Anson to Kimberley, 23 Sept. 1871; C.O. 273/78, Tidman to Hope, 20 May 1874; Bogaars, op.cit. pp. 118-19.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/78, Tidman to Hope, 20 May 1874; C. A. Gibson-Hill, 'Singapore Old Strait and New Harbour', *Memoirs of the Raffles Museum*, no.3 Dec. 1956, pp. 102-3; Bogaars, p.119.

It was on 1 September 1863 that James Guthrie<sup>1</sup> called an informal meeting in his office to consider the possibility of floating the first major joint-stock company in Singapore<sup>2</sup> for the purpose of constructing and operating a patent slip, and perhaps later, a dry dock, in the vicinity of Tanjong Pagar. The estimated capital required was \$200,000. Public subscriptions were immediately called for and on the strength of the response, on 14 September 1863, a meeting of the subscribers took place. Thomas Scott<sup>3</sup> was appointed Secretary, while seven persons who had each agreed to take up twenty or more shares were appointed provisional directors. Plans were finally confirmed at a General Meeting of the subscribers held on 18 January 1864 when the proposal 'to form a Company under the Limited Liability Act for the carrying of the Undertaking with a Capital of

<sup>1</sup>The next notable merchant to land at Singapore, after A. L. Johnston, was Alexander Guthrie who arrived on 27 January 1821. He came from South Africa where he had been engaged in business with a certain Capt. Thomas Talbot Harrington, a merchant who had commercial interests in Malacca. He had not been happy serving as Harrington's subordinate at Capetown so he obtained from the East India Co. an indenture (10 April 1820) allowing him 'to proceed to any of the principal settlements ... in the East Indies there to reside for the transaction of the business of the house of Messrs. Harrington & Co'. In his own words, he arrived in Singapore with 'a considerable investment of British goods'. He soon realized that the best prospects for his business lay in the exchange of goods between Europe and the East. Hence he began 'to ship out the spices, nutmegs and pepper of the East and bring in the knives of Sheffield, the cotton goods of Lancashire and other substantial exports of Victorian England'. For two years, he traded in the name of Harrington & Co. But on 1 February 1823, after Captain Harrington had arrived in Singapore, Guthrie entered into a formal partnership with him. However, it lasted only eight months after which Guthrie took on another partner, James Clark, and the firm of Guthrie & Clark was formed in February 1824. Clark left Singapore in 1833 and since then the firm has been known as Messrs. Guthrie & Co. In 1829, Alexander was joined in the business by his nephew James Guthrie who became a full partner in 1837. Alexander left Singapore in 1847 and died in about 1865. James returned to England in the 1860s and died in about 1900. (See Loh Wen Fong, 'Singapore Agency Houses 1819-1900', pp. 7-9; Wright and Cartwright, *op.cit.* p.669).

<sup>2</sup>The first public company to be formed was probably the Singapore Joint-Stock Coffee Co. which was established in Oct. 1839 with the initiative of M. Le Dieu, a French resident of Singapore. The company envisaged a capital of \$10,000 and an annual revenue of \$2,488,320, but the venture failed. In October 1841, the plantation which had been acquired was sold at an auction (Buckley, p.339).

<sup>3</sup>Thomas Scott arrived in Singapore for the first time on 7 July 1851 in the British Barque *Coaxer* which left Liverpool on 16 February that year. After being in another business for a few months, he joined Guthrie & Co. as a clerk but rose to become a partner in 1857. He married the daughter of Major McNair, the Colonial Engineer. In 1876 he founded the branch of Scott & Co. in London. For many years, prior to his death on 28 June 1902, he was head of the firm of Guthrie & Co. (Buckley, pp. 550-1.)

\$200,000 in 2,000 shares of \$100 each' was approved. With that, the Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. was born.<sup>1</sup>

There were early difficulties and the first line of wharves was completed only in August 1866<sup>2</sup> and the graving dock was formally opened on 17 October 1868.<sup>3</sup> One of the company's major problems was the acquisition of capital. The cost of the project had been much more than expected. Even before 1866, the capital had been raised from \$200,000 to \$300,000. At an Extraordinary General Meeting held on 8 March 1866, John James Greenshields,<sup>4</sup> one of the major shareholders, proposed that the capital should be moved to \$600,000.<sup>5</sup> Such a step being unavoidable, the problem was resolved by offering the shares in London—the first intimation of London shareholders being publicly known after an Extraordinary General Meeting of the company held in July 1869. The idea had apparently originated from the company's Agents in London—Messrs. Mactaggart, Tidman & Co. who were also 'large shareholders in London'.<sup>6</sup>

Although the success of the Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. was, until the opening of the Suez Canal, open to conjecture, it established an important precedent when it registered as a joint-stock company. Prior to 1864, there was little inclination on the part of local merchants to adopt this form of commercial organization. The Patent Slip & Dock Co. had been a partnership enterprise. The Singapore Gas Company and other joint-stock companies which were in existence in the colony then were foreign companies whose shareholders did not reside there. Money did not go into public companies in the past because the chief businessmen there were mainly Europeans whose interests were centred on either Europe or their own mercantile houses. Wealthy local residents were more inclined to participate in individual concerns or partnerships with prospects of quick returns than in public bodies paying small, though steady, dividends.<sup>7</sup>

The rivalry which ensued between the new Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. and the Patent Slip & Dock Co., which had monopolized trade

<sup>1</sup>Gibson-Hill, 'Singapore Old Strait and New Harbour', pp.106-7; Bogaars, p. 121. <sup>2</sup>Bogaars, p. 131. <sup>3</sup>Wright & Cartwright, p. 184.

<sup>4</sup>J. J. Greenshields was one of the outstanding mercantile personalities in Singapore. He became a partner in Guthrie & Co. in 1849 and participated actively in public affairs in Singapore. (See Buckley, pp. 135-6 & *passim*).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 499.

<sup>6</sup>Bogaars, p. 157. <sup>7</sup>Ibid.



before 1864, undoubtedly provided an excellent indication to the Singapore mercantile world the overwhelming advantage that could be derived from the formation of public concerns, for, although the Patent Slip & Dock Co. desperately reduced their rates for docking from \$1,000 to \$75, they still found the situation to be so unfavourable that they had to propose an amalgamation with the Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. which was, however, rejected.<sup>1</sup>

The fact that Tanjong Pagar was only about one mile from town gave the company a distinct advantage over Patent Slip & Dock Co., located more than three miles away, but the more important factors contributing to their success were, firstly, they were the only public wharfingers in the colony and they had no private mercantile interests to compete with the public convenience; and secondly, the extent of the proprietary, which embraced most of the principal Europeans as well as the Asians in the settlement. Hence, the Straits Governor commented in 1871:

The Patent Slip & Dock Co. is principally engaged in the docking and repairing of ships and although possessing extensive wharfage and warehouse accommodation yet being in the hands of a private firm does not and cannot be expected to enjoy so great a share of the public favor as the Tanjong Pagar the proprietors of which consisted of nearly all the leading merchants in the Settlement who naturally employ the concern to which they are interested.<sup>2</sup>

The trend towards the formation of public companies had, in fact, begun, for no sooner was Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. established than a scheme was set on foot to erect a screw pile pier at the town of Singapore. It was designed to accommodate the discharge and loading of large vessels and was, therefore, aimed at centering trade in the vicinity of the town. It would doubtless prove seriously detrimental to the interests of the Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. Applications for the right to construct the proposed Iron Screw Pile Pier were made on 28 July 1865. If Guthrie & Co. had taken the initiative in the formation of the Tanjong Pagar Dock Co., in this other instance, the lead was provided by Johnston & Co. and Paterson, Simons & Co., for the leading promoters were H. M. Simons and W. H. Read who were joined by Whampoa and a certain E. J. Leveson. The proposed public company was to have a capital of \$200,000.<sup>3</sup> For reasons

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/54, Mactaggart, Tidman & Co. to Kimberley, 23 Feb, 1871.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/55, Ord to Kimberley, 19 May 1871.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/54, Mactaggart, Tidman & Co. to Kimberley, 23 Feb. 1871 with encls. and 24 Feb. 1871, encl., W. H. Read & others to Cavenagh, 28 July 1865.

not known, the project failed to materialize and H. M. Simons immediately withdrew from the scheme.<sup>1</sup>

The succeeding attempts to form public companies were aimed at establishing a railway connexion between the town and New Harbour. The Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. had originally proposed such a line which was to pass through each of the five companies lined up along New Harbour. The plans were prepared by their own engineer, W. J. Du Port, and the concession based upon them was promised by Governor Cavenagh to C. H. H. Wilson, secretary of the proposed railway company and manager of the Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. But the rivalry between Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. and the Patent Slip & Dock Co. prevented any possibility of a co-operative effort to effect the construction of such a railway.<sup>2</sup>

Patent Slip & Dock Co. then prepared its own railway project to connect its dock with the town, allowing only a branch line in Tanjong Pagar.<sup>3</sup> This was an ambitious project based on a scheme first conceived in 1862 by G. C. Colleyer, for many years Chief Engineer of the Straits Settlements, which envisaged not only the linking of New Harbour with the town but also an extension of the railway via Tanglin to Tanjong Putri (now Johor Bahru).<sup>4</sup> This obviously would go a long way towards facilitating the export trade of Paterson, Simons & Co. from Johor.

As the project was planned also with the view of providing effective competition to the Tanjong Pagar Dock Co., it was to be a public company, and the major portion of the funds were to be derived from London. The name proposed was the Singapore and New Harbour Railway Co. Its Prospectus, printed in 1866, revealed that its registered office was to be in England; its solicitors, Messrs. Kimber & Ellis of 79, Lombard Street, London; and its engineer, Charles Douglas Fox of 6, Delahay St., Westminster. The proposed capital was £40,000 in shares of £10 each. But, the Prospectus contained no information about the Board of Directors.<sup>5</sup>

Before the plans could mature, owing probably to the widespread depression,<sup>6</sup> the Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. countered with a proposed railway company to be called the Singapore Railway Co. with the

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/54, Mactaggart, Tidman & Co. to Kimberley, 31 Oct. 1871.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/54, Mactaggart, Tidman & Co. to Kimberley, 23 Feb. 1871 with encls.; Ker to Kimberley, 14 Feb. 1871, with encls.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/78, Tidman to B. Hope, 20 May 1874.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/54, Ker to Kimberley, 14 Feb. 1871 (with encls.) & 26 Jan. 1872.

<sup>5</sup>CO 273/54, Ker to Kimberley, 14 Feb. 1871 with encls.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

object of connecting their property with the town. It was also to be a joint-stock company with a capital of £20,000 to be subscribed at £10 per share. It was officially announced on 20 June 1870, and by March 1871 the required capital had been fully subscribed, showing once more the influence and strength of the company. The names of the subscribers presented to the government provide a useful clue as to who some of the Tanjong Pagar shareholders were. The largest shares were held by Edward Boustead and James Guthrie (180 each), both of whom were then resident in England. Among the Singapore merchants, those who held shares were: Whampoa (15), Joaquim de Almeida (10), Thomas Scott (10), W. Mansfield (20),<sup>1</sup> A. Velge (10), Leack, Chin Seng & Co. (20), Tan Seng Poh (10), Lee Cheng Tee (10),<sup>2</sup> Cheang Hong Lim (10), and R. C. Woods (10).<sup>3</sup> Thomas Scott, Whampoa and W. Mansfield were among the provisional Directors. Again, the rivalry between the two powerful commercial factions in Singapore exploded into a major issue with appeals being made to the Colonial Office. The result was that neither party succeeded in its scheme.<sup>4</sup>

What deserves particular attention, however, is that several members of the Tanjong Pagar group were, at some time in the nineteenth century, directly or indirectly connected with commercial or mining activities in the Malay states.

<sup>1</sup>Walter Mansfield came to Singapore in 1861 and was in business as a ship chandler (1864) in Collyer Quay. In 1868, Mansfield & Co. comprised Richard J. Wright and W. Mansfield. In 1872, the partners of the firm were W. Mansfield and George J. Mansfield. Even before 1872, the firm was appointed agents for the Ocean Steam Ship Co. Ltd. W. Mansfield died in 1873 in London. George Mansfield was joined by T. C. Bogaard and the firm opened a branch in Penang in 1876. George himself retired in 1886. (Makepeace et al., *One Hundred Years of Singapore*, p. 206; Wright & Cartwright, p. 177).

<sup>2</sup>Brother-in-law of Tan Kim Cheng and business partner of Tan Seng Poh. (See Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, p. 165.)

<sup>3</sup>Born on 31 December 1816 and went to Bombay in 1840 where he practised law and wrote chiefly for the press. In 1899, W. H. Read wrote: 'Woods was a broken-down lawyer in Bombay, who married a European 'house-keeper' of a Parsi and got paid for it'. He arrived in Singapore in 1845 and 'was engaged by John Henry and Mark Moss [a firm of auctioneers] to take the place of Edwards, a half darkey but a clever fellow and the *Straits Times* was then started'. (See *Singapore Free Press*, 30 June 1899). In 1849, Woods was admitted a Law Agent in Singapore; in 1863 he was called to Bar at Gray's Inn. He entered into partnership with J. G. Davidson and they 'acquired a large native clientels'. In 1870 he acted as Attorney-General and in 1875, as Senior Puisne Judge. But in the same year, he passed away. (See, Makepeace et al., pp. 198-200; Buckley, *passim*.)

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/46, Anson to Kimberley, 25 April 1871 with encls.

*Joint-Stock Companies and the Peninsula*

At a time when leading Singapore mercantilists were actively engaged in attempts to establish larger and more elaborate business organizations, it is not surprising that such efforts were extended to the Malay Peninsula. When Patent Slip & Dock Co. attempted to launch its railway project to establish a link between New Harbour and Tanjong Putri, it had, in fact, a much more elaborate scheme in mind. For, almost simultaneously, the Maharaja of Johor (Abu Bakar), doubtless under the advice of Paterson, Simons & Co., began the construction of a railway line between Tanjong Putri and Gunong Pulai. In 1872, Cavenagh in a letter to Collyer, said:

There can be little doubt that the whole of the trade with Johore would eventually traverse this route [proposed Singapore-Johor railway], as, independent of the loss of time, there is always great risk of loss of property by petty pilfering in transporting Produce &c. any distance by Native boats. Even in conveying goods from the warehouses to the shipping in the Roadstead there is considerable expense and waste, ... and it is not unreasonable to suppose that when the Railway is completed, most of this would be saved, as there would now be a continuous line of Quays constructed along the whole length of New Harbour and merchandise would then be unshipped and shipped almost direct to and from the Railway Trucks.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, in 1872, Patent Slip & Dock Co. was still pursuing the railway scheme. In October that year, an old business associate of Ker's, William Napier,<sup>2</sup> called at the Colonial Office and left with Herbert, the Permanent Under-Secretary, the tracing of a railway which was to traverse the whole of Johor in a north-south direction with the northern terminus at Malacca and the southern terminus at Singapore. The line was said to be already under construction.<sup>3</sup> This was no doubt a reference to the Tanjong Putri-Gunong Pulai

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/64, Ker to Kimberley, 4 April 1872, submitting Cavenagh's letter to Collyer dated 5 Feb. 1872.

<sup>2</sup>Napier was then President of the Straits Settlements Association in London. The proposed railway projects had also brought about a split among members of the Association. As the Tanjong Pagar group predominated in the Association, Napier had to act on his own personal capacity in attempting to persuade the Colonial Office to support the scheme proposed by Patent Slip & Dock Co. By 1872, however, the question was whether the Straits Government should, in the public interest, take over the construction of the railway linking New Harbour and the town. Tanjong Pagar Dock Co. had decided that such a railway was unnecessary. (CO 273/63, Boustead & others to Kimberley, 28 Mar. 1872; CO 273/63, Herbert's minute of 29 Oct. 1872 on P. & O. Co. to Kimberley, 23 Oct. 1872.)

<sup>3</sup>Herbert, expecting the Johor railway to materialize, remarked: 'Our civilisation is being outstripped in the East'. (Ibid.)

scheme. As Johor had its own saw-mills and it had exported railway sleepers to India in 1865, it could cheaply supply the materials needed.

The project, however, fell through, partly, perhaps, because of engineering difficulties, but mainly because white ants wrought havoc on the sleepers. It was not until 1890 that the first railway service was established in Johor, between Bandar Maharani (Muar) and Parit Jawa, a distance of nine miles.<sup>1</sup> It can be inferred that for Paterson, Simons & Co., railway communication between their wharves at New Harbour and Malacca would be important primarily because it could expedite the transportation of tin to Singapore.

An even more ambitious scheme for laying the foundations for the economic development of the Peninsula appeared in 1866. It was aimed at the construction of a telegraph through the Malay states connecting Rangoon with Singapore.

The earliest effort at establishing telegraph communication between Singapore and the neighbouring countries was made in the late 1850s when an electric telegraph cable was laid from Singapore to Batavia, providing the first link between India and Australia. The system, however, failed to work efficiently and by 1861-2, *The Singapore Review and Monthly Magazine*<sup>2</sup> was calling for a new line to be laid.

Its comments, in the light of subsequent events, may be taken as reflecting the urgency of the situation felt by at least an important section of the commercial classes in the Colony. The paper said:

The importance of telegraphic communication with Singapore, more especially since the late troubles in China, is daily becoming evident, and the failure of the submarine cable laid between that island and Java, more than twelve months since, having shown that no dependence can be placed and less expansive telegraph might be carried overland from Singapore to Rangoon, the latter being already in communication with India. The chiefs of the intervening countries, being in friendly relations with the British Government, would be found ready to give every assistance in the construction and protection of the line, were the Governor of the Straits and the chief British authority at Rangoon authorised to treat with them on the subject. This would also be a means of opening up those countries to commerce generally, as well as conducive to the welfare and civilization of the inhabitants. It is understood that the King of Siam has signified his wish for an extension of telegraph communication with Singapore, and connecting this with the French occupation of Saigon

<sup>1</sup>Sundram, 'Economic Development of Johore 1826-95', p. 15.

<sup>2</sup>For a brief note on this magazine, see Turnbull, 'Writings on British Malaya, 1786-1867', pp. 344-5, 396-7.

in Cochin-China, there would be little difficulty in continuing the line to China should such be considered advisable.<sup>1</sup>

By 1867, a proposed joint stock company called the Eastern Asia Telegraph Co. had been publicly announced. The initial capital required was £150,000 in shares of £10 each. The projected scheme envisaged a telegraph line from Rangoon to Singapore with a branch line across Siam and afterwards lines to Hong Kong in the north and Java and Australia to the south.<sup>2</sup> The list of Provisional Directors revealed that the leading Straits mercantilists were involved in the scheme. Leadership was provided by Paterson, Simons & Co. and A. L. Johnston & Co. Among the others in the forefront were J. J. Greenshields of Guthrie & Co., J. J. E. Brown of Brown & Co., Penang, Lawrence Nairne and Abraham Logan.<sup>3</sup> But, this was more than just a local effort. It was intended also to form a Board of Directors in London and all communications on the subject were to be directed to W. W. Ker then residing at Cannon Street, London. Also playing a leading role in the project in London was Seymour Clarke,<sup>4</sup> brother-in-law of W. H. Read. His main responsibility was to obtain official sanction and support for the scheme from the various government departments concerned. It is unnecessary to enter into the details of what he did in London. Suffice it to say that he had influence in official circles and was able to carry out his portion of the task smoothly.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Cited in Makepeace et al. pp. 149-50.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/24, IO to CO, 7 May 1868.

<sup>3</sup>Abraham Logan was born at Hatton Hall, Berwickshire on 31 August 1816. He subsequently practised as a Law Agent in Singapore for many years, first with his younger brother James Richardson who was born at the same place on 10 April 1819 and who arrived in the Straits in February 1839. In 1853 James went to Penang and Abraham practised alone for some years. James became the famous editor of the valuable *JIAEA*. In 1862 Abraham was joined by Thomas Braddell and the firm of Logan & Braddell was established. The partnership continued until 1867 when Braddell became Attorney-General. Abraham then gave up practice. For many years, he was proprietor and editor of the *Singapore Free Press* and was the Secretary of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce from its foundation in 1850 until 1868. Abraham left Singapore for Penang in 1869 and died there on 20 December 1873. His brother had died earlier, on 20 October 1869. (See Buckley, p. 379; Makepeace et al., pp. 197-8.)

<sup>4</sup>For a biographical sketch of Seymour Clarke, see D. MacIntyre, 'Britain's Intervention in Malaya: The Origin of Lord Kimberley's Instructions to Sir Andrew Clarke in 1873', *JSEAH*, vol.2, no.3, 1961; C. D. Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, p. 167 n.74. As the first Manager of the Great Western Railway (the pioneer of railways) and afterwards of the Great Northern Railway, he was a man of standing, and was acquainted with the Duke of Buckingham and Gladstone. It was said that Queen Victoria never liked to make a railway journey unless Clarke went with the train. (Buckley, p. 297.)

<sup>5</sup>See CO 273/25, Campbell Bussy of IO to H. S. Bryant of CO, 14 Sept. 1868.

At the local level, by 1866 Read and W. Paterson were able to secure concessions in Kedah, Selangor and Johor.<sup>1</sup> Selangor obviously presented no problem as Read had at that time farmed from Raja Abdullah the Klang territory. Johor was firmly under the influence of Paterson, Simons & Co. Concessions in Kedah were secured from Siam whose king, Mongkut, as has been mentioned, was a close friend of Read's. Perak, perhaps because of political disturbances, proved to be a problem which Read was not able to surmount until 1869.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, arrangements were made with the London Telegraph Construction & Maintenance Co. to construct the line from Moulmein to Singapore with branches from Tavoy to and through Bangkok, and from Malacca to Sumatra, there to join the line of telegraph then being constructed by the Dutch Government.<sup>3</sup> But, by about 1868, there arose a strong feeling on the part of the British public for submarine cables in lieu of land telegraph lines.<sup>4</sup>

By 1870, it was clear that the proposed telegraph scheme could not materialize. The London Telegraph Construction & Maintenance Co., preferring submarine telegraph, made a contract with the British Australia Telegraph Co. for the purpose of connecting Singapore, Java and Australia, with the line of telegraphic communication between England and Singapore to be provided by various companies, namely, the Falmouth, Gibraltar and Malta, the Malta and Alexandria, the British Indian, and the British Indian Extension Cables. Lord Monck was Chairman of the British Australia Telegraph Co. whose capital of £600,000 had all been subscribed by 1870.<sup>5</sup>

But, for Read and Seymore Clarke, the matter did not end there. In 1872, another telegraph project was proposed. The impetus was provided largely by the Eastern Governments of Australia which were anxious to have a second line to England.<sup>6</sup> The first was in the

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/23, CO to FO, 18 Jan. 1869; CO 273/78, S. Clarke to Carnarvon, 6 July 1874, Encl., S. Clarke to Derby, 23 Feb. 1874.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/76, Sir A. Clarke to Carnarvon, 10 Oct. 1874; Encl., Proceedings of Straits Legislative Council, 5 Oct. 1874.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/24, Treasury to CO, 17 Oct. 1868, Encl., Seymour Clarke to Treasury, 17 Sept. 1874; CO 273/34, FO to CO, 19 July 1869, Encl., S. Clarke to FO, 5 July 1869.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/63, FO to CO, 12 July 1872, Encl., S. Clarke to FO, 24 June 1872; C.O. 273/64, S. Clarke to CO, 23 July 1872.

<sup>5</sup>CO 273/42, FO to CO, 9 April 1870, Encl., Harris to Clarendon, 4 April, 1870; CO 273/43, British Australian Telegraph Co. to Granville, 26 Jan. 1870.

<sup>6</sup>CO 273/63, FO to CO, 12 July 1872, Encl., S. Clarke to E. Hammond, 24 June 1872.

hands of the Eastern Extension Australasia & China Telegraph Co.<sup>1</sup> This time the project also interested Messrs. Siemens, the telegraph contractors,<sup>2</sup> and the Directors of the Indo-European Telegraph Co. of London over whose lines all messages west of Karachi would pass.<sup>3</sup> Among the persons originally interested in the telegraph scheme, only Read and Seymour Clarke remained.

That the new project was a very large one is clear from the estimated cost of construction. The line from the British Indian frontier through the Peninsula to Singapore would cost approximately £150,000 while the second portion of the line to Australia would need a capital of about £1,000,000.<sup>4</sup>

The telegraph project was, in effect, one of two major schemes in which Read and Seymour Clarke were involved. For in 1873, Read and J. G. Davidson, a leading Singapore lawyer and nephew of James Guthrie, were preparing the way for the formation of a mining company, to be called the Selangor Tin Mining Co., with a nominal capital of £100,000.<sup>5</sup>

In March 1873, J. G. Davidson, in conjunction with a certain Count Charles de Gelors, secured from the Viceroy of Selangor, Tengku Kudin,

... full and irrevocable and exclusive License and authority, for the period of ten years, now next ensuing to search for, win, and work all Tin Mines, veins, lodes or deposits of stream or alluvial Tin, not now granted to, or occupied or worked by others in the Districts of Salangore proper, Klang and Bernam, within the Territory of Salangore.<sup>6</sup>

This projected company also had powerful backing. Apart from Seymour Clarke, who once again was given the responsibility of

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/78, John Pender to CO (n.d.), recd., 17 Nov. 1874.

<sup>2</sup>This was a large firm established by Werner, William and Carl Siemens at Carlton in Kent. In 1869, they constructed the telegraph line from Prussia to Teheran, a length of 2,750 miles. In 1874, they were to lay the Atlantic cable. (See CO 273/77, Crown Agents to CO, 14 Aug. 1874; Sir L. Stephens & Sir S. Lee (eds.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, London, 1940-50, pp. 240-44.)

<sup>3</sup>Read's telegraph scheme provided for the construction of some 4,500 miles of submarine cable and about 1,200 miles of land line. (CO 273/77, Crown Agents to CO, 14 Aug. 1874.)

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>CO 273/78, S. Clarke to Carnarvon, 6 July 1874, Encl., S. Clarke to Derby, 23 Feb. 1874. For a more lengthy treatment of this subject, see Khoo Kay Kim, 'The Origin of British Administration in Malaya', *JMBRAS*, vol.39, pt.1, 1966.

<sup>6</sup>CO 273/76, Sir A. Clarke to Carnarvon, 10 Oct. 1874; Round's Memo. of 19 Dec. 1874.

<sup>7</sup>For details, see CO 273/74, Messrs. Lambert & Co. to Kimberley, 25 June 1873; S. Clarke to Herbert, 18 July 1873; S. Clarke to Herbert, 6 Nov. 1873; CO 273/78, S. Clarke to Herbert, 7 Jan. 1874.



attempting to win official support for the scheme, the solicitors of the proposed company in London were the firm of Lambert, Burgin and Petch. Robert Petch of the firm was one of the provisional Directors. Among the others were M. G. Maclain (?) and Seth Arratoon Apcar, a leading businessman of London and Calcutta.<sup>1</sup>

However, both the telegraph and the mining projects failed to materialize. The reasons for their failure fall outside the scope of this study.<sup>2</sup> It is more important to note that there were still other commercial projects undertaken by leading Straits merchants at the beginning of the 1870s. In May 1872, the Dato' Klana of Sungai Ujong wrote to Governor Ord:

We would inform our friend that during the last month (Thulkaidah) we directed our son Tunku Sayed Abdulrahman entitled Laksamana Raja Laut to invite a gentleman named Henry Ferkil [Velge] Esq., one of our friend's people, to come into our country for we wanted to see Mr. Henry concerning the handing over of certain lands of ours within our dominions, the names of the portions of land to be handed over are as follows, of the 1st. *Setoh*, of the 2nd. *Sampadan*, of the 3rd. *Rajang* because he wished to work tin mines, and to search for gold and other things.<sup>3</sup>

A copy of the agreement drawn up between the Dato' Klana and Henry Velge was also sent to the Governor. Velge, in effect, was merely representing several speculators involved in that project. The result of the grant from the Dato' Klana was the formation of what was known as the Sungai Ujong Tin Mining Co. This was very much a local effort. Directors of the Company were R. C. Woods, W. B. Smith, S. Short and Whampoa.<sup>4</sup> The legal firm of Singapore, Woods

<sup>1</sup>Seth A. Apcar was the son of Arratoon Apcar. Arratoon, together with his brother, Gregory Apcar, founded the great Calcutta firm of Apcar & Co. in 1826. The firm had important interests in the opium trade in China. Seth was one of the four sons of Arratoon Apcar who became partners of the firm. He was doubtless an important figure in the commercial circle in England, for in 1871 he was one of the principal Directors of the Merchant Marine Insurance Co. Ltd. which had a capital of £1,000,000. Among the other Directors were Alexander Fairlie Cunningham (also Director of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway) and George Hay Donaldson (also Director of the English, Scottish and Australian Chartered Bank). (See *Cyclopedia of India*, Cyclopedia Publishing Coy., Calcutta, 1907, vol. 1, p. 250; CO 273/64, Ker & Co. to Kimberley, 31 July 1871, Encl., *The Singapore Daily Times*, 19 Aug. 1871).

<sup>2</sup>For further information see CO 273/82, Eastern Extension Australasia & China Telegraph Co. to CO, 1 Dec. 1875, Round's minute of 2 Dec. 1875; Wong Lin Ken, 'Western Enterprise and the Development of the Malayan Tin Industry to 1914', in C. D. Cowan (ed.), *The Economic Development of South-East Asia*, London, 1964, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, F7, Datu Klana Petra of Sungai Ujong to Sir Harry Ord, 14 May 1872.

<sup>4</sup>No information is available on Smith and Short.

and Davidson, acted as solicitors. Little else is known about this project except that the Company paid \$30,000 for the concessions.

A few weeks later, a second mining company was formed. This was the Chindaras<sup>1</sup> Gold Mining Co. Again, information is lacking. What is clear, however, is that, together with the Sungei Ujong Tin Mining Co., it was the outcome of Capt. Shaw's<sup>2</sup> encouragement. One person known to be associated with the Chenderas project was C. B. Buckley.<sup>3</sup> However, by the time British rule was established in Sungai Ujong in September 1874 the Sungei Ujong Tin Mining Co. was no longer in operation. The Chindaras Gold Mining Co. was also subsequently abandoned.<sup>4</sup>

The failure of all these undertakings in no way implies that at this time there was no substantial British investment in the Malay states. The evidence available gives little detail but it is nevertheless enlightening. The *Penang Gazette* of May 1871, for example, quoted Penang's Trade Returns for 1870 which, accounting for only the Penang-Peninsula trade, amounted to \$2,815,647. The paper commented 'This trade [with both Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula] is carried on principally by Chinese assisted by capital of European merchants.'<sup>5</sup> On 27 July 1872, the Malacca merchants addressed a letter to the Chairman of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce. They said, 'About twelve thousand Chinese Miners are now employed on the Klang River alone and they are mostly supported by British capital'.<sup>6</sup> The Secretary of the Chamber, J. G. Davidson, in submitting the letter to the Governor remarked, 'The statement in the letter regarding the trade with Klang is known to the Chamber to be substantially correct'.<sup>7</sup>

It is also known that at this stage certain European firms had commercial dealings with Ngah Ibrahim. Again details are wanting; but

<sup>1</sup>Newbold (*Political and Statistical Accounts &c.*, vol.II, p. 141), described Chenderas as 'a hill situated in Gominchi, a territory subject to the Panghulu of Johore'. Even in the 1830s, there were Chinese and Malay miners there. It was under the advice of the Maharaja of Johor that the Dato' Penghulu of Johor gave the concession to the Chindaras Gold Mining Co. (CO 273/126, Weld to Derby, 10 Jan. 1884.)

<sup>2</sup>Shaw was then Lieutenant-Governor of Malacca.

<sup>3</sup>See Swettenham Papers, item 72, 'Mr. Pickering's Journal, Singapore to Sungei Ujong (1874)'; entry: 30 Oct. 1874.

<sup>4</sup>See Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'; Chelliah, 'War in Negri Sembilan', App. A; Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, p. 142; Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, p. 36.

<sup>5</sup>CO 273/47, Anson to Kimberley, 3 June 1871, encl.2.

<sup>6</sup>CO 273/61, Ord to Kimberley, 6 Nov. 1872, encl.2.

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*

one such firm was Larraine, Gillespie & Co. of Penang which was one of the several creditors of Ngah Ibrahim,<sup>1</sup> and the other was Mansfield & Co. whose proprietor, W. Mansfield, Ngah Ibrahim named as his Agent.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, quite apart from serious attempts made to launch large-scale commercial projects for the development of the Peninsular economy, a great deal of Straits capital had been advanced to various parties in the hinterland. The failure and success of these ventures is not a material point within the context of this study. It is more important to note that at that time, the best means by which speculators could ensure the security of their investments, apart from the need to try to obtain more concrete support from the British Government, was to endeavour to come to terms with influential Malay chiefs and, if necessary, to play a positive role in attempting to safeguard the positions of such chiefs. It is within this context that the politics of the 1860s and early 1870s must be seen.

<sup>1</sup>*CMP*, Jervis to Carnarvon, 16 Oct. 1875, encl.6, Agreement made between Ngah Ibrahim and his creditors, 20 April 1875.

<sup>2</sup>*SSR*, F7, Mantri of Laroot to Col. Sec., SS, 24 June 1873.

### III

## POLITICS IN A NEW SETTING

SUCCESSION disputes and conflicts among members of the ruling elite had long been a feature of Malay politics. This does not mean that there was a complete absence of order in the traditional Malay society. The situation in all modern societies is, in fact, no different. It has been remarked that:

The FIRST characteristic of politics ... is the fact that it involves *conflict*—some form of struggle among human beings who are trying to realize different goals and opposing interests. Political conflict is not an unfortunate and temporary aberration from the norm of perfect co-operation and harmony. It stems from the very character of human life itself.<sup>1</sup>

The occurrence of power struggles in the 1860s and 1870s was, therefore, not an exception to the rule. But the subject cannot be so easily dismissed. For one thing, there is sometimes a tendency to view the events of the time as an indication that the Malay states were on the verge of collapse owing to internal decay. For example, it has been said that:

Subsequent to the dissolution of the Malacca Sultanate, the Malay political structure gradually disintegrated in the course of the centuries. In the 19th century, Malay society in the tin states had become so degenerate and unstable that there was no central authority in any of them capable of controlling or powerful enough to control the whole territory.<sup>2</sup>

To see the prevailing anarchy as merely the ultimate result of a long period of internal disintegration, however, is to ignore the presence of new turbulent elements in Malay politics in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

The stepping up of commercial ventures in the western Peninsula and the arrival of increasingly large numbers of Chinese miners since the 1850s were developments which had significant repercussions on Malay society. Admittedly, the general structure of Malay society was not unduly disturbed by the changing economic environment. But the developments of the mid-nineteenth century did contribute to the greater intensity of political turbulence in two distinct ways.

<sup>1</sup>Austin Ranney, *The Governing of Man*, New York, 1958, p.8. See also Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems &c.*, p.113.

<sup>2</sup>Wong Lin Ken, *The Malayan Tin Industry to 1914*, p.21.

Firstly, Malay political conflicts in the third quarter of the century, unlike those in earlier times, were perpetuated and fostered by financial support from vested interests in the Straits Settlements. Secondly, beginning from the 1860s, clashes between Chinese groups became more and more frequent. These were basically conflicts between territorial-dialect groups, and secret societies provided the means by which 'wars' were perpetrated. Within a decade, the conflicts of one ethnic group became merged with that of the other principally because all parties involved were fighting for control of economic resources. For the Malay chiefs, political control was the prerequisite to the acquisition of a substantial revenue. For the Chinese miners, who were dependent on Malay chiefs for the legal right to work tin-producing lands, it was important that the victorious Malay faction should be the one favourable to their interest. The same may be said of Straits merchants.

Therefore, it is evident that there was a tendency not only for various groups to form larger factions within each state in order to strengthen their positions, but also to seek support from beyond the state frontier. This eventually led to appeals to the Straits Government for concrete and positive support, which was a perfectly natural development considering that the British were clearly the strongest power in this area by that time. In other words, the setting had so radically changed by the third quarter of the century that the normal internal political struggles inevitably led to widespread disorder, and finally, to the collapse of the polity itself—a phenomenon which had not occurred in the past.

## GROWING DISORDER

Two factors which tended to give rise to disturbances were introduced into Malay society with the expansion of commercial and mining activities. Economic development meant an increase in revenue and this in itself became an element of conflict among members of the ruling class. There was equally fierce competition between rival commercial factions. The second turbulent element was the secret society, originally a revolutionary body aimed at the overthrow of the Manchu regime in China. It soon developed into a mutual aid society, especially among overseas Chinese communities, but it remained a militant organization, occasionally utilized for the preservation of peace but often for the perpetration of war. Added to the propensity for members of the Malay ruling class to engage in power struggles, these two new factors wrought havoc on the local society in the third quarter of the nineteenth century.

### *Secret Societies*

Chinese secret societies were established in this area almost as soon as Penang was established as a trading centre. It was said, for example, that '... in 1799, they set the administration in defiance and strong measures were necessary to reduce them to obedience'.<sup>1</sup> By 1825, at least three major secret societies had come into existence there, namely, the Ghee Hin, Ho Seng and Hai San.<sup>2</sup> The Cantonese<sup>3</sup> predominated in all the three societies. In later years, the Hokkien community, probably local-born, made a concerted attempt to check the overwhelming influence of the Cantonese groups. They assembled and founded a new society

<sup>1</sup>Newbold, *Political and Statistical Account &c.*, vol. I, p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>*The Burney Papers*, vol. 2, pt. 1, pp. 237-9, cited by M. L. Wynne, *Triad and Tabut*, Singapore, 1941, p. 73.

<sup>3</sup>This is a reference to the natives of Kwangtung province who called themselves *puntei* (local) people and therefore distinct from immigrant groups present in the same province, prominent among whom were the Hakka who originated from Central China and the Fook Lou who came from the Hokkien province. The native Cantonese were often referred to in Colonial Records as Macao Chinese.

called Kian Teik or more popularly known as Toa Peh Kong.<sup>1</sup>

In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the Hakka community also increased in number and they soon took control of the Hai San society.<sup>2</sup> By the 1860s, there were at least six major secret societies in Penang.<sup>3</sup> The Ghee Hin was numerically the strongest for, in 1867, they had a membership of about 25,000 in Penang and 15,000 in Province Wellesley.<sup>4</sup> About seven-tenths of the Cantonese were members of this society.<sup>5</sup> The Toa Peh Kong could command only about 7,000 followers in Penang and Province Wellesley.<sup>6</sup> The Hai San remained a Hakka society primarily while the Ho Seng admitted Malays, Portuguese, Indians and Jawi Pekan. There was, in addition, the Chin Chin, a Hokkien society formed as far back as 1826 also with the intention of counteracting the overbearing attitude of the Cantonese societies.<sup>7</sup> More important still, within the context of this study, was the Ho Hup Seah, described at that time as 'a recent off-shoot from the Ghee Hin'<sup>8</sup> comprising mainly San Neng<sup>9</sup> who were also actively engaged in the mining industry in Larut. In Province Wellesley, the Teochew had become a significant force and they were primarily members of the Ghee Hin.<sup>10</sup>

The year 1859 was a particularly troublesome one in Penang, for in late February there was a major outbreak between the Ghee Hin and the Toa Peh Kong in Jelutong, two miles south of the town. For

<sup>1</sup>In one of the society's letters for the information of the brethren and fellow members, it was stated: 'On the 21st day of 15th Moon of the year Kah Sin, being the 34th year of To Kong (30th December 1844) this combination was begun at Julutong in the Cocoonut plantation of Yew Hua, in the interior of it; and there it was that the Society was established'. (See PRCR, App.2.) It is likely that the society did not become a force until about ten years later for G. W. Earl, who had a great deal of personal experience of secret societies in Singapore and Malacca, said that when he became Magistrate of Police at Penang in early 1859, 'It soon came to my knowledge that a violent feud existed between the Ghee Hin Society and a rival Society called Toh Peh Kong (*a name perfectly new to me*) ....' (SSR, W34, G. W. Earl (Asst. Resident, Province Wellesley) to Sec. to Gov., SS, 9 May 1860.) Toa Peh Kong is the Chinese God of Prosperity—the patron of all Chinese merchants. (Lim Kean Chuan, 'The Chingay Procession', *British Malaya*, vol. II, no. 10, Feb. 1928, p. 283.)

<sup>2</sup>Anon., 'Notes on the Chinese in Pinang', *JIAEA*, vol. 8, 1854, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/32, Ord to Granville, 20 Dec. 1869, encl. 2, F. S. Brown's Report Upon the Secret Societies, 21 Aug. 1869.

<sup>4</sup>PRCR, Evidence no. 52, Lim Kay Fat.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. p. 46.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. Evidence no. 51, Lim Beng Kwa; Anon., 'Notes on the Chinese of Pinang', p. 16.

<sup>7</sup>W. Blythe, *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*, London, 1969, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup>F. S. Brown's Report Upon the Secret Societies, 21 Aug. 1869, op. cit.

<sup>9</sup>A district in the prefecture of Kongchow.

<sup>10</sup>F. S. Brown's Report Upon the Secret Societies, op. cit.

many days, many of the shops in town were closed. The immediate cause of the conflict was 'a most trivial dispute about a woman but such is the effect of the ties that bind those Societies, that the whole community became disturbed by their quarrels'.<sup>1</sup>

Jealousy was, in effect, the underlying cause of the trouble between the two societies, and this stemmed largely from commercial rivalry because the Toa Peh Kong consisted chiefly of merchants and traders 'who were closely connected in business transactions with the Europeans, their friends and dependents'. Their influence with the leading Penang Europeans excited the envy of the Ghee Hin.<sup>2</sup> This state of affairs had existed for a long time. According to the Resident Councillor (W. T. Lewis):

I may here state that the feelings between these two Hoeyes have for some years been inimical and was with difficulty kept from breaking out by old Appow the watchmaker who was recognised as the Head of the Ghee Hin Hoey and that since his death about seven months ago they have elected much younger and inexperienced men who are not so much respected by the Brotherhood. One of them elected as Chief is a Penang born named Oh Wee Kee and the other a Macao man, by trade a Goldsmith named Lee Coo Yin.<sup>3</sup>

But he added that 'feeling of rivalry ... exists more or less between every Hoey'.

On the all important Toa Peh Kong, Lewis said:

The Topay Kong hoey has not existed at Penang above 18 years and are estimated to be about 1,800 whereas the 'Tantaywah' [Tian Ti Hoey] being the Ghee Hin, Hysan and Hoh Siang [Ho Seng], who are all it is said under one and the same partisanship although acting in separate bodies are estimated to be in Penang and the Province about 13,000. It therefore must surprise us to find that such a great disproportion would venture to oppose the other, but the Topa Kongs are noted to be very quarrelsome and pugnacious, it is well known that with the exception of very few, the whole of the respectable merchants in the Town are members of the Topay Kong although they do not openly profess it.

A further point to note is that '... at Junk Ceylong, Rangoon and Moulmain the Topay Kongs exceed those of the 3 Hoeyes of Tantaywah's and that many quarrels in those mentioned places form the real cause and foundation of the quarrels at Penang'.

In September 1859, the Toa Peh Kong were again involved in a major outbreak of violence. The trouble first started in Junk Ceylon

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/3, Resident Councillor, Penang, to Gov. Blundell, 28 Feb. 1859.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, W34, G. W. Earl to Sec. to Gov., SS, 9 May 1860.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/3, Resident Councillor, Penang, to Gov. Blundell, 21 Mar. 1859.



and subsequently spread to Penang.<sup>1</sup> And in August 1867, the worst riot in the history of the settlement broke out between the Toa Peh Kong and the Ghee Hin. Again it was the extension of a conflict which had occurred in July that year at Bang Chiam, Tongkah.<sup>2</sup>

The Tian Ti Hoey was also the first secret society to be established at Malacca.<sup>3</sup> As happened elsewhere, it led to the birth of other societies. By 1834, the Ghee Hin and Hai San had been numerous represented among the Chinese. But it is significant to note that the Malacca-born Chinese who, until then alone formed the wealthy class of the Chinese population there, did not, at this stage, belong to these societies. They had societies of their own which were, primarily, of a religious character as their chief object was to combine in offering sacrifice to the manes of ancestors. Annual sacrifices were held outside the town and were very much of the nature of picnics affording an agreeable relaxation to the families of the society members. They had temples in secluded spots, one of which was located in Malacca Road. Secrecy was also one of the essentials of these local Chinese societies.

The period 1834-48 was an eventful one in the history of Malacca secret societies, in particular that of the Hai San. The discovery of tin mines at Kesang benefited members of this society and it gave them immense economic power and raised them, as it was pointed out in 1860, to 'a position which has never been reached by any other Chinese Secret Society in the Straits either before or since'.<sup>4</sup> So much prestige did they acquire that people of all classes became candidates for admission into the society which included not only members of the Malacca-born Chinese community, but also Malays, Boyanese and Indians. It was said that even some of the wealthy Malacca Eurasians were admitted.

By 1857, however, the Malacca Hai San had become reduced both in numbers and influence owing to the gradually declining yield of the Kesang mines. But, for many years subsequently, the Hai San

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/3, Resident Councillor, Penang, to Gov., SS, 2 Oct. 1859, encl., Robertson (Asst. Commissioner of Police) to Resident Councillor, n.d.

<sup>2</sup>Blythe, p.130. It has been erroneously assumed (see Wynne, p.249, and Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, pp.51-3) that 'The real dispute was in the Larut tin fields'.

<sup>3</sup>Wynne, pp. 78-9; Haji Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi, *Hikayat Abdullah*, vol. II, Singapore, 1960, p.220.

<sup>4</sup>Until 1905, the 3rd Cross Street in Malacca was known as *Hai San Kongsi Koi* (Hai San Kongsi Street). This was the only street in Malacca known to have the name of a Chinese secret society. (See H. W. Firmstone, 'Chinese names of Streets and Places in Singapore and Malay Peninsula', *JSBRAS*, no.42, 1905, pp.160-1).

continued to remain the most powerful *hoey* in Malacca.<sup>1</sup> In 1879, Malacca had five secret societies—Ghee Hin, Hai San, Ghee Boo, Hock Beng and Ho Seng.<sup>2</sup>

The Tian Ti Hoey was equally powerful in Singapore in the early 1820s. In those years, a very large number of Chinese entrenched themselves in the interior. Robberies and other dangerous activities were common. But since many of the secret society leaders were also engaged in trade, they soon shared in the prosperity of Singapore. Several of them became extremely wealthy. By the 1840s, numerous plantations had also been established in the interior. Agricultural development gradually brought roads deeper into the island. The result was that Singapore became a more settled place and criminal activities began to decline.<sup>3</sup>

The first leader of the Tian Ti Hoey in Singapore was Ho Ah Yam, a baker by trade. His immediate subordinate was Wee Choo Swee who became leader of the Triad after Ho Ah Yam's death in 1846. As in Penang, most of the early heads of the society were Cantonese. With the increase in Chinese population, there was dissatisfaction with the rule of the Cantonese headmen. Splinter societies emerged, the first of which must have been the Hai San.<sup>4</sup> Both Ho Ah Yam and Wee Choo Swee had endeavoured unsuccessfully to crush these subordinate *hoey*. Eventually, when the situation became critical, a general meeting of the Tian Ti Hoey was held, probably in the 1830s, when it was put forward that 'as the numbers of the various tribes had so increased as to somewhat hamper the action of the original Kongsí and also, that as the Members of each Sect were quite capable of holding out ruling their own assemblies, the Rulers thought the time had arrived when a division might be made with many advantages to both'. By this *coup de main* the division of the Triad formally took place. The heads of the original *kongsí* preserved the Cantonese section henceforth known as the Kong Foo Sew. But for a long time, no *hoey* could be created except by virtue of a warrant

<sup>1</sup>On the secret society situation in Malacca in the mid-nineteenth century, see SSR, W34, G. W. Earl to Sec. to Gov., SS, 9 May 1860.

<sup>2</sup>Wynne, p. 387.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, W34, G. W. Earl to Sec. to Gov., SS, 9 May 1860.

<sup>4</sup>The Hai San was suppressed in Singapore in 1883 on 'the strong recommendation of Pickering and Col. Dunlop'. Pickering spoke of this society as an 'incorrigible nuisance and a danger to the peace of the Colony'. The Hai San sent a petition to Lord Derby in which it was stated that 'At one time the only secret societies in Singapore were the Hye San and Ghee Hin'. (CO 273/121, Weld to Derby, 27 June 1883; encl., Hye San Petition to Sec. of State, n.d. See also Leon Comber, *Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*, New York, 1959, pp. 59, 69).

issuing from the headquarters of the Tian Ti Hoey at Lavender Street which also became the principal lodge of the Kong Foo Sew.<sup>1</sup> This seal, to be attached to such warrants, was even in 1869 in the possession of Ung Aun, the widow of Ho Ah Yam, also popularly known as *Toa Ko Soh* (eldest brother's wife). She received a fee for each warrant and something more for fixing the original seal to the document.

By the 1860s, there were no less than twelve major secret societies in Singapore. These were as follows:

Ghee Hin	Tai Beng
Ghee Hock	Ghee Law, also known as Muka Merah
Hock Hin	Ghee Han or 36
Sung Pak Kun	Ghee Soon or 48
Hai San	Chew Leong
Hin Beng	Keng Teik

After a major trial of strength in June 1868, the Tai Beng Hoey, Chew Leong Hoey and Ghee Law Hoey dissolved while the Ghee Han joined the Hock Hin and the Ghee Soon, the Ghee Hin.

At that time, the Ghee Hin in Singapore was a very large organization embracing five sub-divisions: the Cantonese Ghee Hin or Kong Foo Sew whose members were comparatively few; the Hokkien Ghee Hin, numerically very strong and though composed mainly of Hokkien admitted others; the Hakka Ghee Hin, sub-divided into two groups—Ghee Kee and Kong Hock; the Teochew Ghee Hin better known as Ghee Sin, an extremely large and strong group whose influence extended to Johor where the majority of the Chinese were Teochew; and the Hailam Ghee Hin which was the weakest of them all.

Of the remaining societies, among the most prominent was the Hock Hin, a predominantly Hokkien society possessed of considerable economic power and said to be the most wealthy of the Chinese *hoey*, for it had 'a large reserve fund with which it is enabled to transact a description of Banking business with its own Members such as discounting exchange in transmitting money to their Relatives in China, lending money on mortgage &c. &c'. The Hai San, at this stage, was weak and generally acted as allies to one or other of the other societies. The Sung Pak Kun, primarily a Hakka fraternity, had its headquarters at Sungai Ujong. It appeared to have

<sup>1</sup>Lavender Street in Singapore was widely known among the Chinese as *Goh Cho Toa Kongsi* (Big Kongsi in Rochore) which was a reference to the Triad headquarters. (Firmstone, pp. 104-5.)

been particularly antagonistic to the Hai San there. In January 1868, a gambling quarrel between these two societies in Sungai Ujong led to fighting in Singapore. The Hin Beng, composed entirely of Hokkien, was an insignificant group, but the Keng Teik Hoey, comprising originally only thirty-six members, was exclusive and powerful. Its main object was that of 'benevolence, charity and mutual assistance'. Its members consisted of leading Singapore merchants who were born in Malacca.<sup>1</sup>

In the Malay states, secret societies first emerged in the mining centres of Sungai Ujong, Lukut and Linggi in the 1820s. Here again, the first society to be established was the Tian Ti Hoey.<sup>2</sup> But the strength of the secret societies was not fully felt until about the mid-nineteenth century by which time Hai San influence was at its peak in Malacca. As mentioned earlier, the gradual closing of the Kesang mines saw a movement of Chinese miners to the neighbouring Malay states, and since the Kesang mines were controlled by members of the Hai San society, the influence of this society became firmly established in Sungai Ujong and Sungai Klang.

About this time Shin Onn or Shin Kap was appointed Kapitan of the Chinese in Sungai Ujong by the Dato' Klana (Sending). It is known that his son-in-law Lam Ma was a headman of the Hai San society, so was his *panglima*, Liu Ngim Kong. It can be inferred, therefore, that Kapitan Shin Onn himself was a member of that society.<sup>3</sup> Two other societies known to have existed there were the Ghee Hin and its offshoot, the Sung Pak Kun which actually had its headquarters in Sungai Ujong.<sup>4</sup>

In the Kuala Lumpur-Ampang area, the first Kapitan China, Hiu Siew, was a member of the Ghee Hin society, but his successor in 1862 was none other than Liu Ngim Kong, Kapitan Shin Onn's

<sup>1</sup>The account of the growth of secret societies in Singapore is based on a memorandum by Felix Henry Gottlieb who entered the Straits service on 1 April 1846 and rose to become the Chief Commissioner of the Court of Requests, Singapore, in December 1866. In April 1867 he was Acting Sitting Magistrate in that colony, while a few years earlier he had been appointed Acting Police Magistrate. It was while he was serving in that capacity that he began writing his memorandum on secret societies with 'the important assistance' of Ung Ah Chong, the Assistant Chinese Interpreter in the Magistrate Court. When submitting the document to the Governor, Gottlieb asked that it should be kept confidential 'as from the very nature of the information it contains, publicity might be attended with danger to myself, either judicially or otherwise'. (See CO 273/35, Gottlieb to CO, 28 Oct. 1869, with encls.)

<sup>2</sup>Haji Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munshi, vol. II, pp. 221, 226.

<sup>3</sup>Gullick, 'Kuala Lumpur 1880-95', App. A, p. 134; Letessier, 'Si Sen Ta, A Chinese Apotheosis'.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/35, Gottlieb to CO, 28 Oct. 1869.

*panglima*. From then onwards the Hai San grew in strength. Yap Ah Loy, who soon joined Kapitan Liu in Kuala Lumpur, was also a member of the same society. But in Kanching, where the majority of the miners were Kah Yeng Chew Hakka, the strongest societies were the Sung Pak Kun and Ghee Hin. However, the Hai San society was also present here.<sup>1</sup>

The pattern in Larut was basically similar with the Hai San and the Ghee Hin the dominant societies. The Chen Sang Hakka, the earliest Chinese miners in Larut, were members of the Hai San society. So great was the influence of this society that Long Jaafar himself was admitted a member. Following the death of Long Jaafar, sometime in 1858, the administration of Larut was, for a while, entrusted to his brother, Ngah Amat who, in turn, delegated authority to an adventurer Sheikh Mohamed Taib, who originated from Minangkabau.<sup>2</sup> Sheikh Mohamed, who was assisted by a certain Abdul Jabbar, also became a member of the Hai San society. Members of the Ghee Hin society, on the other hand, were made up largely of Fui Chew Hakka.<sup>3</sup>

As in the case of the Straits Settlements, the existence of various territorial-dialect groups, who in turn were clustered under the protective wings of distinct secret societies, constituted a latent cause of hostility among the immigrant Chinese, especially since they were then deeply conscious of their regional differences.

### *Disturbances in Negri Sembilan*

It has been shown that it was in the Sungai Linggi region that sustained commercial activities first developed, and this brought about a chain of political reactions as the territorial chiefs vied for a substantial share of the available revenue. Rivalry among other vested interests was equally intense. One episode which occurred in 1844 clearly illustrates this.

Mohamed Katas, the principal trader in tin to Malacca, had for many years sent the produce of his mines to Messrs. Neubronner &

<sup>1</sup>Gullick, 'Kuala Lumpur 1880-95', App. A, pp. 134-5.

<sup>2</sup>A description of him appeared in the *Penang Gazette* of 25 Oct. 1862: 'Che Mohamed Taib is a Menangkabau man and is said to be a renowned theologian—a fighting and trading saint. Adventurers of this stamp from Menangkabau still enjoy an influence amongst the Malays of other countries only secondary to that of the Arabs...' (cited by Wee Choon Siang, 'Ngah Ibrahim in Larut, 1858-1874', p. 19). He subsequently played an important role in the Klang War.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/5, Correspondence on the Larut Disturbances of 1861.

Co. In February 1844, a new firm by the name of Westerhout & Co. ventured into the tin trade. It was chiefly composed of a group of Chinese merchants who were associated with J. E. Westerhout, son of J. B. Westerhout, the Assistant Resident of Malacca. The firm endeavoured to persuade Katas to transfer to them a portion of the trade which Neubronner & Co. had, hitherto, enjoyed exclusively. J. B. Westerhout assisted the new firm by introducing Chee Yam Chuan, the head partner, to the Dato' Muda of Linggi. Westerhout & Co. was therefore given a share of this trade. But the Neubronners were equally influential for their brother-in-law, Thomas Lewis, was soon appointed Acting Resident Councillor of Malacca.<sup>1</sup> Lewis immediately wrote to Katas and 'the face of affairs again changed'. Of the Dato' Muda of Linggi, it was said: '... the poor Chief was sorely puzzled how to act without giving offence to one party or the other in power, and probably had some dread of bringing himself into collision with the Government'.<sup>2</sup>

Neubronner & Co.'s recovery of their initial advantage frustrated the Chinese. In August 1844, thirty-seven of them petitioned the Governor complaining that the clerk in the Marine Department, Joseph Neubronner, who also acted as Assistant Master Attendant, had interfered with the free trade of the port. Investigation showed that he was influencing local traders in favour of the firm run by his brothers. The petition brought to light the fact that practically 'The whole of the Government servants [were] more or less implicated'.<sup>3</sup> The Straits government then informed Dato' Muda Katas:

I have seen several letters addressed to my friend by Messrs. Neubronner & Co., Joseph Neubronner and Mr. Lewis regarding my friend's Trade in Tin to the Port of Malacca. I am also informed of the interview that Mr. Westerhout held with my friend at the mouth of the Linghy river in company with a Chinaman named Chi Yam Chuan ... and I therefore write to my friend to let him know that the Government Servants have nothing to do with the Trade, beyond affording it every protection and that my friend is at perfect liberty to trade with whomever he pleases without let, hindrance or Tax of any kind whatsoever.<sup>4</sup>

All parties were strongly admonished and Westerhout had to withdraw his son from the firm. But the matter did not end there. The competition between Neubronner & Co. and Chee Yam Chuan con-

<sup>1</sup>SSR, UIO, Gov. to Asst. Resident, P.W.I., 6 June 1844.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, R11, Singapore to Fort William, 28 Aug. 1844.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, UIO, Gov. to Acting Resident Councillor, 16 Aug. 1844; SSR, R11, Singapore to Fort William, 28 Aug. 1844.

<sup>4</sup>SSR, G5, Butterworth to Katas, 20 Aug. 1844.

tinued. The Chinese merchant exploited the already strained relationship between Klana Kawal and Dato' Muda Katas. The intrigues brought the two chiefs to the brink of war. Each was 'aided and abetted by the Firm of Messrs. Neubronner & Co. and Yam Chuan, with a view to obtain the monopoly of Tin from Lingey'. Arms were supplied to both parties. But by this time, Joseph Neubronner was no longer involved in the question so that when Katas appealed to him for assistance he was reminded that 'Mr. Joseph Neubronner is no longer in partnership with his Brothers who are only viewed by me in the same light as other Traders'.<sup>1</sup>

The death of Klana Kawal in about 1849<sup>2</sup> did not contribute to peace along Sungai Linggi, for several persons had stationed themselves along the river levying dues on the passing traffic. Probably the first to do so was Lebai Kulop<sup>3</sup> who was strongly stockaded at Simpang. His activities between 1848 and 1849 caused considerable alarm among Malacca traders.

In 1853, an attempt was made to establish an arrangement satisfactory to all parties interested in the tin trade: 'It was proposed to fix a uniform rate of ten per cent duty on tin alone, everything else, coming up and going down, to be free of duty, and to farm out the right of collection to a Malacca Chinese.' Lebai Kulop, however, refused to be a party to the proposed arrangement. Owing to his bold and determined character as well as the backing he enjoyed from Rembau, it was impossible to induce any solvent Malacca Chinese to come forward to purchase the farm.<sup>4</sup>

By 1855, apart from Lebai Kulop, three other persons had established themselves along Sungai Linggi—Dato' Kanda<sup>5</sup> at

<sup>1</sup>SSR, G5, Butterworth to Katas, 4 Aug. 1845; see also SSR, U11, Gov. to Resident Councillor, Malacca, 4 Aug. 1845.

<sup>2</sup>Gullick, 'Sungai Ujong', pp. 19, 34.

<sup>3</sup>Lebai Kulop was born in Rembau but settled at Linggi where he married a sister of Haji Mohamed Salleh, one of the *Waris Bandar*. He became antagonistic towards the Dato' Klana (Kawal) when four of his Chinese debtors were killed by some Sungai Ujong men, hence causing him to suffer a loss of about \$4,000. The Klana had promised to compensate him but failed to do so. The *lebai* had a second grievance against Sungai Ujong because his wife, Tabau, on going to Permatang Pasir to visit her relative (Dato' Muda Katas), was robbed of all her property in the boat and, in addition, outraged. Again he appealed in vain to the Dato' Klana for redress. Embittered, he decided to throw off all allegiance to Sungai Ujong. He established himself at Pengkalan Kempas where he levied duties on the Sungai Ujong trade in order to repay himself tenfold for his losses. Until his death in 1859 he effectively maintained himself on the river, notwithstanding determined efforts made by the Klana to dislodge him. He was fully supported by the Penghulu of Rembau with whom he probably shared his revenue. (See *GPMP*, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.').

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*      <sup>5</sup>He was the son of Dato' Bandar Haji Mohamed Salleh.

Pengkalan Kempas, Haji Mohamed Salleh<sup>1</sup> at Sungai Serban and Syed Ahman<sup>2</sup> at Bukit Tiga. Klana Sending,<sup>3</sup> unable to cope with these three persons who were also supported by Rembau, and troubled by the powerful Dato' Bandar, Kulop Tunggal,<sup>4</sup> continually turned to the British for assistance, a move which his successor, Syed Ahman, was to exploit even more fully and shrewdly to his own considerable benefit.<sup>5</sup>

Impatient of the situation along the Linggi which drastically reduced their profits from the Sungai Ujong tin trade, the Malacca merchants prevailed upon the Singapore Chamber of Commerce to ask the Straits Government for assistance in removing the toll collectors from Sungai Linggi, but in vain.<sup>6</sup> In August of the same year, taking advantage of Lebai Kulop's absence from Simpang, Klana Sending engaged an English schooner, with a European crew, to attack the stockade at Simpang. Dato' Kanda at Pengkalan

<sup>1</sup>He should be distinguished from the Dato' Bandar of the same name. He was the brother-in-law of Lebai Kulop with whom he had been at Simpang. Following a quarrel, he returned to Rembau where he remained for about a year. He then settled for a while at Bukit Tiga levying a duty on the passing traffic. By 1855, he appears to have moved to Sungai Serban leaving Bukit Tiga to Syed Ahman.

<sup>2</sup>His mother was the daughter of a former Klana and his father was Syed Ahmad, the brother of Syed Shaaban. It was said that he would have been appointed Klana in the 1820s but for the fact that he was then a youth and lacked support so that Kawal was able to displace him. But he had an opportunity to oust Kawal in 1848 when a Rawa uprising occurred. The Rawa, who originated from Sumatra, had long settled and traded in the Peninsula, establishing their headquarters at Pahang where they practically monopolized the trade. In Sungai Ujong too a considerable portion of the trade was in their hands. When Klana Kawal put to death three of them for an alleged offence, they rose against him, sending to Pahang for assistance. Syed Abdul Rahman (Ahman), who was then residing at Ulu Langat, was asked to assist the Rawa but he stipulated that if they were successful, they would have to help him become Dato' Klana. But the uprising was suppressed by about 1853. Syed Ahman, however, continued to occupy an important position in Sungai Ujong. He held the title of Laksamana Raja Laut under Klana Sending and in March 1873 succeeded Sending as the Dato' Klana of Sungai Ujong with full British backing. (See *GPMP*, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'; Abdullah Sultan, *op.cit.* p. 34.)

<sup>3</sup>He succeeded Klana Kawal between 1849 and 1850. No information is available on his background. As the Dato' Klana he relied heavily on Syed Ahman. He died in December 1872.

<sup>4</sup>Kulop Tunggal was the brother of Dato' Bandar Haji Mohamed Salleh whom he succeeded in 1845 or 1846. He was considered able and was certainly very wealthy. While he had money invested in about twenty mines, the Klana's interests were confined to only three or four mines. As a result of his wealth, he became highly influential and posed a threat to the authority of the Dato' Klana. (*GPMP*, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.')

<sup>5</sup>Gullick's remark in this connexion is interesting: 'If Dato' Bandar Tunggal had allied with the British instead of fighting them, another state might have been added to modern Negri Sembilan [in 1875].' (Gullick, 'Sungai Ujong', p.35).

<sup>6</sup>SSR, W21, Chamber of Commerce to Sec. to Govt., 7 May 1855.



Kempas also surrendered to the Klana. But his victory was in no way conclusive for in 1856 levies were re-imposed along the Linggi.<sup>1</sup>

In 1857, the Straits government decided to employ force to interfere with the activities of the toll-collectors, and for the subsequent three years comparative peace prevailed. Mining and trading activities once more increased in tempo, only to be shattered in 1860 by a major outbreak of hostility. The indirect cause of the conflict was the strained relationship which existed between Klana Sending and Dato' Bandar Tunggal. The latter had imposed a duty on the Linggi traffic, much to the consternation of Klana Sending. Not being sufficiently powerful to check the Dato' Bandar, the Klana called for the aid of the Penghulu of Rembau. Apparently, there was an established custom between Sungai Ujong and Rembau whereby if the ruler of one invited the ruler of the other into his territory to render advice or assistance, the invited ruler, for a time, assumed the government of the country. It appears that after the affair involving the Dato' Bandar had been settled,<sup>2</sup> the Penghulu of Rembau exercised his authority by demanding a share of the taxes on the Chinese miners. The situation was made more complex by the fact that the Yamtuan Besar (Raja Radin) had meanwhile moved to the village of Rasah where he also expected to obtain a share of the revenue imposed on the miners.

Klana Sending, joined by the Penghulu of Rembau and Sri Menanti, therefore, decided to levy an increased impost of about \$4,000 on the Chinese who previously had been required to pay a capitation tax of \$1 per person and certain fixed tolls and duties upon tin. The Chinese reacted violently despite attempts by both the Penghulu of Rembau and Klana Sending to restrain them. On 21 August 1860, severe fighting broke out between the two races. The Chinese who commenced the disturbances suffered a crushing defeat and had to flee for their lives. Of the 14,000 Chinese employed in the mines about 200 were put to death. Several others being addicted to opium were unable to endure hardship and therefore

<sup>1</sup>*GPMP*, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'

<sup>2</sup>How precisely the affair was settled is not known but in April 1860 the Dato' Bandar, who enjoyed the confidence of Malacca merchants, was, through intrigue, arrested in Malacca for debt and detained there for several months 'on a civil Process in a suit pending in the Court of Judicature'. (See *GPMP*, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c. '; Petition of Malacca traders to Cavenagh, Aug. 1860, cited in full in Chelliah, 'War in Negri Sembilan', App. B2. The petition was printed in the *Singapore Daily Times*, 27 Dec. 1873. The names of the petitioners, however, were not given.)

perished in the jungle. The rest, their houses and shops having been destroyed, took shelter in the adjoining states.<sup>1</sup>

Again Malacca merchants sent a petition to the Straits Governor. According to them:

Till lately, any stoppage or interruption of the trade has very seldom taken place, owing to the influence of the Datto Bandar or head of the trade at Sungie Oojong, who have invariably maintained order amongst the Chinese Miners ... and kept the communication down the river to Quallah Lingie open, and prevented any black mail, or other than the regular and customary dues being exacted on the amount of the Tin exported.

Your petitioners have therefore traded largely, in perfect confidence, with the Mining Districts beyond the British frontier but since the arrest of the Dattoo Bandar, now about six months ago ... considerable loss and damage to our trade has taken place by the river being closed and the communication stopped by the Datto Klana and other Chiefs of Sungie Oojong, who, taking advantage of the absence of the Dattoo Bandar, began to levy very high and oppressive imposts on all that went up and down the river, and ended by stopping the communication altogether, thereby raising immensely the prices of Tin at this Settlement and also the price of Rice and other goods at the Mining districts, where, now, we understand, Rice is almost at a famine price.<sup>2</sup>

It was further pointed out that so much was Malacca dependent on the tin trade of Sungai Ujong that should anything happen to hamper that trade, ruin would come upon many in Malacca.

The British authorities did not obtain compensation for the traders but tried to persuade Klana Sending to uphold his authority along the Linggi. The Klana, obviously aware of his own lack of power, expressed his desire to enter into a commercial treaty with the British government by which the British should undertake to guard the river on the condition of being allowed to levy a tax of 10 per cent upon all tin brought down from the mines. The Straits government was in general agreement with the proposal and in fact went a step further by suggesting that an Assistant British Resident be stationed at Linggi 'as a referee upon all matters appertaining to the commerce

<sup>1</sup>SSR, R38, Singapore to Fort William, 6 Oct. 1860; Letessier, *op.cit.*; *GPMP*, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'; Turnbull, 'The Origins of British Control in the Malay States before Colonial Rule', Bastin & Roolvink (eds.), pp. 176-7. Middlebrook (*op.cit.* pp. 15-16) spoke of a dispute in Sungai Ujong in 1860 between two Malay chiefs over ownership of certain tin produce, whereupon the Chinese divided into two groups, each attaching itself to one of the chiefs. This is incorrect. It may be mentioned that in this Sino-Malay clash, Yap Ah Loy was wounded in the thigh and subsequently nursed back to health by his friends.

<sup>2</sup>Chelliah, App. B(2).

between our Merchants and the Native traders' and that a strip of land at Simpang should be acquired as the site for a police station. Nothing however materialized. Nevertheless, by the end of 1860, the Chinese had returned to Sungai Ujong to begin work in the mines.<sup>1</sup>

Summing up the general political situation in Negri Sembilan at that time, the Straits Governor wrote:

Although the Rulers of the different States still occasionally meet for the discussion of any matter affecting their common interests, for some time past the Confederacy may be said to have ceased to exist and the late Eang de per Tuan [Raja Radin] who was also the Punghooloo of Sre Menante, exercised but little influence over the other Chiefs, his position indeed seems never to have been recognised by the British Government all correspondence with the various Chieftains having been conducted without any reference to this authority.<sup>2</sup>

This was slightly inaccurate in the sense that the dismemberment of Negri Sembilan did not take place until 1869.

### *Perak: Internal Dissension and Chinese Disturbances*

When Raja Abdullah succeeded Sultan Shahabuddin in 1851, he inherited all the tribulations experienced by his predecessor. Raja Ngah Jaafar, the new Raja Muda, was determined to displace the ruler. He was fully supported by Raja Ngah Ali, the new Bendahara who was also the son of Sultan Shahabuddin. By March 1853, Sultan Abdullah was forced to flee from his *istana* at Tanjong Sarang Dendang to take refuge with the Laksamana at Durian Sabatang. Repeatedly he appealed to the British for assistance. It appears that the Raja Muda was elevated to the throne and it was probably he who, in June 1854, wrote to the Straits Governor calling himself Sultan Safiuddin Muazam Shah.

From this time until the death of Sultan Abdullah at Durian Sabatang in 1857, the events are by no means clear. Apparently the British intervened on Sultan Abdullah's behalf to delay Raja Jaafar's ambition of becoming ruler.<sup>3</sup> But in 1857 Raja Jaafar was formally installed Yang-Di-Pertuan of Perak. Raja Ngah Ali became Raja Muda and

<sup>1</sup>SSR, R38, Singapore to Fort William, 6 Oct. 1860, 13 Oct. 1860 & 21 Nov. 1860; Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'

<sup>2</sup>SSR, R40, Singapore to Fort William, 16 May 1861.

<sup>3</sup>Winstedt and Wilkinson, 'A History of Perak', p.130.

the new Bendahara was Raja Ismail whose father hailed from Siak.<sup>1</sup>

Political re-shuffling was also taking place in Larut, traditionally under the jurisdiction of the Panglima Bukit Gantang. As Larut's revenue increased substantially Long Jaafar decided he should farm (*pajak*) the territory from the Panglima Bukit Gantang (Alang Allaidin) for an annual sum of \$125 which was well below what he could afford. More than that, he was dissatisfied with his limited control over the territory. He soon managed to persuade Raja Ngah Ali, son of the reigning but ineffective Sultan (Shahabuddin), to assist him in obtaining a grant (dated 6 November 1850) over the district of Larut. It does not appear that the Panglima offered any stiff resistance. Alang Allaidin, however, retained control over Kurau and his representative there was Penghulu Rejab. The uncertain political situation of the time must have caused Long Jaafar some concern for, a few years later, he found it necessary to obtain a fresh grant (dated 8 November 1856) from Raja Jaafar, the *de facto* ruler of Perak.<sup>2</sup>

Long Jaafar's administration of Larut was attended by political stability. But after his death, the situation deteriorated. The underlying cause was the dissension which grew between Sultan Jaafar and Raja Muda Ngah Ali in which Bendahara Ismail supported the Raja Muda who 'was a close friend and ally of this Raja ISMAIL, for the latter had been adopted by MARHUM SAFI-ULLAH [Sultan Shahabuddin] and his wife in their lifetime'.<sup>3</sup>

On 24 May 1858, Sultan Jaafar made a grant confirming Ngah Ibrahim, son of Long Jaafar, as the administrator of Larut which was to include Krian and Bagan Tiang. Subsequently, Sultan Jaafar changed his mind and made a move to reduce the authority of Long Jaafar's family by appointing Panglima Besar Mohamed Kasasi chief of Krian. Ngah Ibrahim and his uncle, Ngah Lamat, then induced Raja Ngah Ali to afford them his support so that they could oppose the authority of the Panglima Besar who, from the time of his appointment, prior to October 1859, until July 1860, was unable to collect the revenue of the territory entrusted to his charge. Krian

<sup>1</sup>Raja Ismail's mother was Raja Mandak, daughter of Sultan Ahmaddin. His father's name was Raja Syed Hitam. Raja Ismail had a sister who died young and he was married to Raja Fatimah, daughter of Raja Kechil Besar (Raja Daud). By her, he had two children, Raja Lop Ahmad and Raja Long Khadijah who became the wife of Raja Osman, son of Sultan Ali Inayat Shah. (Maxwell, 'The History of Perak from Native Sources' (1884), pp. 313, 317, 318.)

<sup>2</sup>See Wee Choon Siang, App. IIA.

<sup>3</sup>Maxwell, 'A History of Perak from Native Sources' (1884), p. 316.

was valuable then on account of its rice fields chiefly cultivated by peasants from Province Wellesley. Disturbances followed. Mohamed Kasasi tried in vain to obtain British support.

Raja Muda Ngah Ali and the Panglima Bukit Gantang also communicated with the Penang government stating that: '... the troubles in the Frontier were attributed to the undue interference of the Rajah [Sultan Jaafar] in having appointed Panglimah Besar to the Governorship of the Krian District contrary to established usage which vested the nomination to the named post in the Panglimah Bukit Gantang ....' They too sought British assistance. Matters were further complicated when certain Penang Chinese became involved in the Krian affair. A certain Khaw Choon Chee had farmed from Long Jaafar the right of felling timber on the Hijau and other feeders of Sungai Krian in the *hulu* for a period of three years commencing from 29 January 1859. When Mohamed Kasasi assumed charge of the district, he refused to recognize the agreement. Instead, he sold the farm to Chang Ngoon Tah, a Chinese jeweller of Penang who then sub-let it to some wood-cutters. Meanwhile, the transit of the timber down the river was stopped by Haji Osman, a partisan of Long Jaafar's relatives, acting also at the instigation of Khaw Koon Chee to whom he referred the sub-farmers on their applying to him for permission to remove their logs. The sub-farmers then turned to Khaw Koon Chee for a pass which was furnished on a promise being made that the usual dues would be paid.

But, at this stage, misunderstanding arose between Khaw Koon Chee and Haji Osman on matters relating to financial arrangements, and the Chinese merchant had to turn to the Penang government to help him recover the timber detained by Haji Osman in his stockade. A police force was sent to investigate. On 27 April 1860, they met the Panglima Besar at Nibong Tebal. Being a shrewd man, Mohamed Kasasi saw the advantage which was likely to accrue if he could persuade the police to accompany him to Haji Osman's stockade at the mouth of Sungai Semang, a small feeder of Sungai Krian. Robertson, Penang's Deputy Commissioner of Police, agreed, and as the group appeared, Haji Osman, under the impression that the British Government was supporting the Panglima Besar, resisted. A brief skirmish followed as a result of which the Penang police were forced to retire. Subsequently, a letter was sent to Sultan Jaafar from Penang which led to a promise from the Perak ruler to withdraw the Panglima Besar and depute an influential person to take charge

of the border districts.<sup>1</sup> However, Sultan Jaafar's own position was unstable for the political situation in Perak then was explosive. It was said that '... by a reference to any records it would almost appear as if a state of civil warfare might be deemed the normal condition of Perak'.<sup>2</sup>

Even before the Krian trouble had been fully settled, Sultan Jaafar had to face new problems. It has been mentioned that in 1861 he farmed the territory of Krian to W. T. Lewis. On 11 May 1861, Lewis went to Krian to settle 'the Ryots who had joined me for Paddy lands'. On 25 May 1861, Lewis received a letter from Raja Muda Ngah Ali:

I hear that our friend went to the Eang de Per Tuan of Perak for the purpose of farming Kreean and that the Eang de Per Tuan has granted it. It is on that account that I write. The Eang de Per Tuan himself can do nothing without my knowledge and that of the other Nobles as I am the Wakil of the Eang de Per Tuan and am his brother and his Successor to the Sovereignty of Perak with equal powers. Now the Yang de Per Tuan in this case has not consulted me nor even informed me of it and I in no account will consent to its being farmed to any person of another country.<sup>3</sup>

The Raja Muda proceeded to explain that he together with the Raja Bendahara had come to an agreement with the ruler to entrust the administration of Krian to Mohamed Kasasi. But in order to prevent dissension, it was arranged that the revenue of Krian should be shared between Mohamed Kasasi and Ngah Lamat because Long Jaafar, his brother and son together with Panglima Besar Mohamed Kasasi had spent a great deal of money to open up Krian. The Raja Muda emphasized: 'The seals given by us three to Panglimah Bessar has not been taken from him. We are therefore astonished at what the Eang de Per Tuan has done in farming these to my friend and that before matters are arranged my friend should have taken it.'

<sup>1</sup>The account of the Krian disturbances given here is based on Wee Choon Siang, pp. 4-9.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, R37, Singapore to Fort William, 6 July 1860.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, DD34, Resident Councillor to Sec. to Gov., SS, 22 June 1861, encl., Lewis to Resident Councillor, 19 June 1861, Document 5, Rajah Mudah to Lewis, recd. 25 May 1861.

The Straits Governor had earlier made similar observations on the position of the ruler in Perak: 'Although the Rajah is the only Chief recognised by us as having power in Perak, it would appear that this power is shared with the following great Officers of his Court, Rajah Mudah, Bindaharah, Orang Kaya Besar and Tumongong whose Seals are attached to the different Treaties, the first mentioned is the Heir Apparent to the throne, an elective and not hereditary post, though the chosen is limited to members of the Royal Family.' (SSR, R40, Singapore to Fort William, 14 May 1861.)

However, it is clear that Sultan Jaafar had not fully acquiesced in the arrangement. He had hoped that the Panglima Besar would serve his interest. But the difficulties which Mohamed Kasasi faced compelled him to come to a compromise with the other party. Sultan Jaafar expressed his ire to Lewis who in turn wrote to the Resident Councillor:

The Eang De Per Tuan complained to me and was furious about the infamous conduct of Panglimah Bessar, he alluded to the several letters he had written to the Governor and the Resident Councillor of Penang regarding the man ... by which it would seem that great confidence had been placed on him; but that he now found instead of opposing his rebellious subjects and collecting the revenues of Kreean (of which he had not sent him a single dollar) he (the Panglimah Bessar) had joined the opposing party at Laroot that he had sent for him and would immediately punish him and take all authority from him.<sup>1</sup>

Lewis attempted to introduce an armed party to support the cultivators against Sultan Jaafar's opponents. But the Penang authorities, anxious to avoid complications, discouraged him. Meanwhile, it was reported that:

... the Native Chiefs are ... at the capital [Pasir Panjang Indra Mulia] holding a consultation on the iang de pertuan's conduct in leasing a large tract of the country to Mr. Lewis without their consent and I have been well assured that the conference is likely to end in the Rajah's deposition as he has but little real power in the country.<sup>2</sup>

Faced with such overwhelming odds, Sultan Jaafar wisely decided to bow to the wishes of his *orang besar-besar*. At a moment's notice, he cancelled the Krian lease without offering any compensation to Lewis. In doing so, he saved his own position.<sup>3</sup>

However, this was by no means the only trouble in the northern region of Perak in 1861. Of a more disturbing nature, because it was to lead in subsequent years to open warfare, was the rivalry between the Chen Sang and Fui Chew miners of Larut which, by July that year, had reached a point when the two major factions found it increasingly difficult to tolerate each other's existence.

A dispute soon arose over a water-course so necessary for the working of the mines. In the beginning, it involved a Chen Sang (Hai San) miner, Yang Kew, and a Fui Chew (Ghee Hin) miner,

<sup>1</sup>SSR, DD34, Resident Councillor to Sec. to Gov., SS, 22 June 1861, encl., W. T. Lewis to Resident Councillor, 19 June 1861.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, DD34, Resident Councillor to Sec. to Gov., SS, 24 July 1861.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/15, Correspondence on the Larut Disturbances: Resident Councillor to Deputy Sec. to Gov., SS, 2 April 1863; Wee Choon Siang, pp. 11-13.

Ah Hin.<sup>1</sup> The result was that the Chen Sang took advantage of their numerical strength to attack the Fui Chew. Hardly any resistance was offered by the Fui Chew. One of them, a certain Li Yiang Ong, was killed, and the remainder, about a thousand in number, fled in terror to take refuge in the Malay village of Permatang (or Matang). Although they were not bodily harmed there, they were left without food or shelter. Sheikh Mohamed Taib was indifferent to them. When news reached leaders of the Ghee Hin in Penang,<sup>2</sup> appeals were made to the British Government for assistance to secure compensation for losses incurred. The partisan stand of Ngah Lamat, Sheikh Mohamed Taib and Abdul Jabbar was used as the principal argument to compel Sultan Jaafar, as the supreme ruler of Perak, to provide financial redress for the Ghee Hin financiers and miners. As Sultan Jaafar and his representative, Laksamana Mohamed Amin, both failed to move, the *orang besar-besar* at Larut, two gunboats, the *Mohr* and the *Tonze*, and a screw steamer, the *Hooghly*, were used to blockade Sungai Larut.<sup>3</sup>

The blockade produced the desired result. On 11 May 1862, Sultan Jaafar wrote to Cavenagh:

As regards my friend's letter dated 28 April brought by Captain Warwick concerning the affairs in Larut, I am giving a late reply because I had to send for Ngah Ibrahim and he arrived within two or three days. I explained to him what had been arranged by my representative, the Laksamana, and my friend's representative regarding the sum of \$174,474 to be paid as compensation to the Ghee Hin Chinese. Ngah Ibrahim accepted the arrangement and undertook to settle the claims to my friend's satisfaction and I also confirmed the administration of Larut in the hands of Ngah Ibrahim who will have full authority to deal with all matters with the concurrence of the Laksamana.

It is hoped that my friend will give assistance and consideration to Ngah Ibrahim to help relieve him of the burden imposed by the blockade of the steam ships and also my friend will arrange so that the Laksamana may bring To' Ngah Ibrahim to meet the Resident Councillor of Penang so that the compensation may be paid up.<sup>4</sup>

In October 1862, Sheikh Mohamed Taib left Larut to take up a post

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/5, Correspondence on the Larut Disturbances: Petition of Leoh Ung, Chong Moye, Chong Ahan and Chin Chit Chong (elders of the Penang Hai San) to H. Man, n.d.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. C. B. Plunket to H. Man, 12 July 1861. The three principal leaders of the Penang Ghee Hin were Lee Coyin (Lee Koh Yin), Oh Wee Kee and Chan Chong Hong. (See also *PRCR*, evidence no.10, Lee Coyin.)

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. The Toa Peh Kong (Hokkien) threatened to hang some of the Ghee Hin if the English attacked Larut.

<sup>4</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), *Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim*, pp. 76-7.



in Pahang. Ngah Lamat retired to his home in Kuala Kangsar with an allowance of \$500 per month. He relinquished his authority over Larut but retained the district of Kubang Buaya.<sup>1</sup> This, however, did not mean that henceforth he no longer had any interest in Larut for the right to purchase tin from the mines and to resell it was vested in three farmers or monopolists, each of whom conducted his business through agents. Ngah Lamat was one of the monopolists and his agents were Che Musa and Che Lah.<sup>2</sup>

The return of peace in Larut did little to alter the tense political situation in Perak. The relationship between Sultan Jaafar and Raja Muda Ali, who was then residing in Kuala Kangsar,<sup>3</sup> became increasingly strained. Even in 1863, it was predicted that a fresh outbreak of hostility might occur in Perak at any time.<sup>4</sup>

On 23 October 1863, Ngah Ibrahim was granted the title of Orang Kaya Mentri, Perak.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, he received another grant which 'bestow Larut upon him: westwards as far as Krian, eastwards as far as the mouth of the Bruas river, thence to Bukit Berapit and towards the interior as far as the interior at the new mines [Klian Bahru]'. The document seems to have conferred very wide authority on Ngah Ibrahim:

We give the government of the aforesaid level country to this Orang Kaya Mentri, whether he acts well or ill, with all its subjects and soldiers, its lands and its waters, its timber and plants and rattans, its damar and shells, its mines, its hills and mountains, and its immigrants who are living there, whether they be Chinese or Dutch, with power to frame laws, and admit men to the Muhammadan religion, and to kill and to fine, and to receive criminals, and to give in marriage those who have no guardians, the Orang Kaya Mentri our Wakil can become their guardian.

Over all the things which we have stated in this document, we give notice that we have empowered the Orang Kaya Mantri to hold sway.

If we are in want of anything we shall look to no other source (for assistance) but the Orang Kaya Mantri only. Everyone who resides in the aforesaid province (i.e. Larut) must follow out and obey the orders and counsels of the Orang Kaya Mantri, for whatever the Orang Kaya Mantri does is done (as if) by our orders.

Moreover, be it known that if anyone goes to that country ... wanting anything there, we do (or can) not give them permission. We have given the government of all the aforesaid provinces to the Orang Kaya Mantri;

<sup>1</sup>Wee Choon Siang, pp. 21-2.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/15, Correspondence on the Larut Disturbances: Petition of Haji Mohamed Hussein and Sabudin to Col. H. Man, 13 Dec. 1864. No mention was made of the two other farmers.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Capt. Warwick to Capt. Wright, 13 May 1862.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. Resident Councillor, Penang, to Deputy Secretary to Gov., SS, 2 April 1863.

<sup>5</sup>Winstedt and Wilkinson, p. 81.

now, the Mantri shall rule (lit. give laws to) all the (aforenamed) provinces of Perak, inland as far as Baru (Kelian Baharu?), Southwards, northwards, westwards, and eastwards (as stated above). Let no one, by God's help, make disturbances or disown the Orang Kaya Mantri. If anyone makes disturbances or disowns (him) he commits a sin against God, and against Muhammad and against us.

By the grace of God, with the protection of the Prophet our revered ancestors (or, perhaps, by the graves of our ancestors) the former Sultans, to the man who does that we will mete out a full punishment: if he disowns (the Mantri) we will seize his property, if he resists him (the Mantri) we will kill him, so shall it be. We cannot alter what is written in this document sealed with our seal.<sup>1</sup>

However, on 31 March 1864, Sultan Jaafar made a fresh grant to Ngah Ibrahim which reduced the number of districts under the Mentri's control:

Moreover, we make known the boundaries of the province to be as follows: from Larut and Krian to Bagan Tiang, these are the boundaries, that is to say, these form the country of Larut, as far as Krian.

And on the sea coast towards the west as far as Tanjong Belanak: thence from Pasir Gedebu to the mouth of the Krian river; towards the interior all which marches with Kedah, and the government of our chief of the interior, following the boundaries of Krian as they are at present, the total (except) one river in Kurau given to an old subject of ours, the Panglima Bukit Gantang Seri Amar Diraja, his place will be bounded on the right and left by country under the government of his grandson, Ngah Ibrahim, as aforesaid, and thus there will be no dispute about either's boundaries.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the Fui Chew (Ghee Hin) miners in Larut had a great deal to complain about Ngah Ibrahim's administration. By 1863, he had increased the duty on tin from \$6 to \$20 per *bahara* plus one-tenth in kind.<sup>3</sup> The evidence indicates that the Ghee Hin miners alone took exception to this. Complaints were made to the Penang authorities who, while expressing dissatisfaction over the question of increased duty levied on tin, also harboured thoughts of interfering in Perak politics. It is beyond doubt that Penang merchants who had financial interests in the Larut and Perak trade were behind the move. Lawrence Nairne, for example, was officially asked to offer his opinion on the subject as a means of persuading those in authority to sanction an active policy. Among other things, he said:

I am of opinion that the trade of the Perak territory would be very great, if there were proper protection to the country and to the traders

<sup>1</sup>See Wee Choon Siang, App. II D.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. App. II E.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances: Resident Councillor, Penang, to Deputy Sec. to Gov., SS, 30 April 1863.

who visit the Country, and the exports of tin would be very considerably increased and a very large export trade might be expected in Gutta Percha, India rubber, Rattans and Timber of various kinds.<sup>1</sup>

In 1864, the Ghee Hin traders and miners, through their Law Agent, the well-known J. R. Logan,<sup>2</sup> were still making complaints to the Penang government who, in turn, urged Sultan Jaafar to play a more positive role in the administration of Larut. Pressure from Penang finally forced Ngah Ibrahim to reduce the duty on tin once more to \$6 per *bahara*. But he called together 40 miners of whom So Ah Cheong,<sup>3</sup> a Fui Chew headman, was one. They were informed that though the duty had been reduced,

... there were to be 12 charges to which the miners would be liable, namely, the fee to the Pawang for selecting a favorable place for the mines, the duty on smelting the tin refuse, the duty on clearing the forest, the duty on the iron spoons used in pouring the molten tin into the moulds, the duty on one chupa on each of the bags of tin sand, the rent of the land, the duty on the charcoal used, the duty on the overland transit of the tin from the mines to Kota, the transit duty from Kota to the store-house at Permatang, an increased duty on chandoo, an increased duty on rice, and a penalty on chandoo brought from the mines.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. Statement by Law Nairne, Penang, 18 April 1863.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/5, Larut Disturbances: Capt. G. Smart to Maj. H. Man, 12 April 1862.

<sup>3</sup>Also spelt So Ah Chiang and Soh Ah Tsoang.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances: J. R. Logan to Resident Councillor, Penang, 10 May 1864, enclosing statement by So Ah Cheong of Larut, tin miner and trader, 10 May 1864.

On the subject of the *pawang*, it is interesting to note that in about 1878, the principal *pawang* of Larut, Pak Hitam Dam, applied to W. E. Maxwell, then Assistant Resident of Perak, to reinstate him in the duties and privileges which he had enjoyed under the Orang Kaya Mentri and, before him, under Long Jaafar. Pak Hitam described the customary ceremonies and dues to be as follows. He had to visit all the mines from time to time especially those from which tin ore was being removed; if the daily output of tin suddenly decreased on any mine it was his task at once to repeat certain invocations (*puja*) to induce the tin ore to remain (*hendak di-puleh balik supaya jangan mengurung bijeh*). Once in two or three years it was necessary to carry out an important ceremony (*puja besar*) which involved the slaying of three buffaloes, and a great feast, the expense of which had to be borne by the *pawang*. On the day of the *puja besar* strict abstinence from work was enjoined on everyone in the district—no one might break ground or even pull up weeds or cut wood in the whole province. Further, no stranger whose home was three days' journey away, might enter one of the mines under a penalty of twenty-five dollars. The *pawang* was entitled to exact from the owners of mines a customary payment of one slab of tin (or about \$6.25 in cash) per annum for every sluice-box (*palong*) in use during the year. In any mine from which the tin-ore had not yet been removed it was strictly forbidden to wear shoes or to carry an umbrella; no Malay might wear a sarong. The Chinese miners adhered to these rules and submitted to the payments but since 1875 the *pawang* found that his income had considerably declined and he no longer held the same position as before. (See A. Hale, 'On Mines and Miners in Kinta, Perak', *JSTRAS*, no.16, 1885, pp. 306-7; notes by the editor, W. E. Maxwell).

*In lieu* of levying all these duties, Ngah Ibrahim was prepared to accept '60 catties on each bahar of tin of the value of \$15 (at the present market rate in Penang) in addition to the \$6 export duty'. But So Ah Cheong and the other miners refused to accept the terms without prior reference to Penang, pointing out that they had never paid any such dues, except one slab of tin annually as the land rent (*hasil tanah*) for each mine. Meanwhile, Ngah Ibrahim proceeded to levy once more a duty of \$20 per *bahara* of tin.<sup>1</sup>

The available documents indicate that Ngah Ibrahim probably had other arrangements with the Chen Sang (Hai San) miners. This is evident from Ibrahim's own description of his relationship with Law Ah Sam, leader of the Larut Hai San:

Law Ah Sam is the head of the Hysan Congsee, and farmed the tin mines at Larut from me.

He is the representative of the original settlers at the mines, and he had as farmer the management of them.

I have always protected this man. He paid me 8,000 dollars per mensem for the first six months he had the farm, after that the amount was raised to 10,000 dollars per mensem, but, further, the understanding was that should he make more than that sum he was to keep 1,000 dollars per mensem and pay the remainder over to me.<sup>2</sup>

No reference, however, was made to the subject of duties. Information from another source shows quite clearly that even the farmers had to pay duties for the tin exported. If the tin was sold in Larut itself, the farmer, not the buyer, was responsible for the payment of duties.<sup>3</sup>

It was further stated by Ngah Ibrahim that:

Law Ah Sam used to make the distribution of the allotments at the mines.

The clearing permit was issued by me to the miner.

Allotments vary from 8 to 20 orlongs in proportion to the number of coolies the miner employs.

The miner borrows the money either at Larut or Penang to pay for working his allotment.

It is not clear whether Law Ah Sam made allotments only to the miners whose representative he was or to all the Chinese miners in

<sup>1</sup>Statement by So Ah Cheong, 10 May 1864, *op.cit.* It appears that So Ah Cheong was the spokesman for the forty miners, hence they must all have been members of the Ghee Hin society.

<sup>2</sup>CMP, Sir A. Clarke to Kimberley, 24 Feb. 1874, encl.6, Statements made by the Tunku Mantri in reply to questions regarding affairs of Larut, before A. Neubronner, Acting Interpreter, 26 Aug. 1873.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances: Petition of Haji Mohd. Hussein and Sabudin to Col. H. Man, 13 Dec. 1864.

Larut. Whatever the arrangements, it is certain that Law Ah Sam and his Hai San adherents enjoyed more privileges than the other Chinese miners because both Long Jaafar and Ngah Ibrahim were allies, if not members, of the Hai San society.<sup>1</sup>

Just prior to June 1865, the composition of the Chinese population in Larut was as follows: in Klian Pauh, where there were about 100 shops, 70 to 80 belonged to the Chen Seng Hakka, about seven belonged to the Fui Chew Hakka, three to the Eng Teng Hokkien,<sup>2</sup> three to the Kah Yeng Chew, two to other groups of Hokkien and two to the Hai Lam. There were close to 4,000 people in the village, of which about 3,000 were miners and gardeners. In the neighbourhood there were about twenty mines belonging to the Chen Sang, three to the Fui Chew and another three to partnerships between the two groups of Hakka. There were also Chinese engaged in burning charcoal and other occupations. The charcoal-burners were probably Teochew. In Klian Bahru, all the shops there, about forty to fifty in number, belonged to the Fui Chew Hakka. The village had a population of about 2,200, of whom about 2,000 were engaged in mining, gardening and other occupations. In the neighbourhood there were about twenty mines, of which fifteen or sixteen belonged to the Fui Chew, three to the Chen Sang and only one was owned by a Hokkien.<sup>3</sup>

Ngah Ibrahim's policy of favouritism caused dissatisfaction among the Fui Chew Hakka. The political situation in Larut was therefore tense. At this juncture, on 20 March 1865, Sultan Jaafar passed away.<sup>4</sup> Already relationship between members of the ruling class had deteriorated rapidly. It was said that in 1864: 'Owing to the assassination of one of the Chiefs at the supposed instigation of another, the country of Perak is at present in a very disturbed state, and the breaking out of a civil war is almost hourly anticipated'.<sup>5</sup> The *orang besar-besar* killed was the Shahbandar and the person responsible was the Panglima Semaun who had the backing of Raja Bendahara Ismail. The incident brought about a sharp division

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Ibrahim wrote, '... ia [Ngah Ibrahim] masok bersetia dengan Kongsi Hysan demikian-lah ayah-nya pun kerana Kongsi itu kuat dan ramai orang-nya...' (Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 63.)

<sup>2</sup>Eng Teng was a district in the prefecture of Teng Chew, Hokkien.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances: Petition of Oh Wee Kee to Resident Councillor, Penang, 18 Oct. 1865; SSR, DD42, Resident Councillor to Sec. to Gov., SS, 28 June, encl., Affidavit of Loh Chong, June 1865.

<sup>4</sup>Wee Choon Siang, p. 29.

<sup>5</sup>CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances: Deputy Sec. to Gov., SS, to Sec. to Gov., India, 13 July 1864.

between the major chiefs in the *hulu* and those in the *hilir*, for, the Shahbandar's *pegangan* (holding) was located in the lower reaches of the Perak river while the Raja Bendahara was influential in the *hulu*.<sup>1</sup> While the tension was still high, Raja Muda Ali and Raja Abdullah (son of Sultan Jaafar) both made a bid for the throne. Until the end of 1865, no successor had yet been appointed. Whatever the outcome of the election, it was certain that Raja Bendahara Ismail would not be moved up to the office of Raja Muda. His position was weak because he was not fully a Perak *raja* and also because of his involvement in the killing of the Shahbandar.

At any rate, there was no outbreak of hostilities and by 25 January 1866, Raja Ali was able to inform the Straits Governor that he had been elected Yang Di-Pertuan of Perak and its dependencies.<sup>2</sup> Raja Ismail remained Raja Bendahara and Raja Abdullah was appointed the new Raja Muda. The fact that Raja Ismail, a close ally of Raja Ali's, was displaced by Raja Abdullah suggests that a successful attempt was made at compromise. It was believed that Raja Ali himself owed much of his success to the support of the wealthy Ngah Ibrahim.<sup>3</sup> And indeed, it was during one of Ibrahim's frequent visits to Sungai Perak at this stage that, for the second time, a major crisis occurred in Larut between the Chen Sang and Fui Chew Hakka.

On 16 June 1865, a quarrel arose in a Fui Chew gambling shop in Klian Pauh between a Fui Chew and a Chen Sang. In the words of an eye-witness, Loh Chong, who was an Eng Teng Hokkien from Beach Street, Penang:

Soon afterwards about 20 Cheng Siang men attacked the shop and at the same time the *tintongs* began to beat from house to house and after them the drums (*Gindang*) signals to call all the Cheng Siang men together. They assembled quickly in great numbers. I think 700 or 800 and in my presence seized and bound 3 or 4 Hwe Chiu men whom they found in the bazar. About 10 others were also taken and bound by them. They broke the doors and windows of 3 of the 7 Hwe Chiu shops at Klian Poh and many of the Hwe Chiu men there and in the neighbouring Klians took the alarm and fled to Klian Baru.<sup>4</sup>

On the morning of the 17th., about 1,000 Chen Sang men armed with muskets, knives, spears, shields and clubs attacked all the Fui Chew

<sup>1</sup>This incident is told at great length in F. Swettenham, *Malay Sketches*, London, 1895, Chapter XIII.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G6, Cavenagh to Sultan Ali Almakmal Inayat Shah, 28 Mar. 1866.

<sup>3</sup>Wee Choon Siang, p.30.

<sup>4</sup>SSR, DD42, Resident Councillor, Penang, to Sec. to Gov., SS, 28 June 1865, encl.1. Affidavit of Loh Chong, June 1865.

shops and mines in Klian Bahru. Throughout this time, the Malay *kerani* (clerk) and *mata-mata* (police) did not interfere to stop the fighting. Loh Chong and Lim Seng, another Hokkien, both merchants of Penang trading in Larut, fearing that the situation would worsen if the Fui Chew of Klian Bahru should retaliate, went over to the village to ask the head of the Fui Chew, Chong Chong, to restrain his people till the affair could be settled amicably. In Loh Chong's words: 'He agreed to this and asked me to get Lau Sam the head of the Cheng Siang to apply to the Raja for 200 Malays to keep the peace, 100 to be stationed at Klian Baru and 100 at Klian Poh. We returned to Klian Poh and told Lau Sam what Chong Chong had proposed.' Law Ah Sam then sought the Jemadar<sup>1</sup> at the *Balai* (police station) and asked that a Malay guard should be sent to keep peace pending negotiations. The Jemadar then went off to Permatang for orders. Soon afterwards, Abdul Jabbar, who was generally known as the Judge and Magistrate of Larut, and Che Pandak Leman, the Treasurer, arrived at the *Balai* followed, a few hours later, by about 200 armed Malays. About twenty to thirty of the armed guards were then sent to Klian Bahru; the rest were stationed at Klian Pauh. Abdul Jabbar then proclaimed that no Fui Chew should leave Klian Bahru and, at the same time, no one should take any provision to them. In the afternoon, a few Hokkien went up to Klian Pauh to try to settle the quarrel. They returned at about 9 o'clock at night with the news that the Fui Chew were willing to settle the matter and an agreement would be drawn up at 8 o'clock the following morning.

However, at about midnight, the Chen Sang took out all their Fui Chew prisoners, about fourteen of them, and after making offerings to their flag,<sup>2</sup> killed all of them except one who managed to escape to Klian Bahru. As may be expected, the next day at daybreak, about 300 to 400 armed Fui Chew from Klian Bahru attacked the Chen Sang in Klian Pauh. Again, those Chinese who were not involved in the conflict, particularly the Hokkien, tried to settle the affair amicably. According to Loh Chong:

On the 19th we proposed to the Hwe Chius to pay a fine of \$1,000 to the Cheng Siang for their attack. Two of the three heads were inclined to accede to this proposal, but the Hwe Chius generally were indignant at it

<sup>1</sup>Head of a body of police.

<sup>2</sup>This was done by thrusting a sharpened bamboo into the neck of each man until the blood spurted out at the other end of the bamboo. The Chen Sang proceeded to dye their flag with the blood of their victims. (See Swettenham Papers, Item 72, Journal of the Expedition to Perak, 23 Jan. to 21 Feb. 1874, kept by Frank Swettenham.)

as so many of their number had been killed. We left about noon and in a few hours after another fight between the two parties took place. Che Jabar came up with about 200 armed Malays and a large gun and told them to disperse and as they continued to fight he discharged the gun at them and the Hwe Chius retired to Klian Baru.

Meanwhile, the Chen Sang sought the aid of Ngah Lamat and Kulop Mat Ali (brother-in-law of Ngah Ibrahim) at Kota. It was said that both of them took an oath to the Chen Sang leaders, Law Ah Sam, Chung Ah Kwee and Lee Kwan Kwee,<sup>1</sup> that '... they would assist the Cheng Siang Chinese with all their power in an attack on the Hue Chu Chinese at Klian Baru, imprecating death to themselves, their wives and children if they failed to do so'. But misunderstanding arose between the Malay and Chen Sang leaders regarding the disposal of the tin and other plunder of the Fui Chew mines and houses. It was finally agreed that it should be equally divided between them.

Ngah Lamat and Kulop Mat Ali then gave orders that their followers, about 400 in number, should prepare to join the Chen Sang in an attack on Klian Bahru. On the night of 17 June 1865, Ngah Ibrahim, who had been away from Larut, returned to Permatang and asked to see Kulop Mat Ali. Mat Ali set off for Permatang and returned the next morning with the message that Ngah Ibrahim approved of the intended attack on the Fui Chew. On 19 June 1865, Ngah Lamat and Kulop Mat Ali directed that a party of 200 Malays under Penghulu Sunu and other leaders should march on Klian Bahru by the Assam Kumbang path. The Chen Sang, accompanied by another party of Malays, were to march along the main road and other smaller parties should be stationed around Klian Bahru. The attacking parties were directed to kill or drive off the Fui Chew, plunder their house and mines and then burn the houses to the ground. By noon on 20 June 1865, the Fui Chew had been decisively defeated. All the houses were destroyed and their victorious opponents carried away to Klian Pauh large quantities of tin, tin ore, furniture and provisions. The tin was taken to the *Balai* at Kota and most of the ore to the smelting house of Chung Ah Kwee where it was smelted and sent back to Kota to be stored.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>During the first outbreak in 1861, eleven persons were mentioned as leaders of the Hai San in Penang and Larut, namely Leoh Ah Ung, Chong Moye, Chong Ahan, Chin Chit Chong, Kok Ah Sing, Lim Yong Teck, Chang Sam Tat, Leoh Ah Sin, Chun Nghoon Pak, Lee Kwan Kwee and Yiong Kan. (See CO 273/5, Larut Disturbances, *passim*).

<sup>2</sup>See CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances: Statement of Jebon Ali, 18 Oct. 1865; Petition of Oh Wee Kee, 18 Oct., 1865 and SSR, DD42, Loh Chong's affidavit, *op.cit.*



The Fui Chew, about 2,000 in number, were completely expelled from Klian Bahru. They made their way in scattered parties through the jungle to Province Wellesley, where they arrived in utter destitution.<sup>1</sup> Many of them were hardly able to walk from wounds, sores and hunger; several perished in the jungle and some along the roads in Province Wellesley. So Ah Cheong, his wife (Chew Neoh) and child together with Chew Swee Poh, a young trader, and his wife (Soh Kim Len) as well as another man started for Penang *via* Kurau. Ngah Ibrahim sent word to Kurau that So Ah Cheong should be seized if he chanced to pass that way. Meanwhile, So Ah Cheong had a bad fall and the others had to make a hammock of branches to carry him. When they reached Sungai Kurau, they sought the help of a certain Pandak Korik. But, acting on instructions, Pandak Korik had them bound and sent to Ngah Ibrahim at Ujong Tembok. The men were then taken to Telok Kertang and executed. The women were detained and were later taken away by Penang Police after complaints had been made to the authorities there.<sup>2</sup>

As in the first instance, the defeated Fui Chew blamed the Malay leaders for taking the side of the Chen Sang. A few days after their expulsion from Klian Bahru, a petition was sent to the Penang government claiming compensation from the Larut authorities for losses incurred. It was stated that the debts incurred by the miners (both Fui Chew and Chen Sang) amounted to \$49,573.40½. But, this time, the Penang government decided not to press for compensation for the following reasons:

...it is clear that the interference on the part of the Malay Authorities with the Chinese miners was prompted solely by the turbulent and riotous conduct of the miners themselves and was not a mere act of wanton oppression, it is extremely probable that the measures adopted by the Chief to suppress the serious disturbances that had arisen between the Chinese Societies were somewhat harsh and tyrannical, at the same time, it must be remembered that, these disturbances had already lasted for several days, that, in number, the Chinese exceeded the force at the disposal of the

<sup>1</sup>It was probably at this time rather than in 1861 (see Middlebrook, *op.cit.* pp. 20-1) that the Fui Chew of Kuala Lumpur sent several boats to Penang to convey the refugees to Kuala Lumpur.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/15, Larut Disturbances: Oh Wee Kee's petition of 18 Oct. 1865; Statement of Koh Ah Chye, 22 Aug. 1865; Statement of Thong Sye, 22 Aug. 1865; Swettenham Papers, Item 72, Journal of the Expedition to Perak, 23 Jan. to 21 Feb. 1874.

It may be mentioned that Chong Chong, the supreme leader of the Fui Chew, survived the conflict. Little, however, is known about him. It is possible that this was the same person named as one of the 20 Councillors of the Ghee Hin in George Town in 1867. (*PRCR*, evidence no.8, Boey Yoo Kong.)

Chief, and that he may therefore have deemed it absolutely necessary to strike a severe blow in order, not only to restore order but also to effectually prevent any recurrence of the scenes of violence that had previously taken place or any further display of that turbulent spirit for which the Chinese are everywhere notorious and which, if not kept in check by the awe of Malay vengeance, would soon lead to the subversion of all duly constituted authority in the several weak Native States in which the Chinese establish themselves in large bodies.<sup>1</sup>

This was a rather inaccurate *resume* of what happened in Larut. It was not the case that Ngah Ibrahim and his men acted as a neutral group to quell the Chinese disturbances. They clearly acted in unison with the Chen Sang to expel the Fui Chew.

Ngah Ibrahim's conduct, however, was dictated by circumstances. Unlike the other territories, Larut had no substantial Malay population when the Chinese miners arrived in large numbers, and this was an important governing factor in Chinese conduct towards the local authorities. Hence, it was commented in 1874:

In the Districts where the Chinese are too small in numbers to overawe the Malays they temporise, and endeavour, by policy, to protect their industry; on the other hand, when they are in such large numbers as to make them independent of the Malays, they dispute, or in fact ignore the authority of the Malay Chiefs at the Mines; but they have not [by 1874] attempted to get the command of the rivers by which their tin is sent down to market, and are therefore dependent on the Malay Chiefs for the safe passage of their supplies and tin, and make the best arrangement they can with them on the rivers where the duties are collected.<sup>2</sup>

The cessation of fighting in Larut brought only an uneasy peace to Perak because Raja Abdullah never fully reconciled himself to the position of Raja Muda. As there was a notable difference between the rate of commercial development in the northern and southern territories of Perak, Raja Abdullah made attempts to secure for himself a share of the revenue obtainable in the north. In this he was encouraged by Penang traders, one of whom was a certain Edward Bacon.<sup>3</sup> Perturbed by the conduct of Raja Abdullah, Sultan Ali asked Lieutenant-Governor Anson to warn the Penang traders 'not

<sup>1</sup>SSR, R41, Singapore to Fort William, 3 Nov. 1865

<sup>2</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Report on the Proceedings of Government relating to the Native States in the Malayan Peninsula, 18 Jan. 1874'.

<sup>3</sup>Little is yet known of the background of this man who, in subsequent years, was to play an important part in Perak politics. He might have been related to Nathaniel Bacon who, on 20 August 1817, was admitted as a Law Agent in Penang. (See Kyshe, p. cxiii.) The other important person was Khaw Boo Aun. (See p. 213.)

to mix themselves up with the said Rajah Muda'.<sup>1</sup> But, in the latter part of 1870, Raja Abdullah 'granted concessions of land to Mr. Bacon and others on the south bank of the Krian, and attempted to justify this by producing letters of authority with the Sultan's chop'. Sultan Ali, however, asserted that the concessions had been granted directly against his wishes.<sup>2</sup> Raja Abdullah then compelled Ngah Ibrahim, in March 1871, to put down his seal to a grant which he (Raja Abdullah) had issued to Bacon as farmer of Krian on a fifteen-year lease for the sum of \$5,500 per annum. Ngah Ibrahim immediately appealed to Sultan Ali to intervene in the matter explaining that he was forced to agree to the deed. The Perak ruler thereupon took steps to annul the grant.<sup>3</sup>

In fact, after the affair of 1870, it was predicted that: 'The power usurped by the Rajah Muda is likely very shortly to bring about a revolution and it appears merely a question which side Laroot would take to decide who shall continue the reigning power....'<sup>4</sup> A major conflict did occur, but only after the death of Sultan Ali on 26 May 1871.

### *Selangor: Rumbblings before the Storm*

Sultan Muhammad died on 6 January 1857 and immediately a political crisis occurred in the state. There were several claimants to the throne as the late ruler left behind no less than nineteen children. Even some of his nephews felt that they had a right to become Yang Di-Pertuan. In effect, before his death, Sultan Muhammad had tried to solve the succession question. According to his wife:

... at the time when our husband, the Sultan was alive he wanted to instal his son Raja Mahmood to succeed him in ruling his Kingdom, for this he called all the great men, Princes and people to make known his intention, all of whom were glad to recognize Raja Mahmood and our son Raja Joomahat and our son Rajah Dollah to act in his place during his minority. After properly consulting together at Lookoot for the purpose of making the preparation and before was accomplished our deceased husband, the Sultan went to Klang to meet our son Rajah Dollah and

<sup>1</sup>SSR, G7, Raja of Perak to Capt. Hatchell, 18 March 1871; Raja of Perak to A. N. Birch, 25 April 1871.

<sup>2</sup>CMP, Sir A. Clarke to Kimberley, 24 Feb. 1874, encl., Skinner's Precis of Perak Affairs, 10 Jan. 1874.

<sup>3</sup>Wee Choon Siang, p.27.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/47, Anson to Kimberley, 3 June 1871, encl., Report of a Committee on the subject of the relations of the Straits Settlements with the neighbouring Native States, 19 May 1871.

whilst there for 3 or 4 days was attacked with an illness, 7 days after his illness he died, we conveyed his body to Salangore where he was buried. After this we consulted together with our people of rank, Princes and Rajahs to instal Rajah Mahmood Rajah Mudah in accordance with the wish of the late Sultan, all of whom were glad to recognize him as such, after that our son Rajah Abdool Samat asked for his father's rank and dignity, we consulted together with our people of rank, &c, and made him Panglima Besar. Four or five months after that we do not know why but those people forced us to give up our Government in favor of Rajah Abdool Samat.<sup>1</sup>

Raja Mahmud, then only about eight years old, obviously failed to make an impression on the *orang besar-besar*, and it has been suggested that Raja Abdul Samad was elected to the throne through the influence of Raja Jumaat who was anxious to prevent a war of succession.<sup>2</sup>

Compared to the other mining states, Selangor enjoyed ample peace in the mid-nineteenth century and this, undoubtedly, was due to the ability of Raja Jumaat. As Governor Cavenagh put it:

The state of affairs almost throughout the whole of the Malayan Peninsula is at present certainly far from satisfactory.... in most of the States according to the Malayan system of Government there is a divided authority so that even if the ostensible Head is anxious to exert himself to improve the condition of his subjects he may find himself thwarted by his colleague, who may render nugatory all his endeavours to effect salutary reforms however much they may be needed, one bright exception to the general rule is Rajah Jumahat of Lookoot, this Chief has evidently benefitted by his intercourse with European Officials, he has evinced a great desire to introduce the advantages of our modes of Government into his own Country....<sup>3</sup>

Although Cavenagh was inclined to extol the inherent superiority of the western political system, it is undeniable that much of Raja Jumaat's successful administration of Lukut was due to his readiness to modify the traditional system of government to suit the changing environment.

By the early 1860s it was reported that '... the Rajah of Lookoot [Raja Jumaat] has been recently vested by the Sultan with supreme authority over the whole of Selangore but no official notification has as yet been made to the Government on the subject'.<sup>4</sup> Raja Jumaat's

<sup>1</sup>SSR, F7, Tunkoo Puan of Salangore to Gov. Ord, 15 June 1867.

<sup>2</sup>Maxwell, 'The Ruling Family of Selangor', p. 322; Anon., 'History of Selangor', p. 71.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, R38, Singapore to Fort William, 6 Oct. 1860.

<sup>4</sup>SSR, R40, Singapore to Fort William, 16 May 1861.

death in 1864 was therefore a blow to both Lukut and Selangor. Raja Bot succeeded his father as the territorial chief of Lukut and his elder brother, Raja Yahya, whose mother was a commoner, acted as *wakil* whenever Raja Bot was away from Lukut.

In the early years of Raja Bot's administration, Kota Lukut, in fact, grew in size. Raja Bot had about thirty Arab soldiers in his employment, and these Arabs settled down in Lukut, marrying the local girls. But Raja Bot was not of the same ability as his father. During the early years of his administration he encountered opposition. Raja Sulaiman,<sup>1</sup> chief of Sungai Raya, who had subordinated himself to Raja Jumaat (*mengaku tundok kapada-nya*) challenged Raja Bot's authority. An attack was made on Lukut and heavy fighting occurred at Kampong China. Raja Bot's men, however, were more numerous and they were strongly fortified on top of a hill. As a result, they successfully drove Raja Sulaiman back to Sungai Raya.<sup>2</sup>

Raja Bot's troubles did not end there. One day Yahya, an adopted son of the Selangor ruler, a resident of Langat, visited Lukut with about sixty followers. While Yahya was strolling about in Kampong China, he saw a Hai Lam whom he claimed was one of his coolies who had escaped. The Chinese was immediately apprehended and brought before Raja Bot where Yahya had him executed. This infuriated Raja Bot and, soon after, a gang of 400 Chinese came to ask for an explanation. Raja Bot chose to remain neutral. But apparently he told the Chinese that they could kill any Malay who was not wearing red clothing for they were not his subjects. Almost immediately fighting began and the Langat people were forced to retreat. Those killed were not allowed to be buried in Lukut because Raja Bot disapproved of Yahya's conduct.<sup>3</sup>

These incidents were only signs of more difficult times ahead. Commercial development was obviously fostering jealousy among members of the ruling class. There were also other complications, one of which concerned the financial position of the territorial chiefs. Although by 1862-63 tin mining was a lucrative industry in Lukut and Klang, it appears that neither Raja Jumaat nor Raja Abdullah was financially solvent. Raja Jumaat, however, was recognized for his ability and integrity, and therefore he was trusted by his creditors. Through him, Raja Abdullah must have obtained the necessary

<sup>1</sup>Raja Sulaiman's father, Raja Hussein, was Raja Jumaat's brother.

<sup>2</sup>Nasir Osman Abbas, 'Sejarah Lukut', p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

advances for business ventures. It was no accident that less than a year after Raja Jumaat's death, the Sultan of Selangor received a letter stating:

It has been brought to our notice that certain British subjects, merchants, residing at Malacca have considerable claims against our friend's feudatories the Rajahs of Lookoot and Kallang on account of advances made to those Chiefs to enable them to work the tin mines in their respective districts. Our friend must be well aware that without the support of the residents at Malacca there would be little chance of the tin mines being worked and consequently if that support were withdrawn our friend's country would suffer, we therefore hope that our friend will exert his influence in this matter and cause the above Chiefs to liquidate the just demands now preferred against them. ...<sup>1</sup>

Sultan Abdul Samad's attitude was a most conciliatory one. Replying, he wrote:

... with regard to the Merchants at Malacca about whom our friend wrote we have settled the case of these merchants with our brother Raja Abdullah and our nephew Raja Yahya, there is no further difficulty in the matter, now all the merchants have returned to Malacca our friend can enquire from these merchants what has been done in this matter.<sup>2</sup>

No mention, however, was made of the precise nature of the settlement arrived at.<sup>3</sup> It is possible that the farming out of the Klang territory to the Read-Kim Cheng syndicate was the method by which Raja Abdullah hoped to secure sufficient revenue to repay the Malacca merchants. The arrangement eventually led to political complications, and this was one of the contributory causes of the Klang War Which broke out in 1867.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SSR, G6, Cavenagh to Sultan of Selangor, 16 Nov. 1865. No information is available on the identity of the merchants.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, F7, Sultan of Selangor to Cavenagh, 25 Dec. 1865.

<sup>3</sup>Even the Governor's reply does not throw any light on the subject for he merely thanked the Sultan 'for his ready compliance with our wishes with regard to obtaining a Settlement of the claims of the Malacca Merchants against the Rajas of Lookoot and Kellang', (SSR, G6, Cavenagh to Sultan of Selangor, 13 Jan. 1866.)

<sup>4</sup>In Windstedt's account of the war ('A History of Selangor', pp. 19-20), it is stated that the war occurred in 1866. This is incorrect. At the outbreak of the war, Cavenagh visited Klang in the SS *Pluto* and he addressed a letter to Sultan Abdul Samad dated 17 March 1867. Windstedt dates the letter 17 March 1866. This is obviously the source of the error which has been perpetuated by other writers (Middlebrook, 'Yap Ah Loy', pp. 36-41 and Gullick, 'A Careless, Heathen Philosopher?', p. 90). This mistake also distorts the sequence of events by giving the impression that Read and Tan Kim Cheng were immediately prevented from deriving any profit out of their arrangement with Raja Abdullah, when, in fact, they were able to mine tin for almost a year.

## THE CONFLICTS SPREAD

### *Dismemberment of Negri Sembilan*

THE death of a Yamtuan Besar (Raja Radin) in early 1861 gave rise once more to internal dissension. There were three candidates for the vacant title. They were Raja Ujong (also called Raja Imam or Tuanku Janggut), brother of the late Raja Radin; Raja Beringan, an *anak raja* from Minangkabau; and the resourceful Syed Shaaban who submitted his claims on the grounds that he had held the title of Yamtuan Muda. The attempt from Minangkabau to regain its influence since Raja Labu was driven away from Negri Sembilan was, however, feeble. It was Syed Shaaban who proved the real threat to Raja Ujong for he enjoyed the support of Governor Cavenagh who, in advocating his cause, wrote:

Syed Shaban is of a restless, intriguing disposition, he doubtless has long fretted at being compelled to live in comparative obscurity and consequently, with a view to increasing his own importance, been an active mover in many of the petty conspiracies that are perpetually being devised in the neighbouring Native States, still he is shrewd and intelligent and, if raised to the dignity of Eang de per Tuan Besar will in all probability adopt measures to establish a firm Government over the different States forming the Confederacy and to improve their Revenues by fostering trade and suppressing the lawless bands by which they are now infested, to this, under the present circumstances, indeed his ambition must necessarily be bounded as he can no longer entertain hopes of further aggrandizement by the acquisition of Salangore, the actual though not the nominal rule of that State having recently fallen into the hands of the most active and enlightened Chief in the Peninsula, the Rajah of Lookoot, who is not likely to afford Syed Shaban any pretext for interfering with his administration ....

Although as Eang de per Tuan Besar, Syed Shaban would be vested with no immediate authority over the management of the internal affairs of the several Confederate States, the influence which he even now exercises over the Chiefs and people would, it is reasonable to suppose, be materially increased and, considering how much the prosperity of our Settlements may be advanced by the maintenance of peace throughout the Peninsula and the consequent opening out of the channels of commerce, with reference to the dissensions now existing and the intrigues which are ever being concocted at Singapore, the employment of that influence in our favor would I am of opinion be cheaply purchased by the continuance of the stipend already granted for Political services and I therefore respectfully trust that I

may be authorised to intimate to Syed Shaban that his election to the Office to which he aspires will not militate against his claim to pensionary support provided his conduct continues to meet the favor of the British Government.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately for Syed Shaaban, Governor Cavenagh did not have his way and the more popular candidate, Raja Ujong, was elected the new Yamtuan Besar.<sup>2</sup>

Political tension subsided for a few years only to mount again in 1865 when Klana Sending went down to Linggi to arrange for a fixed duty on the river. The Penghulu of Rembau was angry that he had not been consulted. The Dato' Klana, on the other hand, replied that the tax to be levied was confined to tin, the produce of Sungai Ujong; therefore Rembau had no right to interfere. But he was prepared to give the Penghulu of Rembau a share of the tax. The latter wanted none of this patronizing attitude saying that 'Rumbowe is the mother and Sungie Ujong the father of Lingie', which implied that Rembau had an automatic right to a portion of the duty. There was, however, no unity among the Rembau leaders. Klana Sending was able to win the support of the *lembaga* of Rembau to render ineffective, at least temporarily, the claims of the Penghulu.<sup>3</sup>

At about the same time complications arose in Johol owing to commercial development. In the early 1860s, there was a change of Penghulu as the result of the incumbent relinquishing his office. The new Penghulu took the opportunity to visit Malacca, in the company of Klang Sending, to settle with the Malacca government the question of the future administration of his territory. From all indications, the new Penghulu was anxious to develop Johol. He proposed, therefore, to enter into an agreement with two Malacca Chinese, See Boon Tiong and Towkay Cham,<sup>4</sup> 'in the way of working Tin Mines'. As the mining was to be carried out in the territory of Gemencheh, Penghulu Jaafar of Gemencheh also came to Malacca for the purpose of signing the agreement.

See Boon Tiong and Towkay Cham then commenced to build bungalows and spend large sums of money for the development of Gemencheh. But the Penghulu of Gemencheh, for reasons not revealed, subsequently felt aggrieved and proceeded to ruin 'that property newly erected by setting fire to the Bungalow and plunder-

<sup>1</sup>SSR, R39, Singapore to Fort William, 7 Sept. 1861.

<sup>2</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>No information is available on this merchant.



ing all the property therein contained'. See Boon Tiong and Towkay Cham complained to the Penghulu of Johol who set out for Gemencheh to enquire. In the dark of the night, he was surprised by Penghulu Jaafar 'who fired at us and killed our men'. A war ensued which lasted for three days. Captain Playfair, Resident Councillor of Malacca, attempted unsuccessfully to arbitrate. Both the Penghulu Tua and the Penghulu Muda of Johol, sons-in-law of Penghulu Jaafar, combined against their father-in-law who, by November 1865, was forced to surrender Gemencheh to them. Still anxious to make Gemencheh 'as productive and populated as possible' they offered to make over the territory to the British administration at Malacca. This was not accepted. Both the Penghulu then informed the Governor:

... should any merchants wish to work and open the Tin Mines, Gold, or any other minerals to trade in Gemanchie and we are very glad if our friend will assist by advancing our interests, we shall be responsible for these persons should any disaster or trouble arise from the unlawful acts of our people with reference to those persons who come in to Gemanchie ....<sup>1</sup>

No mention, however, was made of the investments of See Boon Tiong and Towkay Cham.

There is one aspect of Sungai Ujong's history which must be noted at this juncture because of its close connexion with Selangor's history. It came into prominence in 1862 when Dato' Klana Sending attempted to claim from the ruler of Selangor: '... such portion of the territory of Sungie Ujong as that Chief unjustly detained from him, including Cape Rachado [Tanjong Tuan], where government [British] was then building the lighthouse....' But the Klana added that it was not his intention to disturb the arrangements for building the lighthouse. On 24 November 1863, a meeting was held between Raja Abdullah of Klang and Klana Sending at Kuala Linggi in the presence of Captain Playfair and Syed Shaaban. A letter, written by Sultan Abdul Samad two months earlier, was read. Accompanied by a spear of state, it authorized the boundary between the country of Selangor and Sungai Ujong to be fixed by the Dato' Klana and the Penghulu of Klang. It specified that the boundary should be marked by the Sungai Langat: ascending the river, on the right side was Sungai Ujong and on the left Klang territory. And the boundary of

<sup>1</sup>SSR, F7, Datu Punghooloo Tua and Datu Pungooloo Muda, Johol, to Gov., 20 Sept. 1866. For information on the disturbances, see, SSR, F7, Punghooloo Johol to Gov., 12 April 1865 & 27 Nov. 1865.

Sungai Ujong on the coast was from Gunong Jugra, on the Langat river, to Kuala Linggi. However, when a copy of the letter was sent to Raja Jumaat at Lukut, he wrote back to say that he had consulted Sultan Abdul Samad who denied having written the letter. He added that when Sultan Muhammad gave him Lukut to administer, it was clarified that the boundary was from Lukut to Kuala Linggi and up the Sungai Linggi. Ascending the Sungai Linggi, the land to the left up to Sungai Udang and to the interior as far as Bukit Juling Juling, belonged to Selangor.<sup>1</sup> After this, the matter was left in abeyance. It is plain that Klana Sending's grievances arose from the fact that control over one bank of the river would enable Raja Jumaat and Raja Abdullah to obtain a share of the revenue derivable from the Linggi traffic.

In 1866 the boundary question once more emerged. According to Captain Burn, Resident Councillor of Malacca, in a letter dated 14 May 1866, Sultan Abdul Samad had told him that the boundary issue had been settled in 1865 in accordance with the Sultan's letter of September 1863. But when Capt. Burn subsequently met Raja Abdullah at Lukut, the latter stated that the Klana's claim was preposterous. Owing to the same confusion, the issue was left unresolved. On 11 July 1868, however, Sultan Abdul Samad wrote:

Dated 9 o'clock on Saturday the 18th of Rabial-awal ....

We the ruler of Salangor, Sultan Abdul Samat, son of the late Tunku Raja Abdullah, give this paper to Datu Klana Putra in Sungie Ujong showing what are the relations between Selangor and Sungie Ujong, which are not to change in any way the arrangement of old times till the present day.

With regard to Tanjong Tuan (Cape Rachado) the Governor's request was for as much place as (was necessary) for a lighthouse, one hill only. The English Government is our friend, and in our thinking will be the friend of our great men also. With the exception of what has been mentioned, all on the left, ascending the River Lingie, up to Sungie Udang, we and the great men agree to be the Datu Klana's territory, and no one else can claim it, down to our descendants and the Datu Klana's descendants, and this shall not be changed, as long as the sun and the moon revolve, &c., as is stated in this writing and stamped with our chop.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that Sultan Abdul Samad did not see eye to eye with the chiefs of Klang and Lukut. However, despite his letter, the matter could not be brought to an amiable conclusion. In subsequent years, the boundary question was to lead to even more complications as

<sup>1</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

conflicting factions in Negri Sembilan and Selangor attempted to seek support from beyond the state frontier.

In the following year (1869), Yamtuan Besar Raja Ujong passed away and the succession dispute which followed proved to be the most serious Negri Sembilan had ever experienced. There were two rival claimants to the throne: Tuanku Antah ibni Almarhom Tuanku Radin and Tuanku Ahmad Tunggal ibni Almarhom Tuanku Ujong. The struggle which ensued completely split asunder the state of Negri Sembilan. According to a Malay source, until the reign of Raja Ujong, Negri Sembilan had been ruled by a Yamtuan Besar in accordance with the *hukum shara'* (Islamic law) and principles of *adat*. But after the death of that ruler, owing to the power struggle which occurred in several of the territories (*luak*), in particular Sungai Ujong, Rembau and Jelebu broke away from the central authority and each conducted its own government independently.<sup>1</sup> The conflict between members of the ruling class grew increasingly worse in the early 1870s when struggles for power also occurred in Sungai Ujong and Rembau.

In early November 1872, the old and feeble Penghulu of Rembau died at Lubok China. Two candidates vied for the vacant position—Haji Mustapha and Haji Sahil also called Dato' Perba. The latter was by far the more aggressive person so that Haji Mustapha was compelled to look to Sungai Ujong for support. Haji Sahil, on the other hand, continued the policy of the last Penghulu of Rembau. When he heard that the Dato' Muda of Linggi had constructed a *kota* (fort) in his territory, he led the Rembau people on an attack on the *kota*. At the same time, he captured a *kota* at Bukit Tiga and proceeded to levy duties on the passing boats at Sungai Linggi.

Before the succession dispute in Rembau had been settled, on 3 December 1872 Dato' Klana Sending passed away. The administration was left in the hands of Tengku Laksamana Raja Di-Laut (Syed Shariff Abdul Rahman Al-Kadri),<sup>2</sup> aided by the Dato' Bandar, Kulop Tunggal. Although on 27 March 1873, Syed Abdul Rahman was able to write to the British informing them that he had been unanimously chosen as Dato' Klana of Sungai Ujong,<sup>3</sup> he was con-

<sup>1</sup>Sejarah dan Adat Negeri Sembilan 1773-1961, pp.24-5, typescript. This is a collection of copies of miscellaneous notes, records and correspondence from the personal note book of the late Yang Teramat Mulia Tengku Besar Burhanuddin ibni Yamtuan Besar Antah. (Arkib Negara Malaysia.)

<sup>2</sup>SSR, F7, Tunku Dia Oodin to Gov., 27 July 1872, encl., Syed Ahman to Kudin, 21 July 1872.

<sup>3</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'.

fronted by several problems, one of which was his relationship with the Dato' Bandar. Kulop Tunggal had, since the time of Klana Sending, held a special position of respect and independence in Sungai Ujong. He enjoyed the confidence of Chinese traders in Malacca as well as that of the Chinese miners in Sungai Ujong itself. He found no reason therefore to conduct himself differently before the younger and less able Syed Ahman and it was believed that 'the Klana was a puppet in his hands'. Kulop Tunggal had complete control over the port of Rasah where he collected 20 *gantang* of rice from each boat and \$1 as a tax on the boatmen. The new Dato' Klana did not attempt to challenge the authority of Kulop Tunggal until 1874 when the British decided to interfere in Sungai Ujong affairs.<sup>1</sup>

In Rembau, the succession question remained unresolved. Of the four major *lembaga*, three of them—Merah Bangsa, Bangsa Balang and Sangsura Pahlawan—supported Haji Mustapha. The fourth person, 'younger and more turbulent', called Haji Mahmat alias Masahir, holding the title of Gempar Maharaja, favoured Haji Sahil and he was given control over the fort at Bukit Tiga with about 500 fully-armed men. Haji Sahil claimed the three *lembaga* who opposed him had been paid to do so.<sup>2</sup>

Although the animosity between Haji Mustapha and Haji Sahil did not lead to any large-scale fighting, the latter's occupation of Bukit Tiga and the consequent imposition of various duties<sup>3</sup> infuriated the Malacca traders. In April 1873, a petition was received by Captain Shaw pointing out that for many years traders had carried on

... an extensive trade with the Malay Territories of Linghy and Sunghie Ujong ... from whence your Honor's Petitioners imported large quantities of Tin, and exported in return Rice, Opium, Salt, Oil, Saltfish, Sugar &c., to those places, for some of which articles advances were made in cash to your Honor's Petitioners, whilst others were purchased from your Honor's Petitioners and exported to those territories for sale.

It appears that previously duties were levied only at Linggi. As they had more than \$80,000 at stake in Linggi and Sungai Ujong, they

<sup>1</sup>See Swettenham Papers, Item -72, 'Pickering's Journal: Singapore to Sungai Ujong, 4 Oct.—29 Nov. 1874'; P.P., Sir A. Clarke to Carnarvon, 29 Dec. 1874, encl.18, Dunlop's Report of Proceedings as Commissioner in Sungai Ujong, 26 Nov.—15 Dec. 1874.

<sup>2</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'

<sup>3</sup>40 *gantang* on every coyan of rice; \$40 on every boat-load of tin laden in a two-masted boat; \$20 on every boat-load of tin laden in a one-masted boat; \$20 on each chest of opium and 40 cents on every pikul of oil.

asked that the Rembau people should be compelled 'by force of arms' to remove themselves.<sup>1</sup>

Haji Sahil was persuaded to withdraw his people from Bukit Tiga<sup>2</sup> but in July the same year, his people were established at Permatang Pasir where they levied \$10 a coyan on rice and \$5 a *bahara* on tin. However, Haji Sahil himself, in the following month, complained that his attempt to come to an amicable settlement with Sungai Ujong was met by a proclamation from the Klana that '... the people of Rambow should not buy & sell with S. Ujong people under a penalty of \$400 for each person'. The Klana was also said to have gone to Linggi and 'gave Hajee Mustafa powder shots & muskets ordering him to make an entrenchment & Hajee Mustafa has completed his preparations for war'. Haji Sahil therefore accused the people of Sungai Ujong of being 'fickle and headstrong', and because Haji Mustapha had chosen to obey Sungai Ujong, war was inevitable. Hence Haji Sahil asked the Governor to forbid British subjects from trading in the region of Sungai Linggi for he could not be responsible if they should come to any harm.<sup>3</sup>

In early September 1873, three Chinese were reported killed in Rembau and the Dato' Bandar was said to have burnt all the stockades erected by Haji Sahil. A meeting of chiefs followed at Linggi which was attended by a member of the Neubronner family, but no decision was arrived at. By the middle of the month, Haji Sahil had again erected stockades at the river, and tin to the value of \$300,000, the property of British merchants, was detained.

Finding Haji Sahil too redoubtable an opponent, in November 1873 Haji Mustapha made a new move by acknowledging Syed Hamid (son of Syed Shaaban) of Tampin as the overlord of Rembau, on the grounds that Syed Hamid's grand-father (Raja Ali) and father had both ruled over the territory. Haji Sahil refused to acknowledge Syed Hamid because Raja Ali was the son of a Bugis (a member of the Selangor royalty) while Syed Shaaban was the son of a Arab from Aceh. He warned that if Syed Hamid should interfere in the affairs of Rembau then 'the war will be carried into Tampin and Kru which places are subject to Rumbow'. By December 1873, Haji Sahil and seventeen of the Rembau chiefs were able to inform the

<sup>1</sup>The petition (19 April 1873) appears in full in Chelliah, 'War in Negri Sembilan', App. B (4).

<sup>2</sup>This was done through the influence of Tengku Kudin whose participation in the political affairs of Negri Sembilan will subsequently be discussed at greater length.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, F7, Dato' Lela Maharaja (Haji Sahil) to Gov., SS, 8 Aug. 1873.

Malacca authorities that they had attacked Haji Mustapha, fought for several days, killed ten of his men and burnt some sixty houses. Haji Mustapha was forced to flee and the three *lembaga* who supported him were dismissed and replaced.<sup>1</sup>

Haji Mustapha's position was considerably weakened by the fact that throughout the latter part of 1873, Syed Ahman was obliged, owing to pressure from the Straits government, to play a less active part in the power struggle at Rembau. Also, Syed Ahman was involved in other important matters. For simultaneously the rivalry between Tuanku Ahmad Tunggal and Tuanku Antah grew in intensity. Since the majority of the *anak raja* and *ayer kaki*<sup>2</sup> favoured Tuanku Antah, Tuanku Ahmad Tunggal allied himself with the Dato' Klana, hoping for concrete support from that quarter; and promising that should he succeed in becoming the ruler of Negeri Sembilan, one of Syed Ahman's sons would be made Yamtuan of Rembau.<sup>3</sup>

Opposition to Tuanku Antah also came from Haji Sahil and Tengku Abdullah, Yamtuan Muda of Jelebu. During the installation of Tuanku Antah in 1875, Syed Ahman, Haji Sahil and Tengku Abdullah refused to attend. This led to a major war in which the British took the side of Syed Ahman.<sup>4</sup>

### *The Klang War*

There have been variant versions of the origins of the Klang War. The best-known of these, based undoubtedly on an indigenous work, says:

Raja Abdullah had been given charge of Klang by Sultan Muhammad, had introduced Chinese, opened tin-mines up river and, though he himself lived at Pangkalan Batu, had founded Kuala Lumpur and was collecting a large revenue. His success excited the jealousy of Raja Mahdi, whose father Sulaiman had ruled Klang, before Abdullah superseded him, and had made no profit out of the Malay fossickers and tin-washers who then represented the mining industry. Even a monthly allowance from Raja

<sup>1</sup>GPMP, Braddell 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'

<sup>2</sup>The *ayer kaki* were the matrilineal descendants of Naam, Penghulu of Ulu Muar whom Raja Melewar beheaded. It is believed that subsequently Raja Melewar married Naam's daughter and put her relatives into positions of special intimacy as members of his household. (See R. J. Wilkinson, *A Malay-English Dictionary*, London, 1959, Pt. I, p.496).

<sup>3</sup>Sejarah dan Adat Negeri Sembilan, pp. 24-5.

<sup>4</sup>For details of the war, see J. M. Gullick, 'The War with Yam Tuan Antah, *JMBRAS*, vol. 27 pt.1, 1954.

Abdullah failed to appease Raja Mahdi and now a feud between Bugis and Mandilings at To' Bandar Yashi's stockade, Kuala Lumpur, provided him with forces. A Batu Bahara man, Rasul, was stabbed and killed. Raja Abdullah took no notice and punished no one. Thereupon Muhammad Akib, head of the Batu Bahara folk, offered Raja Mahdi the service of himself and his people to fight Raja Abdullah; an offer which Raja Mahdi took 'as a sleepy man takes a pillow'.<sup>1</sup>

Undeniably, the above account has some truth. For one thing, it was based on the writing of a man whose family was involved in the war. This does not, however, exclude the possibility that there were other more immediate causes.

If Mahdi had been prompted solely by jealousy he would hardly have waited for about seventeen years to challenge Raja Abdullah's authority.<sup>2</sup> Nor could it have been a matter of pure coincidence that the two clashed not long after Klang had been farmed out to Read and Tan Kim Cheng. Another reason for the outbreak of the war was offered by a contemporary writer:

... an English merchant, whom everybody connected with Singapore knows and respects, with two Chinese colleagues, took from one of the Selangor chiefs, Abdullah, a connexion by marriage of the Sultan of the country, the farm of the tolls leviable on the river Kallang. By Malay custom, a prince is exempt from toll, just as our royal family is in England; but when one day, Mahdie, a nephew of the Sultan claimed this privilege, the new toll collectors refused to recognize it. Resenting this indignity, the Malay attacked them with a body of his followers, and drove them, and Abdullah also, out of the district.<sup>3</sup>

This is generally supported by another account based primarily on Chinese records:

... the actual outbreak was due to Mahdi's activities as a trader. One day he imported two chests of opium which he proposed to sell to the mines at Kuala Lumpur, but a dispute arose in regard to the duty to be paid. Abdullah demanded a hundred dollars, and Mahdi claimed to have

<sup>1</sup>Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p.19. In Winstedt's bibliography, there is mention of a MS. History of Selangor by Dato' Amar of Selangor, compiled in 1920. This manuscript has since been published in romanised form. See Abdul Samad Ahmad (ed.), *Pesaka Selangor*.

<sup>2</sup>An important point to note is that Raja Mahdi was by no means a completely dispossessed *raja* for 'At the time Rajah Dowlah was made Rajah of Kallang Rajah Mahdie ... held a small district in the neighbourhood'. (CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 14 July 1871, encl. E, Report by C. J. Irving, Auditor-General, on the State of the Selangore District, n.d.).

<sup>3</sup>Sir Peter Benson Maxwell, *Our Malay Conquests*, p.32. Sir Peter Benson was connected with the administration of law in the Straits from 4 April 1856 to 26 July 1871. (See Makepeace *et al.* *One Hundred years of Singapore*, vol. I, pp.206-10, vol. II, pp.431-4.) He was a close friend of Read's (CO 273/36, Ord to Granville, 31 Jan. 1870).

paid it already to the Raja's tax collector. This quarrel may have started the fighting.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the war resulted directly from the question of the duty that Mahdi had to pay.

By the middle of March 1867, Raja Mahdi had taken control over Klang.<sup>2</sup> Raja Abdullah's attempt to regain authority was brief and ineffective. With two or three schooners at his disposal and a number of Bugis, he blockaded the Klang Strait (Lembah Jin)—'all prahus that go in and out of Salangore, they chased, fired and plundered them'. Tin belonging to those not favourably disposed towards Raja Abdullah could not be exported to Malacca; merchants dealing with these chiefs were therefore in danger of losing their money. This incurred the ire of Raja Musa (son of Sultan Abdul Samad) who was then in charge of Kuala Selangor.<sup>3</sup>

It appears that, at this stage, Sultan Abdul Samad himself was in sympathy with Raja Abdullah.<sup>4</sup> This is not surprising for they were jointly responsible for farming Klang to the Read-Kim Cheng syndicate.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the Sultan did not openly oppose Mahdi.<sup>6</sup> It was suggested that the general apathy displayed by the ruler was due to the fact that the blockade of the Klang river at any time was advantageous to him as 'the tin which would ordinarily have descended that river and paid duty at Klang (Pencallan Batu) now was taken down the Langat river and paid duty directly to the Sultan'.<sup>7</sup> At any rate, with a better supply of arms and well-en-

<sup>1</sup>Middlebrook, 'Yap Ah Loy', pp. 25-6.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G6, Deputy Sec. to Govt., SS to Rajah Mahadie, 17 Mar. 1867.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, F7, Rajah Moosa to Gov. Cavenagh, 28 Mar. 1867.

<sup>4</sup>Raja Ismail bin Raja Abdullah to Gov. Jervois, 28 Sept. 1876. For full text of letter, see W. Jalleh, 'Disorders in Selangor before 1874', B. A. Hons. dissertation, University of Malaya, Singapore, 1955, App. E.

<sup>5</sup>In a letter dated 15 Oct. 1867, Sultan Abdul Samad informed Gov. Ord that peace had been restored in Klang and that he 'will now be prepared to take into consideration and to do justice to the claims of any British subjects who have suffered loss in consequence of the disturbances from having invested money in the Tin districts on the Klang River'. A certain Mr. Allen, agent of Read and Tan Kim Cheng, met the ruler at Langat. The outcome of this meeting is not known. (SSR, G6, Ord to Sultan Abdool Samat, 5 Dec. 1867.)

<sup>6</sup>SSR, F7, Toonkoo Puan to Gov., 11 May 1867. In a second letter (15 June 1867), she said '... we are unable to do [anything] as he [the ruler] will never receive any good advice, for this we are therefore still obliged to ask our friend to act in any manner he deems best, for the trouble that has fallen upon us and followers is very great, on account of that doings of the Yam Tuan, for he is executing all the injury to our country ....'

<sup>7</sup>CO 273/94, Robinson to Hicks-Beach, 18 June 1878, encl. 2, Swettenham's memo. on the proposed retirement and pension to Tunku Dia Udin, Viceroy of Selangor, 8 May 1878.



trenched in his *kubu* (stockade), Raja Mahdi's victory was complete by October 1867. Raja Abdullah and his son, Raja Ismail, retired to Singapore to complain to Governor Cavenagh only to be told that the Straits government had no authority to interfere in the affairs of the Malay states.

For the next two years, Raja Mahdi had a free hand in Klang. Meanwhile Raja Abdullah was preparing for another attempt to regain Klang. But before any move could be made, Raja Abdullah died and was buried at Telok Ketapang. Raja Ismail was determined to continue the struggle with Mahdi. With the permission of Sultan Abdul Samad, on 17 December 1869 he opened war with Mahdi.<sup>1</sup> Raja Abdullah's widow, Raja Lijah, and her son, Raja Abdul Rahman, also went to see the ruler:<sup>2</sup> 'There was a great scene ... and much weeping and finally the Sultan was brought up to a determination to do something and the something was to ask Tunku Dia Oodin to take the matter off his hands.'<sup>3</sup>

Tengku Dziauddin ibni Al-Marhom Sultan Zainal Abidin Halim Shah of Kedah had married Raja Arfah, Sultan Abdul Samad's daughter, some time in 1867.<sup>4</sup> Kudin remained in Langat after his marriage. Seeing his son-in-law idle, the ruler asked him what he would like to do. Kudin confessed that he had no knowledge of business or trade but he had some administrative experience as he had helped his brother, the ruler of Kedah, in running the government of Kedah. Sultan Abdul Samad consequently entrusted Kudin with the responsibility of helping in the administration of Selangor, in particular, Langat. But Kudin soon found that being an outsider he was not held in high esteem. He therefore asked the Sultan for a document to strengthen his authority. A letter was duly given to him, the translation of which reads:

In the year 1285 of the Hejrah of the Prophet on whom be the peace and blessedness of God most high on the 5th day of the month of Rabial Awal on Wednesday [26 June 1868]. Now of a truth on that date:

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.; Raja Ismail to Gov. Jervois, 28 Sept. 1876 in W. Jalleh, App. E; Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', pp. 21-2.

<sup>2</sup>Raja Ismail was Raja Abdullah's son by a wife in Riau.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/94, Robinson to Hicks-Beach, 18 June 1878, encl.3, Irving's memo. relative to the proposed retirement and pension to Tunku Dia Oodin, Viceroy of Selangor, 11 May 1878.

<sup>4</sup>There is room for further investigation into Kudin's early life and his arrival in Selangor. The available accounts are based largely on Kudin's own story as told to British officials. See in particular, *GPMP*, T. Braddell, 'Report of Proceedings of Government Relating to the Native States in the Malayan Peninsula, 18 Feb. 1874'.

We the Sultan Abdul Samad son of the late Tunku Abdullah who occupied the throne of his Kingdom in the Country of Selangore the place of rejoicing do give a declaration to Tunku Dia Oodin the son of the late Sultan Zein al Rashid who has become a son to us. And now we declare to all the princes and Nobles and all subjects who are under the jurisdiction of our Country that we give up the country with its dependencies to our son Tunku Dia Oodin to govern and open up so as to bring it into proper order for us and for our sons viz. Rajah Musa and Rajah Kahaar and Rajah Yakob and for all the inhabitants of the Country also so that they may receive a course of justice in all matters. And our son Tunku Dia Oodin empowered to do whatever may be effectual towards fostering our Country and causing profit to us. No person must oppose our son's proceedings. And now we confirm as to this place Langat that it is our gift to our son Tunku Dia Oodin to be the place where he should carry on our business as aforesaid. This is what is declared. The end of the ends.<sup>1</sup>

At the time that the letter was drawn up, Sultan Abdul Samad was in Klang; the administration of Langat was left entirely in the hands of Kudin. He met with immediate opposition. A Malacca boat defied his authority and the Dato' Bandar of Langat took the side of the Malacca men. Kudin reported the matter to the ruler and, at the same time, news having arrived that his mother was very ill, he asked permission to return to Kedah leaving his wife behind. His desire to return home was also prompted by the need to recruit his own followers because of the insult to his authority at Langat. He came back to Langat with 500 men and was soon entrusted with the task of settling the Klang War.<sup>2</sup>

By the time Kudin appeared at Kuala Klang on 6 March 1870 with 250 of his men, Raja Ismail had practically wrested control of the area from Raja Mahdi but he agreed to let Kudin arbitrate in the dispute. Raja Mahdi, however, refused to have anything to do with Kudin, upon which the latter teamed up with Raja Ismail. Kudin also reported to Sultan Abdul Samad and asked to have 200 of his remaining 250 followers sent down from Langat. With that the attack on Klang commenced.<sup>3</sup>

By March 1870, Raja Mahdi had been forced to retreat from Klang. He fled to Sungai Buloh and subsequently went across to Pahang where he participated in a campaign led by Wan Abdul Rahman, son of the former Bendahara (Wan Mutahir), against

<sup>1</sup>The Malay version of the letter has still to be found. The English version appears in CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 28 July 1871, encl.5.

<sup>2</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Report of Proceedings of Govt. &c.'

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.; C.O. 273/94, Robinson to Hicks-Beach, 18 June 1878, encl. Swettenham's memo. on the proposed retirement and pension to Tunku Kudin, op.cit.; Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p. 22.

Bendahara Wan Ahmad at Raub.<sup>1</sup> By July 1870, however, he returned to Selangor where with the support of Raja Hitam, chief of Bernam and Raja Ali, chief of Jeram, he entered the fort at Kuala Selangor and took control of the collection of revenue. Raja Musa went to Langat to complain to his father who suggested that an expedition should be sent against Mahdi.<sup>2</sup>

By then Sultan Abdul Samad had become really displeased with Raja Mahdi. On 14 July 1870, he wrote to the Colonial Governor:

... if men from Salangore or from Jaram or from Bernam come into his Country for the purpose of bringing Rice or Muskets or Gun-powder Your Excellency will as far as possible prevent these purchase and if they should try such things and request a passage back, do not let men under Your Excellency's Government bring them, let other be sent, for we have a guard at the mouth of each of the three rivers; and should either of those articles be brought it is our intention to seize them.<sup>3</sup>

On 17 August 1870, he informed the Governor: '... our son Tunkoo Koodin has married our daughter and in all that concerns the Government of our country he also can issue orders or manage matters'.<sup>4</sup> About a week later, he announced to various chiefs and 'all other persons of whatever rank whether foreigner or born in the country' that:

... we have granted to our son Tunkoo Koodin this letter under our seal and we inform them that he has undertaken our duties in regard to vanquishing the Mandiling tribe and all their allies—Now all these persons above mentioned will obey and assist our son, who is also appointed the leader of all strangers of every race and these will in all cases hold themselves at his command and unless all these obey our son and follow his direction and answerable at his word they will be considered by us as Rebels and will be treated by us accordingly as the Law Command.

Now moreover we inform all the Chinese and all the Malays engaged in commerce in the interior that upon any request of the followers and comrades of Tunkoo Koodin they and all Towkays shall give their assistance in regard to provisions, Gunpowder and weapons.

And we further announce that we positively refuse to allow any Towkay to give assistance of any kind whatever to the Mandeling people or their allies and upon receiving certain information that they have afforded such assistance they will be held liable to us.

And if by the grace of God this disturbance is settled, in regard to the possessions of the Mandeling people they will be restored to all those

<sup>1</sup>Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p. 21. From 1857 to 1863, a civil war occurred in Pahang as a result of which Bendahara Wan Mutahir and his son Bendahara Tun Koris were ousted. Their adversary, Wan Ahmad, brother of Wan Mutahir, became the new Bendahara.

<sup>2</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Report of Proceedings of Govt. &c.': SSR, F7, The Pengawa of Salangore to Tunku Kudin, 5 Aug. 1870.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, F7, Sultan of Salangore to Gov., 14 July 1870.

<sup>4</sup>SSR, F7, Sultan of Salangore to Gov., 17 Aug. 1870.

mentioned in this Proclamation who bear their share of Tunkoo Koodin's difficulties.<sup>1</sup>

It was certainly a symptom of the time that the struggle for power which was essential for the acquisition of economic wealth was not confined to members of the Malay ruling elite. Personal jealousy and rivalry had become just as rife among the Chinese headmen and disturbances broke out at about the same time. The immediate cause of the outbreak has been ably told elsewhere and it may be reiterated here:

As soon as he [Kapitan Liu Ngim Kong] died [in 1868] his clansmen clamoured for the Capitanship and the family property. The Short History says that 'on receiving the news, Capitan Liu's clansmen of the surnames Liu, Kon and Chong all rushed to the spot according to customs of relationship and with the hope that they might receive the succession after the funeral'. Ah Loy, who had returned to Klang after his interview with Liu, immediately went back to Kuala Lumpur to carry out the orders of the late Capitan about the funeral rites. This 'interference' annoyed the dead man's relatives. They not only made trouble over the succession, but also seized some of Liu's furniture and personal belongings.<sup>2</sup>

At this stage, Sutan Puasa, the Mendeling leader, intervened to bring about a temporary settlement. But in February 1869, there arrived in Kuala Lumpur a mining headman from Lukut named Chong Chong who, fifteen years earlier, had given Ah Loy his first job. It appears that:

... from the moment of his arrival ... Ah Loy 'knew him for an enemy'. His clan name shows that he must have been a relative of the dead Capitan, and from his subsequent behaviour it is probable that he had travelled to Kuala Lumpur to support Liu's dissatisfied relatives. The Chong and the Liu clans came from neighbouring districts in China. They were in the habit of worshipping at the same temples, and at times such as this they naturally made common causes and joined together in defence of each other's rights.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The individual chiefs concerned were: Tengku Sutan, Raja Layang, Tengku Raja, Raja Mohamed Yusuf, Raja Perhimpunan, Raja Budul, Sutan Maharaja Lela, Sutan Jenaga, Sutan Besar, Menteri Gedong, Dato' Maharaja, Dato' Setia Raja, Dato' Maharaja Sudali, Haji Mohamed Salleh, Imam Perang Puriok and Imam Perang Malim. (See SSR, F7, Proclamation by Yang Di-Pertuan of Selangor, 25 Aug. 1870, a part of which is also cited in Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p.23, with one error: 'Raja Perhimpunan' is rendered 'Raja Perempuan' in Winstedt's work).

The proclamation was probably considered necessary because a number of Chinese were assisting the Mendeling. In one instance it was reported that a *perahu* (boat) under a Chinese *nakhoda* (skipper) had on board four Mendeling and they were shipping tin belonging to Sutan Puasa, one of the Mendeling leaders, to Malacca for sale. The report was made by Tengku Yusof, brother of Tengku Kudin. (See SSR, F7, T. Yusof to Colonial Secretary, Singapore, 9 Sept. 1870).

<sup>2</sup>Middlebrook, pp. 30-1.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. p. 32.

This clash of personal and family interests did not, however, produce immediate conflict.<sup>1</sup> Violence erupted when later in 1869, Yap Si, who had turned down the offer to become Kapitan China in favour of Yap Ah Loy, was killed by the Kah Yeng Chew at Kanching. The relationship between the Fui Chew and the Kah Yeng Chew had never been really cordial. The killing of Yap Si was considered an affront by the Fui Chew, and a trial of strength was inevitable. After adequate preparations and with the assistance of two Mendeling chiefs—the redoubtable Raja Asal, ruler of Ulu Klang, as well as Sutan Puasa, both of whom had financial claims on the Kah Yeng Chew—Yap Ah Loy massacred his enemies at Kanching in the mid-1870s.<sup>2</sup> The Mendeling involvement in Ah Loy's cause probably influenced Chong Chong, who had meanwhile allied himself with the Kah Yeng Chew, to seek the aid of Syed Mashhor sometime after July 1870.<sup>3</sup> Their combined forces took on the Mendeling and Fui Chew at Sungai Ampang and Ulu Klang between August-September

<sup>1</sup>Middlebrook made a number of errors in his account of the Kuala Lumpur disturbances. He considered secret society feuds as the actual cause of conflict, claiming that otherwise the Chinese in Kuala Lumpur and Kanching were 'all Hakkas ... from the same part of Kwangtung province' (p.27), when in fact there was a clear distinction between the Fui Chew and Kah Yeng Chew. Middlebrook was further misled by his ignorance of the Larut situation for in his reference to the migration of the Larut Fui Chew to Kuala Lumpur in the 1860s, he said: 'They were a welcome addition, both as members of the same tribe, and as persons experienced in tin mining and fighting. They were to prove of great value at a later date, though there is no doubt that the bitterness which they felt for the rival group, the Ghi Hins, increased the savagery of the subsequent fighting in Selangor' (p.21). It has been shown earlier that the Fui Chew in Larut were members of the Ghee Hin society and their quarrel there was not with the Kah Yeng Chew Hakka but the Chen Sang Hakka. The concern shown by the Kuala Lumpur Fui Chew for those in Larut is a good indication that territorial-dialect ties were sometimes stronger than secret society ties. It is not known, however, whether the Larut Fui Chew, on arrival in Kuala Lumpur, were obliged to change their secret society affiliation.

<sup>2</sup>Middlebrook, pp. 32-6, 44-54.

<sup>3</sup>Syed Masshor, a professional fighter from Pontianak, was brought into the Klang War by Kudin in his expedition against Raja Mahdi, probably in July 1870. But soon after the expedition started, Syed Abdullah, Mashhor's brother, was killed at Langat. Syed Mashhor accused Sultan Abdul Samad and his son, Raja Yakob, of having caused his brother's death. With his men he joined the forces of Mahdi. (*GPMP*, Braddell, 'Report of Proceedings of Govt. &c.')

Middlebrook claimed that the Mashhor-Chong Chong alliance took place in March 1870 (p.52) which is unlikely since he did not break away from Kudin until after Raja Mahdi had moved into Kuala Selangor in July 1870. And since Middlebrook himself admitted that the Kanching Massacre itself could have taken place any time between February and June 1870 (p.48), the evidence would tend to indicate that the massacre took place about a month before Syed Mashhor broke away from Kudin because the resulting circumstances would be such as to encourage a compact between two aggrieved leaders.

For an interesting description of Syed Mashhor, see F. Swettenham, *The Real Malay*, London, 1900, chapter entitled 'A Silhouette'.

1870 but suffered a temporary defeat. Mashhor was forced to retreat to Ulu Selangor while Chong Chong retired to Langat where the Chinese population comprised mainly Kah Yeng Chew Hakka. The Mashhor-Chong Chong followers subsequently re-assembled at Ulu Selangor.<sup>1</sup>

For a few months between 1870 and 1871, there was peace in Selangor. In the words of Raja Ismail: 'Tengku dia Oodin, I and my brother, lived in prosperity in Klang and each received his allowance and at that time we had not much debts.'<sup>2</sup> In effect, this was a temporary respite; tension was still very much in the air. And by then it was clear that a merger of interests had taken place between Malay leaders and Chinese headmen when originally the disturbances which occurred among the Malays and among the Chinese were not related to each other. At the same time, there was a rapid build-up of the anti-Kudin faction. The strong backing he received from the ruler in 1870 also upset the sons of the Sultan who feared that he might prove too ambitious. The subsequent years were to witness a stormy struggle between the local *anak raja* and Tengku Kudin for political control in Selangor.

### *The Perak Succession Dispute and 'Wars' in Larut*

The Perak succession dispute of the early 1870s is now well-known<sup>3</sup> but the details of what happened between 26 May 1871, when Sultan Ali died, and 29 June 1871, when he was buried, have not been adequately recorded in previously published works. An account by an eye witness is, in fact, extant.<sup>4</sup>

At the time when Sultan Ali was critically ill at Sayong, among those present were his two sons, Raja Othman and Raja Omar, together with three of the *orang besar-besar*: Temenggong Paduka Raja, Seri Maharaja Lela and Seri Nara Di-Raja. Subsequently they were joined by Orang Kaya Balai Maharaja Lela. When the condi-

<sup>1</sup>The Mashhor-Chong Chong alliance can also be attributed to the fact that after the end of 1869, the relationship between Kudin and Yap Ah Loy had become very amicable. Their forces, however, did not combine in any military operation until August 1871 when an attack was made on Syed Mashhor at Ulu Selangor.

<sup>2</sup>Raja Ismail to Gov., 28 Sept. 1876 in W. Jalleh, App. E.

<sup>3</sup>A useful account has been given by Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, pp. 77-9.

<sup>4</sup>See SSR, G7, Temenggong of Perak to H.E. the Gov., 9 May 1871 with encl. The date of Sultan Ali's burial is recorded in SSR, G7, Sultan Ismail to A. N. Birch, 17 Aug. 1871.

tion of Sultan Ali deteriorated, the chiefs present decided to send for Raja Muda Abdullah, Raja Bendahara Ismail and the other *orang besar-besar*. A letter carrying the Yang Di-Pertuan's seal was sent to summon Raja Abdullah who, however, did not respond, not even after several other messages had been sent.

There were probably two major reasons why Raja Abdullah chose not to be present. It has been mentioned that by early 1871 considerable friction existed between the chiefs in the north and Raja Abdullah owing to his dealings with Edward Bacon. At the same time, he suffered disgrace when he lost his wife to another man, an episode which has been interestingly told by Swettenham.<sup>1</sup>

Some time in early 1871, there arrived in Batak Rabbit, the residence of Raja Abdullah,<sup>2</sup> Raja Daud, brother of Raja Mahdi. Swettenham described him as

... about the same age as [Raja Abdullah, that is, about 30], but in other respects there was a striking difference between the two men. [Daud] was a man of pleasing features, extremely quiet, and of courtly manners; the casual observer would probably fail to realise that this outward appearance concealed a firm determination and a dauntless courage. Of worldly goods he had little enough, and small prospect of multiplying them, but in rank he was almost, if not quite, the equal of Raja [Abdullah.]

At that time, Raja Abdullah had been married to Raja Tipah, younger sister of Sultan Ali,<sup>3</sup> for about three years. She had borne him two children—Raja Mansur and Raja Chulan. For Raja Tipah Swettenham had the highest praise:

Exceeding fair ..., slight but graceful in figure with very small hands and feet, an oval face and splendid eyes, glistening blue-white wells in which floated, lotus-like, the dark iris, flashing or wooing in changeful expression from wide-open or half-closed lids deeply shaded by long black lashes. Her nose was small, straight, and well out, and the curved smiling lips disclosed teeth of perfect shape and singular whiteness. In either cheek a dimple, *lesong mati*, as the Malays call it, the dimple so fascinates the beholder that it will lure him even unto death. Her jet-black hair, fringing the forehead in an oval frame, was drawn straight back over the well-shaped head and fastened in a simple knot with four ruby-studded hair-pins; the heads firmly fixed against one side of the coil, while the golden points protruded for an inch or more beyond the other.

<sup>1</sup>See Swettenham, *Malay Sketches*, London, 1895, pp. 179-91. Fictitious names, however, are used in the story.

<sup>2</sup>PP, Sir A. Clarke to Carnarvon, 26 April 1875, encl.1, Report of Acting Resident, Perak (J. W. W. Birch), 2 April 1875.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, G7, Temenggong of Perak to Gov., SS, 9 May 1872 with encl.

Raja Daud and Raja Tipah were mutually attracted. One night, they eloped. Raja Abdullah made no attempt to regain his wife, hence the disgrace.

After Sultan Ali had died for more than three days, many of the other *orang besar-besar* also turned up—Perdana Menteri Paduku Seri Maharaja Ibrahim bin Jaafar, Panglima Kinta Seri Amar Bangsa Di-Raja, Sa'gor Di-Raja, the newly appointed Seri Adika Raja, the Acting Panglima Bukit Gantang and, later than all of them, the Raja Bendahara. It was Dato' Sa'gor who informed the assembled chiefs that Raja Abdullah would not be coming and this was confirmed by Maharaja Lela<sup>1</sup> who had been specially sent to summon Raja Abdullah. After a delay of about one month, Raja Othman 'summoned all the great men and the lubalangs and the Pugawies and Sida Sidas, Bantaras, Penghulus, Nais and old men not under the Government'. When they had gathered together, he said:

It is not possible to keep my father's corpse any longer, it is contrary to the laws of God and infamous before men, let us bury him and give the Kingdom to the Rajah Bandahara for he is the eldest in rank of all the Rajahs in Perak. Moreover, he is an old man and for the last two reigns he has been Bandahara during which time there has been no trouble whatever in Perak, and his turn has arrived, it is right that he should hold the reigns (sic) of Government. Every Rajah who obtains the Rank of Bandahara in Perak when has had two turns (as Bandahara) i.e. when during two reigns he has been Bandahara instead of becoming Rajah Muda in the second reign he must become Sultan. Moreover the Rajah Bandahara stands in the light of grand father to the Rajah Muda and Raja Ithman [the speaker] it is right that we should exalt him now that he is old.

Raja Othman's proposal was deliberated by the *orang besar-besar* who 'all greatly blamed Rajah Muda saying that he was not fit to rule for there could not be shewn one single instance of his having benefitted his Country'. Raja Ismail was elected without a dissentient voice with the title of Paduka Seri Sultan Ismail Mu'abidin Shah. On 3 July 1871, Sultan Ismail conferred the title of Raja Bendahara on Raja Othman. Apparently, a few days after the election, 'the Laksamana arrived and acknowledged that he approved of the appointment of Sultan Ismail, and he performed every thing as it is appointed to be done by the Laksamana to the Sultan, and the Shahbandar in like manner also'.<sup>2</sup>

After Raja Ismail's accession, Raja Abdullah 'appears to have taken no active steps to assert his rights for some months, but to

<sup>1</sup>It is not possible to determine which 'Maharaja Lela' was referred to.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G7, Mantri of Laroot to Gov., 20 May 1872.



have remained at Purbayan [in Hilir Perak] in great discontent, but without forming any plan as to how to better his position'.<sup>1</sup> According to a contemporary report:

Since then there has been a sort of armed peace between the parties the continuance of which has perhaps been seized by the fact that the R. B. and the R. M. each holds the other's son as a prisoner. The R. B. who was previously living at a place called Blanja far up the Perak River has now gone a day's journey to the interior by land with the view it was stated to prevent the chance of the insignia falling into the R. M.'s hands.<sup>2</sup>

In early 1872, Abdullah finally made his move by styling himself Sultan Abdullah Mohamed Shah in his letters to Governor Ord and Tengku Kudin.<sup>3</sup> Two factors gave him courage to act. Firstly, he had the support of some of the chiefs of Hilir Perak because since the killing of the Shahbandar by Panglima Perang Semaun, many of them could not reconcile themselves to Raja Ismail. One person on whom Raja Abdullah leaned heavily for advice was a man of property called Haji Musa,<sup>4</sup> a relative of the murdered Shahbandar. Haji Musa's residence at Batak Rabbit<sup>5</sup> had also been attacked by Panglima Perang Semaun because Haji Musa attempted to avenge the killing of the Shahbandar in 1864.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, Abdullah was further 'stirred up to action by the man named Bacon' who, together with another Penang merchant, had long desired concessions at Krian.<sup>7</sup>

In a letter to the Governor, at this juncture, Abdullah explained that he was unable to attend the funeral of Sultan Ali because '... beta pada waktu itu ada dalam tengah usur tiada boleh pergi'.<sup>8</sup> The *orang besar-besar* had, therefore, *sandarkan* (entrusted temporarily) the government of the country to Raja Ismail. His letter also carried

<sup>1</sup>CMP, Irving's Memorandum relative to the Affairs of Perak, with reference to a visit to that Country in April and May 1872 and subsequent occurrences up to the 15th June 1872 dated 24 July 1872.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G7, Irving's Memorandum relative to the present state of affairs in Perak, 30 April 1872.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.; SSR, G7, Sultan Abdullah to Gov., 21 Feb. 1872. Raja Abdullah adopted the title after he, together with the Shahbandar, Haji Musa and a certain Raja Dayang, had made an attack on the Raja Mahkota at Sungai Durian, where he (the Raja Mahkota) was collecting taxes on behalf of Sultan Ismail, and had driven him away. (Perak Enquiry Papers, Vol. 1, 1876, XXIIJ—Statement of Nakodah Trang, 1 Sept. 1876.)

<sup>4</sup>PP, Sir A. Clarke to Carnarvon, 26 April 1875, encl.2, Clarke to Abdullah, n.d.

<sup>5</sup>Remnants of the *kota* which encircled Musa's house can still be seen at Batak Rabbit. Some of the residents there claim that he was related to Abdullah.

<sup>6</sup>Swettenham, *Malay Sketches*, pp. 124-46.

<sup>7</sup>CMP, Irving's Memo. on Perak, 24 July 1872; CMP, Sir A. Clarke to Kimberley, 24 Feb. 1874, encl., Skinner's *Precis of Perak Affairs*, 10 Jan. 1874.

<sup>8</sup>'I was ill at that time and therefore could not go'.

the seals of four *orang besar-besar* (Shahbandar, Laksamana, Orang Kaya Balai Maharaja Lela and Dato' Sa'gor) who claimed that they could not accept Raja Ismail as the ruler because 'the Rajah Bandahara is not descended from the Kings of Perak but is a Syed who came from Siak and married at Perak'.<sup>1</sup>

No less important was the personal hostility between Ngah Ibrahim and Raja Abdullah. During the reign of Sultan Jaafar, father of Raja Abdullah, the relationship between the Yang Di-Pertuan and Long Jaafar was especially intimate so much so that Ngah Ibrahim became *anak angkat* (adoptive son) to Sultan Jaafar and was recognized as *saudara* (brother) to Raja Abdullah. It was said that Ngah Ibrahim himself often brought presents to Sultan Jaafar both in cash and in kind. It was because of this close relationship that the ruler gave over the administration (and therefore the revenue) of Larut to Long Jaafar. But he left instructions that Ngah Ibrahim should one day help to place Raja Abdullah on the throne and they should never quarrel. Not long after Sultan Jaafar's death, misunderstanding arose between Ngah Ibrahim and Raja Abdullah. Apparently Ngah Ibrahim was afraid that should Raja Abdullah become the ruler, he might ask for a substantial share of the Larut revenue because he (the Raja Muda) had been in the habit of pestering Ngah Ibrahim for money.<sup>2</sup>

Between the two men, Raja Abdullah was clearly more aggressive. This was evident to observers when the two met at Kuala Larut, on 20 April 1872, on board the *Pluto* for Ibrahim '... showed the R. Muda a degree of respect that seemed to indicate that he was at any rate not quite certain of his ground and not prepared to treat the R. Muda ... as a person in open rebellion against the authority of his lawful sovereign.'<sup>3</sup> Munshi Ibrahim described Raja Abdullah as a man small in stature, courageous, good-looking and shrewd. He had a darkish complexion, a restless temperament and big eyes and he loved to wear all kinds of beautiful things. But he was generally not well-informed. This could be gathered from his speech and *aturan bahasa* (organization of language).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SSR, G7, Sultan Abdullah to Gov., 21 Feb. 1872. It may be pointed out that it was not Raja Ismail himself who had come over from Siak but his father.

<sup>2</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), *Kisah Pelayaran Muhammad Ibrahim*, pp. 64, 75-6.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, G7, Irving's Memo. relative to the present state of affairs in Perak, 30 April 1872. See also Munshi Ibrahim, pp. 65-8.

<sup>4</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 69.

If Ngah Ibrahim was not outwardly aggressive, he had, nevertheless, a very independent spirit. He claimed that: '... the custom in Perak is that the most powerful man no matter what his claims may be according to birth is always in the end acknowledged Sultan ... if I were a common lamp lighter and had only men to back me, I might be made Sultan tomorrow'.<sup>1</sup> He spoke contemptuously of Raja Abdullah: '... [he] is like a duck's egg hatched by a hen. He is in fact a bastard, and Sultan Jaffar was not his father.... I acknowledged Abdulla as Raja Muda [when] Sultan Jaffar was alive [because] he chose to acknowledge Abdulla as his son....'<sup>2</sup>

On 23 or 24 April 1872, Raja Abdullah made an even more concerted effort to gain power. With about twelve *perahu* containing some 200 followers, he set off north along the coast with the intention, as he claimed, of going to Penang to appeal to the Governor, for Penang was so close to Perak that it was as if Perak was under the protection of the English. He had with him a letter addressed to the Governor carrying the chop of the four *orang besar-besar* who supported him.<sup>3</sup> The letter was subsequently handed over to Irving. Ngah Ibrahim, on the other hand, declared that Abdullah's real intention was to proceed to Krian where he hoped to establish himself.<sup>4</sup> And reports received in Penang on 24 April 1872 were also to the effect that Raja Abdullah was heading towards Krian to take possession of it and place it in the charge of Edward Bacon.<sup>5</sup>

However, after a meeting with Irving in the *Pluto* at Kuala Larut on the 25th, Raja Abdullah did not proceed north. On the following morning, he again went on board the *Pluto* where he showed several letters to Irving among them letters from the Raja of Kedah and Tengku Kudin, in reply to his own letters, indicating that they liked him to be the Yang Di-Pertuan.<sup>6</sup> The letter from the ruler of Kedah 'warmly expressed and begged him not to vex himself because the insignia of the Kingdom were in the hands of the Bandaharah'.<sup>7</sup> Abdullah also showed Irving a letter of agreement concluded between

<sup>1</sup>Perak Enquiry Papers, vol. I, XXIII—Statement of Nakodah Trang, 1 Sept. 1876.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 66.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. p. 67.

<sup>5</sup>SSR, G7, Geo. E. Evans to Capt. Speedy, 24 April 1872; Irving to Campbell, 24 April 1872.

<sup>6</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 68.

<sup>7</sup>SSR, G7, Irving's Memo. relative to the present state of affairs in Perak, 30 April 1872.

him and Ngah Ibrahim during the time when Sultan Jaafar was ruling in which both of them promised to be always loyal to each other.<sup>1</sup>

At about 3.45 p.m. the same day, Raja Abdullah once more went on board the *Pluto* where he asked Munshi Ibrahim, Irving's interpreter, to write for him a letter to Kudin in which he asked that Kudin should reply to his letter. He stated categorically that once he returned to Sungai Perak, there would be trouble (*neschaya jadtalah gadoh*). He requested that Kudin should despatch warships to Larut and to bear the expenditure until such time as he [Abdullah] could repay the amount incurred. And he whispered to Munshi Ibrahim asking the latter to inform Irving that should he [Abdullah] succeed in gaining control of the kingdom of Perak, he was prepared to meet all the demands of the British government. He would also not forget all the assistance that Munshi Ibrahim had given. For as long as Munshi Ibrahim was alive, he would be given a pension. Abdullah asked the Munshi to accompany the warships to Perak.<sup>2</sup>

In the subsequent months, Raja Abdullah continued to correspond with the Straits authorities. He must have felt optimistic of the future for the British officials were trying their best<sup>3</sup> to have another election held whereby Raja Abdullah, it was hoped, might be elected in place of Raja Ismail.<sup>4</sup> Throughout this period, Raja Abdullah used a chop with the title of Yang Di-Pertuan inscribed on it and while in Larut,

<sup>1</sup>*Kedua-nya berwaad dan bertegoh-teguh setia selama-lama-nya.*

<sup>2</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), pp. 68-70, 80.

<sup>3</sup>Irving, for example, wrote: 'My object in this and throughout was while giving affairs a certain impetus in the R. Muda's direction, to leave things open for the establishment of friendly relations with the R. Bendahara in the event of his side proving successful.' Ord's comment on the margin was: 'Right'. (SSR, G7, Memorandum relative to the Perak Succession, 5 June 1872).

<sup>4</sup>The reason for British bias towards Abdullah was clearly given by Irving: 'Of the claimants the one to be supported in the interests of the Government is I think the R. Muda. He is a young man and he professes to be and I have no doubt, is desirous of governing his country 'English fashion'. He is accessible to living as he does down at the Qualla. The other man I have not seen but he must be a man advanced in years and has lived all his life up in the interior. I should expect to find him a regular impracticable Malay of the old school. Besides he is hostile to our Policy in Salangore. There is no doubt of this. Tunku dia Oodin had evidence that the B. was supporting Syed Mashore and the others and I heard at Laroot that Syed Mashore had been staying at Kuntar [Kinta] which is the B.'s place of residence. If the Government were therefore to use its influence (it might be done very unobtrusively) and succeed in bringing in the R. Muda it would strengthen its position in Salangore, get a man open to influence at Perak and establish a harmonious state of affairs all down the coast from Queddah to Johore.' (SSR, G7, Irving's Memorandum relative to the present state of affairs in Perak, 30 April 1872.)

Irving's views were then upheld by Governor Ord in his handling of the affairs of the western Malay states. His marginal comments on Irving's Memo. of 5 June 1872 on the Perak Succession question (SSR, G7) were: 'Right', 'This is what I contemplated', 'Correct' and 'Certainly'.

he openly used the *mendera puteh* (white flag) of the Perak ruler.<sup>1</sup> In July 1872, Abdullah was in Penang where he endeavoured to obtain the support of merchants interested in concessions in the state of Perak.<sup>2</sup> But his opponents were equally adamant and it became manifest by August 1872 that there was not going to be another election.<sup>3</sup> Nonetheless, though the *hilir* and *hulu* factions were at variance with each other throughout 1872, there was no major outbreak of hostility.

The picture in Larut was vastly different. At the beginning of 1872, fighting once more broke out among the Chinese miners.<sup>4</sup> It has been argued that:

The latent cause of the ... Larut war [of 1872] was a simmering dispute between Triad and Tokong [i.e. Ghee Hin and Hai San seen as broader organizations than just two societies] over the boundary of certain tin bearing land lying between their respective holdings at Kamunting ... and Klian Pauh.... The precipitating cause was an alleged intrigue between Lee Ah Kun and a woman of the Tokong camp at Klian Pauh who was said to be the wife of a close relative of Chang Keng Kui [head of the Hai San].<sup>5</sup>

This is an oversimplification.

It has been mentioned that since the disturbances of 1865, the Fui Chew Hakka were practically expelled from Larut. Many of them, in effect, moved to Kuala Lumpur. Their places were gradually taken over by San Neng from Penang who belonged primarily to the secret society called Ho Hup Seah. But, since 1861, the Chen Sang had amply demonstrated that they were the most powerful group in Larut. In course of time, they became more and more arrogant. This then was the remote cause of the 'war' of 1872.

The leader of the San Neng (Ho Hup Seah) in Larut was a Penang Chinese called Ho Ghi Siu. His position was comparatively weak because he had only about 2,000 men whereas the Chen Sang Hakka (Hai San) numbered about 10,000. Owing to the domineering attitude of the Hai San, the Ho Hup Seah eventually teamed up

<sup>1</sup>Wynne, *Triad and Tabut*, p. 272; Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 68.

<sup>2</sup>Wynne, p. 269.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, G7, Irving to Col. Sec., SS, 8 Aug. 1872.

<sup>4</sup>The details of the fighting have been given by various writers (C. S. Wong, *A Gallery of Chinese Captains*, pp. 72-7; Winstedt & Wilkinson, 'A History of Perak', pp. 82-90; Wynne, pp. 265-88; Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, pp. 112-25; Parkinson, *British Intervention...*, pp. 74-103); the present account therefore concentrates on only aspects of the subject which are hitherto vaguely known.

<sup>5</sup>Wynne, p. 266.

with the Ghee Hin to fight the Hai San. Ngah Ibrahim, as in the past, assisted the Hai San. Many were wounded and killed. The Ho Hup Seah and Ghee Hin combination drove the Hai San to Ngah Ibrahim's *kubu* at Matang and finally out of Larut. Ngah Ibrahim, at this stage, had no alternative but to agree to co-operate with the Ho Hup Seah.<sup>1</sup>

This was the early phase of the Larut disturbances of the 1870s. The situation was soon to become even more complex. It is appropriate at this juncture to dwell more elaborately on the Chinese community in Larut in the early 1870s. There is ample evidence to show that the San Neng (Ho Hup Seah) constituted one of the two important Chinese factions in Larut. Referring to the first outbreak of hostility in 1872, Ngah Ibrahim said:

Whilst Law Ah Sam was farmer (i.e. at the commencement of these disturbances), about 2,000 to 3,000 Chinese came in boats from Trong, and at the same time about 1,000 more came by land, and, without any previous intimation of their intention, attacked the miners.

I had heard some vague reports about being attacked, but had also heard them contradicted, and I did not know at that time what to believe.

These men who came were not miners, but came from Province Wellesley to Kreaon on the Malay side near Nebong Tebal and collected there.

I asked them to whom they belonged, and they said they were carpenters and goldsmiths, and were Ho Ghee Sew, Ah Chan, Guan Teh and Tong's men.

They attacked my house (which is strongly built of brick) for two days—broke down my godowns—killed ten of my police and stole all my tin &c.

I thought when they came they were only going to attack the farmers and miners, but they immediately attacked me also.

They could give no reason for their attack, and said they were only fighting men, and had been sent from Penang to fight. I could not at the time find out to what Congsee they belonged; some said they were Ghee Hins, others that they were Hap Sia (Ho Ghee Sew's Congsee)—some were Hysans, and I thought at first they were Law Ah Sam's friends as he is head of that Congsee, and some of his tribe are Ghee Hins.<sup>2</sup>

After the San Neng had won the first round of the battle, a British report stated: '... the Mentri, who had previously been a member of the Hysan Kongsee or Secret Society, of which the members chiefly belonged to the defeated party, withdrew from it, and joined the

<sup>1</sup>This is a summary of the early stage of the disturbances as given by Munshi Ibrahim, (Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 63).

<sup>2</sup>CMP, Sir A. Clarke to Kimberley, 24 Feb, 1874, encl.6, Statements made by Tunku Mantri in reply to questions regarding affairs of Larut, 26 Aug. 1873.

Habsya Kongsee, the members of which were principally Sin Heng men.<sup>1</sup> And a letter from Lieutenant-Governor Campbell to the Colonial Secretary (6 September 1872) referring to an attempted stabbing of Ho Ghee Siu in Penang spoke of him as the leader of the San Neng.<sup>2</sup> Ho Ghee Siu's right hand man in Larut was Lee Ah Kun.<sup>3</sup>

It is imperative to note that the Larut 'wars' of the early 1870s involved more than two secret societies. Mention has already been made of the Ho Hup Seah-Ghee Hin combination. More will be said about the Ghee Hin subsequently. Meanwhile, it is necessary to turn to the Toa Peh Kong which is well-known to historians of nineteenth century Malaya because of its involvement in the Penang riots of 1867. Its role in the Larut disturbances is, by comparison, less well-known. Although it has been mentioned earlier that the Toa Peh Kong had existed in Larut, probably among the few Hokkien present there, since about 1861,<sup>4</sup> it cannot be assumed that since then they had taken an active part in the Larut 'wars'. In 1862, they did threaten to attack the Ghee Hin miners for having appealed to the British to interfere in Larut affairs.<sup>5</sup> But, in 1865, they acted as mediators between the Fui Chew and Chen Sang though they failed to prevent bitter fighting between the two factions.<sup>6</sup> Although relationship between the Toa Peh Kong and the Ghee Hin in Penang had never been cordial since the riots of 1859, the Toa Peh Kong did not directly participate in the Larut disturbances until April-May 1873 for in early May 1873, Raja Abdullah wrote to Penang: 'We have to inform our friend that the head Chinese of the Gehin faction have come to complain to us that the Chinese of the Toa Pakong faction have joined the Hysan and attacked the Gehin people....'<sup>7</sup> And the reply to Abdullah was: 'We are very much obliged to our friend for sending us this information. We have already heard that

<sup>1</sup>CMP, Irving's Memo. relative to the Affairs of Perak &c., 24 July 1872.

<sup>2</sup>CMP, A. Skinner, 'Precis of Perak Affairs', 10 Jan. 1874.

<sup>3</sup>Earlier historians have confused him with Lee Koh Yin (also spelt 'Lee Coyn' and 'Lee Coyen') head of the Penang Ghee Hin (see Wynne, pp. 275-6 and Wong, p. 72). This is the result of an attempt to give credence to the theory that the Larut disturbances and the Penang riots of 1867 were closely related. But the evidence, based as it was, on one version of the romanisation of the person's name (i.e. Lee Coyn) is obviously flimsy especially when the other versions also appear from time to time. Moreover, it is inconceivable that the supreme head of the Penang Ghee Hin should be the subordinate of the head of the Ho Hup Seah which was an off-shoot of the Ghee Hin.

<sup>4</sup>See p. 134, note 3.

<sup>5</sup>See, CO 273/15, Correspondence on the Larut Disturbances.

<sup>6</sup>SSR, DD42, Loh Chong's affidavit, June 1865.

<sup>7</sup>SSR, G7, Raja Abdullah to Anson, 5 May 1873.

this combination of the two Chinese Kongsees had taken place and we are now making enquiries into the matter.<sup>1</sup>

So far it has been established that four Chinese societies were involved in the Larut disturbances of 1872-3. There was, in fact, a fifth society—the Ho Seng. The *Singapore Daily Times* of 12 March 1872 reported that a contributory factor to the outbreak of violence in 1872 was a quarrel between the Ghee Hin and the Ho Seng.<sup>2</sup> The role of the Ho Seng in Larut politics is still obscure. The society did not attract much attention in Perak until October 1878 when its members killed Captain Lloyd, the British administrator at Dindings.<sup>3</sup> In Penang, its actual base, the Ho Seng was a relatively quiet society until June 1867 when it came into conflict with the Toa Peh Kong.<sup>4</sup> But when riots broke out in July 1867, the Toa Peh Kong made special efforts to persuade the Ho Seng to remain neutral.<sup>5</sup> The action of the Toa Peh Kong suggested that the Ho Seng was a society to be reckoned with and after that the relationship between the two societies improved. The available records on the Larut disturbances give no elaborate information on this society except that it was backing the Hai San and Toa Peh Kong against the Ho Hup Seah and Ghee Hin.<sup>6</sup>

The colours of flags used by the various warring factions also help to throw light on the nature of the secret societies. The Teochew of Krian in a petition (1 August 1873) to the Penang authorities mentioned that the Toa Peh Kong used a red-with-black-border flag<sup>7</sup> and the Ho Seng, a black-with-white-border flag.<sup>8</sup> It has also been recorded that Ho Ghee Siu's men flew a black flag with a red border and Khaw Boo Aun's<sup>9</sup> men used a red flag with a white border.<sup>10</sup> This description of the flag used by Ho Ghee Siu's men has provoked the following comment: '... a slip appears to have been made in attributing a black flag with red border to Ho Ghi Siu who

<sup>1</sup>SSR, G7, Anson to Raja Muda, Perak, 20 May 1873.

<sup>2</sup>Wee Choon Siang, 'Ngah Ibrahim in Larut, 1858-1874,' p.39.

<sup>3</sup>See CO 273, vols. 96 and 98.

<sup>4</sup>PRCR, evidence no.9, Boey Yoo Kong.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. evidence no.23, Teoh Ching Yen: 'I know of a letter written by Beng Kwa, by order of Thean Teck [head of Toa Peh Kong], to the Ho Seng Society, requesting them to remain neutral during the quarrel'.

<sup>6</sup>Wynne, p.269.

<sup>7</sup>See also, PRCR, evidence no.1, Khoo Thean Teck, who described the fighting flag of the Toa Peh Kong as a triangle with a red ground and black border.

<sup>8</sup>Wee Choon Siang, p.46; Wynne, p.269.

<sup>9</sup>Khaw Boo Aun was an important leader of the Penang Ghee Hin. For more details see, p. 212.

<sup>10</sup>Winstedt & Wilkinson, p. 86.



was the Ghee Hin leader in Penang and his flag in Larut would be the same as that of Koh Bu An viz.—Red with a white border'.<sup>1</sup> But it is the commentator who is in error because he assumed that Ho Ghee Siu was the leader of the Ghee Hin. The difference between the colour of the flag used by Khaw Boo Aun's men and that used by Ho Ghee Siu's men proves conclusively that the Ho Hup Seah and the Ghee Hin were not synonymous.

The information contained in the Penang Riot Commission Report is equally enlightening. Referring to a Ghee Hin-Toa Peh Kong meeting on 2 August 1867, Khoo Thean Teik, supreme head of the Toa Peh Kong, recalled his conversation with Boey Yoo Kong, *sin sehn* (secretary) of the Ghee Hin:

The Secretary replied—On my side of the Town there are several societies, the Ghee Hins, Ho Seng, Ho Hup Seah, and as their houses are all mixed up together, I cannot be answerable.

I said—There are also several societies on my side of the Town, Ghee Hins, Ho Seng, Ho Hup Seah, Hye San and Chin Chin; and if we intend to act with a clean heart we can manage it.<sup>2</sup>

It is interesting to note that in both instances, the Ghee Hin was referred to in the plural. This may be explained by a reference to another statement made during the enquiry:

There are Chin Chew men, and Macao men in the Ghee Hin Society, and whenever the Toa-Peh-Kongs have had to complain to the Secretary of the Ghee Hins of any theft, or assault committed by any of the members of that society on any of our members, the Ghee Hin Secretary puts us off, and says: 'Oh! he's a Chin Chew not a Macao man; go to Wee Kee, he is head of the Chin Chews'.<sup>3</sup>

Hence, on an occasion when Khaw Boo Aun's men and Ho Ghee Siu's men combined to detain a *tongkang* (flat-bottomed barge), the owner of the *tongkang* observed that 'The 11 boats were armed by Macao and Teo Chew men, the large boats had about 40 men, the smaller ones about 25 men. They all had flags some red edged with white, some black edged with red, and others white edged with red'.<sup>4</sup> It has been mentioned that black with red border was the flag of the Ho Hup Seah and red with white border was the flag of Khaw Boo Aun's men who were, in fact, primarily Teochew. White with red

<sup>1</sup>Wynne, p. 268.

<sup>2</sup>PRCR, evidence no.1—Khoo Thean Teck.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. evidence no.35—Lim Beng Kwa.

<sup>4</sup>SSR, G7, The Information and Complaint of Eng Tan of Penang, 19 Aug. 1873.

border was, in reality, the 'Grand Flag' of the Ghee Hin, used also by Cantonese members of the Ghee Hin. In addition, there were five other types of colour-combinations.<sup>1</sup>

On the basis of what has been described, it is clear that the two warring factions were, on the one hand, the Hai San, Toa Peh Kong and Ho Seng combination made up largely of Chen Sang Hakka and Hokkien and, on the other, the Ghee Hin-Ho Hup Seah alliance, comprising mainly Teochew and San Neng. It is equally clear from the evidence given above that the majority of the Teochew were not resident in Larut proper but in the neighbouring coastal area, for example Trong and in Province Wellesley.

The fighting which began in Larut spread to the other territories of Perak with raids and counter-raids, each combination attempting to oust the other completely from every important commercial area. Between March and October 1872 when the Ho Hup Seah and Ghee Hin held sway, traders belonging to the rival combination suffered severe losses. One such trader was Khoo Keong, a Hokkien trader whose firm was at No. 101, Beach Street, Penang; he was, therefore, very likely to have been associated with the Toa Peh Kong. As early as February-March 1871, Khoo Keong's brother, Khoo Teik, had leased from Dato' Muda Abdul Rafur bin Panglima Bukit Gantang Seri Amar Di-Raja the forest in the interior of Sapetang 'for the purpose of cutting and sawing timber into planks and other house building materials for Penang'. In September of the same year, the lease was transferred to Khoo Keong who put in an initial expenditure of \$3,620-\$1,600 in building three work houses, clearing the land as well as clearing and removing the obstructions in the Sapetang river in several places to enable the timber to float down; \$400 advanced to Dato' Muda Abdul Rafur and others; \$620 advanced to thirty-one labourers from Penang to be repaid after the expiration of one year; and \$1,000 in obtaining the lease. In 1872 Ngah Ibrahim, probably through the instigation of the Ho Hup Seah and Ghee Hin, went personally to Sapetang and blockaded the river. Subsequently, a party of 200 armed Malays, under Ibrahim's instructions, arrived at Ulu Sapetang and plundered Khoo Keong's property worth about \$3,700.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PRCR, evidence no.8—Boey Yoo Kong.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G7, Petition of Khoo Keong to Campbell, 26 July 1872 with enclosures. See also, Petition of Chew Tooat, Khoo Keong, Aong Aho, Hek Boon and others to Lt. Gov., Penang, 12 Dec. 1873. All these were Hokkien traders of Penang.

In October 1872, the Hai San counter attacked from Penang and succeeded in driving the Ho Hup Seah out of Larut. But in December 1872, the Ghee Hin from Penang raided the Larut coast and captured Matang. For several months in 1873, there was a near stalemate between the belligerents, with the Ghee Hin and Ho Hup Seah controlling Kuala Larut up to Simpang and the Hai San entrenched in the interior. It was at this stage that the Toa Peh Kong entered the 'war'. Traders belonging to both combinations who had settled at Kurau, Gula, Kalumpang, Selinseng and Sapetang, began to suffer from depredations committed by ravaging parties from rival camps.

In the earlier part of 1873, the Ghee Hin were reported to have committed mischief on the Toa Peh Kong at Gula.<sup>1</sup> As a reprisal, the Toa Peh Kong and Hai San, from Penang, went to Gula 'in 5 Junks and 6 or 7 boats and ... beat and plundered [the] property and afterwards burnt [the] houses' of Ghee Hin traders. They were said to have taken away

... all the things that were there also cash to the amount of \$450 and 200 tails of Chandu (opium) rice 2 coyans and oobat (medicine) ... a little or in small quantities 150 and provisions in all \$200 and boxes containing cloths, bajeos and trousers amounting to \$250 and small sampans about 50 in number.<sup>2</sup>

At about the same time, there was a raid on 'the opium, spirit, timber, chunam and other farms situated along the sea-shore of Gula' also belonging to a group of Ghee Hin traders who had rented the farms from Ngah Ibrahim about two or three years earlier. The Hai San and Toa Peh Kong 'burnt the village down to the ground after plundering it of the merchandise and killing and wounding all the residents who had taken to flight'. The Ghee Hin traders were said to have '... suffered a loss of 6,000 dollars besides 2,000 dollars by the traders in the neighbouring village called Klompang, who were indebted to your Petitioners, and whose ware houses were also attacked, plundered and burnt by the same kongsees.' After the village had been rebuilt and trade revived by the Ghee Hin traders, the Toa Peh Kong and Hai San once again 'devastated and burnt the whole village, scuttled and sunk the junks and topes then lying in the river'.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>SSR, G7, T. C. S. Speedy to Anson, 23 June 1873.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Raja Abdullah to Anson, 17 June 1873.

<sup>3</sup>CMP, Sir A. Clarke to Kimberley, encl.6, Petition of Cheang Long Seng, Chin Guan Tek, Ong Pak Lin and Wen Goh Yong, residing in Bishop St., Penang, to Anson, 23 June 1873. See also C. S. Wong, App. K, 'The Chinese Paper of Khaw Boo Ann'.

On 12 June 1873, Chang Keng Kui's men (Hai San) attacked Khaw Boo Aun's farms at Kalumpang and Selinseng 'robbed to the amount of \$3,500 and plundered the Tay Chew men living there, killing 60 Tay Chew men'.<sup>1</sup> These attacks on the Teochew had serious repercussions on Penang for, since the 1850s, 'the supplies of firewood used in Penang have been procured by Chinese belonging to the Teo Chew class in the territory of Kurau principally from Sunghy Gulah, Klompang and Sepatang, paying a duty of 40 or 50 cents per perahu'. The disturbances drove the Teochew away and more than 1,500 of them were thrown out of employment so that 'the firewood for the supply of the sugar and other Estates, the Steamers, and for domestic purposes in Penang has thus been interrupted and great loss and inconvenience will be caused to the inhabitants'.<sup>2</sup>

The Ghee Hin and Ho Hup Seah, on the other hand, who controlled the area approximately between Kuala Krian and Tanjong Piandang, attacked both Malay and Chinese boats carrying provisions and supplies to their enemies. On 23 July 1873, two Chinese fishing boats were attacked and taken to Krian; on 24 July, two parties of Malays were attacked—one at Tanjong Piandang and the other off Tanjong Piandang; on 25 July, four Malays were attacked at Kuala Krian; on 26 July, three other Malays were attacked at Kuala Krian. Two Malays, Yakob and Lebai Ali, who had rented padi lands from Ngah Ibrahim at Tanjong Piandang were also attacked on 25 July by a party of armed Chinese. All the Malays and Chinese attacked were residents of Penang.<sup>3</sup>

The hostility between the two warring camps was so fierce that even at Hilir Perak a community of about 60 Chin Chew and other Hokkien traders, together with their families, who had been there for many years, were threatened by the Ho Hup Seah. It was reported that 'the Shahbandar of Perak acting in concert with the Raja Muda [Abdullah] ... and the Sen Nings' ordered the traders to leave the territory. Fearing for their lives, they were only too willing to do so

<sup>1</sup>C. S. Wong, App. K.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G7, Memorial of the Inhabitants of Penang to Lt. Gov., Penang, 2 July 1873. This memorial must have been initiated by European merchants and planters, for among the leading signatories were A. Brown, J. W. Vermont, Walter Scott, W. S. Paddy, A. B. Thompson and Law Nairne. Leading Chinese merchants, irrespective of the societies they belonged to, were obliged to sign. Among them were Foo Tye Sin, Koh Siang Tat and Ong Boon Teik.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Extracts from Reports regarding piracies committed on British subjects by Chinese War Junks and Prows of the Sinnengs.

but begged the British government to allow the steamer *Avon* to convoy them until they had passed the Dindings or Pulau Pangkor.<sup>1</sup>

It is well-known now that the power-struggle between the Chinese factions in Perak eventually became merged with Malay politics as happened in Selangor. The numerical strength of the Chinese and their vast financial resources were factors which Raja Abdullah and Ngah Ibrahim were fully conscious of, for these could affect decisively the balance of power between the conflicting Malay factions. From about 1870, Raja Abdullah had already involved himself with the Ghee Hin, and Ngah Ibrahim, except for the brief period between March and October 1872 when discretion forced him to act otherwise, had always been closely associated with the Hai San. This merger of Malay and Chinese political interests disturbed at least one British official. Commenting on the widely-held belief that Ngah Ibrahim was a member of the Hai San society, he said:

I will not vouch for the truth of this story but I am inclined to believe it myself. I saw no reason to suspect my informant of a desire to mislead me, and besides it is not the first time I have heard of Malay Rajahs becoming members of Chinese Kongsees. If it really obtains, the practice is well worthy of notice, suggestive as it is of political arrangements that are likely to arise when,—as no doubt will be the case,—the immense resources of the Peninsula attract a vast population of Chinese to the present uninhabited territories.<sup>2</sup>

Raja Abdullah's inclination to concede as much as possible to his Chinese backers also disturbed at least one important Malay chief—the more mellow and sober Sultan Ismail. At the commencement of the disturbances, he went to Bukit Gantang to try to settle the quarrel.<sup>3</sup> He was quoted as having said: 'We are all Mussulman, and you [Ngah Ibrahim] had better go and see the Raja Muda that we may all join together to drive away those who will not obey our orders'.<sup>4</sup> It was not until early 1873 that a brief attempt was made by the Malay chiefs to attain some degree of unity. In January of that year, finding Larut no longer a safe abode, Ngah Ibrahim moved to Krian where Raja Abdullah had long since established himself. Both had an interview with Lieutenant-Governor Campbell of Penang, after which Raja Abdullah was able to obtain from various

<sup>1</sup>SSR, G7, Petition of Chew Tooat, Khoo Keong, Aong Aho, Hek Boon and others to Lt. Gov., Penang, 12 Dec. 1873 & 16 Dec. 1873.

<sup>2</sup>CMP, Irving's Memo. on Perak, 24 July 1872.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, G7, Sultan Ismail to Lt. Gov., Penang 2 Sept. 1873.

<sup>4</sup>CMP, Sir A. Clarke to Kimberley, 24 Feb. 1874, encl.6. Statements made by Tunku Mantri in reply to questions regarding affairs of Larut, 26 Aug. 1873.

chiefs 'their sealed acknowledgements of our right as Sultan of Perak and its dependencies'. The chiefs who signed the document were: the son of Sultan Ismail (probably Raja Lop Ahmad),<sup>1</sup> Ngah Ibrahim, Orang Kaya Balai Maharaja Lela, the Laksamana, the Shahbandar and Dato' Sa'gor. Writing to the Governor, Raja Abdullah said: 'Now we have got sufficient power to go to Laroot and stop the fighting, but among the men who are making the disturbances are a great number of our Friend's subjects from Penang, and so we are much troubled in mind how to put a stop to this by ourselves without our Friend's taking part with us'.<sup>2</sup> He therefore asked to meet the Governor and 'hope a thousand times that our friend will afford us aid and countenance according to the terms of the Treaty [of 1826] between the English Government and Perak'. But by early June 1873 the quarrel between Abdullah and Ngah Ibrahim had revived, thus frustrating the attempt at Malay unity.<sup>3</sup>

Towards the last quarter of 1873, the balance of power was radically affected when, after an unsuccessful attempt to settle the disturbances, Lieutenant-Governor Anson gave his full support to Ngah Ibrahim and his Chinese adherents. At the same time Capt. Speedy, Superintendent of Police, Penang, disappointed because Governor Ord appointed Capt. Dunlop Acting Inspector-General of Police, resigned his appointment to work for Ngah Ibrahim. He was to recruit sepoy from Calcutta to enable the Mentri to recover Larut and would be paid \$5,000 a month (his salary in Penang was \$2,400 a year) for the services of himself and his men.<sup>4</sup> Raja Abdul .h and his Chinese associates, caught by this unexpected change in the political tide, decided on a counter-move. By October 1873 he had been assured of help from Tan Kim Cheng the powerful Singapore merchant.<sup>5</sup> This was the immediate prelude to the Pangkor Engagement of January 1874.

<sup>1</sup>See Maxwell, *The History of Perak from Native Sources*, 1884, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G7, Raja Abdullah to Gov., 28 April 1873.

<sup>3</sup>CMP, A. Skinner, 'Precis of Perak Affairs', 10 Jan. 1874.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/67, Minute by Cox, 2 July 1873 in Ord to Kimberley (Tel.), 2 July 1873; CO 273/69, Ord to Kimberley, 14 Aug. 1873. See also J. M. Gullick, 'Captain Speedy of Larut', *JMBRAS*, vol.26, pt.2, 1953.

<sup>5</sup>The participation of Straits merchants in Malay politics will be dealt with in some details in a subsequent chapter.

## POLITICAL ALLIANCES AND PREDILECTIONS

WHEREAS in the preceding years, disturbances in the Malay states were more isolated in character, by the early 1870s, the conflicting parties in each territory began to seek wider support in order to contain the activities of their adversaries, and the Mahdi-Kudin struggle became the one issue in Malay politics which involved the interests of several Malay chiefs outside the boundary of Selangor. The belligerent factions within Selangor, in turn, took an active interest in the affairs of the other Malay states.<sup>1</sup>

As the affairs of Selangor provide a useful unifying theme for the very turbulent history of the western Peninsular states at this period, it is appropriate to begin by examining the political conditions in Selangor at the beginning of the 1870s. The Klang War, which had begun with Raja Mahdi and the Mendeling on one side and Raja Abdullah, Raja Ismail and their Bugis followers on the other, assumed a wider scale at this stage. Not only were Kudin and his Kedah men involved; in the attack on Klang in December 1869, Raja Ismail recruited 'Illanuns from Riau, fifty or sixty men from Buru, old adherents from Lukut, and Bugis from Kubu in Siak'. Raja Sulaiman of Sungai Raya, the enemy of Raja Bot, had earlier supported Raja Mahdi, but now with his Batu Bahara men he joined forces with Raja Ismail.<sup>2</sup> Kudin was also able to secure the indirect support of the Colonial government. As a result of Governor Ord's visit to Langat in May 1870, Kudin began to receive supplies of ammunition from Sultan Abdul Samad who had been, until then, rather indifferent to the whole affair.<sup>3</sup> And when Raja Mahdi, in the latter part of the year, appealed to Siam to prevent Tengku Kudin from meddling in Selangor politics, Sultan Abdul Samad came to Kudin's defence in a letter to the Sultan of Kedah:

We have heard a report that Rajah Mahadie has brought a complaint before the King of Siam against your brother Tunkoo Koodin, in which is

<sup>1</sup>Although much has been written on the political history of these states during this period, this particular aspect of the subject has never been fully brought out.

<sup>2</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Report of Proceedings of Govt. &c.'; C.O. 273/94, Robinson to Hicks-Beach, 18 June 1878, encl. Swettenham's memo. on the proposed retirement and pension of Kudin; Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p.22.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 14 July 1871, encl. E. Irving's memo. relative to the disturbances in the territory of Salangore (n.d.).

entirely contrary to truth. If the King sends to ask for information our brother can send him back this letter of ours.

As to the Proclamation of the Governor in Chief at Singapore which our brother desires to see we send it together with this.<sup>1</sup>

That the Governor had brought his influence to bear on Selangor's politics is clear from Irving's report:

The first of these difficulties [Sultan Abdul Samad's apathy] disappeared I believe after Sir H. Ord's visit to Langat in May 1870. Tunku Dia Oodin told me that immediately after this he received supplies of ammunition from the Sultan. I believe that the Governor's visit stimulated the Sultan to a more decided line of policy. Up to this time he seems to have been swayed backwards and forwards by different advisers....<sup>2</sup>

At the commencement of 1871, the position was clear-cut. Raja Mahdi at Kuala Selangor and Syed Mashhor at Ulu Selangor controlled the entire river basin. The Mendeling at Ulu Klang, Yap Ah Loy at Ampang and Kuala Lumpur, and Kudin at Pengkalan Batu, together held sway at Sungai Klang. Although until 1870 the Mendeling were primarily the opponents of the Kudin-Raja Ismail combination, by the middle of 1871 it appears that some of them were in league with Kudin's faction. This is inferred from the fact that Raja Asal, possibly the most important of the Mendeling leaders, was Yap Ah Loy's ally until April 1872.<sup>3</sup>

In the middle of 1871, Syed Mashhor and Chong Chong again took on Yap Ah Loy's men but were completely routed after bitter fighting at Rawang.<sup>4</sup> It was also at about this time that the now well-known *Kim Seng Cheong* affair occurred.<sup>5</sup> Colonial reports treated this matter as a case of piracy. As a result, many of the deeper implications of this event have been lost sight of.<sup>6</sup> For one thing it has to be seriously considered whether the Straits government had not, in fact, capitalized on the *Kim Seng Cheong* incident in order to help Kudin gain control over Sungai Selangor. Kudin clearly realized that without additional support he could not oust Raja Mahdi from Sungai Selangor. To that end, he had endeavoured un-

<sup>1</sup>SSR, F7, Rajah of Salangore to Rajah of Kedah, 19 Aug. 1870.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 14 July 1871, encl. E, Irving's Report (n.d.).

<sup>3</sup>See Middlebrook, 'Yap Ah Loy', pp. 44-7, 52-8, 65-8, 68-9.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. pp. 58-62.

<sup>5</sup>In view of the fact that this incident has already been elaborately told elsewhere (see in particular, Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, pp. 66-98; Parkinson, *British Intervention in the Malay States 1867-77*, pp. 47-60), it is unnecessary to dwell on the details here.

<sup>6</sup>This idea will be developed further in the next chapter.



successfully to obtain extra troops from Kedah.<sup>1</sup> And just prior to the *Kim Seng Cheong* affair, he had appealed to the Singapore authorities to communicate with the Kalahome in Siam 'in regard to the matter of assistance from Quedah to quell the disturbances in Selangor'.<sup>2</sup>

By 1871, Kudin's debts were already substantial, partly because of the war and partly because of his own extravagance. The revenue obtainable from tin alone at the Klang and Selangor rivers was estimated at nearly \$100,000 a year, hence Kudin's anxiety to gain control of Sungai Selangor. The very deliberate efforts made by the British officers to have Kudin confirmed as Viceroy of Selangor and to have his influence established at Sungai Selangor<sup>3</sup> must therefore be interpreted as British participation in the Klang War. As such any account of the incident based primarily on the British reports can hardly be considered a balanced one. An account of the same event by Raja Mahdi himself exists but has never been given adequate attention. Quite apart from the fact that Raja Mahdi accused the British troops and police of having acted unjustly and wantonly caused the death of men, women and children, he also emphatically stated that the British government 'had joined my enemy' meaning, undoubtedly, Tengku Kudin.<sup>4</sup> The credibility of Raja Mahdi's accusation is, to some extent, borne out by one of Commander Bloomfield's letters which reads like a confession:

I have been to a certain extent mixed up with the appointment of Tunku dia Oodin to his present position, he having been suggested by the Colonial officers in my presence, and with my concurrence, to the Sultan (who was desirous of giving it to his half-witted son, Raja Moosa), as the most fitting person to hold the appointment; and I, having afterwards, with the Colonial Secretary, signed my name to his commission as a witness....

More important still, 'These demands were made with the "Teazer's" guns bearing upon the Sultan's palace, and an answer insisted upon within twenty-four hours'.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*GPMP*, *Precis of Selangor Papers: Gov. to Sultan Selangor*, 30 June 1870. Difficulty arose because of Kedah's ambiguous position vis-a-vis Siam.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.* Irving to Col. Secretary, 16 June 1871.

<sup>3</sup>See *PP*, Admiralty to CO 2 Dec. 1871, encl., Bloomfield to Robinson, 6 Aug. 1871; Admiralty to CO, 16 Dec. 1871, encl. 2, Bloomfield to Sir H. Kellet, 20 Sept. 1871.

<sup>4</sup>*SSR*, F7, Rajah Mahadie to the Administrator, SS, Fri. 6th month 1288 (Aug.-Sept. 1871).

<sup>5</sup>*PP*, Admiralty to CO, 16 Dec. 1871, encl. 2, R. W. Bloomfield to Sir H. Kellet, 20 Sept. 1871.

The incident also brought to light the fact that, at this juncture, among Kudin's adversaries was one of the finest warriors in the Peninsula—Raja Mahmud,<sup>1</sup> son of Raja Berkat (Panglima Raja) whose residence was at Sungai Selangor.<sup>2</sup>

However, despite British support, Kudin's position was still unstable after the *Kim Seng Cheong* affair. His enemies were still around him: Raja Mahdi stationed himself at Sungai Bernam, Syed Mashhor remained at Ulu Selangor and Raja Mahmud, who stood to the last against the British at Kuala Selangor, retreated to the jungle at the back of Permatang.<sup>3</sup>

In November 1871, Kudin was informed of news from Wan Abdul Rahman<sup>4</sup> at Ulu Selangor that '... trouble may be anticipated in the interior of Salangore with Ungku Chi of Siak, as [the Ungku] has commanded one Punghulu Jiaffar to act as a Chief, and moreover a younger brother of Punghulu Jiaffar is coming down the river with the intention of asking Gunpowder from Unku Long'. Wan Aman had also heard that 'Raja Mahadie, with Syed Mashhor, is holding himself in readiness at the mouth of the Bernam river, with five hundred men'. Kudin was therefore asked to send 'by the first person who may happen to come up the river' five barrels of gunpowder or some, if he had any.<sup>5</sup>

At this juncture, Kudin had also to add one more opponent to his list—Raja Musa, son of the ruler. Musa's earlier stand might have been indecisive. Colonial officers, at any rate, claimed that he was favourably disposed towards Kudin.<sup>6</sup> If so, this confidence was obviously shaken by the overt support which the British rendered Kudin for, quite apart from the very positive attempt made to es-

<sup>1</sup>In later years, Sir A. Clarke said of Raja Mahmud '... his name has been a word of terror & his person regarded with superstitious dread for many years'. (CO 273/76, Paper 1135, Minute by C. Cox, 8 Feb. 1875).

<sup>2</sup>SSR, F7, Rajah Mahadie to the Administrator, SS, Aug.-Sept. 1871.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 29 July 1871, encl., Irving's Report in reference to the late events at Salangore, July 1871.

<sup>4</sup>Wan Abdul Rahman and Wan Da, both sons of Bendahara Mutahir, in between their attempts to re-conquer Pahang (1866, 1868 and 1870) served first Raja Abdullah (1867?), then Raja Mahdi (late 1867 to early 1870) and Kudin (after July 1870). It was Kudin who put Wan Aman in charge of Ulu Selangor where Syed Mashhor had firmly established himself. (See W. Linehan, 'A History of Pahang', *JMBRAS*, vol.14, pt.2, 1936, pp. 92-5).

<sup>5</sup>SSR, F7, Inchie Umbok to Syed Zein 17 Nov. 1871. No information is available on Ungku Chik, Penghulu Jaafar and Ungku Long.

<sup>6</sup>See CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 14 July 1871, encl.A, Report by Capt. Bradberry, Commanding Colonial Steamer *Pluto*, 1 July 1871; encl.B, Report by Cox, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Malacca, 30 June 1871; encl.E, Irving's memo. on the Salangore disturbances, n.d.

establish Kudin's influence at Kuala Selangor after the *Kim Seng Cheong* incident, it was plainly stated to Sultan Abdul Samad that his *wakil* (representative) was to be Kudin and no one else and Kudin was to 'conduct the affairs of the whole Country between Malacca and Perak'. The British also promised 'to assist our friend's Vakeel in case any of our friend's subjects ventured to dispute his authority'.<sup>1</sup> Musa, as the likely heir to the Selangor throne, had, therefore, every reason to resent Kudin's newly acquired power for fear Kudin might prove too ambitious.

Soon after the *Kim Seng Cheong* affair, Musa proceeded to construct an entrenched *kota* at Permatang, Kuala Selangor. On hearing this, Kudin attempted to stop the work. Musa answered that it was purely a defensive measure against Raja Mahdi, Raja Mahmud and Syed Mashhor who bore ill-will towards him. Kudin accepted the explanation. On the 14th of the same month, he sent Syed Zain<sup>2</sup> to Kuala Selangor to offer Musa the authority to collect all the import and export taxes of the area, to discharge all the expenses of government, and to reserve the surplus, if there should be any, for Musa's own use. It appears that:

At this Rajah Moosah replied that he declined to receive any order from me [Kudin], as Salangore belonged to the Yang de-pertuan, who had long ago given it in charge to him—that the place was now ruined through my means having been bombarded and burnt by an English man of war, which had destroyed all the guns of its forts, and that he now required me to repair in full the whole of the damage caused by the bombardment, and to make full reparation for all loses.<sup>3</sup>

As soon as Musa's entrenchment was completed, on 21 October he despatched his step-brother, Raja Indut, to Bernam to state his desire 'to receive Raja Mahadie and Syed Masshor as friends'.<sup>4</sup>

Kudin decided that if Musa 'will not be persuaded I shall be compelled to endeavour to set Rajah Yacob, also son of the Yang deper Tuan, in his place, and open up the trade of the place'. And, as before, he fell back on the British for support. He wrote to Colonel Anson: 'I should be under the highest obligation to my friend if he would be good enough to send me an officer of his Government, empowered to place these Princes and myself in our proper relative

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 28 July 1871, encl.3, Col. Secretary (J. W. Birch) to Sultan of Salangore, n.d.

<sup>2</sup>Syed Zain bin Syed Puteh Al-Habshi originated from Penang. (E. Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895*, p. 27.)

<sup>3</sup>SSR, F7, Tunku Dia Oodin to the Administrator, SS, 24 Nov. 1871.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.; SSR, Inche Umbok to Syed Zein, 17 Nov. 1871.

positions, that they may cease to be disobedient, and offer obstruction to my authority'.<sup>1</sup> He was able to have Raja Musa replaced subsequently by Raja Yakob as the administrator of Kuala Selangor.<sup>2</sup>

But Kudin was an isolated figure in Selangor. As a foreigner (*orang dagang*) attempting to enforce authority, he was disliked by the local *anak raja*. Though in 1871 he could count among his supporters Raja Ismail and Raja Asal, he was primarily dependent on other foreigners. His secretary and right hand man was Syed Zain<sup>3</sup> whose background was a subject never much discussed. It was believed that his 'antecedents will not bear strict investigation, and that he is not a man to be trusted'.<sup>4</sup> Against this, Irving (Auditor-General, Straits Settlements), who had considerable faith in him, could only say: '... whatever may be attributed to him in other respects, [he] is in my opinion a man of sagacity and great aptitude for business'.<sup>5</sup> Apart from Syed Zain, Wan Abdul Rahman and Yap Ah Loy, all foreigners, Kudin also enjoyed the support of a man named Embok (Umbok), 'the headman of a community of Pahang people settled on the Ulu Kanching'. This was the man who informed Kudin of Wan Abdul Rahman's difficulties in Ulu Selangor. Embok was said to have about 400 followers. In the same neighbourhood, Kudin could also count on a community of Minangkabau Malays under the leadership of the resourceful Sheikh Mohamed Taib of Larut fame.<sup>6</sup> In addition, Kudin employed a force of mercenaries who were a motley lot. The head of his forces (*kepala perang*) was a Frenchman called de Fontaine. Munshi Ibrahim who met him described him as handsome and young, with a moustache but no beard. He wore a shirt with several golden starlike decorations (*berbintang-bintang emas*) and carried a sword. Fontaine obviously had military ability for he was, according to Kudin, primarily responsible for the capture of Klang from Raja Mahdi.<sup>7</sup> There was also an Italian mercenary called Cavaliero. Swettenham, who was acquainted with him, described him as 'quite young, tall, dark and good-looking, of a pronounced Italian type'.<sup>8</sup> Among the mercenaries was a Dutchman

<sup>1</sup>SSR, F7, Kudin to Administrator, SS, 24 Nov. 1871.

<sup>2</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 40.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. pp. 39, 51.

<sup>4</sup>GPMP, Irving's Memo. relative to the Affairs of Selangor with reference to visits to that country in April and May 1872, and subsequent occurrences up to the 15th June 1872, dated 24 July 1872.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), pp. 38-9, 51.

<sup>8</sup>Swettenham, *Malay Sketches*, p. 103.

too named Van Hagen, said to have been 'an officer in the Netherlands army, and that he lost his commission owing to some breach of discipline, but that he was a man of birth, character and courage'.<sup>1</sup> At Kuala Selangor, Kudin had a garrison comprising about 100 Sikhs under a certain Pennefather who had served him for some time and about thirty to forty Kedah Malays.<sup>2</sup> There were possibly other European or Eurasian mercenaries—there was certainly a de Koek in Kuala Selangor in 1872 assisting de Fontaine,<sup>3</sup> but nothing is known about them. Munshi Ibrahim has given us a general picture of these men. The Europeans, he said, were rambles (*orang<sup>2</sup> puteh yang hanyut<sup>2</sup>*) who could not get employment in Singapore. These were paid by Kudin to command his sepoy. The sepoy were made up of Indians, Bengalis (more likely Punjabis), local-born foreigners as well as Malays. Some were thin and sickly, some tall and some short. They wore no uniform. Munshi Ibrahim considered them an unsightly and dirty group—some wore trousers, others *sarong*: some had shirts, others had none.<sup>4</sup>

Raja Mahdi himself was not without outside sympathy. He would have obtained concrete support from Perak in 1871 had his brother not eloped with Raja Abdullah's wife.<sup>5</sup> Klana Sending of Sungai Ujong was also favourably disposed towards Mahdi's cause. This was because Kudin became involved in the boundary dispute between Selangor and Sungai Ujong. On 26 July 1870, Kudin had visited Simpang to meet the Penghulu of Rembau whose relationship with Klana Sending was equally strained, also because of a boundary dispute. The Penghulu of Simpang insisted that '... Sempang is the country that belongs to us of Rambow, and on the left of the River [Linggi] is our friend's [British] country and on the right the Kingdom of Salangore from the early times'.<sup>6</sup> Kudin's friendship with the Penghulu of Rembau inevitably aroused the animosity of Klana Sending. Therefore in 1871 Kudin was seriously concerned about the

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 108.

<sup>2</sup>Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, p. 103, n.8; Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p. 25.

<sup>3</sup>GPMP, Irving's Memo. on Selangor of 24 July 1872.

<sup>4</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 45.

<sup>5</sup>CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 28 July 1871, encl. 2, Birch to Anson, 26 July 1871. Birch wrote 'We intercepted some correspondence which shewed that Mahdie would have got help from Perak had not his brother run off with the wife of the Rajah Muda, of that country.' It was intended to send help by way of Sungai Bernam which was under the administration of Raja Hitam, Mahdi's ally.

<sup>6</sup>SSR, F7, Datu Sedia Rajah of Rambow to Gov., SS, 20 Aug. 1870.

possibility of the neighbouring territories being used as bases against him. He asked for British assistance, ostensibly to demarcate boundaries, but more probably to maintain vigilance over the frontiers. He wrote:

We inform our friend that concerning the boundary between Salangore and Perak, and the boundary between Salangore and Malacca and between Salangore and Rambow and Sungei Ujong, we have no certain knowledge about them—if our friend should think it proper we ask for a trustworthy man from the English Government to come here and inspect the aforementioned boundaries in company with us that they may establish in the presence of the Government officer of us and of the persons who own the several places so as to make without contention a survey of our dominion and to put in their proper positions the officers who are to take charge of the several places.<sup>1</sup>

A Government surveyor, Calcott, was sent to Kudin in November 1871.<sup>2</sup> The outcome is not known. But in view of the open support which the British had given to Kudin, it is possible to infer that many Malay chiefs were not likely to trust to British arbitration in cases where Kudin was involved.

Meanwhile, also in November 1871, Syed Mashhor attacked and captured Wan Abdul Rahman, Kudin's representative at Ulu Selangor. According to Kudin, when Syed Mashhor attacked Wan Aman's stockade at Ulu Selangor, a fierce battle took place. Wan Aman, Wan Da and other Pahang men put up a stiff resistance. Many were killed and wounded including a certain Tuan Chut who was shot in the back. When defeat appeared inevitable Wan Da returned to Pahang to seek help but Wan Aman refused to retreat because he was afraid that the wounded among his men might be killed. At this juncture, Sutan Bangkaulu who had stayed together with Wan Aman deserted to the enemy, and this enabled Syed Mashhor to capture the stockade. Wan Aman was taken prisoner and was ill-treated by Syed Mashhor who gave him porridge (*bubor*) instead of rice (*nasi*).<sup>3</sup>

There was yet another problem that Kudin had to contend with. By August 1871, there was a rumour that Maharaja Abu Bakar's ship the *Johor* had been chartered to run down the *Telegraph*, a steamer which Kudin used frequently for commercial purposes. Between late 1871 and early 1872, Kudin wrote to Abu Bakar but

<sup>1</sup>SSR, F7, Tunkoo dia Oodin to Col. Secretary, 6 Oct. 1871.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, F7, Syed Zein to J. W. Birch, 8 Nov. 1871.

<sup>3</sup>Linehan, p. 95; Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 52. Sutan Bangkaulu was a Rawa chief who had known Wan Abdul Rahman in Pahang before coming to Ulu Selangor. For more details about him see Linehan, p. 99.

received no reply. When Munshi Ibrahim was in Klang in April 1872, Kudin asked why Abu Bakar had not replied to his letter. Ibrahim said that the Maharaja had and it was strange that the letter did not reach Kudin. Kudin diplomatically replied that he was sure the Maharaja had but the letter must have been lost in transit.<sup>1</sup> However, by then it was no secret that Abu Bakar's sympathies were very much with Raja Mahdi.

The ensuing year proved to be particularly eventful in the political history of Selangor. By then the wars in the western Malay states were clearly no longer localized. Kedah, Perak, Pahang, Johor and the smaller territories of Sungai Ujong and Rembau, if not committed to the support of Mahdi or Kudin, were partial in their attitude towards Selangor's politics.

This state of affairs began as early as January 1872. If Raja Daud's amorous exploits had turned Raja Abdullah against Raja Mahdi, the same could not be said of Sultan Ismail. In fact, it was believed that Ismail had planned for the elopement to take place.<sup>2</sup> In January 1872, Syed Mashhor and Raja Daud visited Sultan Ismail. News of this reached Raja Abdullah who sent Laksamana Mohamed Amin and a certain Mohamed Latiff to Kudin to keep him informed.<sup>3</sup> In his letter, Abdullah said:

I write to inform you that Syed Mashore and Raja Dawd the younger brother of Rajah Mahadi are in the country of Perak with the Rajah Bandahara [Sultan Ismail]. I sent to enquire of these Rajahs what was their business in Perak and what they were planning with the Rajah Bandahara. And I received a true account of their proceedings, namely that Syed Mashore and Rajah Dawd were asking for help from the Rajah Bandahara in order that they might go and attack Klang and Salangore, and the Rajah Bandahara was ready to help them, but he desired them to make an agreement that he (the Bandahara) should become the Yang di per Tuan i.e. the Sultan of Perak and whensoever he should be settled as the Yang di per Tuan that he would help them with the expenses of the undertaking and furnish men to make war with Salangore and Klang. But when there could be no longer any doubt about this and there had been made an agreement between the Rajah Bandaharah, Syed Mashore and Raja Dawd, I inform my friend of it, for I want to stop the doings of these men in order that assuredly no disturbance may arise. For the Rajah Bandahara who has received Syed Mashore and Rajah Dawd wishes me to destroy the Custom introduced by my forefathers, the former Sultans, for he wants to become the Yang di Pertuan ... unless you can devise some method for frustrating their designs. Moreover Syed Mashore

<sup>1</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 51.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. p. 42. Ibrahim was, in fact, quoting Kudin.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, G7, Tunku Dia Oodin to Col. Secretary, 1 Feb, 1872.

and Rajah Dawd have sent about 50 or 60 men of Perak, strangers living in Perak to obstruct boats going up and down the Rivers of Salangore and Klang, in order to stop the trade of those places, and this has been done with the help of the Rajah Bandahara who has paid the expenses and seen to the men doing whatever Syed Mashore and Rajah Dawd wish him to do. Of these matters do I inform you.<sup>1</sup>

As on previous occasions, his letter was accompanied by another written by four *orang besar-besar* (Laksamana, Shahbandar, Seri Adika Raja and Dato' Sa'gor) confirming their support for Abdullah, denouncing Sultan Ismail, Orang Kaya Menteri and Dato' Temenggong, warning of the activities of Syed Mashhor and Raja Daud in Perak and begging that Kudin would earnestly consider as well as enquire into all the matters mentioned and 'with speed assist us by making all this known to the Government of Her Majesty the Queen'.<sup>2</sup> The letter of the four chiefs reveals that Raja Abdullah's eagerness to act in concert with Kudin was prompted not only by the fact that Kudin was antagonistic to Raja Mahdi, Raja Daud's brother, but also by the realization that Kudin wielded influence with the Colonial authorities.

Raja Mahdi himself had left for Bengkalis, in Siak, by early 1872.<sup>3</sup> At this juncture, Kudin was in considerable difficulty. Sheikh Mat Taib revealed that 'the men of Salangore cannot be depended on' for the local *anak raja* 'are all of one mind, the Tunku [Kudin] and we being strangers are their enemies'.<sup>4</sup> By March 1872 there was even greater confusion. Raja Yakob had tried to effect a settlement with Raja Daud in order to restore peace in Selangor, but in vain.<sup>5</sup> The Penghulu Dagang reported that all the Chinese had gone over to Raja Daud and his associates<sup>6</sup> and Yap Ah Loy quickly repudiated any intention of proving treacherous.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Kudin's men clashed with Syed Mashhor's forces in the interior of Selangor.

<sup>1</sup>SSR, G7, Sultan Abdullah Mahomed Shah to Tunku di Oodin, 23 Jan. 1872. Note that Raja Abdullah wrote as if Raja Ismail had not been elected ruler of Perak.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G7, Letter from Perak chiefs to Tunku dia Oodin, 22 Jan. 1872.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, G7, Precis of letter from Raja Ismail to Tunku dia Oodin, 19 Jan. 1872; Precis of Selangor Papers, Lt. Gov., Malacca to Gov., 8 April 1872.

<sup>4</sup>SSR, G7, Precis of letter from Shaikh Mohamed Taib to Che Embok, 12 Jan. 1872.

<sup>5</sup>GPMP, Precis of Selangor Papers, Raja Yakob to Syed Zein, Raja Ismail and Raja Jafar at Klang, 18 March 1872.

<sup>6</sup>GPMP, Precis of Selangor Papers, Punghulu Dagang to Ungku Ngah bin Ungku Abdullah, 14 March 1872.

<sup>7</sup>GPMP, Precis of Selangor Papers, Capt. Yap Allowie to Tungku Ngah bin Abdullah, 14 March 1872.



Syed Zain wrote to J. G. Davidson<sup>1</sup> asking for 100 sepoy and complaining that Perak chiefs were helping Syed Mashhor.<sup>2</sup>

By early April 1872, Syed Zain, who had made a quick trip to Bengkalis to spy on Raja Mahdi, returned to the Peninsula with news that Raja Mahdi was in the neighbourhood of Bengkalis with two or three *tongkang* (barge) containing guns, muskets and ammunition. Mahdi was reported to have a supply of money which 'was probably the remainder he brought away from Pengkalan Batu in bank notes about Dec. 1870'. It was believed that the *tongkang* with arms were secured in Singapore with the help of Maharaja Abu Bakar and some Singapore Chinese. Mahdi was even said to have joined the Ghee Hin in Singapore.<sup>3</sup> According to Irving:

The project of the confederates [Mahdi's faction] appears to have been for Mahdi to come across the Straits with his *tongkangs* and blockade the Kallang River, while Syed Mashore and Rajas Kahar and Mahmud were to move down from the north and south on to the mining district and Pancallan Batu. The project appeared to have a good chance of success.<sup>4</sup>

Once again, Kudin turned to the British for assistance. On being informed of this, Governor Ord immediately wrote to the Dutch Resident at Bengkalis:

... telling him who Mahdi was, and requested that he might be prevented from effecting his object. The Dutch authorities then took steps to arrest him with the view of sending him over to me, but Mahdi, obtaining information of the intention fled from the Country leaving behind him his family and people, and two vessels with a large quantity of Arms and Gunpowder.<sup>5</sup>

Mahdi's *tongkang* were confiscated by the Dutch and kept in Riau from where they were subsequently sent to Singapore.<sup>6</sup> Mahdi took refuge on the west coast of Johor where he was soon discovered. Maharaja Abu Bakar consulted Governor Ord who 'came to the conclusion that if [Mahdi] were allowed to take refuge in Johore it might be possible to make some terms between him and Tunku Dia Udin, which would secure the latter from being further troubled by

<sup>1</sup>See, p.110

<sup>2</sup>GPMP, Precis of Selangor Papers, Syed Zein to Davidson, 16 March 1872.

<sup>3</sup>GPMP, Precis of Selangor Papers, Lt. Gov., Malacca, to Gov. Ord, 8 April 1872.

<sup>4</sup>GPMP, Irving's Memo. on Selangor of 24 July 1872.

<sup>5</sup>CO 273/60, Ord to Kimberley, 24 Oct. 1872.

<sup>6</sup>GPMP, Irving's Memo on Selangor of 24 July 1872.

one of the most crafty, energetic and mischievous chiefs in the Peninsula'.<sup>1</sup>

While attempts were made to arrange for a settlement between Kudin and Mahdi, the latter moved to Johor Bahru where he was given shelter and food plus an advance of \$30 by Abu Bakar. In the suggested settlement, two propositions were put forward; first, that Mahdi should be allowed to return to Selangor and Kudin should take him into his confidence and allow him a share in the government of the country; and secondly, that Kudin should provide Mahdi with a suitable income on condition Mahdi lived outside the kingdom of Selangor. There was a prolonged period of deliberations. The Maharaja of Johor favoured the first proposal, while Kudin was disinclined to accept either without considering other factors. An issue which had considerable bearing on the subject was the question of who should be Sultan Abdul Samad's successor. Irving suggested to Kudin that it might be 'a feasible arrangement to nominate one of Raja Musah's sons as successor, with the understanding that the Tunku should act as Regent during his minority'. Even this did not meet with Kudin's approval.<sup>2</sup>

On 14 June 1872 Kudin, Syed Zain and Raja Ismail went to Singapore to meet the Governor. By then, Kudin had decided that he could not accept Mahdi back into Selangor but 'he was prepared to allow him an annuity on condition of his living in Johore, under a guarantee from the Maharaja that he would not mix himself up in any way with Salangore affairs'. On the question of succession, Kudin argued: '... the custom at Salangor (where the dynasty is of Bugis descent) was different from that of Perak ... it had never been the practice to appoint a Raja Muda ... during the lifetime of the Sultan, ... the succession was left entirely unsettled up to the time that the throne became vacant'.<sup>3</sup> Although he did emphasize that he himself did not aspire to the throne, his eagerness to prevent Raja Mahdi, Raja Musa and Raja Kahar from acquiring power in the country unavoidably created suspicion in the minds of the local *anak raja*. In general he was said to be well-disposed towards Raja Yakob, but it can hardly be doubted that this was because Yakob was clearly the most docile of the Selangor *anak raja*. It was for this same reason that Kudin, who had entrusted Kuala Selangor to Yakob in the early

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/60, Ord to Kimberley, 24 Oct. 1872.

<sup>2</sup>GPMP, Irving's Memo on Selangor of 24 July 1872.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. Kudin was wrong on this point. See, p.

months of 1872, subsequently sent de Fontaine to replace him<sup>1</sup>.

In the interview with Governor Ord on 15 June 1872, Kudin proposed a grant of \$250 to \$300 a month for Mahdi, provided he was prepared to live in Johor or in any place under Dutch jurisdiction or where there were European officers through whom the allowance could be paid. On the subject of succession, Kudin asked that the Governor should see that Sultan Abdul Samad brought about a satisfactory arrangement<sup>2</sup> which, however, reminds one of Birch's request to Sultan Abdul Samad in 1871 to appoint a *wakil* acceptable to the British and such a person was none other than Kudin himself.

Mahdi, a man of strong character, turned down Kudin's offer despite repeated efforts made by Governor Ord and Abu Bakar to induce him to accept the terms. When asked what he proposed to do in future, he replied that he trusted in God.<sup>3</sup>

After the negotiations broke down, trouble was again anticipated. It was reported that Syed Zain informed Abu Bakar of his intention to make arrangements: '... for having each end of the Strait watched by a sea force strong enough to capture Rajah Mahdie & any band of his followers who were likely to be with him, and requested [Abu Bakar] to permit him (Syed Zein) to keep a watch over Rajah Mahdie's movements at Johore'.<sup>4</sup> Although Abu Bakar had no sympathy for Kudin, he was continually under pressure from the British. He had no alternative therefore but to state that he was prepared to allow Kudin to take the necessary precautions to watch Mahdi's movements. At the same time, he sent a letter to the Governor stating in no uncertain terms 'his wish that Rajah Musah should have undisturbed possession of Selangor, leaving Tunku Dia Udin to rule over Kallang'.<sup>5</sup>

Kudin could not but feel increasingly insecure. When still in Singapore, he wrote to the Governor telling him that:

... Mr. McAlister told Syed Zin in the presence of Mr Davidson that the Captain of a steamer called the 'Argyle' had informed him that men in the interests of Rajah Mahdi wanted to buy it (the Steamer) and take it to Klang. Therefore if it should appear right to our friend we would ask our friend to circulate a notice thro' the Straits Settlements embodying the substance of Act 10 of 1839 which states that it is not lawful to help

<sup>1</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.) pp.40, 52-4.

<sup>2</sup>GPMP, Irving's Memo. on Selangor of 24 July 1872.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/60, Ord to Kimberley, 24 Oct. 1872.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid. encl. Maharaja of Johore to Ord, 15 Oct. 1872.

<sup>5</sup>GPMP, Precise of Selangor Papers, Maharaja of Johore to Gov., SS, 28 June 1872.

anyone wishing to raise disturbances against us: the Viceroy (Wakil) of the Sultan of Selangore, we think that if this notice be issued it will inspire terror into those who wish to assist in making disturbances against us, and in future the country will probably rest in peace.<sup>1</sup>

But despite all precautions, in July 1872 Mahdi left Johor and proceeded to Sungai Linggi where, apparently with the connivance of Klana Sending, he met his compatriots, the *anak raja* of Selangor, who had sailed up the river in five sampans. They were joined by a body of men from Kampar (Sumatra) and a certain Panglima Perang Periok.<sup>2</sup> According to Governor Ord, 'Although bringing neither men, arms or assistance of any kind his [Mahdi's] mere presence seems to have acted strongly on his party and the result was a series of attacks on Tunku Koodin....'<sup>3</sup> On 17 July, Raja Mahmud, Raja Laut (son of Sultan Muhammad), Raja Berkat, Raja Indut and Teoh Ah Chong<sup>4</sup> with 300 men collected from Langat and Lukut attacked Batu and Gombak killing four Chinese and wounding eighteen. These places were utterly destroyed and all the houses and mining plants burnt. They then proceeded to build two stockades in the locality. It was said that they had obtained their food, weapons and money from Langat. Four days later, Syed Mashhor launched an attack on Kuala Lumpur. He acquired provisions and arms by way of Bernam. The supplies, in fact, came from Penang. Fighting continued for about a month before the town fell to Syed Mashhor and both the European captains there, Cavaliero and Hagen, were killed. Kudin begged the British to stop issuing passes to boats going from Malacca, Penang and Singapore to Bernam, Sungai Selangor, Langat and Lukut.<sup>5</sup> By August 1872, the Mahdi faction had taken possession of Sungai Selangor and the

<sup>1</sup>SSR, F7, Tunku Dia Oodin to Gov., SS, 18 June 1872. It is sufficiently clear that even at this stage, Davidson was already involved in Kudin's affairs.

<sup>2</sup>SSR, F7, Tunku Dia Oodin to Gov., 27 July 1872, encl., Syed Abdul Rahman to Tunku dia Oodin, 21 July 1872; *GPMP*, Irving's Memo. on Selangor of 24 July 1872.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/61, Ord to Kimberley, 6 Nov. 1872.

<sup>4</sup>This must have been Chong Chong, Yap Ah Loy's enemy. Middlebrook (p.62) claims that Chong Chong was killed at the fighting in Rawang between May-June 1871 although one of his Chinese sources included Chong Chong's name among those who fled after Yap Ah Loy had retaken Kuala Lumpur in March 1873. According to Middlebrook, 'The Chong Chong of Source 5 is probably the Chinese headman Teoh Ah Chong ... who assisted Raja Mahmud in his attack on Batu and Gombak on 17 July 1872 ....' But there is no reason to believe that there were two Chinese leaders on Mahdi's side with the same name.

<sup>5</sup>SSR, F7, Tunku Dia Oodin to Gov., SS, 27 July 1872; *GPMP*, *Precis of Selangor Papers*: Syed Zein to J.G. Davidson, 17 Oct. 1872; Middlebrook, pp. 73-8; Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', pp. 28-9.

upper portion of Sungai Klang. Kudin retained only Kuala Klang including Penkalah Batu.<sup>1</sup>

But at this juncture, Pahang was ready to assist Tengku Kudin. When Wan Da returned to Pahang after the fall of Ulu Selangor in November 1871, he appeared before his uncle, Bendahara Wan Ahmad, whom he had fought for many years, begging forgiveness and submitting a letter from Tengku Kudin soliciting help from Pahang to fight his enemies. Tengku Kudin was prepared to accept any terms demanded by the Bendahara. Wan Ahmad was only too willing to help provided the approval of the Straits government could be obtained. Haji Muhammad Nor bin Haji Abdul Hamid was entrusted with the task of conveying the Bendahara's reply to Kudin. He was selected because he had many relatives in Selangor, among them Imam Perang Mat Akil and Muhammad Saman, both fighting for Tengku Kudin. He was also the bearer of a letter from the Bendahara to Governor Ord.

In Klang, Haji Muhammad Nor met Raja Asal, the head of all the Mendeling, who, having no knowledge of Pahang's intention to assist Kudin, asked that he might be allowed to buy rice and gunpowder from Pahang in his war against Kudin. He would pay \$30,000 down to the Bendahara and after victory had been secured, \$1,000 a month in perpetuity. Strangely enough, Haji Muhammad Nor agreed and then proceeded to Pengkalan Batu to hand over the Bendahara's letter to Kudin. By then, the Mendeling and other adherents of Mahdi were ready to attack Tengku Kudin who at once left for Singapore, leaving Raja Deraman to take charge of affairs in Klang. Raja Deraman had therefore to make arrangements for Haji Muhammad Nor to go to Singapore. The meeting with Kudin took place in the company of Syed Zain and J. G. Davidson. Haji Muhammad Nor also informed Kudin that he had contracted to supply rice and gunpowder to Raja Asal and that the Mendeling were about to attack Pengkalan Batu. He asked to be allowed to return by way of Klang so that he might collect the \$30,000 from Raja Asal. Kudin then requested Haji Muhammad Nor not to place undue value on such a small sum of money. After victory had been achieved, Pahang could profit by a few hundred thousand dollars. Kudin and Davidson then brought Hajit Muhammad Nor before Sir Harry Ord.<sup>2</sup>

The Governor was given several reasons why the Bendahara was

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/61, Ord to Kimberley, 6 Nov. 1872.

<sup>2</sup>In the *Hikayat Pahang*, the Governor's name is erroneously given as Sanderworth.

anxious to help Tengku Kudin. Firstly, Wan Ahmad felt humiliated because Syed Mashhor had succeeded in capturing Wan Abdul Rahman. Secondly, many of the Rawa and Mendeling who had revolted in Pahang had taken refuge in Selangor from where they often raided Pahang. There would be no peace in Pahang until these people had been decisively defeated.<sup>1</sup> Thirdly, assistance from Pahang was Kudin's only hope of holding on to Klang. One might also add that Maharaja Abu Bakar's sympathy for Mahdi was an equally strong reason for Wan Ahmad to want to back Kudin's cause. Over the past several years, the sons of Wan Mutahir—Wan Abdul Rahman and Wan Da—had attempted to recover Pahang. Wan Ahmad attributed these activities to the machinations of their brother-in-law, Abu Bakar. Kudin's appeal was further accompanied by financial inducements for he promised that: '... if Klang and Salangore were secured by [Wan Ahmad's] help, ... [he] would hand over Klang, Salangore to [the Bendahara], to do what he pleased with them....'<sup>2</sup>

Sir Harry Ord gave unconditional approval to the Bendahara's request and after a brief conference between Muhammad Nor, Kudin and Davidson in Davidson's house, Syed Zain chartered a boat for Haji Muhammad Nor to return to Pahang bearing a letter from the Governor in which notice was given of Ord's intention to visit Pahang. The subsequent meeting between Ord and the Bendahara was extremely cordial. The Bendahara boasted that even if he had to contend with two additional Malay states, he would still be able to cope with the situation, but he confessed that he would not be able to match the Europeans.

With that Haji Muhammad Nor was once more sent on an errand—this time with letters to all the *dato'-dato'* in Ulu Pahang commanding them to collect their men in preparation for an attack on Klang. Meanwhile, the attack on Kuala Lumpur by Kudin's enemies had begun and Kudin's men, under Imam Perang Mat Akil and Wan Da were besieged there. Kudin therefore rushed to Pahang to urge haste, accompanied by Syed Zain and Raja Ismail. Kudin admitted to the Bendahara that without Pahang's assistance, he would not be able to contain his enemies who were very closely united. Kudin also asked

<sup>1</sup>The Rawa and Mendeling were on good terms with Mahdi. In fact, between 1868 and 1870, Mahdi himself had helped them to make incursions into Pahang (see Linehan, p.93).

<sup>2</sup>PP. Sir W. Jervois to Carnarvon, 5 June 1875, encl.2, Bendahara to Kudin, 18 May 1875.

for financial assistance to which the Bendahara readily acceded.

The Pahang men, 2,500 strong, under Imam Perang Rasu,<sup>1</sup> Orang Kaya Shahbandar, Orang Kaya Chenor and Haji Muhammad Nor, assembled at Bentong. They were to advance into Ulu Klang with 3 or 4,000 more to follow subsequently. But this first expedition was ill-planned. When the advance troops had reached Ulu Klang, Imam Perang Rasu acted independently in an attack on Permulas where Raja Asal's fort was situated. However he succeeded in taking the fort together with many captives including Raja Asal's wife. His men then moved towards Pengkalan Lumpur<sup>2</sup> but the Pahang men were by then too widely spread out. Raja Asal took advantage of this to cut off their food supplies by conducting surprise raids on parties bringing food to the advance troops.

Meanwhile, the Bendahara himself was to accompany the rear columns in their march towards Selangor. A certain Nakhoda Marikan was quickly sent to Singapore with large sums of money to purchase arms and gunpowder. When all was ready, hundreds of *perahu* proceeded towards the Ulu. But at this crucial moment, Wan Ahmad fell ill and was compelled to return to Pekan. This brought considerable suffering to the advance troops trapped in Ulu Klang without food, and they had no alternative but to retreat. Imam Perang Rasu then fortified himself near Bentong while To' Kaya Chenor and Haji Muhammad Nor entrenched themselves at Kapong where they were soon attacked by Raja Asal. But they succeeded in driving Raja Asal back to Klang. With this respite, fresh plans were made for another assault on Selangor—this time it was to be a two-pronged attack. Imam Perang Raja was to lead the men from around Pekan by sea to Selangor while Imam Perang Rasu would lead the men from the Ulu once more by way of Bentong into Ulu Klang.

<sup>1</sup>Imam Perang Rasu, also popularly known as To' Gajah, was Wan Ahmad's favourite. He gained recognition because of his prowess in the Pahang Civil War of 1857-63. His eldest son, Mat Kilau, was, not so long ago, a subject of much debate and discussion. Mat Kilau was one of those who participated prominently in the anti-British resistance movement in Pahang in the early 1890s. Towards the end of 1896, an old man in Pahang, commonly known as Mat Siam, publicly announced that he was in fact Mat Kilau who, as long ago as 1896, had been reported killed by the Siamese at Kuala Reik, Kelantan. The Pahang government appointed a committee to investigate the claim. As a result of the investigation, Mat Siam was officially recognized as Mat Kilau, the redoubtable Pahang warrior.

<sup>2</sup>An account of the Pahang campaign was published in the *Penang Gazette and Straits Chronicle* of 16 (sic) Nov. 1872 (CO 273/61, Ord to Kimberley, 15 Nov. 1872, encl.)

Despite this setback, Kudin himself managed to gain a little ground. On 18 November 1872 he and his Malay captain, Imam Perang Mat Akil, attacked and captured Petaling where 'Among the spoils captured was a letter addressed to the To' Engku Klang by the Sultan himself under the Selangor State seal instructing the To' Engku to assist Raja Mahdi against the Viceroy'.<sup>1</sup> The Sultan's conduct may be explained by the fact that he too was concerned over the considerable influence which Kudin wielded with the colonial government.

Throughout this period of confusion, Kudin had also to take measures to secure his position along the Sungai Linggi frontier. He had been particularly disturbed by the fact that Klana Sending had allowed Raja Mahdi to slip into Ulu Klang by way of Sungai Ujong in July 1872.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the Klana had cold-shouldered an invitation to join hands with Kudin.<sup>3</sup> As in the past, Kudin took advantage of the friction between Sungai Ujong and Rembau—this time owing to Klana Sending's granting of a concession to Henry Velge<sup>4</sup>—to prevail on the Penghulu of Rembau

... to assert some old claim which he had to a place called Sempang ... and to offer it to Tunku Koodin that he might erect thereon a fort, and thus prevent his enemies from receiving supplies by the Linghie River which communicates in its interior with the Langkat [Langat], Klang and Salangore Rivers.<sup>5</sup>

But this could also have had the effect of preventing the Sungai Ujong people from getting in their supplies or sending out their tin. As such, on 15 September 1872 a letter, signed by Syed Abdul Rahman and the Dato' Muda Linggi as representatives of Klana Sending, was sent to the Governor. It was thought that this letter was written by a European.<sup>6</sup> At any rate, the letter spoke out bitterly against Kudin whom they accused of governing the Country of Selangor improperly. It was said that: '... the Sultan and his three sons, Moosa, Kahar, and Yakob are no more thought of; that it is impossible to say if Tuanku Kudin is governing for himself or for the Sultan, and whether he is a friend or enemy of the Sultan.' The letter

<sup>1</sup>Middlebrook, p. 79; Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p. 29.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/61, Ord to Kimberley, 6 Nov. 1872.

<sup>3</sup>Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'.

<sup>4</sup>See, p.

<sup>5</sup>CO 273/61, Ord to Kimberley, 6 Nov. 1872.

<sup>6</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'. Braddell did not name the European concerned but because of H. Velge's close connexion with the Klana at this stage, it is highly probable that he wrote the letter.



further pointed out that Simpang, as in the case of Linggi, was under the rule of the Dato' Klana.

Sungai Ujong's claim on Simpang does appear to be based primarily on conquest for, on 3 October 1872, Klana Sending explained that Simpang was first occupied by Raja Ahman of Selangor who was subsequently expelled by the Dutch at the request of the then Dato' Klana.<sup>1</sup> Then Raja Ali, son of Raja Ahman, with the assistance of Syed Shaaban, gained control of the region in the early nineteenth century but were turned out in 1836. It was Sungai Ujong that was primarily responsible for expelling them and Simpang was left unoccupied for the next fifteen or sixteen years after which it came under the sway of Lebai Kulop. But he too was subsequently driven out by Sungai Ujong.<sup>2</sup>

The Klana expressed anxiety that Kudin's alliance with Rembau might lead to a serious war. His own position was comparatively insecure because his attempt to obtain passes for arms and ammunition had been frustrated by the Colonial authorities. On the other hand, 'Tuanku Kudin will get passes, and will supply the Rumbowe people, the Klana will have no arms to defend his country against Tuanku Kudin and the Rumbowe men, so that his country will be desolated and his people sacrificed, because of the quarrels of Tuanku Kudin and the Sultan and nobles of Salangor',<sup>3</sup>

As 1872 was drawing to a close, the political situation along Sungai Linggi further deteriorated. In early October 1872, Klana Sending was seriously considering the purchase of a steam-ship, the *Johore*, which belonged to Abu Bakar. But the price of \$25,000 was a little too high. Syed Abdul Rahman went to Singapore to try to get an abatement on the price. Hearing of this, on the 18 October Kudin wrote to say that the steamer was intended to take away from Langat, for Raja Mahdi and his partisans, tin belonging to Kudin, who, therefore asked the Governor to prevent the purchase of the steamer. Whether the Straits government complied with Kudin's request is not clear but it does not appear that Klana Sending went through with the deal.

In 1873, as mentioned earlier, Sungai Ujong had a new Klana—Syed Abdul Rahman. However, Syed Ahman favoured the policy of his predecessor whom he served as an adviser and spokesman for many years. Governor Ord endeavoured to persuade Sungai Ujong

<sup>1</sup>This must have occurred in the late eighteenth century.

<sup>2</sup>*GPMP*, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'; see also, pp.120-1.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*

to give every facility to Kudin's people, but the reply from Sungai Ujong was that 'if the Governor wished them to take an active part in the Klang war, they ought to be helped with funds, as they had not the means of doing anything themselves'.<sup>1</sup> This the Straits government could not do.

In March 1873, when Kudin once more regained Kuala Lumpur, Mahdi fled to Sungai Ujong where he was sheltered by Syed Ahman. Kudin had a mind to attack Sungai Ujong<sup>2</sup> but Lieutenant Governor Shaw of Malacca, who favoured the Klana, opposed the move: '... the real grievance was that the Chinese miners, who had been driven out of Klang, had come to work in Sungie Ujong, and Tuanku Kudin wished to drive them back'. Shaw further explained:

... under the name of a blockade in the Linggie River, Tuanku Kudin was levying money on boats going up and down the river; and, although the Klana's sympathies might be on the side of Rajas Mahdi and Mahmood, his position as a resident at Malacca, and completely under the influence of Government, insured his neutrality.

The Lieutenant-Governor added that Kudin's war had already greatly injured Malacca, and if allowed to extend to Sungai Ujong, would drag Rembau, Johol, Keru and Muar into a major war.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, Syed Ahman refused to allow the possibility of his territory being used by Pahang men in their expedition to Klang and, in early May 1873, half of Rembau, obviously supporters of Haji Mustapha, threatened to make war with Pahang because they assisted Tengku Kudin.<sup>4</sup> An attempt by the British at this time to have a treaty signed between Kudin and Syed Ahman failed to materialize. Syed Ahman claimed that he wished to remain neutral. But in June 1873, Kudin once more complained to the British that Raja Mahdi and Raja Laut were at Rekoh (in Sungai Ujong) assembling men for an attack on Klang. Syed Ahman denied that any such preparation was taking place, and in the following month he reported that Raja Mahdi had left Sungai Ujong.<sup>5</sup>

Despite his many problems, in effect, by the beginning of 1873, Kudin's fortune was rapidly improving. Kedah was contemplating sending men from Perak to assist Kudin, to which proposal Governor Ord expressed 'pleasure'.<sup>6</sup> This was not because the ruler of Kedah

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. <sup>2</sup>GPMP, *Precis of Selangor Papers*, Kudin to Gov., SS, 29 March 1873.

<sup>3</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'.

<sup>4</sup>GPMP, *Precis of Selangor Papers*: Kudin to Davidson, 10 April 1873; Rajah of Pahang to Kudin, 5 May 1873.

<sup>5</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'.

<sup>6</sup>SSR, F7, Klana to Gov., SS, 10 July 1873.

had any personal feeling for Kudin. According to Irving: 'He disapproves of [Kudin's] conduct ... in certain matters. He is himself a strict observer of his religion, and I am told that he is displeased with his brother's laxity in drinking wine, and eating with Europeans ...'<sup>1</sup> At the same time, the Raja of Kedah also disapproved of Maharaja Abu Bakar, possibly because, being a conservative and religious Malay, he had much sympathy for the family of Sultan Ali,<sup>2</sup> so much so that he married the daughter of that ruler when it was known that the Maharaja had, or was about to, ask her in marriage and 'it was desired, among the people of the "white blood", to find for the old Sultan an unimpeachable excuse for declining what they would consider as a mis-alliance'. Since Abu Bakar championed the cause of Mahdi, the Raja of Kedah decided to assist Kudin. It might have been the Raja's own conservatism again which prompted him to favour Raja Abdullah against Raja Ismail who was not fully of royal blood.<sup>3</sup>

In fact at this juncture, Kudin could well do without his brother's help, although for the time being he was forced to retreat from Kuala Lumpur in the process of which he lost many of his men, including two European officers, one of whom was fatally shot and the other captured and severely tortured. Then word was received by Imam Perang Mat Akil from Imam Perang Rasu asking that a date should be fixed for the arrival of Pahang's forces simultaneously by land and sea. Mat Akil immediately informed Kudin. When all had been arranged, Kudin sent his men to attack Kuala Lumpur. In the course of the fighting, the Pahang forces arrived and a pitched battle ensued. By March 1873 Kuala Lumpur had been retaken. But, the Pahang forces suffered many casualties—Imam Perang Raja and Dollah Bera

<sup>1</sup>GPMP, Irving's Memorandum relative to the Affairs of the Native States &c.—with reference to the Despatch of the Sec. of State of 20th Sept. 1873.

<sup>2</sup>Sultan Ali, son of Sultan Hussain, appointed by Raffles as ruler of Johor, was formally recognized by the British as Sultan of Johor in 1855 after he had signed an agreement ceding the whole of the territory of Johor, except the Muar-Kesang area, to Temenggong Daing Ibrahim, son of Temenggong Abdul Rahman who was a signatory to the treaty ceding Singapore to the British. Temenggong Abdul Rahman died in 1825 and Sultan Hussain in 1835. Ali and Ibrahim then became rivals for control of Johor with the British positively favouring Ibrahim. The agreement of 1855 did not assuage Sultan Ali's dissatisfaction and his relationship with the Temenggong remained strained. Abu Bakar succeeded his father, Daing Ibrahim, in 1862. He was even more ambitious and it was anticipated that with the death of Sultan Ali, the royal family would gradually cease to exist. But Sultan Ali's son, Tengku Alam, might make a serious claim to his father's title and this could lead to an outbreak of violence. (See Khoo Kay Kim, 'Johor in the 19th Century: A Brief Survey', *Journal of the Historical Society, University of Malaya*, vol. VI, 1967/68; T. Braddell, 'The Sultan of Johore', *JIAEA*, vol. II, New Series.)

<sup>3</sup>GPMP, Irving's Memo. on Kimberley's Despatch of 20 Sept. 1873.

were shot in the thigh, Panglima Garang Ishak in the calf. Nonetheless, the victory which they secured called for celebration. Imam Perang Rasu and Imam Perang Raja returned to Pahang with many captives. The Orang Kaya Pahlawan,<sup>1</sup> however, remained with his men to take charge of Ulu Klang. At Pulau Keladi, on the way to Pekan, the Pahang men gathered for their victory celebration. The Bendahara too was present to reward his men. It was then that Imam Perang Rasu was conferred the title of Imam Perang Indera Gajah, Pahang. Imam Perang Raja was made Imam Perang Indera Mahkota; his brother, Hassan, Panglima Perang Johan Perkasa; and one of his relatives, a man from Jambi who was well-known as a courageous fighter, was given the title of Imam Perang Jambi.

In effect, the war in Selangor had not yet been decisively won. On 16 April 1873 the Bendahara informed Sir Harry Ord that he would continue to assist Kudin. 'He added that Pahang was still able to put in the field some thousands of fighting men, and enquired whether Singapore desired him to proceed with operations. If the Governor consented, Ahmad asked that the Pahang expedition should be afforded a safe passage by sea to Klang'.<sup>2</sup> The reply was favourable and so the Pahang men returned once more to attack Kudin's enemies who had entrenched themselves at Kanching and Kuala Selangor. All the Pahang heroes were again present while Kudin's forces were led by Imam Perang Mat Akil and Khatib Bahrin. The combined forces assembled at Kuala Batu and they were provided with new weapons by Kudin: A confident Kudin wrote in July 1873: '... about the affairs of Salangore a great many Pahang men came by the interior, to go to work. In our opinion a few more days the whole of the affairs will be settled'.<sup>3</sup> He informed the Sultan of Selangor of his intention to attack Kuala Selangor and begged that Raja Musa should be recalled from that district.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>This was the same man who, in 1892, led the anti-British uprising in Pahang.

<sup>2</sup>Linehan, p. 97.      <sup>3</sup>SSR, F7, Tunku dia Oodin to Gov., SS, 9 July 1873.

<sup>4</sup>Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p. 29. Raja Musa, however, did not leave Kuala Selangor until it had fallen in early November 1873. He made his way back to Langat but subsequently went to stay with Raja Abdullah in Perak and only returned to Langat in February 1874 to meet Sir Andrew Clarke. Braddell (*GPMP*, 'Continuation of Report of Proceedings &c.') believed that Raja Musa was expelled from Langat by his father. This is doubtful because by this time, Sultan Abdul Samad clearly had no sympathy for Kudin. Winstedt ('A History of Selangor', p. 29) suggests that Musa left Langat because his father was 'as usual unsympathetic with failure'. It is possible too that Musa's departure from Langat was to prevent pro-Kudin elements, especially the British, from accusing the Sultan of harbouring anti-Kudin refugees. (See Mohd. Amin Hassan, 'Raja Musa ibni Sultan Abdul Samad', *Peninjau Sejarah*, vol.1, no.1, 1966, p. 63).

At 5 a.m. on a Friday morning, the Pahang men began their assault on Bukit Genting. This attacking party was divided into two groups, one led by Imam Perang Indera Gajah, Orang Kaya Pahlawan, Imam Perang Haji Hussein, Panglima Raja Yakob and others, approaching from the right, while the other group led by Haji Muhammad Nor, To' Kaya Chenor, To' Kaya Temerloh, To' Bangau, Teh Muhammad Sanggang, To' Lela and others cordoned off the enemies from the left. Bitter fighting ensued for several days.

Another party under Imam Perang Indera Mahkota, Panglima Perang Johan Perkasa, Imam Perang Mat Akil and Khatib Bahrin made for Kuala Selangor, advancing by way of Tanjong Karang. The first operation ended near Pasir Gayang and many of the enemies' stockades were destroyed. Although initially the Pahang men and Kudin's forces gained rapid ground, the attack on Kuala Selangor eventually cost them many lives. Imam Perang Mat Akil was among the first to be killed and one of Bendahara Wan Ahmad's nephews, Tun Ibrahim, who together with Wan Aman and Wan Da were also taking part in the fighting, fell ill and passed away. The Imam Perang Indera Mahkota himself fell ill while fighting at Permatang. Dollah Bera and Panglima Perang were both seriously wounded. All three of them asked to be allowed to go to Malacca for treatment to which Kudin consented. Eventually Khatib Bahrin was left alone to lead the assault on Kuala Selangor.

In the interior, fighting soon shifted to Kanching where Imam Perang Indera Gajah and Haji Muhammad Nor came under heavy attack by a combination of Chinese, Mendeling and Selangor forces. Imam Perang Indera Gajah at one stage was besieged in a stockade and it required a concerted effort on the part of Haji Muhammad Nor, Teh Muhammad Sanggang, Panglima Bebas Zabidi, Panglima Kanan Chenor, Imam Perang Kedam, To' Kaya Temerloh and To' Umbi to free him in the course of which many of the Pahang warriors were wounded or killed.

Eventually Haji Muhammad Nor had to turn to Yap Ah Loy for men who were skilled at shooting fire-darts. Seventy of these Chinese were then sent to accompany Orang Kaya Pahlawan, Panglima Bebas, Panglima Kanan, Panglima Raja and Enche Bakar Penghulu Balai in an attack on the enemies. Many of the houses were burnt in the course of the battle which lasted for three hours. Kanching finally capitulated. Imam Perang Indera Gajah and Haji Muhammad Nor then proceeded to attack Ulu Selangor in the

process of which they captured Kuala Kubu and Buluh Telur. Then on the way to Ulu Yam, they encountered the forces of Raja Asal and Raja Bintang. But Ulu Selangor finally fell to the Pahang men. At this stage cholera broke out. This so frightened Imam Perang Indera Gajah that he decided to return to Pahang with his men. Haji Muhammad Nor was left in command of the forces. Being considerably weakened, the Pahang men were forced to fortify themselves at Kuala Kubu when the enemies launched a counter attack. There they rapidly ran short of provisions owing to the distance from Klang.

Meanwhile, Khatib Bahrin who had been left in charge of the attack on Kuala Selangor had asked for assistance, and when Kanching had been taken, To' Kaya Temerloh was sent to help him. It was when Haji Muhammad Nor was desperately defending his position in Kuala Kubu that Kuala Selangor was at last conquered. This occurred in early November 1873. Kudin thought that Syed Mashhor had been captured and was among the prisoners being sent back to Pahang. Kudin then declared his intention to go with 500 men to Bernam, where Raja Asal had taken refuge, 'to finish them all off at once'.<sup>1</sup> But his expedition never materialized.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the Pahang men were in pursuit of Syed Mashhor. When Kuala Selangor fell and the conquering Pahang forces moved towards the Ulu, Syed Mashhor retreated by way of Batang Berjuntai with the intention of continuing battle from Ulu Bernam where he had accumulated various kinds of weapons and stored up 20 *koyan* of rice. When Haji Muhammad Nor got wind of this he immediately proceeded to Ulu Bernam, arriving there at the same time as Syed Mashhor and Raja Chik (of Siak). After four hours of fighting, Syed Mashhor was forced to retreat to Slim. Haji Muhammad followed up and again routed him there. Syed Mashhor was compelled to take refuge at Sungai Perak. With the capture of Ulu Bernam, Sutan Bangkaulu, who had defected when Ulu Selangor fell to Syed Mashhor in 1871, surrendered to the Pahang men and was subsequently executed for fear he might cause further unrest in Selangor.

With Kudin's enemies decisively defeated, Pahang men took control of the greater part of Selangor. Ulu Selangor was under Haji Muhammad Nor, Ulu Klang under Orang Kaya Pahlawan and Kanching under Sheikh Mat Taib and Embok. Kuala Lumpur itself came under the charge of the To' Dagang. A certain Mat Saman

<sup>1</sup>SSR, F7, Tunku dia Oodin to Birch, 13 Nov. 1873.

<sup>2</sup>CMP, A. Skinner 'Precis of Perak Affairs', 10 Jan. 1874.

became headman at Batu and Sheikh Mat Ali at Petaling. Irving aptly summed up Kudin's position at the end of 1873:

Tunku Kudin occupies to all appearances a strong position in the country. He has command of the sea, ... he is in uninterrupted communication with Pahang, and he holds the two important rivers the Salangore and Kallang, from their mouths, to their sources in the mountains which divide Pahang from Salangore.<sup>1</sup>

However, when most of the Pahang men had returned home, once more the *anak raja* of Selangor and the Mendeling threatened to rise against Tengku Kudin who at once wrote to Pahang asking for more men to strengthen his position. By then Pahang had become weary of participating in Kudin's war. The reply to Kudin was that it was not possible to send any more help. Kudin then asked Haji Muhammad Nor to appeal to the Bendahara and the reply was that Kudin should accept the British into Selangor. It was therefore through Kudin's request that the Straits government took the first opportunity to interfere in Selangor affairs.<sup>2</sup>

With Kudin's position unassailable because of outright British protection, Raja Mahdi was compelled to leave the state by the close of 1874. But he did not abandon his cause. In July 1875, Sir William Jervois reported: '... since Rajah Mahdie's arrival in Johore both my Predecessor & myself have used every endeavour to induce him to give up further interference in Selangor affairs & to accept an allowance from that Govt'.<sup>3</sup> But Mahdi was adamant. However, beginning from that time his fortune was beginning to ebb rapidly. Even the money that he had kept by for carrying on his campaign in Selangor had been stolen from his house in Singapore.<sup>4</sup> By 1880 his health too was deteriorating. He died of tuberculosis on 10 January 1882.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>GPMP, Irving's Memo on Kimberley: Despatch of 20 Sept. 1873.

<sup>2</sup>The greater proportion of the above account of Pahang's campaign is based on the *Hikayat Pahang* (Rumi text), p. 1-38.

<sup>3</sup>CO 273/81, Minute by Charles Cox (17 Jan. 1876) of Jervois to Carnarvon, 3 Dec. 1875.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/94, Robinson to Hicks Beach, 18 June, 1878, encl., Irving's Memo. relative to the proposed retirement & pension of Tunku Dia Oodin, 11 May 1878.

<sup>5</sup>For a biographical sketch of Raja Mahdi, see, Mohd. Amin Hassan, 'Raja Mahdi bin Raja Sulaiman', *Peninjau Sejarah*, vol.1, no.2, 1966.

## STRAITS MERCHANTS AND THE PENINSULAR 'WARS'

As early as 1848, Governor Butterworth had cause to remark: 'The influence the merchants at Malacca have over the chieftains of the neighbouring states had been of long standing, and that it continues I am credibly informed'.<sup>1</sup> An indication of the magnitude of this influence has been given in the discussion on the Sungai Ujong-Linggi politics of the early 1840s.<sup>2</sup> The situation indeed remained unchanged even in the 1860s and early 1870s. In the midst of the Klang War, Tengku Kudin had occasion to write: 'We inform our friend [Governor Ord] that regarding the disturbances we know that formerly Rajah Mahdi, and at the present time Syed Mashor and others, have received help from merchants under [our] friend's Government in arms and provisions and money'.<sup>3</sup> It is ironical, of course, that the complaint should have come from Kudin for he himself was no less dependent on Straits merchants for material support.<sup>4</sup>

Hitherto, few attempts have been made to identify those merchants and to try to discover the underlying factors giving rise to rivalry among them.<sup>5</sup> Undoubtedly, such a task is a formidable one. Not the least important of the historians' problems is the difficulty of writing an elaborate account of the economic development of that period. It has been noted that one would encounter difficulty even in guessing at the amount of capital invested in the Malay states then.<sup>6</sup> But the absence of reliable statistics should not interfere with the study of the

<sup>1</sup>Cited by Abdullah Sultan, p. 13 n.2.

<sup>2</sup>See pp. 118-20.

<sup>3</sup>SSR, F7, Dia Oodin to Governor, 18 June 1872.

<sup>4</sup>In this context, Gullick's comments are particularly apt:

'... both sides had their backers, among the merchants, chiefly Chinese, in the Straits Settlements. It was the merchants who provided the sinews of war.' (See Middlebrook, Introduction, p. 6).

<sup>5</sup>M. L. Wynne (*Triad and Tabut*) is the only person who has so far made a serious attempt to study the deeper implications of the involvement of Straits merchants in the Peninsular 'wars'. Wynne postulates that rivalry among the merchants was prompted primarily by secret society feuds. This is part of his attempt to substantiate his broader theory about the existence of a Triad-Tokong conflict among the Chinese secret societies. Suffice it to say that Wynne's arguments contain a number of fallacies, a result of superficial study of the available evidence. Some of his errors will be pointed out subsequently.

<sup>6</sup>See Cowan, *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, pp. 130-9.



more human aspect of the subject. And as it has been remarked, 'more important than the actual amounts are the people involved'.<sup>1</sup>

It will be observed that the amount of material available on the activities of Straits merchants (especially the Chinese) in Perak, Selangor and Sungai Ujong varies significantly. Because the Chinese in Perak were more turbulent, contemporary reports on their activities were also more numerous. In the case of Selangor, although the Chinese played no less an important role in the internal politics of the state, surprisingly, contemporary official documents made little reference to them. Similarly, little information is available on the Chinese in Sungai Ujong until 1874 when the British made their move to gain control of the administration of that territory.

Yet another problem which emerges is that while it is easy enough to establish the link between Larut miners and Penang Chinese mercantilists, in the case of Selangor and Sungai Ujong, which were the main spheres of influence of Malacca merchants, it is difficult to ascertain what particular firms in Singapore these Malacca merchants were representing, though it is sufficiently clear that they were mere agents of Singapore business houses. Therefore the discussion which follows will necessarily be speculative in many places.

Before any attempt is made to outline the pattern of cleavage, if any, between the Straits merchants, it is essential first to identify the individual merchants who were largely responsible for financing the opposing factions in the Peninsular 'wars'. One might begin with the Klang War. At the outbreak of disturbances, Mahdi was found to be wanting in money, rice and gun-powder. This was largely because many of the *padi* planters decided to flee to Langat so that there was no one to harvest the crop, and as for gun-powder, though Mahdi had brought a substantial quantity from Kuala Selangor, it was of a poor quality, dating back to the time when the Dutch attacked Selangor (1784). Mahdi, therefore, sent one of his men to go to Malacca to seek the aid of 'Baba Teck Cheng' (Chan Tek Chiang). Mahdi required not only gun-powder and rice but also money and arms. The agreement was that after victory had been achieved, the debts would be repaid with interest.<sup>2</sup>

It appears certain that Mahdi had had commercial dealings with Chan Tek Chiang for some time. This may also be inferred from the fact that at the time when Raja Ismail was about to attack Mahdi,

<sup>1</sup>Ibid. p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>Abdul Samad Ahmad (ed.), *Pesaka Selangor*, p. 10.

late in 1869, some of Mahdi's adherents were in Malacca selling tin to the Baba. Payments for the tin were made in cash or in kind (for example, rice and opium). It has been suggested that Chan Tek Chiang was also 'angling for concessions': '... a Straits-born Malacca Chinese, Baba Tek Cheng, supplied his [Mahdi's] needs, accepting only interest on his outlay till victory should put his client in a position to grant limitless concessions of land'.<sup>1</sup>

The information available on Chan Tek Chiang is scanty. But it is clear that he was a person of standing in Malacca. Apart from being a Justice of the Peace, in June 1875, when certain outrages were committed in Rekoh (Selangor) by members of the Arab Police Force stationed there and some witnesses had to be collected and sent to Singapore for investigation, it was to Chan Tek Chiang that the Resident (J. G. Davidson) turned for assistance because 'these parties are all well known to you'.<sup>2</sup> Also, when secret society riots broke out in Malacca in late 1875, the Acting Lieutenant-Governor of Malacca, C. B. Plunket, had to depend on the assistance of Chan Tek Chiang and two other influential Chinese—See Boon Tiong and Tan Teik Guan<sup>3</sup>—to deal with the riots.<sup>4</sup>

Too little is known about Chan Tek Chiang's connexion with Singapore Chinese. It is on record, however, that at his funeral which took place in Malacca on 9 May 1889, Tan Beng Gum<sup>5</sup> 'took a prominent part in the performance of the traditional ritual'.<sup>6</sup> This is proof that Tan Beng Gum was either closely related to Chan Tek Chiang or intimately associated with him because they belonged to some specific organization. It is not possible to specify the nature of this relationship because it is not known what kind of rituals Tan

<sup>1</sup>Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', pp. 19-20; see also Wynne p. 418.

<sup>2</sup>SSF, CS 97/75, Col. Sec. to Resident, 18 Aug. 1875; Resident to Chan Tek Chiang, 24 Aug. 1875.

<sup>3</sup>He was the younger brother of Tan Kim Cheng.

<sup>4</sup>CMP, Jervois to Carnarvon, 29 Dec. 1875, encl. 4, C. B. Plunket to Governor, 25 Dec. 1875.

<sup>5</sup>He was one of the sons of Tan Kim Seng. Tan Kim Seng, born in Malacca in 1805, became a prominent merchant in Singapore. In 1850 he was made a Justice of the Peace. He had very close and extensive business transactions with leading European firms among which were Hamilton, Gray & Co. and Boustead & Co. Referring to his commercial activities, a contemporary writer said:

'A Chinaman who had come to Singapore, a poor man about thirty years ago, died in March 1864, worth close upon two million dollars. He had grown up to be an extensive merchant, planter and tin miner, had adopted the settlements as his home and had left behind him many memorials of his public spirit and charity.' (J. Cameron, *Our Tropical Possessions in Malayan India*, London, 1865, p. 139n.)

<sup>6</sup>See C. S. Wong, *A Gallery of Chinese Kapitans*, p. 8.

Beng Gum performed. That there was close association between the two men is important within the context of this study because Kim Seng & Co., situated at Boat Quay, Singapore, had substantial interests in the Peninsula. Its investments in Pahang have already been referred to.<sup>1</sup> As early as 1840, this firm was important enough to be admitted as a member of the Singapore Chamber of Commerce. Tan Beng Swee, the eldest son,<sup>2</sup> succeeded as head of the firm after Tan Kim Seng's death. It will be shown subsequently that both Tan Beng Swee and Chan Tek Chiang had important commercial interests in Sungai Ujong in the early 1870s. But whether Chan Tek Chiang continued to assist Mahdi throughout the remaining period of the Klang War is not known. The records show only that in the early 1870s, the Mahdi faction was financed by some Singapore merchants.<sup>3</sup>

Some of the Penang traders were also interested parties in the Klang War. The *Kim Seng Cheong* incident, in fact, throws some light on the subject. This is to be found in the report of Capt. Bradberry, Commander of the colonial steamer *Pluto*. In describing the British attempt to arrest a Chinese who was suspected of being involved in the plunder of the junk, Bradberry wrote:

... this excited the Malays, who immediately drew their creses and threatened our party causing most of us to take to the boats, which shoved off to the ship, leaving a few of us including Captain Bradberry and Mr Cox still on the Beach; the boat now returned to the shore and the remaining party returned; when in the boat the Malay Chief called out for *Mr Boon Tek* to come on shore and on being told he was not in the boat tried to persuade Mr Cox to land, evidently meaning mischief, but Mr Cox refused to go and returned to the ship ....<sup>4</sup>

The mention of Boon Teik is interesting and suggests many possibilities, for Ong Boon Teik, a leading Penang merchant (proprietor

<sup>1</sup>See, p.86.

<sup>2</sup>Tan Beng Swee was born in Singapore in 1828. He had, at an early age, worked in his father's shop and was admitted a partner in 1852. The family's connexion with Malacca, however, was never broken. For seventeen years, Tan Beng Swee was president of the Chinese Temple there. He was on the list of Grand Jurors in 1864 and in 1879 was made a J.P. He died on 4 Nov. 1884 after which his brother, Tan Beng Gum, was elected president of the same temple and a leader of the Chinese community in Malacca. Tan Beng Gum owned large interests in Malacca but spent a great deal of his time in Singapore where he served on the committee of the Po Leung Kuk which controlled the Chinese Girls' Home at Kandang Kerbau. He died on 15 Sept. 1893. (Song, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese in Singapore*, pp. 90, 193, 277; C. S. Wong, p. 8).

<sup>3</sup>GPMP, *Precis of Selangor Papers*: Lt. Gov., Malacca, to Governor, 8 April 1872.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 14 July 1871, encl.A. (My italics)

of Messrs. Boon Teik & Co., ships' chandlers),<sup>1</sup> was, as will be shown later, one of the important members of the Toa Peh Kong. As in many of the other cases, little information is available on Ong Boon Teik. He was one of the owners of the *Kim Seng Cheong*<sup>2</sup> and because of his trading activities was possibly known to many of the chiefs in Selangor.

This is not the only instance of Penang involvement in Selangor politics.<sup>3</sup> There was also the case of Edward Bacon, thickly involved in intrigues in Perak, who, in late 1870, was reported to have paid \$30,000 to assist Raja Mahdi 'with innumerable boat-loads of rice, muskets and gunpowder'.<sup>4</sup>

We have next to turn to Tengku Kudin's financiers. It is well-known that at the conclusion of the Klang War, Kudin's debts amounted to about \$400,000, of which \$300,000 were due to 'a Malacca Chinese merchant for ammunitions of war'.<sup>5</sup> The name of the merchant according to one published source was Baba Tee Yee.<sup>6</sup> Existing published works provide no information on this merchant. It is now possible to add a little more to what is already known. It should be noted that there are many variations of the spelling of his name—perhaps the most accurate version is that given in official correspondence: Lim Teik Hee.<sup>7</sup>

Apparently 'Baba Teck Ee' had been for some time prior to the out-break of the Klang War, a close friend of Raja Abdullah's.<sup>8</sup> Hence, when in late 1869 Raja Ismail (son of Raja Abdullah) was preparing to recapture Klang, it was to Lim Teik Hee that he looked for assistance.<sup>9</sup> Subsequently, probably through Raja Ismail, Kudin also became acquainted with Lim Teik Hee, and from then on Kudin relied heavily on the Baba for material support. In 1882, the Resident

<sup>1</sup>Wright & Cartwright (eds.), *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya*, p. 757.

<sup>2</sup>The *Penang Argus* (1 July 1871) also mentioned that the boat belonged to, among others, Ong Hong Buan. (See enclosure in CO 273/48, Anson to Kimberley, 14 July 1871.)

<sup>3</sup>Cowan (*Nineteenth Century Malaya*, p. 139) believes that Penang merchants were possibly important financiers of Tengku Kudin because 'he spent a good deal of time there on his way to and from his home in Kedah....'

<sup>4</sup>As regards Selangor's commercial link with Penang, Raja Bot (*Malay Mail*, 'Rice Cultivation in the States &c.') said, 'The people of Selangor rarely went as far as Singapore, trading only with Malacca and Penang merchants.'

<sup>5</sup>Winstedt, 'A History of Selangor', p. 23.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid. p. 32.

<sup>7</sup>Middlebrook, p. 127.

<sup>8</sup>SSF, K.L. 78/82, Resident to Col. Sec., 21 Nov 1882.

<sup>9</sup>Abdul Samad Ahmad (ed.), p. 19.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

of Selangor (Swettenham) described Lim Teik Hee as 'the owner of the largest number of Selangor State Debt Bonds held by an individual'.<sup>1</sup>

As a result of Irving's visit to Klang, in April 1872, accompanied by Munshi Ibrahim, some concrete information is available on the relationship between Kudin and the Baba. For example, Kudin was quoted as having said:

Often the steamer Telegraph came to collect tin here which was conveyed to Malacca where Tek Ek arbitrarily placed a price on it and wrote it down in his account book. He always said that he based his assessment on the market value of the tin in Malacca itself which would, of course, be higher than the price of the article in Klang. I accepted everything on the word of Syed Zain.<sup>2</sup>

The conversation, in effect, revolved around Kudin's debt to Lim Teik Hee. Irving had met the Baba in Malacca and the Chinese merchant was anxious to ascertain the precise amount Kudin owed him. Lim Teik Hee claimed that by that time the sum had exceeded \$100,000, but Kudin himself thought that it could not be more than 70 or 80,000 dollars.

But what is even more interesting is that while Munshi Ibrahim specifically mentioned that Lim Teik Hee was Kudin's creditor, Irving, in a letter to the Governor, referring to the same affair, mentioned the name of another Chinese. An official precis of Irving's letter reads, 'Reporting his arrival at Malacca, and giving certain reasons which are likely to delay his interview with the Rajah Muda at Perak. Alluding also to Tunku Dia Udin's debt to one *Chin Seng*, amounting to \$100,000, which the creditor has great confidence would be repaid'.<sup>3</sup> Neither Ibrahim nor Irving was mistaken. It is sufficiently clear that Lim Teik Hee and Chin Seng (Tan Chin Seng) were partners. In other words, it was the firm of Leack, Chin Seng & Co. that was really financing Tengku Kudin.<sup>4</sup> However, there is no precise information available on Lim Teik Hee's position in the firm. One is left to surmise that since one of the

<sup>1</sup>SSF, K.L. 78/82, Resident to Col. Sec., 21 Nov. 1882. It is confirmed in a Malay source (see Abdul Samad Ahmad, p. 54) that the amount of money due to Lim Teik Hee at the end of the war was \$300,000 but the debt was said to have been incurred by Raja Ismail.

<sup>2</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.) p. 42.

<sup>3</sup>GPMP, Precis of Selangor Papers: Irving to Governor, 19 April 1872. (My italics.)

<sup>4</sup>The origin of this firm has been referred to earlier, see p.62.

principal founders of the firm was Lim Leack, there must have been a close relationship between him and Lim Teik Hee.

There is further evidence to show that there were others involved in the venture apart from Lim Teik Hee and Tan Chin Seng. This relates to the presence of the steamship *Telegraph* in Klang. Kudin had made use of the steamer since at least 1871.<sup>1</sup> The steamer, of course, performed primarily a commercial function, for Munshi Ibrahim reported:

(a) ... at eight o'clock we arrived at the village or town of Klang and anchored at the upper end of Pengkalan Batu. I saw many boats also anchored and fastened there and there was a steamer called *Telegraph* whose function was to bring Chinese to work in the tin mines and to convey the tin to Malacca.

(b) ... at nine o'clock the steamer *Telegraph* proceeded down the river on its way to meet Baba Tek Ek at Malacca because it was from him that Tengku Kudin received money, rice &c. for the development of Klang.<sup>2</sup>

Although official sources referred to the *Telegraph* as Kudin's steamer,<sup>3</sup> in reality it belonged neither to him nor to the firm of Leack, Chin Seng & Co., but to the firm of Cheng-tee Watt-seng, Chop Eng Joo, which carried on business at North Boat Quay, Singapore.<sup>4</sup> Lee Cheng Tee, one of the owners of the firm, was the brother-in-law of Tan Kim Cheng. It is interesting to note that there were some ties between Tan Kim Cheng's family and Leack, Chin Seng & Co.

Chee Swee Cheng, grandson of Chee Yam Chuan (one of the founders of Leack, Chin Seng & Co.), began his career at the age of sixteen with the firm of Lim Tiang Wah & Sons and joined Leack, Chin Seng & Co. only four years later. Choa Kim Keat, son-in-law of Tan Kim Cheng, also began his career as a salesman with Lim Tian Wah & Sons. For many years he also managed the large rice business of Kim Cheng & Co. Choa Kim Keat's uncle, Choa Chuan Ghiok, was manager in Rangoon of the branch business of Leack, Chin Seng & Co. Subsequently, Choa Kim Keat's father, Choa Kai Hong, Malacca-born, succeeded as manager of the Rangoon branch of Leack, Chin Seng & Co. and died there in 1865. In short, there must have been close connexion between Lim Tian Wah & Sons, Leack, Chin Seng & Co. and Kim Cheng & Co.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup>GPMP, *Precis of Selangor Papers: Irving to Administrator*, SS, Aug. 1871.

<sup>2</sup>Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), pp. 38, 39.

<sup>3</sup>GPMP, *Precis of Selangor Papers: Irving to Administrator*, SS, Aug. 1871; *Sultan of Selangor to Governor*, 1 Oct. 1872.

<sup>4</sup>Song (p. 165) wrote: 'Messrs. Cheng-tee Watt-seng & Co. owned the steamer *Telegraph*, sailing to Malacca and Penang'.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. pp. 29, 406.

It is evident that Tan Kim Cheng himself must have been pro-Kudin. In fact, he had established commercial relations with Raja Abdullah, father of Raja Ismail, as far back as 1866. There was, in addition, another source of support for Kudin. By 1872, one other steamer 'which trades to Kallang, and which Tunku Dia Udin had chartered' was the *Rainbow*.<sup>1</sup> The *Rainbow*, originally a colonial steamer, was sold in early 1871.<sup>2</sup> It was probably purchased by the shipping firm of Lee Keng Yong Bros.<sup>3</sup> Whether the firm had any ties with Cheng-tee Watt-seng & Co., Kim Cheng & Co. or Leack, Chin Seng & Co. is not known. But it is pertinent to reiterate that there was close relationship between Lee Qui Lim's family and Tan Kim Seng's family.<sup>4</sup>

The involvement of European merchants in Selangor's politics needs no further elaboration. Suffice it to say that since at least 1872, J. G. Davidson had managed to establish himself as Kudin's principal adviser. For economic reasons too, W. H. Read was partial towards Kudin although there is no evidence to indicate that he played as active and direct a role as Davidson in supporting Kudin.

In the case of Perak, the pattern of cleavage between the Chinese merchants is easily traceable. The most powerful of the interested parties was the Toa Peh Kong clique. In Penang, since the mid-nineteenth century, the Hokkien merchants wielded considerable power because they controlled the export and import trade among the Chinese community. With possibly rare exceptions, such wealthy Hokkien were members of the Toa Peh Kong.<sup>5</sup> It was therefore the financial power of the Toa Peh Kong combined with the numerical strength of the Hai San which enabled the latter to hold their own in Larut. In the early 1870s, notwithstanding setbacks which he suffered as a result of the Penang riots of 1867, Khoo Thean Teik remained the supreme head of the Toa Peh Kong and he was possibly the most powerful Chinese in Penang. Apart from the in-

<sup>1</sup>CMP, Irving's Memo. on Selangor, 24 July 1872; Haji Muhammad Said (ed.), p. 47; Abdul Samad Ahmad (ed.), p. 42. In the last-mentioned work, *Rainbow* appears as *Rembau*.

<sup>2</sup>CO 273/46, Governor to Sec. of State, 20 April 1871. The name of the purchaser was not mentioned. But in 1875, Lee Keng Yong was named as the owner of the ship. (See SSF, CS 83/75, Resident to Keng Yong, 12 July 1875; Actg. Sec. for Native Affairs to Resident, 30 July 1875.)

<sup>3</sup>Lee Keng Yong was the son of Lee Qui Lim. Another brother, Lee Keng Liat, who was also connected with the firm, acquired certain farms in Tampin, Negri Sembilan, in the early 1880s. (CO 273/119, Weld to Derby, 23 Feb. 1883, encl., Hervey to Col. Sec., 25 Jan. 1883.)

<sup>4</sup>Sec. p.64.

<sup>5</sup>Sec. pp.113.

fluent position which he held in the underworld, he was also a very wealthy man. Although he has not been given due attention in the published works on the Larut disturbances, he was, in fact, the owner of the *Fair Malacca*,<sup>1</sup> the pride of the Toa Peh Kong fleet.<sup>2</sup> In 1876, he was described as 'a kind of protector of Chinese Coolies' in Penang and was said to be paid \$1,000 a year by interested parties in Swatow.<sup>3</sup> At the beginning of British administration in Perak, it was found that Ngah Ibrahim was indebted to many Penang merchants. One of them was Khoo Thean Teik.<sup>4</sup>

Subordinate to Khoo Thean Teik but nevertheless important because of their social standing and involvement in Larut politics, direct or otherwise, were Foo Tye Sin and Ong Boon Teik. Both of them were also creditors of Ngah Ibrahim.<sup>5</sup> Mention has already been made of Ong Boon Teik in connexion with Selangor's politics. As regards Foo Tye Sin, it is necessary to discuss him in conjunction with another leading Penang merchant, Koh Siang Tat,<sup>6</sup> who also

<sup>1</sup>On the subject of the *Fair Malacca* and the Larut disturbances, see Parkinson, *British Intervention &c.*, pp. 84 et seq., 126, 127; Cowan *Nineteenth Century Malaya*, pp. 117, 184.

<sup>2</sup>Wynne, pp. 267, 275.

<sup>3</sup>A port in Kongchow situated five miles from the sea. Numerous emigrants started every year from this place. See also *Proceedings of the Legislative Council, Straits Settlements 1876*, 'Report on Chinese Labourers', App. 22, pp. ccxliii-iv.

<sup>4</sup>CMP, Jervis to Carnarvon, 16 Nov. 1875, encl.6. Agreement made between Ngah Ibrahim and his Creditors, 20 April 1875. In 1880, Khoo Thean Tek also held the following Farms in Perak: (i) Krian and Kurau, including export of opium to Selama, attaps in the two areas, but excluding duty on tin from Selama and the South Larut Farms; (ii) Right to collect duty of \$5 a ball on all opium imported into Sungai Perak by the sea coast, not to include any opium which entered from Larut to Kuala Kangsar for use in Ulu Perak; (iii) Right to collect a duty on tobacco imported into the Perak river at \$3 a pikul. (See Philip Loh, 'Social Policy in Perak', *Peninjau Sejarah*, vol.1, no.1, 1966, p. 37).

<sup>5</sup>In early 1872, Foo Tye Sin and Ong Boon Teik sued Ngah Ibrahim, Seow Ah Ghow, who ran Ibrahim's shop in Beach Street, Penang, and others (not named) for the recovery of \$3,000 due to Foo Tye Sin and \$1,000 due to Ong Boon Teik. The Sheriff's officers seized a safe belonging to Ibrahim from the shop in Beach Street. A sum of \$4,700 was subsequently taken from the safe on account of the claims and kept in the residence of Rodyk, the Sheriff. (CO 273/80, Clarke to Carnarvon, 5 May 1873, with enclosures.)

<sup>6</sup>Koh Siang Tat was the great grandson of Kapitan Koh Lay Huan. The Kapitan China had two wives, one in Penang and one in Kedah. His eldest son by his Penang wife was Koh Kok Chye, the grand-father of Koh Siang Tat. Koh Kok Chye not only accompanied Raffles to Singapore in 1819 but also served the Siamese government in various capacities: Governor of Kuala Kedah (1821-41), Raja of Pungah (in Ligor) and Agent for the Chau Phya of Ligor. His eldest son was Koh Teng Choon, father of Koh Siang Tat. Koh Teng Choon's career was in no way spectacular. For the greater part of his life, he was interpreter in the Supreme Court of Penang. Koh Siang Tat himself was born in 1833 and educated at the Penang Free School after which he served for a while as a subordinate officer in the Supreme Court before venturing into business. (See C.S. Wong, pp. 12-15; Wright & Cartwright, pp. 755, 757.)



had commercial interests in Perak. An important turning point in the business careers of Foo Tye Sin and Koh Siang Tat occurred when they both entered into a partnership to establish the highly successful firm of Tyesin-tat & Co., ships' chandlers, which was located at Beach Street, Penang. As early as 1861, the firm was one of the parties eligible to vote in the Penang Municipal Election.<sup>1</sup> Between the two, it was Foo Tye Sin who first achieved prominence. By 1867, he was already a public figure and was appointed to the Commission which enquired into the riots of that year.<sup>2</sup> In company with Lee Phee Chuan<sup>3</sup> and Vappoo Nordin, a leader of the Penang Indian Muslim community, he was, in 1872, appointed a Justice of the Peace, 'a new position held in this Settlement [Penang] for the first time by any of the native community'.<sup>4</sup>

How deeply he was involved in Larut affairs is not clearly known. However, on 28 September 1872, he 'forwarded a petition signed by forty-four Chinese traders representing the case of the defeated party, the Go Kwans [Hai San]; this petition directly accused the Mantri of having consented to the proceedings of the Sin Neng faction'.<sup>5</sup> This tends to confirm further that he was associated with the Toa Peh Kong.

More concrete evidence is available on Ong Boon Teik's involvement in the Larut disturbances. In the midst of the 'war' (October 1872), Capt. Speedy, Commissioner of Police, Penang, submitted a report to the Acting Lieutenant-Governor, Campbell, in which he wrote:

On the 14th Inst. at 9 o'clock p.m. I received information that a quantity of arms and ammunition had been shipped on board the Junk 'Kim Choo See' by the Chiefs of the Hysan faction for Laroot.

I proceeded at once on board the Junk which was at anchor in this harbour and asked for the Port Clearance, which was at once produced. I found that ten cases of 20 muskets each 6 Cannon and 900 lbs. of Gunpowder were entered as forming part of her cargo bound for Perak. The

<sup>1</sup>SSR, DD42, Resident Councillor to Governor, 13 Dec. 1861.

<sup>2</sup>PRCR, 'Government Notification'.

<sup>3</sup>No information has been found about this person.

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/74, Campbell to Kimberley, 28 June 1873, encl., Report of the Blue Book of Penang & Province Wellesley, 1872. Apparently, the family of Koh Siang Tat claims that he was the first J.P. of Penang (see C. S. Wong, p. 16 n.45) so did the author of his brief biography written in the early twentieth century (see Wright & Cartwright, p. 755). But the Acting Lieutenant-Governor of Penang (Campbell) could not have been mistaken. Koh Siang Tat must have been made a J.P. some time in 1873 or 1874 as he was among the J.P.'s mentioned in the *Penang Directory* of 1874.

<sup>5</sup>CMP, A. Skinner, 'Precis of Perak Affairs, 10 Jan. 1874'.

Taikong further stated that the junk belonged to one Ah Choey and that the ammunition had been shipped by the firm of Boon Tek.<sup>1</sup>

It had been officially noted as early as 1868 that 'The Toh-Peh-Kongs have all the licensed Arms-shops and supplied themselves'.<sup>2</sup>

Koh Siang Tat was also one of Ngah Ibrahim's creditors. He was, in the 1870s, the Opium and Spirit Farmer of Penang.<sup>3</sup> He probably took up the contract in 1873 as it is known that the previous Syndicate which obtained the lease commenced business in July 1870 and the contract was for a period of three years.<sup>4</sup> It may be inferred that having obtained the Penang Farm, Koh Siang Tat was anxious to secure the Farms in the northern territories of Perak. And in fact, upon the establishment of British administration in Perak, through the recommendation of Lieutenant-Governor Archibald Anson he successfully acquired the lease for the Opium and Spirit Farms of the Trans-Krian districts. Apart from his close association with Foo Tye Sin, there is further evidence to suggest that he was connected with the Toa Peh Kong.

After the first outbreak of violence in Larut (1861), the Penang authorities received a petition from the elders of the Hai San in Penang complaining of Ghee Hin aggression:

... besides these injuries which the said Ghee Hin's men had done towards the Hai San's men, they proceed to adopt another system of injury again on this Island, that is to say by attacking the Hai San's men when found walking alone in the street, and during these few days, they have already attacked six of the Hai San's men and robbed them of what was found on their person at the time, one of whom was attacked in China Street, immediately opposite Kow Teng Choon's house, to which fact the said Kow Teng Choon can bear witness.<sup>5</sup>

Koh Teng Choon was, of course, Koh Siang Tat's father. The tone of the letter suggests that the Hai San elders were confident that Koh Teng Choon was prepared to support their statement, and the one Penang secret society bitterly anti-Ghee Hin and sympathetic with the Hai San was the Toa Peh Kong.

<sup>1</sup>CO 273/61, Ord to Kimberley, 11 Nov. 1872, encl., Speedy to Campbell, 23 Oct. 1872.

<sup>2</sup>PRCR, Evidence no.9—Boey Yoo Kong.

<sup>3</sup>CMP, Jervois to Carnarvon, 8 July 1875, encl., Koh Seang Tat to Anson, 7 May 1875; Jervois to Carnarvon, 16 Oct. 1875, encl., Agreement signed between Ngah Ibrahim and his Creditors, 20 April 1875.

<sup>4</sup>This Syndicate was made up of Cheah Oon Heap, Neoh Ah Chung, Thun Ah Kun and Gan Sim Swee. (CO 273/24, Straits Settlements Association to Buckingham, 25 Aug. 1868, encl., *Straits Times Overland Journal*, 4 July 1868.)

<sup>5</sup>CO 273/5, Correspondence on the Larut Disturbances, Petition of Leoh Ung, Chong Moye, Chong Ahon and Chin Chit Chong to Capt. Man, n.d.

Little more is known about Koh Siang Tat's activities in Perak. His influence in the Straits, however, grew rapidly. In the early 1880s, together with Khoo Tiong Poh, Goh Sin Kho and Quah Beng Hong, all Singapore merchants,<sup>1</sup> he made an unsuccessful bid for the Johor Opium Farms.<sup>2</sup>

In view of Koh Siang Tat's acquisition of the Trans-Krian Farms in 1875, it is significant to point out that the Farms were previously held by Khaw Boo Aun, one of those personalities hitherto given little prominence in the history of nineteenth century Perak.<sup>3</sup> Khaw Boo Aun alias Khaw Ewe Kuang was the eldest son of Khaw Loh Hup,<sup>4</sup> a Teochew, who migrated to Batu Kawan, Province Wellesley, from China in the early nineteenth century. He worked as an assistant in his father's firm for a number of years before taking over the business. Through his initiative, the business expanded. He rose to become a leader of the Penang Ghee Hin holding the position of *sin sehn*.<sup>5</sup> Although he had long occupied a position of influence in the Chinese community, he was given official recognition only in October 1886 by the British authorities who appointed him a member of the Perak State Council. In March 1890, he was made a member of the Penang Advisory Board where he served until 1904. In 1905 he was

<sup>1</sup>Khoo Tiong Poh had been until Nov. 1874, a partner in Chop Teong Ho in Market Street, Singapore. After retiring from that firm he joined up with Raja Wichit of Phya Puket and commenced the business of Bun Hin & Co. as ship-owners which soon became one of the leading Chinese firms in Singapore. He was also involved in the shipchandlery business of Ann Bee & Co.

<sup>2</sup>Goh Sin Kho was the head of the firm of Goh Guan Loo & Co. which owned several saw-mills at Kallang and carried on business as steamship owners at Telok Ayer Street.

<sup>3</sup>Quah Beng Hong was educated in Penang and was related to Khoo Tiong Poh. In 1880 he arrived in Singapore to join the firm of Bun Hin & Co. and subsequently rose to the position of managing partner. He was also a director of the Straits Insurance Co. Ltd. and involved in several other enterprises. He died in March 1885 as the result of an accident. (See Song, pp. 176, 201, 218 & 318).

<sup>4</sup>CO 273/135, Smith to Stanley, 1 Aug. 1885 with enclosures.

<sup>5</sup>A useful biography of him was written only a few years ago. (See C.S. Wong, pp. 81-3).

<sup>6</sup>Khaw Loh Hup began his career as a labourer but was able to acquire sufficient capital to purchase a plantation of his own. From Batu Kawan, he extended his enterprise to Krian where he cultivated sugar and tobacco. Further success led to the establishment of a big business firm known as Chop Kau Heng in Kuala Kurau. In 1866, Khaw Loh Hup retired to Bukit Tambun where he built his family residence. Soon after he returned to China leaving his entire business to Khaw Boo Aun. (Ibid.)

<sup>7</sup>The *sin sehn* was, in practice, the supreme leader of the Penang Ghee Hin, for in 1867, Boey Yoo Kong, who then held that position, said: 'I am above the Toa Ko.' (PRCR, Evidence no.8.)

appointed a Justice of the Peace in Penang but died in the same year at Bukit Tambun.<sup>1</sup>

Khaw Boo Aun's business interests in the northern territories of Perak were undoubtedly inherited from his father. It appears that he was not on good terms with Sultan Ali for in early 1871, the Malay ruler wrote to the Acting Lieutenant-Governor (Capt. Hatchell) of Penang:

I have to acquaint my friend that his letter dated the 8 March 1871 has safely reached me and I perfectly understood its contents. With respect to the matter of the Rajah Muda [Abdullah] sometime ago I addressed two letters to the Hon'ble the Lieut. Governor of Pulo Pinang Colonel Anson, requesting that the subjects of the British Government should be prevented from mixing in any matter whatsoever concerning Farms with the said Rajah Muda.

His Honor the Lieutenant Governor has written a letter to me that he had warned both Mr. Edward Bacon and Khoo [Khaw] Boo An not to mix themselves up with the said Rajah Muda.<sup>2</sup>

It may be reiterated that in about 1870, Raja Muda Abdullah made a serious attempt to secure control of Krian mainly through the instigation of Khaw Boo Aun.<sup>3</sup> However despite his intrigues, Khaw Boo Aun was allowed to retain the farms of the Krian district. Complications set in after the death of Sultan Ali: 'The Chinese sugar planter (Koh Bo An) who rented the farms of the Krian district, ceased to pay his rent to the Muntri, alleging that the payment was made not to him but to the Sultan....'<sup>4</sup> Khaw Boo Aun's hostility towards Ngah Ibrahim must be seen within the context of the Mentri's close association with the Hai San. In early 1872, however, the prevailing situation in north Perak favoured Khaw Boo Aun. The Ho Hup Seah-Ghee Hin combination had successfully driven out members of the Hai San from Larut. Forced by circumstances, Ngah Ibrahim

<sup>1</sup>C. S. Wong, pp. 81-3. The British government, in effect, knew how powerful Khaw Boo Aun was. For example, when British administration had been established in Perak, he would not allow Noel Denison, the Collector, or the Malays the use of a road which ran across his sugar estate in Krian leading in a direct line to the Collector's house at Parit Buntar. And Swettenham could only comment: 'There is little doubt that Boo Aun, by the right of might and money, has absorbed into his sugar estate a number of properties to which Malays of his district had a prescriptive claim, and that since he found they fell within the British territory.' (Swettenham Papers, Item 72, Swettenham's Report on the Audit of the Native States Account, 1879.)

<sup>2</sup>SSR, G7, Letter dated 18 March 1871.

<sup>3</sup>See, pp.139, n.3.

<sup>4</sup>CMP, A. Skinner, 'Precis of Perak Affairs, 10 Jan. 1874'.

allied himself with the Ho Hup Seah.<sup>1</sup> It was hence reported:

... at present the opium farm of all the Perak districts between Larout Proper and the frontier of the province is rented by a Chinaman of the name of Koh Boo Aun for 2,600 dollars per annum. His term will not expire for nearly three years. I believe that he asks 5,000 a year for giving up this privilege.<sup>2</sup>

Possession of the Krian Farms enabled Khaw Boo Aun to move opium freely into Province Wellesley and this caused consternation among the British officials. In fact in 1872 Khaw Boo Aun was arrested by Penghulu Shaik Beenan of Nibong Tebal on suspicion of smuggling, but owing to insufficient evidence he was acquitted.<sup>3</sup>

One other Penang merchant who played a major role in Larut politics was, of course, Ho Ghee Siu, who was not just the head of a secret society but an important creditor to several Larut miners, among whom were So Ah Cheong and Lee Ah Kun, both influential members of the Ho Hup Seah, and Lau Ah Sam and Lee Kwan Kui, both leaders of the Hai San.<sup>4</sup>

Therefore one of the main issues which brought about conflicts between Penang merchant princes, involving also secret societies, was the desire to take control of Opium Farms in the northern territories of Perak. With the formidable array of wealthy Toa Peh Kong merchants ranged against him, Khaw Boo Aun's position was always insecure, notwithstanding the numerical strength of the Penang Ghee Hin and the dynamic leadership of Ho Ghee Siu and Chin Ah Yam of the Ho Hup Seah. This explains his need to assist Raja Abdullah acquire substantial authority at least in the Krian territories. Krian was also important to Khaw Boo Aun agriculturally since he was one of the leading sugar planters in the Peninsula then.

Had Khaw Boo Aun's machinations succeeded, Ngah Ibrahim would have suffered significant losses and, at the same time, leading Penang Hokkien merchants who wished to widen their spheres of investments would have been adversely affected. With the support of Toa Peh Kong and Hai San leaders, Ngah Ibrahim successfully prevented Raja Abdullah from seizing the throne. Raja Abdullah was eventually forced to look to Singapore for further assistance.

<sup>1</sup>Ho Ghee Siu, head of the Ho Hup Seah, was appointed one of Ngah Ibrahim's Attorneys. (CO 273/61, Ord to Kimberley, 11 Nov. 1872, encl., Petition of Mohd. Zein and Ho Ghee Sew to Acting Lt.-Gov., Penang, 16 Oct. 1872.)

<sup>2</sup>CMP, Irving's Memo. on Perak, 24 July 1872. This included a Gaming Farm and the rent on 400 *relong* of land.

<sup>3</sup>Kyshe, *Cases Heard and Determined...*, vol.1, pp. 273-4.

<sup>4</sup>SSR, DD42, Petition of Chinese Traders of Penang to Resident Councillor, 19 June 1865.

Some time in the middle of 1873, Raja Dayang, a Bugis who was closely connected by marriage with Raja Abdullah, together with two other persons, Haji Hussain and Haji Mat Said, went to Singapore to meet a certain trader called Nakhoda Trang. Raja Dayang carried with him a letter from Raja Abdullah appointing him the Raja Muda's agent. Nakhoda Trang was asked to devise a plan by which Raja Abdullah could be recognized as the Sultan of Perak. Raja Dayang was at once taken to see Tan Kim Cheng who promised to help provided Raja Abdullah himself would come to Singapore.

On hearing this, Ngah Ibrahim also sent for Nakhoda Trang. At that time he was living in Penang having lost his property in Larut because of the disturbances. The Mentri requested that Tan Kim Cheng should settle the differences between the warring Chinese factions.

About eight days after Nakhoda Trang had returned to Singapore from Penang, the Dato' Bandar of Perak and Haji Mat Said arrived from Perak, bringing the message that Raja Abdullah was at Krian and Raja Dayang was ill and that the Dato' Bandar had been empowered to act on behalf of Raja Abdullah. They were also brought to Tan Kim Cheng who asked frankly what recompense he would receive should he choose to help Raja Abdullah. The Dato' Bandar replied:

Sultan Abdulla is entitled to \$6 a Bhara on all tin exported from Laroot, but up to the present time he has never been able to collect it, as the Muntri takes it all for himself, if you can get him finally recognized and established as Sultan, I will undertake on the part of the Sultan that you receive 5/11 of this tax.<sup>1</sup>

Tan Kim Cheng agreed provided an agreement was made covering a period of ten years. It was, however, again insisted that Raja Abdullah should go to Singapore.

Two days later, Nakhoda Trang was again sent for by Ngah Ibrahim. Tan Kim Cheng asked the Nakhoda to go to Penang to inform the Mentri that if he was prepared to acknowledge Abdullah as Sultan, then he personally would go to Penang to settle the quarrels between the Chinese factions and he would also see that the secret societies made good the Mentri's losses.

For the next few days Nakhoda Trang ran between the Mentri at Penang and Raja Abdullah at Rantau Panjang, Krian. Raja

<sup>1</sup>The taxes were collected in the area extending from Telok Serah, near the Dindings, to Krian, including Larut.

Abdullah was then living in an old hut together with the Dato' Bandar, Raja Idris (later to become Sultan of Perak), Raja Mansur and Raja Yusuf who, had he been acceptable to the *orang besar*, would by then have been ruler of Perak. Raja Abdullah had set aside all traditions by personally appointing Raja Yusuf to the office of Raja Muda. Only two of the *orang besar* were present—the Dato' Bandar and the Laksamana.

Abdullah's arrangement with Tan Kim Cheng, however, had not been settled for the latter still insisted that Abdullah should be present in Singapore to sign the contract personally. This Abdullah finally promised to do 'as soon as the river is big enough for the steamer to go out'. He also promised Nakhoda Trang that as soon as he was formally installed as Sultan, he would pay the Nakhoda all the expenses incurred and he would even give him the authority to collect taxes in one of the districts.

The Mentri, on the other hand, was uncompromising, especially since he had by then acquired the services of Captain Speedy, and Governor Ord had decided to take action to restore his position because the Governor considered him the rightful ruler of Larut. He therefore asked the Nakhoda to tell Tan Kim Cheng that if he would drive out the Ghee Hin from Larut and arrange matters so that Abdullah was not made Sultan, he would pay Tan Kim Cheng \$16,000 down. Nakhoda Trang apparently replied: 'I said I did not come here to ask for money for Kim Ching. I came here to try and effect a settlement. I cannot take back such an answer.' Tan Kim Cheng in turn told the Nakhoda to go to Penang '... and tell the Muntri plainly that he might be a very rich man, but that he would not interfere on any condition to drive out the Ghee Hins from Laroot and he would only interfere with a view of bringing about a settlement between the two factions.'

So much for what transpired between the two Perak chiefs and Tan Kim Cheng up to about September 1873.<sup>1</sup> With firm backing from the colonial government, Ngah Ibrahim could afford to tell Nakhoda Trang: 'You can give my answer to Kim Ching or not just as you like'. Raja Abdullah, on the other hand, grew increasingly desperate. As a result,

... having, with difficulty raised a thousand dollars through the Shahbandar, [he] took a passage for himself and fifteen of his followers to Singapore, where he arrived on the 3rd of October [1873]. Mr. Kim Ching

<sup>1</sup>See Perak Enquiry Papers, statement of Nakhoda Trang, 1 Sept. 1876.

received him well, provided him with a house, supplied him with funds, paid his lawyer's expenses, and energetically took up his cause. Sir Harry Ord, however, refused to receive him, and before he has been a month in Singapore, Mr. Kim Ching was obliged to urge him to return to Perak, as his demands for money were becoming excessive....

On the 23rd of October, Abdullah returned to Perak, but before leaving Singapore he came to an understanding with Mr. Kim Ching, and, on the proviso that Mr. Kim Ching should succeed in getting him firmly established, and acknowledged as Sultan by our Government, executed a bond in his favour, by which Abdullah appointed him his Collector of Revenue at Larut for a period of ten years, *with power superior for that time, to any of the other officers of State.*<sup>2</sup>

On 4 November Sir Andrew Clarke arrived in Singapore as the new Governor. Raja Abdullah's case was laid before him by Tan Kim Cheng's business associate, W. H. Read. In Read's own words:

... I obtained from Sultan Abdullah of Perak the letter to Sir Andrew Clarke asking him to pacify Perak, and appoint a Resident to advise him, which letter Sir Andrew called 'the key which enabled him to open the door'. Poor Abdullah got more kicks than half pence; and I have not even got the *kudos!*<sup>3</sup>

Of Straits involvement in Sungai Ujong politics in the early 1870s, little indeed has been written. Malacca's commercial dependence on Sungai Ujong was just as real then as in the earlier years: '... the principal exports from this Settlement to those of Linghy and Sunghie Ujong for many years past, and until very lately, have been rice, Opium, Oil, Piece Goods, Sugar, Tobacco, Peas, and Saltfish, in return for which, your Excellency's Petitioners have received large quantities of Tin.'<sup>3</sup> The merchants had no less a sum than \$130,000 at stake in the mining districts in the interior of which more than \$80,000 were tied up at Linggi and Sungai Ujong. The most important of these merchants were L. Neubronner, H. N. Velge and Chan Tek Chiang, all of whom were representing firms in Singapore.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. (Precis.) (My Italics.)

<sup>3</sup>*Singapore Free Press*, 30 June 1899. It is not clearly known whether other European merchants were involved in Perak politics. It has been mentioned, however, that Larraine, Gillespie & Co. were creditors of Ngah Ibrahim and W. Mansfield was his agent in 1873. Thomas Scott of Guthrie & Co. was possibly also an interested party in the commercial transaction between Raja Abdullah and the Singapore merchants, for in July 1874, Lee Cheng Tee, brother-in-law of Tan Kim Cheng, was collecting taxes at Batak Rabbit, Lower Perak, on the strength of a written agreement, a copy of which Thomas Scott sent to Sir Andrew Clarke. (J. W. W. Birch's Journal, 1874-75, entry on 4.11.1874.)

<sup>4</sup>Petition of Malacca traders to Capt. Shaw, 19 April 1873, cited in full in T. Chelliah, 'War in Negri Sembilan', App. B(4).



Before an attempt is made to examine the involvement of Straits merchants in the affairs of Sungai Ujong, it is useful to obtain a closer insight into the position of the Chinese there in the early 1870s.<sup>1</sup> Although the Chinese population there was not particularly large, numbering just over 10,000, they were possibly divided into several distinct groups, for the names of at least five headmen are on record: Lee Ching, Chin Wo, Ngoh Kim, Wong Ying and Khoo Sam.<sup>2</sup>

Wong Ying was clearly a Cantonese (Macao),<sup>3</sup> and Lee Sam, according to report was head of the Fui Chew which was antagonistic to another group of Hakka in Sungai Ujong.<sup>4</sup> But, the records throw no further light on the subject<sup>5</sup> except that the Cantonese and the Fui Chew were also in conflict.<sup>6</sup> However, on the basis of the composition of Chinese population in Selangor, which might be taken as a good reflection of the situation in Sungai Ujong because of the frequent movement of Chinese miners from Sungai Ujong to Selangor, it can be assumed that the next important group of Chinese in Sungai Ujong were the Kah Yeng Chew.

It is equally difficult to ascertain precisely the secret society situation in Sungai Ujong. According to official report, Wong Ying and Hew Sam were leaders of the Hai San. A third leader of the same society was Lam Ma, brother-in-law of Lee Sam, which confirms

<sup>1</sup>Only limited information is available on the subject. The most valuable sources are 'Pickering's Journal: Singapore to Sungei Ujong', (Swettenham Papers, Item 72) and Capt. S. Dunlop's 'Report of Proceedings as Commissioner in Sungei Ujong' (PP, Sir Andrew Clarke to Carnarvon, 29 Dec. 1874, encl. 18).

<sup>2</sup>The reports contain several typographical errors. Ngoh Kim's name in Dunlop's report continually appears as 'Ugoli Kim'. The name 'Lee Ching' (in 'Pickering's Journal') is obviously incomplete and it refers to the same person as 'Ali Sam' (more correctly, Lee Sam) which appears in Dunlop's report but not Pickering's. C. S. Wong (p. 108 n.5) citing a Perak Hakka Association Souvenir Publication writes '... Kapitan Lee Chen Lin ... *alias* Lee Sam ... *alias* Ali Sam of Sungei Ujong ... was called Lee Sam ... because he was the Third President, Sam Ko, of his Lodge.' It should be noted too that Khoo Sam is part Hokkien and part Hakka pronunciation. The proper version of the person's name should be Hew Sam because he was a Hakka. (See Wynne, p. 142, 'Powell's Report 1884'.)

<sup>3</sup>Wynne, p. 412.

<sup>4</sup>Capt. Dunlop wrote '... the Chinese had taken advantage of our absence, and that the Hwey Chews (Ali Sams) had attacked the Kheks and burnt all that remained of Rassa....'

<sup>5</sup>The existing records merely refer to the existence of Cantonese, Hokkien, Fui Chew and Kheh in Sungai Ujong, many of the authors being unaware, no doubt, that Khek or Hakka is a general term. The Fui Chew, for example, are also Hakka.

<sup>6</sup>Captain Dunlop reported on 10 December 1874 that a Fui Chew was badly hacked by some Macao Chinese.

further that the Fui Chew in Sungai Ujong were primarily members of the Hai San. Again, bearing in mind the situation in Selangor, it must be assumed that the Kah Yeng Chew formed the bulk of the Sung Pak Kun.<sup>1</sup> While it is clear that disturbances occurred from time to time between the various societies, contemporary reports also emphasized the hostile feelings existing between members of the different territorial-dialect groups. Hence, although both the Cantonese and the Fui Chew belonged to the Hai San society, clashes between them nevertheless occurred.

It does appear too that even in their relations with the Malay chiefs, secret society affiliation did not provide a basis for common action. In general, of course, the Dato' Bandar had, since the 1850s, enjoyed the confidence of the Chinese population as well as that of Malacca traders. And, therefore, the Chinese played an important part in the balance of power between the Bandar and the Klana. This was continually emphasized by Pickering:

(i) As Swettenham was going to see the Banda the next day, I was sure he could help me, and I said that if the Datoo would write a letter to His Excellency promising to obey his orders, and not interfere with the Klana, at the same time leaving himself at liberty to protest against any injustice in the present arrangements, I then would take on myself the responsibility of sending back the Police, as there was not the least fear of any attack on the Klana from anybody but the Banda, and that was quite unlikely now, as the Chinese would never assist him, and without them he could do nothing.

(ii) According to my idea I was here with the Police to keep the Chinese down, and to protect the Klana's house, that he might punish the Banda.

(iii) I am quite persuaded that the man [Dato' Bandar] did not think of fighting after he saw us in force, and especially after he could not hope for Chinese assistance. That the Chinese would have joined if we had not come and explained things to them, I have evidence from themselves, and the result would have most likely been a general disturbance.<sup>2</sup>

Since the Chinese were divided among themselves, it can be inferred that not all of them supported the Bandar. In fact, those known to be clearly partisan towards him were Wong Ying (who had been in Sungai Ujong since the 1840s and was probably the richest Chinese there), Ngoh Kim and Hew Sam, both of whom were said by Pickering to 'always follow his [Wong Ying's] advice'.

<sup>1</sup>It may be reiterated that the Sung Pak Kun was an affiliate of the Ghee Hin. It was originally founded in Sungai Ujong.

<sup>2</sup>Entries on 10 and 14 October 1874.

Despite their obvious dependence on Malacca because of the tin trade, the Chinese leaders in Sungai Ujong did not hesitate to assert their independence whenever necessary. For example, until 1874 the opium farms in Sungai Ujong were never farmed out to outsiders. When it was heard that the Klana was planning to establish a farm and let it out to a Malacca merchant, there was considerable restlessness among the Chinese headmen. Pickering and Dunlop had to advise the Klana against such a move, and through their influence, the Klana agreed subsequently to give the opium, spirits, gambling and pawnbroking farms to the local Chinese headmen, namely Wong Ying, Ngoh Kim and Lee Sam.<sup>1</sup> This also helped to alleviate the ill-feelings which existed between them. They signed an agreement promising to forget their old quarrels and return to work at the mines.

This, however, is not to say that Straits merchants did not command substantial influence in Sungai Ujong, especially since they undoubtedly had money invested in the tin trade. Hence, at the time when Pickering was attempting to persuade the Bandar to accept British administration, both Tan Beng Swee and Whampoa took a personal interest in the matter:

(i) An old Malay came into my room this morning, and seeing Mr. Hayward (for whom all the Malays seem to have great respect, and many know him very well) he asked to speak with him. Mr. Hayward told him to speak before me, so he said that yesterday he had arrived at the Datoe Banda's place with a letter from Beng Swee, who had written advising the Banda to come to some terms with the Klana, and not persist in getting himself into trouble.

(ii) 2 p.m. received a letter from Whampoa for the Banda of Sungie Ujong, telling him he had better obey the Governor's advice, and inviting him to Singapore.<sup>2</sup>

One can justifiably infer that both Tan Beng Swee and Whampoa were on close terms with the Dato' Bandar. In the case of Whampoa, we have further evidence that he wielded some influence in Sungai Ujong, for at a meeting of the Straits Legislative Council on 15 September 1874, he said:

Many Chinese who have visited Singapore from Perak and other native States on the coast have come to me, anxiously inquiring when the

<sup>1</sup>In 1893 Lee Sam 'is still living in Sungei Ujong, where he enjoys a very handsome fortune' and his brother-in-law, Lam Ma, was then also a 'Towkay of Sungei Ujong ... living in comfort.' (C. Letessier, 'Si Sen Ta, A Chinese Apotheosis', p. 320).

<sup>2</sup>'Pickering's Journal', entries on 12 and 30 October 1874.

Government were going to send British Residents to the several native Courts for the protection of life and property, saying that they would give them every confidence to live there. They have also asked me to use my influence to induce Chinese with capital to come down from China to form companies for working the tin mines, by which means a large business could be done. The Chinese from Sunghie Ujong especially have mentioned that, and the Rajah of that State, with whom I am acquainted, has expressed a wish to have a Resident there.<sup>1</sup>

It should be reiterated that Whampoa was one of the original Directors of the Sungei Ujong Tin Mining Co. and Pickering specifically mentioned that Wong Ying was Whampoa's friend.<sup>2</sup>

But there is no evidence to indicate that either Tan Beng Swee or Whampoa actively supported any one of the warring factions. The position of H.N. Velge was vastly different. He had, in early 1872, secured Setoh, Sempadan and Rejang from Klana Sending for the Sungai Ujong Tin Mining Co.<sup>3</sup> Since then he handled much of the Klana's correspondence and must therefore have been also an important adviser.<sup>4</sup> One of his letters revealed that Tan Kim Cheng was probably also very interested in the outcome of the Sungai Ujong-Rembau conflict: 'On the 16th October, 1872, a letter was received from Mr. H.N. Velge stating that arms consisting of 2 brass field pieces and 100 rifles, ordered from London for Syed Ahman, nephew of the Klana, by Kim Cheng & Co., were really intended for the defence of the country.'<sup>5</sup> It could be that Tan Kim Cheng was merely selling arms to the Klana. And, in fact, there is no evidence that at this time he had any investment in Sungai Ujong. But there is evidence to show that he was, in effect, actively involved in Sungai Ujong politics. Firstly, between 1872 and mid-1873, he once acted as interpreter in an interview between Syed Abdul Rahman and Governor Ord.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, in early 1874, Haji Abdul Karim, the Bangsa Balang of Rembau, who was pro-Haji Mustapha, an adherent of the Klana faction,

<sup>1</sup>CMP, Sir Andrew Clarke to Carnarvon, 5 Nov. 1874, encl.

<sup>2</sup>Entry on 19 Nov. 1874.

<sup>3</sup>See, p.106.

<sup>4</sup>The situation did not change with the death of Klana Sending in late 1872. Syed Abdul Rahman, the new Klana, pursued basically the same policy as his predecessor.

<sup>5</sup>GPMP, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c.'

<sup>6</sup>In another interview between the Governor and Syed Ahman, J. G. Davidson acted as interpreter and he was closely associated with the Sungei Ujong Tin Mining Co. In short, the Governor would hardly have called upon Tan Kim Cheng if he had no personal interests involved since Government officers were easily available. (GPMP, Braddell, 'Second Continuation of Report &c'.)

together with a certain Haji Abdul Hamid wrote to Braddell:

We inform our friend that by our friend's aid we have returned to Rambow with safety.

Moreover until the day that we left Singapore we did not meet our friend, because our friend had gone with H.E. the Governor, and Capt. Kim Cheng told us to return as our business had all been settled so we returned.

Now we write this letter to our friend and beg him to know how much more we must pay in order that we may settle our debts, and our best compliments to our friend.<sup>1</sup>

It is therefore sufficiently clear that Tan Kim Cheng was backing the Dato' Klana, not so much against the Bandar at this stage, but against Haji Sahil, the Dato' Penghulu of Rembau.

An attempt having been made to identify the various merchants involved in the support of the belligerents in the western Malay states, it is now possible to venture a step further by trying to present an overview of the subject with the primary intention of focussing attention on the factors which prompted these merchants to back one faction or the other.

It has been determined that the Straits merchants and Chinese headmen, within the context of their involvement in Malay politics, were divided in the following manner:

#### PERAK

##### *For Ngah Ibrahim*

Khoo Thean Teik	} Toa Peh Kong
Foo Tye Sin	
Ong Boon Teik	
Koh Siang Tat	
Lau Ah Sam (Hai San)	
Clung Keng Kui (Hai San)	

##### *For Raja Abdullah*

Tan Kim Cheng  
 Khaw Boo Aun (Ghee Hin)  
 Edward Bacon  
 W. H. Read  
 Ho Ghee Siu (Ho Hup Seah)  
 Chin Ah Yam (Ho Hup Seah)

#### SELANGOR

##### *For Kudin*

Lim Teik Hee	} Leack, Chin Seng
Tan Chin Seng	
Tan Kim Cheng	& Co.
Lee Cheng Tee	
J. G. Davidson	
W. H. Read	
Lee Keng Yong & Bros.	
Yap Ah Loy (Hai San)	

##### *For Raja Mahdi*

Chan Teik Chiang  
 Edward Bacon  
 Teoh Ah Chong/Chong Chong  
 (Ghee Hin or Sung Pak Kun)

<sup>1</sup>SSR, F7, Hajee Abdulhamad and Hajee Abdul Karim Bangsa Balang of Rambaow to Attorney General, 29 May 1874.

NEGRI SEMBILAN<sup>1</sup>*For Dato' Klana*

Tan Kim Cheng  
H. N. Velge  
J. G. Davidson

*For Dato' Bandar*

Wong Ying	} Hai San
Ngoh Kim	
Hew Sam	

Only one of the Straits merchants, namely, Tan Kim Cheng, was clearly involved in the politics of all the three states. One might, however, add the name of W. H. Read if only because he was then endeavouring to launch a telegraph project which was meant to cover the entire length of the Peninsula. He would therefore be interested in the outcome of the political struggles in the mining states as he hoped to arrive at mutually beneficial arrangements with particular Malay chiefs in these states.

And of the three states, it is only in the case of Perak that one could discern a clear line of cleavage between two groups of persons based on secret society ties. Commercially, Perak was very much the preserve of Penang merchants. As such the pattern of rivalry in one place was clearly reflected in the other. It can be inferred that the Hokkien merchants established at Beach Street, Penang (all members of the Toa Peh Kong) and since the opening of Larut formed close commercial links with the Chen Sang Hakka (members of the Hai San), the Chinese pioneers of the Larut tin industry. Later, the Fui Chew then the San Neng, members of the Ghee Hin and its affiliate, the Ho Hup Seah, respectively, also participated in the tin industry with financial backing from interested parties in Penang. Friction soon occurred between the Chinese miners, but in the early stage it had no serious repercussions in Penang, except that those who had money tied up in Larut, suffered some losses from time to time. However, with the growth of the tin trade and the emergence of valuable opium, gambling and spirit farms, consequent upon the increase in Chinese population in Larut and the neighbouring areas, competition among Penang merchants mounted in intensity. By this time, the Teochew (also members of the Penang Ghee Hin), who had built up a valuable trade in charcoal, timber and agriculture in the

<sup>1</sup>In the case of Negri Sembilan, throughout the early 1870s (up to 1873), the Klana's struggle was mainly with the Penghulu of Rembau, especially Haji Sahil. Support from the Straits merchants should be seen specifically within the context. The conflict between the Klana and the Bandar did not become acute until 1874 when the Klana proposed handing over the administration of Sungai Ujong to the British.

territories adjacent to Larut, joined in the fray to prevent the Toa Peh Kong merchants from extending their near monopolistic control of the trade in the vicinity of Penang. In order to consolidate their positions and to give legal sanction to their activities in the eyes of the colonial government, both groups attempted to place Malay chiefs favourable to them in positions of authority.

In the case of Selangor, it is difficult to ascertain whether there were significant underlying factors contributing to rivalry between the Straits merchants with commercial interests there. To a certain degree, it is sufficiently clear that in Selangor too there was a repetition of the Ghee Hin-Hai San rivalry, at least in so far as the miners were concerned. This helps to explain too the attack made on the Toa Peh Kong boat, the *Kim Seng Cheong*. Moreover, in 1872, Lieutenant-Governor Shaw of Malacca reported that Raja Mahdi had joined the Ghee Hin in Singapore.<sup>1</sup> There was also the case of Edward Bacon, a close associate of the Penang Ghee Hin leader, Khaw Boo Aun, making an advance of \$30,000 to Raja Mahdi as he did to Raja Abdullah.<sup>2</sup> But beyond this the picture becomes blurred, for Tan Kim Cheng, who was ardently advocating the cause of Raja Abdullah in Perak chose to support Tengku Kudin in Selangor, and at the same time, in Negri Sembilan, he backed the Dato' Klana who was opposed to Kudin.

The situation in Negri Sembilan is even more difficult to unravel. There is no doubt that the Dato' Klana was on good terms with many of the Straits merchants such as Tan Beng Swee and Whampoa who, however, were by no means antagonistic to the Dato' Bandar, else they would hardly be in a position to advise the Dato' Bandar to accept British administration. And, in so far as it is possible to ascertain, only three of the merchants were making any serious effort to help the Dato' Klana assert his authority.

In the light of the available evidence, one might conclude that the situation which obtained in Penang was not similar to that in Singapore and Malacca. Whereas in Penang, conflict occurred very much along secret society as well as territorial-dialect lines, in Singapore

<sup>1</sup>*GPMP*, *Precis of Selangor Papers*: Shaw to Gov., SS, 8 April 1872.

<sup>2</sup>*Perak Enquiry Papers*—Bacon stated on 16 May 1876: 'On the 14th October 1874 I left Penang for Perak to demand some money about \$30,000 from Sultan Abdulla which I considered due to me for farming out the Krea District and services rendered.'

and Malacca, the merchants were merely commercial rivals.<sup>1</sup> This in no way implies that as a whole Chinese secret societies did not constitute an important element in local politics in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. But to postulate that rivalry among the Chinese merchants at that time was on a Triad-against-Tokong basis is gross exaggeration.

<sup>1</sup>This is to some extent confirmed in the case of Tan Kim Cheng and Whampoa. Sir Andrew Clarke himself testified that they were rivals ('Straits Settlements', *The British Empire Series*, vol.1, 1899, p. 460). At the same time, it has been widely speculated that Tan Kim Cheng was a member of the Ghee Hin (see especially Wynne, *passim*) and in the case of Whampoa too it was suspected as early as 1846 that he was probably a leader of the Ghee Hin (see, Comber, *Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya*, pp. 70-1). In short, the rivalry between them could not have been the result of secret society affiliation. Their rivalry must have been purely a commercial one.



## CONCLUSION

THE general conclusion which can be drawn from the preceding narrative is that in the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the traditional Malay society experienced more profoundly than it had ever done before, at least since it came into contact with Islam several hundred years previously, the pressure of extraneous forces which steered it towards a new course of development. Hitherto, it has been customary to consider the year 1874 as the all important watershed in the history of the Peninsula. But while a division between the pre-1874 and post-1874 eras is certainly legitimate, this difference has to be seen in proper perspective. The several years following 1874 may be more properly categorized as the phase which saw important changes taking place in the political system, manifested, more specifically, by the introduction of what has come to be commonly known as the Residential System. In substance, this was the replacement of the traditional administrative system by a western-type bureaucratic system which provided the basic foundation for the development of a capitalist economy, but which also led to the effective undermining of the authority and power of the traditional Malay ruling class, in particular the non-royal aristocracy, though not its demise.

The third quarter of the nineteenth century, of course, witnessed little constructive change. It was very much a period of confusion, but this is typical of a society intensely disturbed by new developments and new experiences. What is significant is that the stage was then set for far-reaching changes which took place in later years. Yet, in that period of confusion, there were nevertheless important developments. If change in the early post-1874 period was largely political in nature, in the third quarter of the nineteenth century the significant developments were basically economic in content: the growth of the Chinese community, the expansion of tin production to meet the growing demand of the tin-plate industry, the surrender of economic control by the Malay chiefs to Straits merchants and, most importantly, even the very basic causes of political turbulence.

In short, viewed in terms of the total change which has since been experienced by Malay society, the third quarter of the nineteenth century should not be seen merely as the prelude to British intervention in 1874. It is important in other respects, for both the emergence of a plural society and the general structure of Malaysia's present economy had their origins in that eventful period of the nineteenth century.

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## INDEX

- ABDUL SAMAD, RAJA**, Sultan of Selangor (1857-98), 7, 19, 20, 26, 73, 75, 141, 143, 146, 147, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158n, 176, 177, 180, 187, 188, 189, 193, 197, 198.
- Abdullah ibni Sultan Jaafar, Raja Muda of Perak** (1865-73), 135, 139, 140, 160-6, 168, 173, 174-5, 182, 184, 196, 197, 206, 213, 214, 224; sought the aid of Tan Kim Cheng, 215-17.
- Abdullah bin Jaafar, Raja** (of Riau and Klang), 26, 72, 73-4, 76, 87, 104, 140, 142, 143, 146, 147, 151-4, 176, 179n, 205, 208.
- Abdullah Mohammed Shah, Sultan of Perak** (1851-57), 6, 31, 32, 124.
- Abdullah Muazzam Shah, Sultan of Perak** (1819-30), 6, 30, 31, 32, 33, 69.
- Abdul Malek Mansur Shah, Sultan of Perak** (1806-18), 6, 29, 30.
- Abdul Rahman (Ahman), Syed**, Laksamana Raja Laut, later Dato' Klana of Sungai Ujong, 106, 121, 148, 149, 151, 193, 194-5, 219, 220, 221, 222, 224.
- Abdul Rahman (Aman), Wan** (of Pahang), 179, 181, 183, 191, 198.
- Abu Bakar, Temenggong** (later Maharaja then Sultan) of Johor, 101, 183, 184, 186, 187, 188, 191, 194, 196; (cited) 82n.
- Acheh**, 1, 19, 54, 58, 66, 67, 150.
- Adil, Raja, Yamtuan Besar**, 27.
- Agriculture**, 52 (*see also* Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan).
- Ahmad, Wan, Bendahara of Pahang** (1863-1881), 86, 87, 156, 190, 191, 192, 197, 200; (cited) 84n.
- Ahmad Tunggal, Tuanku**, 148, 151.
- Ahmaddin, Sultan of Perak** (1786-1806), 6, 23, 29, 30n, 125n.
- Alauddin Riayat Shah, Sultan of Perak**, 23.
- Ali, Raja** (of Jeram), 26, 156.
- Ali, Raja** (of Rembau), 41-6, 48, 150, 194.
- Ali, Raja Ngah, Sultan of Perak** (1865-71), 124, 125, 126, 127, 130, 135, 139, 140, 159-61, 162, 213.
- Ali, Sultan** (of Johor), 83, 84, 196.
- Ali Haji, Raja** (Bugis historian), 13.
- Ampang**, 74, 76, 158, 177.
- Anderson, J.**, (cited) 3, 47.
- Anson, Colonel A.E.**, Lieutenant-Governor, Penang, 139, 175, 180, 211, 213.
- Antah, Tuanku**, 148, 151.
- Apcar, Seth Arratoon**, 106.
- Aru, Dato'** (of Selangor), 20 (*see also* Selangor, Orang Besar-besar of).
- Asal, Raja** (of Selangor), 158, 177, 181, 190, 192, 199.
- Asil, Raja** (of Negri Sembilan), 27, 41-2, 44, 45.
- BACON, EDWARD**, 139, 140, 160, 162, 164, 205, 213, 222, 224.
- Bandar, Dato'** (of Sungai Ujong) (*see* Kulop Tunggal and Sungai Ujong).
- Bendahara, Raja** (of Perak) (*see* Perak, Bendahara of, and Orang Besar-besar of).
- Bengkalis** (Sumatra), 186.
- Berkat, Raja**, 19, 179, 189.
- Bernam**, 6, 23, 53, 105, 156, 179, 180, 189, 199.
- Birch, J.W.W.**, 188; (cited) 182n.
- Bisnu, Raja** (*see* Muhammad Shah, Sultan of Perak).
- Bloomfield, R.W.**, (cited) 178.
- Blunddell, E.A.**, (cited) 56-7, 65.
- Borneo & Co.**, 95.
- Bot, Raja** (of Lukut), 62, 73, 142, 176; (cited) 41, 63, 205n.
- Boustead, Edward**, 100.
- Braddell, Thomas**, 65, 222; (cited) 20, 27n, 42, 139.

- Bradberry, Captain, (cited) 204.  
 Britain, 2, 55, 56, 79, 81, 108.  
 British, 30, 32, 35, 36, 38, 42n, 46, 47, 52, 54, 56, 63, 80, 102, 104, 107, 110, 123, 124, 125, 129, 145, 146, 149, 150, 151, 165, 167, 168, 174, 178, 179, 180, 182, 183, 188, 189, 195, 197, 200, 202, 209, 211, 212, 213, 214, 221, 224.  
 Brown, A., 173n.  
 Brown, David, 64n.  
 Brown, F.S., 65, 93-4.  
 Brown, J.E.E., 103.  
 Buckley, C.B., 107.  
 Bugis, 1, 13, 14, 19, 20, 26, 32, 35, 36, 38, 45n, 150, 152, 153, 176, 187.  
 Busu, Raja (of Lukut), 39-40.  
 Busu, Ungku (of Gemenchah), 46-7.  
 Butterworth, Colonel, Governor of Straits Settlements, 84, 201; (cited) 119.  
 CAIRNS, WILLIAM W., Lieutenant-Governor of Malacca; (cited) 57.  
 Campbell, G.W.R., Lieutenant-Governor of Penang; (cited) 210.  
 Cameron, J., (cited) 203n.  
 Cantonese, 75n, 78, 111, 112, 115, 116, 170, 218.  
 Cavaliero, 181, 189.  
 Cavenagh, Colonel (later General) Orfeur, Governor of the Straits Settlements, 94, 143n, 145, 154; (cited) 83n, 86n, 90n, 101, 127n, 141, 144.  
 Chan Teik Chiang, 202-4, 217, 222.  
 Chang (Chung) Keng Kwee (Ah Kwee), 137, 166, 173, 222.  
 Chee Yam Chuan, 62-3, 73, 74, 76, 119-20, 207.  
 Cheng-tee Watt-seng, 207, 208 (see also Lee Cheng Tee).  
 Chin Ah Yam, 214, 222.  
 Chin (Chiang) Chew, 170, 173.  
 Chin Chin, 112, 170.  
 China, 54, 55, 56, 79, 83, 102, 111, 212.  
 Chindaras Gold Mining Co., 107.  
 Chinese, 33, 49, 55, 59, 62, 64, 67, 69, 70, 72, 73, 76, 77, 79, 83, 84, 86, 91, 93, 107, 109, 110, 111, 114, 115, 117, 118, 120, 130, 149, 150, 151, 152, 156, 186, 202, 207, 222, 225, 226 (see also Kuala Lumpur, Larut, Lukut, Perak, Selangor and Sungai Ujong).  
 Chong Chong (of Larut), 136, 138n.  
 Chong Chong (of Selangor) 157, 158, 159, 177, 179n, 222.  
 Chulan ibni Raja Abdullah, Raja, 160.  
 Chulan ibni Raja Inu, Raja (see Shahabuddin, Sultan).  
 Clarke, Sir Andrew, Governor of the Straits Settlements, 20, 197n, 217, 225n; (cited) 179n.  
 Clarke, Seymour, 103, 104, 105.  
 Colleyer, G.C., 99.  
 Cowan, C.D., (cited) 202, 205n.  
 Crawford, J., (cited) 80.  
 D'ALMEIDA, DR. JOSE, 61.  
 Daud, Raja, 160-1, 184, 185.  
 Davidson, James Guthrie, 100, 105, 107, 186, 188, 189n, 190, 191, 203, 208, 221n, 222, 223; (cited) 77.  
 Dayang, Raja, 162n, 215.  
 de Fontaine, 181, 182, 185.  
 de Gelors, Charles, 105.  
 de Jong, Josselin, (cited) 1.  
 de Koek, 182.  
 Dinding, 7, 25, 32, 92, 93, 169, 174, 215n.  
 Dutch, 1, 35, 36, 39, 53, 54, 55, 59, 104, 130, 186, 188, 202.  
 Dziauddin (Dia Oodin), Tengku (see Kudin, Tengku).  
 EARL, G. W., (cited) 112, 114.  
 Eastern Asia Telegraph Co., 103-4.  
 Eastern Extension Australasia & China Telegraph Co., 105.  
 England, 54, 65, 100, 104.  
 English, 54, 64, 77, 129, 152, 164, 175, 183.  
 Europe, 51, 54, 55, 79, 81, 83, 97.  
 European, 55, 59, 62, 77, 81, 87, 98, 107, 113, 141, 182, 188, 189, 191, 193, 196, 208, 217n.  
 FAIR MALACCA, 209.  
 Foo Tye Sin, 173n, 209-10, 211, 222.

- GAMBIER, 81.  
 Gemencheh, 10, 47, 145-6; gold mining in, 49.  
 Ghee Hin, 11, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 128, 131, 132, 158n, 166-74, 186, 211, 212, 213, 216, 222, 223, 224, 225n.  
 Gottlieb, F. H., (cited) 115, 116.  
 Greenshields, John James, 97, 103.  
 Gula, Sungai, 6, 172, 173.  
 Gullick, J. M., (cited) 121n, 201.  
 Guthrie, Alexander, 96n.  
 Guthrie & Co., 98, 103, 217n.  
 Guthrie, James, 96, 100, 105.  
 Gutta Percha, 81n, 82.
- HAI SAN, 111, 112, 113, 114-5, 116, 117, 118, 128, 133, 134, 166-74, 208, 210, 211, 213, 214, 218, 219, 222, 223, 224.  
 Hailam, 72, 116, 134, 142.  
 Hakka (Khek), 112, 116, 158n; Chen Sang, 69, 70, 118, 128, 129, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 158n, 168, 171, 223; Fui Chew, 69, 70, 74, 75n, 78, 118, 128, 129, 131, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 158, 166, 168, 218, 219; Kah Yang Chew, 75, 78, 118, 134, 158, 159, 218, 219.  
 Hamid, Syed, 42n, 150.  
 Herbert, Sir Robert, Permanent Under-Secretary, Colonial Office, (cited) 101n.  
 Hervey, D. F. A., (cited) 17.  
 Hew (Khoo) Sam, 218, 219, 222.  
*Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*, 12.  
 Hitam, Raja, 26, 156.  
 Ho Ah Yam, 115.  
 Ho Ghi Siu, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 214, 222.  
 Ho Hup Seah, 112, 166-73, 213, 214, 223.  
 Ho Seng, 111, 113, 115, 169, 170, 171.  
 Hokkien, 75n, 78, 111, 116, 129, 134, 135, 136, 171, 173, 208, 214, 218n, 223.  
 Hoo Ah Kay (see Whampoa).  
 Horsman, Edward, 89n.
- IBRAHIM, DAING, Temenggong of Johor, 69, 81, 82, 83, 84, 95, 196n.  
 Ibrahim, Raja, Sultan of Selangor (died 1826), 15n, 19, 32, 35-6, 39.  
 Idris, Raja (of Perak), 216.  
 India, 53, 54, 55, 56, 83, 102.  
 Indo-European Telegraph Co. of London, 105.  
 Irving, C. J., 164, 165, 206; (cited) 61, 152n, 174, 177, 181, 186, 187, 196, 200.  
 Iskandar Dzul-karnain, Sultan of Perak, 18n, 24, 29n.  
 Ismail, Raja (of Selangor), 154, 155, 159, 176, 177, 181, 187, 191, 202, 205, 206n, 208; (cited) 73.
- JAAFAR, PENGHULU (of Gemencheh), 145-6.  
 Jaafar, Raja Ngah, Sultan of Perak (1857-65), 6, 30, 32, 90, 124, 125, 126, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 134, 135, 163, 164, 165.  
 Jaafar ibni Raja Haji, Raja (of Riau), 36, 39.  
 Jaafar ibni Sultan Hussain, Raja (of Johor), 46, 47.  
 Jardine, Matheson & Co., 95.  
 Jelebu, 9, 10, 17, 22, 50, 148, 151; Penghulu of, 22, 27n.  
 Jempul, 10, 48-9, 50.  
 Jeram (Selangor), 7, 13, 40, 156.  
 Jervois, Sir William, Governor of the Straits Settlements, (cited) 200.  
 Johol, 9, 10, 17, 21-2, 44, 46n, 49, 50, 195; Penghulu of, 22; disturbances in, 145-6.  
 Johnston, A.L., 63, 83n, 96.  
 Johnston & Co., 83, 98, 103 (see also W. H. Read).  
 Johor, 13, 14, 19, 26, 32, 35, 53, 55, 81, 83, 84, 99, 104, 116, 165n, 184, 186, 187, 188, 189, 196n, 200, 212; agriculture in, 81-2; Chinese in, 81-2; saw-mill in, 82, 102; exports from, 82; railway project in, 101-2.  
 Jugra, 7.  
 Jumaat bin Jaafar, Raja (of Riau and

- Lukut), 26, 40, 41n, 71-3, 74, 75, 140, 141-2, 143, 147.
- Junk Ceylon (Ujong Salang). 54, 55, 58, 113.
- KAHAR, RAJA, 155, 186, 187, 193.
- Kalumpang, Sungai, 6, 172, 173.
- Kanching, 73, 76, 158, 181, 197, 198, 199; Chinese in, 75; Kapitan China in, 75; secret societies in, 118.
- Kanda, Dato', 120, 121.
- Kawal, Dato' Klana of Sungai Ujong, 46, 48, 50, 120, 121n.
- Kedah, 6, 30, 32, 33, 39, 53, 54, 66, 92, 104, 131, 154, 155, 164, 165n, 176, 178, 182, 184, 195, 205n, 209.
- Kelantan, 55, 63.
- Kempas, Pengkalan, 12, 120n, 121, 122.
- Keng Tek Hoey, 63, 116, 117.
- Keppel, H., 84.
- Ker, W. W., 82, 95, 101, 103.
- Ker, Rawson & Co., 81, 82, 83 (see also Paterson, Simons & Co.)
- Kerjan, Raja, 44, 46, 47.
- Keru, 10, 27, 46, 150, 195.
- Kesang, 30, 32, 33, 39, 53, 54, 55, 78, 84, 114, 117, 196n.
- Khaw Boo Aun, 139n, 169, 170, 173, 212-14, 222, 224.
- Khoo Thean Teik, 169n, 170, 208-9, 222.
- Kian Teik, (see Toa Peh Kong).
- Kim Seng Cheong, 177, 178, 179, 180, 204, 205, 224.
- Klang, 3, 7, 13, 20, 39, 40, 53, 59, 73, 74, 86, 88, 104, 105, 107, 117, 140, 142, 143, 146, 147, 152, 153, 158, 159, 177, 178, 184, 185, 186, 188, 190, 193, 197, 199, 200, 206; war in, 62, 118n, 143, 151-9, 176-7, 178, 179, 181, 183, 185, 191, 195, 201, 202, 204; W. H. Read and Tan Kim Cheng in, 87-8 (see also Kuala Lumpur).
- Klian Bahru, 69, 70, 130, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138.
- Klian Pauh, 69, 70, 134, 136, 137, 138, 166.
- Koh Kok Chye, 67, 209n.
- Koh Lay Huan, 67, 209n.
- Koh Siang Tat, 173n, 209-12, 222.
- Koh Teng Choon, 209n, 211.
- Koris, Tun, 86-7.
- Krian, 6 24, 33, 85, 90, 93, 130, 131, 140, 162, 164, 167, 169, 173, 174, 209, 212, 213, 215; padi cultivation in, 91, 126; dispute over chieftainship in, 125-7; dispute over concession of, 127-8.
- Kuala Lumpur, 74, 75, 138n, 151, 152, 157, 158, 166, 177, 189, 191, 196, 199; Kapitan China in, 117; secret societies in, 117-18.
- Kudin, Tengku, 105, 154-5, 156, 157, 158n, 159, 162, 165, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 182, 183, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 193, 194-7, 198, 199, 200, 201, 205, 206, 208, 224.
- Kulop, Lebai, 120, 121, 194.
- Kulop Tunggal (Dato' Bandar of Sungai Ujong), 121, 122, 123, 148, 149, 150, 219, 220, 224.
- Kundang, Pengkalan, 12, 45n, 48.
- Kurau, 6, 36, 85, 125, 138, 172, 173, 209, 212.
- LABU, RAJA (of Negri Sembilan), 44, 45, 46, 144.
- Laksamana, Orang Kaya Kaya (of Perak), 18, 24, 25, 30, 32, 33, 124, 129, 161, 163, 175, 184, 216 (see also Perak, Orang Besar-besar of).
- Lambert, Burgin and Petch, 106.
- Langat, 7, 9, 13, 40, 41, 75, 142, 146, 153, 154, 155, 156, 158n, 159, 176, 177, 189, 193, 194, 197, 202.
- Lorraine, Gillespie & Co., 108, 217n.
- Larut, 3, 6, 84, 112, 125, 132, 140, 158, 163, 164, 171, 174, 175, 181, 202, 208, 210, 211, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 223, 224; discovery of tin in, 67, 69; Chinese in, 69-70, 86, 134, 167-8; topography of, 70-1; secret societies in, 118, 167-71; disturbances in, 128-9, 135-9, 166-72, 171-4, 209; monopolists in, 130; Pawang of, 132.

- Law (Lau) Ah Sam, 133-4, 136, 137, 167, 214, 222.
- Leack, Chin Seng & Co., 62, 100, 206-8.
- Lee Cheng Tee, 100, 207, 217n, 222.
- Lee Ching *alias* Lee Sam, 218, 220.
- Lee Keng Liat, 208n.
- Lee Keng Yam, 64.
- Lee Keng Yong, 208, 222.
- Lee Koh Yin (Coyin), 113, 168n.
- Lee Phee Chuan, 210.
- Lee Qui Lim, 59n, 64, 208.
- Letessier, C., (cited) 220n.
- Lewis, William Thomas, 90-2, 127-8; (cited) 113.
- Light, Captain Francis, (cited) 39.
- Lim Leack, 62.
- Lim Teik Hee, 205-6, 222.
- Lim Tian Wah & Sons, 207.
- Linggi, 12, 38, 45, 46, 47, 48, 55, 59n, 63, 67, 117, 122, 123, 145, 149, 150, 182, 194, 217; Sungai, 9, 10, 12, 27, 45, 46, 48, 50, 54, 77, 118, 120, 121, 147, 148, 150, 189, 193, 194, 195; Dato' Muda of, 12, 148, 193, 201; Dato' of, 45n, 48 (*see also* Muhammad Katas).
- Liu Ngim Kong, 74, 117, 118, 157.
- Logan, Abraham, 103.
- Logan, James Richardson, 103n, 132.
- London, 99, 103.
- London Telegraph Construction & Maintenance Co., 104.
- Long Jaafar, 67-9, 84, 118, 125, 127, 132n, 134, 163.
- Low, Lieutenant James, (cited) 33-4.
- Lukut, 7, 9, 39-40, 41n, 55, 59, 63, 71-2, 73, 74, 75, 76, 117, 140, 141, 142, 143, 147, 157, 176, 189; Chinese in, 7, 9, 39-40, 72; Kapitan China in, 39; disturbances in, 142.
- Lumu, Raja (*see* Salehuddin (Sultan of Selangor)).
- MACPHERSON, COLONEL RONALD, Resident Councillor, Malacca, 73, 76.
- Mactaggart, Tidman & Co., 97.
- Maharaja Lela (*see* Perak, Orang Besar-besar of).
- Mahdi, Raja, 151-6, 158n, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 184, 185, 186-7, 188, 189, 190, 191n, 193, 194, 195, 196, 200, 201, 202-3, 204, 205; Ghee Hin and, 224.
- Mahmud, Raja (son of Raja Berkat), 179, 180, 186, 189, 195.
- Malacca, 1, 6, 9, 10, 14, 26, 35, 36, 38, 39, 40, 42n, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59, 60, 61, 63, 72, 73, 74, 77, 84, 90n, 101, 102, 117, 118, 119, 120, 145, 149, 153, 155, 180, 183, 189, 195, 206, 220, 224; merchants of, 39, 45, 62, 64, 71, 77, 107, 121, 122n, 123, 143, 151, 201, 202-4, 205, 206, 219, 225; trade with hinterland, 53-4, 57-8, 77, 123, 149-50, 217; commercial dependency of Singapore, 55; decline of, 57; secret societies in, 114-15; temples in, 114.
- Malay Peninsula, 1-2, 10, 14, 15, 19, 48, 49, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 62, 63, 66, 67, 80, 81, 84, 85, 88, 94, 100, 102, 105, 107, 108, 109, 121n, 174, 176, 179, 185, 187, 201, 202, 204, 222, 226; trans-peninsular trade, 48-9; 1874 in the history of, 226.
- Malay states, 2, 3, 14, 16, 22, 28, 29, 41, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 79, 80, 81, 86, 92, 100, 107, 165n, 176, 222; political system of, 1, 15-16; capital of, 6; society in, 1, 22, 51, 109, 111, 126; Yang Di-Pertuan in, 15, 16, 22; Orang Besar-besar in, 15, 226; succession in, 22; trade with Malacca, 53-4; British investment in, 107; conflicts in, 109-10, 176; secret societies in, 117 (*see also* Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan).
- Man, Colonel H., Resident Councillor, Penang, (cited) 88, 92-3.
- Mansur, Raja (of Perak), 160.
- Mansfield, W., 100n, 108, 217n.
- Mansfield & Co., 108.
- Mashhor, Syed, 158, 159, 165n, 177, 179, 180, 183, 184, 186, 189, 191, 199, 201.

- Matang (Permatang, in Larut), 129, 132, 136, 167, 172.
- Maxwell, Sir Peter Benson, (cited) 82n, 152.
- Maxwell, W. E., (cited) 23.
- McNair, Major J. F., 60, 96n.
- Melewar, Raja, 14, 27n, 151n.
- Mendeling, 74, 152, 156, 157, 158, 176, 177, 190, 191, 198, 200.
- Mentri Sri Paduka Tuan (Perak) (*see* Ngah Ibrahim and Perak, Orang Besar-besar of).
- Middlebrook, S. M., (cited) 152-3, 157, 158n, 189n.
- Minangkabau, 1, 10, 14, 44, 118, 144, 181.
- Misa Melayu*, (cited) 23-4.
- Mohammed Kasasi, Panglima Besar, 125, 126, 127, 128.
- Mohammed Salleh, Haji (Dato' Bandar of Sungai Ujong), 120n.
- Mohammed Salleh, Haji (Waris Bandar), 120n, 121.
- Mohammed Taib, Sheikh, 77n, 118, 129, 181, 185, 199.
- Mudzaffar Shah, Sultan of Perak, 23, 24.
- Muhammad, Raja, Sultan of Selangor (1826-57), 19, 32, 36, 38, 40, 41, 61, 62, 65, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 140, 147, 151, 189.
- Muhammad Ibrahim Munshi, 184; (cited) 25n, 69, 134n, 163, 164, 181, 182, 206, 207.
- Muhammad Katas, 45-6, 50, 118, 119.
- Muhammad Nor, Haji (of Pahang), 190-2, 198, 199, 200.
- Muhammad Shah, Sultan of Perak, 23, 29n.
- Musa, Haji (of Batak Rabbit, Perak), 162.
- Musa, Raja (of Selangor), 26, 153, 154, 156, 178, 179, 180, 181, 187, 188, 193, 197.
- Mustapha, Haji (of Rembau), 148, 149, 150, 151, 195, 221.
- NA'AM, PENGHULU OF ULU MUAR, 14, 27n, 151n.
- Nahuijs, Colonel, (cited) 58.
- Nairne, Lawrence C., 64, 65-6, 103, 131, 173n.
- Nala, Raja (of Selangor), 19.
- Naning, 14, 42, 46, 59, 90n.
- Napier, William, 81, 101.
- Negri Sembilan, 1, 3, 16, 28, 29, 42, 44, 56, 124, 148, 223, 224; topography of, 9-12; Yang Di-Pertuan Besar of, 9, 17, 27, 42, 45; Sultanate of, 14; installation of first ruler of, 14; political system of, 15, 16-17; *luak* in, 16, 21; *suku* of, 16, 27, 44, 45; Orang Besar-besar of, 21, 41; *anak raja* of 26, 41, 45; Yang Di-Pertuan Muda in, 27, 41, 47, 144, 151; political conflicts in, 28; succession in, 42-5, 144-5, 148, 151; economy of, 47; agriculture in 49-50 (*see also Penghulu*).
- Neubronner family, 59n, 60-1, 119, 150, 217.
- Neubronner & Co., 60, 74, 118-19.
- Newbold, T. J., (cited) 21, 36, 43-4, 55, 107, 111.
- Ngah Ibrahim, 107, 108, 125, 130-4, 135, 137, 138, 139, 140, 161, 163, 165, 167, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 209, 210, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217n; appointed Orang Kaya Mentri, 130; creditors of, 209-10, 211.
- Ngah Lamat, 84, 125, 127, 129-30, 137.
- Ngoh Kim, 218, 219, 220, 222.
- OH WEE KEE, 70, 113, 170.
- Ong Boon Teik, 173n, 204-5, 209, 210-11, 222.
- Orang Kaya Pahlawan Semantan, 197, 198, 199.
- Ord, Sir Harry, Governor of Straits Settlements, 84, 94, 106, 162, 165n, 176, 177, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 193, 194, 195, 197, 201, 216, 217, 221.
- Othman, Raja (of Perak), 125n, 159, 161.



- PAHANG, 10, 35, 48, 49, 53, 55, 63, 80, 84, 87, 121n, 129, 155, 179n, 181, 183, 184, 195, 200, 204; tin mining in, 86; civil war in, 86, 156n, 192n; Klang War and, 190-2, 196-200.
- Pahang Corporation Ltd, 87n.
- Pagar Ruyong, 14, 26, 42, 44.
- Panglima Bukit Gantang, Dato', 18, 67, 125, 126, 131, 161, 171.
- Paterson, William, 82n, 86-7, 95, 104.
- Paterson, Simons & Co., 82, 83, 87, 98, 99, 101, 102, 103 (see also Ker, W. W.).
- Patent, Slip & Dock Co., 95, 97, 98, 99, 101.
- Penajis, 10, 12, 14, 38.
- Penang, 2, 7, 30n, 33, 35, 36, 53, 54, 56, 57, 66, 69, 70, 83, 84, 85, 88, 90, 91, 94, 103, 107, 113, 115, 128, 129, 131, 132, 133, 135, 138, 164, 166, 167, 168, 171, 172, 173, 175, 189, 202, 209, 210, 211, 215, 216, 224; trade of, 54, 58, 71, 88-9; merchants of, 54, 64, 67, 71, 84, 131, 166, 204-5, 214, 223; commercial dependency of Singapore, 56; Riot Commission (1867) of, 66, 170; agriculture in, 89; secret societies in, 111-14, 169; riots in, 114, 168.
- Penang Gazette*, (cited) 84, 85, 107, 118.
- Penar, 12.
- Pennefather, 182.
- Penghulu*, (general), 15; (in Negri Sembilan), 16, 17, 21-2.
- Peninsula & Orient Steam Navigation Co., 95.
- Perak, 13n, 14, 25, 26, 29, 30, 33, 36, 38, 39, 53, 54, 55, 64, 65, 67, 69, 84, 90, 92, 104, 125, 127n, 130, 131, 166, 169, 180, 182, 183, 184, 185, 195, 197, 199, 202, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 217, 222; topography of, 3-7; Sungai, 3, 6, 7, 32, 135; capitals of, 6; Sultanate of, 12-13; *Kerajabat Di-Raja* of, 17, 25; Orang Besar-besar of, 17, 24-5, 67, 128, 159, 160, 161, 163, 164, 175, 185, 215; Bendahara of, 18, 23-4, 29, 30, 33, 135, 161; succession in, 22-3, 30, 159-60; Raja Muda of, 23-4, 30; Chinese in, 32, 34-5; relations with Kedah, 30, 32, 33; relations with Selangor, 32-3; economy of, 53-4; tin industry of, 34, 35; Kapitan China in, 35; trade with Penang, 71; agriculture in, 33-4, 85, 89-92; merger of Malay and Chinese politics in, 174.
- Pickering, W. A., 220, 221; (cited) 115n, 219, 220.
- Portuguese, 1, 53.
- Province Wellesley, 65, 66, 80, 85, 112, 126, 138, 167, 171, 212, 214; agriculture in, 89, 93.
- RADIN, YAMTUAN RAJA, 44, 45, 46, 48, 122, 124, 144.
- Rainbow*, 208.
- Rangoon, 102, 103, 113, 207.
- Ranney, Austin, (cited) 109.
- Rasah, 122, 149, 218n.
- Rasu, Imam Perang, 192, 196, 198, 199.
- Read, W. H., 83-4, 87, 98, 103, 104, 105, 143, 152, 153, 208, 222, 223; (cited) 84, 100n, 217.
- Rembau, 9, 10, 12, 14, 17, 21, 22, 27, 42, 44, 45, 47, 50, 59, 120, 121, 145, 150, 183, 184, 194, 195, 221; Penghulu of, 21, 120, 122, 145, 182, 193, 220, 223; *Lembaga* of, 21; succession in, 42-4, 148-51; relations with Sungai Ujong, 122, 149-50, 193-4.
- Renneh *alias* Nganit (of Rembau), 42, 44, 45, 46, 47.
- Residential System, 226.
- Riau, 36, 38, 40, 53, 54, 71, 176, 186.
- SAHIL, HAJI (DATO' PERBA), 148, 149, 150, 151, 220, 223.
- Salehuddin, Sultan (of Selangor), 13, 19, 20.
- San Neng, 112, 166, 167, 168, 171, 173, 210, 223.
- Sapetang, 6, 70, 171, 172.
- Scott, Thomas, 96n, 100, 217n.
- Secret Societies (general), 110, 111, 117, 214, 225.

- See Boon Tiong, 59n, 62, 63, 145-6, 203.  
 Sejarah dan Adat Negeri Sembilan, (cited) 148.  
*Sejarah Melayu*, 12, 13.  
 Selangor, 3, 7, 10, 20, 29, 30, 35, 39, 40, 53, 55, 56, 61, 64, 65, 67, 72, 73, 74, 77, 87, 104, 105, 141, 142, 147, 148, 150, 155, 159, 165n, 174, 176, 177, 178, 180, 182, 183, 187, 192, 193, 194, 197, 200, 202, 203, 205, 208, 209, 218, 224; Sungai, 3, 7, 39, 40, 41, 54, 178, 179, 185, 189, 193; Yang Di-Pertuan Muda (Raja Muda) of, 7, 19, 38; topography of, 7-9; Sultanate of, 13-4; Yang Di-Pertuan of, 13, 20; installation of first ruler of, 13-14; Tengku Raja of, 14; titles conferred on members of royalty of, 19; Tengku Panglima Besar (Raja) of, 19, 141; Orang Besar-besar of, 19-20, 26, 76; succession in, 25, 140-1; *anak raja* of, 26, 38, 159, 181, 185, 187, 189; relations with Perak, 32-3, 36; relations with Siam, 36; tin industry of, 39, 74, 76; Chinese in, 39, 40, 74-5, 157-9; agriculture in, 40-1; effects of tin mining on, 75-7; Tengku Puan of, (cited) 140-1, 153n; boundary problem of, 146-8, 182-3; Kuala, 156, 158n, 177, 179, 180, 181, 182, 187, 197, 198, 199, 202; Ulu, 159, 177, 179, 183, 190, 198, 199.  
 Selangor Tin Mining Co., 105-6.  
 Selinsing, Sungai, 6, 172, 173.  
 Semaun, Panglima, 134, 162.  
 Sending, Dato' Klana of Sungei Ujong, 106, 117, 121, 122, 123, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 182, 189, 193, 194, 221.  
 Shaaban, Syed, 42, 44, 45-6, 47, 48, 50, 121n, 144-5, 146, 150, 194.  
 Shahabuddin, Sultan of Perak (1830-51), 30, 31, 32, 124, 125.  
 Shahbandar, Orang Kaya (of Perak), 18, 134, 135, 161, 162, 163, 173, 175, 215, 216; assassination of, 134 (see also Perak, Orang Besar-besar of).  
 Shaw, Captain E., R.N., Lieutenant-Governor, Malacca, 107, 149, 195, 224.  
 Shin On, Kapitan, 74, 78, 117.  
 Siak, 14, 125, 162, 176, 179, 185, 199.  
 Siam, 32, 36, 103, 104, 176, 178.  
 Siamese, 30, 32, 33, 36, 67, 209.  
 Siemans, Werner, William and Carl, 105n.  
 Simons, H. M., 82n, 95, 98, 99.  
 Simpang (Sungai Linggi), 12, 45, 50, 121, 124, 182, 193, 194.  
 Singapore, 2, 7, 34, 35, 49, 51, 55, 57, 58, 62, 63, 69, 78, 79, 82, 87, 88, 94, 96, 98, 102, 105, 117, 152, 175, 177, 182, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 197, 202, 203, 204, 207, 215, 216, 217, 220, 224; trade of, 55, 56, 79, 80, 88-9; merchants of, 63, 64, 100, 117, 204, 212, 224; trade depression in, 79; British firms in, 80; German firms in, 80; European firms in, 81; trade with Pahang, 86; early commercial houses in, 94; New Harbour in, 95, 99, 101, 102; railway projects in, 99-100, 101-2; telegraph communication in, 102-3; secret societies in, 115-17; plantations in, 115.  
 Singapore and New Harbour Railway Co., 99.  
*Singapore Free Press*, (cited) 81.  
 Singapore Joint-Stock Coffee Co., 96.  
 Singapore Railway Co., 99-100.  
*Singapore Review and Monthly Magazine*, (cited) 102.  
 Skinner, A., (cited) 213.  
 Speedy, Captain T. C., 175, 216; (cited) 210.  
 Sri Menanti, 9-10, 38, 44, 45, 47, 122.  
 Stanley, Hon. Henry (Baron Stanley of Alderley), (cited) 93.  
 Straits of Malacca, 2, 36, 53.  
 Straits Government, 121, 122, 123, 151, 165, 176, 177, 185, 190, 194, 195, 200, 224.  
 Straits merchants (mercantilists), 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 58-9, 62, 63, 64, 76, 80, 86, 94, 101, 103, 106, 110, 201, 202, 220-2, 222, 223, 224, 226.

- Straits Settlements, 2, 33, 51, 53, 54, 55, 56, 59, 61, 65, 66, 79, 87, 102, 108, 110, 114, 118, 188, 193.
- Straits Settlements Association, 101n.
- Stuart, George, 64-5.
- Sulaiman, Raja (of Sungai Raya), 26, 142, 176.
- Sulaiman, Sultan (of Selangor), 20.
- Sumatra, 1, 58, 89, 92, 107, 189.
- Sungai Raya, 7, 9, 38, 142, 176.
- Sungai Ujong, 9, 10, 12, 17, 21, 22, 27, 38, 45, 47, 50, 55, 59, 61, 67, 73, 78, 120n, 145, 147, 149, 150, 183, 184, 193, 194, 195, 201, 202, 204, 217, 220-2; Dato' Klana of, 21, 44, 46n, 48, 148, 223; Dato' Bandar of, 21; tin industry of, 47, 48, 77-9; Chinese in, 47-8, 78, 86, 122-3, 124, 218-20; effects of tin mining on, 77; trade of, 77, 121, 123, 149-50; secret societies in, 116-17; Kapitan China in, 117; Rawa uprising in, 121n; relations with Rembau, 122, 149-50, 193-4; disturbances in, 122-3; boundary problem of, 146-5, 182-3.
- Sungei Ujong Tin Mining Co., 106-7, 221.
- Sutan Bangkaulu, 183, 199.
- Sutan Puasa, 74, 157, 158.
- Swatow, 209.
- Swettenham, (Sir) Frank, 219; (cited) 94, 160, 181-2, 206, 213.
- TAMPIN, 10, 27, 46, 150, 208n.
- Tan Ah Hun, 35.
- Tan Beng Gum, 203-4.
- Tan Beng Swee, 204, 220, 221, 224.
- Tan Chin Seng, 62, 206-7, 222 (see also Leack, Chin Seng & Co.).
- Tan Kim Cheng, 87, 143, 152, 153, 175, 207-8, 215-17, 221-3, 224, 225n.
- Tan Kim Seng, 86, 87, 203n, 204, 208.
- Tanjong Pagar Dock Co., 61, 96, 97, 99, 100.
- Tanjong Putri (Johor Bahru), 99, 101.
- Tanjong Tuan (Cape Rachado), 146, 147.
- Telegraph, 183, 207.
- Telegraph projects, 102, 103-5, 223.
- Teochew, 35, 112, 116, 134, 169, 170-171, 173, 212, 223-4.
- Teoh Ah Chong (see Chong Chong).
- Tian Ti Hoey, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117.
- Tin (general), 51, 53, 54, 56, 57, 66, 67, 75, 78, 80, 81, 83, 84, 88, 102, 133, 145, 149, 150, 153, 178, 193, 207, 215, 217, 226.
- Toa Peh Kong, 111, 112, 113-14, 129, 168, 205, 208, 209, 210, 211, 214, 222, 223, 224.
- Trang, Nakhoda, 214, 216; (cited) 216-17.
- Trengganu, 53, 55, 63.
- Triang, Sungai, 10, 12.
- Tyesin-tat, 210 (see also Foo Tye Sin and Koh Siang Tat).
- UPU BROTHERS, 13.
- VAN HAGEN, 181, 189.
- Vapoo Noordin, 210.
- Velge family, 59n. 61-2, 100, 193, 217, 221, 223.
- WEE CHOO SWEE, 115.
- Westerhout & Co., 118-9.
- Westerhout, John Bartholomeus, 59-60, 119.
- Westerhout, J. E., 60, 119.
- Whampoa, 64, 98, 100, 106, 200, 224, 225n; (cited) 220-1.
- Winstedt, R. O., (cited) 151-2, 203.
- Wong, C. S., (cited) 218n.
- Wong Lin Ken, (cited) 80, 109.
- Woods, R. C., 100, 106.
- Woods and Davidson, 106-7.
- Wray, Leonard, 89n.
- Wynne, M. L., (cited) 170, 201.
- YAKOB, RAJA, 155, 158n, 180, 181, 185, 187, 193.
- Yap Ah Loy (Tet Loy), 74-5, 118, 123n, 157, 158, 159n, 177, 181, 185, 189n, 198, 222.
- Yeoh Hood Hin, 59n, 64.
- Yeoh Hood Ing, 59n, 64.
- Yusuf, Raja (of Perak), 216.
- ZAIN, SYED, 180, 181, 186, 187, 188, 190, 191, 206.