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**THE OUTCOME OF THE RADICAL-CONSERVATIVE CONFLICT IN
MODERN MALAY POLITICS : THE MALAYAN UNION CRISIS AND
THE TRIUMPH OF CONSERVATISM,1942-1948**

Gazaly A. Malek

**A Thesis
in the Department
of
History**

**Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Master of Arts at
Concordia University
Montréal, Québec, Canada**

September 1994

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Signed by the final examining committee:

John J. Pappey

Chair

Michael Mason

Examiner

Robert Arken

Examiner

John G. Fife

Thesis Supervisor

Approved by

Maria S. S. S.
Chair of Department of Graduate Programme Director

Sept. 22 1994

Haile Valaskakis
Dean of Faculty

ABSTRACT

The Outcome of the Radical-Conservative Conflict in Modern Malay Politics: The Malayan Union Crisis and the Triumph of Conservatism, 1942-1948.

Gazaly A. Malek

The impact of British rule in Malaya on Malay politics resulted in the emergence of two opposing streams of Malay political views. One stream totally favoured the modernism of the West while the other, drawn from the traditional order, preferred to adapt modern ideas to the maintenance of the old structure. The beginnings of modern Malay nationalism coincided with the growing conflict between these two streams. The conflict between the radical, modern element and the conservative old order characterized and dominated the development of modern Malay politics.

From the turn of the century to the end of World War Two, the radical stream, while it could not decisively defeat the conservative element, dominated the struggle for Malay leadership. However, the end of the war erased the gains of the radicals as the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KKM) collapsed. The return of the British with the Malayan Union proposal for the political consolidation of Malaya directly threatened the Malay conservatives. Seizing the opportunity of the weakened position of the Malay radicals, the conservatives utilized the experience gained under the tutelage of the British as well as their traditional influence on Malay society to emerge as the dominant force in Malay politics.

The conservative elite managed to revive the pre-war Malay associations, unifying them where they had been previously unsuccessful, which culminated in the foundation of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO). Spurred by the controversy generated by the Malayan Union plan, UMNO gained overwhelming support

compelling the British colonial government to include UMNO in its political plans. Sharing basic interests with British imperialism UMNO was gladly embraced as heir to British rule. To the British it offered the only alternative to a radical anti-capitalistic nationalist movement led by the MNP. The Malay radical faction, faced with the combined power of British authority and UMNO's organizational skills were demolished. Thus the Malayan Union crisis boosted and propelled the Malay conservative elite to political dominance and ended over fifty years of the radical-conservative schism in Malay politics.

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Glossary

Adat	Customary laws
Bangsa	Nationality or Nation.
Bangsa Jawa	Javanese
Bangsa Arab	Arabs
Bangsa Melayu	Malay Nation
Bendahara	Premier
Dato, Datuk	Aristocratic title of Malay chiefs not of direct royal descent
Daulat	Divine sanction, aura
Derhaka	Treason
Fatwas	Legal ruling by a religious jurist; answer by a mufti (q.v.) to a question of law, on which his opinion is final.
Giyu-Gun	World War Two Japanese Volunteer Army made up of local residents of Japanese-occupied territories such as in Malaya and Indonesia
Hadith	True teachings of the Prophet
Hidup	Live
Ijtihad	Systemetic original thinking
Imams	Equivalent to a priest, although there is no priesthood in Islam.
Indonesia Raya	Greater Indonesia; Political Union of Malaya, Indonesia and Borneo including Brunei.
Istana	Malay palace; Ruler's residence
Jawi Peranakan	Muslims of Indian or Arab origins
Jihad	Islamic holy war
Kame	Tortoise; Japanese military infiltration unit operating during World War Two
Kathis	Muslim jurist or judge

Kaum Tua	Old School; A term for the traditional Muslim establishment who were closely identified with the traditional Malay elite.
Kaum Muda	New School; Muslim Reformists influenced by the modernist ideas of Mohammed Abduh's reformism movement in the Middle East at the turn of the century.
Kebangsaan	Nationality; nationalism
Kempeitai	Japanese wartime military police
Kerah	Conscript; conscripted labour in feudal Malay society for various needs of the rulers or the state.
Kerajaan	The state
Kesatuan	Union; association
Kiyai	Javanese term for a Muslim religious teacher.
Kris	Traditional Malay dagger or short sword
Laksamana	Admiral and Sea Lord; Title and rank of the Malaccan political tradition. It is now revived in Malaysia with the title of Dato.
Madrasah	Religious school
Mentri Besar	Chief Minister
Merdeka	Independence
Mufti	Chief Muslim Jurist
Panglima Bukit Gantang	One of the eight major traditional Malay chiefs of the State of Perak.
Penghulu	Village headman
Pemuda	Youth
Penghulu Bendahari	Treasurer; Title and rank of the Malaccan political tradition
Perikatan	League
Persatuan	Association; federation

Persekutuan	Federation; alliance
Persetian	Loyalists
Raayat	Subjects
Raja	Malay chiefs of royal descent
Sabilliah	Road of God
Shahbandar	Harbour Master; Title and rank of the Malaccan political tradition.
Sejarah Melayu	The Malay Annals;
Temenggung	Chief of Police and Royal Garrison; Title and rank of the Malaccan political tradition.
Tengku, Tunku	Prince or Princess
Ubah sikap,	The changing of values
Undang Undang Melaka	The Melaka Laws established during the 15th Century Malacca Era

Abbreviations

API	Angkatan Pemuda Insaf (Youth Movement for Justice)
AMCJA	All-Malaya Council for Joint Action
AWAS	Angkatan Wanita Sedar
BATAS	Barisan Tani Sa-Malaya (Malayan Farmer's Front)
BMA	British Military Administration
BPKI	Badan Penyelidik Kemerdekaan Indonesia (Investigating Committee for Indonesian Independence)
CCAO	Chief Civil Affairs Officer
CJA	Council of Joint Action
CWC	Constitutional Working Committee
Cmd.	Command Paper
DOCAO	Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer
DO	District Officer
FMS	Federated Malay States
H.M.S.O.	His (Her) Majesty's Stationary Office
IIL	Indian Independence League
ISB	Ikatan Semenanjung-Borneo (Association of Borneo-Peninsula)
IPP	Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar (Association of Young Students)
IMP	Independence of Malaya Party
INA	Indian National Army
JMBRAS	Journal of the Malayan (Malaysian) Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSEAH	Journal of Southeast Asian History
JSEAS	Journal of Southeast Asian Studies
KRIS	Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung (Union of Peninsula Indonesians)
KMM	Kesatuan Melayu Muda (Young Malay Movement)
KMS	Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (the Singapore Malay Union)
KMT	Kuomintang
MAS	Malay Administrative Service
MBRAS	Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
MCA	Malayan Chinese Association
MCP	Malayan Communist Party
MCS	Malayan Civil Service

MDU	Malayan Democratic Union
MIC	Malayan Indian Congress
MMA	Malayan Military Administration (Japanese)
MNP	Malayan National Party (q.v.) PKMM
MPAJA	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army
MPAJU	Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union.
MPU	Malayan Planning Unit
PAS	Parti Islam Malaysia
PEKEMBAR	Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu (q.v.) UMNO
PETA	Pejuang Tanah Ayer (Defenders of the Fatherland)
PKI	Parti Komunis Indonesia (Communist Party of Indonesia)
PKMM	Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (q.v.) MNP
PKMS	Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Selangor (Selangor Malay Nationalist Organization)
PMCJA	Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action
PMS,Johor	Pergerakan Melayu Semenanjung, Johor (Malay Peninsula Movement, Johore)
PMJ	Persatuan Melayu Johor (Johore Malay Association)
PMP	Persatuan Melayu Perak (Perak Malay Association)
PMIP	Pan-Malayan Islamic Party
PnMP	Perikatan Melayu Perak (Perak Malay League)
PMS	Persatuan Melayu Selangor (Selangor Malay Association)
PUTERA	Pusat Tenaga Raayat (People's Action Front)
SABERKAS	Syarikat Bekerjasama Am Saiburi (General Co-operative Society of Saiburi)
SAC	Supreme Allied Commander
SCBA	Straits Chinese British Association
SOCC	Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce
SEAC	South-East Asia Command
SITC	Sultan Idris Training College
SMA	Selangor Malay Association
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.
SS	Straits Settlements
UMNO	United Malay National Organization (q.v.) PEKEMBAR
UFMS	Unfederated Malay States

INTRODUCTION

Britain's post-World War Two policy with regard to Malaya¹ was to find a solution that would ensure the protection and continuation of its economic investments. Malaya was the world's biggest producer of tin and rubber. Its geographical position linking Japan, Australia and the West made it one of the most strategically important regions in the world. With the rise of Soviet Union and the dangers of a Communist China, the strategic value of Southeast Asia, and especially Malaya, was not lost on Britain and the United States.

The Malaya that the British returned to at the end of World War Two was in a different mood and much changed. The *Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army* (MPAJA), and not the British was widely regarded, especially among the Chinese, as the liberator of Malaya.² This situation convinced Britain of the urgent need to reassert its authority. A return to pre-war conditions was out of the question, however, as Malaya would need to be politically organized so as to meet Britain's post-war economic needs. Thus the

¹ The term Malaya is used to mean the geographical area which comprised the southern part of the Malay Peninsula and the islands of Penang and Singapore. In this paper it is also used in its modern political term to mean the Malay States of the Malay Peninsula and Singapore before the formation of Malaysia in 1963. See Amarjit Kaur, *Historical Dictionary of Malaysia*, (London: Scarecrow Press, 1993) p. 91.

² The *Malayan Communist Party* (MCP) was formally established in 1930. Its activities began as early as the mid-1920s when Indonesian communists such as Tan Malaka had exercised much influence. Active Malay participation in the MCP seemed to have been restricted to this period. In the 1930s, the Indonesian elements were replaced by Chinese Communists and Malay membership of the MCP declined. At the outbreak of World War II, the MCP was largely a Chinese-oriented party even though it had tried very hard to attract Malays and other non-Chinese to its cause. It was not until the outbreak of the post-war communist rebellion that the MCP was able to recruit Malays into its ranks, many of whom were members of the banned left-wing Malay Nationalist Party (MNP). For detailed studies of the Malayan Communist Party, see Justus M. Van Der Kroef's *Communism in Malaysia and Singapore*, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967); J. H. Brimmell, *A Short History of the Malayan Communist Party*, (Singapore: Donald Moore, 1956); Cheah Boon Kheng, comp. and ed. *From PKI to the Comintern, 1924-1941: The Apprenticeship of the Malayan Communist Party-Selected Documents and Discussion*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1992)

Malayan Union scheme came to be viewed by the British as the best solution for post-war Malaya.

The aim of the Malayan Union was to create a centralized administrative system which would ensure a greater efficiency in the economic exploitation of the country. The fragmented, pre-war governing system in which three levels of administration existed in addition to the figment of Malay sovereignty would be replaced by a centralized, unitary government. Chinese and Indian residents were to be induced to stay with the provision of Malayan citizenship.

The plans and proposals of the Union had been worked out in the Colonial Office during the war. The British expected no real opposition and counted on the familiar reflexive assent of the Malay rulers. To the surprise of the returning colonialists, the response to the scheme was 'like an electric shock'.³ Opposition came from every shade of the Malay political spectrum. Most surprising of all, the scheme was vociferously attacked by the conservative Malay bureaucratic class, the Malay civil servants. In one stroke Britain had antagonized both the Right and to some extent the Left. The proposals of the Union had the effect of widening the racial cleavage and deepening Malay fears of Chinese domination which the Malay middle class elite quickly picked up as its rallying cry.

Opposition to the Malayan Union by the Malay conservative elite came from their perception that, in a very important respect, it would leave them with practically no real power, despite their allegedly 'privileged' position. The proposed centralization and rationalization of the administrative structure would lead to a greater, not lesser degree of concentration of power into the hands of the British colonialists. At the same time, the

³ Maj-General H. R. Hone, *Report of the BMA of Malaya, September 1945 to March 1946* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1946) p. 62. Hereafter cited as *BMA Report, September 1945 to March 1946*

Union proposals were totally opposed to the creation of an independent Malaya. The dispute over the Malayan Union became a battle between two competing strata of the colonial ruling class: the emergent Malay conservative elite, drawn from the aristocracy and the bureaucracy, and the Whitehall civil servants.

The political crisis brought on by the Malayan Union constitutional proposals was a watershed in the history of modern Malaya. As much as the Malayan Union scheme marked the beginning of Britain's retreat from Southeast Asia, it also signaled the emergence of the traditional Malay elite as the chosen successor of the British rulers. In an attempt to rationalize its administrative and economic grip on Malaya, Britain was forced to take into partnership a confident and revitalized Malay traditional elite. The latter defended the fundamentally Malay-supremacist ideology that had been such an integral part of the pre-war colonial structure. Less than one year since the British Reoccupation, the Malay conservative elite became the leading political actor in Malaya, a position it has maintained ever since.

Most scholars of Malayan politics have agreed that the sudden success of the Malay conservative elite in post-war Malayan politics, a situation that "astounded" many of their contemporaries, was a direct result of the threat posed by the Malayan Union to their survival.⁴ Faced with the prospect of increasing political competition from other races, the Malay conservatives fought ferociously against the Union plan. They were

⁴ A. J. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics During the Malayan Union Experiment, 1942-1948* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979) p. 168. Three historiographical studies provide extensive coverage on the Malayan Union period. These are: For a good historiography of the Malayan Union crisis up to the end of the 1960s, see M. R. Stenson, "The Malayan Union and the Historians," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Oct. 1969) pp. 344-354. A. J. Stockwell, "The Historiography of Malaysia: Recent Writings in English on the History of the Area Since 1874," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 5, no. 5 (Oct. 1976) pp. 82-110; and Khoo Kay Kim, "Historiography of Peninsular Malaysia: Past and Present," in *Malaysian Studies: Archaeology, Historiography, Geography, and Bibliography*, ed. John Lent and Kent Mulliner, (Detroit: Cellar Books for the Centre for Southeast Asian Studies, Northern Illinois University, 1986) pp. 87-118.

undoubtedly well prepared for such a battle and used every available option they had, including the threat of outright rejection of their rulers. As some recent studies by Robert Heussler, Khasnor Johan and Yeo Kim Wah have established, their "apprenticeship" in the colonial administrative service provided the invaluable organizational expertise which enabled the conservatives to launch a formidable campaign.⁵ The Malayan Union acted as a catalyst for the emergence of Malay political power. Thus, as Albert Lau has rightly noted that, in one sense the story of the Malayan Union and, by extension, Malay politics in the immediate post-war period, has already been told.⁶

However, when viewed from within a larger historical and political context, the rise of the Malay conservative elite during the Malayan Union crisis also tells another story. It demonstrates the impact of modernization on the politics of traditional society which, according to John H. Kautsky, brought about two kinds of responses from the latter.⁷ One response comes in the form of a traditionalist opposition which seeks a return to the old order, while the other comes from a modernizing elite which seeks to replace the old order by the modernization model that it encounters. Kautsky further asserted that, in the ensuing competition between the two indigenous responses, "it is almost invariably ... the modernizing wing that becomes dominant within the opposition and comes to power when the colonial-aristocratic regime crumbles."⁸

⁵ See also Robert Heussler, *British Rule in Malaya* (Oxford: Clio Press, 1981); Robert Heussler, *Completing a Stewardship: the Malayan Civil Service, 1942-1957* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983); Khasnor Johan, *The Emergence of the Modern Malay Administrative Elite* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984); and Yeo Kim Wah, "The Grooming of an Elite: Malay Administrators in the Federated Malay States, 1903-1941," *JSEAS*, vol. 11. no. 2 (Sept. 1980) pp. 287-319.

⁶ Albert Lau, *The Malayan Union Controversy, 1942-1948* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991) pp. 1-2 ff.

⁷ John H. Kautsky, *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982) p.350 ff.

⁸ Ibid.

It is the purpose of this study, by tracing the development of modern Malay politics from its earliest beginnings, to examine the conflict which arose between the traditional Malay elite and the modernized radical faction that had emerged as a result of British rule. At the same time, this study proposes that in the case of Malay politics it was the traditional order led by a bureaucratized aristocracy that triumphed and not the modernizing challengers as Kautsky has stressed. Provided with unexpected opportunities by the events resulting from World War Two, the Malay conservative elite seized the leadership of post-war Malay as well as of Malayan politics. The post-war period was the climactic finale as the Malayan Union crisis became the final battleground in the conflict between the Malay conservatives and radicals.

PART ONE

IMPACT OF MODERNIZATION

**THE ADVENT OF BRITISH RULE :
CHANGE AND RESPONSE IN MALAY SOCIETY,
1875-1940**

Chapter 1

MALAY SOCIETY UNDER BRITISH RULE : CHANGE AND MODERNIZATION, 1875-1940

By the first decade of the twentieth century virtually the whole of Malaya had effectively come under British rule. It had taken Britain just over a quarter of a century, with relatively little resistance, to consolidate its political control over the Malay states.¹ The relatively smooth establishment of British political control over the Malay states was largely due to the willingness on the part of the British to maintain the *status quo* of the Malay ruling class and the sovereignty of the Malay states.

Despite the assertion of Malay autonomy British political control of the Malay states was never in doubt. Through a series of treaties, beginning with the Treaty of Pangkor between Britain and the state of Perak in 1874, and in return for British protection, the Malay states agreed to accept British advice which "must be asked and

¹Malay resistance to British rule was not in the scale of similar responses in Indonesia against the Dutch such as the Java and Aceh wars. Although Malay resistance broke out in almost all of the states of the FMS initially, they were small movements involving mostly the Rajas and their followers. While they were easily put down by British forces, they were nonetheless instrumental in directing British policy towards a more cautious approach in establishing total control. It was partly this initial Malay resistance that led the British to pursue their policy of indirect rule. See J. de V. Allen, "The Kelantan Rising of 1915: Some Thoughts on the Concept of Resistance in British Malayan History," *JSEAH*, vol.9, no. 2. (Sept. 1968) pp. 241-257; cf. Cheah Boon Kheng, "Chiefs, Rajas and Rebels: Malay Resistance to British Rule in the 19th Century and Early 20th Century," Paper presented at the First Symposium of the British Institute in South-East Asia, *South-East Asian Responses to European Intrusions*, pp. 1-13. Singapore, 27-30 January 1981; cf. Mohamed Amin, "British 'Intervention' and Malay Resistance", in *Malaya-The Making of a Neo-Colony*, ed. Mohamed Amin & Malcolm Caldwell, pp. 64-72. (Nottingham, England: Spokesman Press, 1977); cf. below p. 8, n. 3.

acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay Religion and Custom".² This led to the establishment of a system of indirect rule where British "advisers" actually governed in the name of the Malay rulers, a political arrangement advantageous for the British as well as the Malay ruling class. Through indirect rule, the British managed to avoid a costly process of annexation, while for the Malay ruling class, it was preferable to an outright annexation of their territories which would meant an absolute displacement from power.³

The primary object of British intervention was to establish political stability as a necessary condition for the successful exploitation of Malaya's economic resources.⁴ Thus, having acquired jurisdiction over all matters of government except those pertaining to religion and Malay customs, British administrative and legal systems were swiftly introduced in the Malay states. While the offices of traditional Malay government such as the Sultan and court officials were symbolically retained, by the turn of the century British administrators had replaced every stratum of Malay

²Article iv of the "Perak Treaty of 20 January 1874." The other Malay states generally accepted British advisers under the same terms as that of the Perak Treaty. See texts in J. de V. Allen, A. J. Stockwell and L. R. Wright, eds. *A Collection of Treaties and Other Documents Affecting the States of Malaysia, 1761-1963* (New York: Oceana Publications Inc., 1981) vol. 1. pp. 390-393; Hereafter cited as *Malay Treaties*.

³ There were several armed Malay resistance to British intervention from the outset. However, these were quickly put down and were never in the same scale as the Indonesian resistance to the Dutch rule. Between 1874 and 1879, armed Malay resistance broke out in Negri Sembilan, Selangor and Perak. One of the longest Malay-British conflict took place in Pahang from 1891 to 1895. By the beginning of the twentieth century, British control was firmly in place throughout Malaya but there were still two more major uprisings: the first was the Kelantan Uprising in 1915 and the last in Trengganu in 1928. Both lasted no more than a month. The nineteenth century resistance were led by disgruntled chiefs with implicit and covert support of the Malay rulers. For an account of Malay resistance, see Cheah Boon Kheng, op. cit., pp. 5-8; and Mohamed Amin, op. cit.

⁴ Malcolm Caldwell, "The British Forward Movement, 1874-1914," in *Malaya: The Making of a Neo-Colony* ed. Malcolm Caldwell and Mohamed Amin (Nottingham: Spokesman Press, 1977) pp. 14-16.

administration right down to the village level.⁵

The maintenance of the sovereignty of the Malay states, despite the fact that the British were clearly the *de facto* rulers, meant that Malaya could not be governed as a single political unit. This led to the emergence of three political groupings under different levels of administration. The Straits Settlements were governed directly as Crown colonies, with Singapore becoming the centre and capital of British administration over the whole Malay Peninsula. The four economically most important states of Perak, Negri Sembilan, Selangor and Pahang managed to be administratively united as the Federated Malay States (FMS)⁶ while the remaining states of Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, Perlis, and Johore were governed through British officers attached as advisers and were known as the Unfederated Malay States (UFMS).⁷

The consolidation of British rule was accompanied by rapid economic development. The stability which resulted encouraged an increase in Western, notably British, economic investments.⁸ By the beginning of the twentieth century the salient features of the modern Malayan economy had emerged. Tin and rubber production was developed into such dominant industries that by the first decade of the twentieth century Malaya had become the world's leading producer of the two commodities.⁹

⁵ Rupert Emerson, *Malaysia: A Study in Direct and Indirect Rule* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malay Press, 1964) pp. 135-142.

⁶ See text of "Federal Treaty of July 1895," in *Malay Treaties*, vol. 1. pp. 41-50; Rupert Emerson, op. cit., pp. 135-142 ff; See Map 1. in Appendix A.

⁷ See text of treaties with Johore, Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Johore in *Malay Treaties*, vol. 1. pp. 70-72; *ibid.*, pp. 102-11; Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan and Trengganu formally came under British advice following the Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 10 March 1909. However, British control was already effected as early as 1899 through similar treaties concluded in the same year. See 'Siamese Treaty of 29 November, 1899' *Malay Treaties*, vol. 1. pp. 321-332; 'Siamese Treaty of 10 March, 1909' *Malay Treaties*, vol. 1. pp. 332-249; Rupert Emerson, op. cit., pp. 194-197 ff; See Map 1. in Appendix A.

⁸ Chai Hon-Chan, *The Development of British Malaya, 1896-1909* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1964) p. 159 f; *ibid.*, pp. 170-171 ff.

⁹ Tin production had a long history, its production and export began as early as the Malacca period, but its extensive exploitation began only in the middle of the nineteenth century. By

The economic transformation of Malaya resulted in social changes that would have serious implications for the future politics of Malaya. Firstly, the expanding labour intensive tin and rubber industries needed and subsequently attracted a large influx of immigrant labour coming mostly from China and India.¹⁰ By 1911, more than forty per cent of the total population of Malaya was made up of non-Malay Asians.¹¹

With these waves of immigration, Malaya began to develop into a more pluralistic but strictly segregated society. Malayan colonial society was not only separated by language and culture but also by economic and geographical divisions created by the process of modernization. The economic development of Malaya had been concentrated in the tin-rich Malay states on the west coast of the peninsula, which fostered rapid urbanization.¹² By 1900 the population of Malaya was heavily concentrated on the western and south western part of the peninsula, and overwhelmingly made up of Chinese and Indian immigrants.¹³

The Chinese, who were mostly involved in the tin industry and domestic trading, settled in the rich tin-mining belts of the Federated Malay States and the commercial centres of the Straits Settlements.¹⁴ The Indian population was mainly located in the

1904, Malayan tin made up more than 54% of the world's tin output. Rubber was an imperial effort in the 1890s when it was introduced from Brazil by British botanist, H. N. Ridley. In 1900, land under rubber cultivation was less than 16,000 acres, but in less than ten years nearly 200,000 acres of land had been alienated for rubber cultivation. Rubber exports jumped from under 500 tons in 1906 to more than 2,000 tons in 1909. Chai Hon-Chan, *Ibid.*, pp. 152-177.

¹⁰ Chai Hon-Chan, *Ibid.*, pp. 108-110 and pp. 127-130 ff.

¹¹ Out of a total population of about 2.6 million of Malaya excluding the Straits Settlements, 43.1% were non-Malays comprising mainly of Chinese and Indians. See T. E. Smith, *Population Growth in Malaya: An analysis of Recent Trends* (London, New York: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1952) p. 8; See Table II, Appendix B.

¹² Chai Hon-Chan, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-176 ff. For a detailed study of the process of urbanization in Malaya at the turn of the century, see Amarjit Kaur, *Bridge and Barrier: Transport and Communications in Colonial Malaya, 1870-1957* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1985)

¹³ T. E. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 7; See Table I, Appendix B.

¹⁴ T. E. Smith, *ibid.*, pp. 66-68 ff; Chai Hon-Chan, *op. cit.*, pp. 124-127 ff.

large rubber plantations and estates which were also concentrated in the Federated Malay States and Johore.¹⁵ As a majority of the Malay population was not employed in the tin or rubber industries, they remained in their established rural villages pursuing mostly subsistence agriculture, especially in the northern rice growing states of the non-federated Malay states.¹⁶

Impact of British Rule on Malay Society

British rule and the process of modernization which followed brought about significant political, economic and social changes with far-reaching consequences for Malay society. Some of these changes were of a disruptive nature affecting specific institutions and practices of traditional Malay society as well as particular groups within Malay society.

At the same time, the process of transition prompted and directed Malay response and reaction which would shape the political and social future of modern Malaya. While the basic social pattern of Malay society, with the ruler at the apex and the *raayats* at the lowest village level, remained intact, the effect of the changes transformed Malay society from a feudal to a capitalist society and from a traditional to a modern culture.¹⁷

¹⁵ T. E. Smith, *ibid.*, pp. 83-85 ff; Chai Hon-Chan, *ibid.*, pp. 127-139.

¹⁶ T. E. Smith, *ibid.*, p. 26; Tham Seong Chee, *Malays and Modernization: A Sociological Interpretation* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1977) pp. 28-58; See Table III, Appendix B.

¹⁷ At the apex of the Malay polity or *Kerajaan* was the Ruler who usually adopted the title *Sultan*. His closest relatives formed the inner circle of the aristocracy with the titles *Raja* and *Tengku* followed by appointed middle rank aristocrats such as the commanders of the military and officers of the court addressed as *Datuk* (Dato). Directly below was the *raayat*, the subjects and the lowest stratum was occupied by debt-bondsmen and slaves. For further discussion on the traditional Malay political structure, see J. M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965) pp. 44-54; See also A. C. Milner, *Kerajaan: Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule* (Tucson, Arizona:

The most immediate of these changes occurred in the political sphere. The establishment of British rule meant a displacement of Malay authority and a general loss of power on the part of the Malay ruling class. However, within the Malay ruling class the sultans and rulers were not too adversely affected. Due to their position at the apex of the political hierarchy, as well as to the need on the part of the British to perpetuate the fiction of Malay sovereignty, they managed to actually gain in status and enhanced the security of their positions. Firstly, the rulers were provided with a paid retinue of officials as well as a generous personal allowance. More importantly the ruler's position was firmly established and not easily challenged by powerful regional chiefs, as had frequently happened in the past.¹⁸ At the same time, the demarcation of permanent state boundaries provided the Malay rulers with wider geo-political arenas than they had ever had before.¹⁹

The group which suffered the most severe loss of political as well as economic power were the Malay chiefs and rajas. The chiefs and rajas who in the pre-colonial era had wielded considerable autonomous power over their districts and fiefs, had become redundant in the face of increasing centralization. The introduction of the "*Torrens*" land system, in which land belonged to the state, and the appointment of district officers as regional administrators, literally stripped the chiefs and rajas of the traditional bases

University of Arizona Press, 1982); and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, *Kesultanan Melayu Melaka* [The Malay Sultanate of Melaka] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1990)

¹⁸ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) pp. 14-15.

¹⁹ In each of the treaties entered between British authorities and the Malay states in instituting British advisory control, the boundaries of each state were explicitly marked, particularly in the case of the Kelantan, Perlis, Trengganu and Kedah which were previously under Siamese suzerainty. In addition there were several treaties concluded specifically for establishing state boundaries. For example, see para. 4, of "Letter from the Minister of the Interior, Siam, notifying Kedah of the 1909 Anglo-Siamese Treaty," in *Malay Treaties*, vol. 1. p.164; see also "Kedah Treaty of 4 March, 1912," and "Boundary Treaty with Perak," in *Malay Treaties*, vol. 1. pp.168-169.

of their power.²⁰ While some of the aristocrats managed to be retained as district officers or as advisors to the Sultans many were pensioned off and even had their titles rescinded and offices eliminated.²¹

The political changes brought about by the imposition of a new Western-style political framework did not simply replace Malay authority but significantly undermined the political foundations of social relationships within Malay society. British rule ended the feudal relationship that had previously existed in Malay society. For the first time in history, Malays of different regional backgrounds and social status came under a common authority. Absolute allegiance to chiefs and sultans was now secondary to the authority of the British. With direct authority invested in the British appointed District Officer and the *penghulu* or village headman, the sultans and rulers had become merely remote symbols of authority.²²

For the bulk of the Malay population, British rule was much less disruptive. In fact, it provided some improvement in the life of the ordinary Malay as some *adat*

²⁰ Ahmad Nazri Abdullah, *Melayu dan Tanah* [Malay and Land] (Kuala Lumpur: Media Intelek, 1985) pp. 21-30. The 'Torrens System' of land registration was devised by Sir Robert Torrens in Australia when he was Collector of Customs in 1859. The aims of the system was to document ownership of land. Land was first surveyed and measured in plots after which owners were obliged to register their claim which was recorded by the State. For the first time in Malaya, registered owners of land were accorded protection and recognition of their claims. For an account of the Torrens System in Malaya, see S. K. Das, *The Torrens System in Malaya* (Singapore: Malayan Law Journal Ltd., 1963) pp. 21-49.

²¹ Pensions and allowances, as well as the elimination of certain traditional Malay offices and ranks were provided following the acceptance of British residents. For example, the relatives of the Maharajah Abu Bakar of Johore, and Sultan Ali, the former Bendahara were given monthly allowances. See Governor of the Straits Settlements, Sir William Robinson's despatches to the Johore ruler in "Muar Document of 24 October, 1878. Robinson's Second Note to Tengku Alam," *Malay Treaties*, vol. 1. pp. 68-69; Another example was the transfer of Lukut, a territory between Selangor and Sungei Ujong (one of the nine principalities of Negri Sembilan which literally translates as the Nine States), from Selangor to Sungei Ujong. Raja Bot, a relative of the Sultan of Selangor, agreed to relinquish his post of Raja of Lukut for monetary compensation in the sum of \$10,000 and 3,000 acres of land. See "Boundary Convention with Selangor, Lukut, and Sungei Raya," in *Malay Treaties*, vol. 1. pp. 310-313; J. M. Gullick, *Malay Society in the Late Nineteenth Century: The Beginning of Change* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987) pp. 73-74 ff.

²² Ibid., pp. 74-75 ff; Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya* (London: John Lane, 1947) p. 229.

(customary) practices, such as debt-slavery, were outlawed.²³ No longer was a Malay peasant under the threat of arbitrary punishment and eventual enslavement by chiefs, rajas and sultans.²⁴ Taxation was regulated and generally more equitable. The person representing authority, the *penghulu*, had been retained and thus there was no great change in perception of authority on the part of the Malay peasants.²⁵

The Modernization of Malay Society, 1900-1940

The emergence of a modern economy had a greater transformative effect on Malay society. It introduced superior technologies and modes of communication, creating new occupations and lifestyles. It generally influenced sections of the Malay population which were geographically and socially closer to the forces of change. Malay communities near the trade and industrial centres of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States were particularly affected. While most Malays remained in their traditional agricultural occupations, increasing numbers were attracted to the emerging new industries. Some found seasonal employment in the smaller tin mines and rubber

²³ For a comprehensive survey of *adat* laws, see M. B. Hooker, *The Personal Laws of Malaysia, An Introduction* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1976); See also M. B. Hooker, *Adat Laws in Modern Malaya: Land Tenure: Traditional Government and Religion* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1972); and an extensive bibliography on *adat* can be found in M. B. Hooker, ed. & comp. *A Source Book of Adat, Chinese Law and the History of Common Law in the Malayan Peninsula* (Singapore: University of Singapore, 1967)

²⁴ Frank Swettenham, op. cit., p. 227; J. M. Gullick, *Malay Society*, op. cit., pp. 98-100; For a descriptive account of slavery in the Malaya, see V. Matheson & M. B. Hooker, "Slavery in the Malay Texts: Categories of Dependency and Compensation," in Anthony Reid, ed. *Slavery, Bondage and Dependency in Southeast Asia* (St. Lucia, Queensland, Australia: University of Queensland Press, 1983) pp. 182-208.

²⁵ Frank Swettenham, op. cit., p. 228-9; J. M. Gullick, *Malay Society*, op. cit., pp. 110-115; For a detailed account of the introduction of British appointed *penghulus*, see Paul H. Kratoska, "Penghulus in Perak and Selangor: Rationalization of a Traditional Malay Office," *JMBRAS*, vol. 57. pt. 2. (Dec. 1984) pp. 32-36 ff.

plantations.²⁶ Many others worked in the service industries in the cities of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States.²⁷ The process of modernization not only dislocated certain groups but also introduced some specialization in production. More significantly it emphasized the role of a western monetary system which drew Malay society into a wider and more modern economic network.

As these Malay wage workers began to settle permanently in the towns and industrial centres of Malaya such as Singapore and Penang, they began to develop into a distinct group of urbanized Malays. This group came from all strata of Malay society: from the aristocracy to the peasantry. They were drawn by trade or employment in a variety of occupations such as government clerks, domestic servants and ordinary labourers.²⁸ This encounter between urbanized Malays and modernization resulted in the awakening of Malay consciousness as to the realities of a modern world. Capitalism and other western political ideas were soon fostered within the urban Malay psyche. Capitalistic opportunities brought about the rise of a successful Malay merchant class who were not of an aristocratic background. Political ideas such as republicanism, communism and nationalism gained adherents among urban Malays who, by this time, had begun to critically question their social and political circumstances.²⁹

At the same time, British policies such as the promotion of non-Malay immigration and the establishment of an ethnically segregated educational system superimposed the social changes taking place within Malay society onto a far wider, supra-national stage. It further polarized Malay society and highlighted the divisiveness between Malays and the other races. British policy on education was an extension of its

²⁶ Tham Seong Chee, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-34 ff.

²⁷ Tham Seong Chee, *ibid.*, pp. 41-50; T. E. Smith, *op. cit.*, p.26; See Table III, Appendix B.

²⁸ Michael Johnson, "The Evolution of Squatter Settlements in Peninsular Malaysian Cities," *JSEAS*, vol.12. no. 2. (Sept. 1981) pp. 364-367; W. R. Roff, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-38.

²⁹ William R. Roff, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-60.

"divide and rule" tradition.³⁰ The Chinese and Indian immigrants had to provide for their own educational needs. On the other hand, a minimum standard of Malay education was encouraged and organized for the Malays in order "to make them better citizens and more useful members of the community", but at the same time English education for ordinary Malays was strongly discouraged because it would make Malays "discontented men, who (would) consider manual labour beneath them" ³¹ Even then, it was provided mainly in the British colonies of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States, benefitting only a small portion of the Malay population.³²

The Emergence of New Elite Groups in Malay Society

At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the transformation of Malay society, which had occurred in the first forty years of British rule, resulted in the emergence of new social groups such as the intelligentsia, and the bureaucratic and merchant classes. Paradoxically, it was these new elite groups which began to feel the effects of colonialism and modernization as detrimental not only to themselves, but also to the whole of Malay society.

The first of these elite groups emerged from the ranks of the Malay ruling class. The lower echelons of the aristocracy began to agitate for a greater role in the administration of government. British authorities, aware of the need to maintain the Malay ruling class as a willing partner in Malaya, quickly acted to accommodate their demands. As a result, the Malay College was founded in 1905 as an exclusive English

³⁰ Philip Loh Fook Seng, *Seeds of Separatism : Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874-1940* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975) pp. 2-4.

³¹ Perak Government Gazette, 4 January 1895. pp. 4-7. cited in Ibid., p.17.

³² Philip Loh Fook Seng, op. cit., pp.13-19.

school for children of Malay aristocrats.³³ A separate bureaucracy from the Europeans-only Malayan Civil Service (MCS) known as the Malay Administrative Service (MAS) was created for them, entrance to which was open primarily to graduates of the Malay College.³⁴ Due to this background, the bureaucratic elite began to develop a symbiotic relationship with the British, and identified themselves simultaneously with the Malay ruling class and the British rulers.³⁵

Another group that was a product of the old order was the conservative religious elite who had emerged as religious leaders and teachers in the Malay States.³⁶ The creation of this elite was in response to the erosion of the position and power of the Malay ruling class. Restricted to matters of Malay religion and customs, the Malay rulers actively involved themselves in these affairs. In most of the Malay States, councils of Muslim Religion and Malay Customs were set up, and although under British supervision, functioned quite independently under the authority of the Malay rulers.³⁷

³³ The idea of a special 'finishing' school was mooted by several British administrators such as Frank Swettenham and R. J. Wilkinson who became Inspector of Schools for the F.M.S. in 1903. In a letter to the Malay Mail, Wilkinson summed up the objective of the School as preparation for 'sons of leading men' and 'boys who have shown marked ability in other schools' and the 'pick of the school' would be given a chance for admission to a special preparatory programme for the Civil Service. The *Malay Mail* 21 April 1904. cited in Philip Loh Fook Seng, op. cit., p. 23; For a detailed study on the establishment of the Malay College see, Khasnor bte Johan, *The Malay College. Kuala Kangsar, 1905-1941: British Policy of Education for Employment in the Federated Malay* (M.A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1969)

³⁴ Khasnor bte Johan, op. cit., chap. 3.

³⁵ Philip Loh Fook Seng, op. cit., pp. 19-24; Khasnor Johan concluded that although relation between Malay administrative officers and their British counterparts and superiors were unequal socially, the Malay administrative elite nonetheless greatly admired their British superiors. Khasnor Johan, *The Emergence of the Modern Malay Administrative Elite* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984) p.164.

³⁶ Moshe Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979) pp. 197-233; For biographical account of influential Malay religious leaders at the turn of the century see, Ismail Che Daud, comp. *Tokoh-Tokoh Ulama Semenanjung Melayu* [Religious Personalities of the Malay Peninsula] (Kota Bharu: Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, 1992)

³⁷ Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society, 1874-1920s," *JSEAS*, vol.5. no. 2. (Sept. 1974) pp. 187-188. For a detailed account and description of the religious councils, see, William R. Roff, "The

These councils were responsible for such varied affairs as the building of mosques, and, more importantly, the appointing of *imams* and *kathis*.³⁸ As a result, these religious officers were drawn from within the aristocracy as well as from the conservative religious establishment which had always been a staunch supporter of the Malay ruling class.³⁹

The next group to emerge was from outside the Anglo-Malay establishment. They were drawn mostly from the urban Malay communities in the towns and cities of Malaya, primarily Singapore and Penang. The alienation of city life created the need to seek new forms of social security, and a desire for self-improvement in a competitive environment. As a result, Malays in the cities of the Straits Settlements soon began to form associations and clubs.⁴⁰ Unlike the aristocratic-religious elite who were supported by, and ensured a role in the ruling establishment, this urban group had to deal with the competition brought about by a modern capitalist economy dominated by non-Malays.⁴¹

As these new elites confronted the realities of modern Malayan society, new influences emerged which would define their concerns and shape their responses. In addition, the relationship and struggle of these new elite groups would determine the political development of Malay society. The earliest of these influences was the Islamic reform movement, which was being steadily transmitted from the Middle East through returning Muslim scholars.⁴² Islamic reformism, with its message for self-improvement as a way to confront Western colonialism and capitalism, triggered a

Origins and Early Years of the Majlis Ugama," in William R. Roff, ed. *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974)

³⁸ Moshe Yegar, op. cit., pp. 170-173.

³⁹ Khoo Kay Kim, op. cit., pp. 186-189.

⁴⁰ William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 178-190.

⁴¹ Ibid., pp.32-38.

⁴² Ibid., pp.43-46.

process of self-examination. It stimulated the politicization of the emerging elites, a process which would eventually lead to the stirrings of modern Malay nationalism.

Chapter 2

MODERN MALAY POLITICS AND THE BEGINNING OF THE CONSERVATIVE- RADICAL SCHISM, 1900-1940

The early development of Malay political awakening began with the involvement by segments of the urban Malay elite in religious revivalism. Their ideas of reformism were directed at self-improvement which led to criticism of existing institutions and practices in Malay society. As these institutions and practices were bastions of the old order, a clash between reformists known as the *Kaum Muda* (New School) and the conservative elite, aptly labeled the *Kaum Tua*, (Old School) was inevitable.¹ This conflict centred on the issue of the causes of Malay "backwardness". The reformists proposed sweeping changes primarily aimed at the ruling establishment, while the old guard steadfastly defended the existing structure of British-Malay hegemony.²

Rise of the Religious Reformists and the Attack on the Old Order

The reformist school was started by the religious movement for reform which had begun to spread to the Malay world from the Middle East as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century. Reformist ideologies such as the *Wahhabi Movement*, the

¹William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) pp. 56-58; William R. Roff, "Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction Amongst the Malays, 1900-41," in *Papers on Malayan History* (Singapore: Journal of South East Asian History, 1962) pp. 162-170.

²Khoo Kay Kim, "Malay Society, 1874-1920s," *JSEAS*, vol. 5. no. 2. (Sept. 1974) pp. 190-192.

reformism of Muhammad Abduh of Egypt and the modernist ideas of Kemal Ataturk, were transmitted to the Malay archipelago.³ Religious reform started in earnest in Singapore with the founding of a Malay periodical called *Al-Imam* (The Leader) in 1906, which although basically religious in motivation and outlook, ventured militantly into the field of social criticism.⁴ To the true Muslim there is no dividing line between the spiritual and political-socioeconomic environments. *Al-Imam* addressed itself many times to what was to become its abiding theme of *ubah sikap*, that is, "the changing of values" along more progressive, and especially in *Al-Imam's* case, religious lines.⁵

Al-Imam also promulgated the idea of the need for progress, and the modernization of government which had previously been advocated by Al Afghani, and by

³ Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West - The Formative Years, 1875-1914* (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1970) pp. 5-9; This book gives an excellent analysis of the Islamic Reform Movement of the early twentieth century. Generally, Muhammad Abduh's ideas, which have stimulated modern non-political Islamic movements in that country, are: the "reformation" of Islam by returning to the teachings of the Prophet and the Quran; the use of *ijtihad* (systematic original thinking) to confront modern conditions but always based on the Quran; that the pursuit of knowledge is not in conflict with Islam; and that religious teaching is intended for the masses and not only for the elite. Islam was to be defended by acquiring secular knowledge from the West. While most scholars generally agreed that the influence of Islamic reformism in Southeast Asia began at the end of the nineteenth century, Azyumardi Azra has recently argued that the transmission of progressive Islamic ideology began much earlier, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, and was consistently sustained to its culmination in the twentieth century. According to Azra, these early reformists had played a major role in the earlier Padri movements and the Java and Aceh wars. See Azyumardi Azra, *The Transmission of Islamic Reformism to Indonesia: Networks of Middle Eastern and Malay-Indonesian 'Ulama' in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Ph.D dissertation, Columbia University, 1992)

⁴ Abu Bakar Hamzah, *Al-Imam : Its Role in Malay Society, 1906-1908* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1991) pp. 1-4; *Al-Imam* was modelled on the Egyptian *Al-Manar*, it often reproduced articles from *Al-Manar*; William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 56-59. The bond between Malay reformist and *Al-Manar* was much stronger according to Jutta E. Bluhm, who discovered correspondence from Malay readers to *Al-Manar* from as early as 1898, the year *Al-Manar* made its debut. See Jutta E. Bluhm's, "A Preliminary Statement on the Dialogue Established Between the reform magazine *Al-Manar* and the Malayo-Indonesian World," in *Indonesian Circle*, no. 32. (Nov. 1983) pp. 40-42.

⁵ *Al Imam* 23 July 1906; One of the directors of *Al Imam* was Syed Syekh al-Hadi a Malay-Arab. Al-Hadi contributed widely in the Malay press of his day and was well known as a social critic. See, Ibrahim Abu Bakar, *Islamic Modernism in Malaya as Reflected in Hadi's Thought* (Ph.D dissertation, McGill University, 1992) pp. 80-124; See Appendix D for biographical note.

Muhammad Abduh himself.⁶ As a result, the conservative Malay ruling hierarchy was viewed by the reformists as the main obstacle to progressive change. Consequently, *Al-Imam* was relentless in its attack on the old school. It criticized the practices of the old order, and labelled many of its Islamic rites and practices as contrary to the true teachings of the Prophet or *Hadith*.⁷ The reformists not only attacked an Islamic conservatism which was steeped in Sufism, but also *adat* practices that were the foundation of the hierarchical power and authority of the Malay ruling elite.

The Retaliation of the Religious Conservatives

Malay religious conservatism which was rooted in the traditional structure of Malay royalty, *adat*, and Malay rural society was alarmed by the reformists. Labelling the reformist school led by *Al-Imam*, "*Kaum Muda*", the conservative stream attempted to thwart the efforts of the reformists. The response of the *Kaum Tua* was immediate. They launched several periodicals such as *Pengasoh* to express their arguments against the reformists.⁸ Reformists were accused of blasphemy and condemned in sermons by *imams* (equivalent of priests) and *fatwas* (legal religious ruling) by religious judges or

⁶*Al Imam* 23 July 1906.

⁷*Al Imam* was daring in its attack of the traditional establishment. In an editorial of its January issue of 1908, it explicitly refer to the Sultan of Trengganu and his religious council as ignorant and incompetent. *Al Imam*, 5 January 1908); William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit. 67-72; According to Roff, adhering to the principles of the Pangkor Agreement, which permitted the Sultans and Malay chiefs to decide on matters of 'Malay Customs and Religion', British authorities often grant the Malay rulers administrative powers in these matters. For example, the appointments of State *Kathis* (judge) and *Imams* (equivalent to a priest, although there is no priesthood in Islam) are usually left to the rulers. This would normally result in appointments to such posts of people who were royalists or at least offered no opposition to the rulers' authority in related matters. At the same time, the appointment of *penghulus* (village headman) was decided by district chiefs who were usually of the aristocracy. The village religious teacher who depended on fees voluntarily paid by villagers, would be hard-pressed if he was out of favour with the *penghulu*. William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 11-18; pp.67-74; pp. 84-85.

⁸ Khoo Kay Kim, op. cit., p. 191; William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 79.

kathis.⁹ In most of the Malay States, *Al-Imam* was banned. Its editors such as Mohd. Tahir b. Jalaludin and reformist teachers such as Hamka (Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah) were refused entry to most of the Malay states and threatened with arrest.¹⁰

British authorities, who saw the activities of the reformists as needless meddling in the affairs of the Malay states, implicitly supported the conservative stream.¹¹ They were, however, not keen to interfere directly in matters of religion. Moreover the reform movement was based primarily in Singapore and Penang, ruled directly as Crown Colonies. The Crown Colonies had no religious establishment tied to traditional leadership (such as existed in the Malay states where the sultans head the religious departments and appoint *imams* and *kathis*). Thus the activities of the reformists and *Al-Imam* continued uninhibited.¹² Singapore, along with Penang, "became sanctuaries... for those who were in conflict with the religious authorities in the states and in addition, as the only sizable concentrations of Muslims, provided a ready audience for doctrines of the new style." ¹³

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 80; Al-Azhari was appointed Mufti of Johore (Chief Muslim Jurist) but was soon after dismissed. Hamka, *Ayahku: Riwayat Hidup Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah dan Perjuangan Kaum Agama*, [My father: Biography of Dr. H. Abdul Karim Amrullah and the Struggle of the Muslim Community] (Jakarta: Penerbit Wijaya, 1967) pp. 230–231; Hamka was the renowned Sumatran Muslim jurist and teacher whose full name is Haji Abdul Malik Karim Amrullah. See Appendix D for biographical note. Mohd. Tahir b. Jalaludin was one of the leading religious reformist leaders of Arab-Malay descent. See Appendix D for biographical note.

¹¹ William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 80-81.

¹² Ibid. p. 81; At the same time, British relations with the Muslim elite of the Straits Settlements were cordial. Prominent Muslim families such as Alsagoffs and Alkaffs, who were active in the Muslim community, were also supporters of British policies. Thus, government authorities allowed the activities of the reformists in the Straits Settlements without much hindrance. Edwin Lee, *The British as Rulers Governing Multiracial Singapore, 1867-1914* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1991) pp. 266-272.

¹³ William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., p. 81.

From Religion to Politics, 1926-1940

Although the Muslim reformists did not attain much success outside the Straits Settlements, it would only be a matter of time until the political ideas of the reformists surged to the forefront. Journals such as *Al-Imam* appeared throughout Malaya providing a medium for discussion of social as well as political issues. In the early decades of the twentieth century this Islamic reform movement paved the way for the emergence of Malay nationalist ideas and leadership from the small Malay educated class. This early leadership of Malay political awakening was from the outset divided between a Malay educated intelligentsia and a conservative English educated group. It was also a division based on class, as most of the Malay educated intelligentsia were commoners, while the English educated group was made up of bureaucrats and Malay aristocrats.

Changes in British policies designed to streamline their economic and political administration further polarized the Malayan population. Following their policy of support for the ruling elite, the British authorities set up special English schools for the children of the ruling class. In 1908, the Malay College was established for the sons of high-born Malays, earning itself the name of "Eton of the East".¹⁴ Students of the college were trained and prepared for the Malay Administrative Service to perform clerical duties under British superiors.¹⁵ Malay vernacular education was neglected and given only nominal support. Finally, responding to much agitation from reformists and non-aristocratic Malay intellectuals, a Malay teacher's training school, known as the

¹⁴ Philip Loh Fook Seng, *Seeds of Separatism : Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874-1940*. (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975) pp. 19-28; See also Yeo Kim Wah, "The Grooming of an Elite: Malay Administrators in the Federated Malay States, 1903-1941," *JSEAS* vol. 1. no. 2. (Sept. 1980) pp. 278-319. Yeo argues that after years of neglect, and due more to economic motives, as it was cheaper to employ locally than from abroad (usually from India), British authorities "pursued a policy of actively promoting Malay employment in the government." *Ibid.*, p. 278.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 287.

Sultan Idris Training College (SITC), was set up in 1922 to train teachers for Malay schools.¹⁶

Just as the religious movement was divided along progressive versus conservative lines, so was Malay political thought. By this time the term *Kaum Muda* became synonymous with "anti-establishment" and thus "anti-British." The Malay College was seen as the perpetuation of the old order while the SITC was radical. Students and graduates of the two schools quickly formed associations and attacked each other on every issue involving Malay affairs. The SITC soon became the headquarters of an underground radical nationalist movement, which included such ultra nationalists as Ibrahim Yaacob.¹⁷

Rise of the Conservatives, 1926-1939

It was in Singapore that the Malays, as a minority group, felt most insecure and defenceless; their greater degree of contact with an alien world around them led in turn to an increasing awareness that salvation could only stem from their own efforts in a cohesive social nationalistic organization. What emerged was a reaction, not only against what was seen as the gradual demise of Malay culture from the onslaught of Western education and institutions and non-Malay Asian economic dominance, but also against the

¹⁶ Philip Loh Fook Seng, op.cit., pp. 28-30.

¹⁷ Abdullah Hussain, *Harun Aminurrashid : Pembangkit Semangat Kebangsaan*, [Harun Aminurrashid - A Leader of Malay Nationalism] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1982) pp. 22-26; Harun Aminurrashid was the pen name of Harun bin Mohd. Amin, a teacher at Sultan Idris Teachers' College. He taught at the College between 1925-30. While there Harun and the College's students sheltered several Indonesian exiles and met regularly other Indonesian exiles such as Tan Malaka and Alimin. The activities of the College's students included the foundation of an underground organization called *Ikatan Pemuda Pelajar* [Association of Young Students] and *Ikatan Semenanjung-Borneo* [Association of Borneo-Peninsula] led by, among others, Ibrahim Haji Yaacob.

Jawi Peranakan, as the non-Malay Muslims of Indian and Arab origins were referred to.¹⁸

In 1926, British authorities, apparently in an attempt to harness budding Malay nationalism to support of British rule, appointed Eunos Abdullah as the first Malay representative in the Legislative Council of the Straits Settlements (Singapore)¹⁹. The outcome of this appointment was to further sensitize Malay awareness of their relatively weak position vis-a-vis the Chinese and Indian communities of Malaya. In the same year, Eunos Abdullah formed the first Malay political organization called the *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* (the Singapore Malay Union or KMS).²⁰ The founding aim of the KMS was primarily to support Eunos in the Legislative Council. However, it also represented a manoeuvre to counterbalance the influence of Arab and *Jawi Peranakan* leaders who were the leaders of the earlier Islamic reform movement. These *Jawi Peranakan* also represented the wealthier, bourgeois non-Malay section of the Muslim population.²¹ KMS was thus designed to further the interests of the poorer Malay members of the

¹⁸ A. Samad Ismail was a radical journalist and one of the leaders of the *Malay Nationalist Party* (MNP) after the war. A. Samad's accounts his early beginnings with the *Utusan Melayu* which was launched by Eunos Abdullah and other leading Malays to counter the influence of the *Peranakan* (Muslims of Indian or Arab origins) elite in the Straits Settlements. According to A. Samad, the editors of *Utusan Melayu* instructed the staff to publicized as much as possible, Malay writings and events. See A. Karim Haji Abdullah, *A. Samad Ismail, Ketokohan dan Kewartawanan*, [A. Samad, Icon and Journalist] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1991) pp. 76-77 ff; The concerns of the Malay intelligentsia of non-Malay domination even if they were Muslims led to the beginnings of the debate on the concept of *bangsa* or nationality which would play a very important part in the rise of Malay politics. It became the slogan of UMNO leaders especially Dato Onn to unite and galvanize Malay reaction. Mohamad Amin Hassan, "The Malay Press During the Great Depression," *Indonesian Circle*, no. 19. (June 1979) pp. 21-23 ff; See also Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu: Malay Concepts of Democracy and Community, 1945-1950* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp. 14-15.

¹⁹ William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 190-191 ff.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Mohamed Ansari Marican, *Malay Communal Politics in Singapore, 1955-1959* (M.A. thesis, Concordia University, 1983) pp. 11-15; William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 188-197.

Singapore Muslim community, and, although itself really an elite group, its avowed purpose was to defend the interests of the Malay population.

The *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* represented an important watershed in the growth of Malay nationalism. However, it failed to provide the final impetus for a nationalist awakening due to several reasons. Firstly, most of the Malay population of the time had not been aware of their plight. Secondly, they had also been conditioned by their culture and the twin paternalisms of British and Malay traditional authorities to accept their lot, rejection of which might have led to a more militant participation. Finally, the Union's leaders, who were mostly from the Malay College, were bureaucrats who had neither a base of support in, or lines of communication to, the Malay populace.

After the KMS had set the pace, elements of the bureaucratic elite established other Malay organizations with similar views in Pahang, Selangor and Negri Sembilan.²² The KMS itself started branches in Malacca and Penang. By the time World War Two broke out, moves were already made to coordinate the activities of these organizations. The first Pan-Malayan Conference of all existing Malay associations held in Kuala Lumpur in 1939 was initiated by leading aristocrats such as Dato Onn Bin Jaafar, under the chairmanship of a member of the Negri Sembilan royal house, Tengku Ismail.²³

²² William R. Roff, "The Persatuan Melayu Selangor: An Early Malay Political Association" *JSEAH*, vol. 9. no. 1. (Mar. 1968) pp. 117-118.

²³ William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 237-243. Tengku Ismail was one of the few Malay lawyers in private practice but had also served in the Malay Civil Service. *Ibid.*, p.237. Dato Onn bin Jaafar, a member of the Johore aristocracy, was to be the most prominent conservative leader after the war. For biographical details, see Appendix D.

The Rise of the Radicals, 1937-1942

The radicals of the SITC saw the KMS, along with the Malay aristocratic class who were favoured by the British, as no better than the alien races themselves. Their motives, the radicals believed, were to exploit the ordinary, poor Malay.²⁴ By the 1930s, the struggle within the Malay community in Malaya had developed into a class struggle: the radical Malay-educated graduates and students of the SITC pitted against the conservative British-backed elite of the Malay College. The failed Communist rebellion in Indonesia in 1926 sent a stream of Indonesian radicals fleeing across the Straits to Singapore, seeking refuge from Dutch authorities. The arrival of the Indonesian radicals further strengthened the more radical Malay nationalists.²⁵

During the two decades preceding World War Two, Islamic and religious influence in Malay radical politics was replaced by secular ideologies of the Indonesian nationalist movement, including the *Parti Komunis Indonesia* (PKI).²⁶ In 1937, a left-wing Malay political organization known as the *Kesatuan Melayu Muda* or the KMM (Young Malay Union) was founded by Ibrahim Yaacob, a graduate of the Sultan Idris Training College.²⁷

²⁴ Iskander Kamel Agastya, (Ibrahim Yaacob) *Sedjarah dan Perjuangan di Malaya* [History and Struggle in Malaya] (Yogyakarta: Nusantara, 1951) pp. 67-68.

²⁵ Tan Malaka, *From Jail to Jail*, transl. and ed. by Helen Jarvis vol 1. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1991) pp. 103-110.

²⁶ Ibrahim Yaacob claimed to have been a member of the *Parti Nasional Indonesia* (PNI) a political movement led by Soekarno. Ibrahim Yaacob, *Sekitar Malaya Merdeka*, [On Malayan Independence] (Jakarta: Kesatuan Melayu Merdeka, 1957) pp. 20-24; The activities of the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (PKI) refugees were known to British authorities, and although there were no direct contacts to the *Kesatuan Melayu Muda* (KMM) or Ibrahim Yaacob, Malay radicals were suspected of being influenced by the PKI as early as the early 1930s. Cheah Boon Kheng, *From PKI to the Comintern, 1924-1941: The Apprenticeship of the Malayan Communist Party*, (Ithaca, New York: Southeast Asia Program, Cornell University, 1992) pp. 48-49; For a detailed study of the PKI, see, Ruth T. McVey, *The Rise of Indonesian Communism*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1965)

²⁷ Abdul Malek Haji Md. Hanafiah, *Sejarah Perjuangan Kesatuan Melayu Muda, 1937-45* [History of the Struggle of the Kesatuan Melayu Muda, 1937-45] (B.A. Hon. thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1975) pp. 19-26; William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit. pp. 222-225.

Through Ibrahim, the KMM was deeply influenced by the Indonesia nationalist movement. Ibrahim had established contact with left-wing Indonesian refugees during his stay at the SITC, and had good connections with Indonesian nationalist movements.

KMM leaders were mainly drawn from the Malay peasantry and lower classes, and some were even Indonesians. The new radical organization was unable to compete with the KMS. The KMS, with support from the British authorities, had access to media and other facilities. They also had the backing of the Sultans who still retained some influence over a majority of the Malay population. As a result, the KMM was unable to gain much support from the Malay population. Nonetheless, British authorities and the Malay ruling elite became increasingly alarmed at the prospect of a successful KMM.²⁸ This concern led to tougher actions against the KMM and in 1940, just before the outbreak of World War Two, leading members of the KMM were arrested.²⁹

The Conservative-Radical Schism.

The development of Malay nationalism in the two decades following the end of the World War Two, centred on the conflict between these two groups of Malay nationalists. The main issue dividing the radicals and the conservatives was the same as that which confronted the opposing factions in the religious resurgence at the turn of the century: How best to safeguard and advance Malay interests.

Conservative politics during the pre-war period featured a marked absence of any real political agenda. The main concerns of the conservatives lay in social demands such as education and increased role in the administrative machinery of government.

²⁸ Abdul Malek, op. cit., pp. 209-300.

²⁹ Ibid. Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-45: Ibrahim Yaacob and the Struggle for Indonesia Raya" *Indonesia*, vol. 28. (Oct. 1979) pp. 96-97.

There was no serious dissatisfaction on the question of British rule itself. To the conservatives, as long as British rule ensured the protection and dominance of Malay interests in the political and social realms of Malayan society, it was not only acceptable but preferable to the uncertainties and the feudings of former Malay governments.³⁰

They also shared the paternalistic British view that Malays were neither equipped nor ready to take on the challenge of a modern political world. Another view was that "it would be dangerous for fatherless young chickens like ourselves [Malays] ... to move about alone when there are hawks and eagles hovering about ready to pounce upon them".³¹ It was with these sentiments that Malay Associations were formed all over Malaya. At the inaugural meeting of the *Persatuan Melayu Selangor* (PMS or the Selangor Malay Association), the opening address ended with a reminder "that no people in the world are as just and modest in their rule as the British are".³² Even after the defeat of the Malayan Union, such views were still held by the leaders of United Malays Nationalist Organization (UMNO) such as Dato Onn bin Jaafar.³³

On the other hand, the radicals related more to the view of their Indonesian counterparts who saw no real progress for the ordinary Malays as long as the controls of

³⁰ William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op. cit., pp. 238-239. This view was amply illustrated in a book written and published anonymously in English by a Malay bureaucrat, Haji Abdul Majid. In it, he argued that British rule had been beneficial to all classes of Malay society. The ruling class "instead of having to fight as in the days of old ... are now enjoying their position in perfect peace and security", while the "peasants or the *raayats* are far better off ... than under the old Malay regime ... when there was practically no justice." [Abdul Majid] *The Malays in Malaya*, (Singapore: Malaya Publishing House, 1928) p. 95.

³¹ [Abdul Majid] *The Malays in Malaya*, op. cit., pp. 94-95.

³² William R. Roff, 'The Persatuan Melayu Selangor', op. cit., p. 125.

³³ In his speech at the UMNO Congress held in Alor Star, Kedah on the 10 January 1947, Dato Onn reiterated his opinion that UMNO and the Malays were not ready to take over the mantle of government yet. See 'Address of Dato Onn Bin Jaafar delivered on the 10 January 1947 in Alor Star, Kedah' reproduced in *Bumi Dipijak Milik Orang* [We Stand Where Others Own] by Ahmad Fawzi Basri, Mohd. Idris Salleh, and Shafee Saad. (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1991) pp. 152-153.

government lay in colonial hands.³⁴ With barely concealed Marxist views, the radicals under Ibrahim Yaacob and the KMM rejected the conservatives' argument that only through the British could the Malays achieve economic progress. The conservatives' acceptance of British rule was viewed as nothing more than attempts at maintaining their own position and dominance, which would have collapsed had it not been for British support.³⁵

Accusing the traditional Malay leadership of being provincial and unwilling to give up feudalism as it would mean an end to their privileged positions, the radicals considered the conservatives as unfit to lead Malays towards advancement.³⁶ The KMM believed that a union with the progressive nationalist movement in Indonesia would provide the strength and leadership necessary for an independent Malaya. Ibrahim Yaacob also accused the conservatives of deliberately fostering ethnic and cultural differences amongst Malays. He thus argued that only through the idea of one great Malay nation or *Indonesia Raya* could Malays achieve real progress and be free from foreign domination.³⁷

The advent of the Second World War and the sudden Japanese Occupation of Malaya would temporarily interrupt the conflict between these two opposing factions in Malay politics. During the occupation, the radicals rose to prominence and enjoyed a brief period of glory until the end of World War Two. The end of the war witnessed the rise of

³⁴ Ibrahim Yaacob, op. cit., p. 21; The book was published by the organization Ibrahim formed in Jakarta in 1950 known as Kesatuan Melayu Merdeka whose acronym is similar to that of the pre-war Malayan KMM under Ibrahim. Ibrahim also claimed to be involved with the successor of the KMM, the *Malay Nationalist Party* (MNP) formed by Ahmad Boestaman and others after the war. Ibid., preface. p. 1.

³⁵ Ibrahim Yaacob, *Nusa dan Bangsa Melayu* [Malay Nation and Fatherland] (Jakarta: Almaarif, 1951) pp. 58-59.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibrahim Yaacob frequently contributed to the Malay paper *Majlis* and was also one of its editors. His article attacking the conservatives appeared as an appeal for support for the KMM. *Majlis* 16 November 1939; Ibrahim Yaacob, *Sekitar Malaya Merdeka*, op. cit., p. 25.

the Malay conservatives. On the other hand, the KMM, far from being eliminated politically by the police actions of the British, managed not only to survive the Japanese but also to effectively regroup and mount another challenge against the conservatives as well as the British in the post-war decade.

PART TWO

THE CONFLICT BEGINS WORLD WAR TWO AND THE CONSERVATIVE-RADICAL STRUGGLE, 1941-1946

CHAPTER 3

THE CHALLENGE OF THE RADICALS : JAPANESE OCCUPATION OF MALAY AND THE RISE OF THE KMM,1942-1945.

In 1931 Japan invaded and occupied Manchuria and, in 1937, it made war on China.¹ Japan formulated a grandiose yet thinly veiled colonization plan known as the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. According to this plan, Japan would free Asians from their Western colonial masters and at the same time would lead and guide them towards "modernization."² Due to its attack on China, the Western powers had imposed an economic embargo on Japan. The United States stopped all oil supplies to Japan. As a result, Southeast Asia, particularly the oil-rich Dutch East Indies and Malaya, became an essential part of Japan's hegemonic ambitions.³ The outbreak of war in Europe in 1939 provided an opportunity for Japan to begin its expansionist plans in Southeast Asia.

On the eve of the Japanese attack on Malaya, British ground forces in Malaya totalled nearly three Divisions of about 90,000 British, Indian, Australian and Malayan soldiers. However, about half of the Indian troops, which made up the bulk of the British forces, had very little training or battle experience. Air defence was made up of approximately 200 aircraft which were scattered all over Malaya. Malaya possessed

¹ John K. Fairbank, Edwin O. Reischauer and Albert M. Craig, *East Asia - The Modern Transformation*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.,1965) pp. 533-600.

² Japan's Foreign Minister Matsuoka Yosuke's proclamation of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere on 1 August 1940 in Joyce C. Lebra, *Japan's Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in World War II - Selected Readings and Documents* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press,1975) pp. 71-72.

³ Nicholas Tarling, *The Fall of Imperial Britain in South-East Asia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press,1993) pp. 135-136.

two of the largest British battleships, the H.M.S. *Prince of Wales* and the H.M.S. *Repulse* but both were without adequate air and naval auxiliary support.⁴ British strategy rested on the hope that the United States would enter the war in the event of a Japanese attack.⁵ The destruction of the American Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour sealed the fate of Malaya.

The Japanese invasion of Malaya took place as suddenly and on the same day as the attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbour. Singapore was attacked by air as the Japanese army landed on the northern coast of Malaya. Earlier the Japanese had managed to force Thailand into an alliance thus removing any military obstacle from the north.⁶ Japanese advance was swift, made possible through the excellent logistical information provided by Japanese intelligence which had been active long before the war.⁷ Two days after the invasion, on 10 December 1941, the two British battleships were caught without air cover and sunk off the coast of Malaya.⁸ Penang was taken two weeks into the invasion and by New Year's Day 1942, Japanese forces had taken half of the peninsula and were poised to enter Kuala Lumpur. The British air force and navy had been destroyed and most of its land forces had retreated to Singapore. On 15 February 1942, 70 days after the Japanese invasion began, Singapore surrendered.⁹

⁴ John Woodburn Kirby, *Singapore, The Chain of Disaster* (London: Cassell, 1971) chap. 10. pp. 90-103.

⁵ Jan Pluvier, *South-East Asia from Colonialism to Independence* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974) pp. 163-164; Nicholas Tarling, op. cit.

⁶ Jan Pluvier, op. cit. For Japanese account of the invasion, see, Fujiwara Iwaichi, *F. Kikan: Japanese Army Intelligence Operations in Southeast Asia During World War II*, trans. Yoji Akashi (Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Asia, 1983) pp. 54-60.

⁷ Fujiwara Iwaichi, op. cit., pp. 1-50. For a history of Japanese espionage and intelligence activities before World War II, see also, Richard Deacon, *Kempeitai - A History of the Japanese Secret Service*, (New York: Berkeley, 1983) chap. 18. For Southeast Asia, *ibid.*, pp. 191-198.

⁸ John Woodburn Kirby, op. cit., pp. 138-139.

⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 234-250. Chronology of the Japanese advance was as follows: 8 December 1941- Landings in northern Malaya; 19 December 1941- Penang taken; 11 January 1942 - Kuala Lumpur fell; 31 January 1942 - Johore Bahru, across the island of Singapore, occupied; Between 9 and 15 February 1942 - Japanese forces battling in Singapore; 15 February 1942 - Singapore surrendered. Source: Masanobu Tsuji, *Singapore: The Japanese Version*, trans. Margaret E. Lake, ed. H. V. Howe (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961)

Japanese Occupation: Administration and Policies, 1942-45

For the next three and a half years Malaya came under Japanese rule. This period was a watershed in the modern history of Malaya. Japanese rule shattered the myth of British invincibility. More than a century of European rule ended abruptly in smoke and rubble. Japan not only continued a policy of colonization but also subjected the people of Malaya to a much harsher administration and control.¹⁰ Malaya was to be incorporated directly into the Japanese empire, unlike the other Southeast Asian states, such as Burma and the Philippines, which were promised independence.¹¹ Eventually a civilian government was to be installed, but during the current period of war Malaya was placed under a military administration. Japan's immediate priority was to harness the resources of Malaya for its war efforts. All political, social and economic activities were directed and organized towards this end.¹²

As with all invading powers, the first task of the Japanese was to restore order and to consolidate power. A systematic attempt was made to destroy the structure of British colonial rule. A military administration known as the *Malayan Military Administration* (MMA) was set up under the direction of the Japanese military commander. Sumatra was joined to Malaya administratively and governed from Singapore, which was renamed *Syo-nan* (Light of the South). The division of the country

¹⁰ Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down* (Kuala Lumpur: Federal Publications, 1976) chap. 19. and 20. pp. 136-151.

¹¹ Japanese Premier Tojo Hideki's speech to the Japanese Diet in January 1942 in Joyce C. Lebra, op. cit., pp. 78-81.

¹² Outline of Japanese Cabinet policy titled, *Essentials of Policy Regarding the Administration of the Occupied Areas in the Southern Region*. This policy was formulated and approved on 20 November 1941, at a Japanese Cabinet Conference. This conference, called the Liason Conference, met every few days during the war and was composed of the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and the Military Chiefs. The policy regarding the administration of Occupied territories in Southeast Asia was the 70th Liason Conference of the Japanese War Cabinet. Document reproduced in Nobutaka Ike, *Japan's Decision for War, Records of the 1941 Policy Conferences* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967) pp. 249-253.

into the Straits Settlements, Federated Malay States and Unfederated Malay States was abolished. All Federal and State councils were suspended. Malaya was divided into eight provinces, each headed by a Japanese administrator.¹³ The Sultans were maintained as heads of their respective states but were closely restricted from any political or social activities. The Japanese also replaced five of the Malay sultans with candidates of their own choice.¹⁴ In a reversal of pre-war British policy, the sultans became mere advisers to the Japanese Imperial government.¹⁵

Japanese rule, harsh and brutal as it was, turned Malaya 'upside down',¹⁶ transforming Malayan society on all levels. Every attempt was made to ensure that the economic exploitation of Malaya was not disrupted. In the political sphere, Japanese authorities relentlessly suppressed all political activities except those that served Japanese interests. Communist and pro-China activities were brutally suppressed. Because of this, the Chinese population bore the brunt of Japanese brutality.¹⁷ Indian anti-British sentiments were encouraged and organized by Japanese-supported Indian nationalists. Japanese policy towards the Malays was to continue the sort of paternalistic domination of British rule.¹⁸

¹³ Yoji Akashi, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: Interruption or Transformation?" in *Southeast Asia under Japanese Occupation* Alfred W. McCoy, ed. (New Haven: Yale University, Southeast Asia Studies Monograph no. 22, 1980) p. 65 f.

¹⁴ A. J. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics during the Malayan Union Experiment 1942-1948* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979) p. 4.

¹⁵ Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star over Malaya* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1987) pp. 27-29 ff.

¹⁶ See Chin Kee Onn, op. cit. For a very good account of the conditions during and after the Japanese invasion of Malaya, see T. J. Danaraj, *Japanese Invasion of Malaya and Singapore: Memoirs of a Doctor* (Kuala Lumpur: Danaraj, 1990). For a collection of eye-witness accounts of harsh Japanese authority in Singapore during the Japanese Occupation compiled by the Oral History Department of the National Museum, Singapore and the Singapore National Archives, see, Lee Geok Boi, *Syonan: Singapore Under the Japanese, 1942-1945* (Singapore: Singapore Heritage Society, 1992)

¹⁷ Cheah Boon Kheng, op. cit., chap. 2. pp. 18-54 ff.

¹⁸ Yoji Akashi, op. cit. cf. pp. 78-80 ff.

Malay Society and Politics under Japanese Rule

At the outbreak of the war, Malay politics had settled into its bipolar division between the conservative traditional leadership and the radical Malay nationalists. The religious element of the early nationalist movement had dissolved into either one of the two political groups.¹⁹ The rulers, for the most part, closely identified with the conservative elements who were drawn from their own aristocratic class.²⁰ The conservatives and the rulers, despite their grievances against the British, supported British war effort as the best protection of their position.²¹ The radical nationalists led by the KMM were, from the outset of their foundation, anti-British and steadfast in their demands for independence.

The disruption caused by the Japanese occupation threw Malay society into a state of turmoil. The traditional authority and leadership of the aristocracy and bureaucratic elite was severely undermined. The sultans, left virtually unprotected by the British retreat, had to comply with all of the Japanese demands. The humiliating treatment which they were often subjected to further exposed their lack of real

¹⁹ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) pp. 220-221. cf. above, chap. 2. pp. 29-36.

²⁰ The leaders of the early Malay Associations, except in Singapore and Penang, were overwhelmingly made up of English educated bureaucrats of aristocratic background. For example, The *Persatuan Melayu Perak* (Perak Malay Association) which was formed in early 1937, existed in obscurity and was unable to attract any attention because its leadership did not include any member of the aristocrats. In 1939, it began to gain some following after its leadership was taken over by the grandson of one of Perak's leading Malay Chief. The role of the aristocrats in other Malay Associations were similarly crucial. The Pahang Malay Association executives included two brothers of the Ruler of Pahang and four of the State's most senior traditional chiefs who were also members of the British run State Council. Half of the Selangor Malay Association's executive were prominent aristocrats and they were publicly supported by the Sultan of Selangor. See William R. Roff, "The Persatuan Melayu Selangor: An Early Malay Political Association," *JSEAH*, vol. 9. no. 1 (Mar. 1968) pp. 120-126 ff.

²¹ A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 1. and p. 45.

authority.²² The Malay bureaucratic elite had either abandoned their posts or had been relegated to menial positions under Japanese authorities.²³ It was only at the village level that leadership under the *penghulu* was somewhat maintained, and it was to the villages that many urban Malays sought refuge from the uncertainties of war.

The fortunes of the contending Malay political factions were drastically affected by the Japanese triumph. The political tables had been turned as the conservatives, who had enjoyed British support and had the organizational advantages of their offices, fell into disfavour. They faced the prospect of Japanese retributions for supporting the British. The pre-war Malay associations disappeared, and conservative aristocratic Malay leaders such as Onn bin Jaafar returned to the safety of the *istana* (palace).²⁴ The major beneficiary appeared to be the KMM. Under the able leadership of Ibrahim

²² Ibid., p. 11. Stockwell gave some random examples of the ill-treatment of the Malay Sultans which include public reprimands and confiscation of their property. However, towards the end of the war Japanese policy had softened towards the Sultans. Though stripped of any real political role or power and kept under close surveillance, the Sultans were allowed to retain their position as head of Malay religion and customs. See Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Military Administration in Malaya - Its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-45," *Asian Studies*, vol. 7. no. 1. (Apr. 1969) pp. 94-100. However, the Sultan of Johore seemed to have been treated much less harshly due to his pre-war relations with Japan. In 1935, he made an official visit to Japan where he was awarded a Japanese honour from the Emperor. He had subsequently allowed a few Japanese mining concerns to operate in Johore and had employed several Japanese advisers to his administration. See, Mohd. Tajuddin bin Haji Abdul Rahman, *Dato' Onn Jaafar, Tokoh Nasionalis* [Dato' Onn Jaafar, Nationalist Figure] (Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, 1987) pp. 20-21ff.

²³ Tun Razak's father, Dato Hussein, was a senior official of Pahang just before the war. Tun Razak's recounts of his family's hardship is an example of the fate that befell many aristocrats and Malay civil servants in the early period of Japanese Occupation. William Shaw, *Tun Razak His life and Times* (Kuala Lumpur: Longman, 1977) pp. 58-59. See also accounts of similar experiences of Dato Onn Bin Jaafar and Tunku Abdul Rahman in their biographies, in Anwar Abdullah, *Dato Onn - Riwayat Hidup* [Dato Onn - A Biography] (Kuala Lumpur: Nusantara, 1971) pp. 76-94; and Harry Miller, *Prince and Premier* (London: George Harrap, 1959) pp. 73-77.

²⁴ Dato Hussein, Dato Onn Bin Jaafar, Tunku Abdul Rahman and other pre-war Malay bureaucrats from the aristocracy returned to their respective royal families in order to assist the ruling families in their dealings with the Japanese which in turn ensured them slightly better treatment than other ex-British civil servants. However, towards the end of the war most former British civil employees were asked to resume their former duties. William Shaw, op. cit., p. 57-59 ff; Anwar Abdullah, op. cit., pp. 80-82 ff; Harry Miller, op. cit., pp. 66-67 ff.

Yaacob, the KMM had supported and aided the Japanese. Ibrahim, along with most of the KMM leadership had been detained by the British just before the outbreak of the war. However, leaders of the KMM who evaded arrest managed to establish contact with the Japanese.²⁵ During the Malayan campaign, KMM members acted as guides for the Japanese forces and mediated between Malays and the Japanese authorities.²⁶ With Japanese victory, the KMM became the only political group in Malaya tolerated by the Japanese. The period of Japanese rule witnessed the ascendancy of the radicals who managed to exploit the opportunities that appeared during the Occupation.

Initial rise and setback of the Radicals: KMM in the early period of Japanese rule,
February 1942 - June 1943.

Immediately after the end of the military campaign, Ibrahim Yaacob and other KMM leaders, detained by the British, were released by the Japanese. In the early months of the Japanese Occupation, before the arrival of Japanese administrators, KMM members acted as temporary administrators and interpreters in the outlying districts of Malaya. They often protected Malays from summary punishments at the hands of the dreaded *kempeitai* (military police). Japanese reliance on the KMM, and its consequent

²⁵ KMM's relationship with the Japanese before the war was largely through the involvement of Ibrahim Yaacob without the knowledge of most of the other leaders and members of the KMM. Ibrahim may have been approached by a Japanese fifth column group known as *Kame* (tortoise). In return for financial assistance which Ibrahim used to buy the Malay language newspaper *Warta Malaya*, Ibrahim would render information-gathering assistance to the Japanese. See Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1954: Ibrahim Yaacob and the Struggle for Indonesia Raya," *Indonesia*, vol. 28. (Oct. 1979) pp. 91-97. For Ibrahim's version see Iskander Kemal Agastya (Ibrahim Yaacob), *Sedjarah dan Perdjuaan di Malaya* [History and Struggle in Malaya] (Yogyakarta: Nusantara, 1951) pp. 86-97 ff; and Fujiwara Iwaichi, op. cit., p. 41 f; Ibid., 99-100 ff.

²⁶ Fujiwara Iwaichi, op. cit., pp. 113-116 ff; Abdul Malek Haji Md. Hanafiah, *Sejarah Perjuangan Kesatuan Melayu Muda, 1937-45* [History of the Struggle of the KMM, 1937-45] (B.A. Honours thesis, Department of History, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1975) p. 205.

ability to protect some of the interests of the Malay populace, raised the KMM's standing in wartime Malay society, especially during this initial period.²⁷ Its membership was reported to have spectacularly increased to about 10,000 within a year.²⁸ *Warta Malaya* (Malaya News), which was now owned by the KMM, resumed publication under the name of *Berita Malai* (Malay News). Ibrahim Yaacob and other leaders of the KMM travelled across Malaya, organizing KMM cadres in small towns and villages. In order to alleviate the resentment of the displaced Malay elite and to avoid an open conflict, Ibrahim encouraged the inclusion of members of the old Malay establishment in KMM activities.²⁹ Among the conservatives who allegedly cooperated with the KMM was Onn bin Jaafar, a former official of the Johore government who was to play a prominent role in post-war Malay politics.³⁰

By June 1942, Japanese authority and administration were firmly in place. Fearing a flare-up of Malay nationalist activities, the Japanese ordered the KMM to disband. KMM members who had enjoyed administrative positions were relegated to menial tasks and dispersed throughout Malaya.³¹ Ibrahim himself was given an assignment in Singapore where he was kept under surveillance. Ibrahim and the KMM had no illusion about Japanese intentions; in fact, as early as February 1942, Ibrahim had firm doubts of the Japanese ever fulfilling their promises.³² Consequently, he had

²⁷ Iskander Kemal Agastya, op. cit., pp. 92-97 ff.

²⁸ Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star over Malaya* op. cit., p. 104 f.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 105 f; Iskander Kemal Agastya, op. cit., p. 68.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ The disbandment of the KMM was part of Japanese policy because it had outlived its purpose as a tool for Japanese administration and was also aimed at discouraging other groups from demanding similar privileges. See Document no. 1, 'Principles Governing the Administration of Occupied Southern Areas', in *Japanese Military Administration in Indonesia: Selected Documents* eds. Harry J. Benda, James K. Irikura, and Koichi Kishi. Translation Series no. 6, (New Haven: Southeast Asian Studies, Yale University, 1965) p. 2.

³² Yoji Akashi, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., p. 78; Ibrahim's suspicion of the Japanese was recorded in a meeting of KMM leaders in February. Iskander Kemal Agastya, op. cit., p. 96.

secretly allied the KMM with the Communist-led *Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army* (MPAJA) for joint post-war actions.³³ Undeterred, Ibrahim set about to salvage and maintain KMM's role. When asked to set up a team of Malay advisors to assist Japanese administration, Ibrahim saw to it that members of the KMM were chosen. He used his influence to ensure that other members of the KMM were employed in similar capacities throughout Malaya. The official Malay language newspaper, the *Berita Malai*, was completely staffed by KMM members.³⁴

Up to the beginning of 1943, KMM activities were restricted to propaganda work through Japanese controlled media. Some administrative tasks in the outlying districts had been turned over to former Malay civil servants.³⁵ KMM members were prevented from getting too close to the public. In June 1943, as its military fortunes deteriorated, Japan modified its policies for Indonesia and Malaya. The Japanese premier Tojo Hideki announced the coming independence of the Philippines and Burma, and promised increased political participation for Indonesian and Malayan nationalists.³⁶ In July of that year, a delegation of Malay leaders was invited to Japan. It was led by Ibrahim and made up of his advisory staff and several aristocratic supporters of the KMM.³⁷

³³ Sutan Djenain, a leading member of the KMM was also a member of the *Malayan Communist Party*. Thus it would not have been difficult for the KMM to establish contact with the MPAJA. Iskander Kemal Agastya, op. cit., p. 103. See also Radin Sunarno, "Malay Nationalism" *JSEAH* Vol. 1, no. 1. (Mar. 1960) pp. 23-24.

³⁴ Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., p.102 f. and p. 105 f.

³⁵ For example, Dato Onn Bin Jaafar was appointed the Johore Officer for food distribution outside Johore Bharu. See Anwar Abdullah, op. cit., pp. 92-94.

³⁶ For the full text of Tojo's speech, see Document 9. in Harry J. Benda, et al, *Japanese Military Administration*, op. cit., p. 51.

³⁷ Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., p. 106.

Resurgence of the Radicals : the formation of the *Giyu-Gun* (Volunteer Army).
November 1943

By the middle of 1943, as Japan began to suffer major military setbacks in the war, Japanese authorities made further concessions in an effort to stall the advance of the Allied forces through Southeast Asia. In August 1943, the four northern states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Trengganu were returned to Thailand.³⁸ The transfer of the four Malay states shocked the Malays, conservatives and radicals alike; it was viewed as a betrayal on the part of the Japanese. To placate Malay sentiments and ensure continued compliance and cooperation, Japanese authorities announced the formation of a Malay defence force known as the *Giyu-Gun* or PETA, *Pejuang Tanah Ayer* (Defenders of the Fatherland), as the first step towards Malayan independence. Ibrahim was chosen to help organize PETA.³⁹ Ibrahim and his KMM colleagues immediately set about to vigorously encouraged Malays to enlist in PETA.

While Ibrahim was busy with PETA, Japanese authorities began the formation of regional councils which were set up in all the Malay States along the lines of the pre-war State Councils. In an important shift of policy more seats were given to Malayan Chinese and members of the Malay aristocracy and bureaucratic elite.⁴⁰ The KMM was only represented in the Singapore Council. This move was clearly at the expense of the

³⁸ Ibid., p. 107.

³⁹ Ibrahim and the KMM preferred to use PETA in reference to the *Giyu-Gun*, Ibid., p. 107; The Malayan PETA was similar to the PETA formed in Indonesia. For a full description of the formation of PETA, its organization and purpose see, Nugroho Nototsusanto, *The PETA Army During the Japanese Occupation of Indonesia* (Tokyo: Waseda University Press, 1979)

⁴⁰ Yoji Akashi, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., p. 81 f. See also, Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945," in *JSEAS*, vol. 1. no. 2 (Sept. 1970) pp. 66-67. Ibid., p. 78 f.

KMM. The KMM responded by strengthening its role in PETA. Ibrahim became the commander of PETA and most of its officers were drawn from the ranks of the KMM.⁴¹

As the war came closer to Japan, Japanese policies began to take on a political "scorched earth" strategy. Sumatra was reunited with the rest of Indonesia and in September 1944, Indonesia was promised independence.⁴² Indonesian nationalists led by Soekarno and Hatta were allowed to prepare for independence. This revived Ibrahim's dream of uniting Malaya with Indonesia which created an atmosphere of urgency amongst the KMM leadership to prepare a plan of action. By this time PETA had been successfully formed into a force of about 2000 strong, and was firmly under the control of the KMM with Ibrahim as the Commander-in-Chief.⁴³ Backed by PETA, Ibrahim felt more confident in strengthening the KMM's ties with the MPAJA. Although filled with mutual suspicions, KMM and the MPAJA agreed to cooperate in the eventual struggle against either the Japanese or the British.⁴⁴ However, Japanese policy changed once again, this time PETA was suddenly disbanded and its members dispersed among different Japanese army units.⁴⁵

The disbandment of PETA severely affected Ibrahim and the KMM's efforts to consolidate their gains. However, clandestine cooperation with underground anti-

⁴¹ Iskander Kemal Agastya, op. cit., pp. 105-106 ff. Ibrahim held the rank of Colonel in PETA.

⁴² See draft statements of Japanese Premier Koiso Kuniaki's statement (in office between July 1944-March 1945) in Harry J. Benda ed. et al, *Japanese Military Administration* p. 120.

⁴³ Iskander Kemal Agastya, op. cit., p. 106 f.

⁴⁴ This is based on Ibrahim's claims although there is no record or corroboration from other sources. However, according to Cheah Boon Kheng, the fact that there was hardly any military engagements between PETA, which was frequently deployed to seek out MPAJA guerillas, and the MPAJA, pointed to at least some form of mutual understanding between the two groups. In addition, KMM members detained after the war were eventually released at the urgings of the MPAJA. See Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., p. 109. Anthony Short also believed that there were connections between Malay resistance groups and the MPAJA or at least the participation of Malays in the communist organization due to the discovery of mosques in abandoned MPAJA jungle camps. See Anthony Short, *The Communist Insurrection in Malaya, 1948-1960* (London: Frederick Muller, 1975) p. 8.

⁴⁵ Iskander Kemal Agastya, op. cit., p. 106 f.

Japanese groups, including such Malay groups as *SABERKAS* and *Wataniah*, allowed the KMM to ride out the crisis and maintain its network.⁴⁶ Both *SABERKAS* and *Wataniah*⁴⁷ were not very active during the Japanese Occupation but came to prominence at the end of the war while mobilizing Malay resistance against the MPAJA.⁴⁸ By the beginning of 1945, inspired by developments in Indonesia where Indonesian nationalists were being given greater political participation, Ibrahim and the KMM revived their pan-Indonesian aspirations. By attaching Malaya to Indonesian independence, Ibrahim sought to sidestep both the conservative Malay elite and the Malayan Communist Party (MCP).⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Ahmad Boestaman mentioned an underground group during the Japanese Occupation known as the *Empat Serangkai* (Four Leaf Clover) or KITA, *Gerakan Kiri Tanahair* (Leftist Patriotic Movement). There was no mention of KITA in Ibrahim's accounts. The only account of KITA appeared to be Boestaman's claim. Nonetheless, if there was an underground network it would generally be of a loose and informal nature. One explanation is that there was a preponderance of shared membership of many Malay organizations. Many KMM followers were not only members of *SABERKAS* and *Wataniah*, but were also members of the MCP and all kinds of other organizations such as secret societies, religious and cult movements. See, Ahmad Boestaman, *Carving the Path to the Summit* trans. with introduction by William R. Roff (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1979) p. 7.

⁴⁷ *SABERKAS* or *Syarikat Bekerjasama Am Saiburi* (General Co-operative Society of Saiburi) was a clandestine political group formed in 1944 in Kedah as an anti-Japanese force. Its patron was Tunku Abdul Rahman and was led by among others Mohammad Khir Johari, who was to be a prominent member of Tunku's UMNO. Similarly, *Wataniah*, (Fatherland) was organized by former Malay bureaucrats in Pahang such as Ghazali Shafie, Yeop Mahidin and Tun Abdul Razak as an anti-Japanese resistance force. It claimed to have the blessings of the Sultan of Pahang.

⁴⁸ The disbandment of PETA led many of its members to return to parts of Malaya where they had come from. It can be speculated that in Pahang and Kelantan many former PETA members would have joined *SABERKAS* and *Wataniah*. In any event, the post-war racial conflict saw members of these Malay organizations operating together against the MPAJA and the Chinese. William Shaw, op. cit., pp. 65-73. See Harry Miller, op. cit., pp. 70-73. See also A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., pp. 10-11. n. 47-50.

⁴⁹ Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., p. 110 f.

The Challenge of the Radicals : KRIS and the Plan for Independence, July - August 1945.

By May 1945, the Japanese had accelerated their plans for Indonesian independence. In July, with tacit Japanese support, Ibrahim convened a meeting of the KMM for the first time since its proscription in 1942. At that meeting, a new organization known as KRIS or *Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung* (Union of Peninsula Indonesians) was formed.⁵⁰ It was made up entirely of former KMM members. Ibrahim immediately instructed KMM leaders to begin organizational activities. In the following months, former KMM branches were revived as KRIS branches. KMM attempts to regroup PETA had little success although in the immediate post-war period PETA members resurfaced to confront the MPAJA. In July, Ibrahim sent a KRIS delegation to a meeting of Indonesian nationalists preparing for independence. KRIS proposal for the inclusion of Malaya was met with approval by the Indonesian Congress.⁵¹

It was also agreed that a Congress along the Indonesian lines should be convened quickly in Malaya under the leadership of KRIS. This congress, the *Kongress Pemuda Se-Malaya* (All-Malaya Youth Congress) was to take place in Kuala Lumpur a month later on the 17 and 18 of August. Ibrahim's plan was to gain approval for the setting up of an interim government in Malaya.⁵² The interim government would be announced

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 110-111 ff. Ibrahim Yaacob, *Sekitar Malaya Merdeka*, [On Malayan Independence] (Jakarta: Kesatuan Melayu Merdeka, 1957) p. 28 f.

⁵¹ Following the Koiso Declaration, Japanese military authorities in Indonesia announced the establishment of an all-Indonesian committee known as the *Badan Penyelidik Kemerdekaan Indonesia* (BPKI) or Investigating Committee for Indonesian Independence on 1 March 1945 to prepare the groundwork for Indonesia's independence. At its first meeting, which a delegation from the KMM attended as observers, the BPKI voted to include Malaya as well as British North Borneo, Brunei, Sarawak, Timor and New Guinea in the territory of the new Indonesian republic. However, in the meeting between Soekarno and Marshall Terauchi in early August 1945, the Japanese insisted that Soekarno dropped the inclusion of Malaya and North Borneo in the new republic. See, Hadji Mohammed Yamin, ed. *Naskah Persiapan Undang-Undang Dasar, 1945* [Preparatory Text of Preliminary Laws, 1945], (Djakarta: Jajasan Prapantja, 1959) pp. 187-214. Ibid., pp. 205-206. Note: Yamin was a member of the first BPKI.

⁵² Ibrahim Yaacob, op. cit., pp. 29-31.

simultaneously as the planned declaration of independence in Indonesia. Several members of the aristocratic elite such as Onn bin Jaafar had agreed to attend the Congress.⁵³ On 8 August 1945, Soekarno made a brief stop in Singapore and met members of the KMM. The Soekarno delegation again stopped over in Malaya on their way back to Indonesia, this time explicitly to meet with Ibrahim. In this meeting KMM and the Indonesian nationalists agreed to announce a joint declaration of independence at the end of August.⁵⁴

Elaborate plans were prepared for the anticipated announcement of independence. Ibrahim Yaacob was to leave immediately for Singapore to deploy PETA units throughout Malaya leaving a leading aide, Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy, to chair the Congress and to declare the establishment of the government of *Malaya Demokratik Rakyat* (Peoples' Democratic Malaya). A governing cabinet led by Sultan Abu Bakar of Pahang which would also include Dato Onn bin Jaafar of Johore, Ibrahim Yaacob and other leading members of the KMM would also be announced.⁵⁵ At the same time, KMM activists and PETA units were to quickly seize important strategic government buildings, roads, airfields and harbours, and also attempt to obtain weapons from Japanese army depots, by force if necessary.⁵⁶

⁵³ Ibrahim did not mention the attendance of Dato Onn Bin Jaafar in his accounts, however, both Cheah Boon Kheng and Stockwell affirmed Dato Onn's attendance. See, Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., p. 114. A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 15.

⁵⁴ Cheah Boon Kheng doubted that this meeting actually took place. However, even if it did, the agreement reached in the meeting in Saigon between the Indonesians and Marshall Terauchi on the subject of Malaya would have prevented Soekarno from promising Ibrahim Malaya's inclusion in the Indonesian independence. Ibid., p. 114. For Ibrahim's account of the meeting see Iskander Kemal Agastya, op. cit., pp. 135-137 ff; and also Ibrahim Yaacob, op. cit., pp. 28-29.

⁵⁵ Ibrahim Yaacob, op. cit., pp. 30-31. Abdul Malek Haji Md. Hanafiah, op. cit., pp. 313-24. Abdul Malek's account is based on interviews with several of the participants. Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., pp. 112-113. ff. According to Cheah Boon Kheng, the Sultans and aristocrats only agreed to the formation of KRIS but opposed the establishment of the interim government.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 315.

Japanese Surrender and the Collapse of the Independence Plan -15 August 1945.

As Malay delegations from as far as the Thai province of Patani and the Riau islands began streaming into Kuala Lumpur, rumours of imminent British invasion and the defeat of Japan were rife. MPAJA guerillas had also been sighted in various parts of Malaya. On 15 August 1945, when news of the Japanese surrender was confirmed, the Congress floundered and quickly plunge into disorder as excitement and confusion set in. Ibrahim rushed to Kuala Lumpur and hastily convened a meeting of KRIS and other delegates present. The urgent issues were whether to proceed with the declaration of independence, and how to prevent the MPAJA from dominating the country and whether to resist the British militarily.⁵⁷

On the same day, Indonesian nationalists led by Soekarno declared the Independence of Indonesia, delivering another blow to the already crumbling KMM's plans. Meanwhile, MPAJA units had begun taking over control from the Japanese wherever they could. KRIS membership began to disintegrate and plans to occupy Japanese and government buildings fell through. Ibrahim returned to Singapore and made a desperate attempt to reinforce the remaining KRIS members in Kuala Lumpur.⁵⁸ A 280-man unit of the remnant PETA force was rushed to Kuala Lumpur but was stopped by the MPAJA in Johore. MPAJA guerillas and PETA units were soon embroiled in the Malay-Chinese clashes which had started in Johore and were rapidly spreading to Perak, Selangor and Pahang.⁵⁹ Unaware of these developments, Ibrahim and Onan Siraj decided to leave for Jakarta where it was claimed that he would try to enlist Indonesian help. However, his hasty departure added to the confusion of the radicals at a most critical

⁵⁷ Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., p. 115 f.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp 115-116 ff. Ibrahim Yaacob, op. cit., pp. 33-34.

⁵⁹ Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya," op. cit., p. 117. William Shaw, op. cit., Chap. 5. pp. 74-92. There was no mention of this development by Ibrahim in his works.

period. Subsequently, the attempt by the KMM to announce a declaration of independence failed. KRIS and KMM members including its leaders who remained in Malaya, retreated to their more isolated branches as Malaya plunged into a state of civil disorder and lawlessness.⁶⁰

The flight of the KMM's leaders marked the end of the brief success of the Malay radical movement during the war. However, the Malay radical movement did not collapse entirely even though it had lost some of its ablest leaders and was in a state of confusion. The radicals had achieved several landmark victories. The KMM and KRIS had become the most recognized groups in Malay politics. Their activities during the Japanese Occupation had produced an experienced second generation of radical Malays who were able to reorganize successfully in the post-war period. They would become the most serious challenge to the conservative Malay elite in post-war Malay politics. Barely a month after the abortive plan for independence, Ahmad Boestaman and other ex-KMM and KRIS leaders formed the *Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya* (PKMM) or the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP) of Malaya.⁶¹ It was the first Malay political party formed after the war.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ahmad Boestaman, op. cit., Chap. 4. pp. 22-28. Despite his absence, Ibrahim Yaacob sought to maintain links with his former comrades. He claimed to have been appointed by the MNP as its official representative outside Malaya. A document to this effect is reproduced in his *Sekitar Malaya Merdeka*. Ibrahim, however, was never able to regain his role in Malay politics from then on. The MNP document appears in, Ibrahim Yaacob, op. cit., p. 42.

Chapter 4

THE RESPONSE OF THE CONSERVATIVES : JAPANESE SURRENDER AND THE RE-EMERGENCE OF THE CONSERVATIVES, August 1945-January 1946

Three and a half years of harsh Japanese military occupation in Malaya came to an end as suddenly and abruptly as it had begun. Following the destruction of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, Japan surrendered unconditionally on 15 August 1945.¹ A week later, Japanese commanders in Malaya received orders to cease all military operations and prepare for eventual surrender to Allied reoccupation forces. As part of the surrender process, the Japanese were also required to remain at their posts and to maintain law and order until the arrival of British troops.²

However, as the first British reoccupation troops did not arrive until about the first week of September, Japanese commanders, concerned about the safety of their troops as well as wanting to avoid any confrontation with the local population or militias, began to abandon isolated posts throughout Malaya.³ In the brief interregnum between the capitulation of Japanese rule and the reinstatement of British authority, and especially in areas abandoned by Japanese troops, Malaya quickly plunged into a state of social and political anarchy.⁴

¹"Imperial Rescript on the End of the War, August, 14, 1945" *Nippon Times* 15 August 1945. Document reproduced in J. Maki, *Selected Documents Far Eastern International Relations, 1689-1954* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1957) pp. 274-75.

² The Commander of the Singapore Garrison had announced that his troops would resist Allied landings. However, he finally bowed to orders from the Supreme Commander of Japanese Forces in Southeast Asia, Field-Marshal Terauchi. See "General Itagaki's First Refusal" *Straits Times* 7 Sept. 1945.; See also, F. Spencer Chapman, *The Jungle is Neutral* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1950) p. 414.

³ F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Occupation in the Far East, 1943-46* (London: H.M.S.O., 1956) p. 154 f. Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star over Malaya* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1982) pp. 132-133.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Chap. 5. pp. 127-47.

The period was characterized by much confusion. There were widespread looting and riots over food and other essentials.⁵ Law and order rapidly collapsed in the face of escalating violence brought on by people seeking revenge, and carrying out brutal reprisals and vendettas against alleged Japanese collaborators.⁶ The targets of this mob vengeance included Japanese-appointed district administrators, penghulus and merchants who had profited during the war, but most of all, the local police force.⁷ Out of this havoc and chaos a chain of events rapidly developed paving the way for the re-emergence of the Malay conservative elite.

The most significant of these was the rise and entrance of the Chinese-dominated *Malayan Communist Party* (MCP) in post-war Malayan politics.⁸ Having emerged from the war as the most powerful political and military organization in Malaya, the MCP and its armed wing, the MPAJA,⁹ took advantage of the political vacuum left by retreating Japanese forces to establish itself as the *de facto* authority in

⁵ Ibid., pp. 133-135. There was a serious food shortage in Malaya during the Japanese Occupation which became one of the major problem during the immediate post-war period. For an account of the food shortage at the end of the war, see Paul H. Kratoska, "The Post-1945 Food Shortage in British Malaya," *JSEAS*, vol. 19. no. 1, (Mar. 1988) pp. 27-47.

⁶ Cheah Boon Kheng, op. cit., pp. 144-147.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ For a brief exposé of the MCP and the MPAJA, see above, Intro. p. 1. footnote no. 2.

⁹ The emergence of the MCP as a dominant player in post-war Malayan politics, can mainly be attributed to its role during the war. From 1941, the MCP acting on orders from the Comintern, began to cease its anti-British activities and on the other hand, offered to aid Britain's war efforts. As a result several hundred members of the MCP had managed to be trained and equipped for guerilla operations behind Japanese lines. After the fall of Singapore survivors of this group formed the nucleus of the MCP's military wing known as the *Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army* (MPAJA) which was supported by a fifth column organization known as the *Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union* (MPAJU) drawn mostly from the Chinese community. See, "Instructions from the China Communist Party to the MCP" Extract from a Malaya Combined Intelligence Summary, No. 8., Period 1st to 31st October 1940. Document reproduced in Cheah Boon Kheng, *From PKI to the Comintern, 1924-1941*, op. cit., p. 65. See also Charles B. McLane, *Soviet Strategies in Southeast Asia* (Princeton, N. Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966) p. 243. Spencer Chapman was involved in the training of the local volunteer force and military "stay-behind" parties. See, Spencer Chapman, op. cit., pp. 16-17ff.

large parts of the country. Often over-zealous in its attempts to consolidate its power and status in the lawless post-war interregnum and sometimes insensitive to Malay concerns, the MCP inevitably collided with Malay political and social interests.

As a result, not only was the MCP perceived by Malays as a Chinese attempt to take control of the whole country but also as a serious threat to the very survival of Malay society. The first casualty of Malay suspicions and resentment towards the MCP at the end of the war was the relationship between the Malays and the Chinese. Sino-Malay relations, which had at the best of times been strained by mutual distrust, deteriorated rapidly during the interregnum, exploding into an almost full-scale ethnic war.¹⁰

During this period Malay leadership returned to the hands of the old order. The first group of Malay leaders to emerge came largely from the lower echelons of the traditional elite as Malay communities throughout Malaya turned to charismatic religious and village leaders for guidance and morale in the face of threats from the communists and their supporters. The racial conflict quickly intensified as these religious leaders formed militant cult movements which went on the offensive against the Chinese and the communists.

This paved the way for the re-emergence of the conservative bureaucratic Malay elite in Malay politics. The bureaucratic elite which had always had a position and status of authority in Malay society, found itself in an enviable position as the only group capable of persuading the warring factions into some form of settlement. The radical Malay leadership which was prominent during the Japanese Occupation was decimated by the flight of its leaders, especially Ibrahim Yaacob. Although they had regrouped and

¹⁰ For a brief account of the history of Sino-Malay relations, see Khoo Kay Kim, "Sino-Malay Relations in Peninsular Malaysia before 1942," in *JSEAS*, vol. 12. no. 1. (Mar. 1981) pp. 93-107. A chapter of Cheah Boon Kheng's *Red Star over Malaya*, op. cit., appears in *JSEAS*. See Cheah Boon Kheng, "Sino-Malay Conflicts in Malaya, 1945-1946," *JSEAS*, vol. 12. no. 1. (Mar. 1981) pp. 108-117.

resumed some of their activities, the radicals still carried the stigma of their Japanese collaboration and, consequently, were unable to attract much support from the Malays.¹¹

The MCP During the Post-War Interregnum, 14 August-1 September 1945

As soon as the Japanese Surrender was announced, MPAJA guerillas emerged from the jungle and began to seize areas abandoned by the Japanese. The communist takeovers encountered serious opposition from Malay guerilla groups such as SABERKAS and Wataniah which inevitably led to violent confrontations.¹² In the northern Malay states of Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu and Pahang, the communist advance was met with fierce resistance. In Kedah, SABERKAS acted swiftly to prevent the occupation of the state capital, Alor Star, by MPAJA forces.¹³ In Pahang, Wataniah units fearing an attempt by the MPAJA to kidnap the Sultan, managed to escort him into the state capital with the help of Force 136 officers.¹⁴

¹¹ Malay radical activities were severely proscribed. In Penang, which was the bastion of KMM's power before the war, the radicals' efforts to establish new KMM's branch offices were rebuffed. Only at the height of the Malayan Union crisis was there any significant success in recruitment. Md. Salleh Bin Md. Gaus, *Politik Melayu Pulau Pinang 1945-1957* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984) pp. 30-31.

¹² For account of the foundation SABERKAS and Wataniah, see above chap. 3. pp. 55-56. footnote nos. 46, 47 & 48. During the Japanese Occupation, the Malay resistance groups such as Wataniah in Pahang and SABERKAS in Kedah were highly suspicious of MPAJA's motives. According to Abdul Razak, a member of Wataniah and who would later become the second Prime Minister of Malaya, Wataniah deliberately concealed its operations and strength from the MPAJA as well as Force 136 officers as a security measure against the communists. William Shaw, *Tun Razak, His Life and Times* (Kuala Lumpur: Longmans, 1977) p. 66.

¹³ SABERKAS seemed to have been aided by Japanese units in Kedah in thwarting the communists attempt to take over Alor Star. Tunku Abdul Rahman was widely credited to have helped organized SABERKAS resistance. Harry Miller, *Prince and Premier* (London: George Harrap, 1959) pp. 71-73. Ranjit Gill, *Of Political Bondage* (Singapore: Sterling Corporate Services, 1990) pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ William Shaw, op. cit., pp. 70-73. During the war, the Allied powers formed a covert military infiltration unit known as Force 136 whose mission was to gather military intelligence

However, in areas where the Chinese population formed a majority, such as in the states of Perak, Selangor and Johore, the MPAJA quickly gained control. Some MPAJA units bent on seeking retribution for Japanese atrocities began arresting alleged Japanese collaborators including local officials and policemen who had served during the Japanese occupation. Many of those arrested were marched or dragged through the streets and were eventually tortured or executed after summary trials.¹⁵ In most cases, Malays bore the brunt of this summary justice as the local Japanese administration was overwhelmingly made up of Malays, many of whom were former civil employees during British rule such as the local police force as well as district and village administrative staff.

The situation was further exacerbated as MPAJA commanders were alleged to have been insensitive to Malay concerns. Accounts and rumours of the desecration of mosques and other religious symbols were rife. One such example was purported to have taken place in Pahang where the MPAJA was alleged to have demanded that Malays change their usual Friday prayers to Sunday, which outraged the Malays.¹⁶ As MPAJA reprisals continued, Malays began to feel singled out and consequently sought out ways to resist the communists as well as to protect themselves. However, Malays found themselves unprepared and leaderless. The traditional Malay leadership and the KMM had disintegrated into confusion.

The departure of Ibrahim Yaacob had seriously weakened the KMM, and its role during the Japanese Occupation had become a serious liability in its efforts to regain the confidence of the Malay community. Former members of the KMM were seen as Japanese

and to organized local underground resistance forces in preparation for an Allied invasion. F. S. V. Donnison, op. cit., pp. 380-381.

¹⁵ Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, op. cit., pp. 179 f. Abdul Razak alleged that he was one of many Malay officials on the MPAJA execution list. William Shaw, op. cit., p.64.

¹⁶ Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, op. cit., p. 197 f.

collaborators by a large number of both Malays and non-Malays alike.¹⁷ While the MPAJA did not deliberately harass them, they were nonetheless viewed with deep suspicion and mistrust and subsequently were prevented from resuming much of their activities by the communists.

Ibrahim's absence had also led to an exodus of former PETA members to other organizations such as *SABERKAS* and even the MPAJA while many more joined the cult movements in the racial clashes. Remnants of the KMM led by Dr. Burhanuddin struggled to retain some semblance of the organization.¹⁸ At the end of September, a group of former KMM journalists led by Ahmad Boestaman founded the *Suara Raayat* which became the mouthpiece of the Malay radicals in the ensuing years.¹⁹ The Malay radicals were unable to intercede in the inevitable racial conflict. It was not until the end of November 1945, as the violence had subsided, that Boestaman and Burhanuddin were able to resurrect a radical organization with the foundation of the *Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya* (PKMM) or Malay Nationalist Party (MNP).²⁰

The traditional Malay elite was similarly in disarray. The Malay rulers and former Malay government officials of the Japanese administration were isolated in their

¹⁷ Abdul Haris Nasution, *Sekitar Perang Kemerdekaan Indonesia* [The Indonesian Independence Struggle] vol. 1. (Bandung: Penerbit Angkas, 1977) p. 276. Nasution compared the negative reception of the KMM amongst the Malays with Indonesian PETA members who were hailed as heroes. See also Md. Salleh Bin Md. Gaus, op. cit.

¹⁸ Dr. Burhanuddin was one of the few top KMM members to remain in Malaya. He was left to chair the failed KRIS Congress in 1945. See above, chap. 3. p. 58. For biographical notes, see Appendix D.

¹⁹ Ahmad Boestaman, *Carving the Path to the Summit*, trans. William R. Roff (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1979) pp. 10-15. cf. below p. 82. footnote no. 56. For biographical notes, see, Appendix D.

²⁰ The MNP was inaugurated in October 1945, making it the first Malay political party to be formed after the war. It was heavily influenced by radical Indonesian and Communist ideas. Its first president was a known MCP member, Mokhtarrudin Lasso but he was soon replaced by Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy. The MNP, even though it was not officially proscribed until 1950, ceased to be effective in Malayan politics after the arrests of its leaders at the start of the Malayan Emergency. Ahmad Boestaman, op. cit., p. xxii.

own hometowns and had also become victims of MPAJA harassment. Sultans who were placed on the throne by the Japanese felt the most insecure and pondered the outcome of their fate at British or communist hands.²¹ Former Malay bureaucrats who had managed to regain their positions towards the end of the Japanese Occupation now felt at risk again. They too had become targets of MPAJA reprisals.²²

The Initial Response of the Conservative Malay Leadership : the Sino-Malay Riots and the Role of the Religious Cult leadership

The paralysis of the Malay leadership, both the aristocratic conservatives and the radicals, created a vacuum in Malay politics which allowed the rise of new leaders from the lower echelons of the traditional hierarchy. This chaotic period, rife with rumours and ruled by mob mentality, drove most Malays to seek refuge in their *kampungs* (villages), which was the only socio-political structure that had remained virtually intact throughout the war.²³

In villages where the Malay leadership such as penghulus and ulamas or religious leaders had been successful in repelling MPAJA advances, militant anti-communist and anti-Chinese movements quickly emerged. These movements soon took on a millenarian character. Charismatic leaders, offering spiritual as well as physical safety and

²¹ A. J. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics during the Malayan Union Experiment, 1942-1948* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979) p. 4. footnote no. 16.

²² Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, op. cit., pp. 184-185 ff.

²³ Malay village society was dominated by a syncretic religious practice which included beliefs in the supernatural. The medicine man or *bomoh* was an important player in village life, responsible for curing the sick, ensuring the safety of the village from natural and supernatural dangers. Along with the religious teachers and village heads, the bomoh was also reputed to be a martial arts exponent and teacher. For an in-depth study of village society, especially through the period of transition from British rule to independence, see, A.B. Shamsul, *From British to Bumiputera Rule*, (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986) chap. 3. pp. 15-83.

invulnerability, and more importantly a sense of *jihad* or holy war, emerged to lead Malays against the MCP and Chinese aggression.²⁴

Malay retaliation soon erupted into widescale attacks not only against suspected communist strongholds but also against the Chinese population in general. Malays who were initially slow to react to MPAJA's highhandedness, were now on the offensive.²⁵ The frenzy swept large sections of the population, causing both Malays as well as Chinese to flee to the cities or to areas where their own community was dominant. Racial clashes occurred in Johore, Kedah, Pahang and Penang.²⁶ The ferocity and relative success of the Malays was largely due to the appeal of religious righteousness cleverly promised and exploited by the mob leaders.²⁷

One of the most infamous of these leaders was Haji Kiyai Salleh,²⁸ a Sufi religious teacher from the town of Batu Pahat in Johore. Claiming to have magical powers Kiyai Salleh attracted thousands of Malays to his para-terrorist group known as

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 59-61. The Malay village leader or penghulu was often the *bomoh* in addition to his normal power and status as the highest civil authority in the village. See S. Husin Ali, "Patterns of Rural Leadership in Malaya," *JMBRAS*, vol. 41. pt.1 (Jul. 1968) pp. 95-145. W. L. Blythe, in his study of Chinese secret societies in Malaya found that some penghulus were also leaders of Malay secret societies similar to the Chinese societies. See W. L. Blythe, *The Impact of Chinese Secret Societies in Malaya: A Historical Study* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969) pp. 274-275 ff.

²⁵ Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, op. cit., pp. 210-217.

²⁶ Ibid. p. 233. For an example of such millenarian motives, see, Syed Naguib al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufism, as Understood and Practised among the Malays* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963) pp. 33-34.

²⁷ The call to *jihad*, the Islamic holy war, was used by the cult leaders in mobilizing Malays during the racial clashes. Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, op. cit., p. 206.

²⁸ Haji Kiyai Salleh was a religious leader in the district of Batu Pahat who had acquired a reputation as a holy man possessed with magical powers and invulnerability to injury. *Kiyai* is a Javanese term for a Muslim religious teacher. Hairi Abdullah, "Kebangkitan dan Gerakan Tentera Selendang Merah dalam Sejarah Daerah Muar dan Batu Pahat" [The Emergence and Development of Red Band Movement in the History of Muar and Batu Pahat] *Journal of the Historical Society*, (Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1973/75) pp. 9-10. The Red Band Movement was the name given to the militant organization of Kiyai Salleh which was also known as the *Sabilliah* (Path of God) army.

the *Sabilliah*.²⁹ At the height of the inter-racial conflict the *Sabilliah* were able to mobilize up to a thousand armed Malays in punitive attacks against MPAJA units as well as Chinese settlements in Johore.³⁰ Other movements similar to the *Sabilliah* sprang up in Perak, Pahang and Kelantan.

By the time British reoccupation forces landed in the first week of September 1945, the Malay-Chinese clashes had reached a dizzying cycle of mutual reprisals. In many areas, however, fighting had abated as both Malays and Chinese avoided, as much as possible, direct confrontation, while the MPAJA concentrated their attention on consolidating control in the towns. The large urban centres such as Singapore, Penang, Malacca and Kuala Lumpur escaped the violence of the racial conflict as Japanese troops managed to maintain order until the arrival of British forces. Despite this, events in the countryside had deeply polarized the town dwellers as well.³¹

The Re-emergence of the Bureaucratic Elite.

The political conditions facing Malay society at the time of British reoccupation were most favourable for the conservative Malay leaders to take over the mantle of leadership from the rabid group of cult leaders. The Malay population was in need of a more experienced leadership now that the British had returned. The religious and cult leaders, successful as they were in stemming the advance of the MCP-led take-overs, faced a vastly different and more formidable power in the British.

The most important figure among the conservatives was Dato Onn bin Jaafar, a member of the Johore aristocracy who had served in the Johore government before and

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 12.

³¹ F. S. V. Donnison, op. cit., pp. 384-385.

during the war.³² Dato Onn more than any other figure was responsible for the rise of the conservatives. During the Japanese Occupation, Dato Onn attended the KRIS Congress organized by Ibrahim Yaacob and the KMM but was astute enough not to be directly identified with the radicals.³³ In the later period of the Japanese Occupation, Dato Onn was appointed to administer the food distribution in Johore by the Japanese. During the course of his duties Dato Onn had saved many Malaysans, including non-Malays as well as Malays, from Japanese brutality. It had earned him the respect of Chinese and Malays alike during and after the war.³⁴

At the end of the war, Dato Onn became the District Officer for Batu Pahat, an east coast town in Johore, where some of the worst Sino-Malay clashes occurred in the country.³⁵ He succeeded in stopping the violence from spreading further when he managed to restrain the *Sabilliah* leader, Kiyai Salleh, and, at the same time, brokered a peace agreement between Malays and the MPAJA at Batu Pahat. It was reported that Dato Onn even managed to sway Kiyai Salleh to his side as a loyal supporter from then on.³⁶

At the same time, other former Malay bureaucrats were displaying similar acts of leadership throughout the country. In Pahang, it was a young Abdul Razak, son of a former aide to the Sultan, who interceded between Malays and the MPAJA thereby

³² See Appendix D for biographical data.

³³ Cf chap. 3., p. 58, footnote no. 55. See also, Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, op. cit., p. 226. Another conservative leader who attended the KRIS was Sardon Jubir a leading member of the *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* (Malay Association of Singapore). Cecilia Tan, *Tun Sardon Jubir, His Life and Times* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1986) pp. 18-19 ff.

³⁴ Anwar Abdullah, *Dato Onn, Riwayat Hidup* [Dato Onn, a Biography] (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Perchetakan Abadi, 1971) pp. 11-12 ff. and pp. 83-86 ff.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 99-101.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 109-113. It was reported that Dato Onn had forced Kiyai Salleh to accept a truce by laying his own life on the line. According to Cheah Boon Kheng, Kiyai Salleh thereafter became Onn's most faithful political supporter. Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, op. cit., p. 230.

preventing an escalation of violence. A member of *Wataniah*, Abdul Razak was involved in the incident of the attempted kidnapping of the Sultan and was commended by the Sultan of Pahang and Force 136 officers for his part.³⁷

In Kedah, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the second son of the Sultan of Kedah, had successfully sheltered the Sultan and members of the Malay royalty, as well as secretly aiding the Malay guerilla movement, *SABERKAS*. The Tunku emerged as the most widely-recognized Malay leader in post-war Kedah. *SABERKAS*, which he helped found clandestinely, elected him as its first patron soon after the war.³⁸ In Singapore, Sardon bin Jubir, one of the few Malay lawyers in pre-war Malaya, was made a magistrate during the Japanese Occupation. As a magistrate, Sardon was instrumental in saving hundreds of lives from Japanese execution. At the end of the war, he avoided arrest by the British due to overwhelming support from the local population, most of whom were Chinese.³⁹ Similar actions of members of the conservative elite elsewhere in Malaya characterized the emerging leadership and confidence of the conservatives.

The conservative bureaucratic elite, who before the war had made little use of mass support preferring instead to limit their political activities within the bureaucratic system, were now turned to as leaders in dealing with the returning British. Though it was not a concerted and organized effort, the pre-war bureaucratic

³⁷ cf. above pp. 66-67. William Shaw, op. cit., pp 78-79. The worst incident of fighting between Malays and Chinese occurred on the 11 February 1946 in the rural town of Batu Malim, Pahang which resulted in the arrest of some members of *Wataniah*. Abdul Razak was promoted to District Officer and managed to ease the racial tensions in his district by persuading members of *Wataniah* to ceased hostilities. See, *Malay Mail* 27 February 1946, p. 2.

³⁸ According to Abdul Aziz Ishak, the Tunku, initially, did not support *SABERKAS* opposition to the Malayan Union. As a result, Tunku not only severed his ties with the organization he helped found but launched a campaign against it. He founded the newspaper *Watan* to attack *SABERKAS*. See, Abdul Aziz Ishak, *Riwayat Hidup, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra*, [Life of Tunku Abdul Rahman the Prince] (Kuala Lumpur: Karya Bistari, 1987) pp. 41-45. However, Harry Miller and Ranjit Gill, in their biographies of the Tunku did not mention this episode of the Tunku's relationship with *SABERKAS*. Harry Miller, op. cit. Ranjit Gill, op. cit.

³⁹ Cecilia Tan, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

leaders began to take over the mantle of leadership from the religious leaders. As a result of their successful efforts in pacifying the Malays, the bureaucratic elite acquired a great deal of visible prominence amongst the Malays. At the same time, the bureaucratic leaders discovered the potent force of mass support which they had previously left untapped, as had their radical counterparts.

Return of British Rule : The Establishment of the British Military Administration,
September 1945

On the 15th of August 1945, a day after the Japanese surrender, Admiral Mountbatten's South-East Asia Command (SEAC) announced the establishment of military administration in all former British territories and dependencies including Malaya.⁴⁰ In the proclamation for Malaya, Admiral Mountbatten, the Supreme Allied Commander (SAC) "assumes full ... jurisdiction over all of Malaya"⁴¹ Actual power was, however, in the hands of the commanding officer of British forces in Malaya who in turn delegated authority to the Chief Civil Affairs Officer (CCAO), the highest ranking civil administrator.⁴² Thus, in practice, it was the CCAO and his staff who were running the country. The British Military Administration (BMA) lasted until the inauguration of the Malayan Union on 1st April 1946, and during this time the BMA functioned more like a transitional bureaucracy than a military regime.

Among the first to arrive with the British landing party in Malaya was none other than the head of the Malayan Planning Unit (MPU) Maj. Gen. R. H. Hone, who was

⁴⁰ Proclamation No. 1 BMA Gazette, vol. 1. no. 1.

⁴¹ Ibid. The Proclamation was transmitted by radio broadcasts in Malaya. It was posted by advance British units of Force 136 hours before the landing of British reoccupation forces. The full text of the Proclamation appeared later in various newspapers which were still functioning at the time of the Japanese Surrender. See, *Malay Mail* Sept. 7 1945.

⁴² Proclamation No. 15, BMA Gazette, vol. 1, no. 1. *Malay Mail* Sept. 13 1945.

now designated the Chief Civil Affairs Officer (CCAO).⁴³ The early arrival of Gen. Hone, ahead of the Supreme Allied Commander Lord Mountbatten and even before formal instruments of surrender were signed, underlined not only the urgency and need for the establishment of civil administration but also the determination of Britain to regain control of Malaya.

The BMA proceeded with its task and by the end of 1945 was able to restore order in Malaya. Malaya was placed under martial law and all pre-war civil institutions were suspended. The BMA took control of every aspect of administration from the setting up of police forces to the distribution of food and services.⁴⁴ Pre-war civil administrators, who were not immediately suspected of collaboration with the Japanese, were reinstated in their former posts. By January 1946, British Military Administration had been extended throughout Malaya, marking the resumption of British rule.

While the BMA set about to restore a functional administrative government and the various public services, British authorities wasted little time in pursuing plans for the political rehabilitation of Malaya. The first step towards the implementation of the Malayan Union plan was started as H.C. Willan, the Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer (DCCAO) for Malaya, embarked on a fact-finding mission to the Malay rulers.⁴⁵ Willan's main task was to investigate the conduct of the Malay rulers during the Japanese Occupation as the BMA was actively pursuing and weeding out 'collaborators

⁴³ The Malayan Planning Unit (MPU) was formed during the war to prepare for the reoccupation of Malaya after an expected successful reinvasion of Malaya. See, F. S. V. Donnison, op. cit., pp. 135-153.

⁴⁴ Maj.-Gen. H. R. Hone, *Report of the BMA of Malaya, September 1945 to March 1946* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1946) p. 45. Hereafter cited as *BMA Report, Sept 1945 - Mar 1946*.

⁴⁵ BMA/TS Com. no. 58/9

and undesirables'.⁴⁶ At the same time, Willan was to sound out the idea of the Malayan Union plan and to ascertain the level of cooperation or resistance to the plan. Thus while Willan was going about asking the Malay rulers their opinions on the Malayan Union plan, the rulers found themselves nervously facing a threatening inquisitor, a situation which could only have worked to Willans's advantage.

All through September, Willan met with the Malay rulers and dealt swiftly with the issue of Japanese-appointed rulers. Willan chose to meet with the rulers separately beginning with Selangor. The Selangor Japanese appointee, Musa Udin, was removed and banished to the Cocos island where he remained until being transferred to Singapore to continue his exile.⁴⁷ That, however, was not one of the severest penalties imposed. In Negri Sembilan, one of the Regents was found guilty of sedition and subsequently sentenced to death although his sentence was later commuted and eventually rescinded.⁴⁸ The other Japanese appointed Sultans in Kedah, Trengganu, Kelantan were more fortunate and received only demotions to their former positions and were replaced by British candidates.⁴⁹

While Willan's quest was underway, the BMA took steps to remove suspected collaborators from within the ranks of the Malay bureaucracy. Several prominent aristocrats and members of the Malay bureaucracy were arrested and accused of aiding the Japanese. Malays who had participated in wartime administration or had close links

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ The Cocos-Keelings Islands, situated in the Indian Ocean, was part of the Straits Settlements before the war. In 1955, they came under the jurisdiction of Australia. Tengku Musa Udin remained in the Cocos Islands until May 1946 when he was allowed to return to Singapore. A.J. Stockwell, *op cit.*, p. 41; For a detail historical account of the Cocos-Keeling Islands, see, Srikanth Dutt, "The Cocos-Keeling Islands" *JSEAS*, vol. 12. no. 2. (Sept. 1981) pp. 476-483.

⁴⁸ BMA/TS Com. no. 58/91. His death sentence was rescinded later. cf. below p.65. footnote no. 51.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

with the discredited parties grew uneasy and increasingly resentful. The English educated Malay elite who had served in the bureaucracy, many of whom came from the ranks of the aristocracy, began to doubt the possibility of a return to a pre-war cordial relations with the British authorities. Furthermore, in the racial clashes between Malays and Chinese, the British were inclined to perceive the Malays as the more belligerent instigators of the conflicts. As British suspicions of Malay disloyalty increased, Malay distrust and resentment of the British grew.

British-Malay Relations during the BMA :The Politicization of the Conservative Elite

The efforts of the conservatives such as Dato Onn, Abdul Razak and the Tunku in the interregnum, uncoordinated and organized as they were, had succeeded in making their presence felt in the Malay community. Following the establishment of British authority, Malay conservative leaders were quite hopeful that once things had returned to normal, the British would acknowledge their role and contributions.⁵⁰ They were, nonetheless, under no illusion that relations with the British would be as close as they were before the war. Immediate British policies soon proved their fears to be well-founded, signaling the beginning of British-Malay conflict.

One of the first issues to spark off the straining of British-Malay relations was the question of war crimes. The banishment of the Sultan of Selangor, Musa Udin as well as the case of the Dato of Rembau who was sentenced to death for alleged Japanese conspiracy, had deeply offended the traditional Malay elite.⁵¹ In addition, all State

⁵⁰ F. S. V. Donnison, op. cit., p. 156. Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, op. cit., p 272.

⁵¹ Ibid. His death sentence was commuted to imprisonment after strong Malay protests. *Majlis*, 9 Oct. 1946.

Councils were suspended and authority was divested from the state government to the BMA.⁵²

The bureaucratic elite, who had in some measure looked forward to the return of the British were soon to suffer the same demoralizing fate as the Sultans. The Malay bureaucracy was immediately investigated, with the result that many were arrested although most were released shortly thereafter. The *Mentri Besar* (Chief Minister) of Johore and even Dato Nik Kamil of Kelantan, who was once praised as the most enlightened and sensible of Malay officials, were under suspicion for alleged Japanese collaboration.⁵³ The remnants of the Malay police force was disbanded and those suspected of alleged wrong-doings during the Japanese Occupation and in the ensuing racial clashes after the war were prosecuted.⁵⁴ As a result the Malay bureaucratic elite became demoralized and highly embittered by the British actions.⁵⁵

There was growing bitterness on the part of the Malays for the way British authorities, perhaps not deliberately, downplayed Malay contributions to the war effort. Malay sacrifices during the war were given scant mention while on the other hand the MCP and the MPAJA as well as the Chinese community were commended for their resistance and sufferings. Many Malays recalled the heroic stand of the Malay Regiment

⁵² An Advisory Council, comprising of prominent local figures was set up immediately after the establishment of the BMA but it was restricted initially to Singapore. Martin Rudner, "The Organization of the British Military Administration in Malaya, 1946-48," *JSEAH*, vol. 9. no. 1. (Mar. 1968) p. 104. Members of the Council came mostly from the business community and were particularly noted for their pro-British record. Among the Malays chosen, one was from the prominent Arab-Malay Alsagoff family and another was a doctor who had been domiciled and had spent his entire career solely in Singapore. See Chan Heng Chee, *A Sensation of Independence, A Political Biography of David Marshall* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984) p. 54. David Marshall was a prominent lawyer who became involved in Malayan politics after 1948 and went on to become Singapore's first elected Chief Minister in 1955.

⁵³ A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 42.

⁵⁴ BMA/PSD no. 1/3, "Report of the Officer-in-Charge of Police, Johore Bharu, Maj. J. M. Maclean."

⁵⁵ F. S. V. Donnison, op. cit., p. 156.

after most Allied units had retreated in the battle of Singapore.⁵⁶ Malays felt that they had suffered as much as any other community under Japanese rule.⁵⁷ The issue of compensation for the period of war became another contentious point in which Malay as well as other Asian civil employees accused the British of maintaining a double standard. Asian ex-civil employees, unlike their European counterparts, received only part of the full restitution of their pay for the war period, regardless of whether they were interned or had escaped from Malaya.⁵⁸

Malay leaders pointed an accusing finger at the British who had refused to arm the Malays at the outset of the war and had so easily abandoned them in the face of defeat. Abdul Razak recounted how it was a policy of "Europeans first" during the evacuation of Malaya. He noted bitterly the flight of the British in Pahang, abandoning the local government staff, "just as they did in Kedah, Perlis and elsewhere and, we never want to see them return."⁵⁹ Malay and other Asians who had served in the police and auxiliary

⁵⁶ The Malay Regiment was formed in 1933. By 1942, the regiment had reached the strength of two battalions which took part in the defence of Singapore suffering heavy losses. The heroic last stand alluded to by Malays involved several small units of the Regiment which held out to the last man in one of the battles for Singapore. A popular account is given in a textbook collection of 'Malay patriots' intended for high school students in Malaysia. See, Talib Samat, *Mereka Yang Ternama*, [Those Who Were Famous] (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications, 1990) pp. 47-55; and for a more scholarly account, see Dol Ramli, "History of the Malay Regiment, 1933-1942," *JMBRAS*, vol. 38, pt. 1 (Jul. 1965) pp. 199-243.

⁵⁷ Malay dissatisfaction was aired publicly through newspaper articles and even short stories such as Harun Aminurrashid's short story entitled *Siapa Yang Bersalah?* [Who is to Blame?] in which he pointedly asked, "Was a Malay who was forced to cooperate with the Japanese under threat of torture or death and, at the same time, who was able to save the lives of many of his countrymen be considered a wrong-doer?" See Abdullah Hussain, *Harun Aminurrashid, Pembangkit Semangat Kebangsaan* [Harun Aminurrashid, Leader of the Spirit of Nationalism] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1982) pp. 109-111 ff.

⁵⁸ According to Chan Heng Chee, European civil employees who were interned received full restitution of their pay during the period of the Japanese Occupation while the Asian members including those who had served in the military units in the final defence of Singapore were awarded a lump sum payment of no more than \$1500. Chan Heng Chee, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

⁵⁹ William Shaw, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

forces were ordered to remain at their post even though their British superiors and colleagues had been evacuated.⁶⁰

More than anything else, the feeling of abandonment by the British contributed to the increased distrust of British post-war intentions. Even some staunch admirers of Britain objected to questions about Malay conduct during the war, blaming instead "the military setbacks ... the exodus of Europeans" as contributing to a loss of confidence in the British, and that "when weighed in the balance the Malay is not found wanting to the same degree as many who have chosen him as their scapegoat." Cautioning the British not to punish the whole Malay community for the activities of the KMM during the war, Malay leaders reiterated that, under the circumstances, they had done well indeed to protect the interests of their country.⁶¹

The initial politicization of the conservative bureaucratic elite was in the form of agitation through the revived pre-war Malay newspapers, which were the organs and mouthpieces of Malay political discourse. The radicals had already launched their own daily newspaper called the *Suara Rakyat* (Voice of the People) which became the only consistently radical Malay newspaper. In addition, the Malay radicals managed to considerably influence a mainstream newspaper, the *Utusan Melayu*.⁶² Thus, the

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹ Quoted from an open letter published in the staunchly colonialist British journal, the *Asiatic Review*, by Tengku Mahmud possibly a member of the Kelantan royalty. See, Tengku Mahmud, "The Attitude of Malays to the War, 1941-2," *The Asiatic Review*, (Oct. 1945) pp. 382-383.

⁶² *Suara Rakyat* was founded by Ahmad Boestaman in the early weeks of the Japanese Surrender. It was also the only Malay newspaper which had a weekly English language edition called the *Voice of the People*. For an account of the founding of the newspaper see, Ahmad Boestaman, op. cit., chap. 1 & 3. *Utusan Melayu* was founded in Singapore in 1939 by Yusoff b. Ishak who was to be independent Singapore's first appointed President. It was generally considered a fairly conservative paper before the war. During the Japanese Occupation it continued publication under Japanese supervision and was called *Berita Malai*. After the war, the *Utusan Melayu* was headed by A. Samad Ismail and the radical younger brother of Yusoff, Aziz b. Ishak. During the leadership of its two radical editors, *Utusan Melayu* grew increasingly anti-UMNO although it did not acquire the reputation of the *Suara Rakyat*. See, William R. Roff, *Guide to Malay Periodicals, 1876-1941* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya, Dept. of History, Papers on Southeast Asian Subjects, no. 4, 1961); For A. Samad Ismail's

conservatives, on their part, found their voice in several other Malay dailies such as the *Majlis* (Forum) and *Warta Negara* (National News).⁶³ Together these Malay papers immediately set out to air Malay concerns and during the first two months of the BMA were relentless in their protests against British treatment of the Malays. Increasingly provocative in their editorials, the Malay papers revived the issues of foreign domination of Malay society and debates on the issue of a national Malay identity or *Bangsa Melayu*.⁶⁴

The idea of a national identity crossing regional loyalties, which was first mooted in the early days of the Malay political movement, had been the thorniest issue of Malay political unity.⁶⁵ In the Congress of Malay associations just before the outbreak of war, this issue remained unresolved and contributed to the failure of the Congress.⁶⁶ Realizing the need for a united front to oppose the British, the conservative Malay

account of the *Utusan Melayu* under his editorship, see A. Karim Haji Abdullah, A. Samad Ismail, *Ketokohan dan Kewartawanan* [A. Samad Ismail, Icon and Journalist] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka) pp. 76-85.

⁶³ *Majlis* was founded in 1931 under Abdul Rahim Kajai, during which it echoed the views of the *Kaum Muda*. After a brief interlude in which its name was changed to *Perubahan Bahru*, *Majlis* resumed publication towards the end of 1945 until 1955. The post-war *Majlis* was undoubtedly linked to the conservative faction becoming the mouthpiece of UMNO in its early years as the editor of *Majlis* was also the secretary of the *Persatuan Melayu Selangor* (Selangor Malay Association). *Warta Negara* was published in Penang at the end of 1945. It too followed a pro-UMNO line. William R. Roff, *Guide to Malay Periodicals*, op. cit.

⁶⁴ *Bangsa Melayu* which means 'Malay nation', was first used in the pre-war rhetorics of the *Kaum Muda* reformists in an effort to unite Malays of the various states of Malaya. The deep regional division prevailed, however, and as a result the attempts in the pre-war period at establishing a pan-Malayan Malay organization failed. For a brief discussion of the concept and its effect on communal politics in post-war Malaya, see Tan Liok Ee, *The Rhetoric of Bangsa and Minzu: Community and Nation in Tension, the Malay Peninsula, 1900-1955* (Clayton, Australia: Monash University, Centre of Southeast Asian Studies, Working Paper no. 52); The rise and use of the concept of *Bangsa Melayu* in the development of post-war Malay nationalism is discussed in detail in Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993)

⁶⁵ The issues of a national Malay identity had been raised in Malay newspapers in the decades before the war. It led to the movement for a national organization of Malay associations just before the outbreak of war. See, Mohamad Amin Hassan, "The Malay Press During the Great Depression," *Indonesian Circle*, no. 19. (Jun. 1979) pp. 21-26.

⁶⁶ See above chap. 2. p. 27.

leaders campaign vigorously for a concept of a common nationality. The conservative leaders, by appealing to a national ethnic consciousness, had not only followed on the heels of the radicals but more significantly, since many of them came from the aristocracy, had broken with the past by elevating the *raayat* or the constituents of Malay society above the rulers and sultans.⁶⁷

In addition to the Sino-Malay conflict, disillusionment with the British had the effect of sensitizing the Malays to the reality of their pronounced political vulnerability. It was amidst this soul-searching atmosphere within Malay society that political activities were revived with renewed vigour. The Conservatives as well as the radicals almost immediately began to regroup and reorganize. Utilizing their increased influence, the conservative elite were soon able to revive pre-war Malay associations into much more politically inclined organizations. Complementing their new-found support from the Malay community with the administrative experience acquired from the colonial bureaucracy, the conservative bureaucratic elite presented the most formidable movement to meet the challenges of post-war Malayan politics.

Thus, between 1941 and 1946, Malay politics entered a new phase which was characterized by direct involvement of the contending Malay elites in political activities. The radicals, during the period of the Japanese Occupation, had rose to their highest point ever in political achievements. A clear political role, if not power, was almost within their grasp when the sudden end of the war evaporated all their war-time gains.

⁶⁷ The announcement of the Malayan Union plan signaled the end of the conservative leadership fear of offending the Malay rulers. Angered by what it termed as the rulers sellout, conservative leaders began to adopt the radicals' view of *kedaulatan raayat* (sovereignty of the people) over the traditional view of the absolute sovereignty of the Sultans. Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Erosion of Ideological Hegemony and Royal Power and the Rise of Postwar Malay Nationalism, 1945-46," *JSEAS*, vol. 19. no. 1. (Mar. 1988) pp. 21-23 ff. Spearheaded by *Majlis* conservative Malay leaders began to create the concept of a *Bangsa Melayu* and fervently promoted it. *Majlis*, Feb. 6 1945. See also Cheah Boon Kheng, 'Erosion of Ideological Hegemony', op. cit., pp. 23-24. and Ariffin Omar, op. cit., pp. 48-50 ff.

At the end of the war, as Malaya plunged into a state of chaos with the threat of a Chinese-Malay civil war, the conservative Malay elite began to emerge as the champions of their community.

At the same time, resentment towards the British on the part of, not only the Malay radicals but also the conservative Malay elite, increased. At the same time, the inevitable confrontation between the two Malay political factions had begun with bitter media battles in the local press. The conflict escalated into a race for organization as both factions began to revive and establish political organizations throughout Malaya. The announcement of the Malayan Union proposal at beginning of 1946 was like "adding fuel to the fire". Armed with opposing views on how to save Malay society, the two factions prepared for a showdown during the period of the Malayan Union crisis.

PART THREE

**THE STRUGGLE ENDS
THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA AGREEMENT
AND
THE TRIUMPH OF THE CONSERVATIVES,
1946-1948**

Chapter 5

THE CONSOLIDATION OF CONSERVATIVE POWER : THE MALAYAN UNION AND THE FORMATION OF UMNO, January 1946 to April 1946.

British planning for the overall restructuring of its colonies had begun as early as the middle of 1942, six months after the fall of Singapore.¹ With regard to Malaya, there were already strong proposals for a political union which would include the Malay States, the Straits Settlements and the Borneo territories of Sarawak, British North Borneo (Sabah) and also Brunei. It was realized that at the reoccupation of former territories, a civil administrative apparatus could not possibly be immediately established. Thus, in order to ensure a speedy recovery of its territories, plans were prepared for a transitional, military administration whose task was to stabilize the reoccupied areas as quickly as possible.²

By March 1943, the planning for the future of Malaya was earnestly underway with the establishment of a special planning body known as the Malayan Planning Unit (MPU) comprised of officers from the Eastern Department of the Colonial Office and the War Office.³ The MPU was headed by Major-General Ralph Hone who had extensive judicial and administrative experience in Africa and Gibraltar.⁴ Other leading members

¹ F. S. V. Donnison, *British Military Administration in the Far East, 1943-46* (London: H.M.S.O., 1956) p. 135. A. J. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics During the Malayan Union Experiment, 1942-1948* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979) pp. 22-23 ff.

² F. S. V. Donnison, op. cit, p. 136 f.

³ Ibid., p. 139.

⁴ Gen. Hone had served extensively in British territories in Africa. As late as 1965, he was still involved in British colonial affairs when he headed a mission to Aden to institute constitutional reform. See Sir Gawain Bell, *An Imperial Twilight* (London: Lester Crook Academic Publ., 1989) pp. 152-153 ff. For biographical note see Appendix D.

of the MPU were H. C Willan, Alexander Newbolt, Patrick McKerron and Victor Purcell, all of whom were Malayan Civil Service (MCS) administrators right up to the outbreak of war.⁵

The MPU argued that the pre-war structure of Malayan government in which the Malay rulers were technically sovereign was incompatible with Britain's desire for a more efficient and centralized government as a necessary condition to increase the economic exploitation of Malaya.⁶ By 1945, plans were already approved for the creation of a new centralized government to be known as the Malayan Union.⁷ In the middle of 1945, the MPU was made into a civilian administrative unit of SEAC's post-war planning section known as the Civil Affairs Unit and was subsequently transferred to India and then to Ceylon, eventually taking over civil administrative duties in the BMA administration of Malaya.⁸

The MacMichael Mission and the Malayan Union Plan, October - December 1945.

Despite the difficulties posed by the immediate conditions of post-surrender Malaya, and the steady deterioration of Anglo-Malay trust, British authorities were confident and quite resolved in achieving their political objectives. On 10 October, 1945, the Secretary of the Colonies, George Viscount Hall, declared the formulation of the Malayan Union plan.⁹ The next day, Sir Harold MacMichael, the former High

constitutional reform. See, Sir Gawain Bell, *An Imperial Twilight*, (London: Lester Crook Academic Publ., 1989) pp. 152-153. ff.; For biographical note see Appendix D.

⁵ A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 24.

⁶ F. S. V. Donnison, op. cit., pp. 136-137 ff.

⁷ A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., pp. 28-30.

⁸ Ibid., p. 135.; F. S. V. Donnison, op. cit., p. 140.

⁹ Malayan Union, *Malayan Union and Singapore, Statement of Policy on Future Constitution* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1946) hereafter cited as *Malayan Union, Statement of Policy*.

Commissioner for Palestine, arrived in Malaya as a special representative of the British government.¹⁰

MacMichael's mission was to secure the Malay Rulers' agreement to the abrogation of all previous treaties and the adoption of the Malayan Union.¹¹ Following in the footsteps of Willan, MacMichael would meet the rulers separately. He was assisted by Newbould, who was very familiar with the rulers, having served as Secretary of the Federal Council of the FMS before the war.¹² As in the case of Willan's fact-finding odyssey earlier, MacMichael was armed with more authority than mere persuasion. His mandate included a reference which implicitly stated that, in the case of a protesting Sultan, the threat of replacing him with a more pliable candidate could be carried out.¹³

Less than two weeks after he had set up office in Kuala Lumpur, MacMichael embarked on his mission by first meeting the Sultan of Johore on the 18 of October. Johore was chosen because Sultan Ibrahim was the most pro-British Malay ruler and it was hoped that the other rulers might be persuaded to follow Johore's example. Two days later, Johore accepted the terms of the Malayan Union. Between the meeting with the Johore ruler and the end of December, MacMichael met in turn the Sultans of the other Malay states. Selangor, Pahang and Negri Sembilan were all won over by MacMichael, although all of them had raised concerns about immigration and their own positions.¹⁴

MacMichael then turned his attention to the four northern states, formerly known as the UFMS, which, because of their past relationship with Siam, had a far

¹⁰ Sir Harold MacMichael, *Report on a Mission to Malaya, October 1945-January 1946*, (London: H.M.S.O., Colonial Office No. 194, 1946) p. 3. hereafter cited as *MacMichael Report*. *Malay Mail* Oct. 1945.

¹¹ A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 49. Paragraph 2. of letter from G. H. Hall to MacMichael stated clearly that MacMichael was to "conclude with each Ruler ... a formal Agreement by which he will cede full jurisdiction to His Majesty in his State", in *MacMichael Report* p. 4.

¹² Ibid., p. 5.

¹³ See Paragraph 3 of the letter from Hall to MacMichael in *MacMichael Report* p. 4.

¹⁴ *MacMichael Report* paragraph 14 to 25. pp. 6-8.

different set of treaties with the British.¹⁵ Through the efforts of Newbould, who managed to convince the Sultans of the inevitability of the situation and who had cleverly drafted the agreements to the satisfaction of the rulers, MacMichael successfully completed his mission.¹⁶ By 21 December 1945, Harold MacMichael had obtained signed agreements with all the Malay rulers.¹⁷ Satisfied with his accomplishment MacMichael immediately headed for England. With the treaty obtained by MacMichael all that was needed to implement the Malayan Union was an act of Parliament to abrogate the Straits Settlements Act.¹⁸ On 22 January 1946, the British Government issued its White Paper on the Malayan Union.¹⁹ Details of the constitutional arrangements were finally made public.

The Malayan Union would effectively unite the nine Malay States and the Straits Settlements under a single political and administrative federal unit thereby creating a unitary political structure in Malaya. The most apparent effect would be an extensive reduction of the powers of the individual states. A provision for the granting of citizenship to non-Malays born and domiciled in Malaya would ensure the equal participation and strong influence of the non-Malays especially the Chinese. These two main characteristics of the Malayan Union dealt a severe blow to the political dominance of the Malays. The government would be under a Commissioner and assisted by a

¹⁵ MacMichael exercised his authority in the case of Trengganu. The defiant and uncooperative Sultan who was placed on the throne by the Japanese was removed. MacMichael appointed the younger brother of the late Sultan (who had died before the arrival of the Japanese) as the legitimate ruler of Trengganu. A. J. Stockwell, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

¹⁶ *MacMichael Report* pp. 8-9.

¹⁷ The last Malay ruler to sign the Agreement was the Sultan of Trengganu on the 21 December 1945. *Ibid.*

¹⁸ See Great Britain, *Bill, Intitulated an Act to repeal the Straits Settlements Act, 1866, and to make further provision for the Government of the Territories heretofore known as the Straits Settlements*. Parliamentary Papers. Non-Serial Papers, 1945-46 iv. 365.; The Repeal Bill was introduced in Parliament on the same day as the publication of the White Paper announcement of the Malayan Union on the 22 January 1946.

¹⁹ *Malayan Union, Statement of Policy*, *op. cit.*

legislative body which would be comprised of more appointed than elected members. Singapore was excluded and would remain a Crown Colony. In an effort to placate the Sultans, each ruler would be provided with an advisory Malay council presided over by the ruler but with judicial power of review only in matters relating only to religion.²⁰

Reactions to the Malayan Union : The Coming of the Storm.

The announcement of the Malayan Union Plan brought forth a torrent of protest both in Malaya and Britain beyond the expectation of the British government.²¹ In Malaya, it was the conservative Malay elite that mounted the most vociferous protest against the Malayan Union. They felt more than ever that what appeared suspect before was now confirmed - the British were selling out the Malays. In their attack against the Union, they, quite unexpectedly, received help from former Malayan Civil administrators who were outraged at being left out of the planning process and who also felt strongly that Malaya was not quite ready for such a bold venture.²²

While the Malay conservatives, who stood to lose the most from the plan, were understandably opposed to the Malayan Union, the radical Malay faction was equally

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ The Malay reaction to the Malayan Union was described 'as an electric shock' by Gen. Hone in his report. See Major-General H. R. Hone, *Report of the BMA of Malaya, September 1945 to March 1946* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1946) p. 62. hereafter cited as *BMA Report, Sept 1945 - Mar 1946*.

²² The opposition to the Malayan Union plan in Britain was spearheaded by retired Malayan Civil Service (MCS) officers or "old Malaya hands" such as R. O. Winstedt and Frank Swettenham. At the outset, the campaign of the "Malaya hands" were mainly unorganized and were mainly characterized by personal letters to the press. See examples of letters of Winstedt and Swettenham in the *London Times* of 29 Oct 1945; 5 Nov 1945 and also *Straits Times* 15 Nov 1945. Only later, when the Malay protests received wide public attention in Britain, was the London campaign stepped up. On 16 April 1946, the "Malaya hands" wrote collectively a letter to *The Times* which was signed by seventeen former MCS officers who had held high office such as Clementi, Guillemard, Maxwell, Swettenham and Winstedt. See *The Times* 16 Apr 1946.

against the plan. The Malay radicals who had cautiously supported the Union when it was first announced in October, were appalled at some provisions of the Malayan Union proposals that retained the position of the Malay rulers.²³ For even though the Malayan Union satisfied their quest for the reduction in the power of the aristocracy, it would mean an end to their plans for a unification of Malaya and Sumatra to form a huge maritime republican Malay nation.²⁴

At the same time, the radicals had little choice but to remain in the anti-Union stream as support for the conservatives had reached a groundswell, threatening the MNP's influence in most parts of the country.²⁵ The most surprising reaction came from the non-Malays since it was they who would benefit from the Union especially in the provision of citizenship rights. Yet the initial reaction from the non-Malays was surprisingly cool.

The Indian community was still caught up with political issues of India and thus paid little attention to the Malayan Union.²⁶ Meanwhile the Chinese community, which

²³ Ahmad Boestaman explained the MNP's initial support of the Malayan Union as one of an 'agreement in principle' because of the Union's plan proposed structure of a unitary state. Ahmad Boestaman, *Carving the Path to the Summit* William R. Roff, tran. and intro. (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1979) pp. 46-48.

²⁴ After the January announcement, the MNP began to retract their support of the Union plan. Ahmad Boestaman wrote, "by this time, the two-faced Malayan Union thought up by the British had come very much into question". Ibid., p. 48.

²⁵ Ibid., p.47.

²⁶ During the Japanese Occupation, Indian political activities centred around Chandra Bose and his Indian Independence League (IIL) and the Indian National Army (INA). When the British return, most of the leaders of the IIL were arrested which included several prominent editors of Malayan newspapers. The arrests left the Indian Community without a strong, viable leadership during a time of political turbulence. However, in August 1946, a few months following the visit of Pandit Nehru, The Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) was formed. Malayan Indian politics, however, were turned towards India. There was an Indian Agent of the Congress Party of India in Malaya to look after the interests of Indians in Malaya. The MIC sent delegations to India's Congress sessions. Only after 1949, was the Indian community more seriously involved in Malayan politics. See Rajeswary Ampalavanar, *The Indian Minority and Political Change in Malaya, 1945-1957* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1981) pp. 17-45. For an account of the INA during World War Two, see Chandar S. Sundaram, *The Indian*

stood to gain the most from the Union, was paradoxically critical of the plan as well. The Chinese right-wing such as the Kuomintang (KMT) were, like the MIC, more concerned with the politics of China.²⁷ Whereas the MCP, whose August manifesto was satisfied in many aspects by the Malayan Union, rejected the Malayan Union because it did not provide for an elected legislative body.²⁸ Thus, while the non-Malays were divided in their actions, the Malay conservatives became united and grew in strength overtaking the other political factions in the fight against the Malayan Union.

The Re-emergence of Conservative Politics : Revival of the Malay Associations

The first volley of Malay conservative response was fired by the Malay press. The cautious and ambivalent response following the first announcement of the Malayan Union in October gave way to a spirited and determined protest.²⁹ Without exception all the Malay papers denounced the plan as a betrayal of the trust placed in the British. Pointing to the secretive nature in which the MacMichael treaties were concluded, the Malay press attacked the Malayan Union as a hijacking of Malay power and rights by the

National Army: A Preliminary Study of Its Formation and Campaigns (M.A. thesis, McGill University, 1985)

²⁷ C.F.Yong, *Chinese Leadership and Power in Colonial Singapore* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1992) pp. 74-76.

²⁸ Khong Kim Hoong, "The Early Political Movements Before Independence," in *Government and Politics of Malaysia* ed. Zakaria Haji Ahmad (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987) pp. 16-19.[11-39].; The MCP's constitutional demands were presented to the BMA in the middle of March 1946. See Yeo Kim Wah, "The Anti-Federation Movement in Malaya, 1946-48," *JSEAS*, vol. 5. no. 1. (Mar. 1973) pp. 33-35.

²⁹ Prior to the announcement of the Malayan Union in October, the Malay Press was more concerned with the attitude of the British towards Malay conduct during the war, the Sino-Malay clashes and the rise of the MCP. Even after the October announcement of the Malayan Union, Malay response centred on the preservation of Malay rights and not on the outright rejection of the Union proposal. See for examples, *Majlis* 17 Sept 1945; 25 Oct 1945; 8 Dec 1945; 15 Dec 1945; *Warta Negara* 13 Dec 1945; 20 Jan 1946.

British.³⁰ While the Malayan Union was clearly seen a threat by the Malay conservative elite, to some Malays it was also a blessing in disguise. The long sought Malay political unity was now close to becoming a reality. Editorials, writers and Malay leaders from every sphere called for Malay unity in fighting the Malayan Union.³¹

Between the announcement of the Malayan Union plan in October 1945 and the formation of UMNO in March 1946, Malay protest quickly grew into a storm. *Majlis* and other Malay newspapers urged Malay leaders, in this case the conservatives, to speed up the revival of the Malay associations and called for the formation of a national political party.³² At the same time, hostilities towards the Malay rulers were coming out into the open from amongst the conservatives, some of whom came from the ranks of royalty themselves. *Majlis* and other papers had begun to make oblique seditious attacks on the rulers reflecting the anger of the bureaucratic elite towards the Sultans.³³

Following the call for a Congress of Malay associations, most of the pre-war Malay associations were reactivated while many new organizations, led by members of the conservative elite, were founded solely for the purpose of protesting the Malayan

³⁰ On 24 Jan 1946, two days after the publication of the January White Paper, *Majlis* carried an appeal from Dato Onn for an immediate Congress of Malay Associations to oppose the Malayan Union. *Majlis* 24 Jan. 1946; A similar call was carried by *Warta Negara* on the same day. *Warta Negara* 24 Jan. 1946.

³¹ *Warta Negara* call for unity reminded its readers that the British had ignored "every cries and pleas" for consideration by the Malays. Ibid.

³² Newspapers such as *Warta Negara* also carried similar pleas for Malay unity and mobilization. See *Warta Negara* 10 Nov. 1945 and *Majlis* 17, 18 and 24 Jan. 1946. *Majlis* appeal began earlier on 4 Oct. 1945. A month later, it renewed its call. *Majlis* Nov. 6 1945. *Majlis* also warned its readers from supporting the MNP which "had slept with the enemy before" and urged them to support the conservative-led *Perikatan Melayu Perak* (Perak Malay League) instead. *Majlis* 25 Jan. 1946

³³ *Majlis* carried a report of the inauguration rally of the *Persatuan Melayu Johor* (Johore Malay Association) which was led by Dato Onn, and explicitly highlighted calls for the Sultan of Johore to step down. *Majlis* 4 Feb. 1946. Two days later it published an article purportedly written by a reader, with the daring title "The Sultans have been cheated." The article argued that true sovereignty rested with the *raayat* and further warned the Sultans that "without the *raayat* there would be no raja ... but even without rajas the *raayat* can be sovereign. See *Majlis* 4 Feb. 1946 and Feb. 6 1946.

Union plan.³⁴ The *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* (Singapore Malay Association) was re-established with Sardon Haji Jubir elected as head of the youth wing.³⁵ In Perak, the pre-war *Persatuan Melayu Perak* (Perak Malay Association) was now matched by the new *Perikatan Melayu Perak* (Perak Malay League) founded by one of the leading chiefs of Perak, the Panglima Bukit Gantang and other members of the aristocracy.³⁶

Similarly, in Selangor, Kelantan and Pahang pre-war Malay associations as well as new organizations were formed.³⁷ However, it was in Johore that Malay political organization was most successful. Dato Onn Bin Jaafar, who by this time had been appointed the Mentri Besar of Johore, received overwhelming support for his *Pergerakan Melayu Semenanjung, Johor* (Malay Peninsula Movement, Johore).³⁸ Along with the pre-war *Persatuan Melayu Johor* (Johore Malay Association), Johore's Malay membership of the various associations was by far the largest in Malaya.³⁹

³⁴ In Penang, no less than six new Malay organizations were formed. Md. Salleh Bin Md. Gaus, *Politik Melayu Pulau Pinang, 1945-1957* [Malay Politics in Penang, 1945-1957] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984) pp. 38-43.

³⁵ Cecilia Tan, *Tun Sardon Jubir, His Life and Times* (Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1986) op. 18 f.

³⁶ The aristocratic title, *Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang*, is held by one of the eight major Chiefs of Perak. It was the domain of one of the most powerful chieftainship before the advent of British rule. With the consolidation of British rule, this office had become hereditary exercising little real influence over government affairs, and was held by a member of the royal family of Perak. At the end of the war, the Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Abdul Wahab, a MAS officer, became the co-founder of UMNO. For an account of the foundation of the *Perikatan Melayu Perak*, see *Majlis* 25 Jan. 1946 as well as Ramlah Adam, *UMNO: Organisasi dan Kegiatan, 1945-51* [UMNO: Organization and Activities, 1945-46] (Kota Bharu, Kelantan: Mohd. Nawi Book, 1978) pp. 5-11 ff. cf. below footnote no. 61.

³⁷ For an account of the foundation of Malay Associations, see *ibid*.

³⁸ Ramlah Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

³⁹ Ramlah Adam, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

The Conservative Offensive : Assault on the Sultans.

While the main target of Malay protest was directed at the British, there was increasing anger towards the role of the Malay rulers. Malay newspapers began to indirectly accuse the Sultans of having 'sold out' the rights of the Malays by signing the treaties. In Johore, these feelings reached a climax at the meeting of the *Persatuan Melayu Johore*. In an emotional outburst, the 2,000 strong gathering declared they no longer wished Sultan Ibrahim to be their ruler.⁴⁰ In one of the most stunning reversal of Malay attitude, the Johore leaders chastised the Sultans for giving away their nation.⁴¹ They claimed that the Sultans had no right to do so as their legitimacy rested on the consent of the people.⁴² This new contractual basis of Malay political relationship was a clear departure from the feudalistic notion of the traditional *kerajaan*.

The meeting was a watershed in the history of Malay politics as the attack on the Sultans was supported and led by members of the Johore aristocracy. They accused the Sultan of violating the state constitution which established that the ruler had no right to give away the state to any foreign power, and that the advisory council must be consulted on matters of the constitution. Although the Mentri Besar of Johore, Ungku Abdul Aziz, and Dato Onn Bin Jaafar did not directly join in the attack of the Sultan, their presence at the meeting was undoubtedly an expression of their opposition against the Sultan.⁴³ Dato

⁴⁰ *Majlis* of 4 February carried a report on the rally of the Johore supporters of Dato Onn highlighting their demands for the Sultans to step down. See *Majlis* 4 Feb. 1946

⁴¹ The meeting of Johore Malays on 1 February 1946 was attended by several members of the Johore State Government, among whom were Dato Onn. It was reported that in their speeches, Dato Onn's colleagues denounced as illegal the Sultan of Johore's agreement with MacMichael. Anwar Abdullah, op. cit, pp. 68-69. See also J. de V. Allen, *The Malayan Union* (New Haven: Southeast Asia Studies, Yale University, 1967) pp. 33-36.

⁴² *Majlis* 4 Feb. 1946.

⁴³ When the criticism against Sultan Ibrahim turned into a rebellious call for his ouster, Dato Onn shrewdly toned down his attacks and defended the Sultans by pointing to the underhanded manner and threats used by MacMichael to gain the Sultans agreement. J. de V. Allen, op. cit., p. 34.

Onn went as far as telling the crowd that he tried in vain to dissuade the Sultan from signing the treaty. At the end of the meeting it was agreed that official protests should be sent to the British government as well as the Sultan of Johore. Similar criticism of the rulers was heard in Perak, Selangor and other states as well.⁴⁴

Malay newspapers became bolder in their criticism of the Sultans after the incident at Johore. *Majlis*, in its editorial of 6 February, referred extensively to the incident in Johore and defended the peoples' action. It accused the Sultan of being duped by the British and insisted that it was the ruler who had committed treason towards the Malay nation.⁴⁵ For the first time, *derkaha*, (treason)⁴⁶ was given a totally opposite meaning. The sovereignty of the Sultan and his government was replaced by a concept of the people as being sovereign. This marked a revolution in Malay political thought. Along with the concept of a single nationality expounded for the unification of all Malays, Malay political philosophy entered a post-traditional phase, almost completely severed from its feudal roots.⁴⁷

Faced with such overwhelming opposition, the Sultan of Johore reacted swiftly. The Mentri Besar, Ungku Aziz was removed and other leaders were fired from their government posts.⁴⁸ Despite his tough stand, Sultan Ibrahim of Johore began to feel the pressure of the attacks on him. He revoked his agreement to the Malayan Union and

⁴⁴ J. de V. Allen, op. cit., pp. 34-35.

⁴⁵ In its 6 February issue, *Majlis* headlined its editorial as "The Sultans have been cheated" and warned the Sultans that "without the raayat there would be no Raja ... but even without Rajas the raayat can be sovereign." *Majlis* 6 Feb. 1946.

⁴⁶ In traditional Malay culture, the Malay ruler is endowed with a divine sanction and legitimacy known as *daulat*. The state is embodied in the person of the ruler. Any act against the ruler is *derhaka* or treason. For a discussion of traditional Malay political culture, see J. M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965)

⁴⁷ Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu, Malay Concepts of Democracy and Community, 1945-1950* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp. 50-54.

⁴⁸ A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

began to follow the line of the conservative protests.⁴⁹ By this time, the conservative advance had gathered momentum. *Majlis* again repeated its calls for national unity amongst the Malays and urged leaders of the various Malay associations to form a national organization. It also proposed Dato Onn Jaafar as the most qualified leader of the Malay community citing his prominent role during the racial clashes in Johore.⁵⁰ The campaign by *Majlis* was soon followed by a public appeal by Dato Onn, which was published in the 24 January issue of *Majlis*, calling for a meeting of all Malay associations.

Stressing the urgent need of a national Malay effort to fight the Malayan Union and warning of dire consequences for Malay society if the Union plan was not defeated, Dato Onn's appeal received enthusiastic support from almost every Malay organization. Malacca, the famed city first occupied by a foreign power, was proposed as the site of the national gathering as a symbol of the beginning of Malay political renaissance.⁵¹ As a result of the successful appeals from *Majlis* and Dato Onn, the *Persatuan Melayu Selangor* (Selangor Malay Association) and the *Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Selangor* (Selangor Malay Nationalist Organization) volunteered to organize a Congress of all Malay associations. However, they suggested the meeting be held in the capital city of Kuala Lumpur so as to demonstrate to the British as well as the Malay rulers the resolve and determination of the movement.⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ *Majlis* 11 Jan. 1946.

⁵¹ *Majlis* 24 Jan. 1946. See above footnote no. 30.

⁵² Although the Malacca branch of Dato Onn's organization, the *Pergerakan Melayu Semenanjung Melaka* (Peninsula Malay Movement of Malacca), had agreed to host the Congress in response to Dato Onn's suggestion, Kuala Lumpur was chosen instead as it was thought to be more accessible and more apt since it was the seat of the colonial government. UMNO, *UMNO-10 Tahun* [UMNO, the First Ten Years] (Penang: UMNO, 1956) p. 17. Hereafter cited as *UMNO-10 Tahun*. See also UMNO, *UMNO-20 Tahun* [UMNO, Twenty Years] (Kuala Lumpur: UMNO, 1966) p. 12. Hereafter cited as *UMNO -20 Tahun*.

The Consolidation of Conservative Power : the Formation of UMNO.1 March 1946

The organization of the Congress was entrusted to the Malay associations of Selangor, the *Persatuan Melayu Selangor* (Selangor Malay Association) and the *Persatuan Kebangsaan Melayu Selangor* (Selangor Malay Nationalist Organization) under the direction of Za'ba (Zainal Abidin b.Ahmad), a well-known writer and grammarian. Arrangements were made for the Sultan Sulaiman Club, a bastion of MAS officers, to be the venue for the Congress to be held from the 1 to 4 March.⁵³ At the same time, *Majlis* appealed for public donations of financial support for the Congress.⁵⁴ Throughout February, it stepped up its campaign for support of the Congress. Letters and pledges supporting the Congress were published daily as it exhorted its readers to support Dato Onn and the Congress. By the middle of February thirty-nine organizations including the MNP had confirmed their attendance.⁵⁵

On 1 March 1946, barely two months after the announcement of the Malayan Union plan, over 200 delegates from 39 organizations and associations met in Kuala Lumpur to begin the first post-war pan-Malayan Malay Congress.⁵⁶ As a show of royal support it was officially launched by Sultan Alam Shah of Selangor.⁵⁷ Expectedly Dato

⁵³ Ibid., p. 18.

⁵⁴ *Majlis* 2 Feb. 1946.

⁵⁵ Ibid. This was the beginning of the MNP's attempt at some sort of rapport with the conservatives. According to Ahmad Boestaman, a meeting between the two parties had been arranged by Tengku Mahmud a descendant of the Patani royal house which was under Siamese control. Boestaman recalled that the meeting with the "feudalists" was the first and the last. Ahmad Boestaman, op. cit., pp. 29-33.

⁵⁶ UMNO officially recorded 39 organizations actively participated in the Congress while two attended as observers. The number of organizations and associations in attendance was usually given as 41 which included these two associations which attended as observers. One of these is the Indonesian representative of a the organization known as *Pembantu Indonesia Malaya Merdeka* (Indonesia Malaya Independence Support). Little is known of this group except that it claimed to represent the Indonesian nationalist movement. UMNO/SG/14/1946. See also Anwar Abdullah's list in Anwar Abdullah, op. cit., pp. 127-129.

⁵⁷ *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., p. 25.

Onn Bin Jaafar was unanimously elected as chairman of the Congress and immediately underlined the main objective of the Congress which was to "raise and defend the integrity and dignity of our people and to ensure the protection of our homeland and nation ... which can only be achieved if we are united as one people and nation...".⁵⁸ Following Onn's opening speech, the Congress set out to tackle its agenda. The main items on the agenda were, firstly, the establishment of a national organization and secondly a campaign against the Malayan Union.⁵⁹

The Congress quickly passed and immediately adopted its first resolution. This was the formation of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) also known as *Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu* (PEKEMBAR). UMNO was to function as an umbrella organization whose mandate was to coordinate the activities of the associations present. A Working Committee was formed to draft a charter and constitution for UMNO.⁶⁰ This working Committee became the nucleus of UMNO's Executive Council and its membership reflected the glaring domination of the conservative aristocratic leadership. Four of the five members were from the aristocracy: Dato Abdul Wahab, who was the Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang, Dato Kamil, Dato Hamzah and Dato Onn himself. The fifth member was Za'ba who, while not an aristocrat, was a highly accomplished university educated MAS officer.⁶¹

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 26-29. passim.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 28.

⁶⁰ *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., p. 28.

⁶¹ Ibid. cf. above, footnote no. 36. The Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang is one of the eight regional chiefs of Perak. The title *Dato* is a hereditary title held by Malay aristocrats of the middle rank who were not directly related to royalty. Whereas, the titles *Raja* and *Tunku* or *Tengku* were honorific titles held by members of the royal family. In the heyday of traditional Malay rule, the *datos* were junior officials of the *kerajaan* while the *rajas* and *tengkus* comprised the inner circle of the Malay ruler. In colonial Malaya, this division disappeared when admission to government services was generally based on merit. cf. chap. 1. pp.13-16, footnote no. 17. For a detailed study of the traditional Malay political and social structure, see J. M. Gullick, op. cit., pp. 90-94. For biographical note, See Appendix D.

The rest of the first day was devoted to taking into account the suggestions of the various organizations as to the content and direction of the UMNO. The second day of the Congress was devoted to debate and discussion of the Malayan Union. One dramatic highlight was a speech delivered by a Malay youth, representing Malay children, which pleaded with the delegates to "protect the rights of your children while we are young and helpless"⁶² This drama demonstrated the conservatives' skilful manipulation of Malay sentiments toward their cause. After the preliminary speeches by the UMNO leaders the debate on the Malayan Union was started by the Malay Association of Trengganu who argued the illegality of the treaty signed by the Sultans and MacMichael. Throughout the day, one by one delegates focused on this since no ruler had the right to act without advise or consensus as required by their respective constitutions and *adat* practice.⁶³

Despite having relative support from at least some of the Sultans, the issue of the sovereignty(*daulat*) of the Sultans was raised during the meeting. The concept of the sovereignty of the people(*raayat*), and of a nation(*bangsa*), was defined in a new radical light challenging the traditional Malay world view. There were even calls for the abdication of the rulers throughout the debate.⁶⁴ The Congress agreed to immediately begin its anti-Malayan Union campaign by sending a formal protest note to Whitehall demanding a withdrawal of the Malayan Union and the restoration of the pre-war constitutional arrangement.⁶⁵ The main points of the note argued that the Malayan Union

⁶² *Majlis* 3 Mar. 1946

⁶³ *Ibid.* The Trengganu delegates argued that since the Agreement was entered between MacMichael and his royal appointee, it was illegal and not binding on the people of Trengganu. UMNO/SG/158/47

⁶⁴ *Majlis* 3 Mar. 1946

⁶⁵ *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

could not be legally implemented since the treaties obtained by MacMichael were null and void. It was further argued that this was because⁶⁶

- a) the MacMichael treaties contravened the constitutions of the Malay States;
- b) the MacMichael treaties were agreed upon by the Malay rulers without the knowledge, consultation and consent of their subjects;
- c) the Malayan Union proposal violated the provisions of the Atlantic Charter;
- d) the sovereignty of the Malay States had been recognized by international law as well as the British government itself;

In addition, UMNO prepared plans for legal recourse by appointing Sir Ronald Braddell as its legal adviser and representative.⁶⁷ Braddell began to prepare a case for UMNO based on the illegality of the MacMichael treaties. Finally, it was also decided that UMNO would reconvene no more than a month later to plan further actions against the Malayan Union.

Help From Britain : The "Malaya Hands" Protest

The Malay cause received a welcome boost from a most unlikely quarter - former colonialists who were the architects of pre-war British rule in Malaya. Old "Malaya hands" such as Swettenham, Winstedt, Clementi and Maxwell in an unexpected showing, railed against the British government's plan.⁶⁸ As Malayan opposition gathered in strength the anti-Union lobby in Britain was putting pressure on the government. The campaign by the former colonialists was even joined by left-wing members of the Labour party and radical Union leaders as well as the opposition

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ R. Braddell was engaged as UMNO's legal adviser until 1948. UMNO/SG/14/1946; For biographical notes, see Appendix D.

⁶⁸ For biographical notes, see Appendix D.

Conservative party, a situation which deeply annoyed and embarrassed the Labour government.⁶⁹

In the British Parliament, the Conservative Member of Parliament L. D. Gammans, became the spokesman of the anti-Union lobby in Britain, and was even referred to as the member from Malaya for his vociferous attack on the Union plan.⁷⁰ The old Malaya hands campaigned through lobbying as well as letters to British newspapers. The campaign was highlighted by the famous "proconsul letter" on 16 April 1946 to the *Times* by seventeen of the most prominent colonial administrators including Guillemard, Clementi, Maxwell, Swettenham and Winstedt. In the open letter, they attacked the government's underhanded manner of obtaining consent from the Sultans.⁷¹

Meanwhile, in Malaya, having achieved their objective of attracting support from within the Malay community as well as from without, such as from former British colonialists in Britain, the conservatives began to consolidate their power by focusing on the formation of a national organization. Aware of the danger of splitting Malay support, they stopped attacking the Sultans and instead reiterated their commitment to uphold and defend the position of the sultans.⁷² Dato Onn and other Malay leaders directed their protest, shifting all blame, to the British. In this way the conservatives offered a common voice and solidarity of Malays of all colour and factions. They also refrained from attacking non-Malay groups who had supported the Malayan Union such as the Chinese business community or even the MCP.

⁶⁹ A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., pp. 60-61

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ See above, footnote no. 22.

⁷² Ariffin Omar, op. cit., pp. 98-102. The conservative leaders, having prevented the Sultans from attending the Malayan Union Inauguration ceremonies, quickly moved to heal the rift. They led the Sultans on to the balcony to receive pledges of loyalty from the crowd. *Majlis* 3 Apr. 1946.

Summary : UMNO as the Party of the Conservative Elite

The formation of the *United Malay National Organization* (UMNO) was the third and final successful realization of the conservative quest that had begun before the outbreak of war. Two previous attempts, the first in 1938 and later in 1940, failed to establish a national political movement due to the deep regional and class divisions then dominating Malay society. Its success resulted from one common objective of the various associations, which was to coordinate a united opposition to the Malayan Union plan.

At its establishment UMNO was, as its name implied, nothing more than an amalgam of the Malay associations that had met to synchronize their anti-Malayan Union protest. It was out of this objective that UMNO was born. However, the conservative elite who spearheaded the movement had far greater plans for UMNO. In the meantime it seemed UMNO was effective enough as it was.

Nonetheless, from its inception the structure and organization of UMNO displayed an apparent intention on the part of its leaders to develop it into a long-term political bastion of conservative power. The president of UMNO, Dato Onn Jaafar had the sole prerogative to appoint his executive committee.⁷³ The voting system of two votes for each member organization favoured the conservatives who led a majority of the associations in UMNO, while the large organizations such as the MNP suffered.⁷⁴

⁷³ *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., p. 25

⁷⁴ *Ibid.* The MNP was plainly dissatisfied with the voting regulations of UMNO which distributed two votes per member-association equally. Ahmad Boestaman hinted that if it was not for this voting system, the MNP could have dominated UMNO. See also Ahmad Boestaman, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

Chapter 6

THE CONSERVATIVES' ROAD TO POWER : DEFEAT OF THE MALAYAN UNION AND THE BEGINNING OF BRITISH-UMNO ACCORD, April-December 1946

Ignoring Malay protest, the British government proceeded with its plans for the Malayan Union. During the House of Commons debate on 8 March 1946 concerning the Straits Settlements (Repeal) Bill, the Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Office, Mr. Creech Jones, stated unequivocally that "the British government must push on with its policy".¹ The Bill was passed on the 18 of March, clearing the way for the implementation of the Malayan Union.² George Viscount Hall, Secretary of State for the Colonial Office, reiterated that the British government "would not admit the right of one party to withdraw from engagements solemnly entered".³ However, he added that the citizenship provision of the Malayan Union was deferred "until further consultations".⁴ Edward Gent, the Secretary of the Colonial Office, was named to be the first Governor of the Union. The Malayan Union was to be inaugurated on 1 April 1946 setting the stage for an escalation of British-Malay disagreements.

¹ House of Commons Debate, 8 Mar 1946, col. 727, cited in Albert Lau, *The Malayan Union Controversy, 1942-1948*, (Singapore: Oxford University Press) p. 144.

² The treaties obtained by MacMichael allowed the Malayan Union proposals to be effected by an Order in Council, thereby bypassing debates in the House of Commons.

³ House of Commons Debate, 18 mar 1946, col. 1565, Ibid.

⁴ Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Creech Jones' press release, *Malay Mail*, 18 March 1946.

UMNO on the Offensive : The Boycott of the Malayan Union Inauguration, April 1 1946.

When it became apparent that the British government was determined to push through the Malayan Union, UMNO convened an emergency Congress on 29 March 1946, barely two days before the inauguration of the Malayan Union. At the meeting, attended by 31 of UMNO's member associations, a resolution calling for a complete boycott of the new government was unanimously passed. A massive public demonstration was planned for the day of the inaugural ceremony in Kuala Lumpur.

In addition, UMNO members who had been appointed to Advisory Councils of the various states, as well as to Federal and Union committees were to reject their appointments. As a sign of mourning for the "death" of their nation, UMNO supporters were required to wear white headbands. No Malay was to take part in any of the ceremonies and celebrations of the Governor's installation. UMNO also asked the Malay rulers to boycott the inauguration ceremony as well, warning them that UMNO would instigate a general withdrawal of Malay support for any ruler who attended Gent's installation.⁵

Most of the UMNO directives were enthusiastically complied with by its supporters. Doubts about the rulers' cooperation led UMNO leaders to initiate drastic measures in order to ensure that the rulers stayed away from Gent's installation. UMNO supporters were directed to gather in front of the Station Hotel where the Malay rulers had gathered. The atmosphere in Kuala Lumpur on the eve of the inauguration of the Malayan Union became increasingly tense as thousands of Malays in white headbands mingled uneasily with police and army units.⁶ An eye-witness account described the situation as follows:

⁵ *Majlis* 3 Apr 1946. UMNO, *UMNO-10 Tahun* [The First Ten Years] (Penang: UMNO, 1956) p. 37.

⁶ According to Stockwell, members of the wartime Malay resistance force, *Wataniah*, were given the task to 'muster the crowds in the event of Malay apathy, which was most unlikely

"we had just arrived from Batu Pahat, after travelling the whole morning, I didn't know about the white headband, I did not have any kind of white cloth but people were handing out pieces of white cloth, some of them tearing apart their handkerchiefs ... A large group were marching towards the Station Hotel where there was already a large crowd waiting. There were police with shields and Gurkhas, some of the English Police Officers were telling people in Malay to return home and not to cause trouble. We were very angry, there were shouts '*Takkan Melayu Hilang di-Dunia*' (Malays Shall Never Disappear) and '*Hidup Melayu*' (Long Live the Malays) ...

We stood in front of the Station Hotel, there were barricades and police ... people were pushing. Then there was a shout, I could not see very well but on the balcony there were the rulers with Datuk Onn and our leaders, and we all shouted '*Daulat Tuanku*' (Hail, Your Highness). People were telling each other to be careful, the police might attack, some wanted to move forward... there was a lot of pushing. Others were telling people to calm down and not to cause trouble. it was very exciting, I thought that there was going to be a riot of some sort but nothing much happened." ⁷

Onn, who had met the Malay rulers in the hotel, succeeded in dissuading them from attending Gent's inauguration although there were indications that Onn had used threats to convince the rulers.⁸ It was an emotional scene as the rulers appeared in front of the crowd, moving some to tears. The most obvious point was the realization that UMNO held the key to their power and status; "no raayat, no rulers" as *Majlis* had

given the fervour of Malay protests earlier on. Stockwell, *British Policy and Malay Politics During the Malayan Union Experiment, 1942-1948* (Kuala Lumpur: MBRAS, 1979) p.71. footnote 170.

⁷ Personal account of Abdul Rahman Sulong. Interview in Singapore, August 1989.

⁸ According to Stockwell, quoting a senior UMNO member, Dato Onn actually barred one ruler from leaving for the inauguration ceremony. A.J. Stockwell, op. cit. p. 71. footnote 169. See also Anwar Abdullah's account claimed that Dato Onn warned the Sultans that the people will go *amok* (rioting; to go on a rampage), if they proceeded with the ceremonies. Anwar Abdullah, *Dato Onn, Riwayat Hidup* [Dato Onn, a Biography] (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Perchetakan Abadi, 1971) p. 149.

bluntly put it.⁹ It was a profound victory for the conservative elite. As Allen aptly surmised, "in those few hours the very basis of the Malay political traditions had been subverted and the trend toward constitutional monarchy had inexorably begun."¹⁰ In addition, aware of the presence of a British parliamentary team who were on a fact-finding mission in Malaya,¹¹ UMNO prepared plans for massive public demonstrations wherever the two MPs went.

The British Retreat - The Search for a New Deal, April - May 1946.

The boycott of the inauguration ceremony of the Malayan Union shocked British authorities. Two weeks after the establishment of the Malayan Union, the sultans formally withdrew their agreements with MacMichael and prepared a delegation to London to demand fresh negotiations.¹² The rulers repeated their claims of having been pressured by MacMichael into signing the treaties. Gent, in an effort to discourage them from going to London, met with the rulers.¹³ The outcome of these meetings persuaded Gent that the Malayan Union was doomed and advised Whitehall of the need to accommodate the Malay demands.¹⁴

⁹ *Majlis* 6 Feb 1946

¹⁰ J. de. V. Allen, *The Malayan Union* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) p. 42.

¹¹ The parliamentary delegation was made up of Col. D.R. Rees-Williams, a Labour Party Member of Parliament, and Capt. L. D. Gammans, a Conservative member of Parliament. The delegation was on a fact finding mission to Sarawak on the matter of the cession of Sarawak to Britain. The crisis in Malaya had compelled George Hall, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, to ask them to continue on to Malaya to investigate the situation. See A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 88.

¹² A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 90. Albert Lau, op. cit, p. 166.

¹³ There was a concern that if the rulers were to proceed to London the crisis would worsen for according to MacDonald, "they (the Rulers) will fall into the hands of retired Malayan officials and lawyers with consequent increase in the difficulties of reaching agreement". Telegram, MacDonald to Hall, 21 June 1946. cited in Albert Lau, op. cit, p. 166.

¹⁴ By 2 June, MacDonald and Gent were convinced that UMNO was unmoved but sincere in its desire to compromise and begin fresh negotiations. A. J. Stockwell, op. cit, 89.

Whitehall was caught in a most tenuous situation - Edward Gent, one of the architects of the Malayan Union, had admitted to a blunder. The British government decided to send further reinforcements. The Labour Member of Parliament (MP) Rees-Williams and his Conservative counterpart Capt. L. D. Gammans, were on an official tour of Sarawak.¹⁵ They were asked to proceed to Malaya so as to ascertain the situation and to find some kind settlement. At the same time, Sir Malcolm MacDonald, the Governor-General designate on his way to assume his appointment, was briefed on the situation and told to shore up Gent who was thought to have succumbed to Malay pressures.¹⁶

The two parliamentarians arrived in time to witness the boycott of Gent's installation and the event at the Station Hotel. In the next two weeks as they traveled across Malaya, they became impressed by the sophistication of UMNO's organizational abilities noting that even Malay women had turned out in protest under the banner of UMNO.¹⁷ By the end of May, Rees-Williams and Gammans had seen enough of the Malay opposition to urge London to modify of the Union plan and begin a dialogue with the Malay rulers as well as with UMNO. Gammans had dire warnings for Whitehall that unless a solution was found, there "would be a rapid deterioration of the situation and Britain would have a second Palestine on her hands"¹⁸

¹⁵ See above, footnote no. 11. cf. below, footnote no. 18.

¹⁶ Hall wrote to Gent that, "your sudden and fundamental change of attitude has come as a great shock to me. I find it hard to believe that it has been possible for you to reach a complete assessment of public opinion in so short a time." Telegram, Hall to Gent, 8 May 1946. cited in Albert Lau, op. cit., p.157.

¹⁷ At the 29 March meeting of UMNO, as a show of force, protests and demonstrations were organized at every place the parliamentarians visited. In Batu Pahat, referring to Malay-British relations, a banner read, "you have destroyed in four weeks what you have taken 80 years to build" *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., p. 38. For account of the mass rally in Penang which were held by women and school children, see Md. Salleh Bin Md. Gaus, *Politik Melayu Pulau Pinang, 1945-1951* [Malay Politics in Penang, 1945-1957] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984) pp. 52-53.

¹⁸ *Malaya Tribune* 11 June 1946. Gammans was such a severe critic of the British Government's Malayan policy that he was known as the "Member for Malaya" in Parliament. A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 60.

There was sufficient cause for alarm. The Malay opposition was taking on an increasingly anti-British tone rather than mere dissatisfaction with the Malayan Union. Onn had made an oblique reference to militancy when at the May Congress of UMNO held in Johore Bahru, he remarked that "if the Malays resort to violence it won't be their fault".¹⁹ The spectre of Malay mobs with *krises* (Malay daggers) and *parangs* (machete) in the earlier racial conflict was still fresh in everybody's mind.

Finally, British authorities began to concede their miscalculation when even Governor-General Sir Malcolm MacDonald came to the same conclusion as Gent and the two British MPs. He argued that the Malays were not opposed to some constitutional changes but that their only demand was for a return to the pre-1941 status quo as a starting point for negotiations towards a form of federation.²⁰ MacDonald stressed that the Malay rulers and UMNO were acting as the loyal opposition and that at no time did they aspire to an outright severance of British ties. On the other hand, MacDonald further warned that there were elements in the Malay movement toying with the idea of a political union with the Indonesian islands.²¹ This was an explicit reference to the threat posed by the Malay radicals.

The Demise of the Malayan Union, May 1946.

From the beginning of May, British officials began a series of private meetings with the Malay rulers in an effort to overcome the political impasse. UMNO, having been invited discreetly, was represented by Onn and his top aides.²² Out of these informal

¹⁹ *Majlis* 15 May 1946

²⁰ Telegram, MacDonald to Hall, 25 May 1946, cited in Albert Lau, op. cit., p. 161.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ariffin Omar, *Bangsa Melayu, Malay Concepts of Democracy and Community, 1945-1950* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1993) pp. 104-105.

negotiations, it was proposed that a Committee comprised of the three parties be formed to discuss the Malayan Union. Aware of a weakening in the British position and having tasted success in the boycott of the inauguration ceremonies, Onn and his colleagues decided to convene a General meeting of UMNO to obtain a mandate to accept the British proposals.

A second Congress of UMNO was convened at Johore Bahru on 11 May 1946.²³ The importance of presenting a strong and united UMNO to the British before joining any negotiations prompted a call for further tightening of the organization. At this Congress UMNO was officially inaugurated and Onn was elected its first president. A charter which was first mooted in the March Congress was passed, binding the member associations in a loosely tied federation. The Congress discussed the British proposal for a Working Committee and agreed to defer acceptance pending further clarification from the British as well as the Malay rulers on its agenda.²⁴

Towards the end of May, it became quite apparent that the British were ready to consider some sort of modification of the Malayan Union plan. On May 28 and 29, Rees-Williams and Gammans, who had witnessed Malay opposition during their travel from Kuala Lumpur to Penang, attended a conference between UMNO and the Malay rulers. During the conference, Rees-Williams and Gammans were impressed by the "political sophistication of UMNO leaders and the solidarity and determination of the Malay people... expressed in conversation, conference and a mass rally."²⁵ By this time MacDonald was in full agreement with Gent's view. Thus the collective reports of Gent, MacDonald, Rees-Williams and Gammans finally persuaded Whitehall to agree to modify the Malayan Union Plan which in effect marked its demise.

²³ *Majlis*, 12 May 1946

²⁴ *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., pp. 26-30.

²⁵ A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p.89.

UMNO's Road to Power : British-UMNO Informal Negotiations, May-July 1946.

By the end of May, The Malayan Union had effectively been defeated. Gent was finally given permission by Hall to begin negotiations with the Rulers and UMNO towards a modification of the Malayan Union.²⁶ The British hoped to offer some concessionary changes while retaining the framework of the Union plan. Gent immediately contacted the Rulers and UMNO proposing formal talks on the constitutional impasse. However, the widening gap between the British and Malay positions was clear from the start. At the first meeting, on 2 June, UMNO had insisted that formal talks could only begin with the abrogation of the MacMichael treaties.²⁷

For the next two months, a series of meetings took place to resolve the issue. Anxious as they were to dispense with the Union plan, the British were, however, unwilling to return to the pre-war status quo as a basis for negotiations. UMNO was unmoved and by the middle of June, along with the Rulers, had threatened to abandon the discussions in Malaya and to proceed to England immediately for direct talks.²⁸ Again, Gent and MacDonald pestered Hall for further concessions. Hall gradually relented, all the while insisting that the commitment of a centralized constitutional structure must not be compromised.²⁹

On 26 June, MacDonald and Gent met with the Malays and managed to obtain agreement that UMNO and the rulers accept increased centralization and concessions for non-Malays. The impending revocation of the Malayan Union revived the idea of a

²⁶ Hall, while approving most of Gent's recommendations, however, insisted that any future document be approved by Her Majesty's Government and not by the Sultans and UMNO. Albert Lau, *op. cit.*, p 163.; Stockwell, on the other hand, quoting a 'secret source' claimed that Gent was allowed to convey the 'eagerness' of Britain to meet Malay demands. See A. J. Stockwell, *op. cit.*, p. 89. footnote 16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 90.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

federation. UMNO, however, reiterated its demand that the MacMichael treaties be revoked as soon as an acceptable plan came into being.³⁰ With the idea of a centralized government secured, all parties felt that a satisfactory solution was possible. The success of the meeting was highlighted with an agreement for the establishment of a joint working committee to begin formal negotiations.

In response to the progress made during the informal talks with the British, UMNO summoned another Assembly to discuss the British proposals and prepare for the second round of British-Malay negotiations.³¹ At this meeting which took place on the 29 and 30 June in Ipoh UMNO faced its first crisis. In a dispute over the adoption of an UMNO flag, the MNP and several other radical associations staged a walk out and subsequently withdrew from UMNO. The cause of the radical withdrawal was, however, more than just over the issue of a flag. The MNP which had up to this time supported UMNO's leadership found itself left out of the constitutional negotiations which were conducted by UMNO's top leaders. As almost all of UMNO's leadership were members of the conservative elite, MNP's views and proposals never made it past the convention debates and thus it decided to act on its own.³²

Nevertheless, showing increased confidence Onn and the other conservative leaders of UMNO were not perturbed by the exit of the radicals. Proceeding with the issue of the proposed constitutional negotiations, UMNO prepared a draft proposal for a new form of federation which more or less was halfway between the pre-war triple

³⁰ Ibid.; See also Albert Lau, op. cit., p. 163.

³¹ *UMNO -10 Tahun*, op. cit., p. 42.

³² The MNP's leaders was aware of the dominance of the Malay conservatives in UMNO. They devised various strategies to avoid being submerged by conservative voice during UMNO meetings, One of which was to lobby individual members of other Malay organizations to their side during debates. They were also critical of the distribution of voting privileges in UMNO which gave them 2 votes similar to other organizations which were much smaller than the MNP. See Ahmad Boestaman, *Carving the Path to the Summit* trans. and intro. by William R. Roff, (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press,1979) pp. 70-71. cf. Chap. 5. pp. 111-112. footnote no. 74.

forms of government and the Malayan Union. An UMNO delegation consisting of Onn and the executive leaders was approved and Roland Braddell appointed as legal adviser during the negotiations with the British.³³

With the ouster of the radicals, UMNO became a truly conservative organization made up of member associations representing the traditional Malay elites - from aristocratic bureaucrats to village and religious elders. It also made UMNO more indispensable to the British. In a correspondence to London, MacDonald stressed the advantage and importance of "strengthening the position of Dato Onn's moderates against that of the Indonesian-inspired extremists."³⁴

By the first week of July, Whitehall had come to the conclusion that it would be best to proceed with negotiations as soon as possible. Another meeting was convened between UMNO, the Rulers and British officials on 25 July. Both sides, while eager to begin formal discussions, were vague and reluctant in giving complete assurances on most issues. Nevertheless, an agreement was reached to form a committee comprised of representatives of the three parties to begin formal negotiations. The Working Committee of Twelve, as it became known, met largely behind closed doors from August to November.³⁵

³³ UMNO/SG 14/46

³⁴ Albert Lau, op. cit., p. 169.

³⁵ UMNO/SG 14/46. See *Constitutional Proposals for Malaya: Report of the Working Committee Appointed by a Conference of His Excellency the Governor of the Malayan Union, Their Highnesses the Rulers of the Malay States and the Representatives of the United Malays National Organization*, (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1946) Hereafter cited as *Report of the Working Committee*.

Formal Anglo- Malay Negotiations : The Constitutional Working Committee of Twelve.
(CWC) August - December 1946.

The Working Committee of Twelve was made up of six British officials, four Malays representing the Rulers and two representatives of UMNO. The rulers and UMNO were assisted by two British advisers whom they had chosen. The British representatives were A. T. Newbould, K. K. O'Connor, W. D. Godsall, H. W. Linehan and A. Williams. The Governor-General was represented by Maj-Gen. H. R. Hone and D. C. Watherson was appointed the committee's Secretary.³⁶

The Malay Rulers were represented by Dato Hamzah Bin Abdullah, Hj. Mohammed Sheriff, Raja Kamaralzaman B. Raja Mansur (Perak) and Dato Nik Ahmad Kamil. Except for Raja Kamaralzaman, who was the nephew of the Sultan of Perak, the rest of the Rulers' representatives were serving officials of the Malay royalty. UMNO was represented by Dato Onn himself and Dato Abdul Rahman B. Mohd. Yasin. The legal advisor for UMNO was R. Braddell and Sir Theodore Adams acted on behalf of the rulers. Although it held only two seats on this committee, UMNO's strong position was never in doubt since two representatives of the Rulers were also members of UMNO.³⁷

The Working Committee met on four separate occasions between August and November. In their deliberations, a framework was provided as a guide to the creation of a new constitutional proposal. The main points were as follows, 1) that there should be a strong central government; 2) that the individuality of each of the Malay States and of the Settlements should be clearly expressed; 3) that the new agreement should offer... prospects of ultimate self-government; 4) a common form of citizenship

³⁶ Ibid., p. 1.

³⁷ Ibid. Dato Nik Ahmad Kamil of Kelantan and Dato Hamzah Bin Abdullah of Selangor were founding members of UMNO. Dato Hamzah was also the president of the Selangor Malay Association.

should be introduced; and finally, the most significant, that those states are Malay States ruled by Your Highnesses and the subjects of Your Highnesses have no alternative allegiances.³⁸

The guideline clearly illustrates the British government concession to the Malays, particularly with the provisions of the last clause. At the same time the inclusion of the citizenship requirements was the compromise accepted by UMNO and the Rulers. By the 18 November, the last day of the Committee's meeting in 1946, a Draft Agreement had been completed by the Committee. In early December 1946, it received the conditional approval of the British government and was made public on Christmas eve 1946, as the *Constitutional Proposals for Malaya : Report of the Working Committee Appointed by a Conference of His Excellency the Governor of the Malayan Union, Their Highnesses the Rulers of the Malay States and the Representatives of the United Malay National Organization*.³⁹

The First Conservative Triumph : The Anglo-Malay Constitutional Proposals

The Constitutional proposals resulting from the Anglo-Malay Working Committee, while not adversely affecting the original position or power of the British government, retreated from the position of the MacMichael treaties obtained exactly one year earlier. The proposed constitutional arrangement was in fact very similar to the pre-war constitution of the Federated Malay States except that it now included all the states of Malaya. The Malayan Union, which would have drastically reduced the position

³⁸ Ibid., p. 7. passim.

³⁹ See above, footnote no. 35.

as well as the power of the Malays, was replaced by a federation proposal which allayed Malay fears but managed to salvage some key principles of the Malayan Union.⁴⁰

The Governor of the Malayan Union was replaced by a High Commissioner who retained most of the powers of the Governor except for matters touching Malay Customs and Religion. These powers were returned to the Malay rulers. There was to be a Federal Legislative Council as well as separate State Councils which provided for a majority of appointed Malay members, thereby ensuring the continuity of Malay political dominance. The only new provision was that of Federal Citizenship which would be extended to all races domiciled in Malaya but again the conditions under which citizenship would be granted greatly hindered the admittance of many non-Malays.⁴¹

With the publication of the Working Committee's proposals, the conservative Malay elite and UMNO had come a long way. It had been barely more than a year since the confusion and mayhem following the Japanese surrender. In that short period of time the conservative elite in UMNO had risen from relative obscurity to become partners with their British and Malay overlords in the planning for the future of Malaya. Complete victory, however, was yet to come. Another political battle had to be won. Once made public, the British-Malay Agreement aroused the apathetic non-Malays, (as well as the Communists) into active opposition. Conducted in secret, the new proposals completely denied non-Malay participation and ignored their views. Seen as a collusion between British and traditional Malay interests, the new proposals aroused an opposition which grew in intensity, reminiscent of the earlier storms of Malay protest. Seizing the opportunity provided by non-Malay opposition to the British-UMNO agreement, the Malay radicals of the MNP mounted their own protest in a renewed challenge to UMNO.

⁴⁰ *Report of the Working Committee* op. cit., p. 9.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

Chapter 7

THE FEDERATION OF MALAYA AGREEMENT, 1948 :

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CONSERVATIVES

PART ONE :

THE RETURN OF THE RADICALS -

THE MNP AND THE ANTI-FEDERATION COALITION,

JANUARY 1947-JULY 1947

Despite the crushing failure suffered with the Japanese surrender, the radicals were still able to regroup with the foundation of the MNP, the first Malay political party formed after the war. It was, however, a weak MNP functioning mainly through its newspaper, *Suara Raayat*, in the early post-war months. Malay disaffection with the BMA's attitude towards Malay leaders and later, the Malayan Union, provided the impetus for the MNP's expansion. By January 1946, at the height of Malay protests against the Malayan Union, the MNP had grown considerably with branches in Penang, Singapore and Malacca.

When the Malayan Union was first announced in October 1945, the MNP gave its qualified support. As Malay protests led by conservatives such as Dato Onn gained increasing support, the MNP decided not to oppose the conservatives. When UMNO was formed the MNP had little choice but to join. Relations between the radicals and the conservatives within UMNO were strained and filled with mutual suspicions from the start.¹ The MNP used every means available to assert itself during UMNO's meetings. At the first UMNO Congress, the MNP heatedly argued its concept of *Indonesia Raya* and

¹ According to Ahmad Boestaman, the MNP staged its first walkout during this inaugural meeting of UMNO. Ahmad Boestaman, *Carving the Path to the Summit* trans. and intro. by William R. Roff (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1979) p. 50.

absolute independence.² At the UMNO Congress in June 1946, the marriage of convenience between conservative Malay associations and the Malay radicals ended. The MNP and several other radical associations staged a walk out and subsequently withdrew from UMNO.³

After the walkout of UMNO the MNP concentrated its efforts into organizing its own pan-Malayan movement.⁴ The MNP had already formed its youth wing called the *Angkatan Pemuda Insaf* or API (Youth Movement for Justice). API was headed by Ahmad Boestaman and other MNP leaders who had some form of military training. It was organized in military style with the motto "Merdeka Dengan Darah" or "Freedom through Blood". The MNP also launched two more newspapers, the *Pelita Malaya* (Light of Malaya) and the weekly, *Suluh Malaya* (Leading Light of Malaya).

In addition, the MNP formed a women's wing known as *Angkatan Wanita Sedar* (AWAS) or Women's Awareness Movement under Shamsiah Fakhir. It also tried to organize the Malay peasantry and launched another organization known as *Barisan Tani Sa-Malaya* (BATAS) or Malayan Farmer's Front. Towards the end of 1946, the MNP had branches in almost every town in Malaya. Its daring slogans such as API which means "Flame", and AWAS or "Beware", had especially attracted younger urban Malays, further increasing its militancy.

Along with the MNP there were several other Malay groups who were opposed to the British-UMNO accord. While some of these were affiliates or satellite organizations of the MNP, such as API and AWAS, others such as the *Hizbul Muslimin* (Muslim Front)

² The MNP resorted to filibuster tactics of long winded presentations, speeches and questions. Ramlah Adam, *UMNO: Organasasi dan Kegiatan, 1945-51* [UMNO: Organization and Activities, 1945-46] (Kota Bharu, Kelantan: Mohd. Nawi Book, 1978) p. 15.

³ Ibid. The UMNO flag was made up of red in the top-half and white at the bottom. A yellow circle with a green *kris* (Malay dagger) crossed by its sheath occupies the middle part of the flag.

⁴ Ahmad Boestaman, op. cit., pp. 67-73.

and *Kesatuan Melayu Johor* (KMJ) led by Dr. Hamzah bin Taib opposed UMNO out of concern for their respective independence.⁵ In the latter half of 1947, many of these associations joined several MNP inspired organizations in a unified attempt to protest the new Constitutional Proposals.⁶ It was a marriage of convenience between the extreme secular and left-wing radicals of the MNP and its affiliates and the anti-UMNO Malay associations of such varied background as the religious-oriented *Hizbul Muslimin* and the conservative KMJ.

The MNP was critical and highly suspicious of the secretive nature of the constitutional negotiations. When the Working Committee was formed, the MNP denounced it as a conspiracy to maintain and shore up the position and power of the traditional aristocratic elite.⁷ Claiming to be the true representative of the Malay people, the MNP refused to accept the proposed arrangements. When the UMNO-British Constitutional Proposals were announced the MNP prepared to wage a long battle with the UMNO-British group.

The Non-Malay Response : the Council for Joint Action (CJA), August 1946

The non-Malay reaction was initially divided between the conservative Chinese elite and the Chinese communists as well as emerging groups formed by English-educated

⁵ The *Hizbul Muslimin* is an Islamic traditionalist party which evolved from the early days of the Islamic reform movement in the early decades of the century. Dr Hamzah had, from the inception of UMNO, been vehemently opposed to any compromised with the British. Although he did not share the KMM's or the MNP's idea of an Indonesian Union nor cooperation with non-Malay parties, he led the KMJ out of in May 1947 UMNO and, supported PUTERA even though the KMJ did not join the coalition, to oppose the Federation Proposals. Other pro-MNP Malay groups were also neither left-wing nor secular such as the MNP. Some such as the *Hizbullah* were Islamic based parties which later formed the *Parti Islam Malaysia* (PAS). See Khoo Kay Kim, *Malay Society: Transformation and Democratisation* (Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications, 1991) pp. 243-279.

⁶ Ahmad Boestaman, op. cit., pp. 99-101

⁷ Ibid., pp. 104-105.

Malayans, including Eurasians and Indians as well as Chinese and Malays. Most prominent among these were the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) formed in August 1946⁸ and the Malayan Democratic Party (MDU).⁹ The Chinese conservative leaders were mainly from the business elite led by Tan Cheng Lock, a respected anglophile businessman.¹⁰ The next detractor to the federation proposal was the MCP, along with the militant labour unions under its influence and control¹¹

Aware of the necessity for a united effort in opposing the powerful UMNO-British partnership, a call was made by the MIC to organize joint actions among the anti-federation parties.¹² The suggestion was enthusiastically responded to by all of the non-Malay factions including the MNP. On 14 December, eight of the opposition groups met to form the *Council for Joint Action* (CJA) These were the MNP, the MDU, Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA), the MIC and Chinese business leaders.¹³

⁸ The MIC, initially, supported UMNO's struggle as it accepted UMNO's claim that Malaya was Malay land and that the MIC would "never appeal over the heads of the Malays". Rajeswary Ampalavar, *The Indian Minority and Political Change in Malaya, 1945-1957* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford university Press, 1981) p. 83.

⁹ The Malayan Democratic Party (MDU) was a left-wing, Singapore-based, non-communal party founded just two months after the end of the war on 21 December 1945. Its leadership were from the English educated elite of Singapore who founded other non-communal parties such as the Progressive Party and the Singapore Labour Party. The MDU and these other parties never really had much influence outside Singapore. See Chan Heng Chee, *A Sensation of independence: A Political Biography of David Marshall* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984) p. 55 f.

¹⁰ In addition to clan leaders, traditional Chinese conservatives came prominently from two mercantile based associations which were the Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA) and the Singapore Chinese Chamber of Commerce (SCCC). The SCBA mainly represented the Straits Chinese or Babas (culturally Malay but ethnically Chinese) who were mostly English educated, while the SCCC was formed by the Chinese-educated merchant class. Both were conservative, and equally supported the British and the Kuomintang before the war. For a detailed account, see C. F. Yong, *Chinese Leadership and Power in Colonial Singapore* (Singapore: Times Academic Press, 1992) chap. 2.

¹¹ See above, chap. 3.

¹² *Malaya Tribune* 10 Nov. 1946

¹³ Ibid, 14 Dec 1946; Yeo Kim Wah, "The Anti Federation Movement, 1946-1948," *JSEAS*, vol. 4. no. 1. (Mar. 1973) p. 36.

The CJA declared its intention to oppose the new UMNO-British Agreement and to "join hands in submitting [their own] proposals on the future of the Malayan Constitution".¹⁴ Its proposal was based on three main points; first, that Singapore was an integral part of Malaya and should be included in any political framework regarding Malaya; second, that there must be a fully elected legislative body and lastly, that Malayan citizenship be granted to all domiciled persons without the stringent requirement such as knowledge of the Malay language.¹⁵

The CJA lasted no longer than a month till 22 December, when it was joined by the MCP and other leftist organizations.¹⁶ Subsequently the CJA was replaced by a new organization called the *Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action* (PMCJA). The new coalition benefitted from the organizational abilities of the MCP. Throughout the first two months of 1947, protest campaigns were stepped up with public demonstrations, strikes, petitions and lobbying of government officials.¹⁷ It demanded that the British repudiate the UMNO agreement, arguing that UMNO did not represent the interests of all Malaysians. It claimed to be the only body representing all the Asian communities in Malaya.

Formation of PUTERA and the Second anti-Federation United Front, February-July 1947

By the end of February the MNP decided to pull out of the PMCJA. The MNP had realized the political inexpediency of a Malay political party submerged in a coalition

¹⁴ *Malaya Tribune* 14 Dec. 1946

¹⁵ *Malay Mail* 23 Dec. 1946

¹⁶ Most of the other organizations were affiliates of the MCP or deeply influenced by it such as trade unions. The SCBA withdrew from the coalition because it did not agree to a hardline approach that was being formulated. Yeo Kim Wah, op. cit, p. 37.

¹⁷ The militant campaign had already been a feature of MCP activities before the formation of the coalition, it was now credited as coalition activities.

dominated by non-Malays.¹⁸ It did not wish to risk further erosion of support from the Malay community if the MNP became identified with predominantly non-Malay interests. By remaining independent of the PMCJA, the MNP retained its claim as the voice of real Malay interests and continued its struggle to wrest the leadership of the Malay political movement from UMNO. At the same time, the MNP, which had a long history of distrust of the communists, wanted to counteract the dominance of the communists in the PMCJA.¹⁹

On 22 February 1947, the MNP and several of its allies such as API and AWAS formed its own coalition known as *Pusat Tenaga Raayat* or PUTERA (Peoples' Action Front).²⁰ There was very little change in PUTERA's aims and it continued to work closely with the PMCJA. Soon after its formation, PUTERA entered into a new alliance with the PMCJA, which had been renamed the All-Malaya Council for Joint Action (AMCJA).²¹ The new alliance, which was known as the PUTERA-AMCJA United Front, was loosely structured with no collective leadership or authority to ensure coordination of activities.²²

Nonetheless, by the middle of 1947, signs of cooperation emerged as the alliance worked to produce an alternative proposal to the Anglo-Malay arrangement. In July PUTERA-AMCJA presented its People's Constitutional Proposals which were the product

¹⁸ Conservative Malay newspapers were already charging that the MNP was being manipulated by non-Malays and the MCP. See *Warta Negara* 11 Dec 1946; *Majlis* 10 Dec 1946 and 12 Dec 1946.

¹⁹ The MNP's relationship with the communists was inherited from the KMM whom it replaced. Ahmad Boestaman admitted receiving financial assistance from the MCP for the MNP's newspaper, *Suara Raayat*. In fact, the first President of the MNP was a known Malay communist, Mokhtaruddin Lasso. However, Ahmad Boestaman claimed that they were never able to influence or dominate the party. See Ahmad Boestaman, *op. cit.*, pp. 11-45. *passim*.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 99-100.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 100. See also Yeo Kim Wah, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40 *ff.*

of a compromise between radical Malay and non-Malay interests.²³ Its main theme attacked the Malay conservative elite's position as well as the Malay rulers. It demanded an accelerated process for self-government and the inclusion of all races in an elected assembly.²⁴

Rejecting any direct dialogue with the government before the revocation of the Draft Agreement, the radical alliance strategy was to mount an intensive public campaign in the hope that it could force the British to the negotiating table as UMNO's campaign had done earlier. Protest rallies, meetings and labour strikes were intensified. Despite these actions, the anti-federation alliance failed to deter the government which instead hardened its resolve to overcome the opposition. In an effort to split the protest movement, British authorities proceeded to launch its own public campaign by setting up a Consultative Committee to seek support from non-Malays.²⁵ The Consultative Committee organized public meetings where it met representatives of various groups to hear their grievances. On 21 July 1947, having been satisfied with the reports of its Consultative Committees, a "Revised Constitutional Proposals" was announced which

23 The contentious issue was on the definition of Malayan citizenship and its requisite. The MNP's position, keeping in line with that of UMNO, was based on ethnic and religious background such that a citizen of the Malay States must be of the Malay race and a Muslim. This line is diametrically opposed to the non-Malay position which demand citizenship rights based on the concept of *jus soli* and that a politically-derived "Malayan" would be the term of all citizens. In the compromise, PUTERA accepted the concept of *jus soli* as a basis for citizenship and the AMCJA agreed to use the term "Melayu" (Malay) for Malayan citizenship. For the MNP version of the PUTREA-AMCJA compromise, see Ahmad Boestaman, op. cit., pp. 107-111. For a discussion of the citizenship issue in the Malayan Union crisis, see Albert, op. cit., pp. 173-187 ff. For a discussion of the "nationality" debate within the Malay political movement, see Ariffin Omar, op. cit., pp. 191-210 ff.

24 See PUTREA-AMCJA, *The People's Constitutional Proposals for Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur, n. p., 1947) cited in Ariffin Omar, op. cit., p. 200.

25 The committee was chaired by H. R. Cheeseman and four appointed members representing the European, Indian, Chinese and Eurasian communities. The four appointed members, in turn, nominated one other member from their own community. *Constitutional Proposals for Malaya: Report of the Consultative Committee Together with Proceedings of Six Public Meetings, a Summary of Representations Made and Letters and Memoranda Considered by the Committee.* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1947) p. 1. Hereafter cited as *Report of the Consultative Committee*.

offered some concessions especially to the conservative elite of the non-Malay communities.²⁶

The Chinese Conservatives and the Formation of a Third Anti-Federation Front, July-December 1947

The British concessions did not go far enough to satisfy the powerful Chinese business elite. In July 1947, the Singapore Chinese Chambers of Commerce (SCCC), which had remained very much outside the anti-federation movement even though it did not like the British-UMNO Agreement, threw in its lot with the radicals.²⁷ While they had not officially joined the PUTERA-AMCJA alliance, the Chinese business community agreed to support the radicals' efforts. The outcome of this collaboration was the organization of general strikes - a complete stoppage of all economic activities.²⁸

The first of these *hartals* (strikes) took place in parts of Malacca, Selangor and Perak throughout September and were a tremendous success. It clearly demonstrated the

²⁶ The Consultative Committee which held its six public meetings from January to March, 1947, at Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Malacca and Ipoh also received 81 letters and memoranda from individuals, groups and associations. At the conclusion, the Committee recommended 17 revisions to the Working Committee's Proposals. Most of the changes recommended were issues of the composition and distribution of Council seats in the new Federation's Council as well as the length of residence required for a status of permanent residency. Some of these changes were incorporated in the revised proposals. On 21 July 1947, the revised proposals were published as a White Paper. See *Federation of Malaya: Summary of Revised Constitutional Proposals* Cmd. 7171 (London: H.M.S.O, 1947) hereafter cited as *Revised Constitutional Proposals*. For details of the Consultative Committee's recommendations, see *Report of the Consultative Committee*, op. cit., pp. 1-13, passim. For an account of the deliberations of the Working Committee on the recommendations, see also Albert Lau, op. cit., pp. 229-234 ff.

²⁷ The PUTERA-AMCJA had boycotted the Consultative Committee but members of the traditional Chinese business elite had actively participated in the meetings. Chinese Chamber of Commerce of Singapore, Selangor and Perak, the Singapore Straits Chinese British Association and Tan Cheng Lock made representations to the Consultative Committee. See *Report of the Consultative Committee*, op. cit., pp. 189-190. The Chinese business elite joined the PUTERA-AMCJA only after the publication of the *Revised Constitutional Proposals*, see Yeo Kim Wah, op. cit., p. 43.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 43-44 ff.

power of the Chinese business elite.²⁹ Pleased with the results of the September strikes, the business leaders, together with PUTERA-AMCJA, planned a nation-wide strike for 20 October.³⁰ Despite threats on the part of British authorities, a general strike proceeded and all business and labour activities ceased right across the country.³¹

Although the strike was a tremendous success in terms of disrupting economic activity, it failed to soften the government's stand.³² British authorities were more determined than ever to stand firm and retaliated with tougher police actions and other punitive measures.³³ In the face of government resolve and fearing a deterioration of its interests, the Chinese business community backed down from any further confrontation with the British. This signaled the end of the Chinese conservatives' collaboration with the radicals.³⁴ Chinese business leaders quickly made peace with the authorities and eventually crossed over to the British side when they accepted nominations to the Federal Legislative Council in the Federation of Malaya government in February 1948.³⁵

²⁹ 10 Sept. 1947. *Malay Mail* 19 Sept 1947. The idea of 'hartals', a peaceful, nation-wide stoppage of all economic activities, came from the Indian political activism which Tan Cheng Lock witnessed during his war-time exile. Yeo Kim Wah, op. cit., pp. 43-44.

³⁰ *Malaya Tribune* 16 Oct 1947.

³¹ Pro-government newspapers predicted outbreaks of racial strife and carried police warnings of stern response to any violence. *Straits Times* 17 Oct 1947 and 20 Oct 1947; *Malay Mail* 19 Oct 1947.

³² The day after the hartal, the *Straits Times* reported that "hundreds of thousands of dollars were lost by the government, industry and business ... and every rubber estate contacted said that Indian and Chinese labourers were not tapping, ... Singapore presented an impressive spectacle yesterday, with its miles of shuttered shops and its streets of almost empty of traffic ..." *Straits Times* 21 Oct 1947. passim.

³³ Government retaliation focused on breaking the back of the MCP by clamping down on the trade unions. The pre-war Trade Unions Bill, a legislation for the supervision and control of trade unions was resurrected and a Department of labour was created. All trade unions must be registered and audited by the government. Several prominent union leaders were arrested and illegal strikes were broken up by force. See, Michael Morgan, "The Rise and Fall of Malayan Trade Unionism, 1945-1950," in *Malaya: the Making of a Neo-Colony* ed. Mohamed Amin and Malcolm Caldwell (Nottingham: Spokesman Press, 1977) pp. 180-184.

³⁴ Yeo Kim Wah, op. cit., p. 45.

³⁵ Among those who accepted was Tan Cheng Lock's son, Mr. Tan Siew Sin. Ibid., pp. 48-49 ff.

PART TWO:
CONSERVATIVE RESPONSE AND THE DEFEAT OF THE RADICAL OPPOSITION,
JANUARY 1947-JANUARY 1948

The British Response and the Failure of the Radical Opposition

Throughout negotiations with UMNO and the Malay Rulers, British authorities did not concern themselves with the reaction of the non-Malays. As non-Malay opposition became more intense including even the conservative and usually cooperative Chinese business community, the British government grew concerned and sought ways to placate non-Malay dissatisfaction. However, the British did not face the dilemma such as had occurred during the Malayan Union protest by the Malays. They were convinced that they could win over the non-radical segments of the opposition and easily deal with the extremists.

As a result, the government decided to act tough towards the opposition, while it tried to persuade non-radical elements by offering them some concessions. Radical activities were met with stiff government response. Demonstrations were forcibly dispersed (resulting in several fatalities), followed by arrests of some of the leaders of the radical movement.¹ At the same time, the government began their crackdown on the mostly communist-influenced trade unions. Unions were required to be registered and regulated by rules designed to prevent them from engaging in political activities.²

¹ Police crackdown on the trade unions, which had begun as early as the middle of 1947, intensified from the beginning of 1948. Between January and June of 1948, when a State of Emergency was declared, more than 800 trade unionists had been arrested. Michael Morgan, "The Rise and Fall of Malayan Trade Unionism, 1945-1950," in *Malaya: the Making of a Neo-Colony* ed. by Mohamed Amin and Malcolm Caldwell (Nottingham: Spokesman Press, 1977) pp. 185-186.

² Ibid., p. 185.

While the authorities responded ruthlessly to the extreme Left, they also launched conciliatory gestures to persuade the less radical of the non-Malay opposition. A Consultative Committee was set up at the end of December 1946 to cater to non-Malay concerns. Under the chairmanship of H.R. Cheeseman, the ten member committee was made up solely of non-Malays. It was hoped that through this process some of the non-Malay demands could be satisfied.³⁸

From January to March 1947,³⁹ the Consultative Committee held public meetings and gathered presentations and petitions for changes to the Constitutional Proposals. By April Cheeseman presented the Committee's recommendations, which did not drastically threaten the UMNO-British plan, to the government. The government was ready to go ahead with its constitutional changes and subsequently reconvened the Working Committee to go through the final paces towards an agreement.

UMNO's Response : The Drive for Unity, 1947

After a trying year that witnessed its rise from a ragtag collection of Malay interest groups to become the official Malay representative at the bargaining table, UMNO faced its first serious test of confidence amongst its membership. After the announcement of the Draft Agreement in late December 1946, UMNO's leaders, relieved and elated at their first major success, began to realize the need for a more cohesive and effective internal organization in anticipation of long drawn out negotiations with the British. There was also the growing threat to UMNO from the MNP and its allies. At the

³⁸ See above, footnote no. 59 and 60.

³⁹ See Appendix C for dates

same time, the Malay rulers were beginning to resent and challenge the domination of UMNO during the negotiations.⁴⁰

In January and March of 1947,⁴¹ UMNO meetings were held at Alor Star in Kedah and Seremban in Johor, respectively, in an effort to maintain the momentum of UMNO's rise. The Constitutional Proposals, one of the main items on the agenda, were accepted and ratified by the Congress at the January meeting although some changes were called for.⁴² During the debate, major differences amongst member associations were revealed. The *Kesatuan Melayu Johore*, *SABERKAS* and the *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* were critical of UMNO's leadership and presented their own diverging expectations of the constitutional issue.⁴³

However, once the constitutional debate was out of the way, UMNO's leadership turned their attention towards organizational matters. During its early period when the Malayan Union crisis required quick action, UMNO's structure was comprised of an Executive Committee, a Working Committee to deal with Malayan Union issue, and a Secretariat.⁴⁴ By the end of 1947 UMNO had grown into a sophisticated organization and had already established several departments to deal with various social and political issues.⁴⁵ Some of these issues, such as the problem of Malay education and the economic

⁴⁰ A senior UMNO member reminded his colleagues of the difficulties UMNO still faced. Referring to the Rulers resentment of UMNO, he said, that "we have to fight a 'Triangular Battle' ... and must try to win over one of the opponents as an ally". UMNO/SG no. 1/47: Mohamed Ali Rouse to the Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang, Dato Abdul Wahab, no date.

⁴¹ See Appendix C for dates.

⁴² The General Assembly, in an apparent show of support for Dato Onn, resolved to accept the Draft Proposals in principle but established a sub-committee to resent its amendments to the government. UMNO/SG no 15/47

⁴³ *SABERKAS* tabled and distributed its own statement to the General Assembly rejecting the proposals as not going far enough. However, *SABERKAS* apparent attempt at mustering support for a possible mutiny was unsuccessful. UMNO/SG no 15/47

⁴⁴ *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴⁵ By the end of 1946, UMNO established several departments which functioned much like a government department. These were, the departments of Finance, Religion, Economics, Politics and Education. The Departments of Religion and Politics were a single department until July

position of Malays became the central themes of UMNO's call for greater effort and continuing unity.⁴⁶

Throughout 1947, UMNO concentrated on social programs as it was beginning to detect signs of dissatisfaction towards UMNO's leadership among its supporters. The committee responsible for education began drafting a plan to set up more village schools. It proposed funding for existing private schools and *madrasahs* (religious schools) to raise standards comparable to those of government schools.⁴⁷ Various funds were established for special projects such as scholarships, small businesses and emergency relief.⁴⁸ Response to fund raising efforts was initially encouraging, although it never achieved projected targets. By August 1947, UMNO had collected less than \$50,000 for all of its proposed activities.⁴⁹

1946. In 1947, several new departments were created which were the departments of Labour, General Welfare, and Trade and Industry. At the same time, the departments of Youth and Women were established and would later developed into separate bodies known as UMNO Youth and Women's UMNO. *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., p. 30.

⁴⁶ *Majlis*, 6 May 1947

⁴⁷ Until the end of 1947, the Malay vernacular schools still did not received much support from the government. As a result, villages had to fund their own schools and, consequently, were quite independent of government supervision. For an account of British policy towards Malay vernacular education, see Philip Loh Fook Seng, *Seeds of Separatism: Educational Policy in Malaya, 1874-1940* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975) pp. 11-15. In 1947, the number of known private Malay village schools had rose from 40 in 1940 to nearly 200 in 1947. See, *Malayan Union Annual Report 1947* (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printer, 1947) p. 50f. UMNO's Department of Education Draft Policy was formulated in the middle of 1946 with a projected requirement of about M\$200,000 a year. UMNO/Ed no. 1/46

⁴⁸ In addition to UMNO's main source of income, the Patriotic Fund, UMNO created various other funds as a mean to raise money for its projects. These were an Investment Fund set up by the Department of Economics, a Malay Education Fund, and a Special Fund. The Special Fund had no clear function other than that it was a donation call for badly needed financial support. See, UMNO/F no 8/47 for details of Special Funds. The pro-UMNO newspapers played a leading role in the fund raising campaign. See, *Majlis*, January to May, 1947, passim.

⁴⁹ UMNO was unable to meet many of its financial needs. It depended much from personal donations and aid, for example, *Majlis* provided free advertisement space to UMNO and various clubs and associations provided the logistical requirements at UMNO General meetings. Roland Braddell, UMNO's legal adviser during the Constitutional Negotiations had to sue UMNO for payment of his fees. See UMNO/SG no 161/47. For Braddell's case, see UMNO/SG no 14/46.

On the propaganda front, UMNO also launched an official publication known as the *Voice of UMNO* and instituted a formal dress code for its officials and membership.⁵⁰ As a result of these campaigns and the publicity of its activities, UMNO succeeded in maintaining its identity as the champion of Malay welfare in addition to its political image as the leader of Malay society. Thus, through the efforts of its leadership, UMNO survived this period of dissension after successfully clearing the crisis of the Malayan Union.

There were renewed calls for further centralization of UMNO.⁵¹ In January and March 1947, resolutions were passed for the formation of a committee to prepare for the re-organization of UMNO.⁵² This was the outcome of an unforeseen obstacle which prevented UMNO from becoming a unitary organization. The UMNO founding charter did not have any provision for turning UMNO member associations into regional branches.⁵³ UMNO would have had to overhaul its entire charter and constitution in order to effect such a change. However, due to the preoccupation with the constitutional negotiations, efforts at centralization were not completed until January 1948.⁵⁴

In May 1947, the plan for UMNO's reorganization was passed, but not without difficulties. The *Kesatuan Melayu Johor* and *SABERKAS* vehemently protested against the proposals and subsequently withdrew their organizations from active membership in

⁵⁰ The *Voice of UMNO* appeared as official articles and columns in pamphlets until 1951, when a full length tabloid size magazine was launched. UMNO/SG no 44/46: circular no.1

⁵¹ *Majlis* had, from as early as September 1946, been calling for the establishment of UMNO into a unified political party when it had urged member associations to convert into UMNO regional branches. However, it was not until the Malayan Union had been successfully resisted that UMNO leaders turned seriously towards the issue of UMNO's structure. See *Majlis* Sept 1946, especially editorials of 11, 13, and 16 Sept 1946. *Majlis* 1 Jan 1947.

⁵² UMNO/F no 7/47. *Majlis* Jan. 1947

⁵³ *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., pp. 11-13.

⁵⁴ UMNO/SG no 44/48. By March it was reported that UMNO member associations in Pahang, Malacca, Perak, Kedah, Selangor, Trengganu and Perlis had dissolved and formed state branches. See UMNO/SG no 127/49

UMNO.⁵⁵ By the end of 1947, UMNO was stable enough to withstand the criticism of the Malay radicals and the non-Malay groups. Furthermore, UMNO had become indispensable to the British. The constitutional process was not far advanced enough to allow for a disruption if UMNO was to be defeated.⁵⁶ In this respect, British authority, in its uncompromising stance against the anti-federation movement, ensured the survival of UMNO.

The Triumph of the Conservatives : UMNO and the Federation of Malaya Agreement, October 1947-January 1948.

By the beginning of April 1947, after the completion of the Consultative Committee's work, it was clear that the preliminary Constitutional Proposals needed modification. The recommendations of the Consultative Committee had to be incorporated in order to appease certain non-Malay concerns. UMNO also returned with further modifications demanded by its members. The Working Committee was reconvened at the end of April 1947 to discuss amendments to the original proposals.⁵⁷ Both the British and UMNO were eager to avoid an impasse which would critically weaken their respective positions.⁵⁸ Two issues which figured prominently in the amendment talks

⁵⁵ *SABERKAS* however, unlike the *KMJ*, did not entirely withdraw from UMNO, choosing to remain within UMNO as an affiliate member. See UMNO/F no 7/47. *Utusan Melayu* which was under the editorship of A. Samad Ismail, a member of the MNP, highlighted *SABERKAS* withdrawal from full membership of UMNO.

⁵⁶ Stockwell, quoting from British intelligence sources, revealed that British authorities were quite concerned of threats to UMNO's strength. In addition to tough actions against militant anti-Federation activities such as the PUTERA-AMCJA coalition, the authorities employed its propaganda machinery to boost UMNO's standing. A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., pp. 114-116.

⁵⁷ UMNO/SG no 79/47. Albert Lau, op. cit., pp. 231-240 ff.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 231 f.

were the citizenship provision and distribution of official government representation amongst the communities.⁵⁹

The changes which followed did not alter the original proposals in any substantial way. However, they were sufficient to temporarily satisfy all parties. In the matter of citizenship, the non-Malays were persuaded to accept some of UMNO's terms with the promise of future reconsideration. Meanwhile, the apportionment of seats which stood in favour of the Malays was offset by a large number of British officials who together with the non-Malay local members could outnumber the Malays.⁶⁰ The radicals' demands were completely ignored and in July the Revised Constitutional Proposals were published.⁶¹

In October 1947, the Working Committee was reconvened to discuss possible dates for the implementation of the new constitution. In January 1948 the Federal Agreement based on the proposals was signed by the British government and the Malay Rulers.⁶² The new Federation of Malaya Constitution was inaugurated on 1 February 1948.⁶³ One year later, in May 1949, UMNO officially became a political party with member associations converted into regional branches.⁶⁴ Early in the same year, on 27 February, the Chinese conservatives formed themselves into the *Malayan Chinese Association* (MCA).⁶⁵ In the next few years until 1954, the conservative leaders of

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 234.

⁶⁰ Ibid., In the revised composition of the unofficial membership in the proposed Legislative Council, out of a total of 50 seats, Malays occupy 21, Chinese 14, Indians 5 and 8 for Europeans. See, *Revised Constitutional Proposals*, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 92.

⁶³ *Federation of Malaya: Summary of Revised Constitutional Proposals Accepted by His Majesty's Government, 24 July 1947*, (Kuala Lumpur: Government Printers, 1947)

⁶⁴ *UMNO-10 Tahun*, op. cit., p. 41. A. J. Stockwell, op. cit., p. 93.

⁶⁵ The prime mover for the formation of the MCA was credited to Sir Henry Gurney, the first High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya and Tan Cheng Lock. Tan Cheng Lock, obviously forgiven by the British, along with several other members of the Federal Council was

UMNO, the MCA and the MIC developed a symbiotic relationship establishing a power-sharing arrangement that retained their respective leadership over their communities. This tripartite Alliance has successfully dominated and ruled the country until the present time.⁶⁶

The announcement of the Federation of Malaya Agreement represented the final rejection of non-conservative political demands. The following month the MCP abandoned its passive politics and declared the beginning of armed response to the new Federation.⁶⁷ Its abrupt violent swing did not attract many of its anti-federation allies such as the MDU and the MNP, although many of their members joined the MCP revolt. The British responded by declaring a State of Emergency, which marked the beginning of the guerilla war that was to last for more than ten years.

persuaded by Gurney to form the MCA as an alternative of the MCP and a counterpart of UMNO. Soh Eng Lim, "Tan Cheng Lock," *JSEAH*, vol. 1. no. 1 (Mar. 1960) pp. 50.

⁶⁶ For a more detailed account and discussion of the communal alliance in Malaysian politics, see R. K. Vasil, *Politics in a Plural Society* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1971) and B. H. Shafruddin, *The Federal Factor in the Government and Politics of Peninsular Malaysia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987)

⁶⁷ There are several studies on the period of the State of Emergency in Malaya, for an excellent example, see, Richard Clutterbuck, *Riot and Revolution in Singapore and Malaysia, 1945-1963* (London: Faber & Faber, 1973). For an account of the MCP during this period, see Justus M. Van Der Kroef, *Communism in Malaysia and Singapore* (Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967)

CONCLUSION

The establishment of the Federation of Malaya in 1948 marked the triumph of conservative Malay politics over radicalism. The communist insurrection which immediately followed was a blessing in disguise for UMNO, eliminating whatever was left of the Malay radical challenge to the conservatives. In response to the communist rebellion, British authorities arrested Boestaman and most of his colleagues along with hundreds of other opposition and union leaders from the PUTERA-AMCJA movement.¹

The Malay radicals never recovered from this massive crackdown. They were either arrested or retreated to the jungle, joining the MCP.² During the next twelve years of guerilla warfare, while British military power kept the communists at bay, UMNO persuaded its conservative counterparts in the Chinese and Indian communities into forming a power-sharing alliance.³ This alliance proved to be the winning formula

¹ Ahmad Boestaman, *Carving the Path to the Summit* trans. and intro. by William R. Roff (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1979) pp. 143-144. Michael Morgan, "The Rise and Fall of Malayan Trade Unionism, 1945-1950," in *Malaya: the Making of a Neo-Colony* ed. by Mohamed Amin and Malcolm Caldwell (Nottingham: Spokesman Press, 1977) p. 186.

² Some members of the MNP who joined the MCP's armed struggle was Musa Ahmad, A. Manan, Abdullah C. D., and Shamsiah Fakir who was the president of AWAS at the time of the communist uprising. Ibrahim Yaacob, *Sekitar Malaya Merdeka* [On Malayan Independence] (Jakarta: Kesatuan Melayu Merdeka, 1957) p. 51. See also Virginia H. Dancz, *Women and Party Politics in Peninsula Malaysia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1987) pp. 86-87; and Aishah Ghani, *Memoir Seorang Pejuang* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1992) pp. 33-35.

³ The government declared a 'State of Emergency' over the whole of Malaya on the 18 June 1948. In the course of the 12 years that it took British forces to overcome the uprising, more than 4,500 civilians, 3,000 British forces personnels and 10,500 guerrillas had been killed, at a cost of more than 1 billion Malayan dollars. At the height of the conflict the colonial forces numbered up to 300,000 men made up of some 250,000 Malayan Home Guards and more than 40,000 British and Commonwealth troops. The RAF and other commonwealth air force units played a prominent role in the war with the use of helicopters, fighter and bomber aircrafts to strafe and bomb guerrilla positions. The air forces made a total of over 25,000 sorties, dropped about 33,000 tons of bombs and fired nearly 100,000 rockets. Edgar O'Ballance, *The Communist Insurgency War, 1948-1960* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1966) pp. 176-180 ff. There are several studies and personal accounts of the Communist Uprising period, see Noel Barber, *The War of the Running Dogs* (New York: Weybright & Talley, 1972); Sir Robert Thompson, *Defeating Communist Insurgency* (New York: Praeger, 1966); Richard Stubbs, *Hearts and*

for the Conservatives, for in the first nation-wide federal elections held in 1955, the conservative alliance won an astounding 51 out of a total of 52 seats with more than eighty per cent of the vote.⁴

When viewed against the backdrop of historical development in modern Malay politics, the Malay conservatives' victory was a culmination of a long struggle between the conservative elite and a new radical element. Malay conservative politics had been centred on the dynamics of political administration. In the tradition of the Malay *kerajaan*, the *Istana* was the arena for political contest.⁵ Thus, in colonial Malaya, the conservative elite who were drawn mostly from the aristocracy, saw the British administrators more as their competitors than as a threat to their positions. For the Conservatives the acquisition of more administrative control was political dominance itself. They therefore channeled their energies into working from within the colonial system to demand more control over government.⁶

At the turn of the century a new stage opened up in the arena of Malay leadership. As Malay political consciousness was being awakened by Islamic reformism and the modernizing influences of Western colonialism, the *raayats* became a constituency to be won or lost. Issues of social and economic concerns of the Malay community as a whole, not simply issues relating to the Malay *kerajaan*, became the central feature of Malay politics. The question of how Malay society was to be saved and who was to lead the

Hearts and Minds in Guerilla Warfare. The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1960. (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989)

⁴ K. J. Ratnam, *Communalism and the Political Process in Malaya*, (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1965) pp. 195-196. ff.

⁵ For a discussion of traditional Malay political culture, see, Moy, T. J. "The 'Sejarah Melayu' Tradition of Power and Political Structure: An Assessment of Relevant Sections of the 'Tuhfat al-Nafis'." *JMBRAS*, vol. 48, pt. 2 (October 1975) pp. 64-78.; A. C. Milner, *Kerajaan, Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*. (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1982)

⁶ Yeo Kim Wah. "The Grooming of the an Elite: Malay Administrators in the Federated Malay States, 1903-1941," *JMBRAS*, vol. 61, pt. 2. (1988) pp. 287-319.

process produced two opposing views which would characterize conflict in Malay politics.

The Conservatives held that they, the traditional elite, would lead Malay society into the modern world after a period of 'apprenticeship' under British rule. This view was challenged by the radical proposal of an outright elimination of the aristocracy and an eventual union with Indonesia. In the decades preceding World War Two, the contest for Malay leadership had begun. In an attempt to counter the Radicals, who at the time had control of the press, the Conservatives began forming Malay associations throughout Malaya. The formation of the KMM in 1937 signaled the first Radical challenge to the Conservatives. Led by Dato Onn Jaafar, the Conservatives responded by trying to unify their associations. The failure of this attempt exposed deep divisions within the conservative establishment.

World War Two and the Japanese Occupation was a further setback for the Conservatives. Identified with the colonial establishment, the Conservatives lost their dominant position in government and Malay society. The period belonged to the Radicals. In the absence of any conservative opposition, the KMM went ahead and were almost successful in pulling off a coup with their aborted independence plan at the end of the war. The sudden Japanese surrender put an abrupt end to the brief rise of the Radicals.

The emergence of the MCP and the ensuing communal conflicts allowed both the Conservatives and the Radicals to re-emerge. However, it was the Conservatives' turn to take centre stage. Aroused by fears of communist and Chinese domination, Malays turned to their conservative leadership, preferring the experience and familiarity of the traditional elite to the more innovative but untried radical alternative.

The post-war interregnum marked a major turning point in the development of Malay conservative politics. It matured dramatically from the polite protests of a pre-war era to become an effective political force, extremely sophisticated and adept in

political agitation. The MCP, in its ill-prepared efforts to dominate Malayan politics not only helped push Malay politics further to the right but was also never again able to gain any influence within Malay society.

The reimposition of British authority and post-war plans for Malaya propelled the Conservatives to the forefront of the Malay nationalist movement. Determined and impatient to enhance its pre-war power and status, Britain's policies for post-war Malaya further aggravated Malay fears.⁷ The relief felt by most Malays, especially former bureaucrats, at the return of a protector soon gave way to a sense of betrayal and anger. Malay leaders, both the Conservatives as well as the Radicals, were soon made to realize that too many social and political changes had occurred since the outbreak of war to allow a return to pre-war conditions.

The Malayan Union plan appeared to be the last straw for the conservative Malay leaders. It was the most direct threat to their survival. In less than six months from the announcement of the Malayan Union, Malay conservatives had regrouped their pseudo-political pre-war Malay associations into a mighty pan-Malayan, explicitly political union known as the United Malays National Organization (UMNO).

Mobilized by leaders who had both the accessibility and experience to mount a political campaign on a national scale, the power of UMNO was a *fait accompli*, eventually accepted by the Malay rulers as well as the British. To the Malay rulers Dato Onn did not plead for support but rather dangled the spectre of either outright rebellion or massive Malay support. The aristocrats and bureaucrats of whom he was a part, were

⁷ Economic and strategic motives lie behind Britain's determination to repossessed Malaya. See, R.B. Smith, "Some Contrast between Burma and Malaya in British Policy Towards South-East Asia, 1942-1946," in *British Policy and the Transfer of Power in Asia, Documentary Perspectives*, eds. R.B. Smith and A. J. Stockwell (London: SOAS, University of London, 1988) pp. 47-48. ff. [30-76]

promised the challenge of actual power. To the Malay masses, Dato Onn presented UMNO as the solution to British alienation, Chinese domination and feeble royal authority.

In what Kolko calls a "controlled liberation" of its colonies, Britain found it more advantageous to relinquish direct political control to indigenous groups sharing, or who were at the least less hostile to, their interests.⁸ This policy had the compelling advantage of reducing costs to the colonizing governments while ensuring the safety of capital investments in the colonies. UMNO offered itself as the solution to a political impasse faced by Britain upon its return to Malaya.

As for the Malay radicals, they immediately suffered the consequences of their war-time gamble. Many of them were arrested or put to flight by the British immediately after the war. The Radicals would probably not have survived if not for the need on the part of the Malay community to stand united in the face of a Chinese-dominated communist threat. In the confusion of communal conflict the Radicals were able to reorganize. Their early formation, however, was in the shadow of UMNO, giving them little choice but to join in the anti-Union movement. By the end of 1946, the Radicals, led by the MNP, were sufficiently strong to pose a serious threat to UMNO. Dissension within UMNO and the pre-war suspicions of the Malay press towards the conservative aristocrats were becoming apparent. The Radicals, however, were unable to capitalize on these developments due to several factors.

First, the British had decided to back UMNO as its junior ally and contributed its authority in order to maintain UMNO. Radical leaders were harassed and excluded from any negotiations except those offered to the non-Malay communities. Second, the MNP obstinately clung to its pre-war vision of *Indonesia Raya* which had by now very little currency in post-war Malay politics as it was defined by Malay-Chinese conflict. The

⁸ Gabriel Kolko, *The politics of War*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1968) p 604.

idea of an Indonesian union was obviously opposed by the Malay rulers who still held great influence over the Malays. Thirdly, the Malay radicals shifted their stance by identifying with the anti-Federation movement dominated by the MCP and non-Malays. Thus, in one swift stroke the Radicals alienated themselves from the Malay ruling class and lost their support of the Malay raayats.

Radical ideas of Malay republicanism, which would have eliminated the Malay rulers and distributed political power within an already economically dominant non-Malay population, stood little chance of realization. This republican ideal was not subscribed to by many in the radical movement. Some of the organizations within PUTERA were only opposed to the domination of the aristocratic element in UMNO but not the domination of Malay power itself. As a result, Malay radical opposition during the immediate post-war period was unable to reach a level that could possibly challenge UMNO, the rulers and the British, all at the same time. In 1950, the MNP was banned and although many Malay radicals were still active in other organizations, it marked the end of an organized republican Malay party.⁹ Opposition to UMNO was eventually crystalized only through a resurrected Islamic reformist platform later in the 1950s.¹⁰

The triumph of UMNO was not simply a fortuitous victory of Malay nationalism over the spectre of non-Malay domination. It was also the triumph of Malay traditionalism over radical "progressivism" in Malay politics. It ended the conflict between these two streams of Malay politics which began with the first stirrings of

⁹ Ahmad Boestaman, op. cit., pp. 142-143.

¹⁰ Dr. Burhanuddin al-Helmy founded the first Islamic party, the *Pan-Malayan Islamic Party* (PMIP) drawn from the *Hizbul Muslimin* and remnants of other PUTERA affiliates. Alias Mohamed, *Malaysia's Islamic Opposition. Past, Present and Future*, (Kuala Lumpur: Gateway Publishing House, 1991) pp.11-20.

modern Malay nationalism.¹¹ It was a contest between two opposing visions of what the post-colonial Malay polity should be. The Conservatives pictured a resurrected and revitalized *kerajaan* (traditional Malay political structure)¹² while the Radicals desired a modernized Malay nation freed from hierarchical constraints of the old feudal order.

¹¹ See, Ishak bin Tadin, "Dato Onn and Malay Nationalism, 1946-1951," *JSEAH*, vol.1, no. 2, (Mar. 1960), pp. 56-88.; Radin Soenarno, "Malay Nationalism," *JSEAH*, vol.1, no. 2, (Mar. 1960), pp. 1-33.; and, William R. Roff, *The Rise of Malay Nationalism*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967);

¹² The *kerajaan* is the traditional Malay feudal system established during the era of the Malaccan Empire. For a description of the *kerajaan*, see, J. M. Gullick, *Indigenous Political Systems of Western Malaya*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1965); A. C. Milner, *Kerajaan - Malay Political Culture on the Eve of Colonial Rule*, (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 1982); Mohammad Yusoff Hashim, *Kesultanan Melayu Melaka*, [The Malay Sultanate of Melaka] (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1990)

Appendix A

Map of Malaya and Singapore, 1948



Appendix B

TABLE I

Percentage Distribution by Communities
of Urban Population of Malaya including
Singapore

	1931	1947
Malays	15.9	17.4
Chinese	65.4	68.3
Indians	14.8	11.4
Others	3.9	2.9

TABLE II

Total Enumerated Population of the Three
Major Communities of Malaya including
Singapore

	1911	1947
Malay	1,420,000	2,540,000
Chinese	920,000	2,620,000
Indians	270,000	610,000
Total	2,610,000	5,770,000

TABLE III

Major Occupations of the Malay
Population (including Singapore), 1947

	Male Working Population: % engaged in			% of Urban Dwellers in Total Malay Population
	Rice Production	Rubber Production	Fishing	
Singapore	0.0	1.2	4.3	72.0
Penang	44.1	6.8	10.9	25.5
Malacca	17.6	37.4	10.0	8.1
Perak	45.3	21.3	4.1	10.5
Selangor	22.1	22.0	2.6	18.1
N. Sembilan	41.3	31.3	0.9	7.4
Pahang	62.4	9.7	7.6	6.3
Johore	7.5	45.4	4.7	14.6
Kedah	68.8	13.9	2.9	6.7
Kelantan	64.0	7.7	6.1	5.7
Trengganu	44.8	5.5	21.0	21.0
Perlis	82.8	1.5	3.9	3.8

(Source: T. E. Smith, *Population Growth in Malaya-An Analysis of Recent Trends*.
London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1952. pp.6, 8, & 25.)

Appendix C

Chronology of Political Developments, 1874 - 1948

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 1874 | 'Treaty of Pangkor 1874,' the State of Perak agreed to accept a British Resident to advise on all matters except Religion and Malay Customs. |
| 1895 | 'Federal Treaty of 1895,' Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Pahang are administratively united into the Federated Malay States (FMS). |
| 1906 | <i>Al-Imam</i> begins publication. Beginning of Islamic reformist influence on Malay political and social development. Beginning of two opposing streams, the conservative <i>Kaum Tua</i> and the reformist <i>Kaum Muda</i> , in Malay politics. |
| 1908 | Establishment of the Malay College of Kuala Kangsar, the 'Eton' of Malaya, for the education of the Malay upper class. |
| 1922 | The establishment of the Sultan Idris Training College (SITC), a Malay language training school for Malay school teachers. |
| 1926 | The foundation of the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS) or the Singapore Malay Association by Eunus Abdullah, a member of the Singapore Legislative Council. It marked the rise of conservative Malay organizations similar to the KMS throughout Malaya. |
| 1937 | The foundation of the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM) by Ibrahim Yaacob. KMM members were mostly drawn from SITC graduates and the Malay press. Beginning of the rise of Malay radical politics and the Conservative-Radical conflict. |
| Aug 1939 | The first pan-Malayan Malay Congress of Malay Associations held in Kuala Lumpur. Attended by most Malay associations except the KMM. Efforts to establish a national organization during this meeting were unsuccessful. |
| Dec 1940 | The second pan-Malayan Congress of Malay Associations is held in Singapore. Attended mostly by conservative Malay Associations and again excluding the KMM. Another attempt at forming a national organization failed. |
| 15 Feb
1942 | Fall of Singapore to the Japanese. Beginning of the Japanese Occupation of Malaya. |
| Jul 1943 | The formation of the <i>Giyu Gun</i> (Volunteer Army) or PETA under Ibrahim Yaacob. |

Dec 1944	Disbandment of PETA.
Jul 1945	The formation of KRIS, a movement for the establishment of an independent Malayan government, by Ibrahim Yaacob and other members of the KMM. A KRIS Congress was planned for the 17 August to formally announce the Independence of Malaya.
15 Aug	The surrender of Japan, marking the end of the Japanese Occupation of Malaya. Announcement by the Supreme Allied Commander of Allied Forces, Lord Mountbatten, of the establishment of British Military Administration in all former British territories freed from Japanese Occupation.
17 Aug 1945	KRIS Congress in Kuala Lumpur collapsed in confusion because of the Japanese Surrender. Ibrahim Yaacob and several other leaders of the KMM fled to Indonesia.
17 Aug - Sept 1945	Period of interregnum in Malaya. The MPAJA takeover of parts of Malaya and the beginning of violence between Chinese and Malays.
Sept 1945	British Reoccupation completed and the establishment of the British Military Administration (BMA). H. C. Willan Deputy Chief Civil Affairs Officer of the BMA embarked on his preparatory meetings with the Malay rulers.
-	Foundation of the Malay Nationalist Party (MNP). Rise of the conservative Malay leadership and the beginning of the revival of pre-war Malay Associations.
10 Oct 1946	Announcement of the Malayan Union in London and the appointment of Harold MacMichael as a special representative to Malaya to prepare for the implementation of the Malayan Union. MacMichael was to obtain the agreement of the Malay rulers to the Malayan Union.
Oct 1946 - Dec 1946	MacMichael arrived in Malaya to begin consultation with the Malay rulers. By December he had succeeded in getting the agreement of the Malay rulers.
22 Jan 1946	Formal announcement of the Malayan Union. Details of the Malayan Union published for the first time in a government White Paper.
Jan - Jun 1946	Malay campaign against the Malayan Union escalated. Revival of pre-war Malay Associations. Malay campaign for a stronger political organization intensified by the Malay Press. Emergence of new Malay Associations. Renewed calls by Malay newspapers for Malay political unity. Campaign of the former British administrators of Malaya in support of the Malay cause.
1 Feb 1946	Meeting of the Persatuan Melayu Johore where calls for the dethronement of the Sultan of Johore was made. Emergence of Dato Onn Jaafar as a prominent figure in Malay politics.

- 1 - 4 Mar 1946 Congress of Malay Associations chaired by Dato Onn Jaafar held at Kuala Lumpur attended by almost all Malay organizations including the MNP. Formation of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO).
- 29 Mar 1946 UMNO emergency meeting in response to the British government's plan for the inauguration of the Malayan Union on 1 April 1946. Decision by UMNO to launched boycott and protest rallies against the inauguration.
- 1 Apr 1946 Inauguration of the Malayan Union and the installation of Sir Edward Gent as Governor. UMNO and the Malay rulers boycotted the inauguration ceremonies.
- Apr - Jun 1946 Informal meetings between the British, UMNO and 1946 the Malay rulers.
- 11 - 12 May 1946 Second UMNO Congress held in Johore Bharu. Dato Onn elected as President of UMNO. The MNP withdrawal from UMNO.
- 28 - 29 May 1946 British parliamentary team comprised of Col. D. R. Rees-Williams, a Labour Party MP, and Capt. L. D. Gammans, a Conservative MP, travelled throughout Malaya on a fact-finding mission concerning the political situation.
- 25 Jul 1946 Agreement reached between British officials, UMNO and the Malay rulers to begin negotiations on the constitutional issue. The establishment of the Constitutional Working Committee (CWC) comprised of representatives of the three parties. Increased opposition from the non-Malay communities.
- 14 Dec 1946 Eight of the non-Malay opposition groups and the MNP met to form the *Council for Joint Action* (CJA) These were, the Malayan Democratic Union (MDU), Straits Chinese British Association (SCBA), the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) and Chinese business leaders.
- 22 Dec 1946 The CJC was replaced by a new organization called the *Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action*. (PMCJA) which includes the MCP.
- 24 Dec 1946 Draft proposals for a new constitution to replace the Malayan Union was announced. Establishment of a Consultative Committee for non-Malay proposals on the constitution.
- 22 Feb 1947 The MNP withdraws from the PMCJA and together with several of its allies such as API and AWAS formed its own coalition known as *Pusat Tenaga Raayat* or PUTERA (Peoples' Action Front). PMCJA renamed All-Malaya Council for Joint Action (AMCJA) and entered into an alliance with PUTERA known as PUTERA-AMCJA alliance.
- 21 Jul 1947 Consultative Committee's report completed. A revised "Constitutional Proposal" incorporating some of the Committee's recommendations was announced.

- 20 Oct 1947 PUTERA-AMCJA most successful nation-wide strike took place. Government authorities responded with tougher police actions such as arrests of strike leaders.
- Oct 1947 The Constitutional Working Committee was reconvened to discuss possible dates for the implementation of the new constitution.
- 21 Jan 1948 The Federal Agreement based on the proposals were signed by the British government and the Malay Rulers.
- 1 Feb 1948 The new Federation of Malaya Constitution was inaugurated.

Appendix D

Biographical Notes

The Malaysians

Abdul Rahman, Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra Al-Haj- Born in 1902 and educated at Penang, Cambridge University and the Inner Temple. After the war was elected leader of SABERKAS whom he helped found in 1943. He was involved only in the early part of the anti-Malayan Union campaign leaving for London in late 1946 and not returning to Malaya until 1949. In London, he was part of the "UMNO London" group of Malay students supporting UMNO. He became the president of UMNO at the resignation of Dato Onn in 1951 and led UMNO into an Alliance with the MCA and the MIC. In 1955, he became the Chief Minister of Malaya and then Prime Minister of Malaya from 1957 to 1970.

Abdul Razak bin Dato Hussein- Born in 1922 and educated at the Malay College, Kuala Kangsar and Raffles Institution, Singapore. His father was one of the four major chiefs of Pahang and the Principal Adviser to the Sultan of Pahang. During the Japanese Occupation Abdul Razak was an active member of the *Wataniah*, a Malay anti-Japanese resistance group. Left Malaya for England at the end of the war. While there he was active in the Malay students association, the unofficial branch of UMNO, returning in 1950 to become UMNO's Youth President and later Deputy Prime Minister in Tunku Abdul Rahman's government. In 1970 he succeeded Tunku Abdul Rahman as Prime Minister of Malaysia.

Abdul Wahab Bin Toh Muda Abdul Aziz- the Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang. He was born in 1905 and educated at the Malay College in Ipoh and London University and the Inner Temple. Served in the Malayan Administrative in 1930. Member of the Council of Malay Chiefs of Perak and the Perak State Council. President of the *Perikatan Melayu Perak* (Perak Malay League) and Secretary-General of UMNO, 1946-47.

Ahmad Boestaman, (real name Abdullah Sani) - Born in 1920 and educated in Malay and later received English education for a short time. Journalist with the *Utusan*

Melayu and *Majlis* before the war and then *Suara Raayat*. A founder member of the KMM in 1937. Arrested by the British in 1941 along with other KMM leaders. During the Japanese Occupation, he worked in the propaganda unit with Ibrahim Yaacob and claimed to have formed the clandestine anti-Japanese movement called "Empat Serangkai" (Four-Leaf Clover). Founder and editor of *Suara Raayat*. Founder member of the MNP and API in 1945. Arrested at the start of the Emergency in 1948 (released in 1955) Founded *Partai Raayat* (Peoples' Party) in 1956 and won a parliamentary seat in 1959. He was again detained in 1960.

Aishah Abdul Ghani- Born in 1924 and educated in Malay and then attended a religious school in Sumatra. After the war, she joined the MNP and became the second President of AWAS. She left the MNP at the end of 1946 and became a radio host until 1949 when she joined UMNO. She became head of UMNO's Women Wing in 1962.

Burhanuddin al-Helmy, Dr. (Dr Burhanuddin bin Mohamed Noor) - Born in 1911 and educated in Malay and at a religious school. Obtained a degree in homeopathic medicine in India. A journalist and teacher before the war. A founder member of the KMM in 1937 and was detained by the British in 1941. Assumed leadership of remnants of KMM and KRIS after the flight of Ibrahim Yaacob. He became the second President of the MNP. Arrested in 1950 at the proscription of the MNP. Founder member of the *Pan-Malayan Islamic Party* (PMIP) and elected to the Malayan Parliament in 1960 and was again detained in 1962.

Eunos bin Abdullah - Born in 1876 and educated in English at Raffles Institution, Singapore. Often referred to as the "Father of Malay Journalism" for the foundation of the *Utusan Melayu* in 1907. In 1924, he was appointed the first Malay member of the Singapore Legislative Council. He was one of the founding members of the *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* (Singapore Malay Union) in 1926.

Hamzah bin Abdullah, Dato - Born in 1890 and educated at the Malay College, Kuala Kangsar. Served in the MAS and the MCS. He was the Rulers' representative on the Constitutional Working Committee, 1946-47. Secretary of UMNO, 1946-47 and Deputy President in 1950.

Ibrahim Yaacob (Ibrahim bin Haji Yaacob) - Born in 1911 and educated at the SITC. Founder-President of the KMM in 1937. Editor of *Majlis*, 1939-41; Detained in 1941 by the British. Colonel of the *Giyu-Gun*, founder of PETA and KRIS during the Japanese Occupation. Fled to Indonesia where he formed the Kesatuan Melayu Merdeka (KMM) to carry on his Malayan activities.

Ishak bin Haji Mohamed - Born in 1910 and educated at Malay College, Kuala Kangsar. Served in the MAS for a year in 1933 to become a writer. Joined *Warta Malaya* and the *Utusan Melayu* before the war. He was a founder-member of the KMM and was detained in 1941. Editor of the *Berita Malai* during the Japanese Occupation. Became the third President of the MNP and leader of PUTERA in 1947. Detained again in 1960.

Mokhtaruddin Lasso - Probably from Sumatra. Malay leader of the MPAJA during the war. First President of the MNP in 1945. After the war he left for Indonesia and was not directly involved in Malayan politics from then on.

Musa Ahmad - A long-standing member of the MCP and the MPAJA. He was also a member of the KMM and the MNP probably as part of the MCP's strategy of influencing the Malay radical movement. Joined the MCP's guerilla war and emerged as its Chairman in the unsuccessful peace talks between the communists and the Malayan government in 1955.

Nik Ahmed Kamil bin Nik Mahmood, Dato Setia Raja Kelantan - Son of the Chief Minister of Kelantan. Educated at Malay College, Kuala Kangsar and London. Served in the Kelantan State Administration and in 1938 succeeded his father as the Chief Minister of Kelantan. One of the Rulers' representatives on the Constitutional Working Committee. Founder-member of UMNO but left in 1950 to join Dato Onn in the *Independence of Malaya Party* (IMP).

Onn bin Jaafar, Dato - His grandfather, father and two elder brothers were Chief Ministers of Johore. Educated at Malay College, Kuala Kangsar and England. He was editor of several Malay newspapers such as *Warta Malaya* before the war. Joined the Johore Civil Service to become Private Secretary to the Regent in 1938. Served in the Japanese Military Administration as Food Controller during

the Japanese Occupation. He was District Officer of Batu Pahat during the immediate post-war period and became the Chief Minister of Johore in 1946. Founder-President of the *Pergerakan Melayu Semenajong Johore* (Malay Peninsula Movement, Johore) and UMNO in 1946. Represented UMNO on Constitutional Working Council. Left UMNO in 1950 to form the *Independence of Malaya Party* (IMP) in 1951.

Sardon bin Haji Jubir - Born in 1917 and educated at Raffles Institution, Singapore and obtained a law degree in London. Served as Assistant magistrate during the Japanese Occupation. Attended the KRIS Congress in 1945 and became President of the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura in 1947. Founder-member of UMNO and served in UMNO's Working Committee for the preparation of Constitutional proposals. Minister in the Malayan Government from 1957-1970.

Syed Sheikh Ahmad al-Hadi - Born in 1862 of mixed Arab-Malay parents. Related to the Riau royal family and educated in Malaya and Saudi Arabia. Co-founder of *Al-Imam* in 1906 and became one of the most well known *Kaum Muda* proponents in Malaya and Indonesia.

Zainal Abidin bin Haji Abas (Za'ba) - Born in 1907 and educated in English in Malaya. Served in the MAS and the MCS. Founder-member of the *Perikatan Melayu Perak* (Perak Malay League) and UMNO in 1946. Filled various executive posts in UMNO. Left UMNO to join Dato Onn's IMP in 1951.

Tan Cheng Lock (Sir Cheng-Lock Tan) - Born in 1883 of Straits Chinese descent in Malacca. (Straits Chinese have been residents of Malaya since the early eighteen century and have acquired many Malay customs) He became a successful rubber planter and represented the Chinese community on the Colonial Legislative Councils. Spent the war years in India. After the war he was actively involved in the anti-federation movement. Founder-member of the *Malayan Chinese Association* (MCA) and the IMP with Dato Onn. He was instrumental in forging an alliance of UMNO and the MCA.

The British

Braddell, Sir Roland St. John - Born in 1880 and educated in law. Practised law in Malaya during the pre-war period and member of various Colonial legislative councils. and became the legal adviser to the Sultan of Johore. He became the legal adviser of UMNO from 1946 to 1948.

Gammans, Capt. L David - Born in 1895 and served as MCS officer and became the Unionist MP for Hornsey from 1941 to 1955. Member of the Parliamentary Delegation to Sarawak and Malaya in 1946.

Gent, Sir Edward J.- Served in the Colonial Office from 1920 to become Asst Permanent Under Secretary of State for the Colonial Office between 1942 and 1946. Governor of the Malayan Union, 1946 to 1948, and High Commissioner of the Federation of Malaya in 1948.

Hall, Rt Hon George H. 1st Viscount- Labour MP in 1922 and became the Secretary of State for the Colonies between 1945 and 1946.

Hone, Maj-General Sir H. Ralph- Born in 1896 and educated in Law. Served in various judicial positions in British Colonies such as Chief Justice of Gibraltar, Attorney-General of Uganda between 1937 and 1943. Head of the Malayan Planning Unit and then the CCAO of Malaya 1945-46.

MacDonald, Rt Hon Malcolm J.- Born in 1901 and became Labour MP in 1929. High Commissioner of Great Britain to Canada from 1941 to 1946. Governor-General of South East Asia and Malaya 1946-48.

MacMichael, Sir Harold A.- Born in 1882 and had served in various senior Colonial appointments in Africa and the Middle East such as Governor of Tanganyika, 1933-37, and High Commissioner of Palestine and Trans-Jordan, 1938-44. He was appointed the Special Representative of HMG in Malaya, 1945.

Rees-Williams, Lt Col David R.- Born in 1903, obtained law degree and practiced in Malaya before the war. Military service during World War Two and became

Labour MP from 1945 to 1950. Member of Parliamentary Delegation to Sarawak and Malaya, 1946.

Willan, Sir Harold C.- Born in 1896 and served in the MCS from 1920 to 1935.

During the war served in the Malayan Planning Unit. He became the DCCAO of the BMA in 1946 and later Chief Justice of the Malayan Union and the Federation of Malaya from 1947-1950.

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