

THE IMPACT OF THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION  
ON CONTEMPORARY ETHNIC POLITICS IN MALAYSIA

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THE IMPACT OF THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION  
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## DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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## ABSTRACT

### The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Contemporary Ethnic Politics in Malaysia

This study aims to analyze how the Japanese occupation of Malaysia, back then Malaya, created a post-war continuation in the formation of contemporary ethnic politics under Malay political primacy in Malaysia between 1945-1969. The brief Japanese occupation has ramped up the nationalist sentiments and political experiences of not only the Malays but also the Chinese and Indians, who were regarded as transient communities. The Japanese military experience of Malaysia between 1941 and 1945 brought dramatic political changes that were beyond the ability and expectations of pre-war colonial power of Malaysia: The British, which resulted in the decolonization of Malaysia. While independence was achieved as a result of the nationalist movements of all ethnic groups that emerged with the Japanese occupation, the Malays found room to actualize their nationalist agendas in fields of politics, economy, and nation-building. This study observes the role of Japan in the consolidation of ethnic politics in Malaysia under Malay ethnocracy by predicating on the impacts of the Japanese invasion.

## ÖZET

### Japon İşgalinin Malezya'daki Çağdaş Etnik Siyasete Etkileri

Bu çalışmanın amacı Japon'yanın Malezyayı işgalinin 1945-1969 arası dönemde çağdaş etnik siyasi gelişmelerin Malay hegemonyası altında oluşumu için nasıl savaş sonrası bir süreklilik ortaya çıkardığını analiz etmektir. Kısa süren Japon işgali yalnızca Malayların değil, geçici göçmen topluluklar olarak kabul gören Çinli ve Hintlilerinde milliyetçi duygularını ve siyasi tecrübelerini politize etmiştir. 1941-1945 yılları arasında tecrübe edilen Japon emperyalizmi, Malezya'nın 1941 öncesi yöneticileri olan İngilizlerin beklentilerinin ve yetkinliklerinin ötesinde dramatik siyasi değişiklikler oluşturmanın yanı sıra, dekolonizasyon sürecinde başmasına sebep olmuştur. Bağımsızlık Japon işgali ile yükselen bütün etnik grupların milliyetçi hareketleri ile alınırken, Malaylar kendi milliyetçi gündemlerini siyaset, ekonomi ve ulus-inşa süreçlerinde hayata geçirmeyi başarmıştır. Bu çalışma Japon işgalinin etkilerini baz alarak Japonların Malezya'da ki etnik siyasetin Malay üstünlüğü üzerine kurulmasında ki rolünü gözlemlemektedir.

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## CHRONOLOGY

1402-1511	The Malacca Kingdom was founded by Parameswara. He established the Malacca Empire, which was Malacca's pre-colonial Golden Age.
1511-1941	The Arrival of Western Colonialism by Portuguese, the Dutch and the British.
1941-1945	Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia and the beginning of decolonization in South East Asia.
1945-1946	British reoccupation attempts through the introduction of the Malayan Union Plan.
1946-1948	The establishment of the United Malay National Organization, the political tool of Malay Nationalism, and the establishment of the Federation of Malaya in 1948.
1948-1960	The First Malayan Emergency and the path to Independence.
1963-1965	The Federation of Malaysia with the participation of Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore.
1965	The Partition of Singapore from the Federation.
1969	The Second Malaysian Emergency; the 13 May Racial Riots.
1971-1990	The Establishment of Malay Ethnocracy: The Malay Malaysia.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Japan's rise swept into the South Seas with the defeat of a European power: The Russians, in 1905, with which Japan lifted the psychologically ingrained sense of inferiority, engineered by Western colonial and economic dominations in the growth of nationalist feelings in Southeast Asia. By invading the colonized outposts of the colonialist Powers in Asia in 1940's, Japan provided the occasion for "the politically, economically, and culturally subjugated peoples of Asia"<sup>1</sup> to seize power for the fulfillment of their nationalist ideals after 1945. By causing the demise of Western Colonialism, Japanese, "acted as a catalyst in the formation of nation-states in Southeast Asia by imposing an even more hateful (bloody and militarist) brand of unparagoned colonialism"<sup>2</sup> and "caused a change in the favor of colonized nations."<sup>3</sup> Japanese occupation did not only paralyze the comfort zone of Western colonialists but also their Asian subjects who were secluded in ivory towers and were confined to Western colonial ill-fate.

The Japanese military rule "constituted a calculated ... reversal and... destruction of the colonial order, accompanied by Japanizing the occupied countries."<sup>4</sup> Among the Southeast Asian countries, the least politically mature country; Malaysia, experienced the most transformative changes. The occupation "had turned Malaysia upside down. The former social order was completely reversed. The nobodies of yesterday became the big-shots of today."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> John Dower, *War Without Mercy*, 20.

<sup>2</sup> John Bastin, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 145-146.

<sup>3</sup> John Bastin, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 146.

<sup>4</sup> John Bastin, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia*, 147.

<sup>5</sup> Chin Kee Onn, *Malay Upside Down*, 174.

The Malays, who were known as the least politically mature race in Asia found room to fulfill its nationalist agenda after experiencing political activism and social organization, coupled with the inculcation of Japanese military values. The radical impact of Japanese occupation on the pre-war social structure and relations was transferred into the post-war Malaysia, back then Malaya, under the guise of social unrest until the completion of Malay nationalism in 1969.<sup>6</sup>

As stated by Paul H. Kratoska ‘‘the Japanese Occupation divides the twentieth-century history of Malaysia into two parts, 1900-1940 and 1945 onward’’.<sup>7</sup> This period indisputably ended the British colonial order and created a new one under Malay political primacy. In British Malaya, there was an immobilized peaceful coexistence where locals were segregated by a rigid division of labor. By ending forever the myth of European invulnerability and superiority, Japanese occupation reversed the pre-war colonial map and a new Malaya, called Malai and a new Singapore, called Syonan was created within the Co-Prosperity Sphere under the colonial ideology of Japan, accompanied by Pan-Asianists sentiments.<sup>8</sup> According to Yoji Akashi, the occupation was significant in bringing positive and negative radical changes ‘‘depending on the experiences of individuals and various racial communities.’’<sup>9</sup> Although the impact of the occupation varied among Malays, Chinese, and Indians based on their ethnic identities, it vitalized and regenerated a plural nationalism among locals and brought a radical departure from pre-war British Malaya, to one where major races had to fight to conquer the political hegemony to construct their future.

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<sup>6</sup> Chin Kee Onn, *Malay Upside Down*, 174.

<sup>7</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945: A social and Economic History*, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Hale, *Massacre in Malaya*, 335.

<sup>9</sup> Yoji Akashi, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaysia*, 16.

The 1945 Japanese Malaya led to the emergence of the country we know as Malaysia today. The emergence of Ethnic politics majorly owns its importance to this specific period. As stated by Tim Harper, the British, who attempted to reoccupy Malaya in 1945, was baffled by ‘‘the extent to which Asian Nationalism had been transformed by the war’’, the way Japan had given a new youthful and militaristic face to Malay nationalism in general and non-Malay nationalism in particular and how Malay nationalism emerged from the war with radical potentials.<sup>10</sup> Japan’s nationality policy that was applied throughout the occupation deeply ethnicized and politicized the nationalism and identity of Malays and non-Malays. Between 1941 and 1945, ‘‘the Japanese patronized the Malay ruling establishment as prospective partners in a Japanese-led Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere; they even tolerated Pan-Malayan sentiments inspired by Indonesian Nationalism.’’<sup>11</sup> Throughout the war, the Japanese united all Indians regardless of their sub-ethnic differences and fully supported the creation of the Indian Independence League (IIL) and Indian National Army (INA) so that they could co-operate with the Japanese Army to liberate India from the British Imperial Rule. The Chinese Community were deprived of the pre-war British comfort zone and their relations were cut off with China and they were treated with unremitting hostility and brutality as enemy aliens. They were tortured, brutally killed, and obligated for voluntary contributions after being forcefully united under the Japanese-established Overseas Chinese Association. The Japanese also acted as a catalyst in the emergence of an Anglo-Communist Alliance on the eve of occupation for the defense of Singapore and the formation of the Malayan People’s Anti-

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<sup>10</sup> Christopher Bavly, Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars, Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, 16,17,18.

<sup>11</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 51, 52.

Japanese Army, MPAJA, which became the most-effective anti-Japanese army, led by the Malayan Communist Party during and after the occupation. The role cast for locals parallel to the politics of ethnicity the Japanese adopted, was transferred to post-war Malaya in the context of social unrest, accompanied by diverse nationalist sentiments of major races.

The racial divisions among the major races that were only economic and religious during the colonial years of British Administration were radically transformed into the struggle of ethnic politics during and after the Japanese occupation which led to the post-war challenges starting with post-surrender interregnum of 1945 and ending up with the 13 May 1969 racial riots where Malay's completed the implementation of their nationalist agenda.<sup>12</sup> The Japanese occupation of Malaya did not only politicize the racial relations but also pushed the power holders to consider the assimilation and integration of ethnic Chinese and Indians as part of the Malay-dominant new nation after Malays would fulfill their political agenda.<sup>13</sup> From nationalist movements to locally-oriented political parties: the Japanese occupation led to the emergence of left-wing political factions and trade unions and contributed to the reorientation of Chinese as it led to the founding of MCA and the Indians as it led to the creation of MIC.<sup>14</sup> This chapter will analyze the post-war impacts of the Japanese Occupation on contemporary ethnic politics under Malay hegemony.

This thesis is about how the brief Japanese Occupation impacted the contemporary ethnic political development in favor of Malays and among Malays,

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<sup>12</sup> Army Vandenbosh, Richard Butwell, *The Changing face of Southeast Asia*, 77.

<sup>13</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, "The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Ethnic Relations between Chinese and Indigeneous People in Malaya and Indonesia in 1940's," 3.

<sup>14</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, "Nanyang Chinese Under Japanese Pan-Asianism and Pribumi Nationalism in Malaya and Indonesia," 109.

Chinese, and Indians: The three main ethnicities who shared the history of nation-building in Malaysia. This research mainly claims that the contemporary ethnic politics of Malaysia can only be comprehended concerning the changes brought by the Japanese occupation between 1941 and 1945.

Yoji Akashi states that after the surrender of Japan in 1945, Japanese imperial rule and its traces that were left in Singapore and Malaya were discarded, and the only words that described the occupation period in the living memory were ‘‘Kempetai (military police), Bakayaro (idiot), Romusha (Forced Laborer), Binta (Slap in the face).’’<sup>15</sup> However, the Look East Policies implemented in the 1980s by Mahathir Mohammad, the fourth and seventh Prime Minister of Malaysia, made the researcher re-evaluate the impacts of the Japanese Occupation between 1941-1945. The Japanese Occupation of Malaya not only accelerated and politicized the nationalist movements, but also put Malay nationalism into perspective in terms of religion, politics, and economy, while pushing Malay power holders to consider ‘‘whether ethnic Chinese and (also Indians) could be accepted as part of a new nation and how to integrate them if they were accepted.’’<sup>16</sup> It is well known that the race problem in Malaysia is rooted in the coming of European colonialism and institutionalized as a by-product of British colonialism in the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> However, the politics of ethnicity that was carried out upon the initial invasion of Japan, prevented British recolonization attempts and plans under the creation of a Malaysian Malaysia and ingenerated unavertable long-term social conflicts which would solely be tackled with the establishment of Malay Malaysia until 1969.

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<sup>15</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Cultural Policy in Malaya and Singapore,’’ 147

<sup>16</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, ‘‘The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Ethnic Relations between Chinese and Indigenous People in Malaya and Singapore in 1940’s’’, 3.

<sup>17</sup> Charles Hirschman, ‘‘Making of Colonial Race in Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology’’ 330.

This thesis consists of seven chapters. The introduction of this thesis, which forms the very first chapter, establishes the groundwork for the rest of the dissertation.

Chapter 2 provides a brief portrayal of pre-war colonial indigenous rule and the British colonial rule who transformed Malaya into a plural fragmented polity. This chapter aims to highlight how indigenous rule took a heterogeneous outlook until 1941.

Chapter 3 provides the background of the historical scholarship of the Japanese occupation and its relation to the post-war analysis. After providing a detailed portrayal of pre-colonial indigenous rule and the British constructed ethnic relations, the researcher will provide the developments that were caused by Japan in the politicization of identity and ethnic relations through the historiography of the Japanese Occupation between 1941 and 1945.

Chapter 4 discusses the wartime impact of Japanese occupation on major races; the Malays, the Chinese, and the Indians. By providing details on the impacts of the Japanese Occupation, this chapter aims to make a comparison of Japanese and British Colonial Structures to reveal the generational change between pre-war British Malaya of 1941 and the Japanese Malai of 1945. The researcher will end her argument with the change or continuity debates to outline how the brief Japanese occupation acted as a catalyst in the formation of the post-war politics in Malaya through the regeneration of ethnic communities.

Chapter 5 will focus on the post-war political fermentation and the struggle of the Malays, the Chinese, and the Indians in the formation of contemporary ethnic politics in Malaysia under Malay political primacy. The nationality policy, wittingly and unwittingly designated by the Japanese was transferred to Malaya as a life and

death struggle between Malays and non-Malays in the aftermath of the Japanese surrender. This part will briefly organize the impacts of the Japanese Occupation around Malay nationalism and non-Malay nationalism, and claims that Japanese occupation trisected Malay nationalism in fields of religion, politics, and economy. The first type came in the form of Malay religious nationalism which was intertwined with the politics of ethnicity fostered under the Japanese Military Rule. The second type came in the form of Malay Political Nationalism, where Malays managed to re-rule their land after 446 years of European colonization and established Malay political primacy in the fight to accommodate and integrate ethnic Chinese and Indians as part of the new nation. The third type came in the form of Malay economic nationalism. The economic consolidation of Malays became possible after the elimination of non-Malay and European economic ownership in the country. This was possible after the outbreak of 13 May 1969 racial riots, which led to the creation of ethnocracy in Malaysia.

Chapter 6 will explore the discussions of different ethnic imaginations on Japanese Occupation and Malaysian identity. This chapter will examine how exactly Malays, Chinese, and Indians evaluate the impacts of the Japanese occupation between 1941-1945 and how they describe their Malaysian identities despite the nation-building attempts of the Malaysian government which greatly shaped war-memory and identity in Malaysia. This chapter will probe the question; How do Malays, Chinese, and Indians interpret their war-time memories and Malaysian identities?

This thesis is an attempt to answer the research questions that were designed for each specific chapter:

Research Questions;



- 1- How Japanese Occupation created a continuation of post-war political development?
- 2- What are the impacts of the Japanese occupation in the context of ‘‘change and continuity’’ debates?
- 3- What are the changes brought by the Japanese Occupation within the context of contemporary ethnic politics?
- 4- How do major ethnic communities evaluate the impacts of Japanese occupation and their Malaysian identities?

## CHAPTER 2

### PRE-WAR MALAYSIAN HISTORY

Before examining the period of Japanese occupation, it is of great importance to briefly reveal the transitional period of Malaysia from indigenous rule to Western colonial rule that lasted more than 400 years, where ‘‘Malay’’ boiled down to a race category under the preferential racialization<sup>18</sup> of the Western colonial ideology and that it never found a room to revive the golden days of indigeneous rule that was lost to Western Colonialism until 1940’s. This chapter is an attempt to reveal the Malay indigenous outlook of Malay history and its evolution under the Vasco de Gama epoch<sup>19</sup> of Malaysia in which the British was the last zeal of Western Colonial powers.

#### 2.1 Malaysia before the Western Colonial Rule

Before the arrival of colonialism to the Malay Archipelago,<sup>20</sup> Malaysia had a distinct history that began with the rise of the Malacca Sultanate, a Malay civilization that dominated the parts of the Nusantara world.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> One of the most interesting solutions the Portuguese tackled to protect their religious and colonial interests was to devise a racial approach in Malacca that the researcher defines the preferential racialization, as it created a domino effect in the colonial heritage of the latter. Preferential racialization can be defined according to a statement made by John Bastin, in his book, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: 1511-1957* (p.22.), as seeking closer relations with non-moors, namely non-Mohammedan regions and giving favored treatments to other ethnicities.

<sup>19</sup> This is a theory put forward by K.M. Panikkar in *Asia and Western Dominance, A Survey of the Vasco Da Gama Epoch of Asian History* as the arrival of Vasco de Gama in Calicut in 1498 and the departure of British forces from India in 1948 and the European natives from China in 1949. The fall of Melaka Sultanate in 1511 set the beginning of the Vasco De Gama epoch in Malaysia which permanently ended the reign of the Sultanate’s indigenous control until the arrival of the Japanese.

<sup>20</sup> The Malay archipelago sparked global interest due to its geographic location, and its natural wealth in its jungles and oceans. The archipelago developed a vast trading system stretching from Africa to China. Its geographic location was the meeting point of two major sea routes, linking the markets of India and China. The natural resources and the richness of soil, such as gold and tin-mining, contributed to the development of the archipelago. This period of Malay history is filled with the ebb and flow of powers to establish the commercial hegemony.

<sup>21</sup> This term is used to refer to many parts of Southeast Asia, beginning from Vietnam and Cambodia to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Brunei and Southern Philippines.

The Malacca Sultanate was founded by its first ruler; Parameswara,<sup>22</sup> a Srivijayan Prince who was forced to escape Palembang, the Srivijayan region of Sumatra, after the invasion of the Javanese kingdom in 1397.<sup>23</sup> He fled to the Malay Peninsula and founded a Malay kingdom geo-strategically situated in the middle of the Straits of Malacca ‘with excellent potential to control the maritime trade routes between the Western and Eastern worlds.’<sup>24</sup>

The acceptance of Islam<sup>25</sup> both by Malay rulers and their subjects constituted the most decisive turning point in the civilizational process of the Malays as a race and the history of the Malay world as a regional power.<sup>26</sup> Besides bringing a new identity and a new sense of belonging, ‘Islam became the politically unifying force in Nusantara, fomenting nationalist consciousness and ideals.’<sup>27</sup> The Sultanate that absorbed Islamic ‘religion, statecraft and social organization’ turned into an Islamic

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<sup>22</sup> The founder and the first ruler of the Malacca Sultanate, who embraced Islam and took the name of Iskandar Shah, empowered his kingdom through his skillful diplomacy and a trading policy between 1390-1413/1414, which can be found in the contributions of Wang Gungwu in the Admiral Cheng He and Southeast Asia under the heading ‘The First Three Rulers of Malacca’.

<sup>23</sup> Caroline Lopez, ‘The British Presence in the Malay World: A Meeting of Civilizational Traditions,’ 8

<sup>24</sup> Adam Leong Kok Wey, Abdul Latif Harun, ‘Grand Strategy of the Malacca Sultanate, 1400-1511,’ 50.

<sup>25</sup> Before Islam was adopted in the Malay world, the region was under the control of the Kingdom of Srivijaya (Sumatra), between the 7th and 14th centuries. The Kingdom of *Srivijaya* was greatly influenced by Hindu-Buddhist traditions due to the Indian Merchants who came to Southeast Asia in the 4th century for trading activities in the occupied regions under the Malay kingdom, and the Malay civilization was greatly influenced by Hindu and Buddhist traditions prior to Islam. Among the major influences of the Hindu-Buddhist tradition, the Indian idea of kingship contributed to the traditional Malay understanding of power and authority, to the extent that the kingdoms in Java, Sumatra and Malay Peninsula used the administrative titles such as Maharaja and Raja.

In the maintenance of economic and political superiority, the maritime kingdom of Srivijaya, which means both Melayu-Jambi and Palembang line rose from Southeast Sumatra, established itself as a regional power in the Straits between the 7th and 13th century. The kingdom prospered under the tributary system of China. Benefitting from the special relationships with various Chinese Emperors, the kingdom attached the traders through an established check and balances in government and in commercial transaction. The archipelago greatly developed through international trade and generated a cultured and refined society. Due to a shift in China’s policy on regional trade in the Late Sung and Mongol periods, Srivijaya faced greater challenges from rising ports and dependencies. The flourishing of private Chinese trade, a system that allowed the traders to go directly to the source of supply rather than the entrepot, led to the development of attractive ports in the Malay World and led to the rise of new kingdoms along the Sumatran Coasts, such as Perlak and Pasai.

<sup>26</sup> Abdul Rahman Embong, ‘Malaysia as a Multicultural Society,’ 43.

<sup>27</sup> Abdurrahman Embong, ‘Malaysia as a Multicultural Society,’ 43.

state which was modelled by the remaning sultanates in the wider Malay world.<sup>28</sup> Between 1400-1528, Paramesvara (Iskandar Shah 1390-1413/1414), and his successors Megat Iskandar Shah (1414-1423/24), Sultan Muhammad Shah (Sri Maharaja 1424-1444), Sultan Muzaffar Syah, Sultan Mansur Shah Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah, Sultan Mahmud Syah<sup>29</sup>, the last ruler of Malacca, transformed this small trading post into a confederation of Muslim States of commerce, covering the eastern coast of Sumatra and the entire Malay peninsula and made it the commercial and religious hub of the Malay world where other Muslim kingdoms in the archipelago absorbed.<sup>30</sup> Malay language became the homogenizing factor for the political life of the heterogeneous world of Nusantara.<sup>31</sup> Malacca's style of government, title of sultans, literature, music, dance, dress, games, all of which were distinctively Melaka-Malay, were absorbed and imitated by other regions that justified the supremacy of the Malacca Sultanate.<sup>32</sup> The administrative life settled by Malaccan Rulers after Parameswera which was based on Malaccan laws in land and the sea had region-wide practises. Malacca generated an ethnoreligious and cultural identity to the extent a sense of belonging to Malay identity, and the religion of Islam was highly attached by the remaining sultanates. The ethnic status quo was designed upon Malay supremacy where Malays were the dominant part of the population, who were in control of the socio-political order.<sup>33</sup> Malay's socio-political and cultural supremacy 'shaped the outlook of the local populations'.<sup>34</sup> Due to being a strategic

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<sup>28</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans; Indian in Malaysia*, 9.

<sup>29</sup> As clarified by Wang Gungwu in his book, the Admiral Cheng He and Southeast Asia, under the title of 'The First Three Rulers of Malacca', the confusion about the identity of Parameswera and Megat Iskandar Shah is restored and the blur about Megat Iskandar Shah is corrected as the second ruler of Malacca who served between 1414-1423/24.

<sup>30</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 50, 51.

<sup>31</sup> Mohd Taib Osman, *Malay Dünyasında İslam Medeniyeti*, (İstanbul: İslam Tarih, Sanat ve Kültür Araştırma Merkezi, 2000), 40.

<sup>32</sup> Leo Suryadinata, *Admiral Cheng He and Southeast Asia*, 40-41.

<sup>33</sup> Mahathir Mohamad, *A Doctor in the House, The Memoirs of Tun Doctor Mahathir Mohamad*, 54.

<sup>34</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans; Indian in Malaysia*, 10.

regional trading center, the population of Malacca ‘‘were outsiders with a strong mixture of Javanese, Indian, and Chinese traders ‘’. <sup>35</sup> The Sultanate was constructed upon ‘‘the ethnic forms- language, institutions, and cultural norms-.... embraced by the communities within Sumatra as well as parts of Java and other diverse regions within the Malay Archipelago.’’<sup>36</sup> The long centuries cosmopolitanism that was ruled under Malay political primacy changed with the arrival of European colonialism<sup>37</sup> where ‘‘Malays lost their central position within the new framework of sociopolitical and commercial life’’ of the region.<sup>38</sup>

After the influx of European colonization, Malaysia became ‘‘the revolving door of various brands of colonialism for over four hundred years.’’<sup>39</sup> Malacca and its conquered territories were colonized by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British, respectively between 1511 and 1940. The racial compartmentalization penetrated into the region with the beginning of the Vasco De Gama epoch in

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<sup>35</sup> Adam Leong Kok Wey et al, ‘‘Grand Strategy of the Malacca Sultanate, 1400-1511,’’ 53.

<sup>36</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans; Indian in Malaysia*, 10.

<sup>37</sup> The arrival of Europeans was mainly over spice and power to monopolize the lands and the resources of Southeast Asia. Due to its maritime importance, trade, and natural resources, Europeans became interested in controlling Malacca’s geo-strategic and economic superiority. The Portuguese, who were the first European power occupying the Malacca Sultanate under the lead of Alfonso de Albuquerque, Portugal’s Governor of India on 10 August 1511, established Europe’s first modern colony in Asia. In the face of the unchallenged military power of the Portuguese, accompanied by non-Malay communities who were under the status quo of the Malacca Sultanate, ‘‘Sultan Mahmud Syah and his courtiers fled to Riau-Lingga archipelago where Malacca’s supremacy was retained by the sons of the Sultan through the Sultanate of Perak by Muzaffer Syah and Sultanate of Johor until 1699 by Alaeddin Riyata al-Syah’’. The Portuguese ruled Malacca and its conquered territories between 1511 and 1641. When the Portuguese fell into a decline, the Dutch ‘‘got the upper hand in Europe ... dispelled the Portuguese from Malacca in 1641.’’ Benefitting from the internal strife between sultanates, the Dutch ended the Portuguese hegemony with the help of the Johor Kingdom in 1641, where Johor was crowned with commercial concessions in return; this set the emergence point of Malay special privileges assigned to Malay Sultanates. Having colonized India, the British, as the last European colonizer, was looking for ways to penetrate the new territories of Southeast Asia to empower its colonial empire in terms of raw materials. The British, who were able to establish free ports in the region to wipe out the monopoly of European powers, took the control of trade in the region. The British entered the Malay Peninsula ‘‘with the claim of restoring order in the area’’, as Johor’s decline led to the emergence of independent states who chased freedom for their political and economic goals, which caused chaos and decay in the Malay world. The initial acceptance of the British in the Malay Peninsula became possible due to her potential friendship in the face of Thai hegemony after 1782.

<sup>38</sup> Mahathir Mohamad, *A Doctor in the House, The Memoirs of Tun Doctor Mahathir Mohamad*, (Malaysia: MPH Group Publishing, 2012), 54.

<sup>39</sup> Henry Frei, *Malaya in World War II, The Revolving Door of Colonialism: Malaya 1940-1946*, 46.

Malaysia which officially ended the reign of the Sultanate's indigenous rule in 1511. The Portuguese cooperated with the non-Malay communities of Malacca to cause the fall of the Sultanate, and adopted a type of racialization where Malays deliberately lagged behind while non-Malays were prioritized.<sup>40</sup> This racial compartmentalization was institutionally and progressively consolidated with the arrival of British colonialism between 1784 and 1940.

## 2.2 The British Colonial Period

Having established themselves in Penang in 1786, the British sphere of influence was determined with two distinct occasions in the peninsula, the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824, and the Pangkor Treaty of 1874. These treaties formed the backbone of modern political boundaries, which was to be called British Malaya. The first treaty determined the Anglo-Dutch spheres of influence in the Malay world along the Malacca straits while it formed the contemporary boundary between Malaysia and Indonesia.<sup>41</sup> It was the first territorial organization which resulted with the formation of Straits Settlements, comprising of Singapore, Malacca, and Pulau Penang in 1824.<sup>42</sup> The formation of Strait Settlements caused the expansion of trade and non-Malay population in three port cities, and Singapore became the capital of Strait Settlements.<sup>43</sup> With the mounting rivalry among European powers in Asia, Africa, and Oceania,<sup>44</sup> the Malay mass revolts: the Maharaja Lela Revolt of 1874, which resulted in the killing of James Birch, the British Governor, and the Pahang Rising of 1891 which resulted with the annihilation of Malay rebels with the help of

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<sup>40</sup> John Bastin, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: 1511-1957*, 15.

<sup>41</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 122.

<sup>42</sup> Abdul Rashid Moten, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, 6.

<sup>43</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 122,123.

<sup>44</sup> Moche Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya*, 26.

the Siamese King<sup>45</sup> and the disputes between Chinese secret societies and Malay princes,<sup>46</sup> the Pangkor Treaty of 1874 led to the second territorial organization where Protected Malay States (1896) and Unprotected Malay States (1914)<sup>47</sup> emerged.<sup>48</sup> The treaty formalized the British direct rule, whose advise to be asked and acted upon by all rulers in all affairs except Malay religion and custom.<sup>49</sup> British colonialism ‘‘brought modern political boundaries.... empowered Peninsula’s role as a supplier of raw materials, and expanded the socio-economic distinctions between the major ethnic groups.’’<sup>50</sup> Until 1940’s, the British Malaya emerged from three different political units that were possessed; the Strait Settlements, Federated and Unfederated Malay States.

The Colonial ideology of the British, which had a racial menace, ‘‘ provided a justificatory rationale for the British presence in Malaya, a rationale which claimed responsibility for nothing less than the cultural and economic survival of the Malays as a ‘‘race’’.’’<sup>51</sup> The structure of the Malay Malacca kingdom was maintained under the British colonial rule despite British understanding of separation of religion and state.<sup>52</sup> The motive behind this formula was to restrict the competitiveness and industriousness of the Malay race from challenging the absolute control of British

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<sup>45</sup> Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied, *Radicals Resistance and Protest in Colonial Malaya*, 20.21

<sup>46</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 154.

<sup>47</sup> The British who penetrated into the resource-rich Malay states such as Perak (1874), Selangor (1875), Pahang (1888) and Negri Sembilan (1895), placed these polities under a British resident by establishing the Federated Malay States in 1896. The remaining parts of the Peninsula comprised of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Terengganu and Johor named as the Unfederated Malay States in 1914. Sabah and Sarawak was also under British colonial rule. Sabah was ruled by the British North Borneo Company since 1880’s and Sarawak was ruled by the Brooke Family who established themselves as the White Raja’s in the 1840’s. These states gained independence after they joined Malaysia for the creation of Federation of Malaysia in 1963. This information is available in the article of Abdul Rahman Embong ‘‘ Malaysia as a Multicultural Society’’.

<sup>48</sup> Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied, *Radicals Resistance and Protest in Colonial Malaya*, 21.

<sup>49</sup> Caroline Lopez, ‘‘The British Presence in the Malay World: A Meeting of Civilizational Traditions,’’ 15.

<sup>50</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 115.

<sup>51</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans; Indian in Malaysia*, 56.

<sup>52</sup> Caroline Lopez, ‘‘The British Presence in the Malay World: A Meeting of Civilizational Traditions,’’ 18.

Colonialists and their colonial interests. With the aim of insulating Malays from the modern colonial economy, the British implemented ‘‘a series of measures designed to force Malays into food production’’ so that their versatility would be neutralized. They necessitated the flow of Chinese and Indian immigrant groups to work in the modern extractive economy of Malaya until the 1930’s.<sup>53</sup> The British run Malaya under the guise of a pro-Malay policy to justify the adoption of these measures ‘‘as necessary to ‘‘preserve’’ ‘‘traditional’’ Malay kampung-based society, and to protect Malay land from acquisition by predatory Chinese and Indian immigrants.’’<sup>54</sup>

British racial compartmentalization managed to sustain the outlook of a harmonious society among main races so that social conflict and nationalist inclinations were minimized. The economic industriousness assigned to Chinese and Indians in modern extractive economy and the agricultural role assigned to Malays in Traditional Malay Peasant Sector was key to stability to advance British interest in Malaya.<sup>55</sup> The harmonic spell of British Malaya was broken with the arrival of a military imperial power: Japan.<sup>56</sup> The racial isolation instigated by the British served to the maintenance of the British colonial economy up until the 1940s. With the arrival of the Japanese, Japan’s politics of ethnicity served to the dismantling of British colonization from Malaya in 1941. In addition to the fall of the British Empire, Japanese brief military rule ‘‘transformed racial tensions into open and lasting conflicts.’’<sup>57</sup> The present-day Malaysia’s statecraft that embraced the ethnic

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<sup>53</sup> Abdurrahman Embong, ‘‘Malaysia as a Multicultural Society,’’ 45.

<sup>54</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans; Indian in Malaysia*, 53.

<sup>55</sup> Charles Hirschman, ‘‘The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology,’’ 353.

<sup>56</sup> Eugene Fodor, Fodor’s Southeast Asia, 328.

<sup>57</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 17.



forms of Malacca Sultanate became possible with the arrival of Japanese Imperialism between 1941-1945.

## CHAPTER 3

### THE HISTORY OF JAPANESE OCCUPATION IN MALAYSIA

This chapter brings into open the question of how the Japanese Occupation of Malaysia between 1941 and 1945 prepared the social conditions for the revival of the indigeneous rule and caused a continuation in the post-war ethnic political developments under Malay political primacy. The researcher argues that the ethnic politics engineered under Malay political primacy in the aftermath of the Japanese' surrender in present-day Malaysia is a byproduct of Japanese imperialism between 1941 and 1945. The Japanese occupation of Malaysia did not only changed the course of British-made race relations but completely ethnicized the pattern of post-war politics, to the extent that the wartime social conflict that generated an ethnicity problem, turned into a political rivalry in post-war Malaya and determined the direction of contemporary ethnic politics in favor of the Malays.<sup>58</sup> When closing the revolving door of colonialism, Japan reinstated Malays, who had been exposed to centuries long European colonization, the Malay political supremacy, and the primacy of Malay identity that they had in the past and re-oriented the loyalties of transient immigrant populations back to Malaya.

#### 3.1 Japan's Prelude to Malaya: The Southward Advance

Japanese occupation of Malaya was a major part of Japan's grand strategy in South-East Asian Theatre of World War II<sup>59</sup>, to occupy the resource-rich areas of South

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<sup>58</sup>Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 17, 18.

<sup>59</sup> This campaign was a combination of multiple campaigning, covering Burma, India, Thailand, the Philippines, Indochina, Malaya and Singapore. Malaya Campaign was the first major battle of the Pacific War, which began on 7 and 8 December 1941.

Seas and comprised of four distinct phases; prelude, preparation, conquest and occupation.

Japan's prelude, which is known as the Southward Advance, "a doctrine that the South Seas were vital not just to Japan's Economic development but to its very existence as a nation" began to be pursued between 1870's and 1940's.<sup>60</sup> Japan's interest in Southeast Asia began with the imperial ambitions and expansions of Meiji Japan in the 1880s.<sup>61</sup> The prelude that was embodied in the idea<sup>62</sup> that "Japanese navy must have bases of operation from the Malay Peninsula to the Philippines to secure the command of the Pacific and the safety of the Empire goes down to the close of the Sino-Japanese War of 1895".<sup>63</sup> Advocating a foreign policy that Japan should distance itself from Asia and affiliate itself with western powers, the Meiji Southward policy aimed to achieving a peaceful economic advance in Southwest Pacific without completely jeopardizing Japan's expansionist ambitions.<sup>64</sup>

The World War I, put a new complexion on Japan's Southern Advance Doctrine, which made it ideologically stronger, expansionist, and Asianist in form.<sup>65</sup> Two occasions simplified Japan's penetration into Southeast Asia; "the curtailment of trade between West and Southeast Asian markets", which helped Japan to fill the vacuum in trade, and the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which allowed Japan to enter the

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<sup>60</sup> Hajime Shimizu, "Nanshin-Ron: Its Turning Point in World War I," 386.

<sup>61</sup> Takao Matsumura, John Benson, *From Isolation to Occupation*, 3.

<sup>62</sup> According to Willard H. Elbsree, in his book *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945*, an army officer who was sent for exploration and mapping mission from Fomosa to Philippines in the aftermath of the Sino-Japanese War in 1895, was of the viewpoint that the only way to expand Japanese influence in the Pacific region was to aide nationalists in Philippine. This idea was supported by two advocates of Japanese expansionists whom the army official consulted with. One of the advocates was Uchida Ryohei, the to-be figure of Black Dragon Society, communicated with Naval officials in regard to Philippine's role in Japanese Policy. As stated by Willard H. Elbsree, it was these officials who primarily formulated a decision that Japanese navy must have bases to operate from the Malay Peninsula to the Philippines. These policy makers sought ways to aid Philippino revolutionaries in the struggle against Spain and the United States. Japanese officers went to train the Army of General Emilio Aguinaldo, the leader of insurgent forces of Philippines.

<sup>63</sup> Willard H. Elbsree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945*, 3.

<sup>64</sup> Hajime Shimizu, "Nanshin-Ron: Its Turning Point in World War I," 386.

<sup>65</sup> Hajime Shimizu, "Nanshin-Ron: Its Turning Point in World War I," 388.

war against Germany to seize German possessions in the Southern Areas of the Pacific.<sup>66</sup> Japan possessed the islands of ‘‘Caroline, Mariana, Marshall, and Palau in the Pacific’’ as a gateway to Southeast Asia and put them under the administrative control of the Imperial Japanese Navy under the banner of South Seas Mandate. The bases that were set up via Central Pacific islands and Taiwan for Southward Advance materialized the ideas on Southern areas extending to the Dutch East Indies.<sup>67</sup> Japan’s involvement in WWI made it necessary for Japan to establish several South Seas Companies, mainly the Nanyo Kyokai<sup>68</sup> (the South Seas Society) as a response to Japan’s rising interest in Southeast Asia.<sup>69</sup> The Nanyo Kyokai concretely facilitated Japan’s expansionist interest in S.E.A by playing a vital role ‘‘in disseminating information about the region and in training the manpower necessary for Japanese business operations in South Seas’’ while involving in the economic activities of the Southeast Asia until the 1930s.<sup>70</sup> Japan organized a web of espionage activity in Malaya after her involvement in World War I, which allowed Japan to possess ‘‘twenty years of successful operations experience’’ for the battle of

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<sup>66</sup> Hajime Shimizu, ‘‘Nanshin-Ron: Its Turning Point in World War I,’’ 390.

<sup>67</sup> Hajime Shimizu, ‘‘Nanshin-Ron: Its Turning Point in World War I,’’ 390.

<sup>68</sup> Due to reasons of entering into WWI, occupying German-held protectorates in the Central Pacific facing an increasing demand in its export to the South region, Japan felt compelled to establish the Nanyo Kyokai to deepen its knowledge and to empower its ties on the geography, history and economy of Southeast Asia. The institute that was founded in 1915 studied the industrial and socio-cultural affairs of Nanyo, exchanged information between both parties, promoted good-neighbor policy, trained manpower for business community, established libraries and museums. This foundation gathered raw data on the economic relations, ethnic problems, the Chinese diaspora community and their efforts in boycotting Japan, the Japanese economic activities and the extent of trade activity with Japan and aimed to distribute among government agencies and business community via regular reports since 1918. It was followed by on-the-job training institutes to tackle the anti-Japanese movement of Chinese Diaspora communities who threatened Japanese economic activities in the region. A secret mission in regard to Japanese agricultural colonization was carried out through the North Borneo Emigration Project. To place Japanese emigrant community in order to blockade the southward expansion of the United States from the Philippines and to expand Japan’s influence in the Dutch East Indies, feasibility studies based on Siam, Sarawak, Malaya, North Borneo was carried out between 1926-1932 which was backfired after the eruption of Sino-Japanese war in 1937.

<sup>69</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 21.

<sup>70</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 21, 27.

Malaya. 68. Commercial Intelligence was collected from the commercial community who resided in Malaya for commercial reasons. Japanese community who owned tin mines, and rubbers estates situated along vital routes, or were storekeeper, barber, or dentists, monitored and reported the activity of the Common Wealth troops.

Diplomatic Intelligence was collected from the Ambassadors, consular officials, and attaches who were stationed in embassies and consulates for covert operations. They took part in ‘‘the collection, processing and exploitation, and analysis steps of the intelligence cycle.’’ 75. They simplified the meetings between disaffected anti-British factions and Japanese officials. Naval Intelligence was obtained from the navy agents who were part of the Kaigun Tokumu, Naval Special Service organization that were opened in China in 1930’s. Naval agents had massive fishing fleets operating on South China Sea and Malaya. They helped to ‘‘helped to map coastlines, conduct hydrographic surveys, reported on naval traffic, and scout naval bases and ports.’’ 81.

During the rise of Showa militarism, the Southward Advance was adopted ‘‘as a national policy in the military and naval strategy of Southern Advance.’’ With the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, tensions<sup>71</sup>, that led economic embargo sanctions policy against Japan, intensified between Japan and the West parallel to Japan’s attempts to isolate China from Western help and to become independent of the West in terms of vital resources which concentrated Japan’s Southward advance in the rich areas of Southeast Asia, mainly the British possessions. In 1936, the Southern Advance became a national policy after the proclamation of the New Order in East Asia. With the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese war in 1937, the British and the United

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<sup>71</sup> Economic embargo sanctions policy against Japan began back in 1931 with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and later 1937 Sino-Japanese War leading to Japanese occupation of some parts of China proper even.

States indirectly funded China with war supplies so that they would impede Japan's Southward thrust. In the face of western retaliations, Hokushin-ron, the doctrine of Northern Advance of the Japanese Imperial Army was replaced with the doctrine of Southward Advance of the navy to possess Western assets in Southeast Asia and to repel the threat posed by the Western Powers in the Pacific. The Showa Southern Advance policy aimed three things; 'providing the supply of strategic materials to Japan, preventing the creation of an Anglo-American block in Southeast Asia, and taking advantage of Nazi blitz in Europe.'<sup>72</sup> Showa Nanshin Ron Policy was subsumed under the newly announced Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere in 1938 with 'no prescribed method of expansion, no fixed timetable that had to be met, no definite form which this hegemony had to assume.'<sup>73</sup> Japan's golden moment for the South Advance was triggered by the developments in Europe.<sup>74</sup> By igniting the wick of WWII by invading Poland in 1939 and declaring war on France and England, Germany opened up new possibilities for Japan's Southward plan to colonize the colonial assets of the Dutch, French, and British colonies in Southeast Asia.<sup>75</sup> Japan<sup>76</sup> entered into a three-way military alliance, known as Axis, with

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<sup>72</sup> Hajime Shimizu, 'Nanshin-Ron: Its Turning Point in World War I,' 387.

<sup>73</sup> Willard H. Elsbree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945*, 15.

<sup>74</sup> Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, 628.

<sup>75</sup> Marius B. Jansen, *The Making of Modern Japan*, 628.

<sup>76</sup> Since Meiji restoration in 1868, Japan's zone of conquest was planned to be the former Chinese Empire in the Pacific. The Japanese empire that was transformed from a feudal society, fragmented by internal divisions and heavily dependent on agricultural activities, emerged from its two hundred years of self-imposed international isolation. From isolation to occupation between 1868 and 1945, Meiji restoration produced a modern system of government, civil service, a nation-wide education system and began to show its military might in China in 1895, in Russia in 1905, in Korea in 1910. With the rise of militarism and authoritarianism in 1930's, Japan, a country facing economic, political, and diplomatic challenges at home and abroad, magnified its aggressive nationalism through economic justifications that was worsened by the Great depression of the 1930's. Japan invaded Northeast province of Manchuria in 1931 and China's Eastern Provinces in 1937. The Sino-Japanese war turned into an all-out war where Japanese Imperial Army experimented chemical and biological weapons along with the annihilation campaigns which, claimed by Tim Harper, determined the nature of the coming war in Southeast Asia. In the hope of creating a United States in Asia with a prosperous, Christian and free China, the Americans and British poured financial support and provisions to the Nationalists and assisted Chiang's armies as opposed to Japanese aggressive policies in China. The German's invasion of France in 1940's, allowed Japan to seize French-Indo China and to cut the road to Chungking where American and British assisted Chiang through Burma Road. The British Administration closed the route

Germany and Italy in 1940's.<sup>77</sup> The Southward Advance first surfaced in Japan's invasion of French-Indo China to cut off Western war supplies to China and to occupy the resource-rich areas in the region. The United States imposed economic sanctions on the resources that were deemed war material to Japan, which were later followed by other Alliance powers. To prevent Japan's aggression in the Pacific region, the United States kept her fleets at Pearl Harbor as war with Japan seemed inevitable. At this point, Japan deemed that a pre-emptive attack on the U.S was necessary to fulfill the forward move to Southeast Asia and scrapped the bottom of the barrel for hardline measures on the United States and Britain to counter American economic sanctions directed against Japan. Seizing the southern regions of Asia was the sole rational option to be free of dependence on Western Powers in terms of essential raw materials such as rubber, iron ore, aluminum, and petroleum reserves. Unlike Southeast Asian countries, Malaya, the core of vital resources, and Singapore, the heart of Britain's naval base and power in Asia, were crucial areas to control the entire resource-rich regions in Southeast Asia.<sup>78</sup> Malaya was harboring the essential raw materials such as petroleum, tin, bauxite, manganese, and rubber that Japan needed for its economic and military advancement in the Pacific, and was 'the center of the communication network of Southeast Asia that is linked by the Malacca Straits and connects the Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean.'<sup>79</sup> Japan launched 'a

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upon a possible imminent attack. The announcement of Japanese Axis alliance with Fascist powers forced British to open the Burma Road. The Japanese cultivated ties with Britain's enemies in the region. In 1940, New Political Order was determined to mobilize support for the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere across East and South-East Asia. America imposed sanctions on oil and essential war materials at a moment where Japan spent 70 percent of budget to the war in China. When Germans' sudden attack to Europe distracted British and Russians, Japan took immediate action to break the encirclement comprised of America, Britain, China and the Dutch.<sup>76</sup> This information can be found in the work of John Benson, *Japan 1868-1945* and also in Christopher Alan Bavly, Timothy Norman Harper, *Forgotten Armies: The Fall of British Asia, 1941-1945*.

<sup>77</sup> John Dower, *Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering*, 100.

<sup>78</sup> Alan C. Headric, "Bicycle Blitzkrieg: The Malaya Campaign and the Fall of Singapore," 3.

<sup>79</sup> Byunkuk Soh, "Malay Society under Japanese Occupation, 1942-45," 84-85.

coordinated attack on Pearl Harbor, Hong Kong, Malaya, and the Philippines.”<sup>80</sup> The Southward plan found expressions in Konoe Cabinet’s general principles of national policy under the construction of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere on 26 July 1940.<sup>81</sup> The Cabinet formulated the basics of Japanese Foreign Policy as follows: ‘the construction of New Order in East Asia, the Settlement of China Affair and...to advance the national fortunes of the Empire.’<sup>82</sup>

The Co-Prosperity Sphere, that was planned to be an economic order comprised of an area centered around ‘Japan, China, Manchuria, including the mandated islands of French Indo-China, Thailand, Malaya, Borneo, the Netherlands East Indies, Australia, New Zealand, and possibly India’ was adopted as the national policy of Japan on 1 August 1940.<sup>83</sup> The Co-Prosperity Sphere aimed to ‘extend

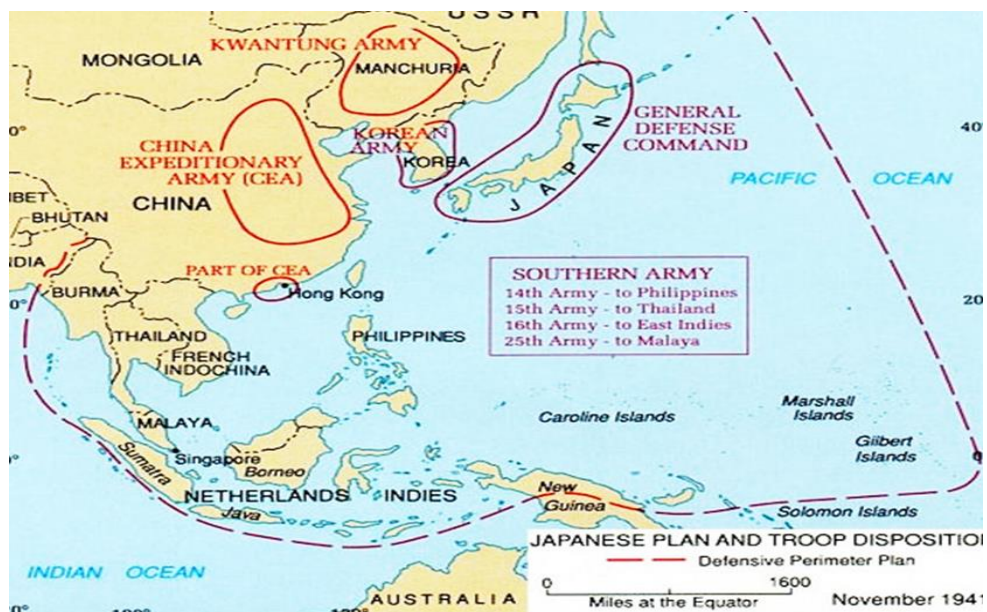


Fig 1 Japanese Plan and Disposition of Troops

Source; <http://factsanddetails.com/asian/ca67/sub427/item2534.html>

<sup>80</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 34-35

<sup>81</sup> During the initial formulation of Japan’s Co-Prosperity Sphere, Japan came up with a dual plan of expansion either towards the North of Pacific; to China and Siberia or towards the South Pacific by taking into consideration a great and unending war with colonial empires, the Great Britain, America, France and Holland.

<sup>82</sup> Willard H. Elbsree, *Japan’s Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945*, 15.

<sup>83</sup> Willard H. Elbsree, *Japan’s Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945*, 16.



the Japanese empire, one in which Japan served as the Imperial father of a family of Asian nations.’’<sup>84</sup>

### 3.2 Preparation of Japanese Occupation Policies

The Commercial, Diplomatic and Naval intelligence that was gathered since WWI, transformed into military reports to be utilized by the Japanese Imperial Army when Japan mobilized the Army’s Intelligence Unit. Japanese Army Intelligence was the last intelligence ring of espionage activity, which was initiated for ‘all clandestine operations, espionage, subversion, and fifth column activities.’’<sup>85</sup> The Japanese Army Intelligence began strategic and logistical planning of the invasion with the establishment of the Taiwan Army Research Unit to be the hub of intelligence and planning for the Malaya and Singapore campaigns.<sup>86</sup> The Unit 82 was in charge of military planning and ‘utilized intelligence developed from the web of agents that had been cultivated since World War I’.<sup>87</sup> The mastermind behind the intelligence operations in Malaya was Colonel Tsuji Masanobu, accompanied by Major Asaeda Shigeharu and Major Hayashi Tadahiko.<sup>88</sup> The Tokumu Kikan, Special Service Organization, opened a branch in Malaya and Fujiwara Kikan was tasked with the clandestine intelligence divisions by contacting anti-Colonial and pro-independence nationalist Malayan independence groups.<sup>89</sup> Fujiwara was successful in contacting

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<sup>84</sup> Jeremy A. Yellen, *The Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, When Total Empire Met Total War*, 76.

<sup>85</sup> Lauro, Daniel J., "The Battle of Malaya: The Japanese Invasion of Malaya as a Case Study for the Re- Evaluation of Imperial Japanese Army Intelligence Effectiveness During World War II," 83.

<sup>86</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 30.

<sup>87</sup> Lauro, Daniel J., "The Battle of Malaya: The Japanese Invasion of Malaya as a Case Study for the Re- Evaluation of Imperial Japanese Army Intelligence Effectiveness During World War II," 84.

<sup>88</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 30.

<sup>89</sup> There was also a British intelligence officer educated by Japanese espionage activities, Patrick Stanley Vaughn Heenan, who was working as a liaison between the Japanese Army and the British Air Force and known for his support of Indian Nationalism. It could be found in the thesis of Lauro,

the anti-British groups such as ‘‘Kesatuan Melayu Muda, pro-Wang Ching-Wei groups, Indian Independence League, and Acehnese Independence groups’’.<sup>90</sup> These groups contributed to the creation of maps of the jungles, terrain paths, acted as guides upon the Japanese invasion, and provided detailed information on ‘‘British Commonwealth forces disposition, capability and weaknesses.’’<sup>91</sup>

The general policies for the military administration of the occupied regions were drafted in a document, ‘‘Draft of the Administrative Principles for the Occupied Regions in the Operations of the Southern Area’’ on February 1941. It drew out five principles: the acquisition of vital materials for national defense, restoration of law and order, self-sufficiency of troops in occupied regions, respect for the local organizations and customs of locals, and the preparation for the sovereignty of the occupied regions.’’ The first three pillars, known as the Three Objectives of the Military Administration was incorporated into the ‘‘Principles of the Administration of the Occupied Southern Areas’’, a document adopted at the Liaison Conference on 20 November 1941. The tenets regarding the political design of the Malay Peninsula were ratified in another policy paper, titled ‘‘Draft of Implementing Principles for Each Region.’’<sup>92</sup> Administrative-wise, the Strait Settlement decided to be placed under the Japanese Army, the Federated Malay States and Johor were to autonomously remain under their sultans and Unfederated Malay states were to revert to Thai Rule.<sup>93</sup> The political and administrative re-dress of Malaya was

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Daniel J, "The Battle of Malaya: The Japanese Invasion of Malaya as a Case Study for the Re-Evaluation of Imperial Japanese Army Intelligence Effectiveness During World War II".

<sup>90</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1945: Ibrahim Yaacob and the Struggle for Indonesia Raya,’’ 92, 93.

<sup>91</sup> Lauro, Daniel J., "The Battle of Malaya: The Japanese Invasion of Malaya as a Case Study for the Re-Evaluation of Imperial Japanese Army Intelligence Effectiveness During World War II," 82-83-84-85-86.

<sup>92</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 3.

<sup>93</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 3.4.

formulated parallel to the status of sultans and their political position concerning the Malays and the Islamic religion.<sup>94</sup> On 6 November 1941, the battle of Malaya was issued for the Southern Army, in which the 25th Army and its Gunseibu, the military administration department responsible from Malaya was under command.<sup>95</sup>

### 3.3 The Battle of Malaya

The Battle of Malaya, where Japan challenged a coalition of Western Powers in the first major battle of the pacific war, began several hours before the commencement of the Pacific War, with the detachment of the 25th Army under the command of the General Yamashita Tomoyuki<sup>96</sup>, to carry out landing operations at Kota Bahru, Kelantan and ‘‘Songkhla, Dhebbhe, Pattani, Nakhom Sim Thammarat, Chumphon, Jumbhorn and Prachuap Khiri Khan in Southern Thailand’’.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 81.

<sup>95</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 4.

<sup>96</sup> General Yamashita Tomoyuki (1885-1946), who is known as Tiger of Malaya, a title given to him after the conquest of Singapore in 1942 by Japanese press, was the Army commander of the 25<sup>th</sup> Army, which captured Malaya, Singapore and Dutch East Indies in 68 days. With the surrender of Japan, General Yamashita surrendered and due to his war-time crimes committed under his jurisdiction, he was hanged in Manila after being tried by the Allied powers in Luzon Island, in Manila on 23 February 1946.

<sup>97</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 1.

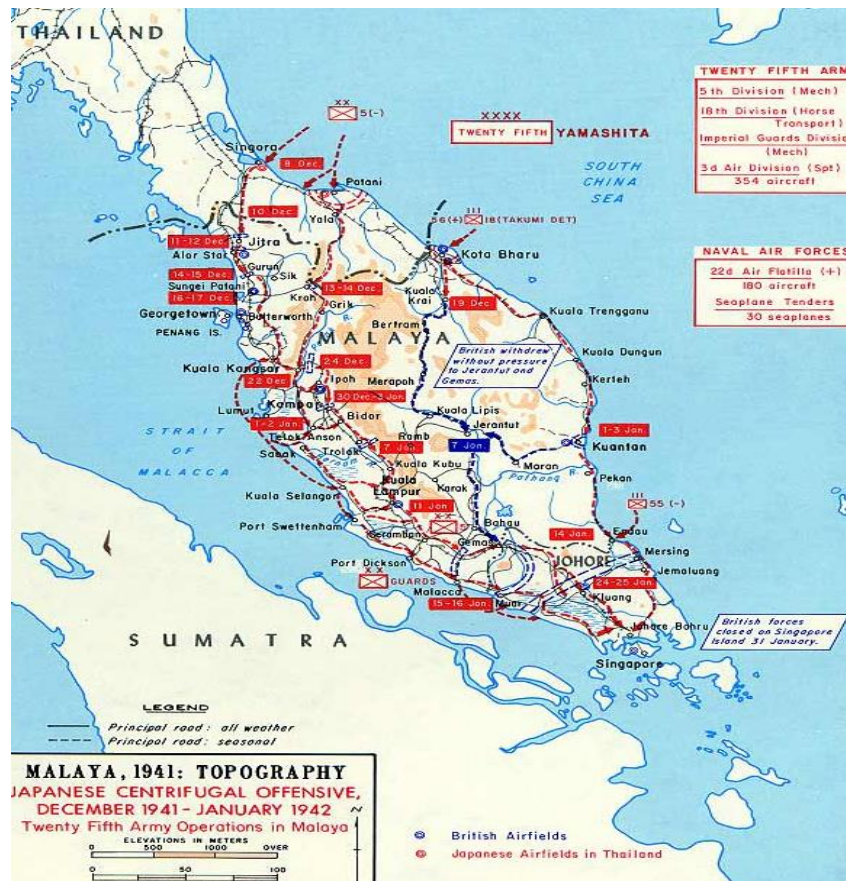


Fig 2 Malaya with Japanese Offensive on December 1941 - January 1942  
Source: [http://www.emersonkent.com/map\\_archive/malaya\\_1941.html](http://www.emersonkent.com/map_archive/malaya_1941.html)

After a swift attack on Pearl Harbor on 8 December 1941, Japan commenced military operations for ‘Guam, Wake Island, the Philippines, Hong Kong, and Malaya.’<sup>98</sup> It was a campaign that “made it impossible for European colonial powers to turn the clock back and that economically the future belonged to Japan and the United States” despite the recolonization attempt of British, French, and Dutch in 1945.<sup>99</sup> Upon initial landing, General Yamashita and his army was welcomed by Sultan Ibrahim of Johor and the invasion of Singapore, the core of Malaya campaign, was planned from the palace of the Sultan. Christopher Hale portrays the collaboration as:

<sup>98</sup> Mikiso Hane, Louis G. Perez, *Modern Japan, A Historical Survey*, 330.

<sup>99</sup> Carl Bridge, “The Malayan Campaign, 1941-2, In *International Perspective*,” 169.

By the end of January, Yamashita's armies had reached Kluang in the southern Malay state of Johor, where he was warmly welcomed by Sultan Ibrahim. From the vantage point of the sultan's Bukit Serene Palace, Yamashita could now look out across the narrow straits towards the great prize of Singapore. From the British naval base, a thick pall of black oily smoke rose from burning fuel tanks high into the cloudless sky: the funeral pyre of empire. Comfortably ensconced inside Sultan Ibrahim's state secretariat building, Yamashita and his general staff began planning the invasion of Singapore.<sup>100</sup>

After unopposed landings, the 25th Army carried out Kirimomi (penetration) operations and advanced towards Singapore, the British military and naval base in Southeast Asia.<sup>101</sup> Japan crossed the occupied territories by installing provisional military administrative offices they captured in Malaya and filled them with Japanese officers.<sup>102</sup> According to a military study conducted by David Mollahan, the Japanese achieved an 'operational-level asymmetric advantage: they shaped the British into a one-dimensional adversary, forced to defend a peninsula against a multidimensional onslaught.'<sup>103</sup> With the first attack, the British compelled to initiate a diplomatic rapprochement with the Chinese Community<sup>104</sup> and worked with the Malayan

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<sup>100</sup> Christopher Hale, *Massacre in Malaya*, 334.

<sup>101</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 1.

<sup>102</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 33.

<sup>103</sup> David J. Mollahan, 'The Japanese Campaign in Malaya: December 1941- February 1942, A Study in Joint Warfighting,' 23.

<sup>104</sup> Since 1890's, the Chinese Community in Southeast Asia who regarded themselves as Overseas Chinese (Hua Ch'iao) paid their allegiance to China. The Chinese in the Strait Settlements who were British subjects known as Baba or nonyas Chinese. Since 1898, the political consciousness and participation of overseas Chinese increased with the help of two leaders, K'ang Yu-wei in China and Sun Yat Sen. K'ang Yu-Wei influenced the Manchu Emperor to actualize the Hundred Days' Reform and fled the country in the face of failure. He came to Singapore to publicize his liberal reforms between 1908-1910 where he won the support of Straits born, English-educated Chinese such as Dr. Lim Boon Keng. Sun Yat Sen fled to Singapore after his failed attempt to raise a revolt in Canton in 1900. He formed his Kuomintang (KMT) in 1912 and opened a branch in Malaya. In 1925, British suppressed the Malayan Kuomintang due its fear that China 'would regard Malaya as an imperium in imperio'. In 1925, the first Communist party branch was formed in Malaya as the overseas branch of CCP after the KMT-CCP established a united front in China. The split of KMT-CCP led a split in Malayan Kuomintang and the Malayan Communist Party formally came into being in 1930. Between 1930-1941, political activities of the Chinese in Malayadeveloped parallel to the political events at the homefront. The second Sino-Japanese war caused by Japan in 1937, aroused the activities of KMT and MCP through the National Salvation Movement to organize boycotts, raise funds and relief for China. MCP took the lead in the fight against Japan. On the eve of the outbreak of WWII, both parties were banned as illegal political groups due to anti-British activities of Kuomintang, to stop China from interfering

Chinese Communist Party as they were the sole strongest anti-Japanese element in Malaya.<sup>105</sup> Malays were not reliable in the eyes of the British because of their involvement in the fifth-column activities which prevented them from training the Malays. Ibrahim Yaacob<sup>106</sup> and his friends, who were known for their anti-British cause, had contacts with Kame, a secret political organization established to simplify Japanese penetration into Malaya along fifth-column lines. This involvement resulted in the arrest of Ibrahim Yaacob and 110 Malays in Malacca, Johor, and Singapore on 7 and 8 December 1941.<sup>107</sup> The non-cooperation of Sultans of Kedah, Selangor, Pahang and Perlis where British officials offered asylum in Singapore, India, and Australia to prevent them from falling into the Japanese hand, doubled British distrust of the Malays, which was to be lasted even after British re-occupation of Malaya in 1945.<sup>108</sup> The work of the 'Fifth Columnists' who contributed to the course of the Malayan campaign and sultan's non-cooperation was the last straw for the British to initiate a rapprochement with the Chinese Communists parallel to the sinking of British Naval Power on 10 December 1941. The ban on Malayan

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with the internal affairs of Chinese in Malaya. This information could be found in the book published by Cheah Boon Kheng, 'Red Star Over Malaya'.

<sup>105</sup> Byunkuk Soh, 'Malay Society under Japanese Occupation, 1942-45,' 92.

<sup>106</sup> Ibrahim Yaacob is the founder of the first nationalist leftist political movement in Malaya, the Kesatuan Melayu Muda (the Young Malays Union). Ibrahim Yaacob and the members of KMM, was inspired from ideologies and political developments of nationalist movements in Turkey, Middle East and Indonesia. By establishing KMM, Ibrahim wanted to produce progressive and nationalist Malays to challenge the narrow nationalism of Malay feudalists who were preoccupied with state autonomy and consent for a small political entity. Ibrahim's first and foremost aim was to attack: the disunity stemmed from the ethnic and provincial classification of Malays and Malay aristocracy and the colonial administration. His ideal was to unite the 65 million people under a United Malay Nation who could fulfill the ideal of one language, one race, and one Nation. Besides the formation of KMM, the cooperation of Ibrahim Yaacob with the Japanese marked an irremediable phase in the history of Malay independence. Several conditions pushed him to make this decision: the first is the Siamese rapprochement with Japan between 1935 and 1940 to actualize his expansionist plans in Southeast Asia. Secondly, the poor British defense mechanism led some Sultans such as Sultan of (Johor), Tungku Umar, and Sultan Abu Bakar of Pahang to approve Ibrahim to obtain a bargaining position to secure the rights of Malays and Malay independence. The third is the collaboration of pro-Wang Ching-Wei groups, Indian Independence League, and Acehnese Independence groups made him rationalize that Malays should safeguard their interests too.

<sup>107</sup> Byunkuk Soh, 'Malay Society under Japanese Occupation, 1942-45,' 88, 89.

<sup>108</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 20.

Communist Party<sup>109</sup>, Kuomintang, and other Chinese organizations in Malaya was lifted so that they could form a Malayan Overseas Chinese Anti-Japanese Mobilization Council to raise volunteers for the Dalforce, a last-minute unit created under the British Third Indian Corps to recruit Chinese volunteers under the supervision of Lieutenant-Colonel J. D. Dalley.<sup>110</sup> Comprised of various Chinese organizations, the guerillas formed the largest volunteer group in the Dalforce.<sup>111</sup> The Unit<sup>112</sup> was formed due to a shortage of manpower, where the British filled the shortage with 4000 Chinese volunteers, and then renamed after John Dalley, the Lieutenant Colonel of Federated Malay States Police Force.<sup>113</sup> The training of the volunteers under the leadership of Tan Kah Kee, the new leader of Mobilization Council, began 101 Special Training School, which is directly governed by the Malayan branch of Special Operations Council located in London. After 10 days of

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<sup>109</sup> The arrival of Japan led to the recognition, formation, and organization of the blacklisted Chinese Communist Party by the British Administrators at the beginning of the war to defend Singapore against the Japanese forces. The MCP and MCP-led Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA), the sole resistance movement which led to the rise of MCP in the post-war Malaya as a social and political organization was the second most powerful organization that emerged due to the Japanese occupation. The Chinese nationalism had already existed before the Japanese occupation in Malaya but their political activities closely followed the events in China as they had a homeland focus between 1910 and 1940. MCP ended up as a Chinese party whose aim was to "over throw British colonialism, abolish Malay feudalism and set up a Malayan People's Republic". Upon the Japanese attack on China in 1937, KMT, MCP, and other Chinese organizations in Malaya stirred up the support for China by sponsoring the anti-Japanese China National Salvation Movement by boycotting the Japanese Goods in Malaya. On the eve of the outbreak of WWII, both parties were banned as illegal political groups due to anti-British activities of Kuomintang, to stop China from interfering with the internal affairs of Chinese in Malaya and to prevent Malaya to be used as the imperium in imperio, and to stop Chinese financial transactions to China as Chinese economic activities were closely connected to the British colonial interests, and to prevent possible social unrest that can be caused by the working class under MCP. Upon facing an unexpected Japanese open up in Malaya, the British turned to MCP to consider its conditional offer that was made in July 1941 and 8 December 1941 for the effective defense of Singapore as the sole and most effective anti-Japanese tool in Malaya.

<sup>110</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 19. 60.

<sup>111</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 61.

<sup>112</sup> Although the volunteers' trainings and weaponry were not suitable for warfare, they were known as Dalley's Desperados, due to their bravery in the fight against Japan for the defense of Malaya. The Unit suffered serious setbacks and heavy casualties. Upon the fall of the British Empire, the survivors joined the anti-Japanese army; the MPAJA to carry out guerilla operations throughout the war. This information is available at National Heritage Board, "Singapore in World War II,"

<sup>113</sup> National Heritage Board, "Singapore in World War II, A Heritage Trail" 7.

training, the volunteers were sent to the area of operations in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, the North and South of Johor until 30 January 1942. They contacted the State Committees of the MCP.<sup>114</sup> As soon as Japan seized air and land supremacy, Japan occupied Malaya, Singapore, and Netherland East Indies.<sup>115</sup> In less than two months, the Japanese lost 9,000 casualties, and the Commonwealth forces lost more than 145,000 casualties, where 130,000 of whom were counted as POW.<sup>116</sup> The Malaya campaign resulted in the surrender of General A.E. Percival<sup>117</sup>, the commander in chief of the British force on 15 February 1942.<sup>118</sup> Upon British surrender, the MCP officials were caught by the Japanese to be utilized as dual spies and informers while the remainders were put to death. Those MCP volunteers who were lucky to escape formed the core of the anti-Japanese resistance force, the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army from March onwards.<sup>119</sup> After the formal surrender of the British Empire in 1942, the Japanese Army ruled Malaya under the Japanese Military Administration for three years and eight months until 15 August 1945 although the formal surrender took place on September.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 60, 61.

<sup>115</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 18.

<sup>116</sup> Lauro, Daniel J, "The Battle of Malaya: The Japanese Invasion of Malaya as a Case Study for the Re- Evaluation of Imperial Japanese Army Intelligence Effectiveness During World War II," 88.

<sup>117</sup> Lit-General Arthur Percival was the appointed general officer commanding Malaya. With the fall of Singapore, he went down in history as the general who surrendered with his 136.000 men to Japan. He is known for his refusal to initiate Operation Matador, a military plan developed to occupy Singapore from the Southern Thailand prior to the arrival of Japanese. After the fall of Singapore, he fell as POW to Japan and was sent to Manchuria until the surrender of Japan. With the official surrender ceremony held in Singapore for Japan in September 1945, Percival accompanied General Douglas MacArthur and left to Britain. He quit the army in 1946.

<sup>118</sup> Yoji Akashi, Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 1.

<sup>119</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 61.

<sup>120</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 1.



### 3.4. Japanese Military Colonial Rule in Malaya

The Japanese Occupation in Malaya is comprised of two distinct periods: the Watanabe Gunsei Hard-line Era (February 1942 to March 1943), which was ethnically discriminating and consolidating in nature, and The Fujimura Gunsei Soft-line Era (March 1943 to September 1945) which was communal and Jihadist in nature. Since the Co-Prosperity Sphere had a racial, cultural, and religious menace, which was established against the occidental world, the ‘‘race’’ was situated in the center of Japanese colonial policies. The operative language of the Co-Prosperity Sphere in Malaya was racist and constructed upon ‘‘the belief that the Japanese were destined to preside over a fixed hierarchy of peoples and races.’’ Japan created a new colonial hierarchy ‘‘singing the glories of their unique Imperial Way while professing to support a broad and all-embracing Pan-Asianism.’’<sup>121</sup>

From 15 February onwards, Malaya was handed on to the 25th Army under the command of Lieutenant General Yamashita Tomoyuki and the Military Government, the Gunseibu, became responsible for Malaya. The executive matters were given to Colonel Watanabe Wataru<sup>122</sup>, who was ‘‘the deputy chief and a ten-year administrator to the Special Service Agency (Tokumu Kikan) in North China who was assigned by General Yamashita to formulate and execute administrative policies.’’<sup>123</sup> The soldiers in the 25th Army were the veterans of the Sino-Japanese

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<sup>121</sup> John Dower, *Ways of Forgetting, Ways of Remembering*, 26-27.

<sup>122</sup> Colonel Watanabe Wataru was a ten year experienced administrator of Tokumu Kikan, the Special Service Agency and a political liaison officer in China and Manchuria where he extracted his nationality policy. As defined by Yoji Akashi: The concept of misogi, spiritual cleansing which is simply a way to make occupied communities to rectify their depraved way of life brainwashed with liberalism, materialism and epicureanism, and to revive in them the Japanese way of life. In Malaya, General Yamashita wielded Watanabe the power of command in administration to formulate administrative policies. He is known as the mastermind of Malayan Military Administration between 1941-1943.

He also had a duty in Total War Research Institute where he devised the plans for Malayan Military Administration and the utilization of military resources. He was the chief of staff and ran the Military Administration in Malaya.

<sup>123</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 83.

War including Colonel Watanabe Wataru. The first phase of military administration is characterized by the hardline policy which Yoji Akashi attributes to Watanabe Wataru's nationality policy he derived from his experiences in China as follows:

The indigenous people who had submitted themselves to British rule for such a long time must be made aware of their need to reflect on their conduct and must be taught to endure hardship as citizens of greater Asia for its prosperity. They can no longer be allowed to indulge themselves in a hedonistic and wasteful way of life that is eating up their mind and spirit... The fundamental principle of my nationality policy is to require them to account for their past mistakes and to make them ready to give up their lives and property. Only when they repent their wrongdoing, will I allow them to live, and I will return their property once they repent.<sup>124</sup>

...

It is injurious to our interest to be sympathetic with them [the Chinese] for the sake of being popular.... They (Chinese) must be held accountable for their past misdemeanors. It is my policy to make them reborn with a clean slate. Depending upon the extent of their penitence, we will allow them to live and will return their property. To retrieve life from a condemned person will be most appreciated. It is what I mean by 'a minimum pacification as deemed necessary.' For this reason, I planned, as repressive measures, to levy taxes, to coerce their contributions, to cut off their relations with China, and to deny their appointment to administrative positions as well as equality.<sup>125</sup>

Watanabe's philosophy aimed to 'coerce the occupied people with resolution responding to the needs of military operations.'<sup>126</sup> Yoji Akashi summarizes Watanabe's nationality policy with the concept of misogi; spiritual cleansing aims to clean people from the tenets of westerns colonialism through the indoctrination of Japan's traditional culture and way of life.<sup>127</sup> He believed that British rule introduced a hedonistic way of life. Thereby, Watanabe's hardline nationality policy found expressions on the ethnic communities in Malaya, mainly on the Chinese

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<sup>124</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 34.

<sup>125</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945," 65.

<sup>126</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945," 84.

<sup>127</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 34.

community. The nationality policy also coupled with Japan's politics of ethnicity where Japan "attempted to reach an accommodation with the Malays, encourage the growth of nationalism among the Indians, while actively discriminating against the Chinese as despised and reviled enemies."<sup>128</sup> Until the formation of the military government on 2 March 1942, the 25th Army held an immediate campaign with the help of Kempetai and local spies to stop rape, looting, robbery, and lawlessness in Malaya.<sup>129</sup> Law and order were established through summary executions where offenders and criminals who were involved in looting and lawlessness were killed and exhibited in cities. In Singapore, the Second Field Kempeitai (military police), under the command of Colonel Oishi Masayuki, took over the city to establish security to clean up the hostile Chinese elements.<sup>130</sup> Watanabe's nationality policy was implemented through "a series of repressive and discriminatory policies, mainly directed towards the Chinese, including a forced payment of Y50 million, closure of Chinese schools, a ban on the use of the Chinese language in schools and suspension of remittances to China."<sup>131</sup>

General Yamashita and his Watanabe Gunsei Crew ordered Sook Ching, a mop-up operation before the implementation of other policies for several reasons; to maintain the security of Malaya as the 25<sup>th</sup> army was exhausted from two months of the Malayan campaign and was to be transferred to Burma for the upcoming Burma and Sumatra Campaigns, to establish law and order and to impede the warfare of the Chinese Guerillas.<sup>132</sup> The man who was in charge of Chinese problem was Takase

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<sup>128</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaya*, 183.

<sup>129</sup> Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*, 3.

<sup>130</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941–1945," 67.

<sup>131</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 4.

<sup>132</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941–1945," 67

Toru, whose plans became the guiding principles of Watanabe Gunsei.<sup>133</sup> The list of desirables included people from the China Relief Fund and Capitalists Chinese who generously funded China Relief Fund, the supporters of Tan Kah Kee,<sup>134</sup> the leader of Nanyang National Salvation Movement, the Communist' Hainanese, the China-born Chinese who came to Malaya after Sino-Japanese War, the members of Chinese Secret Societies, the Pro-British volunteers who resisted the Japanese in the defense of Singapore, the Pro-British members, and servants of government and the armed people who disturbed public safety.<sup>135</sup> By 3 march 1942, almost 80.000 thousand Chinese, comprised of desirable figures in community and politics were detained in Singapore and Malaya.<sup>136</sup> Leadership groups were spared to be utilized as Japanese agents for social control while remainings were sent to rural areas for execution.<sup>137</sup> The Chinese operation was held indiscriminately, exceeding the list of the desirables as all Chinese in Malaya and Singapore were deemed hostile.<sup>138</sup>

The Sook Ching that began in Singapore and extended to Malaya was a twelve-day-long military campaign launched to cleanse suspicious Chinese men aged between 18 to 50 years old.<sup>139</sup> While Chinese men fell victims to Japanese brutality, the women fell victims to rape, which caused ‘many families to hide their female

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<sup>133</sup> Yoji Akashi, “Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941–1945,” 69-70.

<sup>134</sup> Tan Kah Kee (1874-1961), was an overseas Chinese and the leader of Chinese Community who resided in Singapore. He is described as an “entrepreneur, social reformer, political activist, philanthropist, community leader and educationist”. He led China Relief Fund to mobilize financial support to finance the Chinese against Japanese invasion in the Sino-Japanese War which erupted in 1937 and became the president of South-East Asia Federation of the China Relief Fund in 1938. With the arrival of Japanese Imperialism to Malaya, he established he Overseas Chinese Mobilization Council. With the fall of Singapore in 1942, he was among those who managed to escape to Java, Indonesia. He was able to return to Singapore with the initial surrender of Japan in 1945. His biography is present at: <https://www.tkkfoundation.org.sg/biography>.

<sup>135</sup> Yoji Akashi, “Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941–1945,” 68.

<sup>136</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 22.

<sup>137</sup> Cheah, Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 22.

<sup>138</sup> Cheah, Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 23.

<sup>139</sup> Lauralei Singsank, “Massacre or Genocide? Redefining the Sook Ching,” 77.

children in fear of the Rape of Nanking’’.<sup>140</sup> The social control methods that were utilized during the Watanabe Gunsei era, which aimed to enforce ‘spiritual cleansing’, ‘‘had their fullest expression in the slaughter of perhaps 20,000 (estimates vary from about 5,000 to 40,000 or more) after the occupation of Singapore.’’<sup>141</sup> The unofficial numbers exceed 50,000 Chinese lives.<sup>142</sup>

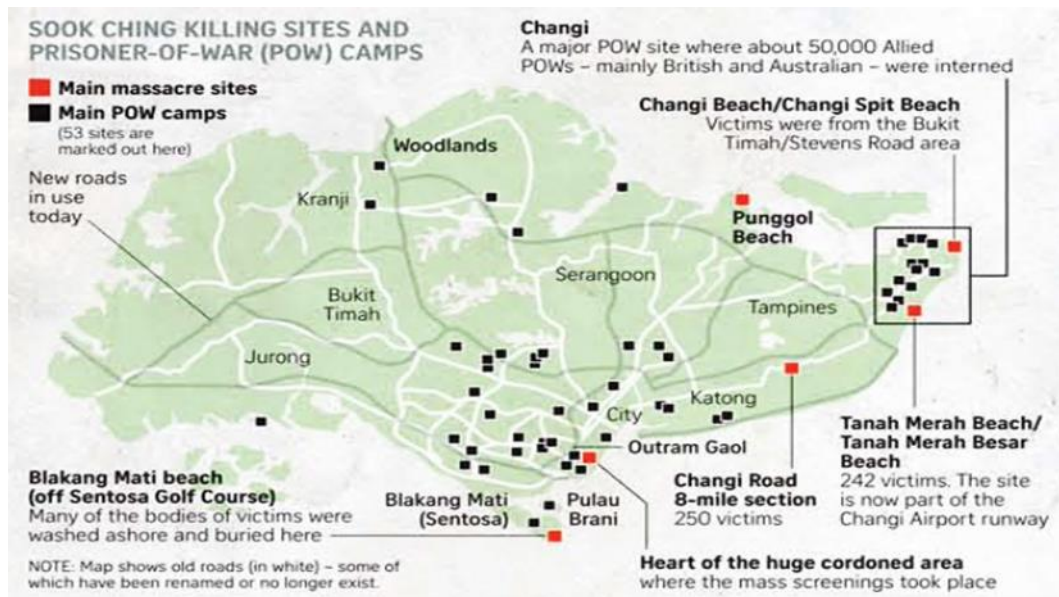


Fig 3 Sites of the Sook Ching Operation that began in Singapore

Source: [https://static.straitstimes.com.sg/s3fs-public/attachments/2017/02/14/st\\_20170214\\_alveteran14\\_2939870.pdf](https://static.straitstimes.com.sg/s3fs-public/attachments/2017/02/14/st_20170214_alveteran14_2939870.pdf)

According to Yoji Akashi, the exact figures are not known because the Kempetai in Singapore committed the execution within bounds. The Sook Ching, which was the biggest blot of the Japanese, heightened Chinese anti-Japanese sentiments by empowering the bond between the Chinese and the Communist party.<sup>143</sup>

<sup>140</sup> Lauralei Singsank, ‘‘Massacre or Genocide? Redefining the Sook Ching,’’ 80.

<sup>141</sup> Greff Huff, Shinobu Majima, ‘‘The Japanese Occupation of Southeast Asia during the Second World War’’, 861.

<sup>142</sup> Lauralei Singsank, ‘‘Massacre or Genocide? Redefining the Sook Ching,’’ 79.

<sup>143</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941–1945,’’ 68, 69.

Upon the formation of Malayan Military Administration on 2 March 1942, the punishment of Chinese was doubled with a Y50.000.000 atonement incident.<sup>144</sup> The administration tackled the Chinese problem through the utilization of detained Chinese leaders.<sup>145</sup> Japan forced them to establish an Overseas Chinese Association for the collection of Y50 million atonement money<sup>146</sup> from the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya for their anti-Japanese activities.<sup>147</sup> The OCA only collected Y28.000.000 despite the imposed deadline. Yet, Y50.000.000 was unwittingly collected with the compromise of Takase Toru, an expert in OCA who allowed the deficit to be taken from the Yokohama Specie Bank to be given to General Yamashita to atone for their support of British and Chiang Kai-shek on June 25, 1942.<sup>148</sup>

Besides the heavy criticism of the Southeast Asia Headquarters and Tokyo regarding the implementation of General Staff and the 25th Army, only the tightening war conditions brought a dramatic change to the hardline policy of the Army.<sup>149</sup> Watanabe Wataru was replaced by Major General Fujimura Masuzo and Colonel Hamada Hiroshi to win the economic support of the Chinese Community for the creation of a self-sufficient Malaya.<sup>150</sup> The moderation policy was adopted as a formula to obviate the issue of the security posed by the Guerrillas who had the support of the Chinese Community. During this period, Malayan Military Administration which was formed on 2nd March, allowed the Chinese to pay

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<sup>144</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941–1945," 67.

<sup>145</sup> The Chinese leaders was comprised of Dr. Lim Boon Keng, Lee Choon Seng, the Chairman of Singapore and China Relief Fund, and Shaw Brothers, the Film Magnates.

<sup>146</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 24.

<sup>147</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 24.

<sup>148</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *A Contest for Post-War Malaya: Social Conflict*, 36.

<sup>149</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941–1945," 76.

<sup>150</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941–1945," 78.

remittances to China. The Chinese were assigned to the Advisory Councils established in Singapore and Malaya and were given a significant proportion after the adoption of Political Participation of Indigenous Peoples, at the Liaison Conference on June 26, 1943. The number of the Chinese exceeded the number of Malays not just because their population was greater but also, they were economically vital to Japan's war effort. This inter-racial device of Japan was an attempt for racial integration to blunt Chinese opposition and to prevent them from being the core of an anti-Japanese movement.<sup>151</sup> They simplified and urged Chinese economic participation in the economic affairs of Malaya by reducing Japanese company monopoly and by reducing the discriminatory measures by cleaning off the Kumia's and Rikenyas, the big and small Japanese companies involved in the black market such as Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Ishihara Sangyo, Taiwan Takushoku, Senda Shokai. These monopolies impeded the economic recovery of Malaya and the economic activities of Malayan Chinese while driving them out of business. The Administration created Eposho and Hedoshos ventures to win the heart of the local Chinese.<sup>152</sup> The former was established to create an economically independent Malaya through "restraining and controlling monopolistic Japanese firms, relaxing suppressive measures toward the Chinese, utilizing...Chinese labor, and capital resources, winning Chinese public sentiments, and promoting a Chinese cooperating spirit."<sup>153</sup> The latter was established to urge mutuality among locals, to suppress the hostile feelings of major races through collaboration in Hodoshos, and "to re-create social unity in Malaya by the people's awakening to common social responsibility and common consciousness of their homeland."<sup>154</sup> While enunciating the

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<sup>151</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945," 80-81.

<sup>152</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945," 89.

<sup>153</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945," 86.

<sup>154</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945," 88.

moderation policy, M.M.A adopted a repressive approach in Chinese educational policy. Due to intense nipponization, the new Educational Policy Concerning the Chinese was adopted in March 1944, the private schools that belonged to Chinese were abolished, and "the Chinese language was banned at public schools. The Japanese language program was made compulsory for staff and students. The use of Chinese was allowed for teaching Japanese.<sup>155</sup> Due to M.M. A's policy on education, the Chinese were suspicious and distrustful of the Japanese intention.

As for the Malays, Japan initially collaborated with Kesatuan Melayu Muda. Japan gave a free hand to Malay radicals to expand KMM which boosted the confidence believing that "fate had finally swung to their side."<sup>156</sup> Members were officially recognized and militarily educated as community leaders and granted local and administrative support to simplify the entry of young Malays to KMM branches. Japan expanded KMM's appeal by closing all Malay newspapers and establishing new periodicals and newspapers: The Semangat Asia, Fajar Asia, and Berita Malai.<sup>157</sup> Within this period, KMM became the new privileged political elite whose membership amounted to 10.000 during the initial months of the occupation. Since KMM was successful in maintaining Malay unity, many aristocrats such as "Raja Shariman in Perak, Datuk Hamzah bin Abdullah in Selangor, Tengku Mohammad bin Tengku Besar in Negeri Sembilan, Tengku Mohammad bin Sultan Ahmad in Pahang, Datuk Onn bin Jafar in Johor took place in KMM."<sup>158</sup> After consolidating Japanese rule, the Japanese banned KMM<sup>159</sup> and all Malay organizations as part of

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<sup>155</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941-1945," 85.

<sup>156</sup> Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied, *Radicals Resistance and Protest in Colonial Malaya*, 76.

<sup>157</sup> Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied, *Radicals Resistance and Protest in Colonial Malaya*,

<sup>158</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 106.

<sup>159</sup> From February to June 1942, KMM's efforts and Japanese support signaled that independence was on the eve yet two occasions made them aware that they were used by Japan's colonial machinery: the KMM's ban upon their frequent appeal for independence turned down by Japanese and the brutality purged against the Chinese along with the violence against Malays and others.



the Japanese military policy to discourage political activity in the multicultural society of Malaya and to prevent the pre-mature flare-up of KMM's Malay nationalism as its initial growth looked like a mass movement.<sup>160</sup>

The first phase of the administration concerning the Sultans and Islamic religion adopted a chastising policy as M.M.A deemed it dangerous to grant political and religious power to Sultans and Muslims.<sup>161</sup> As in line with the nationality policy, Watanabe Wataru believed that Sultans ‘‘must be chastened and must atone for the parasitic way of the past life’’.<sup>162</sup> After the formation of the Malayan Military Administration, which meant the complete control of the Peninsula where the Chinese threat was toned down, the pattern of administration was put into practice concerning Sultans, the Islamic Religion, and the Malays. Japanese immediately caused an intensive state-building by reshaping the political and administrative structure of pre-war Malaya which meant the absolute passivation of Sultans and Islamic religion.<sup>163</sup> Japan was the first colonial government that united the entire peninsula, with a headquarters from Singapore, which was named Syonan, the light of South, as the center of regional military administration on 28 March 1942.<sup>164</sup> The name of British Malaya changed into ‘‘Malai’’ in which the Japanese time zone, Japanese signboards, and the Japanese street names were adopted.<sup>165</sup> In line with the ‘‘Fundamental Principle Relative to the Execution of the Military of Occupied Areas’’, a military document adopted in March 1942 stated that ‘‘Malaya,

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<sup>160</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 107.

<sup>161</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’ 96-105

<sup>162</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’ 100.

<sup>163</sup> Tim N. Harper, *The End of Empire and The Making of Malaya*, 36.

<sup>164</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, ‘‘The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Ethnic Relations between Chinese and Indigenous People in Malaya and Indonesia in the 1940’s,’’ 5.

<sup>165</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 61.

Philippines and Dutch East Indies were to remain the permanent possessions of Japan.’’<sup>166</sup> For the first time, Malaya experienced a centralized system of Government where the pattern of administration was based on administrative integration in which Malaya and Sumatra were considered a special defense area, a nuclear zone, and a permanent colony for Japan’s wartime objectives in Southeast Asia, for their economic and strategic importance to simplify the acquisition of raw materials and to possess the communication network in Southeast Asia.<sup>167</sup>

After the formation of Malayan Military Administration<sup>168</sup>, the main plan which was to unstate the Sultan’s autonomous power to Japan was instigated because Watanabe Wataru desired to strip Sultans’ political power by ‘reducing them to the status of newly acquired subjects (Shimph no tami) of the Japanese Empire.’’<sup>169</sup> Marquis Yoshichika Tokugawa<sup>170</sup> who was appointed as the supreme advisor to the 25th Army in charge of Sultans affairs, was given the initiative to deal with Sultans operation, his moderate proposal was as follows:

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<sup>166</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’ 83.

<sup>167</sup> Byungkuk Soh, ‘Malaya Society Under Japanese Occupation, 1942-45,’ 84-85.

<sup>168</sup> At the beginning of the transitional period, the Japanese policy towards Sultans and the Islamic religion was recognized due to the Sultan’s utility for the pacification and restoration of public order and to win the support of Malays in the 1942 march draft, ‘*Fundamental Principle Relative to the Execution of the Military Government of Occupied Areas*’ where sultan’s religious position and the religious customs of the natives promised to be embraced until the formation of the Malayan Military Administration.

<sup>169</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’ 89.

<sup>170</sup> Marquis Tokugawa Yoshichika (1886-1976) was an aristocrat and expert in Malay affairs and Malay culture. He was a close friend of Sultan Ibrahim of Johor. During the policy formulations in relation to Sultans, he proposed the idea of forming princely states recognizing Japan’s superiority, appointing them Japanese governors while respecting Sultan’s position and prestige. After the consolidation of Japanese Administration in Malaya, he was assigned as the supreme advisor to the twenty-fifth army in charge of Sultans affairs. In inducing Sultans to surrender their autonomous power, Tokugawa’s ideas that Sultans should be not be considered as autonomous principalities and they must be re-educated along with Malays for the realization of a unity under Japanese Emperor was accepted. He was also in favor of preferential treatment towards Sultans that they were to be made parts of Japanese imperial family through decorations in recognition of their collaborations and contributions to MMA. Tokugawa was the one who persuaded Sultans to surrender their autonomous power to the Japanese and he appeased them with stipends. Parallel to Sultans operations, Tokugawa took part in both Islamic conferences held between 1943-44 and he was chairman of the Conference in 1944 where he assured delegates the freedom of worship’’ while asking them to "live and die together" with Japan’’.

Sultans must be coaxed to give up their autonomy and to become new subjects of the Empire but their lives and property must be guaranteed, and they might be given some honorable position. Although the sultans' religious position must be respected, he said, they should not be regarded as heads of autonomous principalities. It was advisable, Tokugawa suggested, to re-educate the Malays along this line of policy, inculcating the Japanese spirit into their minds. They must be made to realize that they would be a united people under the Emperor of Japan.<sup>171</sup>

A document “The Disposition of Sultans” was prepared by the 25<sup>th</sup> army with a dual aim: to deprive the autonomous power of the Sultans where they should be forced to offer “their titles, lands, and peoples to Imperial Majesty through the Japanese military commanders and to set an example for the people by swearing loyalty as Japanese Subjects.”<sup>172</sup> In exchange for an income guaranteeing financial inheritance for Sultan’s descendants, an annuity from local administrative funds assuring direct contact with the administration of Malaya, Sultans must resign their political prerogatives as of Tokugawa Shogunate relinquished its power to the throne at the Meiji Restoration since Malaya was an integrated part of the Empire. For the implementation of this policy, an effective Sultan was chosen to urge the rest of the Sultans to relinquish their authority. Marquis Tokugawa persuaded Sultans to submit their political and religious powers to the Japanese in exchange for stipends.<sup>173</sup> Despite the appearance of stipends as paid-up in the military records, the Sultans were never paid in the first, second, and third quarters of the Administration because Watanabe Gunsei found it irrational to follow “the British practice of paying sultans in accordance with their importance and prestige”, and adopted a carrot-and-stick approach according to the degree of Sultans cooperation for the payment of

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<sup>171</sup> Yoji Akashi, “Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,” 90.

<sup>172</sup> Yoji Akashi, Yoji Akashi, “Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,” 91.

<sup>173</sup> Yoji Akashi, “Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,” 91-94.

allowances. This policy, which was officially announced in the document ‘‘Reference Material and the Exploitation for Nationality Policy’’ on 28 November 1942, stated that: ‘‘Sultans shall be utilized in such a way as to be the central driving force for reconstruction and the leaders for inspiring an Asian consciousness. Those sultans who are proved to be less useful to us and less enthusiastic shall be: treated coldly and ignored as a warning to others.’’<sup>174</sup>

For the first time, the traditional link between Sultans and their subjects were broken in Malaya. The disposition of Sultans led to the abuse of religion. The lack of coherent policies towards Sultans, who were the heads of the Islamic faith led to serious abuses towards Islamic institutions in the peninsula. Islamic enactments became unenforceable in many states because of the restrictions of the M.M.A. Religious talks and Islamic courses were banned or worked with confirmations from local policies.<sup>175</sup>

Due to the deteriorating war conditions and the impending military invasion of India, Watanabe’s punitive stance that Sultans must first be chastened and atone for the parasitic way of the past life they caused was backfired. The Japanese reformulated the administrative policies in line with sultans and the Islamic religion, to win the support of Malaysians as they were aware that it was impossible to win the Malays without the empowerment of the Sultanate.<sup>176</sup>

This change of policy required another reorganization of the Malay Military Administration and the transfer of personnel at the top positions. Sumatra was placed under the 25<sup>th</sup> Army, while Malaya was placed under the newly created 29<sup>th</sup> army of

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<sup>174</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 97.

<sup>175</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, ‘‘The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation’’ 63.

<sup>176</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 95.

the newly created 7<sup>th</sup> Area Army in charge of the defense of Singapore and Johor.<sup>177</sup>

The Northern states of Malaya were ceded to Thailand to increase the maneuverability of the Japanese troops for the Burma Campaign and to reward Thailand's collaboration in the Malaya campaign.<sup>178</sup> The policies concerning Sultans, Muslim-Malays, and Islam, were constructively yet cautiously reformulated, in consideration of non-Malays in the face of deteriorating war conditions.<sup>179</sup> The nationality policy under the Fujimura Gunsei Era was excessively communal and jihadist. Japanese restored 'Sultan's titles, personal allowances and pensions, and property rights along with the recognition of their status as supreme Islamic authorities.'<sup>180</sup> In January 1943, Japan held a reception with the participation of 11 Sultans in Singapore to mobilize the support of the Malays for Japanese war efforts. Japan decided to mobilize the support of the Islamic functionaries by adopting a radical Islamic policy. Two Islamic and Pan-Malayan conferences were conducted to instill the idea that Japan's Greater East Asian war was a holy war.<sup>181</sup>

The April 1943 Islamic Conference was held to win the popular support of Malays through Muslim leaders, indoctrinating the Japanese worldview into the people's minds and uniting all races and religious groups in Malaya.<sup>182</sup> The Conference aimed to impress the Malay-Muslim elites with the idea that 'Tokyo was the protector of Islam and the Ummah, and the future of the religion very much

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<sup>177</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 58.

<sup>178</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 25-26.

<sup>179</sup> Yoji Akashi, 'Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,' 103.

<sup>180</sup> Layton Horner, *Japanese Military Administration in Malaya*, 154.

<sup>181</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, 'Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,' 116.

<sup>182</sup> Yoji Akashi, 'Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,' 101.

depended on Japan's ultimate victory in the war."<sup>183</sup> The delegates responded Japanese officials by condemning the Western colonizers for causing the backwardness of the Malays and affirmed that the situation under the Japanese changed in favor of the Malays after the pro-independence directives of Premier Tojo in August 1943 while expressing their happiness on freedom of religion and Japanese intention to protect Islam.<sup>184</sup>

Sultans were nominally appointed as vice-chairmen of their respective state councils and Marquis Yoshichika Tokugawa<sup>185</sup> became the spokesman of the Sultans. They were given membership status, princely titles, and medals as in the case of Emperor Manchukuo or former Daimyos of the Tokugawa period. The M.M.A furthered its study on the Islamic religion, customs, and other indigenous people and concluded that education, not coercion is the only way to change the detrimental attitude of the locals. It was decided that "Sultans and influential religious leaders must be re-educated in such a manner as to change voluntarily their customs and religious precepts, and habits of the Moslem-Malays...must be rectified

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<sup>183</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, *Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment*, 109.

<sup>184</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, "Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment," 111.

<sup>185</sup> Marquis Tokugawa Yoshichika (1886-1976) was an aristocrat and expert in Malay affairs and Malay culture. He was a close friend of Sultan Ibrahim of Johor. During the policy formulations in relation to Sultans, he proposed the idea to forming princely states recognizing Japan's superiority, appointing them Japanese governor while respecting Sultan's position and prestige. After the consolidation of Japanese Administration in Malaya, he was assigned as the supreme advisor to the twenty-fifth army in charge of Sultans affairs. In inducing Sultans to surrender their autonomous power, Tokugawa's ideas that that Sultans should be not be considered as autonomous principalities and they must to be re-educate along with Malays for the realization of a unity under Japanese Emperor was accepted. He was also in favor of preferential treatment towards Sultans that they still to be made parts of Japanese imperial family through decorations in recognition of their collaborations and contributions to MMA. Tokugawa was the one who persuaded Sultans to surrender their autonomous power to the Japanese and he appeased them with stipends. Parallel to Sultans operations, Tokugawa took part in both Islamic conferences held between 1943-44 and he was chairman of the Conference in 1944 where he assured delegates the freedom of worship" while asking them to "live and die together" with Japan".

through the education of children."<sup>186</sup> Japanese modelled Sultans on the inculcation of Japanese language and Japanese spirit in exchange for high-stipends and the authorization of the establishment of the 1944 religious councils to enhance Sultans religious positions and ‘‘improve Islamic Institutions such as courts, schools, and charities.’’<sup>187</sup> Japanese Officials ‘‘started the re-training of Islamic religious functionaries at a Japanese training school, patterned after the re-educational program of the Islamic kiais which had been underway in Java.’’<sup>188</sup> The education of Islamic functionaries and their responsiveness resulted with convening of the second Islamic Conference that was to be held in December 1944.<sup>189</sup> Other than the education of Islamic Kiais, Japan intensified the training of locals in the Japanese language, established Volunteer Army and Corps for the Malay youth and the Labor Service Corps for Malay men and women. Sultans’ task was to devote themselves to waging Japanese war till victory. Sultans were susceptible towards Malay’s spiritual and moral education so that they could work for the betterment of the war conditions. As a result, M.M.A induced Sultans to the war of emancipation of all Asia.<sup>190</sup>

At the core of Japan’s cultural policies and military values, which was designed by the military and implemented by the Bunkajin<sup>191</sup>, there was the dire need to create a new national consciousness among all Malaysians so that they could change their colonial character forever and uplift their spiritual quality to discard the colonial

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<sup>186</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 106.

<sup>187</sup> Layton Horner, *Japanese Military Administration in Malaya*, 157.

<sup>188</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 107.

<sup>189</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 108.

<sup>190</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 106, 107.

<sup>191</sup> Bunjakin are a group of intellectuals who played a major part in the cultural propaganda of Japan. They were recruited and sent to the occupied areas in Southeast Asia to re-educate the locals on Japanese military and cultural values.

indoctrinations by way of Japanese Seishin and Japanese language and to produce leaders who are physically and spiritually fit for military and national service after Japanese surrender.<sup>192</sup> The Japanese classroom customs where students had to practice by the order of the class monitor in Nippon-go; ‘Kiritsu (Stand at attention), Rei (Bow), and Chakuseki (be seated)’’, implemented in all schools in Malaya and Singapore.<sup>193</sup> The Japanese established local military and paramilitary organizations to ease the burden of the regular military forces, to improve their sense of love and belonging for their country mannered with strong mental power and physical abilities, and to raise awareness for a strong sense of responsibility. The Heiho, known as Auxiliary Servicemen or sub soldiers, were enlisted in the Japanese Army. The Giyu Hei, the collective name used to refer to the two Malay military organizations was created; The Giyu Gun, a Malay Volunteer Army is known as PETA, Pembela Tanah Air, and the Giyu Tai, the Volunteer Corps were established to ease the burden of the Japanese forces, to empower the struggle against the Allied powers, and to combat the Chinese guerilla bases.<sup>194</sup> They were trained in anti-craft guns, artillery, and machinery, assisted the Japanese forces in labor service as non-combatants, employed in the transport section, and used as military guides. Heiho’s also had a women section, a Malay women’s auxiliary corps established in 1944.<sup>195</sup> The Giyu Gun was a volunteer army, operating with militarily trained 2000 men, armed with machine guns and rifles extracted from the British Army. Members of the Giyu Gun wore the same uniforms as Japanese soldiers, given comparable ranks,

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<sup>192</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘Japanese Cultural Policy in Malaya and Singapore, 1942-1945,’ in *Japanese Cultural Policies in Southeast Asia during World War 2*, 118.

<sup>193</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘Japanese Cultural Policy in Malaya and Singapore, 1942-1945,’ in *Japanese Cultural Policies in Southeast Asia during World War 2*, 126.

<sup>194</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 86.

<sup>195</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 34.



were administered from Johor Bahru, and were exposed to inner training. The Giyu Tai was an army of semi-soldiers and semi-farmers formed into small units for the performance of defense measures. Members were expected to have a strong love, mind and physic, and a sense of responsibility.<sup>196</sup>

Japan's propagandist policies reached their peak in the December 1944 Islamic Conference. High functionaries and religious courts from Perak, Johore, Pahang, Negri Sembilan, Singapore, Malacca, and Penang participated in the conference where Muslim customs, administration, and religious courts were deeply discussed.<sup>197</sup> In the second Islamic Conference, the religion was intensely used for propaganda purposes. Fujimura Masuzo asked the participants to adjust their world view with the new order and 'the resurgence of East Asia is to reach all the way to the holy land of Mekah is under the hand of Muslims...and (they) must defend their beloved homeland.'<sup>198</sup> The delegates were convinced on the idea that 'Japanese war was indeed a holy war, to liberate Muslims and the holy land from the tyrannical Anglo-Saxon yoke!'<sup>199</sup>

While mobilizing Muslims Malays in the war against the Allied powers under the guise of the Holy War, Japan shifted its strategy to independence and decided to empower Kesatuan Melayu Muda, the movement of Ibrahim Yaacob, by transforming it into the KRIS Movement, (Kesatuan Ra'ayat Indonesia Semenanjung) .<sup>200</sup> With the tightening war conditions and the locally operating

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<sup>196</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya and Singapore, 1941-45: A Social and Economic*, 86.

<sup>197</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, 'Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,' 114.

<sup>198</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, 'Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,' 114.

<sup>199</sup> Ali Ebu Talib, The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 116.

<sup>200</sup> Yoji Akashi, 'Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,' 108.

Auxiliary local units: Giyu Gun and Heiho, the Japanese accelerated their promise of independence and ‘‘founded a pan–Southeast Asian movement known as KRIS in late July 1945’’ to give Malaya independence with the help of Malay radical nationalist movement.<sup>201</sup> Japan worked to the fullest to grant Malaya independence under the leadership of Ibrahim Yacoob until 17 August 1945.

In terms of Indians, the nationality policy was peripheral during the war as ‘‘Japan was aware of the instrumental potential of Indian nationalism and the BIA (British Indian Army) to further their war aims’’.<sup>202</sup> The Japanese who encouraged, aided, and housed Indian nationalists against the potential troubles that were likely to develop with England since the 1930s, were indeed ready to lay the plans for Indian independence.<sup>203</sup> Since India was planned to be an independent member of the Co-Prosperity Sphere before the occupation, the Prime Minister Tojo championed the idea of an India Campaign, similarly coincided with the contact of Rash Behari Bose who was living in Japan with General Sugiyama to organize an Indian Independence movement in Southeast Asia. Malaya was an ideal place to be the core of the Indian Independence League because of several reasons: Malaya was geographically close to India and the nationalism of India affected the leaders in Malaya since the 1920s, and British-Indian military units stationed in Malaya.<sup>204</sup>

Having to know that Japan’s greater dreams in the Far East and Southeast Asia could not be actualized as long as Britain could hold its Indian Empire, proposals for the Indian Independence League and Indian National Army<sup>205</sup>, the

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<sup>201</sup> Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied, *Radicals Resistance and Protest in Colonial Malaya*, 98

<sup>202</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 187.

<sup>203</sup> Gordon Paul Means, *Malaysian Politics*, 47.

<sup>204</sup> Ganesan Shanmugavelu and Balakrishnan Parasuraman, ‘‘Political Development of Indians During the Japanese Occupation in Malaya (Malaysia), 1941-1945,’’ 7.

<sup>205</sup> Having to know the existence of a secret society comprised of revolutionary Sikhs who dedicated themselves to the cause of India, known as the Indian Independence League, the Japanese contacted with Pritam Singh, the head of disaffected Sikhs in Thailand. Parallel to Japanese penetration to Malaya in December 1941, IIL was expected to absorb all anti-British Indians in the army, to organize

military arm of the IIL were accepted in a dual conference held at Tokyo and Bangkok in 1942.<sup>206</sup> Rash Behari Bose was assigned as the President of the IIL of East Asia in March 1942. IIL was formally established with the INA as its military wing for the cause of Indian independence as a result of a conference held in Bangkok in June 1942. As stated by Cemil Aydın, the creation of INA with the surrendered British troops became “the most memorable project to embody pan-Asianist slogans.”<sup>207</sup> In two months, the membership of INA accounted for 200,000.<sup>208</sup>

The disagreements between Imperial Headquarters, the INA, and IIL intensified over the issue of autonomy for the Indians and the leadership problem led to the temporary suspension of INA. The tensions stemmed from the leadership of Rash Behari Bose, who was a Japanese puppet in the eyes of Indians due to his long tenure in Japan, his isolation from the India’s political life, his inability to speak on behalf of Indians in the Congress, and his dictated leadership in line with Japanese Army to lead the movement. In addition, the Japanese commitment to IIL/INA and Indian nationalism caused distrust among Indians. Among the ranks of IIL and INA, the doubts were raised about the military leadership of Mohan Sing, the provisional commander of INA. As a result, these tensions reduced the effectiveness of Bose in the eyes of Japan.<sup>209</sup> Japan crowned the problem of effective leadership through the

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a volunteer army from BIA and Indian population in Malaya and Singapore and to be used as a vehicle of dissemination of nationalist propaganda aimed at BIA soldiery and the Malayan Indians. In exchange, the Japanese promised to support the cause of the Indian nationalism, to promote the welfare of Indians, and to treat Indians with brotherly bonds, and to embrace the dignity of Indian women. The first Malayan headquarters of IIL was established at Kota Bharu, upon Japan’s initial landing on 8 December 1941s’ military wing, the Indian National Army was established during the Malayan Campaign. On 31 December 1941, Mohan Singh was assigned as the provisional commander of INA.

<sup>206</sup> Willard H. Elbsree, *Japan’s Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945*, 33.

<sup>207</sup> Cemil Aydın, “Japan’s Pan-Asianism, and the Legitimacy of Imperial World Order, 1931-1945,” 20.

<sup>208</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 296, 193.

<sup>209</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 296, 195.

supervision of Subhas Chandra Bose<sup>210</sup> who believed that “the main hope for Indian independence lay in active cooperation with the Japanese government.”<sup>211</sup> His meeting with Tojo Hideki, on 16 June 1943 solved two structural problems that caused a failure in IIL; the ambivalent policy of Japan towards India was corrected and Subhas Chandra Bose was given greater autonomy over IIL and INA.<sup>212</sup> For Subhas, the collaboration with Japan was one of the means to achieve the liberation of India as Subhas Chandra Bose anticipated the future of the movement with Okawa Shumei<sup>213</sup>, and asked him if it was possible to guarantee the Soviet’s support in the face of Germany’s defeat in the European front.<sup>214</sup>

Subhas guaranteed Japan’s non-interference to INA or IIL for Japan’s military benefits.<sup>215</sup> He began to re-form and re-name INA as Azad Hind Fauj (Free Indian Army.) He gained the popular support of the Tamil working class in Malaya as he replaced the symbol of a springing tiger on the Indian national congress to remind the Tamils of the anti-colonial struggle of Tipu Sultan, a Muslim Sultan of Mysore, who fought to prevent the fall of South India. He re-organized IIL by

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<sup>210</sup> Subha Chandra Bose who was the first Indian leader fighting against the British since the great mutiny of 1857, a Bengali politician, the former president of the All-India Congress until he was forced to resign by Nehru and Gandhi because of his radical and pragmatic nature for believing in a forceful and dictatorial leadership to get rid of the British, sent by Germany upon the request of Japanese on 16 May 1943. With the presence of Subhas Chandra Bose, Japan cleared up the air about Japanese policy towards India and expanded the autonomy on IIL and INA. Subha Chandra Bose, who became the maverick of Indian nationalism was fully supported to the point “his birthday became a special celebration, and a Netaji Week, which included rallies, processions, and prayers for Bose’s health in Hindu temples, mosques and churches, was held from 4 to 10 July 1944.

<sup>211</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 196.

<sup>212</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 197.

<sup>213</sup> Okawa Shumei (1886-1957), is an advocate of Pan-Asianist and Japanese nationalism and an expert of Islamic religion. He introduced Islam to Japan’s nationalist and military circles in the 1930’s as he saw Islam as a global mean for the fulfilment of Pan-Asianism while paving the way for the establishment of Islamic area studies supported by Japanese Army and Navy. Okawa navigated Japanese government to adopt Islam as a policy in Japan’s Asianist foreign agenda in 1938. This information is in reach of Selçuk Esenbel’s *Japan’s Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Translational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945*.

<sup>214</sup> Cemil Aydın, “Japan’s Pan-Asianism, and the Legitimacy of Imperial World Order, 1931-1945,” 21.

<sup>215</sup> Cemil Aydın, “Japan’s Pan-Asianism, and the Legitimacy of Imperial World Order, 1931-1945,” 21.

introducing administrative units of thirteen departments. A national bank was opened to issue a national currency. A national flag, a national language, a national anthem, and a symbolic greeting style, together with a slogan; the Chalo Delhi, which became the rallying cry to signify the great rebellion of 1857 was adopted.<sup>216</sup> Subhas opened a unit for women volunteers, called Rani of Jhansi, ‘‘a heroine of the Great Rebellion of 1857 who had campaigned actively against the British.’’ Headed by Dr. Lakshmi Swaminathan, the first group of female soldiers was sent to Burma in 1943, to be trained in warfare and nursing.<sup>217</sup> After appointing himself as the governor of INA, he agreed with the Japanese proposal ‘‘to engage the movement against the British in Imphal’’.<sup>218</sup> Training camps mushroomed across the peninsula for Indian officers and soldiers. Until the end of the war year, 1000 military officers were trained while more than 20.000 regular soldiers completed their training. Declared himself as its president, he announced the Provisional Government of Free India (FIPG) on 21 October 1943. His government was recognized by Japan, Germany, Italy Manchukuo, Burma, Thailand, and Croatia. The Prime Minister Tojo consolidated the existence of provisional government by transferring the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the control of FIPG so that Bose could raise the Indian flag on free Indian Soil.<sup>219</sup>

Having to know that full accommodation with the Japanese would impede his liberation plan unless he would free itself from Japanese control, INA declared war against Britain and the USA on October 23-24, 1943, intending to minimize Japanese influence on IIL while maximizing his authority as the leader of the Indians in

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<sup>216</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 199.

<sup>217</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 199.

<sup>218</sup> Ganesan Shanmugavelu and Balakrishnan Parasuraman, ‘‘Political Development of Indians During the Japanese Occupation in Malaya (Malaysia), 1941-1945,’’8.

<sup>219</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 199.

Southeast Asia.<sup>220</sup> Since operations of INA and IIL would be costly, Bose not only sought the financial assistance of Indians in Malaya but also asked for their active involvement in the movement. Almost two million dollars was donated from the 70 branches of the Malayan network.<sup>221</sup> In 1944, Subhas managed to organize the fifty percent of the Indian population<sup>222</sup> under IIL.<sup>223</sup>

Despite the revitalization of IIL and INA by Bose, the effectiveness of the league was faded ‘’by the genuineness and extent of Japanese support for the league as an agent for attaining Indian independence, and by continuous distrust of the actions and goodwill of the Japanese authorities.’’<sup>224</sup> From February to May 1944, the INA engaged itself in the Imphal Campaign, a Japanese-led major offensive aimed to eliminate the British from the Pacific War. INA troops accompanied the Japanese Army, left for Rangoon. When the headquarters of the provisional government moved from Singapore to Rangoon, Indians in Malaya faced the worst abuses of Japanese officials, while the IIL was misused by Japan to gather the Indian workforce for the construction projects between 1944 and 1945.<sup>225</sup> In Rangoon, the Japanese wasted the potential of INA in non-combatant tasks while prioritizing a prediction that ‘’BIA troops would desert in large numbers when they encountered a genuinely independent Indian Army.’’ In the face of unexpected hostility, the INA soldiers surrendered to the command of BIA. The deterioration and disillusionment of Indians began when Imphal Campaign, the core to spark an India-wide revolution

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<sup>220</sup> Ganesan Shanmugavelu and Balakrishnan Parasuraman, ‘’Political Development of Indians During the Japanese Occupation in Malaya (Malaysia), 1941-1945,’’ 8.

<sup>221</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 201.

<sup>222</sup> Some enlistees were forced to attend INA to escape from the forced labor camps, semi-starvation, and Japanese brutalities. The joint pressure imposed by IIL and the Japanese, who specifically advised that the perpetuation of sub-ethnic divisions such as Ceylonese, Malayalee, and Muslims, would not be tolerated, forced the majority of Indians to participate in INA.

<sup>223</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 199.

<sup>224</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 201

<sup>225</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 50.

if proved to be successful, resulted in the death of ‘‘65,000 Japanese and 2,000 INA soldiers’’ while paving the way for the Allied advance into Burma.<sup>226</sup> After dissolving INA in Malaya, Bose showed the Indians in Malaya he did not give up on the struggle for independence by saying that ‘‘the roads to Delhi are many and Delhi remains our goal.’’<sup>227</sup> He pushed for Japan’s help to contact the advancing Soviet Armies to Manchuria about the possibility of continuing the independence.<sup>228</sup> Japanese decided to help him contact with Soviet Officials but his shadowy death at a military Japanese hospital after a plane crash with a group of Japanese crew in Taipei, Formosa on 18 August 1945, prevented the cause of imagined struggles for India.<sup>229</sup> The support for and confidence in INA among the Indians in Malaya began to wane as Indian independence seemed impossible.<sup>230</sup> With the surrender news of Japan, the Azad Hind Provisional government and INA were disbanded.<sup>231</sup> According to Cemil Aydin, ‘‘the mere existence of a provisional government and an army had a positive psychological impact on the Indian nationalist movement as a whole.’’<sup>232</sup>

INA fostered nationalist feelings and radical sentiments among Indians of different classes to effectively challenge the British and helped them improve their socio-economic conditions in the post-surrender period.<sup>233</sup> As a result, the arrival of Bose and the involvement in IIL and INA ‘‘made many Indians feel that not only

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<sup>226</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 201,202.

<sup>227</sup> Tim Harper, *The End of Empire and The Making of Malaya*, 21.

<sup>228</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 204.

<sup>229</sup> Tim Harper, *The End of Empire and The Making of Malaya*, 21.

<sup>230</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 50.

<sup>231</sup> Ganesan Shanmugavelu and Balakrishnan Parasuraman, ‘‘Political Development of Indians During the Japanese Occupation in Malaya (Malaysia), 1941-1945,’’ 9.

<sup>232</sup> Cemil Aydin, ‘‘Japan’s Pan-Asianism, and the Legitimacy of Imperial World Order, 1931-1945,’’ 21.

<sup>233</sup> A. Mani and P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Subha Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army: A Southeast Asian Perspective,’’ 8.

would they fight for swaraj (self-rule) in India, but for swaraj of the people in Malaya...that they would be able to be rid of the people who stood upon them''. The radical nationalism brought by Subhas became ''the starting point for the Indians to move into socialist, trade unionist and even communist activity, in which the Malayan Indian intelligentsia participated prominently in the post-war years.''<sup>234</sup> Although the promise of independence under Subha Chandra Bose failed, the fall was a new beginning for Indians in Malaya as it ''changed the face of Malayan Indian politics and the attitudes of Indians both towards one another and towards their colonial masters, the British.''<sup>235</sup>

This chapter has discussed the history of the Japanese occupation in Malaya. Both the British and the Japanese used ethnic divisions and concepts to fuel their colonial monopolies in Malaya, but what differentiates Japan from British colonial rule is the politics of ethnicity. Despite the double periodization of Japanese Occupation in Malaya, which ranged from repression to moderation, Japan ''attempted to reach an accommodation with the Malays, encourage the growth of nationalism among the Indians, while actively discriminating against the Chinese as despised and reviled enemies.''<sup>236</sup> The next chapter will focus on the impacts of Japanese occupation in the light of interruption or transformation argument to reveal Japan's post-war impact on Malays and Non-Malays.

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<sup>234</sup> Ganesan Shanmugavelu and Balakrishnan Parasuraman, ''Political Development of Indians During the Japanese Occupation in Malaya (Malaysia), 1941-1945,''<sup>9</sup>

<sup>235</sup> Ganesan Shanmugavelu and Balakrishnan Parasuraman, ''Political Development of Indians during the Japanese Occupation in Malaya (Malaysia), 1941-1945,''<sup>9</sup>

<sup>236</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 183.



## CHAPTER 4

### THE JAPANESE OCCUPATION: INTERRUPTION OR TRANSFORMATION?

This chapter covers the impacts of the Japanese Occupation on Malays and non-Malays to provide a better insight into the impacts of the Japanese Occupation. Japan developed its entire occupation policies based on a simple intention; ‘to erase all memory of the old colonial order.’<sup>237</sup> Japanese occupation, unlike the Western colonialists, did not cause a continuum in the colonial legacy of the former but interrupted the exploitative nature of British colonial rule and intensified the politicization and political maneuvers and experiences of each ethnic group to varying degrees. Before the arrival of Japan, as Ian Morrison showcases, there were occasional frictions and the key was racial harmony and the indigenous people were not anxious about the possible future dangers.<sup>238</sup> Upon the surrender of Japan, racial hatred replaced racial harmony, which led to the emergence and consolidation of ethnic politics in Malaysia. In the occupied territories, ‘Japanese, in their attempt to dislodge the Western imperial powers from Southeast Asia, were themselves the last imperialists in Asia’ and, after their brilliant conquest of Malaya, had ‘clearly intended to stay.’<sup>239</sup> The surrender of Japan was a total departure from the old colonial order because in reality ‘the war for the people...started when the fighting

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<sup>237</sup> Diana Wong, ‘Memory Suppression and Memory Production, The Japanese Occupation of Singapore’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 4.

<sup>238</sup> Ian Morrison, ‘Aspects of Racial Problem in Malaya’, (Pacific Affairs, Vol.22, No.3, 1949), 240.

<sup>239</sup> Diana Wong, ‘Memory Suppression and Memory Production, The Japanese Occupation of Singapore’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 2.

stopped".<sup>240</sup> This chapter aims to provide insights on the arguments whether or not the Japanese occupation was a change or continuity in terms of post-war developments.

#### 4.1 The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Malays, Chinese, and Indians

The wartime impacts of the Japanese occupation were told to be beyond the intentions of Japan's policymakers in Japan and the occupied regions.<sup>241</sup> However, it was not beyond the Japanese expectations to destroy the British colonial possessions in Malaya and to cause British departure from Asia as was also the case for American and Netherlands colonial possessions. The Japanese invasion of 1941, coupled with its Japanese nationalism and Pan-Asianism, produced various effects on nationalism in Malaya and 'served as an intensive school for nationalists' feelings and thoughts about political questions'' mainly for Malays.<sup>242</sup> The positive and especially the negative impacts of the Japanese colonial rule caused radical changes on the transformation of locals, 'depending on the experiences of individuals and of various racial communities'.<sup>243</sup> The impact of the Japanese occupation will be evaluated in terms of nationalism, political and social changes among locals in Malaya.

In terms of nationalism, Japan empowered the ignored sense of fragmented nationalism of locals, regenerated and reorganized them. Japan's politics of ethnicity produced different effects on nationalism in the peninsula. The Malays experienced a

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<sup>240</sup> Diana Wong, 'Memory Suppression and Memory Production, The Japanese Occupation of Singapore' in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 3.

<sup>241</sup> John Bastin, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: 1511-1957*, 147.

<sup>242</sup> T. H. Silcock and Ungku Aziz, *Asian Nationalism and The West*, 289.

<sup>243</sup> Yoji Akashi, Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore*, 16.

severe shock in the most violent way which was unseen in British Malaya and social upheaval while mastering the habits of violence and mass demonstrations. Japan's support of Malay nationalism through Kesatuan Melayu Muda in 1942 and 1945 cemented Malay sense of identity. The Chinese experienced a terrible sense of insecurity and violence while mastering the art of guerilla activity between the years 1942 to 1945. The Chinese who volunteered for the Dalforce for the defence of Malaya in 1941 managed to escape Japanese brutality and formed the most effective anti-Japanese resistance movement, the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army in the jungles in 1942 after the mop-up operations that were directed against the Chinese in Malaya. The Indians experienced hardship and struggle while mastering the political upheaval and unity through the INA and the IIL. For main races as a whole, 'the Japanese nationalism and Pan-Asianism was the most intensive school for nationalist feelings and thoughts about political questions.'<sup>244</sup> This mastery and the heightened sense of nationalism were violently transferred to post-war Malaya even before the surrender of Japan on 15 August 1945.

In terms of political changes, the emergence of nationalist movements whose elements transformed the post-war Malaya after the surrender of Japan caused the birth of new leadership groups and styles, beginning in 1941. Abu Talip Ahmad states that the potential of the independence and volunteer groups that were formed by Japan in Southeast Asia, was more than the Japanese expectations;

..independence and volunteer armies—achieved results well beyond the initial aims of their Japanese sponsors. Given different modes of training, and deployed for various purposes, including resisting the West and internal pacification, the impact of these armies was to be varied, but nevertheless of considerable importance in postwar developments. Some of these forces eventually revolted against the Japanese, and many took part in the

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<sup>244</sup> John Bastin, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: 1511-1957*, 151,152.

subsequent struggle for independence, or were used as political leverage in postwar politics.’’<sup>245</sup>

Between 1941 and 1945, three nationalist groups imbued with military cultural experiences and values engrossed the political scene in Malaya. These are respectively; the Kesatuan Melayu Muda, the Young Malays Union, the Indian Independence Movement, and Indian National Army, and the Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army. The political utilization of these groups, and the precautions to control the anti-Japanese resistance ‘‘saw the Japanese recruiting and training Malay youths into their colonial occupation forces to help them fight against the Chinese-dominated Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA).’’<sup>246</sup> These play-offs shaped the post-war racial clashes and still abides in the political culture of Malaysia. In the case of Malays, the possibility of defeat at the beginning of the Japanese policy formulation and the swift turn towards Japanese support for Independence, and seeing the imminent defeat against the Allies at the end of the war determined the fate and evolution of KMM.<sup>247</sup> KMM’s collaboration with Japan went through a three-fold evolution for Malay radicals and the Malay nationalist movement. The first step was the transformation of KMM into a mass movement and its ban in 1942. The second step was the transformation of KMM into the Auxiliary and Military units between the years 1943 to 1944 and its utilization against the Chinese. Finally, the third step was the evolution of KMM into a nationalist independence movement arranged by Malayan Military Administration: the KRIS in 1945. In terms of

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<sup>245</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, ‘‘The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Colonial and Anti-colonial armies in Southeast Asia’’ in Karl Hack, *Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia*, 202.

<sup>246</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, ‘‘The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Colonial and Anti-colonial armies in Southeast Asia’’ in Karl Hack, *Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia*, 203.

<sup>247</sup> Kesatuan Melayu Muda, known as Young Malay Union, was founded by Ibrahim Yaacob in 1938 to openly advocate independence within a Pan-Indonesia alliance. It is mainly a political organization, comprised of teachers and journalists; Malay educated Intelligentsia, whose members were advocating Melayu Raya or Indonesia Raya<sup>247</sup>; Greater Malaysia or Greater Indonesia ideal. By KMM, Ibrahim Yaacob’s aim was to create a United Malay Nation from the 65 million people in Malaya and Indonesia for the establishment of Melayu Raya or Indonesia Raya.

leadership, the Japanese period brought forth four types of leadership in winning the popular support of Malays; the KMM, the secular Nationalist movement, the Sultans, and the Islamic groups, and the English-educated Malay Intelligentsia. Although KMM was politically short-lived, Malay radical left was utilized ‘as political agents, advisors, local administrators’ along with auxiliary units. With the grant of independence, Malays were mobilized under the leadership of Ibrahim Yacoob, the founder and the leader of KMM. Although the traditional link between Sultans and Malays was broken for the first time due to Sultan’s sovereign and religious titles until 1943, the Sultans were made minor officials and made Vice-chairmen to Japanese chairmen, a role which was previously played by the British officials. The Islamic religious elites were utilized for Japan’s Holy War Machinations when the tide of the war turned against Japan in 1943. With the convening of two Islamic conferences, Japan ‘started the re-training of Islamic religious functionaries at a Japanese training school, patterned after the re-educational program of the Islamic kiais which had been underway in Java’<sup>248</sup> Islamic leadership was indoctrinated with Holy War ideas and they contributed to the publicization of Japan’s Holy War machinations while helping Japan to utilize Islamic Institutions for propagation. The English-educated Malay Intelligentsia was utilized in administrative works where Japan run the administration with the help of Malay aristocratic factions. They were favored in high positions and were extracted more work compared to their pre-war rules. When the traditional link between Sultans and Malays were broken, the political bond between aristocratic faction and Malays became closer.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’ 107

<sup>249</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 42.

In the case of Indians, the possibility of occupying the British' Indian Empire determined the fate and evolution of Indians in Malaya. Indians were neither treated well as Malays nor brutalized as Chinese, yet a lenient stance was accorded towards Indians as a result of Indian's interest in the INA after the leadership of Subhas Chandra Bose and the ambiguous status of India itself as a British colony.<sup>250</sup> Indian's collaboration with Japan went through a two-phased evolution; before and after the arrival of Subhas Chandra Bose. Among Indians, the change in leadership and the extensive recruitment of the working-class in the IIL, and INA led to the 'tamilization of post-war Indian Malayan political organizations.'<sup>251</sup> The working class who were from the lower caste of the society were trained in military affairs and imbued with organizational skills and a sense of self-worth. Therefore, it was Tamils who comprised the majority of the population in Malaya that overruled the post-war politics.

In the case of the Chinese, the Malayan Campaign and the possibility of the Japanese Occupation of Malaya determined the fate and evolution of the Chinese and Malayan Communist Party in Malaya. It was the Japanese who 'enabled the predominantly Chinese Malayan Communist Party to increase its political and guerilla influence in Malaya during and after the war.'<sup>252</sup> The political evolution of MCP and it is the military wing, Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army under Japanese colonial rule experienced a three-way evolution; the emergence phase between 1941 and 1942, the development phase between 1943 and 1944, and the Sino-Allied cooperation phase between 1944 and 1945. In 1941-1942, the first phases, MPAJA lacked sustenance, leadership, sufficient training, and experience in

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<sup>250</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A history of Malaysia*, 250.

<sup>251</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 208.

<sup>252</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, 'Sino-Malay Conflict in Malaya, 1945-1946: Communist Vendetta and Islamic Resistance,' 108.

guerilla warfare to the extent that one-third of the guerilla forces were crushed by the Japanese-controlled mechanism to impede the help of people from helping MPAJA. In 1943-1944, the second phase of MPAJA, the organization developed institutional postures such as ‘‘food supplies, communication systems, and military training’’ and grew in size. In 1944-1945, the third phase of MPAJA, the organization consolidated and expanded and established close collaboration with Allied Powers and was armed and financed from the headquarters of Southeast Asia Command under Admiral Mountbatten based in Colombo.<sup>253</sup> For the Chinese, the traditional leadership in Chinese society eclipsed from a group of traditional Chinese to Communist Chinese and Malayan Communist Party, which was banned in pre-war Malaya due to its anti-British communist activities. Pre-war leaders in Chinese society were comprised of China-born Chinese educated and Strait-born English educated Chinese. These two leadership groups, involved in the anti-Japanese struggle in Malaya in 1937, collaborated with the British and mobilized the Chinese community in the fight against the Japanese.<sup>254</sup>

The social changes produced under Japanese occupation created two types of social impacts on the inner structure of the ethnic communities: it empowered ethnic identities and intra-ethnic unity among races.<sup>255</sup> The emergence of different leadership styles frequented the mass experience of Malays who were differentiating themselves as ‘‘ the local-born Malays (anak negeri) and the recently arrived immigrant Malays (referred to as anak dagang-- traders, i.e., aliens)’’ or had the ‘‘habits of classifying themselves provincially as Orang (people) Kelantan, orang

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<sup>253</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 61, 62.

<sup>254</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 61, 62, 46.

<sup>255</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, ‘‘Nanyang Chinese Under Japanese Pan-Asianism and pribumi Nationalism in Malaya and Indonesia,’’ 146.

Perak, or ethnically orang Bugis, orang Minangkabau and orang Jawa.’’<sup>256</sup> The experience gained under the mass demonstrations, Pan-Malayan conferences, Nippon-go trainings, and administrative education, increased their identification with a Malaya-wide identity rather than their individual states.<sup>257</sup> the Japanese encouragement of Malay nationalism increased the sense of a united Malay nation, which bore fruit before the surrender of Japan and after the arrival of the British in 1945.

In terms of Chinese, the Chinese identity was strongly empowered with the Sook Ching operations, which caused the death of more than 50.000 Chinese in Malaya. The Japanese malayanized the Chinese community in Malaya by cutting off their allegiance from the Communist China and directing their loyalties to their temporary location; Malaya.<sup>258</sup> For the first time, a link between China and Southeast Asia had been broken ‘’since regular shipping routes were established between China and this region in the 19th century.’’<sup>259</sup> The Japanese expansion, therefore, affected Chinese identity by disrupting the "primordial ties" with China that existed among the Diaspora Chinese in Southeast Asia. The incident of \$50 million atonement money led to the unification of Chinese under the apolitical Overseas Chinese Association, OCA. The Japanese integrated the entire Chinese community by neglecting their regional differences such as China-born, Straits-born, Muslim Chinese, or dialectical divisions.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>256</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘’The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1945: Ibrahim Yaacob and the Struggle for Indonesia Raya,’’ 89.

<sup>257</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A history of Malaysia*, 248

<sup>258</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘’Japanese Policy towards the Malayan Chinese, 1941–1945,’’ 65.

<sup>259</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, ‘’Nanyang Chinese Under Japanese Pan-Asianism and pribumi Nationalism in Malaya and Indonesia,’’ 140.

<sup>260</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, ‘’Nanyang Chinese Under Japanese Pan-Asianism and pribumi Nationalism in Malaya and Indonesia,’’ 136.



For the Indians, shifting the Malayan and Singaporean Indians ‘‘from the periphery of metropolitan affairs to the very heart of Indian nationalist politics’’ through INA and IIL, the nationalist ideology introduced by Japan brought Pan-Indian identification and an urgency to contribute to the independence of India regardless of caste, ethnicity, language, or religious affiliation. The inclusive nationalist discourses repeatedly stated that ‘‘all Indians were descended from one of the world’s great and most enduring civilization, one of which had bequeathed incomparable gifts to humanity in terms of religion, philosophy, statecraft, and artistic expression’’ affected all segment of Malayan Indians.<sup>261</sup> While the structural design of INA and IIL thought about Indians the methods of activism and political organization ‘‘as a vehicle for mobilization of community resources and as an agent of change. Membership promoted communal solidarity which united Indians under the umbrella of an overarching organization.’’<sup>262</sup> The Institutional requirements of IIL and INA such as meetings and training sessions, not only stimulated nationalists and anti-Imperial sentiments among Malayan Indians but also exposed a variety of political and social potentialities to be adopted in the post-war political process in unity.<sup>263</sup> The Japanese forced the sub communal Indians in Malaya to put aside their differences and to singularize their identity for the cause of the Indian independence, which made them identify themselves with a supra-national cause; the liberation of the motherland; India.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>261</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 207-208

<sup>262</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 208.

<sup>263</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 208.

<sup>264</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 49, 50.

#### 4.2 A Comparison of Japanese and British Colonial Structures

This part will make a comparison of British and Japanese colonial policies that caused transformations in the social, political, economic, and educational fabric of Malaya.

Socially, British racial policy helped to create the social conditions which brought Malays and non-Malays into direct isolation. The race relations generated by the British colonial rule were harmonious. The plural society which emerged as a result of British colonial interest in the opening up Malaya was comprised of three main races; the Malays, the Chinese, and the Indians. The colonial economy allowed Chinese and Indians to dominate ‘‘the mining, rubber plantation, manufacturing, service and retail trade sectors of the economy while the Malays were largely agricultural peasants and a few worked in government positions.’’<sup>265</sup> In British Malaya, Chinese and Indians occupied the primary and secondary positions in the Malayan economy while Malays were left at the bottom of the economic ladder. Due to the fragmented identical orientation of nationalist associations of Malays, Chinese, and Indians, the pre-war Malaya never experienced communal conflicts under British rule. The Chinese and Indians who felt oriented to their homelands were kept isolated by the British as distinct communities to minimize the room for social conflict.<sup>266</sup> Malaya’s racial compartmentalization was designed upon the needs of the colonial economy. Malays were concentrated in the traditional peasant sector, situated in the least developed areas; the Unfederated Malay States, while non-Malays were placed in modern extractive sector situated in the most developed areas; the Strait Settlements and Federated Malay States. These socio-economic divisions

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<sup>265</sup> Steven Ratuva, ‘‘Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,’’ 196.

<sup>266</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 16.

and demographic isolation helped British to easily manage their colonial assests. <sup>267</sup>

The Japanese racial approach helped to created the social conditions which brought Malays and non-Maays into direct conflict. Japanese politics of ethnicity formed the core of Sino-Malay racial conflict. The Chinese community was severely discriminated in fields of politics, economy, and education while experiencing mop-up operations, resulted with the thousands of Chinese lives. On the other hand, Malays were regarded as the rightful owners of Malaya while being favored in politics, administration, military units, police forces. The Japanese nationality policy or politics of ethnicity militarised and politicized the racial harmony in Malaya. Japanese brutality led to the formation of Chinese resistance groups; the MPAJA, the MCP's military wing during Malay's collaboration with Japan, and the pro-Malay policy of Japan and Japan's utilization of Malay-dominated Auxiliary Units in the military operation against MPAJA made Malays a chosen instrument in the eyes of Communist Chinese. The existence of MPAJA and its struggle to defend the Chinese population and Chinese interest, in the eyes of Malays, classified the Chinese organization as a 'weapon of terror and intimidation.' <sup>268</sup>

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<sup>267</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 56.

<sup>268</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 55, 56.

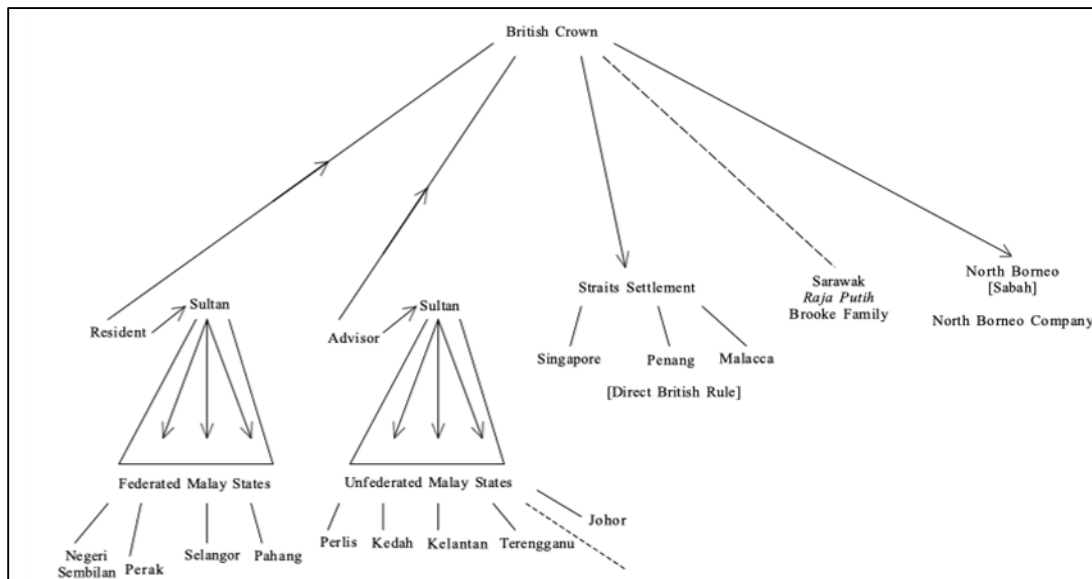


Fig 4 British Malaya

Source; Caroline Lopez, *The British Presence in the Malay World: A Meeting of Civilizational Traditions*

Administratively and politically, British Malaya was comprised of three political units: the Strait settlements, (Singapore, Malacca, Penang), the federated Malay States (Selangor, Perak, Pahang, Negeri Sembilan), and the Unfederated Malay States (Perlis, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu). The British Administration had a dual form of government; a direct and an indirect rule on Malay political units. In Federated and Unfederated Malay states, the British controlled everything except customary law and the Islamic religion.<sup>269</sup> The British did not touch the Sultan's autonomous power as heads of state and the Sultans in the Unfederated Malay States were dominantly independent.

<sup>269</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 3.5.

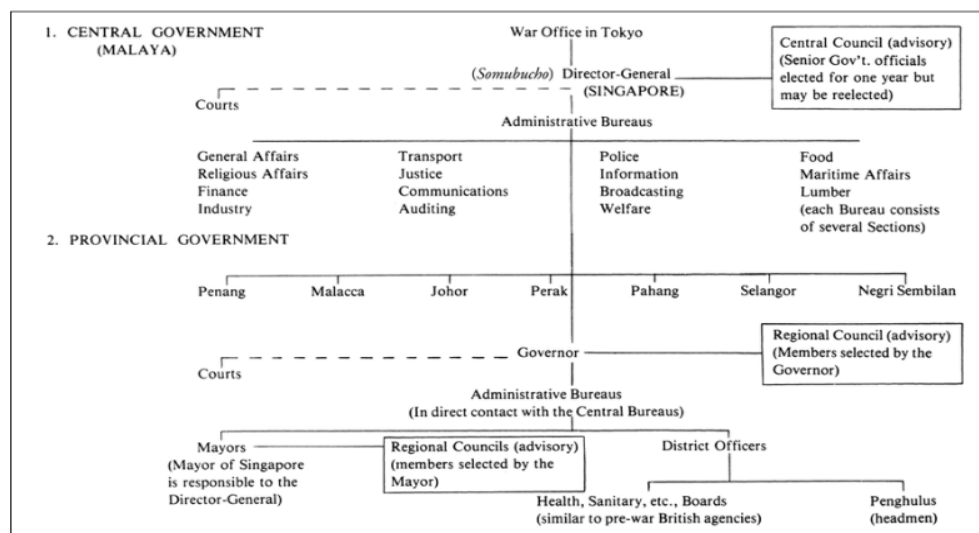


Fig 5 Japanese Political Re-formation of British Malaya  
Source; Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, p, 31

The Japanese rule, however, produced two different Malaya's. In 1942, the Japanese Administration centralized Malaya together with Sumatra under one supreme government, run by the Malayan Military Administration from Singapore.<sup>270</sup> In the second phase of the administration, the Unfederated Malay States, the core of the agricultural economy were ceded to Thailand, and Japan's area of command was reduced in size, and Malaya was placed under the 29th Army. For the first time, Malaya experienced a centralized administration. A single military command was applied for two different units as they were the nucleus of Southern areas. The first phase of formulation necessitated the transfer of the Sultan's religious and political prerogatives to the Japanese Emperor until 1944-45.<sup>271</sup> Their stipends were cut by two-thirds of the pre-war amount and their level of cooperation determined the repayment of stipends equal to pre-war amounts. For the first time, the traditional role between the Sultan (tradition) and his subjects was broken. In administrative matters, the number of English-educated Malay Traditional elites

<sup>270</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 28.

<sup>271</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945," 91.

were increased and they were favored over Chinese and Indians in higher administrative positions. The Japanese filled the seventy percent of the leadership training schools, known as Koa Kurenjo, with Malays and those who were able to graduate were given high positions in administrative matters in Malaya.<sup>272</sup>

Economically, the British colonial sector gave birth to a dual economic sector comprised of the modern colonial sector which operated on trade, rubber, and tin in the Federated Malay States. In addition, the traditional sector, known as the Malay-peasant sector, which operated on rubber, coconut, palm oil, coffee and tea in the Unfederated Malay States.<sup>273</sup> The ownership of Rubber and Tin industries were mainly shared between the British and Europeans, Chinese and Indians while Malays owned the smallest share in it. <sup>274</sup> The dual economy ‘‘resulted in the indigenous people being left in the subsistence rural sector while the migrants, particularly Chinese and Indians, were involved in the modern urban sector of the economy.’’<sup>275</sup>

The Japanese occupation did the opposite and monopolized the entire economic activity that in alien control. Japan demised the principal markets utilized for raw materials which resulted in a decline in imports and inflation in prices. Japanese companies, mainly Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Ishihara Sangyo, Taiwan Takushoku, Senda Shokai, etc., and Guild Associations, known as Kumiais, monopolized the entire economic activity and the economic initiatives of the Chinese and drove them out of business. The Rikenyas, known as concession hunting profiteers, flooded Malaya and hindered the Malayan economy via illegal business practices such as black market racketeering, smuggling, and real estate

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<sup>272</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 29-30.

<sup>273</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*,

<sup>274</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 6.

<sup>275</sup> Abdurrahman Embong, ‘‘Malaysia as a Multicultural Society,’’ 45.

speculation.<sup>276</sup> With the surrender of Japan, Malaya and Singapore were in total ruins economically. The people suffered from “shortages of food, clothing, medicines, and daily necessities.” The mainstay industries like rubber and tin came to a halt. An all-pervasive future was awaiting people, mingled with social unrest.<sup>277</sup> Japan forced people to grow more food to create a self-sufficient Malaya. According to Adrian Vickers, the difficulties and efforts put by locals for economic self-sufficiency would be a deliberate preparation for the struggle of self-rule.<sup>278</sup>

Educationally, schools were the best institutions for the preservation of the socio-economically assigned roles among Malays and non-Malays. British allowed the existence of “four school systems, namely the Malay Vernacular School, Chinese Vernacular School, Tamil Vernacular School, and English Schools.” While serving as a means of social control, the British colonial schools established to indoctrinate British values while educating a group of people for the needs of the British workforce and colonial economy. Malay vernacular schools kept Malays within the confines of modern economic activity, restricted their aspirations and talents while separating them from the socio-economic developments that were taking place in the Peninsula. Malay College of Kuala Kangsar was established for upper-class Malays and Malay rulers to take part in lower administrative positions, while Sultan Idris Teachers College was established for Malay teachers to teach village kids the know-how of husbandry.<sup>279</sup> The Chinese and Indian Vernacular schools were China and India-oriented. As non-Malays were seen as transient communities, their future aspirations were not for Malaya but China and India. That

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<sup>276</sup> Yoji Akashi, “Japanese Policy Towards the Malayan Chinese 1941-1945,” 81-82.

<sup>277</sup> Yoji Akashi, Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore*, 16.

<sup>278</sup> Adrian Vickers, *Komunistlerden İslamcılara, Bir 20. Yüzyıl tarihi: Endonezya*, 131.

<sup>279</sup> Ganesan Shanmugawelu, “Development of British Colonial Education in Malaya,” 10, 11.

is why, their education was exclusive of indigenous history and culture. The Chinese Education<sup>280</sup> was not concerned by the British until the growing influence of the Kuomintang and Communists elements in the 1930s, only then British introduced legal yet ineffective pre-cautions to control Chinese Schools. For Indians, the British aimed to keep them in plantations, and education for Indian planters was not considered beyond primary education.<sup>281</sup> The only national schools up to secondary level were the English Schools with which the children of Malays, Chinese, and Indians could be educated under a common curriculum. English schools imposed English education and propagated British supremacy while creating an inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic gap. The British Schools that were established in cities were within the reach of Chinese and Indian children and they comprised the majority. Due to its location and high fees, Malays, who were living in rural areas and the poor in the cities could not afford English schools.<sup>282</sup> The British colonial education caused socio-economic disparities between races. Malays were isolated from industrial and urban development whereas Malaya was the worldwide producer of tin and rubber. The Malays were left in agriculture to work in paddy fields, Indians were living in rubber estates and Chinese were in the heart of business and commerce.

Japanese colonial education brought a common education system and indoctrinated to all races Asian nationalism by mobilizing the popular support of locals and nationalist movements in the war against the Allied powers and Asian

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<sup>280</sup> The Chinese vernacular schools were financed by the Manchu government since 1901 with the aim of clustering Chinese support for Manchu administration. There were 56 vernacular Chinese schools in Malaya, experiencing a Kuomintang influence. Chinese financed their own schools up to secondary level. Their curriculum was China-oriented and was in Mandarin and the recruitment of teachers were from China. Upon eliciting the involvement of Chinese vernacular schools in the Chinese nationalist's politics, and its inculcation of anti-British doctrines, the British administration passed a law for the registration and the control of Chinese schools and teachers.

<sup>281</sup> Shanmugawelu Ganesan, "Development of British Colonial Education in Malaya," 11, 12

<sup>282</sup> Shanmugawelu Ganesan, "Development of British Colonial Education in Malaya," 14.



Spiritualism by promoting the Japanese spirit, Seishin.<sup>283</sup> Japanese colonial education centralized the advocacy of Hakko Ichiu (universal brotherhood), promotion of Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and the liberation from the Anglo-American cultural influence while indoctrinating the superior culture of Japan. Schools propagated “’emperor worship, Japanese language, music, religion, and history, and Japanese Seishin.” The Japanese language became the medium of instruction while the English language was banned. The Japanese allowed the operation of Tamil and Malay schools while allowing the use of Japanese, Malay, and Tamil languages as the medium of instruction. Being a major part of Chinese anti-Japanese activities, repressive measures were applied to Chinese schools and the Chinese language. With moderation policies, the Chinese language was allowed to be used three hours a week, yet banned again in 1944.<sup>284</sup>

Primary education was prioritized by Japan to reformat and reshape the mind of future generations of Malaya parallel to the New Order. Secondary and Tertiary educations were closed or replaced with industrial and vocational training while Sultan Idris Teachers Training College and a medical faculty were allowed to operate. Malay schools were allowed to operate while Tamil and Chinese schools were dependent on government approval. English schools utilized as Japanese schools where instructions were taught in Malay and English until students could attain fluency in the Japanese language. Arithmetic, mathematics, physical geography, science, physiology, hygiene was studied along with physical training, gardening, drawing, handicrafts.<sup>285</sup> Catholic Schools in Singapore were utilized as Municipal Schools and missionaries were employed as public servants as they were

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<sup>283</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 125.

<sup>284</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 39-40.

<sup>285</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 126.

from the allied countries with Japan. For higher education, the Japanese introduced leadership training schools and vocational schools. Syonan Koa-Kunrenjo, known as Leading Officers Training Institute, was opened to educate the future leaders of Malaya through Japanese Language and Nippon education. After completing a six-month study course, Japan placed the graduates in public services unlike the British policy of holding them back.<sup>286</sup> The Koto Kogyo Gakko, known as High-level Industrial Schools, a system of schools based on teaching civil and electrical engineering and telecommunications was set up together with multiple training programs such as fisheries training schools, railway training schools, seamen training schools, agricultural training schools, technical and vocational schools.<sup>287</sup> The Japanese language was made lingua franca not only in education but also in administration where the use of Malay and partially English were allowed until the Japanese language would be the official language of the government.<sup>288</sup> The students and the teachers trained in the Japanese language with the help of Japanese songs, music, and patriotic marches. Adults were also trained through a Syonan Nippon Gakuen through three-month courses which comprised of the kanji, and lectures about the Japanese spirit and the Japanese way of life. Adult education centers were opened to simplify the public reach to language instructions. Despite the difficulties experienced by the Malays to learn the language due to working conditions, the Japanese tried to popularize Nippon-go throughout the war. The Japanese established local military and paramilitary organizations as parts of local education. Locals were recruited into defense and police units with Bushido codes.<sup>289</sup>

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<sup>286</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 130.

<sup>287</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 129-130.

<sup>288</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 135.

<sup>289</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134.

#### 4.3 Japanese Occupation; Change and Continuity?

The change and continuity section will make a generational comparison of British Malaya and Japanese Malaya in the light of interruption and transformation schools that emerged to reveal the impacts of Japanese occupation on the post-war political, economic and social changes in the occupied countries.

The interruption or transformation of schools originally grew out of historians' need to ground Japanese Occupation in the sudden flare-up of nationalist awareness in Southeast Asian Countries after 1945. This trend is initially coined by Willard H. Elbsree in his book; *The Japanese Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements* where he concluded that “this period saw a marked development in the nationalist movements everywhere in Southeast Asia.”<sup>290</sup> This scholarly trend is echoed in the work of Harry J. Benda, “the Structure of Southeast Asian History” who centralized Japanese Occupation as a decisive factor in the modern history of Southeast Asian nations. He stated that “Japanese rule was not merely a period of military occupation. In many ways, the Japanese wittingly and unwittingly interfered in virtually all aspects of Southeast Asian life, albeit to a different extent in the various countries, and to a different degree in areas occupied.”<sup>291</sup> Such historiographical interpretations made by Elbsree in 1953 and Benda in the 1960s and Alfred McCoy in the 1980s have been institutionalized by Southeast Asian historians and country-based specialists, and triggered the emergence of a dual trend; the interruption and transformation camps.<sup>292</sup>

The historians in the interruption camp defend that Japanese occupation catalyzed the formation of post-war nation-states in Southeast Asia. Willard H.

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<sup>290</sup> Willard H. Elbsree, *Japan's Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945*, 166.

<sup>291</sup> Harry J. Benda, “The Structure of Southeast Asian History: Some Preliminary Observations,” 146.

<sup>292</sup> Byungkuk Soh, “Malay Society Under Japanese Occupation, 1942-45,” 83.

Elbsree who grounds his claims based on the nationalist movements that emerged with the arrival of Japan between 1940 and 1945, emphasizes that these movements were much “more powerful in 1945 than they had been in 1941”.<sup>293</sup> He makes this deduction because of two significant developments caused by the Japanese Military Administration “the increased role of the native population in administrative affairs, and the strengthening of the forces of national unity.”<sup>294</sup> Harry J. Benda, who agreed with Elbsree’s views in his work “the Structure of Southeast Asian History”, openly expressed that “without the Japanese interlude, that balance between continuity and change in contemporary Southeast Asia might conceivably still be weighted in favor of continuity, or at best of more gradual, evolutionary change.”<sup>295</sup> To Benda, only after Japanese occupation, the countries in Southeast Asia “once again determined their fate, in part, at least by continuing or conversely by reacting against the twin legacies of West....”<sup>296</sup>

The historians in the continuity camp advocate the idea that Japanese occupation did not cause greater shifts in the socio-political structures of the natives and that the countries in Southeast Asia maintained continuity. One of the pioneers of continuity camp, whose view was taken into account, is Alfred McCoy, the student of Harry J. Benda. He advocated the idea of continuity because, to him, “the political and social system (under Japanese occupation was) maintained and remained unchanged in post-war societies.”<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>293</sup> Willard H. Elbsree, *Japan’s Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945*, 166.

<sup>294</sup> Willard H. Elbsree, *Japan’s Role in Southeast Asian Nationalist Movements, 1940-1945*, 166.

<sup>295</sup> Harry J. Benda, “The Structure of Southeast Asian History: Some Preliminary Observations,” 134.

<sup>296</sup> John Bastin, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: 1511-1957*, 145.

<sup>297</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 280.

The change and continuity debates on Malaya remained mainly untouched until the 1960s. Yoji Akashi explains the indifference of scholars with two incidents. The Japanese scholars who were hesitant to engage in studying the occupation took part in the occupation and were scared of being accused as war-time collaborators. Furthermore, the issue of the blood debt incident that took place in 1962 in Singapore and then Malaya for Japanese war crimes compelled these scholars to think carefully. New materials surfaced with the official access to the Defense Agency's Archives.<sup>298</sup> Yoji Akashi pioneered some foundational studies on the military administration of Malaya and Singapore in the 1970s and oral history projects in the 1980s and 1990s. These studies that unearthed 'some official papers, private diaries, and memoirs' enlightened the details of the occupation on Malaya and Singapore concerning Malayan Military Administration, Japan's politics of ethnicity, Japanese cultural and militarization policies, etc.<sup>299</sup> Currently, the scholarship has divergent views on Japanese Occupation to the extent it exceeds the debates on change and continuity but creates new perspectives that the post-war impacts were made by the efforts of Malays, the Communists, or the British.

On the interruption camp on Malaya, the work on T. H. Silcock and Ungku Aziz discuss the ambiguity. Their studies suggest that 'the sudden change of masters and the impact of violent Japanese nationalism and Pan-Asianism served as the most intensive school for nationalists' feelings and thoughts about political questions.<sup>300</sup> The massive studies conducted by Yoji Akashi remain the navigating light on Malaya and Singapore. Quoted from Byungkuk Soh, the study of Yoji Akashi, the

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<sup>298</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 280.

<sup>299</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 280.

<sup>300</sup> T. H. Silcock and Ungku Aziz, *Asian Nationalism and The West*, 289.

Japanese Occupation of Malaya: Interruption or Transformation, advocates that ‘‘the Japanese occupation brought about a psychological, social, and political transformation of a ‘‘land which was a political backwater,’’ and changed it ‘‘into a political maelstrom.’’<sup>301</sup> Professor Akashi emphasizes the importance of Japanese educational policies which gave birth to the emergence of Koa Kunrenjo leadership training schools. He says that Koa Kunrenjo schools aimed to revolutionize the old habits imposed by the British, through Japanese Seishin and Gambari Seishin, the spirit of endurance on the members, majority of which were from Raffles College and Sultan Idris Training Schools.<sup>302</sup> Christopher Bavly and Tim Harper, in their book ‘‘Forgotten Wars, Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia’’ where the struggle of ‘‘proconsuls, colonial military commanders and nationalist leaders together with ordinary people that went through the violence of insurgency and counter-insurgency, claims that ‘‘the four years after the fall of Japan were Asia’s time of revolution’’ where Great East Asian War continued through non-Japanese means and elements; the locals and the nationalist movements. It is stated that ‘‘none of the fundamental causes of the Great East Asian War had been eradicated. Imperialism... and ideological ethnic and religious conflict continued to stalk the land....the war was continuing under another guise.’’<sup>303</sup> According to Professor Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, ‘‘if some changes during the Japanese occupation led to further changes in the postwar years we can regard these changes as part of the impact of the Japanese occupation.’’<sup>304</sup> His work on ‘‘the Impacts of Japanese Occupation on Ethnic Relations between Chinese and Indigenous people in Malaya

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<sup>301</sup> Byunkuk Soh, ‘‘Malay Society under Japanese Occupation, 1942-45,’’ 83.

<sup>302</sup> Yoji Akashi and Yoshimura Mako, *New Perspectives on the Japanese Occupation in Malaya and Singapore, 1941-1945*, 136. 141.

<sup>303</sup> Christopher Bavly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars, Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, 8.

<sup>304</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, ‘‘The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Ethnic Relations between Chinese and Indigenous People in Malaya and Indonesia in the 1940’s,’’ 3.

and Indonesia in the 1940s’’ claims that the occupation did not only empower the newly emerging nationalist movements that were aligned with or against the Japanese but also pushed the local authorities whether or not to include non-Malays in the formation of the nation-state or nation-building discourses.<sup>305</sup>

On the continuity camp, Chin-Kee Onn, in his book ‘‘Malaya Upside Down’’ agrees that ‘‘the Japanese occupation turned Malaya upside down. The former social order was completely reversed. The nobodies of yesterday became the bigshots of the day.’’<sup>306</sup> According to Chin, this New Order of Japan was a new disorder for pre-war harmonious Malaya and the Co-Prosperity Sphere was nothing but a Co-Poverty Fear where people found relief after the reoccupation of the British Administration.<sup>307</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng believes that Malaya’s post-war socio-political developments and Malay political primacy can singlehandedly be comprehended in consideration of the racial events that occurred in the post-surrender period of Japan in 1945.<sup>308</sup> Cheah believes that the Japanese occupation harmed the race relations and this issue in its mold shaped the post-war Malayan politics, as he underpins that: ‘‘much of the interaction of Japanese policy and local responses, especially the changing Malay and Chinese perceptions of one another during the Japanese Occupation, helped to determine the direction of Malaya’s post-war political development.’’<sup>309</sup> To him, it was ‘‘the local interpretations of these policies by Malay and Chinese communities which led to bitter inter-racial conflicts.’’<sup>310</sup> Diane K. Mauzy advocates that the post-

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<sup>305</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, ‘‘The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Ethnic Relations between Chinese and Indigenous People in Malaya and Indonesia in the 1940’s,’’3.

<sup>306</sup> Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*, 174.

<sup>307</sup> Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*, 174,179.

<sup>308</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, xxi.

<sup>309</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946* 18.

<sup>310</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 41.

war political developments, especially Malayan Union, after 1946 were the key catalyst for Malay nationalism ‘‘where pre-war colonialism, pan-Islamic reforms, Pan-Indonesianism, and a world war could not stimulate.’’<sup>311</sup> Byunghuk Soh believes that interruption school is not a viable viewpoint as ‘‘the extent to which reaction of the Malay unity could be directed and consolidated depended mainly on the creative reaction of Malays to the new circumstances, not on the deliberate intentions of the Japanese.’’<sup>312</sup>

To understand the debates of change and continuity on the evolution of mainly Malays, and partially Chinese, and Indians in the post-war ethnic politics, the researcher believes that a generational comparison will greatly contribute to the interruption camp.

The race relations in terms of impenetrable group boundaries were a byproduct of British colonialism due to unrestricted immigration and divide and rule policies.<sup>313</sup> It was British colonial rule that necessitated the isolation of main groups as distinct communities to minimize the frictions for social conflict and social change.<sup>314</sup> This policy generated a plural society accommodated with the colonial economic interests of the British Administration. Administratively, the British governed Malaya by an indirect rule where the security of the Sultanate and traditional Malay Rulers were guaranteed under the guise of British protection and subsidies in exchange of a British advisory system on security and economic issues. Despite the advisory system, Sultans retained the control of all matters including Islam. The British evolved the doctrine of trusteeship into Malay special privileges

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<sup>311</sup> Diane K. Mauvzy, ‘‘From Malay Nationalism to a Malaysian Nationalism,’’ 49.

<sup>312</sup> Byunkuk Soh, ‘‘Malay Society under Japanese Occupation, 1942-45,’’ 108-109.

<sup>313</sup> Charles Hirshman, ‘‘The Making of Race in Colonial Malaya: Political Economy and Racial Ideology,’’ 330-332.

<sup>314</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 16.



“where British would protect Malays’ traditional social structure and way of life, exclude Malays from the stream of modern education ... protect them from the competitive pressures of modern economic development where Malays were seen culturally and biologically unsuitable while immigrants deemed suitable.”<sup>315</sup> As a result, an ethnic division of labor emerged. Governance was in the hands of the British where Malays were given junior administrative positions. Despite the image of “Malay Malaya”, the Malays stood at the bottom of the social status quo albeit to British pro-Malay policies where the legal position of the Sultans by that sovereignty rested in the hands of the Sultans, not in the British crown, the religion of Islam, the indigenous custom, the welfare of Malays and its advancement were safeguarded. The Chinese were the most politically, economically, and educationally advanced racial group in pre-war Malaya, and Indians were in a fairly secondary position.<sup>316</sup> “Plantations, large-scale industrial, commercial, and financial houses” belonged to Europeans. The “small scale industries, wholesale, retail trade, money lending, the processing of crops, the technical and skilled labor” were owned and controlled by the Chinese. Rubber plantations, middle managerial and clerical positions were dominated by Indians.<sup>317</sup> The main owners of the modern colonial sector belonged to Europeans, Chinese, and fairly Indians while smallholdings of rice, rubber, and coconut, known as the Malay peasant sector, was left to Malays.<sup>318</sup> The rationale behind the Sultan’s assistance of the British ethnic division of labor was related to the British approach who regarded the immigrants as transient sojourners who were brought to Malaya to earn money and had a home-land focus. The nationalist

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<sup>315</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 50.

<sup>316</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 15-16.

<sup>317</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 50.

<sup>318</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 7.

orientation proves the Sultan's posture on transient communities. The nationalist attempts of Malays that were crushed by the British who reminded the Malays of the fall of the Malacca Sultanate at the hands of the Portuguese in 1511 had always been a threat to the British status quo. The Chinese in Malaya had a strong sentimental attachment to China and their political activities in Malaya were tied to the political developments in China. The activities of Indians were oriented towards India.<sup>319</sup> Until the outbreak of the Pacific War in 1941, Malaya was harmonious, rich, stable, and secure despite the low-intensity<sup>320</sup> of communal frictions.<sup>321</sup> The British Malaya experienced an immobilized outlook of a plural society where Malays were deemed as the owners, yet left isolated from the political and economic developments.

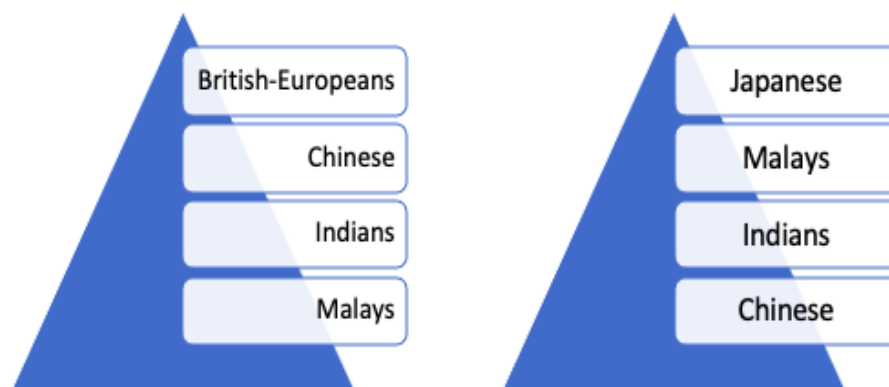


Fig 6 The Colonial Status quo under British and Japanese Rule

The 1945 Japanese Malaya ended the ‘immobilized co-existence of British Malaya by destroying forever the myth of European invulnerability and

<sup>319</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 14-15.

<sup>320</sup> The Malays, Chinese and Indians did not have a Malaya-wide orientation, they co-existed with conflicting interest and viewpoints which impeded the birth of a united nationalist movement on the eve Japanese occupation of Malaya.

<sup>321</sup> Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*, 178.

superiority.’’<sup>322</sup> The Japanese Malaya was military, bloody, violent, unstable, and insecure.<sup>323</sup> They treated Malays as the rightful owners of the country while Chinese and Indians were treated as subordinate races.<sup>324</sup>

Until 1945, the Japanese Military Administration ‘‘patronized the Malay ruling establishment as prospective partners in a Japanese-led Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere; they even tolerated Pan-Malayan sentiments inspired by Indonesian nationalisms.’’<sup>325</sup> They adopted a pro-Malay policy by favoring Malays in bureaucracy, neighborhood associations, police forces, and multiple volunteer defense units, whereon ‘‘the socio-political conditions...brought Malays and Chinese into direct conflict.’’ Four types of leadership classes were improved by the Japanese Military administration. The Sultans were deprived of their legal status and religious duties while the uncooperative Sultans were replaced by cooperative Japanese-appointed Sultans in Selangor, Terengganu, Kelantan, Perlis, and Kedah. During the moderation period, the Sultan's pre-war positions were reversed. In pre-war Malaya, the British were advisors and the Sultans were the chairmen. The Military Administrators of Japan assigned Sultans to state councils as advisors to Japanese governors.<sup>326</sup> Previously, the British were advisors to the Sultans and it was the British whose view in politico-administrative matters was taken into account. The Japanese changed the role of the Sultans and placed them in a position whose views were taken into account by the Japanese military officials.

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<sup>322</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 51.

<sup>323</sup> Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*, 178.

<sup>324</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘‘Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 109

<sup>325</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 51.

<sup>326</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 40, 41.

The English-educated traditional Malay Elites were utilized in military and administrative matters under the provincial government of Japan. They were well treated and financed while Japanese military officials heavily relied on their advice and services. The more they got promoted to top positions, the more these elites integrated and drawn closer to Malays as they had to be involved in community projects and Grow More Food Campaigns with the tightening war conditions between 1943-1945. The Japanese occupation politically and administratively empowered the self-confidence of Malay traditional elites and enabled them to assert their political influence upon the British reoccupation.<sup>327</sup>

The Islamic groups who were comprised of Kaum Muda, known as Modernists or Islamic reformists, and the non-conformists, known as Sufi groups were trained ‘’ at a Japanese training school, patterned after the re-educational program of the Islamic kiais which had been underway in Java.’’<sup>328</sup> Parallel to the trainings of Islamic functionaries, Japan held two Islamic Conferences in 1943 and 1944, and these groups helped Japan for the publicization of Japan’s Holy War machinations and the utilization and politicization of the Islamic institutions for propaganda purposes. They were the most active group who took part in Japan’s Holy War machinations during and after the war ended. As stated by Cheah Boon Kheng, Johor and its sub-regions was the most islamically and militarily politicized regions, to the extent that even women took part in mass drills, and auxiliary units in Johor.<sup>329</sup> This is the area where the inter-racial strife took the form of a Holy War between Malays and non-Malays in May 1945 to March 1946.

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<sup>327</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 42, 43.

<sup>328</sup> Yoji Akashi, ‘’Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,’’ 107.

<sup>329</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 43

The Kesatuan Melayu Muda, the secular Malay-educated nationalist movement was utilized in intelligence, manpower, and defense between 1942 and 1945, although it was banned after Tokyo's decision that native nationalist groups not be supported prematurely in 1942. After the ban, Malay officers were trained at Malay Police Officers Training School that was set up in Singapore, and produced over 1800 graduates until 1944. The Volunteer Defense Units such as Heiho (Auxiliary Servicemen), Giyu Gun (Volunteer Army), and Giyu Tai (Volunteer Corps) were formed and filled with Malays. These units were tasked with 'coastal defense and ...military operations against the Chinese dominated MPAJA.'<sup>330</sup> The Heiho, known as Auxiliary Servicemen or sub soldiers, enlisted Malays in the Japanese Army. The Giyu Hei, the collective name used to refer to the two Malay military organizations that were created; The Giyu Gun, a Malay Volunteer Army known as PETA, Pembela Tanah Air, and the Giyu Tai, the Volunteer Corps were designed to ease the burden of the Japanese forces, to empower the struggle against the Allied powers, and to combat the Chinese guerilla bases.<sup>331</sup> Although the Heiho was open to the participation of all, Malays were recruited for Giyu Gun and Giyu Tai, and Ibrahim Yacoob was the army commander where he was appointed as Lieutenant-Colonel, which was the highest rank ever given to a non-Japanese after the completion of a six-month training course.<sup>332</sup> The KMM came to fore again in 1945 with the Japanese establishment of KRIS "Kesatuan Rakyat Indonesia Semenanjung" (Union of Peninsular Indonesians) in 1945. The acceleration of

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<sup>330</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, "The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Colonial and Anti-colonial armies in Southeast Asia" in Karl Hack, *Colonial Armies in Southeast Asia*, 209.

<sup>331</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *The Japanese Occupation of Malaya: A Social and Economic History*, 86.

<sup>332</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 34-35.

Indonesian independence by Japan gave way to the ideals of KMM where Japan agreed to support the independence of Malaya within Indonesia-Raya.<sup>333</sup>

This period, as defined by Chin Kee Onn, was a period of active mobilization of Indians outside of India. The Japanese accorded a diplomatic special treatment to Indians, where they were not subjected to discrimination and mop-up operations as the Chinese to win Indian's cooperation.<sup>334</sup> They generously "sponsored Indian nationalism, including the organization in Singapore and Malaya of an Indian National Army that would cooperate with the Japanese in liberating India from British imperial rule."<sup>335</sup> The Indian Independence League was the sole political and national organization that was allowed to exist and mushroom across the Malay Peninsula until 1945. The emergence of Subhas Chandra Bose immunized Indians with a "Will, a Purpose and a Divine Mission." The Malayan Indians whose nationalist sentiments were strongly aroused by Japan "were out to fight India's Last War of Independence." Women were mobilized in the India's War of Independence through the establishment of Ranee of Jhansi Regiment where Dr. S. Lakshmi was the head. She successfully gathered educated Indian women and girls from Malaya, Thailand, and Burma. Subha's total mobilization of Indian Manpower and Resources went full swing throughout Java, Sumatra, Thailand, Burma, Borneo, and parts of East Asia.<sup>336</sup> Japan urged the communal groups such as Ceylonese, Indian Muslims, Hindus, to forget their "differences to identify themselves with its cause and the

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<sup>333</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 44

<sup>334</sup> Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*, 122.

<sup>335</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 51.

<sup>336</sup> Chin Kee Onn, *Malaya Upside Down*, 125, 128.

movement.”<sup>337</sup> With the establishment of the Provisional Government, the allegiance of almost all Indians was guaranteed for India and Malaya.

Unlike Malays and Indians, it was Chinese who were violently ‘‘treated with unremitting hostility and brutality as enemy aliens.’’ During the war, anti-Chinese actions were justified in Malaya as of Java, the intra-Chinese differences were ignored, and all ethnic Chinese were treated as outsiders during the occupation.<sup>338</sup> The Chinese community was severely punished and discriminated against in fields of administration, economy, and education.<sup>339</sup> Japanese colonial rule towards Chinese was violently racist due to the involvement and the mobilization of China-Born Chinese Educated and English-Born English Educated influential Malayan figures in Anti-Japanese National Salvation Movement that emerged in 1937 and the Dalforce, a British-led Defence Unit against the Malayan campaign in 1941. With the fall of Singapore, the pre-War Chinese leaders faced three difficulties; they either escaped to countries like India, Thailand, and Indonesia or remained in Malaya for massacres, arrests, and torture, or were compelled to join the resistance movement, MPAJA, led by the MCP.<sup>340</sup> Japan’s politics of ethnicity resulted in the deaths of thousands of Chinese in Malaya and Singapore in the infamous Sook Ching. The leaders who could not escape ‘‘were forced and brutalized for voluntary contributions to the Japanese war efforts.’’<sup>341</sup> Once they forcefully cooperated with the Japanese Military Administration, these leaders, who became unpopular among Chinese youth during and after the war, were used for social control methods. Japanese repressive policies

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<sup>337</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 49.

<sup>338</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, ‘‘A Short History of Anti-Chinese Riots,’’ 3,4.

<sup>339</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 40.

<sup>340</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 46, 47.

<sup>341</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 52.

towards those who withdrew to jungles, led to the formation of the Chinese Anti-Japanese Resistance Movement, where Japan's massacre and pro-Malay policies aroused their anti-Malay sentiments due to the political leverages given to Malays.<sup>342</sup> All Chinese associations were abolished after the establishment of a new Chinese association; The Overseas Chinese Association. The payment of Y50 million atonement money, organized Chinese in the newly established Overseas Chinese Association where representatives in the State Committee was comprised of major regional groups in Malaya; Hokkien, Cantonese, Hakka, Hylam, and Teochiu.<sup>343</sup> Japan disappeared the regional and dialectical divisions of Chinese by holding the view that 'once Chinese always Chinese',<sup>344</sup>

The next chapter will focus on the post-war impacts of the Japanese occupation on the ethnic political developments in Malaysia under Malay political primacy between 1945 and 1969.

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<sup>342</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 56.

<sup>343</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 48.

<sup>344</sup> Tsung Rong Edwin Yang, 'The Impact of the Japanese Occupation on Ethnic Relations between Chinese and Indigeneous People in Malaya and Indonesia in the 1940's,' 11.



## CHAPTER 5

### THE POST-WAR IMPACT OF JAPANESE OCCUPATION ON CONTEMPORARY ETHNIC POLITICS IN MALAYSIA

This chapter aims to illustrate the impacts of the Japanese Occupation on the contemporary ethnic political developments in favor of the Malays. The post-surrender period, as summed by R. A. Bladswell, was a Malay renaissance that began during the Japanese occupation and was ready when the British resumed the control of the country.<sup>345</sup> The Japanese produced pan-ethnic Malayan cooperation of major races under Malay political primacy in the post-war history of Malaya until 1969. The pre-war immature Malay nationalism was generated and three types of nationalism emerged to be accommodated between 1945 and 1969; Malay religious nationalism in the form of Jihad fi Sabillillah, Malay political nationalism in the form of Malay political primacy, and Malay economic nationalism in the form of never-ending New Economic Policy. Japan ‘‘paved the way for ethnic nationalism, created a post-war condition for Malaya by solidifying incipient racial identities and exacerbating Sino-Malay rivalry.’’<sup>346</sup> While this brief period helped Malays to revive the indigenous rule of the Malacca Sultanate, it also shifted the homeland focus of Chinese and Indians and created Malaysian identities.

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<sup>345</sup> R. A. Blasdel, ‘‘Renaissance in Malaya,’’ 83.

<sup>346</sup> Carl Vadivella Belle, *Tragic Orphans Indians in Malaysia*, 225.

## 5.1 Malay Religious Nationalism

“Most people at the turn of the twenty-first century have forgotten that there was a time in Japan before the Second World War when Japanese nationalists showed an Asianists face to the World of Muslims, whom they wanted to befriend as allies in the construction of a new Asia under Japanese domination.”<sup>347</sup>

In the quest of whether or not “Japan could be the savior of Islam”, the Muslim World in 1930’s and 1940s saw Japan as a destabilizing factor in emancipating their polities from the clutches of Western colonialism, even if it meant a new journey to the unknown; the Japanese imperialism.<sup>348</sup> Christopher Hale verifies that the challenge against the West fell on Japan’s shoulders. Japan, taking up the Yellow man’s burden, “became a Mecca for Asian nationalists.”<sup>349</sup> As enlightened by Selçuk Esenbel, Japan saw Islam as a political tool for the liberation of Asian countries from Western colonialism, and transformed the Islamic policy (Kaikyo Seisaku) into a military strategy “by mobilizing the Muslim forces against the United Kingdom, Holland, China, and Russia in East Asia, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East.”<sup>350</sup> Japan devised a way for Islamic know-how in the Second World War as part of its invasion plans. Selçuk Esenbel believes that “Japan’s pattern of involvement with the political activities of Muslim groups in Asia reflects twentieth-century World power behavior that ultimately may have been party to the emergence of political Islam, possibly even in its militant forms in some areas.”<sup>351</sup> A frequently overlooked area in the context of political Islam in the occupied areas of Southeast Asia is Malaysia. One of the most significant effects of the occupation

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<sup>347</sup> Selçuk Esenbel, “Japan’s Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945” in Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey and the World of Islam*, 1.

<sup>348</sup> Selçuk Esenbel, “Japan’s Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945” in Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey and the World of Islam*” 1.

<sup>349</sup> Christopher Hale, *Massacre in Malaysia*, 240.

<sup>350</sup> Selçuk Esenbel, “Japan’s Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945” in Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey and the World of Islam*” 2.

<sup>351</sup> Selçuk Esenbel, “Japan’s Global Claim to Asia and the World of Islam: Transnational Nationalism and World Power, 1900-1945” in Selçuk Esenbel, *Japan, Turkey and the World of Islam*,” 2.

during and in the immediate aftermath of Japan's surrender in 1945 was the Holy war waged by Malays with the help of the Japanese, against the Chinese.

Malay religious nationalism is important because it owes itself to Japanese Islamic policies that were re-formulated<sup>352</sup> in the second stage of the war: the moderation phase. In mid-1943, the Islamic policy of the Malayan Military Administration underwent far-reaching changes where Islamic faith, religious elites, and religious institutions were attached to Japanese propagandist machinations to win the war against the Allied Powers.<sup>353</sup> The Japanese manipulated Islamic religion to serve the wartime needs of Military Administration, which increasingly went on even after the formal surrender of Japan in 1945.<sup>354</sup>

The Japanese machinations began on the first Islamic Conference that was held in Singapore to impinge Muslim Malays on the idea that 'Tokyo was indeed the protector of Islam and the ummah (community of believers), and that the future of the religion very much depended on Japan's ultimate victory in the war.'<sup>355</sup> The conference was attended by thirty-nine religious' leaders from Malaya, Sumatra, and Singapore other than thirty-two non-Malay delegates. Johor, the core of inter-racial clashes, was represented by 'Dato' Haji Abdullah Abdul Rahman, president of the Religious Department since 1933; Haji Hasan Haji Yunus, the deputy mufti; and the

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<sup>352</sup> With the formation of a nationality study groups, the MMA accelerated its study on Islam and indigenous customs while searching on locals' customs, religions, education and administration in 1943. This formation concluded that detrimental native customs should be rectified through educational precautions. The Sultans and Religious leaders were confined within the educational policy, which meant training in Japanese language and Japanese spirit. Under this policy, the administration re-trained Islamic religious functionaries at a 'Japanese training school' which modelled after the re-educational program of the Islamic *kiais* which was already in operation in Java. This policy resulted with the convening of two conferences. This information could be found in the work of Yoji Akashi on Malayan Military Administration.

<sup>353</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, 'Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,' 107.

<sup>354</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, 'Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,' 109.

<sup>355</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, 'Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,' 109.

kathis of Muar and Batu Pahat, Haji Ismail Haji Yusof and Haji Othman Haji Abdullah respectively.’’<sup>356</sup> These above-mentioned names are significant to show that Japanese heavily relied upon the help of non-conformist Sufi groups who were the leading actors in the post-war Malaya. Japanese Imperial functionaries and mainly Marquis Tokugawa tried to win the Muslim delegates through promising protection on the freedom of worship while emphasizing that the future of Islam and the Malay community depended on Japanese victory in the ongoing war. The nature of speeches given by functionaries in the first conference can be exemplified with the speech of Marquis Tokugawa:

The time has now come for all Muslims to accomplish their long-cherished desire to live and die together in their effort to crush their common enemy (British, American, and Dutch). Thus, with a bright future and good hope in sight, I resign unto God, the Most Powerful and Great who will direct the one hundred million and three thousand followers of Islam to the right path and favor them with the true spiritual guidance so that they will unite into one solid body and soul to work and co-operate fully with Nippon – to live and die together. It is only in this way that a New Asia that will cast brightness on Islam can be built. Our glorious victory lies in the powerful and true Nippon spirit. <sup>357</sup>

The interest of imperial functionaries towards Islamic religion and the nature of their propagandist machinations convinced the Muslim delegates of Malaya and Sumatra that they should unite and co-operate with Japan by fully understanding the true aim of the Holy East Asian war. They agreed that it is their foremost duty to freely ‘reinforce this ambition to other Muslims in all the districts in Malaya and Sumatra.’’<sup>358</sup> At the end of the Conference, Muslim delegates issued a communique on their agreement that the Japanese war was a holy war to liberate Asia from the

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<sup>356</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, ‘Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,’ 109.

<sup>357</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, ‘Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,’ 111.

<sup>358</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, ‘Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,’ 111.

colonial hegemony of Britain, Holland, and America. For the construction of the New Order, they pledged their loyalties to Japan to realize Japan's Holy War.<sup>359</sup> Japan assigned delegates a dual task: to explain and to urge Muslim Malays for the pure intentions of Japan which were to be re-evaluated within the principles of Islam and to double their efforts to spread the culture and the teachings of Islam.

Abu Talip Ahmad provides considerable details on the efforts of the religious elites while stating they did not disappoint the Japanese in terms of publicizing Japan's war efforts. To publicize the details of the 1943 Conference region-wise, the MMA of Pahang set up a meeting of all district officers, where district and sub-district officers and village heads "visited the villages to inform 'the people of the decisions reached at the meeting of Muslim (Islamic) representatives in Syonan.'" <sup>360</sup> In Kelantan, the senior state officers distributed reports of the 1943 Conference to "all state dignitaries in the presence of the sultan and senior Japanese officers" which empowered Japan's efforts in the promotion and protection of Islamic faith in the eyes of the natives.<sup>361</sup> Rather than Pahang and Kelantan, Abu Talip Ahmad reveals that it was Johor that essentially detailed "what transpired behind the facade of Japan's self-laudatory claim to be the protector of Islam and Malay-Muslims."<sup>362</sup> The local religious elites of Johor held an immediate two-day Kathis meeting in Johor Bahru between 10-11 April to announce the Singapore Conference of Japan. The head of the Religious Department transmitted the details of the Conference and

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<sup>359</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, "Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment," 111.

<sup>360</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, "Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment," 112.

<sup>361</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, "Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment," 112.

<sup>362</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, "Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment," 113.

the kathis prepared lecture tours in places accessible to the public such as venues, mosques, suraus, schools, and public fields.<sup>363</sup>

The Second Islamic Conference that took place between 13 and 15 December 1944 in Kuala Kangsar, was purely jihadist where Japan doubled her efforts to use Islamic religion for propaganda purposes. The conference was attended by officials from “Perak, Johore, Selangor, Pahang, Negri Sembilan, Shonan, Ma:- lacca, and Penang attended the meeting and discussed Moslem customs, administration, and religious courts.”<sup>364</sup> In the conference, Fujimura Masuzo, the new Gunsei, asked the delegates to double their efforts with the following words:

Gentlemen, look back at what our noble ancestors have done, now wake up to defend East Asia by sacrificing ourselves and through religion besides concentrating our efforts towards this end. Look! Is it not the case that the holy land of Mekah has been neglected all this while under the power of the Anglo-Saxons? The way of the resurgence of East Asia is to reach all the way to the holy land of Mekah until it is under the hand of Muslims. Muslims who believe in the Quran will bear witness to the bravery of Muslims in their history. The Muslims of Malaya are responsible for [overcoming] all the present difficulties. I hope Muslims in Malaya will ponder about God’s assistance to destroy all those who had oppressed others all the way from East Asia to Mekah. And this is the basis for Malaya’s involvement in the present war and Muslims must defend their beloved homeland.<sup>365</sup>

Delegates were asked to finalize the objectives of the Japanese Greater East Asian War, by donating more for Japanese war efforts in which Pahang religious elites greatly contributed, urged people to pledge their loyalties to Japan, helped to increase food production, and prayed for the victory of Japan in the total war.<sup>366</sup> The

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<sup>363</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, “Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,” 113.

<sup>364</sup> Yoji Akashi “Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,” 108.

<sup>365</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, “Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,” 114.

<sup>366</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, “Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,” 116.

idea of Japan's total war as a Holy War was one of the issues three issues that were emphasized by the Japanese Army Commander in a Friday Sermon.<sup>367</sup>

The Conference ended with the Friday sermon of Fujimura Masuzo on "the real teachings of the Quran, the similarity between Islam and Shinto, and the Greater East Asian War as a holy war".<sup>368</sup> The nature of his speech was detailed by Abu Talip Ahmad as follows:

The Gunshireikan reminded delegates that the teachings of the Quran, as revealed to Muhammad, were similar to the Japanese indigenous religion, or Shinto (Way of the Gods). He also stressed that, in essence, all religious teachings were the same: the problem, it seemed, lay with the teachers whom he noted: "would determine the rise and fall of religion including Islam". He reminded the teachers to comprehend fully the message of the Quran, and that they should pay much attention to the way they lived and how they must provide a commendable religious leadership.

Equally significant was the second issue, namely, the alleged similarity of the Quranic revelations, as written in verse 112 (the surah or chapter was not mentioned), and the personality of the Tenno who was descended from the sun goddess, or Amaterasu Omikami Sama. To his bewildered guests, the Gunshireikan went on to elaborate that the emperor was the embodiment of the thoughts of the most powerful god and at the same time imbued with a godly spirit. Since time immemorial, the Japanese people had never questioned their Emperor, especially when the emperor was descended from one family. Consequently, Japan was fair to all, powerful and succeeded at all times in its endeavors, with the holy Emperor becoming the focus of national reverence. The Gunshireikan then pointed out the similarity of the Quranic verse mentioned earlier to the sacrifices that the Japanese had undertaken for their Emperor. That was why, according to this officer, Japanese soldiers, because of their loyalty to their god (or gods), could overcome all odds and defeat any enemy even if they had to face enormous numerical odds and other disadvantages. In this respect, he stressed that the true spirit of Japan was similar to the true spirit of Islam.

...it was the third issue that was the most controversial, and that perhaps caused much uneasiness among the delegates which included royalty and religious elites or ulamas. It served as a warning to the Malay elites of the futility and danger of using religion for political purposes except in those cases condoned by the M M A, The Gunshireikan told his conservative Malay guests to treat the existing war- as a holy war, an argument that is testament to Japanese wartime propaganda ingenuity. The guests were reminded of the

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<sup>367</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, "Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment," 116.

<sup>368</sup> Ali Ebu Talib, The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 116.

early period in the spread of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula when the chosen Prophet Muhammad had to overcome enormous odds to spread the teaching of the Quran on very infertile terrain. As part of the process of spreading the faith, holy war or jihad was unavoidable against infidels in the various parts of the peninsula. Yet, despite this early success, Muslims were later trampled upon and colonized by the West, especially Britain and the United States. Consequently, Western materialism came to the forefront in human life instead of religion, such as during the glorious days of Islam. Therefore, according to the Gunshireikan, the situation facing mankind was similar to the time of the Prophet, that is, the time of jahiliah (religious and moral anarchy). He then stressed that Japan under the Showa Tenno was undertaking a holy war, a jihad, to save mankind from rapacious Britain and the United States, and Muslims in Malai (Malaya) must play their part. He said, "the existing holy war is protracted and costly in terms of the lives lost; the gains are big, and so are the losses." He urged the delegates to understand this well. In ending the meeting, the Gunshireikan expressed the hope that with his guests' proper leadership, the Muslims in Malaya would survive the existing war and would understand better the teaching and message of the Quran. The conservative elites were only allowed to leave after the Gunshireikan issued a stern warning on the futility of using religion for political purposes."<sup>369</sup>

The Conference was ended with a communique from the delegates where all took an oath of loyalty to Japan and Showa Tenno:

Let us be loyal to the Tenno Heika – the Emperor of Dai Nippon and her territories – for assistance to our religion;  
 Let us march towards the final victory by concentrating all our power in line with the real aims of the East Asian war;  
 Let us give our fullest trust to the Nippon army and sacrifice ourselves for and unite with Dai Nippon; and  
 Let us fulfill our obligations to safeguard and reconstruct Malaya based on Islamic principles.<sup>370</sup>

Abu Talip Ahmad claims that Japan, who manipulated religious elites, misused mosques and Islamic religion, heavily propagated Holy War ideology and “Johor religious leaders submitted to this new role without much protest.”<sup>371</sup>

<sup>369</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 67.

<sup>370</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 116.

<sup>371</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, “Japanese Policy Towards Islam in Malaya During the Occupation: A Reassessment,” 122.



Japan's Holy War Machinations such as 'playing propaganda games with the mosques and trying to liken their war effort to jihad' found recognition among Islamic religious elites of Johor; the non-conformist Sufi groups that took part in the Sino-Malay clashes that unremittingly erupted in 1944 and continued in intensity until 3 March 1946.<sup>372</sup> The Sino-Malay clashes featured the leadership of Malay religious elites to protect the Islamic religion violated by the guerillas and the Malay community that were subjected to MPAJA's cruelty.<sup>373</sup> It was the Islamic religious leaders who led the struggle against the Chinese communist guerrillas between the 1944 and 1946 inter-racial clashes and these groups of leaders 'opened Malay eyes to the dangers of Chinese communism that were detrimental to their race and religion.'<sup>374</sup>

During this period, Japan did three things, they found ways to create a Sino-Malay inter-racial strife by launching four major offensives, channelled it to Islamic religion through Islamic conferences held in 1943-1944 and played Malays's fears of Chinese domination by ceding the four Northern Malay States to Thailand where Malays overpopulated by Chinese community. All of these created an atmosphere where Malays interpreted the actions of the 'other' in the context of Japan's holy war machinations.

According to the Communist claims, the inter-racial tensions were deliberately fostered when Japan changed its plan to provoke racial unrest by launching four major offensives to be carried out against the MPAJA. The decision to instigate the Malays in military operations in 1944 was claimed to be taken before

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<sup>372</sup> Christopher Bavly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, 43.

<sup>373</sup> Christopher Bavly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, 43.

<sup>374</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, 'Sino Malay Conflicts in Malaya, 1945-1946: Communist Vendetta and Islamic Resistance,' 116.

the collapse of Germany with the aim of fanning ‘anti-Chinese feelings among the Malays and then instigating them to attack the Chinese.’<sup>375</sup> The first and second offensives were held in September 1944, the third offensive was held in April 1945 and the fourth-offensive was held in June-July 1945.<sup>376</sup> The researcher will attempt to portray the development of the Holy war within Sino-Malay racial strife parallel to Japan’s three offensives held between 1944 and 1945.

During the first and second offensives, Japan utilized Malay’s in the anti-guerilla offensives while channeling the racial conflict to the most sensitive spot of the Muslims: Islamic religion, which was ‘the best way to arouse and to unite the Malays.’<sup>377</sup> The strategy of Japan ‘playing one group against the other’ was already in from the start of the initial occupation ‘. Before the consolidation of Japanese rule during 1941-1942, Malays acted as guides and were utilized in the police raids against Chinese villages which resulted in killings and arrests of the Chinese villagers.<sup>378</sup> Japan also held Islamic conferences in 1943-1944 to mobilize Malay resistance to the Chinese and Communist Chinese guerillas under the banner of Islam.<sup>379</sup> In due course of this operations, Japan’s portrayed non-alien groups as occupiers. Christopher Hale who quotes the British Military Administration's view on the conflict exemplifies Japan’s strategy; ‘the Japanese actively incited Malays to

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<sup>375</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 218.

<sup>376</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 216.

<sup>377</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 206.

<sup>378</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *Southeast Asian Minorities in the war-time Japanese Empire*, 107.

<sup>379</sup> Christopher Bavly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, 43.

attack Chinese villagers– ‘to stir up holy war against the pig eaters’’.<sup>380</sup> They treated the Chinese community in Malaya as ‘‘only less slightly dangerous than British.’’<sup>381</sup> In 1944, Japan once utilized the already trained 2000 Giyu-Gun members in the Anti-Guerilla operations and skirmishes that occurred between Malay Giyu Gun and MPAJA’s 3rd Regiment in the Kota Tinggi area of Johor which resulted in the death of 25 guerillas.<sup>382</sup> Then, the Japanese channeled the racial ill-will to the Islamic religion.<sup>383</sup> While verifying that inter-racial clashes began much earlier and spread from the Batu Pahat area of Johor, Ching Peng<sup>384</sup> in his autobiography narrates that the method employed by the Japanese troops in framing up the Chinese in the racial riots in Batu Pahat/Johor began when Japanese disguised ‘‘as AJA guerrillas, went to a mosque in Johore and slaughtered a Pig’’ which immediately turned Malays on the Chinese in the villages who also asked for help from AJA support.<sup>385</sup> Since then, ‘‘the spark was often an incident in or near a Mosque’’ as settled by Tim Harper, involving a pork incident or Friday Prayers.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> Christopher Hale, *Massacre in Malaya*, 472.

<sup>381</sup> Ian Morrison, ‘‘Aspects of the Racial Problem in Malaya’’, *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.22, No.3, (September, 1949):240.

<sup>382</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 113.

<sup>383</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 206.

<sup>384</sup> Ching Peng was the leader of the Malayan Communist Party in 1947, and led the anti-colonial struggle in pre-war Malaya against the British. With the arrival of Japan, he effectively collaborated with British and led the guerilla warfare against the Japanese invaders through MPAJA. He was a key figure between MPAJA and the British-led Force 136. After the surrender of Japan, Ching led the Communist struggle both against the British and the newly established Federation of Malaya between 1948 and 1960.

<sup>385</sup> Ching Peng, *My side of History*, 127.

<sup>386</sup> Christopher Bably and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, 43.

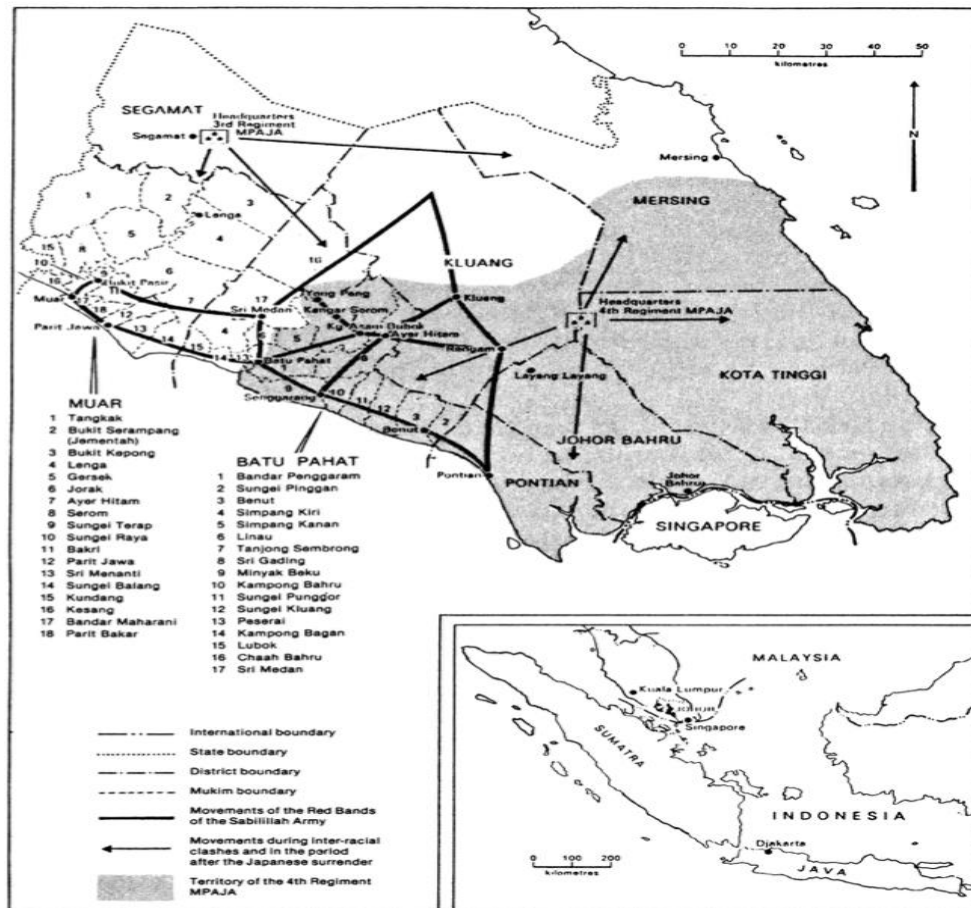


Fig 7 the Red Bands of the Sabilillah Army During the Period May-August 1945  
 Source; Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya*, 205.

In the course of third offensive which was held in April 1945, the open racial conflict fermented in the Batu Pahat area of Johor and spread to other states of Malaya upon the anti-guerilla operations held by Japan. Japanese Military Administration utilized Malay village Chiefs, police forces, and Giyu Gun Units.<sup>387</sup> In the core of the conflict, according to the Malay viewpoint, there laid the transgressions of the MPAJA in the areas they controlled such as the enforcement of head taxes or commodity taxes, supplies, intelligence from Malay villagers in areas they control, the forceful recruitment of Malay men into MPAJA units, the abduction of Malay women, the assaults on Malays and Islamic religion; slaughtering pigs in

<sup>387</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *Southeast Asian Minorities in the war-time Japanese Empire*, 106.

mosques, forcing Malays to eat pork and preventing them from Friday prayers, the abduction, the torture and the execution of Malay men, Malay policemen, district headmen, village headmen and government officials, and lastly the mutilated bodies of the victims beyond recognition.<sup>388</sup> In this stage of the war, Japan took every opportunity to attack MPAJA Guerillas with the help of Malays whose retaliations ‘‘took the form of a religious war, with charismatic Islamic leaders organizing Red Bands of the Sabilillah<sup>389</sup> Army and declaring a Jihad (crusade).’’<sup>390</sup> The trouble appeared publicly in April 1945 in the Tanjong Sembrong area of Batu Pahat with the disappearance of Malays who were believed to have been ‘‘either tortured or killed in connection with their failure to collect the various ‘‘taxes’’ which the guerillas had imposed on the Malays.’’ In this area, which was populated by Malays who were of Indonesian and Banjarese stock, the Malay section of the MPAJA was working with Malay village headmen ‘‘to raise contributions among the villagers towards financing the activities of the MPAJU and MPAJA’’. When MPAJA sections increased their insults and harassments towards Malays, the cooperation led to the refusal of Malays to work with Chinese guerillas in April 1945. In retaliation, guerillas tried to abduct two Malays, one of them was able to escape and inform others about the fate of his friend, which brought the discovery of disappearing

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<sup>388</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 196-197.

<sup>389</sup> Sabilillah Movement, also known as Muhammadiyah Movement, is an Arabic term which means in the cause of Allah and for the sake of Allah. According to Cheah Boon Kheng, it is translated as Holy War in literal terms. Sabilillah is a religious movement founded and established under the lead of Kiyai Salleh to mobilize the independent Malay Muslim groups operating and issuing call for Holy War independently to overcome Chinese and MPAJA domination in the post-war process. The founder of the movement was a disciple of Kiyai Hadj, Fadil, who was a close friend of Sultan Ibrahim of Johor and from Naqshbandiyyah and Qadiriyyah Sufi orders. Kiyai also organized the Sabilillah Army, the Holy War Army of the Red Bands, the military wing of the Sabilillah movement. They were just armed with parang panjangs known as long traditional Malay weapons. Kiyai and his followers possessed secret Powers such as spiritual and mystical knowledge, knowledge of invisibility, invulnerability, and martial arts. Their supernatural powers and skills on martial arts helped to congregate Malays and mobilize them quickly.

<sup>390</sup> Paul H. Kratoska, *Southeast Asian Minorities in the war-time Japanese Empire*, 106.

Malays at the hands of Chinese guerillas. The killing of Chik Gu Jamain, the president of the Malay Section of the MPAJA, and the abduction of several more Malays boiled the race relations. The discovery turned into a testament with the Ketua Kampung, Malay headman, who escaped MPAJA's abduction attempts and took refuge in the home of a village headman, Haji Talib, a disciple of Tuan Guru Haji Mokhtar, a Sufi conformist. Mokhtar took over the leadership and began "to train and form a fighting group" against the MPAJA guerillas. As a retaliation, MPAJA banned the Friday prayers in the area to prevent the resistance of the Malay Muslims in nearby districts which were already underway. The initial attack on the Chinese and Chinese Guerrillas was organized by the independent Muslim groups by Barisan Islam, known as the Muslim Front under the leadership of Tuan Guru Haji Mokhtar of Tanjong Sembrong who issued a fatwa to wage Holy War.<sup>391</sup> MPAJA's future plans to attack the Malay population were also "reported to the district officer (DO) of Batu Pahat, Ismail bin Dato Abdullah, and also to the Japanese authorities" so that they could take precautions. It is claimed that it was in this stage of the conflict that the Sultan of Johor "gave stern orders to his followers to destroy the enemy of the religion once for all."<sup>392</sup> The Japanese took an immediate action and coordinated a joint attack with Malays on MPAJA detachments. The MPAJA retaliated against the Malays, whose fighting groups separately consisted of 40 Malays from a particular village. The majority of Chinese indiscriminately fell victim to the the Malays equipped with Parang Panjang, a traditional heavy and long knife used as a weapon by the Malays.<sup>393</sup> Cheah states that "no Chinese or Malay

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<sup>391</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 208.

<sup>392</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 214.

<sup>393</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 209, 210, 211.

in the mukim could any longer escape from the conflict.’’<sup>394</sup> According to Chinese accounts, the coordinated attack of Japanese and Malays was ‘‘the beginning of a series of attacks and massacres of Chinese by Malays in the Batu Pahat District.’’<sup>395</sup> When the conflict spread to the Simpang Kiri area of Johor, Kiyai<sup>396</sup> Salleh Bin Albul Karim<sup>397</sup> was urged to bring these fighting groups that were independently operating in Batu Pahat and several areas under his central command.<sup>398</sup> Kiyai Salleh led the resistance against the guerillas and due to his supernatural powers and methods such as ilmu batin (spiritual knowledge), ilmu ghaib (invisible knowledge), ilmu pencak silat (knowledge of martial arts), and ilmu kebal (knowledge of invulnerability)<sup>399</sup>, the conflict swayed Johor. The call to wage Holy War spread to Perak under the leadership of the religious men in the Sungei Manik area.<sup>400</sup> In line with Japanese accounts, the Japanese Army was also planning a three-way operation from Muar, Batu Pahat, and Keluang to clean up 1000 guerillas and the northern army ‘‘moved eastwards and lined up along Muar-Yong Peng Highway’’ to block Chinese guerillas, however, the operation was postponed on June 22, as Sabillillah Army was in the making to operate Johor-wide.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>394</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 211.

<sup>395</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 218.

<sup>396</sup> A Kiyai is a local leader of an order of Sufis, a tradition of leadership which ly outside of the established Islamic hiearchy.

<sup>397</sup> Kyai Salleh who was of the Sumatran origin, was a disciple of Kiyai Haji Fadil, ‘‘a *Shaykh* of both the Qadiriyyah and Naqshbandiyyah Sufi orders and the *pawang* of Sultan Ibrahim.’’

<sup>398</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 206, 208.

<sup>399</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 202.

<sup>400</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 230.

<sup>401</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 214.

During the course of fourth offensive, which was held in June-July 1945, the conflict gained intensity with the murder of the District Officer of Batu Pahat as a result of MPAJA's retaliations. The Holy War Army of the Red Bands, known as *Tentera Sabil Selendang Merah*, was established by Kiyai Salleh. The army's armaments were *parang panjangs*, the Malays' traditional long swords, *lembing*, *kris*, *pedang* and *tombak*.<sup>402</sup> In the Army's hierarchy, Kiyai Salleh Abdul Karim was the Commander-in-Chief and Kiyai Wak Joyo was the General Commissioner. Kiyai Husin, Kiyai Mashudi, and Kiyai Mayor were the Southern branch commanders of Johor. Kiyai Saudi, Kiyai Maskam and Kiyai Sarbini were commanders of East Johor. Kiyai Mustahir, Kiyai Haji Sahmsuddin and Kiyai Haji Shukor were commander of North Johor.<sup>403</sup>

The *Sabilillah* Army fought two times: the former was Johor-wide and the latter was Malaya-wide with the authorization of Sultan Ibrahim of Johor during the war and then the Japanese on the post-surrender.<sup>404</sup> Tim Harper states that "there is no doubt that the Japanese supported the *Sabilillah* bands once their conflicts with the MPAJA was fermented. They followed up Kyai Salleh's raid with their operations, and supplied arms and men in Perak."<sup>405</sup> Upon Sultan Ibrahim's decision, the Japanese carried out a large-scale anti-communist organization simultaneously from three directions; Muar, Batu Pahat, and Keluang.<sup>406</sup> The operation was held by Japanese armed forces, Johor *Jikeidan* (Self-Defence Corps),

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<sup>402</sup> Mohamed Ali Haniffa, Zulhilmi Paidi, Nor Azlah Sham Rambely, "Parang Panjang Group" in Mukim Sungai Manik, Perak: A Historiography," 364.

<sup>403</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 207,208,209.

<sup>404</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 208.

<sup>405</sup> Christopher Bavly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, 44.

<sup>406</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 214.



and Batu Pahat Police Force.<sup>407</sup> The conflict gained intensity with the fall of British air-dropped leaflets to Johor, mentioning severe reprisals for Malays who jointly acted along Japan's wishes to turn one race against another in Johor while allying with MPAJA and the Chinese Community.<sup>408</sup> The British leaflets validated Malay fears of a Chinese takeover in the country.<sup>409</sup> As portrayed by Christopher Hale the last offensive went as follows:

The news thoroughly alarmed the supreme commander, Lord Louis Mountbatten. Airdrops of propaganda leaflets were organized urging Malays to Jaga Baik-Baik – take heed. Mountbatten carefully blamed the Japanese for inciting outbreaks of communal violence and warned that ‘the day of repayment will come’. British threats deepened the anger of many Malays. In Johor, the violence did not abate. The Japanese refused to intervene – and in mid-June, Japanese army units backed by Malay policemen launched a massive new attack on the MPAJA 4th Regiment to finish it off for good. This would turn out to be the last major Japanese counter-insurgency operation in Malaya, for on the international stage events were moving rapidly towards denouncement.<sup>410</sup>

As a result, ‘the combined Japanese and Malay onslaughts on the MPAJA and the Chinese reduced the Chinese population in South Western Johor to a state of siege and despair.’<sup>411</sup> Malays’ in Johor, instigated by the Japanese took the control of Johor. The Chinese accounts state that the victim's toll ranged between 15.000 or 20.000 Chinese inhabitants.<sup>412</sup>

The announcement of the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945 allowed MPAJA guerillas to control towns and villages in the Peninsula parallel to the withdrawal of the Japanese from the outlined areas. The political prerogatives given

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<sup>407</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 220.

<sup>408</sup> Christopher Bavly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, 44.

<sup>409</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 74.

<sup>410</sup> Christopher Hale, *Massacre in Malaya*, 475.

<sup>411</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 222.

<sup>412</sup> Paul Kratoska, *Southeast Asian Minorities in the Wartime Japanese Empire*, 106.

to the MPAJA guerillas were applied in its severest form which was another Sook Ching directed against the Malays and the Japanese.<sup>413</sup> After controlling seventy percent of the towns, “revenge” became the operative language of MPAJA.<sup>414</sup> The majority of Malays “became victims of Chinese MPAJA killings.”<sup>415</sup> This time, the retaliations of the Holy War Army of the Red Bands, known as Tentara Sabilillah Selendang Merah ferociously “surpassed its earlier level.”<sup>416</sup> The Sultan Ibrahim of Johor turned to Kyai Salleh as the savior of Malays in a meeting held at the Sultan’s Pasir Plangi Palace, where “the Sultan embraced Kiyai Salleh, kissed his hand, and thanked him for his deeds. He asked Kiyai Salleh to “menjaga negeri kita” (guard our country.)”<sup>417</sup> The motive behind this collaboration was the fear that British reoccupation would result in the establishment of a Chinese and MPAJA Malaya.<sup>418</sup> Malays who “launched numerous raids, attacking in groups, chanting prayers and wielding parang, kris, bamboo spears, and iron rods (some bearing Koranic verses)” were unstoppable not only by the Chinese and MPAJA guerillas but also by British Military Administration.<sup>419</sup>

Spearheaded by the Sabilillah movement as “Holy War”, simultaneous retaliations erupted in Johor, Melaka, Kedah, Kelantan, Terengganu, Perak, Pahang, and Negeri Sembilan,<sup>420</sup> between 15 August 1945 and 2 March 1946. The Japanese

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<sup>413</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 294.

<sup>414</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 223.

<sup>415</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 294.

<sup>416</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 224.

<sup>417</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 225.

<sup>418</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 224.

<sup>419</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 224.

<sup>420</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, “Sino Malay Conflicts in Malaya, 1945-1946: Communist Vendetta and Islamic Resistance,” 110.

troops were still involved in the massacres as they formally surrendered on 3 September 1945. In Perak, Banjarese populations organized themselves with silat (Malay Martial arts) and ilmu kebal (knowledge of invulnerability) under the village' religious men; Imam Haji Bakri, Haji Shukor, and Haji Marzuki.<sup>421</sup> On 15 August 1945, MPAJA's attempts which were the same in Johor, was backfired with the penghulu Haji Hasan Ibrahim. When he asked the Japanese for armaments, Japan took him to the military headquarters in Ipoh and provided a lot of rifles, pistols, and ammunition in addition to 24 Japanese soldiers "where they exchanged gunfire with the communists, which lasted three days."<sup>422</sup> The Malays carried out reprisals on MPAJA hideouts and Chinese settlements to the extent that Chinese settlers were denuded from the lower Perak Basin.<sup>423</sup>

Sabilillah's worst attempt occurred in the Padang Lebar Massacre on 7 November 1945. Kiyai Selamat, one of the main disciples of Kyai Salleh led 1000 Malays to Padang Lebar which resulted in the killing of 170 Chinese.<sup>424</sup> While Communist leaders passed a resolution to change their attitude to one of conciliation, the Southern branches of MCP of Johor, the KMT, the People's Committee, and the Chinese association sent a joint telegram to Mountbatten for the protection of Chinese communities with the help of the local garrisons.<sup>425</sup> This massacre caused repercussions in Negeri Sembilan, Malacca, Selangor, Johor, Kedah, and Pahang,

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<sup>421</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 230

<sup>422</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 231.

<sup>423</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 231.

<sup>424</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, "Sino Malay Conflicts in Malaya, 1945-1946: Communist Vendetta and Islamic Resistance," 112.

<sup>425</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 235.

urging Malays to increase their attacks to the extent that all Malays seemed united in their struggle to prevent Chinese political claims and domination in the country.<sup>426</sup>



Fig 8 The spread of Sino-Malay clash under the banner of Holy-War

Within this period, the British' move to publicize the Malayan Union plan on 10 October 1945, and the strategy to disband MPAJA and KMT movements on 1 December 1945 so that guerillas would disarm and suppress the aroused zeal of Malay religious struggle did not induce the conflict but escalated the Malay vengeance against the Chinese.<sup>427</sup> The reports on Malay attacks continued in Terengganu and Kelantan. On 19 December 1945, Kin Wok Daily News pressed for the protection of Chinese lives and properties from the British officials. In Perak, the entire Malay population was fully armed in the racial clashes that erupted on 27 December 1945, which caused the Chinese to be evacuated in order to avoid Malay

<sup>426</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 235.

<sup>427</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 232.

reprisals.<sup>428</sup> On 11 February 1946, Sabilillah bands were continuously involved in incidents in Pahang. The Malays sudden attack resulted in the killing of thirty Chinese, while sixteen were wounded. In March 1946, Sabilillah bands increased their attacks on the Chinese in the Telok Anson area of Perak.<sup>429</sup> As a result, the Malays successfully defeated the MPC-MPAJA political claims and left them unprepared for the post-war politics in Malaya.<sup>430</sup> The Malay attacks suddenly ceased on the Chinese and the MCP because the Malay's anti-Malayan Union campaign, which took an organized political stance to crush the British recolonization attempts in 1946, reached its climax with the formation of UMNO, the United Malay National Organization, under Dato Onn Ja'far.<sup>431</sup> According to T.H Silcock and Ungku Aziz, Kiyai Salleh did not only mobilize the Holy War sentiments of Malays under the Sabilillah movement but also ‘’ assisted Dato Onn in mobilizing Malay peasant opinion against the Malayan Union proposal in 1946.’’<sup>432</sup>

## 5.2. The Malay Political Nationalism

The Japanese occupation was not only a God-sent chance for locals but also for the British Administration to initiate the post-war planning of reoccupation. The Japanese occupation ‘’introduced considerations<sup>433</sup> which had not existed to sway

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<sup>428</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 237.

<sup>429</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 238.

<sup>430</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 295.

<sup>431</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 239.

<sup>432</sup> John Bastin, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: 1511-1957*, 154.

<sup>433</sup> The issue of Chinese participation into Malayan Political agenda was indirectly formulated under Japan's centralised system of governance after 1943. Japan, as the first colonial power creating a centralised system of government in Malaya, urged the Chinese to participate in the low and middle levels of government administration along with advisory councils. With the issue of independence, the Chinese response was assessed in a secret memorandum prepared by Ministry of Foreign Affairs Tokyo, in February 1945. It was believed that the main race seemed to be the Chinese rather Malays with the incorporation of four Malay states to Thailand. The Chinese (1,699,594) exceeded the Malays

previous (British) planners.”<sup>434</sup> Before the Japanese Occupation, British Malaya did not have a uniform rule unlike Japan’s central and unified system established in the Peninsula. Politically, British Malaya “was a mosaic of governments with different systems, with the various concept of the kingdom.”<sup>435</sup> Since Federated and Unfederated Malay states were resistant to the initiation of any plan for peninsular union in the 1930s, Japanese occupation was a catalyst “to clear up all the country’s trouble.”<sup>436</sup> Without Japanese occupation, the Union project was not to be deployed.<sup>437</sup> The problems that confronted the British planners such as the abolishment of the Sultans autonomous power and the inclusion of the Chinese in the preparation of the document was tackled through the Japanese Military Administration where Japan centralized the Malayan Military Administration at the expense of Sultans and the Muslim Malays in 1942. The administrative similarities can be found in the document; the Disposition of Sultans, which was adopted to lift the obstacles in front of the Japanese Military Administration. The Sultans were deprived of their autonomous powers under concessions and made advisors in the transitional process under Japanese Rule.<sup>438</sup> The British forced them to relinquish their powers through the McMichael mission and forced them to accept the positions in the future legislature.<sup>439</sup>

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(1,210,718) in terms of population. However, with the tightening war conditions, the Japanese were entangled with Chinese hostility and revenge attacks of MPAJA, so the considerations declined.<sup>433</sup> However, Japanese occupation “introduced considerations which had not existed to sway previous (British) planners.” (Tsong Rong Edwin Yang).

<sup>434</sup> Tsong Rong Edwin Yang, “Nanyang Chinese Under Japanese Pan-Asianism and pribumi Nationalism in Malaya and Indonesia,” 7.

<sup>435</sup> Tsong Rong Edwin Yang, “Nanyang Chinese Under Japanese Pan-Asianism and pribumi Nationalism in Malaya and Indonesia,” 5.

<sup>436</sup> Azmi Arifin, “Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,” 2.

<sup>437</sup> Tsong Rong Edwin Yang, “Nanyang Chinese Under Japanese Pan-Asianism and pribumi Nationalism in Malaya and Indonesia,” 7.

<sup>438</sup> Yoji Akashi “Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,” 92.

<sup>439</sup> Geoff Wade, “The Origins and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia,” 6.

During the bloody interim period in 1945, the British Military Administration gave the urgency to the administrative and constitutional arrangements for the capitulation of Malaya.<sup>440</sup> In the formulation of the Malayan Union, ‘‘the British felt little obligation to the Malay establishment which collaborated with the Japanese.<sup>441</sup> The pre-war attitudes of Malays such as ‘‘the refusal of the Sultans to evacuate with the British during the Japanese invasion and the activities of Malays in Japanese-sponsored organizations like PETA, required the punishment of Malays while Chinese and Indians were deemed loyal to the British Administration until 1945, in the eyes of the British.<sup>442</sup> The Union was proposed to create a multi-ethnic unity from pre-war British political units in Malaya except for Singapore where equal political rights were extended to all who were born in Malaya or regard Malaya as a second home while Malay’s sovereign powers and autonomous position would be ended.<sup>443</sup> The Union meant the transfer of sovereignty to the British Crown.<sup>444</sup> It also meant the elimination of the Sultan’s sovereignty and the autonomy of Malay states and the placement of the Malay Peninsula under the absolute control of the British Crown while Indians and Chinese could enjoy equal citizenship rights.<sup>445</sup> Singapore was excluded from the plan because ‘‘the British government saw a value of retaining Singapore as a naval base for its strategic operations in the Far East.’’<sup>446</sup> The motive behind this plan was the dire need to recover British colonial possessions destroyed by Japan.<sup>447</sup> The Malayan Union was nothing more than a recoccupation attempt aimed to ‘‘reward to the non-Malays for their loyalty during the war and a

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<sup>440</sup> Geoff Wade, ‘‘The Origin and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia,’’ 5.

<sup>441</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 52

<sup>442</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 254.

<sup>443</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 52

<sup>444</sup> Frederick Holst, *Ethnicization and Identity Construction in Malaysia*, 39.

<sup>445</sup> Azmi Arifin, Siti Aisyah Jasni, Nur Liyana Mohd Sukri, ‘‘Nationalist Resistance and Colonial Reaction in Malaya, 1946-1948,’’ 734.

<sup>446</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A history of Malaysia*, 254

<sup>447</sup> Rizal Yaakob, ‘‘The British Legacy and the Development of Politics in Malaysia,’’ 61.

punishment to the Malays for their alleged disloyalty’’<sup>448</sup> The Union altered the pre-war political pattern and departed from the traditional British policy where Malay rulers were forced to abondon their sovereignty for the direct rule by the British Crown and for the secession of protected Malay states to become colonial protectorates under MacMichael mission, a series of treaties obtained in 82 days in the form of 10 seperate treaties with 10 different rulers, by the Commissioner Sir Harold MacMichael, a former commissioner of Palestine.<sup>449</sup>

As a whole, the Union was a threat to the political future of the Malays.<sup>450</sup> The British attempted to alter the pre-established political system at the expense of the Malays, which was a total departure from the pre-war pro-Malay policies, where Malay political rights and the sovereign power and status of Sultans were traded off with the administrative unification and common liberal citizenship terms for non-Malays.<sup>451</sup>

On the part of MCP, the Chinese communists did ‘not only fought but also sacrificed their lives and suffered enormous losses materially and culturally’ and they felt ‘totally excluded from the proposed constitution of self-government in Malaya.’<sup>452</sup> Since the constitution was to decide the future of Chinese economically, politically, and culturally, the MCP’s Singapore branch refused the Union Plan since there was no room for elections, governor in council were overpowered and Singapore’s separation was illogical in terms of political and economic gains.<sup>453</sup> MCP’s Singapore branch simply asked for a universal franchise, an elected

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<sup>448</sup> M.R. Stenson, ‘The Malayan Union and the Historians’ 345.

<sup>449</sup> P. T. Bauer, ‘Nationalism and Politics in Malaya’ 508.

<sup>450</sup> Azmi Ariffin, ‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’ 3.

<sup>451</sup> Diane K. Mauzy, ‘From Malay Nationalism to a Malaysian Nation,’ 49.

<sup>452</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 288.

<sup>453</sup> Rajeswary Ampalavanar, ‘Politics and The Indian Community in West Malaysia and Singapore,’ 109, 110.



assembly, and the inclusion of Singapore.<sup>454</sup> These concessions which were never to be conceded by the British deteriorated the relations of MCP and BMA. However, the moderate Chinese opinion was receptive to the citizenship idea. Considering that the Malayan Union plan was offering 1.6 million or 62.5 percent of the local-born Chinese population a Malayan Union Citizenship, they generally welcomed the equal citizenship provisions accorded in the plan.<sup>455</sup> However, there was still discontent on the citizenship requirements and demands on Chinese language qualification.<sup>456</sup>

In the case of Indians, the formal Indian response came out with the formation of the Malayan Indian Congress in August 1946 where MIC, as the spokesman of Indian Community in Malaya, opposed the Union Plan on accounts that ‘‘it had been imposed on the country by the British without any consultation with the local people.’’<sup>457</sup> The general view among the Indians was that ‘‘Malaya was a Malay country and should remain so.’’<sup>458</sup> The Indians assured that they ‘‘would not accept any constitutional reform that was unacceptable to the Malays.’’<sup>459</sup> As a way to impede communal dissensions, MIC gave assurances that they ‘‘would never appeal over the heads of the Malays to the British for any particular right or privilege in the task of establishing a constitution for Malaya.’’<sup>460</sup> The MIC ‘‘urged the government to grant citizenship to those who lived in Malaya

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<sup>454</sup> Rajeswary Ampalavanar, ‘‘Politics and The Indian Community in West Malaysia and Singapore,’’ 109, 110.

<sup>455</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 286.

<sup>456</sup> Rajeswary Ampalavanar, ‘‘Politics and The Indian Community in West Malaysia and Singapore,’’ 110.

<sup>457</sup> Rajeswary Ampalavanar, ‘‘Politics and The Indian Community in West Malaysia and Singapore,’’ 114.

<sup>458</sup> Rajeswary Ampalavanar, ‘‘Politics and The Indian Community in West Malaysia and Singapore,’’ 114.

<sup>459</sup> Rajeswary Ampalavanar, ‘‘Politics and The Indian Community in West Malaysia and Singapore,’’ 114.

<sup>460</sup> Rajeswary Ampalavanar, ‘‘Politics and The Indian Community in West Malaysia and Singapore,’’ 114.

and simultaneously asked the people to obey the laws of the country and to give their undivided loyalty.”<sup>461</sup>

The Malay response was swift and decisive. Malays knew that “they would be economically swamped and politically overwhelmed in their own country by non-Malays and their political survival would be jeopardized by the Union plan.”<sup>462</sup> That way, the subordination would be inevitable and Malays would be reduced to “the pathetic position of the Red Indians in North America.”<sup>463</sup>

From this very threat, the Malay political nationalism emerged and this time, the leadership came from the aristocratic establishment in the form of a political movement.<sup>464</sup> Malay’s nationwide resistance was notably divided into two different ideologies; the Malay left nationalism and the Malay right nationalism that was nurtured by the Japanese between 1941 and 1945.<sup>465</sup> Both parties took part differently in the independence struggle. The first group that opposed the union was the Malay left whose nationalist movement previously known as KMM and KRIS under Japanese occupation immediately transformed into Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM), known as Malay Nationalist Party in October 1945, after two months of the Japanese surrender to impede British attempts to recolonize Malaya.<sup>466</sup> The MNP, which was established way earlier than UMNO, was the pioneer of immediate independence, anti-imperialist, and anti-federation, and kept its struggle for absolute independence.<sup>467</sup> The MNP was effective in gathering pro-Indonesian political groups and organizing youth and religious groups into three political

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<sup>461</sup> Himanshu Prabha Ray and Susan Mishra, “Indian Leaders in Malaysia,” 98.

<sup>462</sup> The National Operations Council, 5

<sup>463</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 53.

<sup>464</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethnic Politics*, 53.

<sup>465</sup> Azmi Arifin, “Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,” 3.

<sup>466</sup> Azmi Arifin, “Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,” 9.

<sup>467</sup> Rizaal Yacoob, “The British Legacy and the Development of Politics in Malaya,” 62.

factions: ‘‘the Angkatan Pemuda Insaaf or API (Generation of Awakened Youth), the Angkatan Wanita Sedar or AWAS (Generation of Awakened Woman) and the Majlis Agama Tertinggi or MATA (Supreme Islamic Council).’’<sup>468</sup> The second group was the Malay Right Nationalists, the Western-educated Malay elites whose members also collaborated with Japan, and established the long-lasting vehicle of Malay nationalism, which served from 1946 to 2018: UMNO, the United Malay National Front. The Aristocratic establishment was the amalgamators of independence, whose priority was: ‘‘politics first, and economics second.’’<sup>469</sup> Despite their ideological differences to pursue their aspirations, these Malay political figures were collectively adamant to establish UMNO to backfire the Union plan and to capitulate the British in retaining Malay sovereignty and special rights.<sup>470</sup> On March 1, 1946, 200 Malay delegates from 41 Malay political associations came together at a Pan-Malayan Congress for the establishment of Pertubuhan Kebangsaan Melayu Bersatu, the United Malays National Organization, UMNO.<sup>471</sup> The Malays established a mass political movement from aristocrats, Malay ultras in Malay Nationalist Party, rural leaders such as the penghulu and Ketua kampung, the Islamic groups, businessmen, the civil servants, and the police and ex-servicemen.’’<sup>472</sup> UMNO had a dual objective: ‘‘(1) to abolish the McMichael treaty on which the Malayan Union was based, and (2) to set up a new government which would restore the former powers to the sultans and the prestige of the Malay people and ensures the dominance of the Malays in the future.’’<sup>473</sup> Dato Onn Jaafar, the founder of

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<sup>468</sup> Rizaal Yacoob, ‘‘The British Legacy and the Development of Politics in Malaya,’’ 62.

<sup>469</sup> Shamsul A.B. ‘‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications,’’ 256.

<sup>470</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’’ 21.

<sup>471</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 256.

<sup>472</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 285, 286.

<sup>473</sup> R. A. Bladswell, ‘‘Renaissance in Malaya,’’ 84.

Malaysian independence, guaranteed three realities in the political establishment of UMNO: ‘the institutionalization of the political predominance of Malay nationalism, the taming and demystification of rulers to be subservient to the will of Malay people, and the British recognition that Malaya was the country of the Malays.’<sup>474</sup> In the face of Malays bitter opposition to the Union, the British backtracked and capitulated as they feared that ‘if the UMNO-led resistance was purposely ignored, a more radical form of opposition might emerge.’<sup>475</sup> The power of the growing left which had the popular support of Malays and non-Malays made the British give ‘immense political access for negotiations to the UMNO... make concerted attempts to meet all the demands of the UMNO leaders.’<sup>476</sup> The Malay demands resulted in the creation of a Political Working Committee, where future of Malaya was negotiated between British and UMNO leaders.<sup>477</sup> In December 1946, the Committee reached an agreement that a Federation of Malaya with a central government and legislative powers was to be adopted while Federation citizenship was to be acquired by ‘(1) any subject of the ruler of any state. This included all Malays and excluded all non-Malays, (2) British subjects born locally, and (3) Children of fathers who were Federal.’<sup>478</sup> UMNO enabled Malay’s to possess political supremacy. The Federation plan shelved the attempts for an egalitarian society and created Malay ethnocracy where Sultans were deemed the representative of Malay rights and special privileges, the legislative council was pro-Malay, and the immigrant communities were sidelined.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>474</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 16.

<sup>475</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,

<sup>476</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left, 13.

<sup>477</sup> Geoff Wade, ‘The Origion and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia,’ 9.

<sup>478</sup> Geoff Wade, ‘The Origion and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia,’ 9.

<sup>479</sup> Geoff Wade, ‘The Origion and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia,’ 10.

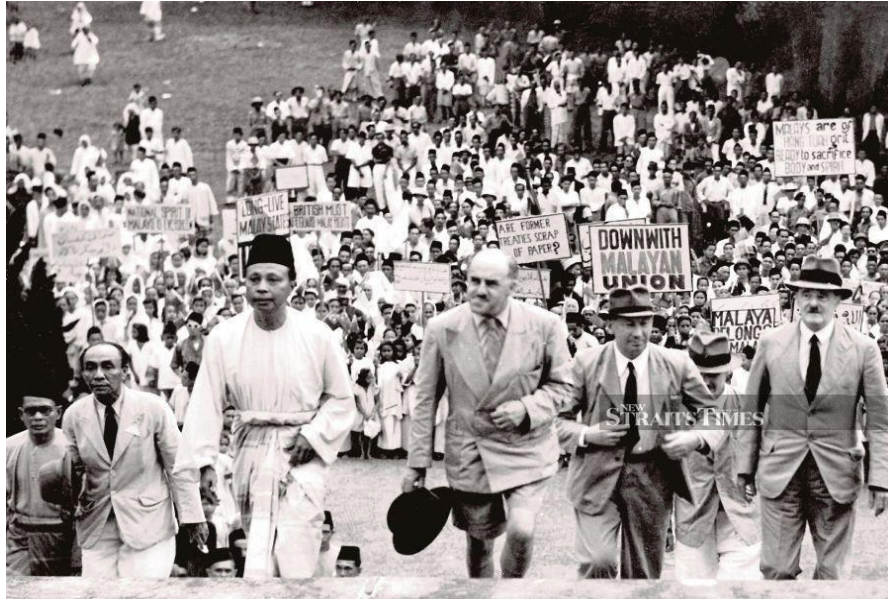


Fig 9 Malayan Union Rallies

Source; <https://www.nst.com.my/opinion/columnists/2019/03/471743/stop-think-reflect-and-call-change>

The collective action of UMNO crashed the Union plan despite its forceful inauguration on 1 April 1946, which brought the union plan to a premature end.<sup>480</sup> However, the federation created immediate dismay among Malay Radical left and non-Malays because of UMNO's stance towards independence. The Malay leftist movement played a greater role in the pursuit of independence. As stated by Azmi Ariffin, 'not only its anti-British nature but also its anti-UMNO forces also played an important role in the struggle for independence.'<sup>481</sup>

With the release of the new Constitutional proposal of the Federation plan on 14 December 1946, a Council of Joint Action from the representative's of Malay, Chinese, Indian and Ceylonese associations was formed on the same day in Singapore and was attended by 75 delegates, including representatives of the Malay nationalist Party, General Labor Union, Clerical Union, Malayan Indian Congress, Straits Chinese British Association, Ceylon Tamils Associations, and Indian

<sup>480</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 256.

<sup>481</sup> Azmi Ariffin, 'Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,' 16.

Chamber of Commerce.<sup>482</sup> On 12 January 1947, Malayan Communist Party denounced the proposals while announcing its support for the Joint Council.<sup>483</sup> Malayan Indian Congress's motive was to "campaign for political rights of non-Malays to press for the single citizenship and inclusion of Singapore in the Constitution of the mainland and a fully-elected Legislative Council."<sup>484</sup> "On 22 December, the council's membership was extended to include organizations on the Malayan peninsula, and the CJA was renamed as the Pan-Malayan Council of Joint Action."<sup>485</sup>

On 22 February 1947, PUTERA, a new coalition comprised of 29 Malay political and cultural organizations including PKMM, BATAS, Peasants Union, and Hizbul Muslimin formed to counterbalance UMNO.<sup>486</sup> The MNP garnered the support of non-Malay leaders, such as Tan Cheng Lock, to pave the way for the formation of PUTERA-AMCJA, a left-wing coalition of Malay and non-Malay organizations, in February 1947, which served as the first inter-racial political coalition initiated earlier than the UMNO-MCA-MIC coalition in 1954.<sup>487</sup> It was unexpected for the British to see that "the Malay left movement was suddenly transformed into a major force, with the backing of the non-Malays."<sup>488</sup> The leftist-alliance came up with a drafted constitution which called for "a united Malaya including Singapore, an elected central states and settlement legislatures, equal rights for all who made Malaya their home, Constitutional Sultans who governed through

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<sup>482</sup> Domiciled peoples form joint council. (1946, December 15). *The Straits Times*, p. 1. Retrieved from Newspaper SG.

<sup>483</sup> Geoff Wade, "The Origin and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia," 11.

<sup>484</sup> Rajeswary Ampalavanar, Politics and the Indian Community in West Malaysia and Singapore, 116.

<sup>485</sup> <https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/history/events/36770bbe-0e83-46ce-9157-58000638bf43>

<sup>486</sup> Geoff Wade, "The Origin and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia," 11.

<sup>487</sup> Azmi Arifin, "Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left," 16.

<sup>488</sup> Azmi Arifin, "Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left," 19.

democratic state councils, Special measures for the uplift and advancement of the Malaya people.’’<sup>489</sup> By balancing between the key non-Malay privileges which were citizenship rights and democratic rights, and the Malay privileges which were a monarchy, religion, language, and national identity, and ensuring the acknowledgment that the Malay Peninsula is the land of Malays, the MNP made a great compromise accepting the non-Malays on the Peninsula to help their quest for independence.<sup>490</sup>

The growing influence of the leftist movement was so influential, the British was aware of her inability to impose enforcements. The British aimed the absolute subversion of ‘‘the social, political, and religious activities of the Malay leftist group.’’<sup>491</sup> With few options remaining, the British resorted to ‘‘mass arrests of leftist groups such as API of Ahmad Boestamam, and key strategists of the PUTERA-AMCJA establishment.’’<sup>492</sup> On 20 October 1947, Peninsula-wide hartals were staged, where business and commerce were severely ceased. Despite the strong opposition from the Malay-non-Malay movement, the demands of the left-wing coalition were rejected as the British were not willing to grant self-governance and independence to Malaya.<sup>493</sup> The Federation of Malaya was established at the expense of Malay and non-Malay groups on 1 February 1948.<sup>494</sup> Expectedly, the Malayan Communist Party was covertly planning an armed rebellion which coincided with the collapse of law and order due to the ongoing industrial unrest which ‘‘reached its

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<sup>489</sup> Geoff Wade, ‘‘The Origion and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia,’’ 11.

<sup>490</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’’ 16.

<sup>491</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’’ 19.

<sup>492</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’’ 20.

<sup>493</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘The Communist Insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-90, Contesting The Nation-State and Social Change,’’ 134.

<sup>494</sup> Geoff Wade, ‘‘The Origion and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia,’’ 14.

climax with a series of murders of European planters and managers.’’<sup>495</sup> This new language of Malay politics was exceeding the British ability to contain the activities of the left movement which resulted in the declaration of emergency.<sup>496</sup> According to Azmi Arifin, the British used the threat of a violent uprising led by MCP as an excuse to declare an emergency as there was no alleged conspiracy.<sup>497</sup> This view is also supported by Cheah Boon Kheng who claims that Chin Peng, the leader of MCP, whose party was blamed for all the troubles that led to the emergency in 1948, rejected the accusations by saying that ‘‘it was the Emergency and the mass arrests of its members, that forced the CPM to issue a call to its members to revive its disbanded wartime resistance army, the MPAJA, and to take up arms again and escape to the jungles.’’<sup>498</sup> Repressive measures such as ‘‘the restrictions on people’s movements, food supplies, press freedom, detention and arrests of thousands with no trials’’ caused MCP for an armed uprising.<sup>499</sup> In the containment of the so-called MCP-led insurgency, it was the leaders of the Malay left and the religious groups who experienced major casualties, and the figures of imprisoned were around 34.000 between 1948 and 1957.’’<sup>500</sup> The British took the psychological initiative ‘‘to prevent the radical nationalist movements from gaining a major influence over the Malay communities while annihilating the MCP and its militant uprising.’’<sup>501</sup> As a result, MCP was banned while the Malayan Nationalist Party and Malayan

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<sup>495</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘Sino- Malay Conflict Communist Vendetta,’’ 135.

<sup>496</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘Sino- Malay Conflict Communist Vendetta,’’ 135.

<sup>497</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’’ 20.

<sup>498</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘Sino-Malay Conflict Communist Vendetta,’’ 135.

<sup>499</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 22.

<sup>500</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’’ 20

<sup>501</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’’ 20.



Democratic Union dissolved themselves and “were forced to choose to join the MCP, leave for Indonesia or align themselves with the UMNO.”<sup>502</sup>

Although the tide of Anglo-Communist collaboration in 1941 turned against the British Administration who used MCP/MPAJA “as a scapegoat to attack anti-colonial movements in the Peninsula”<sup>503</sup>, the Communist insurrection with the participation of the Malay left acted as a catalyst in the acceleration of decolonization and independence.<sup>504</sup>



Fig 10 The British troops who are trained to adjust themselves to jungle warfare to counter the guerilla campaign waged by Malayan Communist Party  
Source; <https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=1992-11-145-22>

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<sup>502</sup> Azmi Arifin, “Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,” 20.

<sup>503</sup> Azmi Arifin, “Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,” 14.

<sup>504</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 22.

The Communist aimed ‘to disrupt the economy, to establish ‘liberated’ areas, to overthrow British colonialist and to achieve freedom and national independence for the people of Malaya.’<sup>505</sup>



Fig 11 ‘1st Battalion, The Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, arriving at Singapore at the start of the Malayan insurgency, 5 August 1948’

Source; <https://collection.nam.ac.uk/detail.php?acc=2008-07-34-2>

The Emergency<sup>506</sup>, which lasted 12 years from 18 June 1948 to 31 July 1960, and continued unabated until 1989 after the emergency ended, was a communist insurgency fought between British and MCP and its military wing Malayan National Liberation Army, (MNLA). The Communist point of operation until 1989 was the

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<sup>505</sup> Cheah Boon kheng, ‘The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,’ 135.

<sup>506</sup> Although the emegency was part a feature of the Cold War, it was undeniably a part of national liberation struggle that stirred by Japan not only in Malaya but also in parts of Southeast Asia as Communists rebellion simulteneously began in Malaya, Burma, Indonesia and Philippines. Cheah Boon Kheng, the Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1946-1990.

Malaysian-Thai border.<sup>507</sup> In the face of a greater threat that was posed by the Communists against the Malay-Malaya where the Chinese would transform Malaya into a de-facto province of China through the subversion of “existing social structure, the status of Islam, and the special position of Malays”, UMNO collaborated with the British to consolidate its nationalist agenda for a Malay Malaysia<sup>508</sup>

The containment of Communist insurgency necessitated the subversion of Communists and their assistance. A series of Draconian rules were issued to allow government freedom of action in the curtailment of radical threats to national security and political stability.<sup>509</sup> Emergency regulations led to the emergence of a police state where people “without any experience of democracy, began to face the full force of authoritarian rule.”<sup>510</sup> The armed forces were comprised of 32.000 regular troops, 73.000 police, and 224.000 home guards (mostly Malays).<sup>511</sup> Fundamental liberties were curtailed through detentions, interrogations, info-censorship, licensing for newspapers, screening operations introduced by an identity card system, registration of political parties and social organizations through the Societies Act.<sup>512</sup>

Until the end of 1949, the guerilla hit-and-run attacks against the officials in government or personnel in mining and estates were affirmative. MCP regrouped and retrained its members in MNLA and concentrated on developing assistance from Min

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<sup>507</sup> Karl Hack, “The Malayan Emergency as a Counterinsurgency,” 1.

<sup>508</sup> Milton Jacob Esman, *Ethic Politics*, 55.

<sup>509</sup> Cheah Boon kheng, “The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,” 136.

<sup>510</sup> Cheah Boon kheng, “The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,” 137.

<sup>511</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, “The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,” 137.

<sup>512</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, “The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,” 136.

Yuen mass organizations caused by Japan. The Min Yuen emerged as a result of Japanese policy for the grow-more-food campaign where forest reserves under the Malay Reservation Act were opened to the Chinese. During the Japanese occupation, these Chinese squatter settlements, which were located in remote areas became the most effective tool for supply.<sup>513</sup> With the emergency, the MCP reutilized these Chinese settlements for supply and intelligence during the emergency.<sup>514</sup>

During that time, the earliest attempts for a multi-ethnic cooperation also came from Dato Onn, with his visit to England to talk about the independence of Malaya. He asked for a grant of 10.000.000 sterlin to improve the competitive position of Malays, while assuring that Malays should be Deputy High Commissioners.<sup>515</sup> In 1949, the regional developments which created problems for the Chinese and Indian communities and their nationality in Malaya, increased their pressure to obtain permanent residency in Malaya appeared to be conducive in order to create Malayan loyalty among non-Malays, with the extension of political rights to those who regard Malaya their true home.<sup>516</sup> With the fall of China to Communism in 1949, the majority of the Chinese were not willing to go back. When India and Pakistan achieved independence after a massive racial bloodbath which led British authorities to tighten citizenship provisions, the majority of Indians were considering the citizenship of the Federation of Malaya.<sup>517</sup> The Communities Liaison Committee was established ‘to appease Malay dissatisfaction and moderate the attitudes of UMNO’s Malay Nationalists.’<sup>518</sup> Chinese Advisory Boards were created for the formation of the Malayan Chinese Association as a means to institutionalize

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<sup>513</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 259.

<sup>514</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 259.

<sup>515</sup> Geoff Wade, ‘The Origin and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia,’ 16.

<sup>516</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 23.

<sup>517</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 23.

<sup>518</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 24.

moderate Chinese political opinion.<sup>519</sup> UMNO's radical stance was to be tackled with Dato Onn, who was of the view that compromises are a must among communal parties.<sup>520</sup> Having to know that independence can be achieved through the readjustment of the Malay nationalist outlook, Dato Onn made greater sacrifices to force UMNO to open its membership to non-Malays to the extent that it cost him his position in UMNO.<sup>521</sup> Departing from Malay nationalism to championing non-Malay rights, Dato Onn advocated the idea of multiracial unity within UMNO.<sup>522</sup> It can be understood from the May 29, 1949 speech: 'It is absolutely important for the Malays to obtain closer ties with the other people in this country. It is time for us to take the view wider than the kampung view. I ask of you, which will you choose? Peace or chaos, friendship or enmity?''<sup>523</sup>

In September 1950, MCP increased attacks on the government and caused 65 major incidents.<sup>524</sup> The British Administration introduced the Briggs Plan under the newly appointed Lieutenant Sir Harold Briggs to destroy MCP's two main backups: the Min Yuen and the Malayan Races Liberation Army.<sup>525</sup> The plan aimed at the resettlement of the Chinese and the people in labor into compact groups, empowering local administration, providing road communication in isolated populated areas, and setting up police posts in these areas.<sup>526</sup> The resettlement plan<sup>527</sup> was initiated for the 'resettlement of over 500,000 squatters, and the regroupment of up to 600,000 estate

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<sup>519</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 24.

<sup>520</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 24.

<sup>521</sup> Frederick Holst, *Ethnicization and Identity Construction in Malaysia*, 40.

<sup>522</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 25.

<sup>523</sup> <https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/letters/2007/06/18/the-rebel-in-onn-jaafar/>

<sup>524</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 259.

<sup>525</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 259.

<sup>526</sup> Karl Hack, 'The Malayan Emergency as a Counterinsurgency,' 5.

<sup>527</sup> The resettlement program resulted with the transfer of 573,000 people where 86% were Chinese in 480 newly established villages between 1950 and 1960 was initiated, which cost British Military Administration M\$100 million. (Cheah, 144-145).

laborers.’’<sup>528</sup> In the face of the resettlement project, MCP’ attacks climaxed with the the killing of the British High Commissioner, Sir Henry Gurney, on 7 February 1952.<sup>529</sup> Less than a month, the Guerilla forces initiated ‘‘the heaviest weekly casualties ever suffered by government forces’’ which was followed by Briggs’ retirement.<sup>530</sup>

The long-drawing nature of the war, massive casualties, socio-economic and financial difficulties made the British realize that they cannot win the war without making compromises.<sup>531</sup> The British decided for de-colonization and self-government in which a ‘‘locally-elected non-communist government would become involved and take over the war against the insurgents.’’<sup>532</sup> In the 1950s, Dato Onn pushed for the liberalization of citizenship terms in UMNO, at the expense of his political position. Onn proposed the transformation of UMNO into a Malayan Party, which caused his departure from the political scene in the long run in 1951. He stepped down from UMNO’s presidency and established the IMP, the Multi-Racial Independence of Malaya Party, so that it could act as a leverage to force UMNO to agree with Onn’s multi-racial unity in UMNO, because Onn’s IMP was not communal and open to all races in Malaya.<sup>533</sup> Tunku Abdurrahman, who replaced Dato Onn changed UMNO’s ideology from "Hidup Melayu" (Long live the Malays) to "Merdeka!" (independence) by adopting a multiracial representation within UMNO to achieve independence.<sup>534</sup> MCP also shifted its strategy and subordinated

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<sup>528</sup> Karl Hack, ‘‘The Malayan Emergency as a Counterinsurgency,’’ 4.

<sup>529</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 137.

<sup>530</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 260.

<sup>531</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,’’ 138.

<sup>532</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,’’ 138.

<sup>533</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 25.

<sup>534</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’’ 3.

the guerilla activities for political goals.<sup>535</sup> Although MCP's political rapprochement 'coincided with the forging of political alliance in 1952 between UMNO and MCA',<sup>536</sup> MCP urged its cadres to infiltrate legal political parties and hide their identities, where most took place in the formation of socialist political parties in the coming years.<sup>537</sup>

With the introduction of local elections, UMNO formed an electoral alliance with MCA and enlarged its inter-racial membership with MIC where the UMNO, MCA, and MIC alliance was officially formed for the 1955 Elections. To win the independence struggle, Alliance launched peace and amnesty talks for MCP, which alarmed the British Authorities that 'the nationalists and communists would do a deal behind their backs.'<sup>538</sup> The Baling Talks forced the British to accelerate the decolonization process.<sup>539</sup> Tunku Abdurrahman was the one who initiated the Baling Talks to secure a trump card from the MCP. Ching Peng, the leader of the Malayan Communist Party, offered a commitment and a social contract only if Tunku Abdurrahman 'could obtain independence and the transfer of internal security and national defense from the British government.'<sup>540</sup> Tunku Abdurrahman promised to take the independence from London.<sup>541</sup> The inducement of MCP was too difficult to be handled by the British, as claimed by Cheah, 'if the British wanted to end Emergency, they had no choice but to expedite independence and grant him (Chin Peng) the powers on internal security and national defense, as suggested by the

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<sup>535</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, 'The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,' 139.

<sup>536</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 260.

<sup>537</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, 'The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,' 139.

<sup>538</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 30, 31.

<sup>539</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 31.

<sup>540</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 31.

<sup>541</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, 'The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Consenting the Nation-State and Social Change,' 142.

Communists.’’<sup>542</sup> The Baling talks held between the Communists and the Alliance hastened the arrival of independence and led straight to Merdeka (Independence).<sup>543</sup> At the end of the talks, the British agreed to concede on internal security and defense, and to the demand for independence by 31 August 1957.<sup>544</sup> The colonial chapter of English Malaya was finally erased. Mahathir Mohamad portrays the ruins left by English as:

Apart from leaving the Malays with a big immigrant Chinese and Indian population to manage, the British also left the country very poor. The country’s per capita income in 1957, the year of Independence, was less than USD350. Under British colonial rule more than 70 percent of the population lived below the poverty line. The literacy rate was very low and there were only about 100 university graduates in the whole country. Roads that were built served only the British-owned rubber estates and tin mines. Malayan ports were deliberately left undeveloped in order to protect the British colonial port of Singapore. Malacca was destroyed and Penang’s growth slowed down to enhance the economic development of Singapore. True, Singapore was strategically located at the tip of the Peninsula in the center of 13,000 rich Spice Islands, but as the post-Independence development of Peninsular ports shows, that concentration on the development of Singapore port did not need to be total. Malayan ports could have catered to some of the trade during colonial days. Instead, Malaya was made totally dependent on exports of rubber and tin via Singapore. The bulk of the foreign exchange that these industries earned went to Britain. These cold hard facts are never mentioned in the so-called free Press of the ethnic Europeans.’’<sup>545</sup>

Tunku Abdurrahman became the Prime Minister of Malaya by ending the Communist insurgency and accommodating the interest of non-Malays in UMNO through a historic bargain. At the end of the political struggle, ‘‘Malays obtained political independence, control of the government, and a polity which was Malay in style.’’ For non-Malay communities, ‘‘the Chinese (and also the Indians) gained more than the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia had dreamed of in terms of equal citizenship, political participation and officeholding, unimpaired economic

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<sup>542</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 32.

<sup>543</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 32.

<sup>544</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 33.

<sup>545</sup> Mahathir Mohamad, *A Doctor in the House: The Memoirs of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad*, 35-35.



opportunity, and tolerance for their language, religion, and cultural institutions.”<sup>546</sup>

As a result of the social contract agreed in the memorandum of Alliance which was submitted to the constitutional commission, the Malay language became the official national language, Malay rulers were accepted as constitutional monarchs, and citizenship rights and the right to practice religion, language, and culture were given to qualified non-Malays who paid their allegiance to Malaya.<sup>547</sup> After independence, the majority of the MCP/MRLA guerillas was surrendered in 1958 while the rest withdrew to the Thai border, for the continuation of guerilla activities until 1989.<sup>548</sup> The state of emergency was officially finalized on 31 July 1960.<sup>549</sup>

The government’s primary task was ‘internal security, national development, infrastructure projects such as education, rural development, and social welfare.’<sup>550</sup> With the elimination of guerilla threat, the Alliance under the lead of UMNO had to deal with the ‘task of reconciling the demands of the communal groups in the creation of their new nation’ as non-Malay groups were preoccupied ‘with fear of being pushed aside.’<sup>551</sup> Despite the elimination of communist emergency, the insurgency’s influence began to be increasingly felt in Malayan politics with the appearance of socialist parties led by MCP.<sup>552</sup>

The first step to consolidate Malay ethnocracy was the introduction of Malaysia Plan, which was to be composed of 14 states and 9 million people. Tunku who decided to enlarge the federation of Malaya into a Federation of Malaysia

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<sup>546</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia: The Making of a Nation*, 39.

<sup>547</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Contesting the Nation-State and Social Change,’ 142.

<sup>548</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘The Communist insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Contesting the Nation-State and Social Change,’ 142.

<sup>549</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 263.

<sup>550</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘The Communist Insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Contesting the Nation-State and Social Change,’ 143.

<sup>551</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 265.

<sup>552</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘The Communist Insurgency in Malaysia, 1948-1990, Contesting the Nation-State and Social Change,’ 145.

inclusive of Singapore (1.5 million and Chinese constitute 1.3 million), Sarawak (750.000), Brunei and Sabah (400.000) declared the federation plan on 21 May 1961.<sup>553</sup>

The Malaysia plan was needed for political and economic reasons.<sup>554</sup> The ethnic factor was the primary target to overpopulate Malay population to outnumber Chinese and Indian communities.<sup>555</sup> The racial balance in Malaya was fairly balanced between Malays and non-Malays, however, in the enlarged Federation of Malaysia, Malays and Natives of Malaya, Sabah, and Sarawak would outnumber the non-Malays.<sup>556</sup> In terms of security, the plan aimed to destroy the growing Malay left who were still struggling for the Greater Indonesia and Greater Malaysia dream.<sup>557</sup> As part of a Cold-War Strategy, the politics of Singapore, flooded by communist and radical groups, necessitated an immediate solution even though the inclusion of Singapore might radicalize Malayan politics because of the left-wing groups it harbored.<sup>558</sup> Since Singapore was to obtain its independence as its transitional constitution was to end in 1963,<sup>559</sup> Lee Kuan Yew needed an immediate merger with Malaya to stop the growing threat of communism and ‘’ wanted Tunku’s government to take over responsibility for the island’s security as he was reluctant to act against the Communists who had supported PAP and helped his party to come to power.’’<sup>560</sup> The last reason to enlarge the federation was to simplify the acquisition of economic and mineral resources from the new member territories.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>553</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 93

<sup>554</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 97.

<sup>555</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 93.

<sup>556</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 93.

<sup>557</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 269.

<sup>558</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 270.

<sup>559</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 270.

<sup>560</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 94.

<sup>561</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 93.

The concessions on the constitutional provision convinced the leaders of Sabah and Sarawak for a merger. They were given autonomy on immigration so they would not be sidelined by the immigrant groups in the Peninsula over language, where the use of English in Borneo states continued and the use of the Malay language as the National Language was postponed for ten years, over religion where religious freedom was accorded to ethnic groups although Islam is the religion of the federation, over education where Borneo states were given enough power in educational administration and the recruitment of personnel, over citizenship over those who were born, naturalized, or registered ordinary citizens to become citizens by law after the formation of Malaysia. Sabah and Sarawak were given overrepresentation and the constitutional provisions safeguarding the Malay special privileges were extended to the Borneo States. Singapore was given less representation in the Federal parliament while autonomy was given in fields of education, labor, and economy.<sup>562</sup> The national defense and internal security of Sabah, Sarawak, and Singapore were transferred to the Federation while the provisions for the construction of a Malay nation-state concerning the religion of Islam, Constitutional Rulers, Malay Special privileges, and Malay language was accepted by all.<sup>563</sup> In Brunei, there was a reluctant group who actualized the Brunei revolt under the lead of Malay A. M. Azahari who wanted to restore Greater Malaya with Brunei as its center.<sup>564</sup> Indonesia supported Azahari rebels in actualizing its revolt.<sup>565</sup> Although the revolt was suppressed by the British troops, the Brunei Sultan who was disenchanted over the financial and constitutional provisions,

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<sup>562</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 96-97.

<sup>563</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 96-97.

<sup>564</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 273.

<sup>565</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 273.

declined the invitation.<sup>566</sup> The federation of Malaysia was inaugurated on 16 September 1963.<sup>567</sup>

Overcoming the formation of the Federation of Malaysia, the new state was severely challenged by two distinct external and internal strains: the Confrontasi Campaign initiated by Indonesia and the Malaysian-Malaysia Campaign initiated by Singapore. The formation of Malaysia was challenged by Indonesia and the Philippines over the inclusion of Borneo states in the Federation. President Sukarno disagreed with the plan as he saw the merger as ‘an obstacle in the way of his pan-Indonesian concept, to unite the Malay world’.<sup>568</sup>

These states were claimed by Indonesia and the Philippines upon the departure of British rule. These claims turned into an open military engagement with Indonesia where konfrontasi (confrontation) and the Crush-Malaysia campaign was launched, and a diplomatic campaign with the Philippines was sought by claiming rights over Sabah. The Diplomatic relations were halted with the inauguration of the Federation of Malaysia on 16 September 1963.<sup>569</sup> The terror-related activities and indiscriminate bombings of Indonesia were suppressed by Malaysian and Commonwealth Troops.<sup>570</sup> The confrontation was ended with the military coup attempted by Suharto in 1965-1966.<sup>571</sup> In the case of the Philippines, the federation of Malaysia was recognized while claims over Sabah continued.<sup>572</sup>

The cut-and-thrust politics between Malaysia and Singapore grew as an internal problem which was the biggest challenge to the political primacy of the

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<sup>566</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 273.

<sup>567</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 274.

<sup>568</sup> Hitoshi Hirakawa, Hiroshi Shimizu, *Japan and Singapore in the World Economy: Japan's Economic Advance into Singapore 1870-1965*, 180.

<sup>569</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 273, 274, 275.

<sup>570</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 275.

<sup>571</sup> Frederick Holst, *Ethnicization and Identity Construction in Malaysia*, 44.

<sup>572</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 275.

Malays and Malay nation-state. Tension began with the declaration of Singapore's independence on 31 August 1963, a month before the proclamation of the Federation of Malaysia, which meant that Singapore openly violated the Malaysia agreement and did not comply with the proclamation of Malaysia's plan.<sup>573</sup> The political tensions deteriorated when PAP, Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore-based party, battled against the Alliance in the elections that were held in Singapore in 1963 and Malaysia in 1964.<sup>574</sup>

The electoral competition that went on between the Alliance and Singapore, resulted in inter-racial strife in Singapore in July 1964 and 2 September 1964. UMNO accused Singapore of oppressing Malay Muslims by making Singapore an Israel.<sup>575</sup> The first riot occurred ‘‘during a procession to celebrate the Prophet Muhammad's birthday, which was attended by an estimated 20,000 Muslims. The procession began at the Padang and was to end at Lorong in Geylang. With the involvement of Chinese bystanders, inter-racial clashes broke out.’’ The curfew was imposed until 2 August 1964 and the riots left 23 dead, 454 injured and 3,568 arrests. The Alliance claimed the Lee Kuan Yew's government's poor treatment of Malays in Singapore, and the actions of Chinese bystanders next to procession, as well as the involvement of Communist and Indonesian agents as the possible starting point of the riots.<sup>576</sup> Lee Kuan Yew's party accused UMNO's Secretary-General Syed Jaafar Albar of stocking up Malay feelings against the Chinese.<sup>577</sup> Lee supported his argument with the distributed leaflets urging Malays to start a ‘‘Holy War’’ against the Chinese.<sup>578</sup> The second communal riots broke out with the killing of a Malay

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<sup>573</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 98, 99.

<sup>574</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 275.

<sup>575</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 100.

<sup>576</sup> [https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_45\\_2005-01-06.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_45_2005-01-06.html)

<sup>577</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 100.

<sup>578</sup> Leon Comber, *13 May 1969, The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, 59.

trishaw rider at Geylang Serai, which necessitated an island-wide curfew. Malay's retaliation resulted in 13 deaths, 106 wounded, and 1,439 arrests.<sup>579</sup>

On 8 May 1965, Lee Kuan Yew decided to stay in the Malaysian political scene by forming an Alliance under the banner of the Malaysian Solidarity Consultative Convention, comprised of non-Malay opposition parties under the slogan of "Malaysian Malaysia" which advocated collective rights, interests, and responsibilities for all races.<sup>580</sup> The Malaysian Malaysia campaign turned out to be the last straw for the Federation of Malaysia. The formation of the Chinese-dominated Alliance was the most alarming challenge to the Malay political primacy and Malay nation-state, and made the "struggle appear as one between non-Malays and Malays."<sup>581</sup> On one side, there were the calls of Malay leaders for the detainment of Lee, while on the other side Malaysia was on the verge of racial violence.<sup>582</sup> In the face of deteriorating race relations and security concerns, Tunku Abdulrahman decided "to break with Singapore and save the nation from a bloodbath."<sup>583</sup> Although the secession of Singapore was "a moment of anguish" for Lee Kuan Yew as both territories were sharing a geostrategic kinship,<sup>584</sup> the PAP concerned itself in Malaysian politics to secure the position of Malaysian Chinese and registered a new party to Dewan Rakyat, the Democratic Action Party in March 1966, to act as the successor of PAP, to champion the idea of Malaysian Malaysia.<sup>585</sup> Despite the leadership skills of Tunku Abdulrahman who survived an "Indonesian Confrontation, Philippine claims to Sabah and Singapore's secession, the ever-

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<sup>579</sup> [https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_45\\_2005-01-06.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_45_2005-01-06.html)

<sup>580</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 101.

<sup>581</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 276.

<sup>582</sup> Leon Comber, *13 May 1969, The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, 61.

<sup>583</sup> Leon Comber, *13 May 1969, The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, 61

<sup>584</sup> National Achieves of Singapore, " Transcript of a Press Conference given by the Prime Minister of Singapore, Mr. Lee Kuan Yew, at Broadcasting House, Singapore, at 1200 hours on Monday 9th August, 1965," 21, 22.

<sup>585</sup> Leon Comber, *13 May 1969, The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, 61.

present ethnic problems were alive in the society mingled with the communist-elements caused by Japan. The Alliance's solution was to create a 'new Malaysian' citizen 'whose loyalty would be to the nation rather than an ethnicity.<sup>586</sup> The issue of national language was one of the building blocks of this solution. The language provision in the independence constitution of 1957, which stated that 'Malay should be the national language and that a period of at least ten years of English should continue to be used as an official language''<sup>587</sup> drew to a close in the tenth anniversary of independence in 1967. Malay and non-Malays pressured the Tunku Administration.

The United Chinese School Committees Association (UCSCA) pressured the Alliance for the establishment of a Chinese-language university, an idea supported by DAP and Chinese chauvinists in the MCA. The Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Malaysia's Language and Literature Bureau, Malay ultras in the UMNO, and Malay nationalists demanded the wider use of the Malay language.<sup>588</sup> To force the government for the full implementation of Malay as the National Language and to urge the government not to compromise for Chinese demands, the National Language Action Committee under the leadership of Syed Nasir Bin Ismail, a UMNO member and the Director of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (Council for Language and Culture) organized 6 month-long National language rallies.<sup>589</sup> A 13-page memo written by Syed Nasir bin Ismail was sent to the Prime Minister and His Cabinet accusing the government to accommodate Chinese interests while sidelining the Malay Language. Syed Nasir was supported by Dr. Mahathir Mohamed, Dato Harun Idris, the Menteri Besar of Selangor, and Abdul Rahman bin Yakuub, the

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<sup>586</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 277.

<sup>587</sup> The Reid Commission Report 1957, A.170, 75.

<sup>588</sup> Leon Comber, *13 May 1969, The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, 62.

<sup>589</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 103.

Minister of Lands and Mines.<sup>590</sup> Deciding not to make further concessions to Malay demands and going to the rescue of the MCA who requested ‘‘a more liberal use of the Chinese language in government notices, forms, signboards, and announcement’’<sup>591</sup>, Tunku Abdulrahman passed the bill which delayed the ‘‘full and wider use of the Malay as a National language which automatically allowed the use of English in government departments, law courts, parliament and state legislatures. This decision was interpreted as the greatest concession ever made to non-Malays.<sup>592</sup> The interest of the non-Malays seemed to be well-taken care of due to the close affiliation between the executive members in MCA and MIC and Tunku Abdul Rahman. Tunku’s concessions created an atmosphere where ‘‘business and educational opportunities were largely unrestricted. The state-funded Chinese-medium schools at the primary level English remained an important language of education and government, and government attempts to address problems of Malay economic backwardness made limited headway.’’<sup>593</sup> These concessions increased the unresolved resentment of Malays as their economic and cultural interests seemed to be widely ignored by the government.<sup>594</sup> The political agenda of Malays adopted on the eve of independence prematurely developed and enjoyed limited success, while ‘‘its socio-economic agenda was overwhelmed due to the dire need to control the political sphere before the economic sphere’’.<sup>595</sup> All these ethnic tensions were unfolded in the upcoming general elections in 1969.<sup>596</sup> The nation-building strategies of Tunku Abdul Rahman met with severe setbacks. With the announcement of the

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<sup>590</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 103-104.

<sup>591</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 105.

<sup>592</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 105.

<sup>593</sup> John Funston, *Governance and Politics in Southeast Asia*, 193.

<sup>594</sup> John Funston, *Governance and Politics in Southeast Asia*, 163.

<sup>595</sup> Shamsul A.B, ‘‘The economic dimension of Malay nationalism, the Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications,’’244.

<sup>596</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 105.



election results, the Alliance lost two-thirds of its votes in West Malaysia, while opposition parties won the biggest number of seats since 1955.<sup>597</sup>

The rise of opposition parties meant that the doctrine of Malay Malaysia was challenged by non-Malays, especially the Chinese who ‘were no longer satisfied with just economic hegemony, but wanted a protective share of the political power as well.’<sup>598</sup> The non-Malay victories fueled fear in the Malays ‘of a future in which they would be subjugated by the minorities and lost the benefits they had set for themselves’ as was the case in 1945 on the eve of the Japanese surrender.<sup>599</sup>

### 5.3 Malay Economic Nationalism

Inter-racial clashes broke out across Malaysia two days after the announcement of election results.<sup>600</sup> The causes of the riots were attributed to many reasons. Cheah Boon Kheng attributes the riots to ‘Malay dissatisfaction over non-Malay threats and challenges to Malay rights and Malay political primacy.’<sup>601</sup> Steven Rattuva believes that the ‘longstanding socio-economic grievances were readily and spontaneously translated into ethnic violence when the circumstances were ripe.’<sup>602</sup> Dr. Kua Kia Soong, author of *May 13: Declassified Documents on the Malaysian Riots of 1969*, believes that ‘it is constantly trotted out by the politicians who want to play the racial card, to show us what will happen if the privileges of the ruling class are threatened.’<sup>603</sup> This view is also verified by the Jomo K.S. that ‘the riots

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<sup>597</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 105.

<sup>598</sup> "Race War in Malaysia". *Time*. 23 May 1969. Archived from the original on 18 May 2007. Retrieved 14 May 2007.

<sup>599</sup> Jones Kelly, "A Time of Great Tension": Memory and the Malaysian Chinese Construction of the May 13 Race Riots," 80.

<sup>600</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 105.

<sup>601</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 106.

<sup>602</sup> Steven Rattuva, "Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia," 198.

<sup>603</sup> <https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/columnists/watching-the-world/2008/05/11/may-13-1969-truth-and-reconciliation/>

are caused by the popular rejection of the Alliance coalition as well as a palace coup within the ruling United Malays National Organization (UMNO) as ‘the Young Turks’ supporting the Deputy Prime Minister Tun Razak.’’<sup>604</sup>

According to the NOC report, the racial events, that were believed to be ‘engineered tension’, were triggered by the efforts of the Malayan Communist Party, which went underground a few years earlier and re-organized for a political comeback.<sup>605</sup> The official report published by NOC states that the Communist Party of Malaya did not start the May 13 disturbances to seize power immediately, as they were not equipped for such a move but ‘their activities and the activities of their agents in the Labour Party of Malaya, together with paid secret society agents,’ brought the racial disturbances to a rift.<sup>606</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> Jomo K. S. ‘The New Economic Policy and Interethnic Relations in Malaysia’, iii.

<sup>605</sup> National Operation Council, 11.

<sup>606</sup> National Operation Council, 27

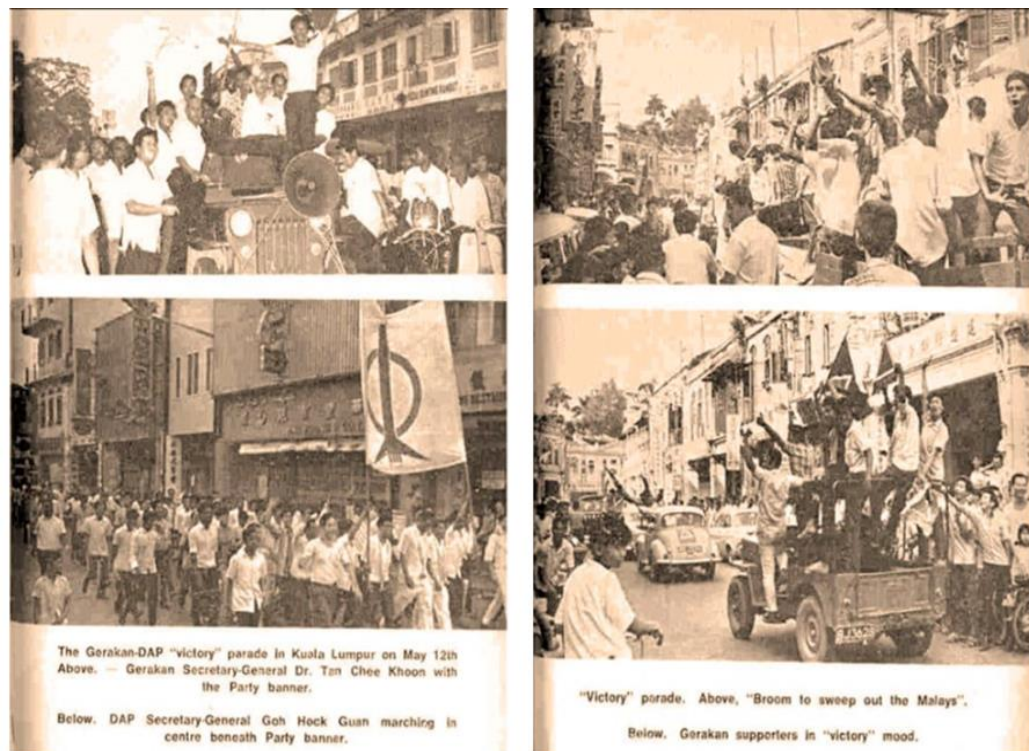


Fig 12 Victory Parades of Opposition Parties

Source; <https://pages.malaysiakini.com/may13/en/>

The racially provocative victory processions held by the opposition parties, the Democratic Action Party and Parti Gerakan Malaysia, on 11th and 12th May 1969, became the triggering points of the 13 May riots.<sup>607</sup> During the processions, there was direct insults to Malays, such as "Apa polis boleh buat-kita raja" (What can the police do, we (the Chinese) are king!), "Buang semua Polis Melayu" (Sack all Malay policemen!) ... "Mati Melayu, sakai pergi masok hutan!" (Death- to the Malays, aborigines go back to the jungle)... "Kuala Lumpur sekarang China punya". (Kuala Lumpur now belongs to the Chinese) ... "Kita hentam lu; sekarang kita besar" (We'll thrash you; we are now powerful) ... "Semua Melayu kasi habis" (Finish off all Malays) ... "Apa ini Melayu kita negeri dia sudah perintah. Ini negeri

<sup>607</sup> National Operation Council, 29.

bukan Melayu punya" (Why should the Malays rule our country. This is not a Malay country) ... "Habis Melayu" (End of the Malays).<sup>608</sup>

UMNO Selangor branch retaliated the victory procession of the left-wing opposition parties since the Alliance obtained the majority of the votes in the parliament, and all Selangor branches were invited to celebrate in front of the house of the Menteri Besar residence.<sup>609</sup> According to the NOC report, the Malays who participated in the procession were armed with parangs, Malay traditional weapons as rumors were rife in Kuala Lumpur that the procession would be attacked by the Chinese. They felt the need to protect themselves as they were aware of the fact that Kuala Lumpur was a densely Chinese-populated city. A fight already sparked when ‘‘Malays while proceeding to the assembly point on foot and scooters ... were taunted in Setapak by groups of Chinese and Indians and this developed rapidly into stone and bottle-throwing incidents between opposing groups ten to fifteen minutes before the outbreak of violence in Kampong Baru.’’<sup>610</sup> Official narrative verifies that it was the news of the fight that lashed through the Malays who gathered on the roadside opposite the houses of the Menteri Besar for the victory procession. They moved from Menteri Besar’s home to the Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman area to clash with the non-Malay groups.<sup>611</sup> It was a moment where ‘‘all the Malay martial arts teachers merged into a group called Red Waistband Movement (Gerakan Selendang Merah)’’.<sup>612</sup> As the ‘‘the Red Sash’ insurgency turned into a religious crusade to kill Chinese Malays without discrimination’’<sup>613</sup> in 1945, the 1969 riots also left some 196

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<sup>608</sup> National Operations Council, 30, 32, 32.

<sup>609</sup> National Operations Council, 43

<sup>610</sup> National Operations Council, 49.

<sup>611</sup> National Operations Council, 52.

<sup>612</sup> Al-Amril Othman, Mohd Nor Shahizan Ali, ‘‘Misinterpretation on Rumors towards Racial Conflict: A review on the Impact of Rumors Spread during the Riot of May 13, 1969’’,

<sup>613</sup> Christopher Hale. ‘‘Massacre in Malaya’’, 474.

Chinese dead (to National Operations Council Report) or 800 Chinese dead (to Forieng diplomats).<sup>614</sup> The Menteri Besar lost control of the situation in which ‘‘Malay mobs, wearing white headbands signifying an alliance with death, and brandishing swords and daggers, surged into Chinese areas in the capital, burning, looting and killing. In retaliation, the Chinese, sometimes aided by the Indians, armed themselves with pistols and shotguns and struck at Malay kampungs.’’<sup>615</sup> Despite the prompt action of the police and armed forces to restore law and order and the imposition of the curfew to prevent the riots from spreading, killing, arson and looting extended other parts of the country.<sup>616</sup> Between 13 May and 31 July, the violence subsided and the official toll was tallied at 196 dead, 376 wounded, 9143 arrests, 6000 homeless, 211 destroyed cars, and 753 destroyed buildings.<sup>617</sup> The unofficial claims of the death toll are reported to range between 800 and 1,000.<sup>618</sup>

On 14 May 1969, the Yang Di Pertuan Agong, (the King) suspended the constitution and declared an Emergency under clause 2 of article 150 to restore law and order, to suspend the constitution and parliament, and to postpone elections in East Malaysia.<sup>619</sup> National Operations Council was installed as an alternative parliamentary solution, and all power had vested in Tun Abdul Razak, the Deputy Prime Minister from 1971 until his premiership.<sup>620</sup> The NOC de-authorized Tunku Abdul Rahman, who had to retire in 1970.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>614</sup> <https://pages.malaysiakini.com/may13/en/>

<sup>615</sup> <https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/columnists/watching-the-world/2008/05/11/may-13-1969-truth-and-reconciliation/>

<sup>616</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 106.

<sup>617</sup> Leon Comber, *13 May 1969, The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, 71.

<sup>618</sup> <https://www.thestar.com.my/opinion/columnists/watching-the-world/2008/05/11/may-13-1969-truth-and-reconciliation/>

<sup>619</sup> Steven Ratuva, ‘‘Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia’’, 198.

<sup>620</sup> Jones Kelly, ‘‘A Time of Great Tension’’: Memory and the Malaysian Chinese Construction of the May 13 Race Riots,’’ 76.

<sup>621</sup> Frederick Holst, *Ethnicization and Identity Construction in Malaysia*, 45.

The challenge to the ethnic status quo and the Malay insecurities in socio-cultural and economic fields ushered a new realism of Malay hegemony and the institutionalization of Malay preferential policies.<sup>622</sup> Thereby, the Tunku Abdul Razak administration marked a radical change from the Tunku Abdul Rahman Administration, where a dual approach was initiated. On the one hand, the new policies were a kind of official declaration of Malay political primacy and a statement that Malaysia was a Malay nation-state, while on the other hand, there were efforts to empower Malaysia as a Malay plural society.<sup>623</sup> After imposing an emergency rule for 21 months, new policies were outlined ‘‘to restrict political liberties, entrench Malay pre-eminence, strengthen UMNO, and ensure stronger affirmative action for Malays under a New Economic Policy (NEP).’’<sup>624</sup>

The New Economic Policy was immediately outlined by the Department of National Unity, where economic priorities were aligned to nation-building and economic development on 18 March 1970.<sup>625</sup> Tun Razak announced the political rules to actualize ‘‘the full realization of the Malay nationalist ideal, in the economic sphere, began in earnest.’’<sup>626</sup> The government introduced national restructuring through National Culture Policy, known as Rukun Negara to serve as a state ideology and a political restructuring through the Government of National Unity by rejuvenating UMNO and enlarging the Alliance coalition, known as Barisan Nasional to simplify the implementation of NEP.<sup>627</sup>

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<sup>622</sup> Diane K. Mauzy, ‘‘From Malaysia to a Malaysian Nation,’’ 57.

<sup>623</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 122.

<sup>624</sup> John Funston, *Governance and Politics in Southeast Asia*, 163.

<sup>625</sup> National Operations Council, 139.

<sup>626</sup> Shamsul A.B. ‘‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications,’’ 251.

<sup>627</sup> Abdul Rashid Moten, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, 3.

The Rukunegara was designed by the NOC ‘‘to serve as a post-1969 framework’’ to create a basic consensus on communal issues by establishing principles that could be invoked to restrain the more extreme demands of ethnic chauvinists.’’<sup>628</sup> A Department of National Unity was set up to devise ways for inter-racial harmony and was tasked with drafting the national ideology, where the final draft was summed with five principles: ‘‘Belief in God; loyalty to King and Country; Upholding the Constitution; Rule of Law; Good Behaviour and Morality.’’<sup>629</sup> It was officially announced by the Yang di Pertuan Agong on 31 August 1970 on the thirteenth anniversary of Merdeka, the Malaysian Independence Day, to accommodate and consolidate the loyalties of non-Malays and to foster national unity to embrace Malaysia’s Malay-dominant multiculturalism.<sup>630</sup> A bill for the implementation of Rukun Negara in the educational curriculum was approved in 1971. A Malay Cultural Congress was formed to formulate a policy on National Culture where ‘‘it should be based on the culture of the Malays and other indigenous people of which Islam was an important element and that it could also include suitable elements from other cultures.’’<sup>631</sup>

The political restructuring was initiated by the introduction of the Sedition Act, to prohibit anyone from criticizing ‘‘what constitutes Malayness’’ and ‘‘Malay Special Rights’’ (Malay language, Islam or the royalty.)<sup>632</sup> This was because, previously, through the social contract agreed between ethnic groups in 1957, the immigrant populations who were made citizens by constitution, accepted Malay

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<sup>628</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia,’’ 267.

<sup>629</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 133.

<sup>630</sup> Leon Comber, 13 May 1969, *The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, (Singapore; Graham Brash, 2009), 79.

<sup>631</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 133.

<sup>632</sup> Shamsul A.B. ‘‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications,’’ 250-251.

special position, rights and privileges. However, the constitution embraced the right to freedom of speech of all in Malaya. As citizens of Malaya, non-Malays were allowed to question Malay dominance. After 1957, Malay political dominance ‘‘became the central issue of contention in Malaysian interethnic relations.’’<sup>633</sup> By Sedition Act, ‘‘the power and the status of the Malay rulers, citizenship rights of non-Malays, special rights and privileges of Bumiputera’s, the Status of Islam as the official religion, the status of Bahasa Melayu as the sole national language were deemed seditious.’’<sup>634</sup> The political dominance of Malays enjoyed limited success with the help of the constitution while its economic agenda remained unfulfilled and overwhelmed until 1970’s.<sup>635</sup> By these amendments, sensitive issues were removed from public and parliamentary discussions and gave the government a free hand ‘‘to pursue its policies with greater freedom.’’<sup>636</sup>

After silencing all effective political opposition parallel to the occurrences in 1969, Tun Razak expanded the Alliance to form Barisan National, the national front, comprised of 10 political parties, mainly the opposition parties, to reduce non-Malay divisiveness towards the 1971 constitutional amendments and government policies and to divide Chinese interest in the Barisan National.<sup>637</sup> The political coalition between Alliance and Opposition parties, impeded the representativeness of MCA and MIC to be the sole spokesman for their respective communities.<sup>638</sup> During the announcement of the election results in 1969, MCA had withdrawn from the Alliance because the majority of its candidates were defeated in the election. Although the

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<sup>633</sup> Shamsul A, B ‘‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications’’, 244.

<sup>634</sup> Abdul Rashid Moten, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, 23.

<sup>635</sup> Shamsul A, B ‘‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications’’,

<sup>636</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 292.

<sup>637</sup> Geoff Wade, ‘‘The Origin and Evolution of Ethnocracy in Malaysia,’’ 18.

<sup>638</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 147.



rationale behind MCA's withdrawal was to punish Chinese voters for rejecting MCA, it became one of the fueling reasons for the May riots as it was interpreted as an act of betrayal and raised serious implications on the constitutional contract.<sup>639</sup> This mistake cost the MCA to lose bargaining mechanisms, being in the new government.<sup>640</sup> There was also an ongoing leadership crisis within the Malayan Indian Congress, which needed a radical change as the former leader lost the support of its voters. Tun Abdul Razak mediated the problem and assigned Tan Sri V. Manickavasagam, the deputy of MIC, as the new president.<sup>641</sup> The MCA was no longer the only Chinese political party in the front, while the leadership problem of MIC was also resolved with more responsive personalities. In the 1974 federal elections, the enlarged coalition won the majority of the votes as a recognition from the masses for new policies to be built by the government.<sup>642</sup>

After clearing the non-Malay barrier in front of Malay-Malaysia, the march toward the full realization of the Malay nationalist ideal, in the economic sphere, began in earnest.<sup>643</sup> Tun Razak launched the never-ending economic plannings where "the preservation of the constitutionally given special status of the Malay Community remained a cornerstone of all economic policies."<sup>644</sup> The NEP was launched in 1971 as a result of Tun Razak's efforts and his "back room boys comprised of Malay bureaucrats, academics, and technocrats, many of whom were responsible for the successful organization of the Kongress Ekonomi Bumiputera (Bumiputera Economic Congress) in 1965 and 1968."<sup>645</sup>

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<sup>639</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 106.

<sup>640</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 106.

<sup>641</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 147.

<sup>642</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Malaysia, Making of a Nation*, 293.

<sup>643</sup> Shamsul A.B. "The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications," 251.

<sup>644</sup> Abdul Rashid Moten, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, 93.

<sup>645</sup> Shamsul A.B. "The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications," 251.

The NEP, the tool of Malay Economic Nationalism,<sup>646</sup> was initiated as a 20-year social engineering and affirmative action program through the Second, Third, Fourth, and Fifth Malaysia Plan between 1971 and 1991, and it belonged to a tradition of five year plans initiated by the Alliance government since independence.<sup>647</sup> Before the announcement of NEP by Tun Abdul Razak, the early attempts to revive Malay interest in the economy is traced back to a group of Malay religious teachers, who launched initiatives such as PEPERMAS, the Centre for the Malay in Economy, Farmer's Bank, National Bank and a Bank of Commerce in 1947, all of which failed to materialize. Yet, Dato Onn in UMNO voiced the plight of Malay peasants and urged the British to launch development initiatives to improve the economy of Malay rural dwellers. Instead of nationalizing the commercial interests of Malay nationalists, the British found it reasonable to initiate a Draft Development Plan (1950-1955), an affirmative action policy, as official recognition of the Malay economist agenda before 1957. Rida, as the first program initiated within DDP aimed to help 'rural, small and medium Malay entrepreneurs, to obtain capital and skill' to set up or enlarge their small-scale businesses.<sup>648</sup>

The push to fulfill the Malay nationalist agenda came after independence. Targeting Malay peasants and Malay entrepreneurs, various quasi government-bodies and institutions were initiated to develop the socio-economic condition of the Malay Community, with the help of three major national plans until the 1970s: Rancangan Malaya Pertama, the First Malaya Plan (1956-1960), Rancangan Malaya Pertama, the Second Malaya Plan (1961-1965), and Rancangan Malaysia Pertama,

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<sup>646</sup> Shamsul A.B. 'The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications,' 251.

<sup>647</sup> Husein Alatas, 'The Second Malaysia Plan 1971 1975: A Critique,' 1.

<sup>648</sup> Shamsul A, B 'The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications',

the First Malaysia Plan (1966-1970), which was the beginning of a development policy for modern Malaysia after the expulsion of Singapore.<sup>649</sup>

In the mid-1960s, an emerging Malay entrepreneurial class was in the making, comprised of rural Malays: ‘peasants, petty traders, and owners of small and medium cottage industries’ who seized the opportunities of massive development projects ranging from infrastructure projects to agricultural and non-agricultural capacity-building projects.<sup>650</sup> Affirmative Action Policies in the mid-1960s brought preferential access to ‘education opportunities, business licenses, employment and promotion in the public sector with Malayization of the civil service after independence.’<sup>651</sup>

In 1965, the first economic congress that was held under the title of Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputera (Bumiputera Economic Congress), detailed the agenda of Malay economic nationalism. In 1968, the second Kongres Ekonomi Bumiputera (Bumiputera Economic Congress) was held to check if the initiatives implemented since 1965 were successful. According to Shamsul A., as a result of both congresses, three things came out: it helped to devise the roadmap in the upliftment of Malay economic role in the economy: it established the institutional frameworks needed for the betterment of Malay capitalist enterprises, such as ‘banks, financial institutions, commercial organizations (distributors, wholesalers, and agency houses for imported and local consumer goods), educational and vocational training institutes, economic and urban development bodies’. Furthermore, it helped to assemble Malay bureaucrats, technocrats, professionals, traders and academics to table their views on

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<sup>649</sup> Abdul Rashid Moten, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, 43.

<sup>650</sup> Shamsul A. B. ‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications’, 249.

<sup>651</sup> Jomo Kwame Sundaram Wee Chong Hui, *Malaysia at 50, Economic Development, Distribution, Disparities*, 15.

the future of the Malay economy, to set the desirables to be achieved, and to make ways for the realization of the plan.<sup>652</sup> According to Shamsul A, prioritizing political accommodation to get access to the economics, UMNO politicians, who already gained massive experience in the politics of business, materialized the ‘‘political way to make materialist leap, to become reach rather quickly, to climb the social ladder, to enjoy a better social status and at the same time to have power.’’<sup>653</sup> Until 1969, without properly redressing the economic imbalances of Malays in the economic life of the country for the realization of national unity, Malay special rights and UMNO’s political dominance were highly resisted and criticized by non-Malay parties. In 1970, it was known by all parties that ‘‘ Malays formed the majority of the poor, accounting for 74 percent of all poor households in Peninsular Malaysia’’ and Malay corporate share ‘‘was 2.4 percent, compared to the Chinese share of 34.4 percent and the British share of 63.3.’’<sup>654</sup> Malays were in a severely disadvantageous position in terms of per capita income and living standards and were confined to the rural sector, while the modern sector was dominated by the non-Malays and the foreigners.<sup>655</sup> As detailed by Leon Comber, the foreign capital sector share was 60%, and Chinese ownership was 22% or in industries where foreign interest was less, Chinese ownership amounted to 50 %, while Malays capital share amounted to 2%.<sup>656</sup>

With the eruption of the 13 May Riots, the nationalist’ struggle in the economic sphere went on with the implementation of NEP ‘‘to regain control both in the rural agricultural sector (dominated by the British and Chinese-owned plantation

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<sup>652</sup> Shamsul A.B. ‘‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications,’’ 250.

<sup>653</sup> Shamsul A.B. ‘‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications,’’ 248.

<sup>654</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia’’, 264, 265.

<sup>655</sup> Tridib Chakraborti, ‘‘The New Economic Policy of Malaysia: Its Impact on the Malaysian Indians,’’ 200.

<sup>656</sup> Leon Comber, *13 May 1969, The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, 84.

and mining), and the urban commercial sector (dominated by British agency houses and Chinese family businesses.)’’<sup>657</sup>

The NEP, a race-based rather than a need-based affirmative action had a two-pronged strategy: ‘poverty eradication regardless of race’ and ‘restructuring society to eliminate the identification of race with economic function’’.<sup>658</sup> The first strategy aimed to simplify Malay access to ‘land, physical, capital training, and public amenities.’’ The second strategy was expected to end the ‘dependence of Malays and other indigenous people on agriculture’’ which meant greater Malay participation in the modern rural and urban sectors of the economy.’’<sup>659</sup> Two prongs of NEP aimed at ‘the creation of a Malay commercial and industrial community in all categories and at all levels of operation so that Malays and other indigenous people will become full partners in all aspects of the economic life of the nation.’’<sup>660</sup> In actuality, both of the prongs served to the creation and the consolidation of Malay Bumiputra<sup>661</sup> class for the control of wider areas in the economy based on ‘a system of power-sharing between ethnic communities.’’<sup>662</sup> Between 1971 and 1990, the NEP’s first prong aimed to reduce poverty from 49% to 16.7 % until 1990, while its

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<sup>657</sup> Shamsul A, B ‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications’’, 245.

<sup>658</sup> Jomo Kwame Sundarami Wee Chong Hui, *Malaysia at 50, Economic Development, Distribution, Disparities*, 1.

<sup>659</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 284.

<sup>660</sup> Leon Comber, *13 May 1969, The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, 84.

<sup>661</sup> According to Cheah Boon Kheng, the confusion in building the desirables of Bumiputra by definition was made complex by the government in Malaysia to foster political expediency. For example; Bumiputra by definition, means the Sons of the Soil, and represent the natives or indigeneous people of the country; the Malays, and the natives of Borneo States; Sabah and Sarawak. The notion is politically used as the substitute of Malay, as a Malay is identified by the constitution with Malay language, Malays norms and customs, and Monarchy. The Aborigins, known as orang asli, the original people or Malay immigrants from Indonesia are not counted as Bumiputra, along with Chinese and Indians. This information is to be reached at Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘The Bumiputra Policy and Nation-Building’.

<sup>662</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘The Bumiputra Policy and Nation-Building,’ 401.

second prong aimed to increase the Bumiputera share of corporate equity from 2.4 % to 30% through growth rather than redistribution.<sup>663</sup>

In the first prong of NEP, the Malays were also the major beneficiaries of the politics of poverty eradication policies as the highest poverty rate belonged to the Malays with 65.0%, compared to 26.0% for Chinese and 39.0% for Indians.<sup>664</sup> The Government who believed that poverty was the main destabilizer in front of Malay unity and the political support of the rural Malays, worked on rural areas as a response to the 1969 riots. Since the poverty was mainly caused by the mass migration of rural Malays into the urban areas, the primary aim was to increase the living standards in rural areas. The strategies for the development of rural areas included “infrastructural development, subsidizing resettlement projects and provision of agricultural resources, such as irrigation schemes as a means of increasing productivity.”<sup>665</sup> The core areas for poverty alleviation “were rubber, palm oil, and rice cultivation.” In 20 years, time, the poverty reduced from 65.0 % to 20.8% for Malays, from 26.0 % to 5.7% for Chinese and from 39.0% to 8.0% for Indians.”<sup>666</sup>

The second prong of the NEP was initiated for the formation and consolidation of a Malay middle class through a restructuring in “employment, ownership of share capital in the corporate sector and the creation of a Bumiputera Commercial and Industrial community.”<sup>667</sup> The NEP expanded the role of the state through “greater political and bureaucratic control over planning as well as greater state intervention and a larger public sector, to promote the growth of Malay

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<sup>663</sup> Jomo Kwame Sundarami Wee Chong Hui, *Malaysia at 50, Economic Development, Distribution, Disparities*, 15.

<sup>664</sup> Steven Ratuva, “Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,” 200.

<sup>665</sup> Steven Ratuva, “Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,” 200.

<sup>666</sup> Steven Ratuva, “Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,” 200.

<sup>667</sup> Steven Ratuva, “Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,” 201.

Capitalist and middle classes.”<sup>668</sup> The number of state-owned enterprises increased by government intervention in the economy as the 1950s and 1960s saw the domination of Chinese capitalists and foreign investors in the private sector.<sup>669</sup> The Chinese mainly populated retail, wholesale trade, rubber estates, tin mining, domestic transport, small-scale manufacturing, and banking while foreign interests populated the formal economy; plantations, trading agencies, tin dredge mines, bigger banks, and financial institutions, manufacturing.<sup>670</sup>

The Government re-regulated primary and public sectors as “Bumiputera employment in the agricultural, secondary and service sectors was 66.2%, 12.1%, and 21.7% respectively.”<sup>671</sup> The Government aimed to reduce the reliance of Malays on agriculture while increasing employment in the secondary and service sectors. Between 1971 and 1990, the employment in agriculture decreased to 29.0% while the secondary and services sectors increased to 30.5% and 40.5%.<sup>672</sup> Public sector employment in government and quasi-government corporations was expanded to Malays who were provided 68% of the newly created jobs. The police and armed forces saw Malay recruitment from 70% to 86% in the 1980s. Incentives and financial assistance such as “provision of equity, capital, loan financing, education, and training” were given to Malays to facilitate their entry into industry and commerce. The Malay participation in commerce and industry was encouraged by the establishment of public enterprises such as “MARA, Majlis Amanah Rakyat, The Council of Trust for indigenous peoples, PERNAs, Perbadanan Nasional

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<sup>668</sup> Jomo Kwame Sundarami Wee Chong Hui, *Malaysia at 50, Economic Development, Distribution, Disparities*, 16.

<sup>669</sup> Jomo Kwame Sundarami Wee Chong Hui, *Malaysia at 50, Economic Development, Distribution, Disparities*, 16.

<sup>670</sup> Jomo Kwame Sundarami Wee Chong Hui, *Malaysia at 50, Economic Development, Distribution, Disparities*, 16.

<sup>671</sup> Steven Ratuva, “Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,” 201.

<sup>672</sup> Steven Ratuva, “Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,” 202.

Berhad, (National Corporation Ltd.) SEDCs, the State Economic Development Corporations, UDA Urban Development Authority, and MIDF, the Malaysian Industrial Development Finance Ltd.”<sup>673</sup> These bodies purchased the economic shares assigned for Malays and indigenous people to relinquish control to Malays later on.<sup>674</sup> Privileges in education and scholarships simplified Malay entrance into civil service and commerce so that they would be able to break Chinese dominance in higher education. In education, the Sultan, as authorized by the Constitution, had immense powers to lead universities and higher institutions for the entrance of more Malays.<sup>675</sup> Specific area studies such as engineering, medicine, and the sciences were preserved for Malays.<sup>676</sup> The Malay students filled 64% of all university positions until 1995.<sup>677</sup>

The consolidation of the Bumiputera business class was backed up with a concerted drive towards industrialization and privatization. Greater state intervention was initiated through an expansion in the public sector and a regulation in public sector investments. Export-oriented industrialization was encouraged to accelerate the expansion of employment and rapid urban migration. By this process, state corporations were expected to act on behalf of the Bumiputera.<sup>678</sup> The Privatization was diverted to politically favored corporations which changed ownership and employment patterns, income distribution, and the control on vital sectors in the economy. There was an increase from 2.4% to 20.3% in 1990, and the number of shares held by the Chinese also increased from 27.2% to 44.9%, while a dramatic

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<sup>673</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 285.

<sup>674</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 285.

<sup>675</sup> Leon Comber, *13 May 1969, The Darkest Day in Malaysian History*, 84.85.86.87.

<sup>676</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 292.

<sup>677</sup> Steven Ratuva, “Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,” 203.

<sup>678</sup> Steven Ratuva, “Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,” 204.



decrease felt by Indians whose share decreased from 1.1% to 1.0% and foreign investors plunged from 63.4% to 25.1% in 1990.<sup>679</sup>

The NEP led to the emergence of two new types of Malay rich: “old,” manually oriented middle class and the “new,” mentally oriented middle class. The old, manually oriented middle class emerged from the first prong of the NEP as rural-based entrepreneurs, who were involved in traditional small or medium businesses ‘‘such as construction, manufacturing of food products and handicrafts goods, in wholesaling of primary commodity items, or retail activities’’. They were politically active in and connected to UMNO where they also acted as top-district level UMNO politicians who ‘‘managed to turn rural development projects, initially aimed at eradicating poverty, into rich financial resources for themselves, by establishing their own companies and then awarding them lucrative government contracts.’’<sup>680</sup> The new middle class who were urbaners emerged as a result of the second prong of the NEP; restructuring society, particularly in the field of education. The government introduced a series of special educational programs, called express lane programs, which aimed to increase qualified Malays in the fields of science, technology, and non-science related fields. In ten years, the graduates of these NEP programs who graduated from Malaysia, the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, employed in such organizations and institutions either set up or funded by the government.<sup>681</sup>

Even though the apparent assault of NEP on Chinese economic, educational and cultural interests put the Chinese in a difficult position to question their futures

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<sup>679</sup> Steven Ratuva, ‘‘Ethnicity, Reform and Affirmative Action in Malaysia,’’ 211.

<sup>680</sup> Shamsul A.B. ‘‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications,’’ 252.

<sup>681</sup> Shamsul A.B. ‘‘The Economic Dimension of Malay Nationalism, The Socio-Historical Roots of the New Economic Policy and Its Contemporary Implications,’’ 253.

in Malaysia, the Chinese leaders in politics and business obtained satisfying results in the twin goals of NEP which aimed at ‘‘social restructuring across racial lines’’.<sup>682</sup> Heng Pek Koon explains that when Malaysia’s political economy had a linear growth without being impeded by political and economic instabilities, the Malaysian Chinese felt persuaded in accepting the preferential privileges in NEP, the Malay supremacy in politics and bureaucracy, because ‘‘it enabled an expanding Chinese Middle class to participate as active partners in Malaysia’s extraordinary economic advance.’’<sup>683</sup> Between 1971 and 1975, the Chinese bureaucrats who were involved in the Economic Planning tried to safeguard the interest of non-Malays.<sup>684</sup> The Chinese mediation was impeded by the enactment of the Industrial Co-ordination Act in 1975, which forced ‘‘non-Malay manufacturing firms to divest at least 30 percent of their equity to Malay interests and ‘‘incorporate into their workforce a number of Malay employees to reflect the Malay proportion in the country’s population, at least 50 percent’’. In the second phase, which was initiated between 1976 and 1985, Chinese leaders in MCA, DAP, and Gerakan argued that the NEP is unable to be implemented in the spirit of reciprocity, exceeding its original intent and scope. The MCA was on the verge of a dilemma that it had to support a policy that risked the Chinese interest in the name of political stability, while competing with rival Chinese parties such as DAP and Gerakan to secure Chinese votes.<sup>685</sup> MCA tried to directly compete with NEP through MCA-led Chinese corporatization and Sino-Malay joint ventures. The Multi-Purpose Holdings Berhad (MPHB) was launched to attract

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<sup>682</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia,’’ 262.

<sup>683</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia,’’ 262.

<sup>684</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia,’’ 269.

<sup>685</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia,’’ 270.

Chinese community capital for investments in competing with the large-scale Malay trust agencies. The incorporation attempts failed due to the MCA's communally based pooled resources policy.<sup>686</sup> As Chinese Business interest was harmed by the massive Malay employment and equity ownership in the private sector and urban industries, Chinese business community bypassed the MCA and established direct links with Malays to overcome the barriers of "licenses in printing, petrol service stations, air and shipping transportation, logging, saw-milling, mining, rubber dealing, timber export, and vehicle import and the Malay government officials who were approving business permits and licenses and being uncooperative with the Chinese business community."<sup>687</sup> The Chinese proposed the establishment of Sino-Malay joint ventures to "UMNO leaders, senior bureaucrats, top military brass, and members of royal families".<sup>688</sup> Only then, the NEP allowed the utilization of a vast pool of Malay capital which was state-led trust agencies, UMNO-led corporations, institutional funds, and private sector capital controlled by the Malay millionaires.<sup>689</sup> The Chinese business leaders effectively expanded their fortunes as soon as they accommodated themselves to the conditions of the NEP. The Sino-Malay Economic Cooperation Advisory Board was established to encourage Sino-Malay joint ventures for Malays who were lacking experience and knowledge in the business. The Ali-Baba operation, in which Ali signifies the Malays and Baba refers to the Chinese community, was launched where Malays had to act as "sleeping partners". The system was a series of "arrangements where the minority Malay shareholders, "Ali,"

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<sup>686</sup> Heng Pek Koon, "The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia" 272-273.

<sup>687</sup> Heng Pek Koon, "The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia" 274.

<sup>688</sup> Heng Pek Koon, "The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia" 274.

<sup>689</sup> Heng Pek Koon, "The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia" 274,275.

received generous fees for securing business deals in which access to high-ranking political and bureaucratic power-holders played a crucial role, while the Chinese partners, the “Baba,” retained control over the enterprise, made policy decisions, and took charge of day-to-day business operations.’’<sup>690</sup>

The Chinese response for joint ventures impacted three types of Chinese business class: the old Money, the new Money, and the declining Money groups. The old Money grew bigger, the new Money groups advanced both parties wealth, but their rise or decline in business was heavily dependent on the political fate of their Malay partners and lastly, the declining group who were pre-war elites ‘’either chose not to or failed to adapt effectively to the new political and business environment of the NEP.’’<sup>691</sup> The Chinese entrepreneurs fared better while Chinese urban and rural classes fared worst under NEP as they were given the minimal benefit from poverty eradication policies since Malays were targeted primarily.

Although the Malaysian Indian situation was much better than the Bumiputera’s in 1970, the NEP weakened the economic conditions of the Indians to the extent that ‘’ the share of wealth held by ethnic Indians shrank slightly, from 1.1 percent to 1 percent between 1970 and 1990 and ... two-thirds of Malaysian Indians remain trapped in poverty.’’<sup>692</sup> Most of the Indians experienced the positions of Malays in the 1950s as the NEP impeded them in terms of education and economy while income disparity grew larger among Indians, than Malays and Chinese.<sup>693</sup> To elevate the poor conditions of Indians and to prevent them from turning a social

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<sup>690</sup> Heng Pek Koon, “The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia” 276.

<sup>691</sup> Heng Pek Koon, “The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia” 275.

<sup>692</sup> Tridib Chakraborti, “The New Economic Policy of Malaysia: Its Impact on the Malaysian Indians”, 201.

<sup>693</sup> Tridib Chakraborti, “The New Economic Policy of Malaysia: Its Impact on the Malaysian Indians”, 201.

liability for the government, the MIC proposed a 5% quota system in the Six Five Year Plan in the ownership of capital.<sup>694</sup>

At the end of the NEP, the targeted share of 30 percent Malay equity ownership was not fully realized, and it was ostensibly successful, where Malays managed a 20.3 percent share of corporate equity, unlike 46.2 percent for non-Malays and 25.1 percent for foreigners. The New Development Policy was initiated with the official termination of NEP, with a focus on ‘growth-oriented policies to create absolute wealth.’<sup>695</sup> The New Development Policy (1991-2000), and the National Vision Policy (2001-2010), etc., embraced changes in the context of the previous plan, the NEP, without jeopardizing ‘the interest of the Malay capitalist class’ and by consolidating and strengthening their interests.<sup>696</sup>

In summary, this section has provided a general overview of key events after the Japanese Occupation. The years between 1945–1969 represents an important period not only in the history of ethnic politics in Malaysia, but also in the identity formation of Malays and Malaysians, filled with crucial key events, ranging from ‘colonial politics, negotiations, diplomacy, and even "real politic" and violence, as the British were put in a difficult situation concerning Malay nationalists on both the right and the left.’<sup>697</sup> The Japanese occupation empowered Malay nationalism to the point that it erupted in the post-war Malaya, in the form of religious nationalism, political nationalism, and economic nationalism which began in 1945 and ended in 1969.

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<sup>694</sup> Tridib Chakraborti, ‘The New Economic Policy of Malaysia: Its Impact on the Malaysian Indians’ 202.

<sup>695</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘The New Economic Policy and The Chinese Community in Peninsular Malaysia’ 289.

<sup>696</sup> Shamsul A. B, *From British to Bumiputra Rule, Local Politics and Rural Development in Peninsular Malaysia*, 192

<sup>697</sup> Azmi Arifin, ‘Local Historians and the Historiography of Malay Nationalism 1945-57, The British, the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malay Left,’ 21.

The next chapter will discuss the different ethnic imaginations on Japanese Occupation and Malaysian identity.

## CHAPTER 6

### DISCUSSIONS OF DIFFERENT ETHNIC IMAGINATIONS

This chapter discuss the ethnic imaginations of Japanese occupation and the Malaysian identity that have been formed in line with the nation-building discourses of the Malaysian government.

The ethnic imaginations concerning the Japanese Occupation have been shaped in line with the nation-building discourses of the governments in Southeast Asia.<sup>698</sup> The Japanese economic development in nation-building, which was maintained under the guise of Official Development Assistance and Foreign Direct Investment in Southeast Asia,<sup>699</sup> has led Southeast Asian countries to navigate and to ease anti-Japanese feelings from the memory of locals about the Japanese Occupation.<sup>700</sup>

Between 1950 and 1960, war reparations<sup>701</sup> were reached with Southeast Asian countries; the Philippines obtained US\$550 million and economic assistance of US\$250 million in 1952, Burma obtained US\$200 million, plus private loans of US\$50 million in 1954 and an additional grant assistance of US\$140 million and US\$30 million loans in 1963, Indonesia obtained US\$223 million and economic assistance of US\$200 million, plus the trade debt cancellation of US\$177 million in 1957 and South Vietnam received US\$39 million. The sub-reparations reached with the remaining countries in S.E.A: Thailand received 1,556 billion Baht that Japan

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<sup>698</sup> Kevin Blackburn and Ryoko Nakano, ‘‘Memories of the Japanese Occupation and Nation building in Southeast Asia,’’ 31.

<sup>699</sup> Glenn D. Hook, *Japan’s International Relations, Politics, Economics, and Security*, 204.

<sup>700</sup> Kevin Blackburn and Ryoko Nakano, ‘‘Memories of the Japanese Occupation and Nation building in Southeast Asia,’’ 44.

<sup>701</sup> As a way to reassert her political presence and to overcome her colonial past in Southeast Asia, Japan entered into the region by providing a variety of aid under reparations agreements. Japan offered liberal ODA, and FDI as if they were part of ‘‘war reparations as part of this ‘‘apology’’ for the war time occupation.

borrowed during the war, Laos obtained US\$2.78 million in 1957, Cambodia obtained US\$4.17 million in 1959, Singapore obtained S\$25 million in compensation and S\$25 in soft loans and the Malaysian government received a “goodwill” payment of M\$25 million in 1967.<sup>702</sup>

Demands for war-time reparations and an official apology ‘climaxed in 1963 in Singapore and Malaya, when both territories merged to form the Federation of Malaysia.’<sup>703</sup> The anti-Japanese feelings appeared with the exhumation of Sook Ching victims in Singlap area of Singapore between 1962 and 1966, which prompted the blood debt payment. The Chinese Chamber of Commerce handled the investigations to search for the Sook Ching site and the area was named as the Valley of Death and Valley of Tears as it was harboring multiple war graves.<sup>704</sup> The Chamber organized the largest rally with the participation of 120,000 people in 1963, which resulted in the demand of \$50 million compensation in local currency. This was the amount of the atonement money the Japanese forced the Chinese in Malaya and Singapore to pay after the Sook Ching massacre in 1942.<sup>705</sup> Lee Kuan Yew took over the rally and mediated for the demands of the Chinese so that the rally could not be hijacked by pro-communist opposition in Singapore. ‘On 13 September 1963, the Confederation of the Chinese Chambers of Commerce in Malaysia, including Singapore, passed a resolution to claim M\$10 million from Japan for each state, totaling \$130 million, as compensation for the "blood-debt" suffered by victims in Malaya.’<sup>706</sup> Japan offered S\$25 million in compensation and S\$25 million as soft

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<sup>702</sup> Kevin Blackburn and Ryoko Nakano, ‘Memories of the Japanese Occupation and Nation building in Southeast Asia,’ 34.

<sup>703</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘Memory as History and Moral Judgement, Oral and Written Accounts of the Japanese Occupation’ in P. Lim Pui Huen, War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore, 34.

<sup>704</sup> A Heritage Trail, ‘Singapore World War II,’ 31.

<sup>705</sup> Kevin Blackburn and Ryoko Nakano, ‘Memories of the Japanese Occupation and Nation building in Southeast Asia,’ 35.

<sup>706</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘Memory as History and Moral Judgement, Oral and Written Accounts of the Japanese Occupation’ in P. Lim Pui Huen, War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore, 34.



loans, which was the exact payment the Chinese in Singapore and Malaya forced to meet, to overcome the deficit. Tunku Abdulrahman and Lee Kuan Yew warned the Chinese Chamber of Commerce in Malaysia and Singapore not to incite ill feelings as they would not be supported by the state. The governments of Malaysia and Singapore agreed separately to bring their "blood-debt" claims to the Japanese Government.<sup>707</sup> In 1967, 'Singapore signed the "blood debt" agreement (S\$25 million) and the Malaysia received the "goodwill" payment of RM\$25 million.'<sup>708</sup>

After compensations were reached, the public remembrance and commemoration of Japanese Occupation followed two patterns in Southeast Asian Countries who 'equally affected by the Japanese Occupation, and equally engaged in nation-building': 'a collective memory of a shared past and shared sacrifices in war to assist their efforts in encouraging a greater sense of nationhood' or 'a national amnesia about remembering the wartime past.'<sup>709</sup> Singapore belongs to the first category as it preferred 'to etch the collective experience of war into public memory and to derive from this memory production a grand narrative of national beginning and destiny'. Meanwhile, Malaysia belongs to the second category as it 'continued to maintain a distanced silence on the war, with commemorative ceremonies organized by foreign war veterans and their families remaining essentially foreign rituals on local sites.'<sup>710</sup>

The negotiated settlement between the Japanese government and the Malaysian Government under Tunku Abdulrahman and Singapore Government

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<sup>707</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, "Memory as History and Moral Judgement, Oral and Written Accounts of the Japanese Occupation" in P. Lim Pui Huen, *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 34.

<sup>708</sup> Kevin Blackburn and Ryoko Nakano, "Memories of the Japanese Occupation and Nation building in Southeast Asia," 34.

<sup>709</sup> Kevin Blackburn, "War Memory and Nation-building in South East Asia", 5.

<sup>710</sup> Diana Wong, "Memory Suppression and Memory Production, The Japanese Occupation of Singapore" in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 219.

under Lee Kuan Yew helped to deaden the war-time pains.<sup>711</sup> The Japanese occupation acted as a catalyst in the creation of a ‘national unity and a sense of belonging in Singapore.’<sup>712</sup> After closing a bitter chapter of history through sub-reparations in 1967, Singapore revived ‘the Civilian War Memorial to the war dead from the Japanese Occupation on 15 February 1967, the 25th anniversary of the Fall of Singapore, as an expression of national unity, not anti-Japanese war memory.’ In 1988, the 15 February was redefined as Total Defense Day to foster national cohesion.<sup>713</sup>



Fig 13 ‘The Civilian War Memorial (right) unveiled by prime minister Lee Kuan Yew, who also presented a wreath (left) on behalf of the Singapore Government to the victims of the Japanese Occupation.’

Source; <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/wartime-symbol-still-evokes-strong-emotions-among-older-sporeans>

<sup>711</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘Memory as History and Moral Judgement, Oral and Written Accounts of the Japanese Occupation’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 36.

<sup>712</sup> <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/wartime-symbol-still-evokes-strong-emotions-among-older-sporeans>

<sup>713</sup> Kevin Blackburn and Ryoko Nakano, ‘Memories of the Japanese Occupation and Nation building in Southeast Asia,’ 37.

Unlike Singapore, Malaysia ‘‘has avoided commemorating the Japanese Occupation in the name of nation-building.’’<sup>714</sup> The government became oblivious to the Occupation as a way of ‘‘furthering nation-building rather than remembering a time of wartime divisiveness.’’<sup>715</sup> The reason behind that, as stated by Kevin Blackburn ‘‘the Japanese Occupation works against nation-building, not because it might overshadow a declaration of independence, but because of its divisiveness in public memory.’’<sup>716</sup> The reason behind avoiding an official commemoration day lies on two possibilities: the first possibility is that the resistance against the Japanese invasion came from the ranks of the Communists-led MPAJA and the Communists fighters who spearheaded the resistance took place in the left-wing insurgency in the post-war construction.<sup>717</sup> The issue of the commemoration of Japan’s wartime atrocities in Malaysia was left to the ethnicities and it became ethnicized.<sup>718</sup> The visit of the Prince Akihito of Japan in 1970 and the adoption of the Look East Policies by Mahathir Mohamad in 1980 confirmed that the government of Malaysia healed the scars of the Japanese Occupation.<sup>719</sup> Since the Government ensured that national history and culture should be dominated by the idea of Ketuanan Melayu, a political discourse used to signify Malay pre-eminence in Malaysia, ethnic groups are left on their own ‘‘to nurture their own cultures and to commemorate their past with no financial assistance from the government.’’<sup>720</sup>

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<sup>714</sup> Kevin Blackburn and Ryoko Nakano, ‘‘Memories of the Japanese Occupation and Nation building in Southeast Asia,’’ 43.

<sup>715</sup> Kevin Blackburn, ‘‘War Memory and Nation-building in South East Asia’’, 7.

<sup>716</sup> Kevin Blackburn, ‘‘War Memory and Nation-building in South East Asia’’, 31.

<sup>717</sup> <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2019-08-15/Chinese-Malaysians-keep-memories-of-Japanese-occupation-alive-JbpsinQzXq/index.html>

<sup>718</sup> Kevin Blackburn and Ryoko Nakano, ‘‘Memories of the Japanese Occupation and Nation building in Southeast Asia,’’ 34-43.

<sup>719</sup> Kevin Blackburn, Karl Hack, War Memory & The Making of Modern Malaysia, 259.

<sup>720</sup> Kevin Blackburn, Karl Hack, War Memory & The Making of Modern Malaysia, 257.

Although the government of Malaysia has avoided commemorating the Japanese Occupation in the name of nation-building, the Malaysians kept its memories alive.<sup>721</sup> The ghosts of the war, as called by Cheah Boon Kheng, such as ‘‘suffering, hardships, resistance, torture, horror and terror, are the evergreen memories in the public imagination.’’<sup>722</sup> The transition from an unobtrusive British Colonial Administration to the brutal and pragmatic Japanese Military Administration left an undeniable impact on the memories of the Malaysians.<sup>723</sup> The Japanese occupation of Malaya between 1941 and 1945 aroused different reactions among the major races in Malaysia to varying degrees, parallel to their values and experiences with the Japanese. According to Diana Wong, there is a plurality of meaning and memory to Japanese Occupation among Malays, Chinese, and Indians.<sup>724</sup> This chapter will deal with the different ethnic imaginations on Japanese occupation and will evaluate their Malaysian identities.

## 6.1 Malay Perspective on Japanese Occupation

A selective study, which is conducted by Abu Ahmad Talib to outline the memory of the war and the occupation on ordinary Malays, concludes that ‘‘events that are pleasant, important and sometimes traumatic are more remembered than others which are equally important from a wider historical perspective.’’<sup>725</sup> His study

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<sup>721</sup> Kevin Blackburn and Ryoko Nakano, ‘‘Memories of the Japanese Occupation and Nation building in Southeast Asia,’’ 43

<sup>722</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘The Blackout Syndrome and the Ghosts of World War I: The War as a Divisive Issue in Malaysia’’ in Daiv Koh Wee, *The Legacies of World War II in South and East Asia*, 47.

<sup>723</sup> Diana Wong, ‘‘Memory Suppression and Memory Production, The Japanese Occupation of Singapore’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 3.

<sup>724</sup> Diana Wong, ‘‘Memory Suppression and Memory Production, The Japanese Occupation of Singapore’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 2.

<sup>725</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, ‘‘The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 77.

focuses on six impacts of the occupation: ‘‘school days, songs, forced labor, jikeidan (self-defense corps), village mobilization, the Grow More Food Campaign, and Japanese policy on Islam.’’<sup>726</sup> The researcher will condense the memory of the Malays to education, village mobilization, and Japanese Islamic policy, Kempetai and the cession of four northern states to Thailand.

The war veterans who were between 60-66 years old recalls the harsh discipline instilled through ‘‘Nippon-go lessons, military drill and the cultivation of Seishin’’<sup>727</sup> Student and Teachers had to take part in ‘‘the trinity of Kimigayo, saikere and rajio taiso.’’ Facing the eastern direction of Tokyo, to the Imperial Palace, they were obligated to sing Kimiyago, followed by Saikare, a deep bow to Imperial Palace for Showa Tenno, and then undertake rajio taiso, the mass exercise drills accompanied with music. The Japanese-style tug of war as well as Japanese sports were part of their education. Gardening was used as a ‘‘double-pronged objectives of the Grow More Food Campaign’’, ‘‘to produce more food for Malai (Malaya) and to produce a more dedicated cadre of farmers to serve the Co-Prosperity Sphere’’ as school provided plots of land for students.<sup>728</sup> The veterans still reminisce how Malays fell as laborers and were unable to maintain their education due to food production campaigns coupled with diseases and malnutrition.<sup>729</sup> The teachers who served under Japan recalls the days how Junkai Sendantai (Travelling Propaganda Corp), headed by school teachers, traveled across Malaysia, from Perlis to the borders of Thailand to propagate for rural Malays. The Malay and Japanese

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<sup>726</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, ‘‘The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 46.

<sup>727</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, ‘‘The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 50.

<sup>728</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, ‘‘The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 47, 48,49.

<sup>729</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, ‘‘The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 47, 48,49.

songs that were instilled to indoctrinate the superiority of the Japanese while denouncing the West, especially the British are still alive in the memories of the war victims. The interviewed school teachers such as Shaballah who was in the corp is still able to sing the propagated songs such as "Tokyo Undo" (Tokyo chorus song) and "Haru ga Kita" (spring has come).''<sup>730</sup>

For Malays, one of the most unforgettable and tragic episodes of the occupation is forced labor and the method of recruitment. The Burma-Siam railway<sup>731</sup> (the Death Railway) undertaken between 1942-1943, was constructed by 250.000 laborers from Southeast Asia where 120.000 were brought to Malaya, 60.000 of them were described to be Malays, Chinese, and Indians, while the remaining were prisoners of war. It was a 420 km railway in length from Thailand to Burma, built to provide logistics and passage to Japanese troops.<sup>732</sup> The method of recruitment was conducted through deception and coercion by the Japanese Army, held co-jointly with village headmen. The majority of Malays volunteered for their old fathers as recalled by Kassim Mohamed from Tanah Merah and Abdul Rahman Yusof from Machang, or tricked like Alias Salleh, 71 years old with the promise of necessities, and a proper salary.<sup>733</sup> Malay laborers who were supposed to complete the construction in 16 months ''were provided with very basic working tools such as an axe, matchete, handsaw and changkul, with which they had to cut down trees, turn

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<sup>730</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, ''The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,'' in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 53.

<sup>731</sup> Other than Malays, Chinese and Indians, the rest were procured among the 50.000 Allied prisoners of war who were captured after the fall of Singapore. There were 686 American soldiers, of whom 131 died, 13,004 Australian soldiers, of whom 2802 died, 30,131 British of whom 6904 died, and 17, 990 Dutch soldiers, of whom 2782 died in the construction of the railway. This information could be found in the work of Frances Miley, ''In the valley of the shadow death; Accounting and Identity in Thai-Burma Railway prison camps 1942-1945''.

<sup>732</sup> Frances Miley, ''In the valley of the shadow death; Accounting and Identity in Thai-Burma Railway prison camps 1942-1945'' 4.

<sup>733</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, ''The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,'' in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 55.

these into logs and planks, transport them to the required sites, carry out earth works and construct bridges and embankments.”<sup>734</sup> Under primitive camp conditions, “pork was the usual fare served, its consumption was out of the question for Malays.”<sup>735</sup> Mat Ali Saud narrates that he escaped from Kelantan with nine people in the face of Japanese soldiers and Haji Hassan Abdul Samad, the second group, as narrated, had to kill a Japanese guard “to flee from pursuing captors and cross a river infested with hungry-looking crocodiles.” After staying in Thailand for some time, some of the groups were able to come back to Malaysia in December 1945.<sup>736</sup> As a result, 25% of them perished in the camps with no decent burials given.

The Japanese policy towards Islam gave the most harm to Malay Muslims during the initial stages of the war. In the first phase, Japan did not have coherent policies towards Islam and Sultans. The restrictions imposed by the Japanese have paralyzed the enforcement of Islamic Enactments. Religious officials were forbidden from conducting religious courses or talks if they did not have any permission from the local police. Certain religious days on the Muslim Calendar were forbidden.<sup>737</sup> After 1943, the Japanese policies took a swift turn towards Islam and Sultans. Although Muslim acts were promulgated by Japanese such as “the first day of Muharram (Muslim New Year), Aidhil Fitri, Aidhil Adha (festivities celebrating the Haj and the sacrifice of Abraham), the tenth day of Muharram, and even the religiously irrelevant Mandi Safar (bathing to purify the soul)”, the participation of Japanese officials in mosques and the bow to the Imperial Palace while on their

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<sup>734</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, “The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,” in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 55.

<sup>735</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, “The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,” in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 56.

<sup>736</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, “The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,” in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 56.

<sup>737</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, “The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,” in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 63.

praying mats, or the political speeches made by Japanese Chakans (governors) in the mosque were greatly resented by the Malays.<sup>738</sup> A teacher, interviewed from Ipoh stated that "Malays at that time were lost in their religious orientations."<sup>739</sup> Even in the 1944 Islamic Conference, the agenda of the Muslim delegates were comprised of issues such as:

the need for uniformity of the important dates in the Muslim calendar, like the beginning of fasting in the month of Ramadhan and Aidhil Fitri, the need to establish a Supreme Islamic Council for Malaya, the setting up of an Islamic high school (perhaps a prelude to an institution of higher learning), the need to punish Muslims of Penang, Melaka and Singapore who had flouted Islamic laws, as was done in other states according to the Islamic Enactments, requesting the M M A to take firm action against Muslims involved in gambling, asking the M M A to allow Muslim soldiers and policemen to fast during Ramadhan and religious teachers or ustaz to be given opportunities to give lectures on Islam to these soldiers and policemen."

Japan allowed these issues to be tackled under several conditions that "religion should never be politicized", "all delegates had to take a pledge of loyalty to the Showa Tenno (Showa Emperor, or Emperor Hirohito) and the Japanese empire" and "had to make a courtesy call on the Gunshireikan (commander-in-chief)." According to Abu Talib, the delegates were not brave enough to resist Japan from abusing Islam for religious purposes and condoned it.<sup>740</sup>

Other than the above-mentioned factors, Kempetai occupies the living memory of the indigenous people. For the first time in their colonial history, Malays witnessed extreme brutality directed against the Malay civil servants, who resisted against Japan. In the initial stages of the occupation, "Malay soldiers and policemen were summarily executed. Some were decapitated and their heads were put on

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<sup>738</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, "The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation," in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 63.

<sup>739</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, "The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation," in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 64.

<sup>740</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, "The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation," in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 67,68.



display for public view. Dozens were tortured before they were bayoneted to death.’’ Other Malays who were able to shy away from Japanese brutality were caught and ended up in detention camps. Khairuddin Al Junied portrays how Kempetai and their deeds were bitterly recalled by the war veterans; ‘’The Kempeitai subjected Malays who were suspected of sympathizing with the British to severe treatment: beatings, water torture, electric shocks, burning, dislocation of limbs, and threats of execution.’’<sup>741</sup> Junied proceeds that at no time in the history of Malaya’s indigenous people ‘’witnessed the killing of so many people within such a short period, murders that were committed in cold blood and without mercy.’’<sup>742</sup>

The secession of the four northern states of Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah, and Perlis to Thailand, is the least examined area in the living memory of the Malays. Due to being major rice-growing areas, the demography of Malaya was reduced and a significant portion of the area for source production was lost. Cheah Boon Kheng, states that ‘’the transfer of states marked the disillusionment with the Japanese military administration, and placed Malays numerically behind the Chinese in Malaya for the first time in their history.’’<sup>743</sup> Japan played on Malay fears of Chinese domination to cause a racial strife between 1944-1945 and succeeded it. The transfer was a betrayal to Malays which caused them some to join anti-Japanese Malays and some to wage holy war against the Chinese communist elements and Chinese community.<sup>744</sup>

Despite the hardship and difficulties experienced under the Japanese Occupation, the Malay community also perceived Japanese rule as a fulfillment of

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<sup>741</sup> Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied, *Radicals Resistance and Protest in Colonial Malaya*, 78.

<sup>742</sup> Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied, *Radicals Resistance and Protest in Colonial Malaya*, 78.

<sup>743</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 27.

<sup>744</sup> Abu Talib Ahmad, ‘’The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation,’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 76, 77.

the ‘‘Joyo boyo’’ prophecy, a belief that after a brief interlude of the Yellow Race, a native ruler will emerge and assist the local society to enter into an era of peace, prosperity, and social justice.<sup>745</sup> In a symposium ‘‘Pendudukan Jepun Di Tanah Melayu, 1942-45’’, the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1942-1945, held in the 15th anniversary of the war veterans, Malay participants stated that they do not view the occupation negatively as it acted as a catalyst to achieve Malayan independence.<sup>746</sup> Malays imagination on occupation ‘‘promotes the occupation as a catalyst in the awakening of Malay nationalism, leading to decolonization and self-determination.’’<sup>747</sup> The general feeling of the Malays can be described by the words of Patricia Lim where she narrates in ‘‘War and Ambivalence Monuments and Memorials in Johor’’: ‘‘Malays feel that three and a half years of hardship was a small price to pay. One of them said to me, ‘‘the Japanese fought our war for us.’’<sup>748</sup>

## 6.2 Chinese Perspective on Japanese Occupation

For the Chinese Community, the Japanese Occupation ‘‘marked not the beginning, but the continuation of a chain of events which had begun in China with the outbreak of the Sino-Japanese War in 1936.’’<sup>749</sup> Since Japanese nationality policy was supportive towards the Malays and encouraging towards the Indians, it was mainly

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<sup>745</sup> Syed Muhd Khairuddin Aljunied, *Radicals Resistance and Protest in Colonial Malaya*, 75.

<sup>746</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘Memory as History and Moral Judgement, Oral and Written Accounts of the Japanese Occupation’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen, *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 35.

<sup>747</sup> Franchis Tay, ‘‘Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia’’ in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 222

<sup>748</sup> Patricia Lim Pui Huen, ‘‘War and Ambivalence Monuments and Memorials in Johor’’ in *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 139.

<sup>749</sup> Diana Wong, ‘‘Memory Suppression and Memory Production, The Japanese Occupation of Singapore’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 2.

the Chinese community who bore the brunt of Japanese aggression.<sup>750</sup> Chinese imagination of the occupation is dominated by ‘‘a sense of victimhood which they see as exclusive to themselves.’’<sup>751</sup> The wartime memory is colored by the ‘‘mass killings, summary executions, rape, forced labor, arbitrary detention, and torture.’’<sup>752</sup> For the majority of the war-veterans, the Japanese experience reaches to the core of the Chinese identity. The Japanese atrocities that were directed against the Chinese were committed simply because they were Chinese.<sup>753</sup> The collective suffering, where the Chinese developed a fictive kinship, as classified by Kevin Blackburn, has enhanced the Chinese sense of community. The Chinese gained power and understanding ‘‘out of this shared past and affirmation of their identity.’’<sup>754</sup> The bloody war experience under Japan, the loss of families, relatives, properties, and homes, increased Chinese dependence on the land they were fought on and empowered Chinese identity. Before the arrival of Japan, the Chinese sense of belonging was given to China while their attachment to Southeast Asia was given only cursory. The Japanese occupation fostered affinity between the Chinese in Malaya and Singapore and the land.<sup>755</sup>

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<sup>750</sup> Franchis Tay, ‘‘Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia’’ in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 222.

<sup>751</sup> Kevin Blackburn, ‘‘Recalling War Trauma of the Pacific War and the History of Malaysia in the Oral History of Malaysia and Singapore’’ 244.

<sup>752</sup> Franchis Tay, ‘‘Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia’’ in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 221.

<sup>753</sup> Kevin Blackburn, ‘‘Recalling War Trauma of the Pacific War and the History of Malaysia in the Oral History of Malaysia and Singapore’’ 245.

<sup>754</sup> Kevin Blackburn, ‘‘Recalling War Trauma of the Pacific War and the History of Malaysia in the Oral History of Malaysia and Singapore’’ 244.

<sup>755</sup> Diana Wong, ‘‘Memory Suppression and Memory Production, The Japanese Occupation of Singapore’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 6.

Pertaining to the evocative war-time attributes, the Sook Ching massacre has become the symbol of the Japanese Occupation.<sup>756</sup> In the Sook Ching operations, the estimated number of massacres purged in Singapore and Malaysia ranged between 6000 (according to the Japanese) and 50,000 (according to the Chinese).<sup>757</sup> Several mass graves left a scar on the post-war Chinese Community in Malaysia. Francis Tay exemplifies three mass graves to show how the Chinese are left on their own to construct their historiography in Malaysia, and how the Chinese departed from ethnic historiography to national history-making under a Malay-dominated state to gain recognition for their war-time past.

The Bukit Dunbar Mass Grave of Penang was publicized in 1946 when the British Military Administration launched investigations to objectify the war crimes not only committed by the Japanese soldiers, but also the civilian collaborators. In the light of given testimonies, the mass grave was excavated with no medical officers or forensic scientists. The aim was to provide evidence to show how people were murdered in cold blood. The excavation was cursory and the investigation stopped after unearthing 232 skulls.<sup>758</sup> A joint Memorial Committee was established ‘‘to collect the remains of victims from various sites and rebury them in a dedicated memorial site.’’<sup>759</sup> The Chinese Associations in Malaya were consulted about the mass grave and were allowed to reinter the remains. With the help of the Chinese Relief Fund, other remains were reinterred ‘‘beneath an obelisk commemorating ‘‘the Penang Overseas Chinese war victims, compatriots, and transport workers’’. In

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<sup>756</sup> Francis Tay, ‘‘Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia’’ in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 221.

<sup>757</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, ‘‘Memory as History and Moral Judgement, Oral and Written Accounts of the Japanese Occupation’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen, *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 32.

<sup>758</sup> Francis Tay, ‘‘Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia’’ in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 224.

<sup>759</sup> [https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP\\_40\\_2005-01-24.html](https://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/infopedia/articles/SIP_40_2005-01-24.html)

the final resting place, excavations were ‘‘transmuted into symbolic representations of the Chinese fallen, not in Penang or even Malaya alone, but martyrs in China’s ‘War of Resistance to Japan.’’’ On 11 November 1951, the community leaders of Malayan Chinese ‘‘re-dedicated the site as a Chinese anti-war memorial.’’<sup>760</sup>

The exhumation in Parit Tinggi, Negeri Sembilan, in 1982 was facilitated by the local Chinese Community Associations, a committee established to raise funds for exhumation and to build memorials. The Association is chaired by 70-year-old Xiao Wen Hu, who was among the 30 survivors when Captain Iwata Mitsugi ordered the Parit Tinggi village in Kuala Pilah District to be razed to the ground. Francis Tay states that 675 civilians were killed before the village was destroyed. With the help of hired laborer’s who were made to use unscientific tools such as hoes and baskets, the remains were reinterred in the Kuala Pilah Chinese cemetery until the completion of a permanent memorial in 1984, where the Chinese community comprised of war veterans, victims’ relatives, Chinese media, and representatives of various Chinese organizations unveiled the permanent memorial. As explained by Francis Tay, the excavations contributed to the empowerment of the Chinese communal sentiment under the banner of common victimhood.<sup>761</sup>

The Batu Caves excavation that was held in 2002, was led by Liew Yew Kiew, an 89-year-old Chinese villager from Sungai Tua, Batu Caves. He chaired the ‘‘Chinese press, Chinese association members, and Quek Jin Teck, secretary-general of the Malaysian Chinese Cultural Society ‘‘ to retrieve the remains of ‘‘9-1 Martyrs’’, when their mass grave was subjected to a state land redevelopment

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<sup>760</sup> Francis Tay, ‘‘Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia’’ in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 223,224,225,

<sup>761</sup> Francis Tay, ‘‘Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia’’ in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 225,226,227.

project. Known as the 1 September 1942 events, where Chinese villagers were killed and members of MPAJA were beheaded and displayed in a clash held between MPAJA and the Japanese, the martyr's symbolic traces were transferred to Nilai Memorial Park and the relocation occurred with 100 Chinese community leaders and politicians. In 2003, the 9-1 Memorial was unveiled with the participation of the “Chinese press, Chinese political and community leaders, as well as 100, visiting former MPAJA and Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) veterans from China.” The memorial aimed to provide a message that the people who died were; “Malayan/Malaysian martyrs; their sacrifice was not limited to the Second Sino-Japanese War cause, but they had also acted out of patriotism for Malaya.” The Chinese also decided to erect an additional monument in the same location for the remembrance of Malayan war heroes. In 2007, the monument was unveiled as an anti-war memorial by Chinese participants only comprised of “Chinese community leaders, politicians, and MPAJA veterans.”<sup>762</sup>

Since national history and historiography have been in the service of Malay supremacy, “the minority war histories are left to themselves, without the sponsorship of the state, to write their histories, to nurture their own cultures, and to commemorate their wartime past.”<sup>763</sup> From the government viewpoint, the sensitive issues were left unchecked because of the deepening strife between major races. For the Chinese community, as stated by Francis Tay, the excavations which resulted with permanent memorials “have reinserted their collective memory into the

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<sup>762</sup> Francis Tay, “Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia” in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 231.

<sup>763</sup> Francis Tay, “Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia” in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 232.

historiography of the occupation’’.<sup>764</sup> The rejection of the government reaffirms that the national history is in the service of Malay supremacy.

### 6.3 Indian Perspective on Japanese Occupation

According to P. Ramasamy, the memory of the Japanese occupation which brought hardship to the Indian Community revolved around three interrelated themes:

‘‘hardship and struggle, heightened sense of political consciousness, and disillusionment and re-orientation.’’<sup>765</sup>

The most tragic event etched in the memory of Indian war veterans is forced labor. The hardship and struggle began with the elevation of former estate clerical staff to managerial positions in the plantation system, previously held by Europeans. The clerical staff ‘‘imposed the worst forms of regimentation in the plantations.’’<sup>766</sup> The imposed labor quota on the clerical staff were filled with blackmail, threats, and other kinds of methods to recruit the Indian workforce for Thailand. The zealous methods of recruitment were imposed especially on the newly married males while their wives were taken as mistresses. An estate staff called Si Van in the Pal Melayu Estate gathered all the men to work on the railway and said ‘‘all the women whose husbands had been taken away to consider themselves as their husband.’’<sup>767</sup>

According to a documentary Siam-Burma: Marana Railpathai (Siam-Burma Death Railway) conducted by P. Kurinjivendan, an academician, more than 150,000 Tamil laborers who were sent to Thailand and Myanmar lost their lives and only 35,000

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<sup>764</sup> Franchis Tay, ‘‘Remembering the Japanese Occupation Massacres: mass graves in the post-war Malaysia’’ in *Human Remains and Identification, Mass Violence, Genocide, and the Forensic Turn* by Elisabeth Anstett, Jean-March Dreyfus, 232.

<sup>765</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 92.

<sup>766</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 93.

<sup>767</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 94.

were claimed return home after the war ended.<sup>768</sup> After 1945, the agenda of the left-wing unions such as the Pan Malayan Federation of Trade Unions, a labor affiliate of MCP, stood up for compensation ‘‘to be paid to the families of the laborer’s who had died in Siam.’’<sup>769</sup> The interviewed veterans who survived the period condemn the silence of the Malaysian government and think that the ‘‘Japanese Government should provide financial compensation for those families who had suffered.’’<sup>770</sup> Apart from railway projects, the ‘‘working-class felt compelled to join the INA and IIL to escape the cruelty and harshness of the Occupation, as it was guaranteeing a more honorable end in the cause of one’s country.’’<sup>771</sup>

The Indian clerical and middle classes bitterly experienced the harshness of the Japanese Military Rule. On the eve of the invasion, sections of these groups escaped to India by leaving their establishments and properties with agents. The estate staff who were sub-communal groups comprised of Malayalee and Ceylonese members, could not escape and stayed in the country. P. Ramasamy states that it was due to the fear of Japanese and death that made them accommodate themselves with the Japanese and commit the worst crimes towards the Indian class.<sup>772</sup> They were also forced to join the quest for Indian independence even though it was not the quest of these sub communal groups. All these sub-communal members joined the movement parallel to the announcement of Japan, that the reluctant ones would be

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<sup>768</sup> The Real Kwai killed over 1.50 lakh Tamils, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/tamil-nadu/The-real-Kwai-killed-over-1.50-lakh-Tamils/article14593113.ece>

<sup>769</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 94.

<sup>770</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 94.

<sup>771</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 95.

<sup>772</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 96, 97.



punished as traitors and the maintenance of racial distinctions such as Ceylonese, Malayalee and Muslims would not be tolerated.

Despite the hardship and struggle, the Japanese occupation also meant a memory of nationalism and heroism that could be transferred to younger generations in the post-war years.<sup>773</sup> They recall how the Japanese massive assistance to INA and IIL in the liberation of India ‘‘psychologically enhanced their self-importance.’’<sup>774</sup> The act of revenge towards the British for their exploitation and ill-treatment of labor, the idea of playing a great role in the cause of an independent India, and ‘‘the opportunity to get even with their colonial masters who had ill-treated and exploited them’’ captured the imaginations of Indian working class.<sup>775</sup> As stated by Michael Stenson, ‘‘as a consequence of the establishment of IIL and INA, Indians were suddenly elevated from being pariahs of the British Malaya to a most favored community status under the Japanese.’’<sup>776</sup> In addition to self-importance, INA ‘‘gave a sense of unprecedented communal solidarity’’ and for the first time in the history of the immigrant population, all Indians of sub-communal groups united under a single movement for a common cause.<sup>777</sup>

The disillusionment and reorientation phase came up with INA’s failure to liberate India at the Imphal Campaign. Participation in INA reviled the sense of dignity and self-worth of the ordinary citizens. Despite the failure to liberate India, Indians quickly reoriented themselves to the socio-political and economic realities of

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<sup>773</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 97.

<sup>774</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 98.

<sup>775</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 98.

<sup>776</sup> Micheal Stenson, *Class, Race, and Colonialism in West Malaysia*, 92.

<sup>777</sup> P. Ramasamy, ‘‘Indian War Memory in Malaysia’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 99.

Malaya.<sup>778</sup> The Indians' involvement in INA was narrated as a 'memorable event because it provided a chance of a lifetime, to settle old scores with their colonial masters.'<sup>779</sup> The Indians' agenda turned towards reorientation so that they could accommodate themselves with the Malayan realities. The struggle against British colonialism was maintained under the ranks of communist-dominated organizations and left-wing trade unions. The MCP forged the struggle and MPAJA, its military wing, kept recruiting Indian labor and assigned them greater roles in various left-wing organizations in the post-war political process.<sup>780</sup>

Although the experiences of the Chinese community are mainly exemplified to color the war-years of Malaya under Japanese military rule, all Malays, Indians, and Chinese experienced the dark side of the occupation in bitter and different ways. The Japanese politics of ethnicity that reversed the pre-war British-made racial fabric of the Peninsula, has created an ethnic order where the Chinese would turn the ethnic misfortune bitterly experienced into ethnic accusations in the post-war Malaya, which shaped the post-war process of nation-building. The racial groups in Malaya who played leading roles in the politics of ethnicity of Japan between 1942-1945, experienced the dark side of the occupation through their ethnicities. Herewith, the Japanese occupation empowered the sense of identity of major races in Malaysia to the extent that the identity became more pronounced with the implementation of the nationality policy of Japan. The ethnic imaginations of identity in Malaysia, a country whose contemporary politics was established on Malay ethnocracy, evolved

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<sup>778</sup> P. Ramasamy, 'Indian War Memory in Malaysia' in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 104.

<sup>779</sup> P. Ramasamy, 'Indian War Memory in Malaysia' in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 104.

<sup>780</sup> P. Ramasamy, 'Indian War Memory in Malaysia' in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong's, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 102, 103.

from ethnic identity to authority-defined identity, which is Bangsa Malaysia, a patch in the nation-building process of Malaysia.

#### 6.4 Ethnic Imaginations on Malaysian Identity

The Vision 2020, the country's 30-year development plan that was introduced by Mahathir Mohamad in 1991, aimed to transform Malaysia into an established and fully modernized nation-state only if several challenges would be tackled. Among the outlined challenges, the immediate concern was to establish 'a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny.'<sup>781</sup> The Vision idealized a solution for ethnic integration; the creation of 'Bangsa Malaysia, a united Malay nation, with political loyalty and dedication to the nation'<sup>782</sup> It was introduced so that people will absorb 'the original culture and language of the country'.<sup>783</sup>

Bangsa Malaysia is not actually Malay. It's an adoption of some of the original culture and language of the country, that's all. You will still be a Chinese but your home language is Malay, you don't have to change your religion. I think if there are a lot of similarities, more than differences, then you'll have a Bangsa Malaysia. That's what I had in mind when I put down one of the nine objectives [of Vision 2020].'<sup>784</sup>

Shamsul A, B, distinctly clarifies the proposal of Mahathir Mohammad's concept of Bangsa Malaysia which is 'a nation-state in which the constitutionally recognized Malay special position retained' in the existing federation and the legal bureaucratic structures.<sup>785</sup> This concept is dissimilar to Lee Kuan Yew's concept of Malaysian Malaysia of 1965, where a unitary nation-state with equal rights for all was deemed necessary. The nation of intent designed under the premiership of Dato

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<sup>781</sup> <http://www.wawasan2020.com/vision/p2.html>

<sup>782</sup> <http://www.wawasan2020.com/vision/p2.html>

<sup>783</sup> <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/vision-2020-mission-unrealised-dr-m-race-and-religion-got-way-bangsa-malaysia-under-vision>

<sup>784</sup> <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/vision-2020-mission-unrealised-dr-m-race-and-religion-got-way-bangsa-malaysia-under-vision>

<sup>785</sup> Shamsul A.B, In search of Bangsa Malaysia: The Politics of Identity in Multi Ethnic Malaysia'' 60.

Onn Ja'faar, Tunku Abdur Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak, and Dr. Mahathir Mohamad set the pattern of a Malay dominated plural society.<sup>786</sup> The state-sponsored official nationalism constitutionally styled Malaysia as a Malay-based nation.

In the context of indigenous history, the Peninsular Malaysia is a country that has been known as Tanah Melayu long before the rise of the Malacca Sultanate in the 14th century. Furthermore, the Malays have always been known as the legitimate sons of the Malay World who originated from the region.<sup>787</sup> Unlike colonial constructions, the Malays had been the pioneers of sovereign political establishment and institutions with effective administration, beginning with pre-historic times and climaxed with the Malacca Sultanate. According to Od. M. Anwar and Wan Ahmad Fauzi ‘‘the legitimacy of the Malays regarded as Bumiputera, the sons of the soil, had been constituted by the legitimate, supreme indigenous institution, the Malay Sultanates.’’ The Malays had constituted the geo-political entity, called Tanah Melayu (The Malay Land) on their own long before the emergence of colonialism.’’<sup>788</sup>

According to Shamsul A, the identity formation has always been driven by authority-defined realities where the dominant power structure had the legitimacy to define the subjects in the power structure. In the colonial context, Malay identity has been an authority-defined concept, and ‘‘Malay and Malayness were re-created within the framework of colonial knowledge.’’<sup>789</sup> With the arrival of colonialism, the indigenusness of the Malay community was replaced by heterogeneous colonial

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<sup>786</sup> Shamsul A.B, In search of Bangsa Malaysia: The Politics of Identity in Multi Ethnic Malaysia’’ 62.

<sup>787</sup> Od. M. Anwar, Wan Ahmad Fauzi Wan Husai ‘‘ Legitimacy of the Malays as *the Sons of the Soil*’’ 75.

<sup>788</sup> Od. M. Anwar, Wan Ahmad Fauzi Wan Husai ‘‘ Legitimacy of the Malays as *the Sons of the Soil*’’ 75.

<sup>789</sup> Shamsul, A.B. ‘‘ Malay and Malayness in Malaysia Reconsidered: a Critical Review,’’78.

designs of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, between 1511 and 1940. With the arrival of the British, the “disruptive political, economic and social pressures resulting from British colonial rule and mass immigration of the Chinese and Indians to Malaya, produced a crisis of Malay self-identity in the latter part of the nineteenth century.”<sup>790</sup> With the formation of British Malaya, Malay was boiled down to a race status shared by the immigrant Chinese and Indian populations and became a social category in British Malaya. With the arrival of Japan, the ethnic political design under the Malacca Sultanate in the context of indigenous rule was modelled and centralized the whole political system around a core ethnic: the Bangsa Melayu, the Malay race. The contemporary Malaysian identity is employed from the methods of past centuries. The system that was devised under the Malacca Sultanate where “the founders established their language and culture as the basis of a new society composed of immigrant and local Malays”<sup>791</sup>, was adopted in the formation of Malay Malaysia where non-Malay groups adjusted themselves to the standards of Malay society.<sup>792</sup>

Owing to the dominant Malay nationalist’ agenda, “the three core ethnic identifiers of “Malayness”- bahasa, agama, raja (language, religion, and royalty)- have been utilized by the Malay political leadership in public policies to reflect Malay hegemonic status in the Malaysian polity.”<sup>793</sup> After the surrender of Japan, the Malay nationalists found ways to implement the political, economic, and cultural supremacy for the consolidation of Malay identity. The political agenda aimed to liberate Malaysia from alien control and establish the political hegemony of Malays. The economic agenda designed to balance the economic imbalances that were aimed

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<sup>790</sup> Heng Pek Koon, “Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony in Peninsular Malaysia 1957-96,” 32.

<sup>791</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 303

<sup>792</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 303

<sup>793</sup> Heng Pek Koon, “Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony in Peninsular Malaysia 1957-96,” 32.

at Malays by the British, and to tackle Malay backwardness in every field of life. The cultural agenda aimed to fulfill nation-building based on ‘‘Malay cultural attributes: Islam and Malay language.’’<sup>794</sup>

Since 1948, the Malay’s political and cultural superiority was officially recognized by the British in the face of strong mobilization of all Malays and later reinforced in the 1957 independence constitution, while the economic agenda remained unenforceable until 1969.<sup>795</sup> Anthony Reid portrays Malay’s recognition in the political field as:

The conflict between ethnic and civic nationalism had to be skirted around, in a formula which finally granted a single Malayan nationality, but only after hard bargaining for concessions which would acknowledge the definitive position of bangsa Melayu at the core – chiefly in symbolic forms and the ‘Malay privileges’ in education and government service.<sup>796</sup>

Before the formation of the Alliance, comprised of the Malayan Chinese Association and the Malayan Indian Congress, the non-Malay struggle went on with the left-wing radical factions such as the Malay Nationalist Party and Malayan Communist Party, whose sole aim was to establish a common ground for all racial groups and to decolonize Malaya from British rule. With the formation of an alliance with moderate racial-based parties and the initiation of independence, the left-wing struggle came to naught and the demands for civic nationalism were accommodated around Malay ethnocracy which was enforced in the aftermath of the 13 May riots in 1969. After the 1969 crisis, the voice of the opposition in regard to national sovereignty was eliminated through constitutional amendment, and also the National Culture Policy that was adopted by the Malaysian government set the Ketuanan Melayu (Supremacy of Malay culture) as the national identity.

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<sup>794</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony in Peninsular Malaysia 1957-96,’’ 33.

<sup>795</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony in Peninsular Malaysia 1957-96,’’ 33.

<sup>796</sup> Anthony Reid, *Understanding Melayu (Malay) as a Source of Diverse Modern Identities*, 309.

Defining Malayness in a Malaysian context, Malaysia is a Malay-first nation-state, where the Malayization of Malaysia can be summed through Article 3, Article 160(2), and Article 153. According to Article 3, ‘‘Islam is the religion of the Federation; but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the Federation.’’<sup>797</sup> All Malays, by the constitution, are Muslims and are first-class citizens while the rest were expected to adjust themselves to race-based politics and privileges.’’<sup>798</sup> The Malaysian Constitution defines a Malay as follows: ‘‘a Malay is a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, and conforms to Malay custom.’’<sup>799</sup> ‘‘Malayness’’ is a legal construct. One is a Malay if one satisfies certain legal conditions. ... An individual who meets these requirements is a Malay and all such individuals are automatically citizens enjoying rights in the nation.’’<sup>800</sup> Malays and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak ‘‘are officially classified as Bumiputera and are accorded a variety of constitutionally enshrined special rights or privileges.’’<sup>801</sup> According to Article 153, ‘‘it shall be the responsibility of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong to safeguard the special position of the Malays and natives of any of the States of Sabah and Sarawak and the legitimate interests of other communities in accordance with the provisions of this Article.’’<sup>802</sup> The special positions are reserved in ‘‘public service, scholarships, educational or training privileges, special facilities, permits, licenses and university places.’’<sup>803</sup>

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<sup>797</sup> Article 3, Federal Constitution, Reprint, As at 1 November 2010.

<sup>798</sup> <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/malaysia-needs-to-figure-out-its-malay-first-policy-jakarta-post-columnist>

<sup>799</sup> Article 160 (2), Federal Constitution, Reprint, As at 1 November 2010.

<sup>800</sup> Mahathir Mohamad, *A Doctor in the House: The Memoirs of Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad*, 31.

<sup>801</sup> Abdul Rashid Moten, *Government and Politics in Malaysia*, Moten, 9.

<sup>802</sup> Article 153, Federal Constitution, Reprint, As at 1 November 2010.

<sup>803</sup> <https://www.malaysiakini.com/news/448630>

The voices of non-Bumiputras mainly consist of Chinese and Indians who have been marginalized or muted in the formation of national identity.<sup>804</sup> Totaling a population of 32.7 million people, Malaysia's ethnic composition comprised of 69.6 percent Bumiputera, 22.3 percent Chinese, and 6.8 percent Indians.<sup>805</sup> The Chinese and Indians form the second and the third largest groups in Malaysia. On account of their minority community status, not only the socio-political and economic life of the Chinese and Indian community has changed under the Malay hegemonic state but also the formation of their identity shaped by the political initiatives emanating from the dominant Malay community.<sup>806</sup> They recognize the state-centered official nationalism and conform to the standards of the Malaysian nationalist agenda. The Chinese and Indians who strived to establish civic-nationalism, yet failed in the end, regard Malays as their rulers.<sup>807</sup>

The Malaysian Chinese ‘‘identify themselves as Malaysians whose roots stretch back to China but whose loyalties as citizens are given exclusively to the Malaysian nation-state.’’<sup>808</sup> The Chinese responded to the Malay hegemonic reality by absorbing the Malay cultural elements which were previously acknowledged as exclusive standards of Malays such as the Malay rulers and the Malay language, except for the Islamic religion. Heng Pek Koon portrays the Malaysian experience of Chinese as such:

Sultans now accept Chinese as loyal subjects and confer honorific titles and awards to Chinese public figures, and members of royal families participate as partners and patrons in Chinese businesses. At the same time, increasing

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<sup>804</sup> Shamsul A.B, ‘‘In Search of Bangsa Malaysia: The Politics of Identity in Multi Ethnic Malaysia’’ 59.

<sup>805</sup> [https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=155&bul\\_id=OVByWjg5YkQ3MWFZRTN5bDJiaEVhZz09&menu\\_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09](https://www.dosm.gov.my/v1/index.php?r=column/cthemByCat&cat=155&bul_id=OVByWjg5YkQ3MWFZRTN5bDJiaEVhZz09&menu_id=L0pheU43NWJwRWVSZklWdzQ4TlhUUT09)

<sup>806</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘ Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony in Peninsular Malaysia 1957-1996, 32.

<sup>807</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, 303.

<sup>808</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘ Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony in Peninsular Malaysia 1957-1996, 52.



numbers of Chinese are becoming as fluent in Bahasa Malaysia as Malays.’’<sup>809</sup>

In the case of Indians, the Malay-dominated politics created ‘‘dispossessed, impoverished, illiterate and politically marginalized Indians, sandwiched between politically powerful Malays and economically powerful Chinese.’’<sup>810</sup> The insufficient leadership of MIC forced Indians to fall victim to the state’s pro-Malay policies. In 2007, the lack of representation and the Bumiputra politics of government that submerges thousands of Indians, saw the largest protest against the government since independence. A lawsuit was filed to London in the lead of HINDRAF, the Hindu Rights Action Force on behalf of two million ethnic Indians demanding one million sterling compensation money in which the British had to be held accountable ‘‘for shipping millions of Tamil-speaking South Indians to Malaya and later abandoning them without adequate safeguards for their position, rights, and future.’’<sup>811</sup> The motive behind the eruption of Indian’s rage was related to ‘‘growing frustrations over the endemic poverty plaguing the community due to a lack of job opportunities, spots in public universities and business licenses, as well as the demolition of Hindu temples by authorities.’’<sup>812</sup> Being part of the non-Bumiputra population and holding a small demographic weight for political power, Indians are economically, educationally, and religiously in a disadvantaged position that also stemmed from the Bumiputra policies.

In light of these difficulties, ‘‘the first generation of Indians had to adapt to local society and culture. The second generation re-emphasized a common Indian

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<sup>809</sup> Heng Pek Koon, ‘‘Chinese Responses to Malay Hegemony in Peninsular Malaysia 1957-1996, 53.

<sup>810</sup> Vibhanshu Shekhar, ‘‘Malay Majoritarianism and Marginalised Indians’’, 25.

<sup>811</sup> <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/indians-2/>

<sup>812</sup> <https://edition.cnn.com/2017/08/30/asia/independence-malaysia-race-religion/index.html>

culture, while the third generation, who are the subjects of this article, are moving towards a westernized lifestyle and Malaysianized way of living.’’<sup>813</sup>

The Vision 2020 is proved to be a failure in creating the Malaysian identity, according to Mahathir Mohammad, who stated that as Malaysians ‘‘we still talk about Chinese Malaysians, Indian Malaysians, Malays and all that, so we don’t have a Bangsa Malaysia.’’<sup>814</sup> There is no Malaysian Race with a single language as expected to happen in Indonesia where the mother tongue of the Chinese community is Bahasa Indonesia.<sup>815</sup> The language that non-Malays insist to preserve, and the religion of the federation, which is Islam, does not allow complete assimilation among Malays and non-Malays. Other than these two constructs, the Bumiputra policies are one of the disincentives in front of the creation of the Malaysian race. In terms of a full-fledged achieved Malaysian identity, it could be said that Malaysia is a country on the way of reducing differences and increasing similarities between Malays and non-Malays to create a Malaysian identity embraced by all major races in Malaysia.

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<sup>813</sup> Wong Ngan Ling and Lau Kui Ling, ‘‘Voices of Third Generation Malaysian Indians: Malaysian or Malaysian Indian’’, 45.

<sup>814</sup> <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/vision-2020-mission-unrealised-dr-m-race-and-religion-got-way-bangsa-malaysia-under-vision>

<sup>815</sup> <https://www.theedgemarkets.com/article/vision-2020-mission-unrealised-dr-m-race-and-religion-got-way-bangsa-malaysia-under-vision>

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

This research suggests that the contemporary ethnic political developments in the establishment of Malay-Malaysia are a by-product of Japanese imperialism between 1941-1945, whose military nature intentionally polarized the impenetrable group boundaries, which was established parallel to the colonial needs of the British Administration. This study concludes that the Japanese occupation of Malaysia was highly calculated in the reversal of the British colonial order and in the acceleration of Malay nationalism and partially non-Malay nationalism to last in the post-war ethnic politics that was in the making between 1945 and 1969. The nature of the Japanese occupation transformed the previously-fragmented political backwater; the British Malaya, whose natives were wretched by the political ill-fate of the British Administration, into a nation-state where the status quo of the Malacca Sultanate in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was employed and modeled as a method to maintain plural unity under Malay political primacy.

The eventful 1941-1945 period covered in Chapter two is highly central to understand how the Japanese occupation created a continuation for post-war political development in Malaysia by transforming a political backwater into a political maelstrom. The inclusion of Malaya into the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere surfaced native and non-native nationalist movements which previously showed no signs of life Malaya-wide under British occupation, and politically re-oriented the allegiance of non-Malays to their place of temporary residence. Japan provided a new youthful and military face to all nationalist movements in Malaya. The Malays' sense of belonging, which was fragmented before, was made part of a greater cause within

the Greater Indonesia ideal of Kesatuan Melayu Muda, a radical Malay left movement that aimed for Malaya's independence within Indonesia Raya. The sphere brought a Pacific-wide Asian identity while its support of KMM nationalists brought a new Malaya-wide belonging. Apart from Malay nationalism, the Japanese occupation eclipsed non-Malayan nationalist inclinations of the Chinese and Indian, who fought on the Malayan soils back to Malaya. The emergence of the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army, a mainly Chinese-dominated anti-resistance force mushroomed in the jungle by the survivors of the Dalforce, a unit established to defend Malaya. Japan not only caused an Anglo-Communist collaboration in the initial phases of the war but also caused the politicization of the Malayan Communist Party and the militarization of its military wing; the MPAJA. For Indians, the establishment of the Indian Independence League and the Indian Liberation Army brought a transformation 'from being the pariahs of the British to a most-favored community status under the Japanese.'<sup>816</sup>

The literature on the post-contributions of Japanese occupation lacks clarity on Malay-nationalism and non-Malay nationalism. In this context, Chapter four has evaluated the impacts of the Japanese occupation by probing whether or not Japan acted as a catalyst in the formation of post-war ethnic conflicts in Malaysia. It is found that the Japanese occupation was the turning of race relations in Malaysia. The Japanese trisected the already-septate Malay nationalism into a Malaya-wide Malay religious nationalism, Malaya-wide Malay political nationalism, and Malay economic nationalism, beginning in 1945 and ending in 1969.

This study concluded that Japan intentionally triggered the establishment of Malay Malaysia through the use of the Islamic religion 'because the best way to

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<sup>816</sup> Michael Stanson, *Class Race & Colonialism in West Malaysia*, 92.

arouse and to unite the Malays was through their Islamic religion”.<sup>817</sup> Islam was utilized as a wartime propaganda weapon for the social mobilization of the Malays to help them resist British colonialism and Chinese Guerrillas during and after the war. Although not included in this research, Japan was not as prepared as they were in Indonesia during the initial stages of the war. After 1943, they decided to educate the Islamic kiyais in Indonesia, and Japanese officials gave concessions to Islamic leaders to magnify the political mobilization of the Muslim people in the actualization of the Japanese war effort.<sup>818</sup> Japan established Masyumi, the Consultative Council of Indonesian Muslims, and stepped up its importance at the governmental level. The most vital part of the program was the training of Indonesian Ulama’s which was held between 1943 and 1945. According to Harry J Benda, the training of the Islamic scholars was “to politicize Indonesian Islam at the village level.”<sup>819</sup> The village-wide mobilization of the Islamic Kiyais in Malaysia also fermented in 1943 and 1944.

During the initial stages of the war, Japan was determined to win the popular support of the natives in Malaya, yet experienced a trial and error period<sup>820</sup> before the implementation of the Islamic policy between 1941-1943. This period saw the punitive measures of the hard-line strategists take the stage concerning Sultans and Muslim Malays parallel to Japan’s nationality policy. This period colored Japan’s Islamic policy with inconsistencies. According to Yoji Akashi, the contradictions and inconsistencies for Islamic policy formulation stemmed from “the expediency and haphazardness with which M.M.A dealt with Sultans and from the absence of clear-

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<sup>817</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya: Resistance and Social Conflict During and After the Japanese Occupation*, 206.

<sup>818</sup> Saiful Umam, “Historiography of Japanese Islamic Policy in Indonesia” 80.

<sup>819</sup> Harry J. Benda, *The Crescent and the Rising Sun: Indonesian Islam under the Japanese Occupation, 1942-1945*, 135.

<sup>820</sup> Saiful Umam, “Historiography of Japanese Islamic Policy in Indonesia” 78.

cut statements on the ultimate dispositions of Sultans.”<sup>821</sup> Japan violated its non-interference principle on Islamic matters in Malaya. During this period, Malays were made to “reconcile themselves ... to bow to the Imperial Palace while still on their prayer mats, necessitating a 180-degree turn from the direction of the Ka'aba in Mecca, or to listen to the Japanese Chakan (governor) making political speeches from inside the mosques.”<sup>822</sup> Islamic enactments became unenforceable which led to a “decline of Islamic morality.” After realizing that Japan’s actions were conflicting with Japan’s grand strategy of winning the popular support of the Malays in 1943, Japan turned to a moderation phase. Japan’s Islamic policy saw a radical departure from apathy and indifference to a Holy War propaganda. It was Japan who reconciled themselves to an all-around Islamic policy to win the Malays and to create a post-war situation in Malaya before the arrival of the British Administration. This policy manifested itself in two forms; the Holy War propagation and Frame-Ups. In the former, it was decided that Islamic religious functionaries to be re-trained at a Japanese training school, which was “patterned after the re-educational program of the Islamic Kyais which had been underway in Java.”<sup>823</sup> This policy necessitated the convening of two Islamic conferences as claimed by Yoji Akashi.<sup>824</sup> Japan convened two Islamic conferences that were purely jihadist in which Malays were made to believe “Japan under the Showa Tenno was undertaking a holy war, a jihad, to save mankind from rapacious Britain and the United States, and Muslims in Malai (Malaya) must play their part”,

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<sup>821</sup> Yoji Akashi, “Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,” 105.

<sup>822</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, “The Malay Community and the Japanese Occupation” in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore* 65.

<sup>823</sup> Yoji Akashi, “Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,” 107.

<sup>824</sup> Yoji Akashi, “Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945,” 108.

between 1944-1945.<sup>825</sup> In the latter, Japan disguised ‘‘as AJA guerrillas, went to a mosque in Johore and slaughtered a Pig’’ which immediately turned Malays on the Chinese in the villages who also asked for help from AJA support.<sup>826</sup> Japan managed to incite an inter-racial conflict tangled with Islamic religion as ‘‘the spark was often an incident in or near a Mosque’’, involving a pork incident or Friday Prayers after 1945.<sup>827</sup> The emergence of the Malay Sabilillah Movement and its military wing, Tentara Sabilillah Selendang Merah (Sabilillah Army of the Red Bands) in the lead of Islamic figures who waged Holy War against the Communist Chinese Guerillas, was the political turning point for Malay political primacy. If not for Malay Sufi conformists, the Malay political nationalism and Malay economic nationalism would not find their rightful place in the formation of Malay-Malaysia. According to T.H Silcock and Ungku Aziz, Kiyai Salleh did not solely mobilize the Holy War sentiments of Malays under the Sabilillah movement but also ‘‘assisted Dato Onn, (the founder of UMNO) in mobilizing Malay peasant opinion against the Malayan Union proposal in 1946.’’<sup>828</sup> Through their help, Malays successfully took over the ‘‘the MCP challenge and then the British challenge’’ between 1945 and 1957.<sup>829</sup>

The impacts of the Japanese occupation can be found in the modern state structure where Malay supremacy was built. The politics of ethnicity brought by the Japanese imperial occupation between 1941 and 1945 still continues to exist in Malaysian politics through constitutional means. The politics of ethnicity was Japan’s political survival to maintain her imperial objectives. Since the rise of Malay

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<sup>825</sup> Abu Talip Ahmad, ‘‘The Malay Community and the Japanese Occupation,’’ in P. Lim Pui Huen and Diana Wong’s, *The War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, 68.

<sup>826</sup> Ching Peng, *My Side of History*, 127.

<sup>827</sup> Christopher Bavly and Tim Harper, *Forgotten Wars: Freedom and Revolution in Southeast Asia*, 43.

<sup>828</sup> John Bastin, *The Emergence of Modern Southeast Asia: 1511-1957*, 154.

<sup>829</sup> Cheah Boon Kheng, *Red Star Over Malaya, Resistance and Social Conflict during and after the Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-1946*, 298.

nationalism with Japan, politics of ethnicity became the Malays political survival tool to maintain their nationalist's agenda. Japan's politics of ethnicity treated Malays as the rightful owners of the country while the Chinese and Indians were treated as subordinate races and disparaged enemies throughout the war.<sup>830</sup> After the consolidation of Malay nationalism and the peaceful accommodation of non-Malay nationalism by Malays in the course of nation-building, this very policy of the Japanese constituted the Malays' perception of the 'other'. The political developments such as the 1946 Malaya plan, 1948 Emergency, 1957 independence, and 1969 emergency had one thing in common: the establishment of a Malaysia where Malays were the rightful owners over subordinate races. In a country where Malay-Malaysia's politics of ethnicity is consolidated, non-Malay's face "discrimination based on ethnicity in education, health care, finance, workforce, and welfare."<sup>831</sup>

In terms of directions for future research, on the impacts of the Japanese occupation on contemporary ethnic politics in Malaysia, interviews could be done with the war-time generation, officials, and researchers in the relative departments. Mostly relying on secondary data was one of the limitations of this dissertation. There is limited further thought on this eventful period under the Japanese Occupation. This is because the studies on the Japanese Occupation and Japanese military administration were generated by the detailed contributions of Joji Akashi, beginning between 1960 and 1969. Malaysia and Singapore launched a project to study the Malay Gunsei for primary sources in 1980. Only after the mid-1980s, comprehensive yet limited studies have been produced to detail Japanese socio-economic policies, Islamic Policies, or their impacts on the locals. It should be also

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<sup>830</sup> Yoji Akashi, "Japanese Military Administration in Malaya, its Formation and Evolution in Reference to Sultans, the Islamic Religion and the Moslem Malays, 1941-1945." 109

<sup>831</sup> Malaysia Racial Discrimination Report, 2015.



considered that the issues that were banned by the Sedition Act after 1969 are sensitive in Malaysia. In the wider public debate, the Japanese Occupation was not discussed often from the perspective of Malays or non-Malays on particular terms.

All in all, owing to the Japanese colonial rule ‘‘Malay nationalism has evolved from wanting to save the race from extinction and gain independence, to protecting Malay political, cultural, and religious symbols, to gaining an equal and more secure social and economic footing with the other communities.’’<sup>832</sup> Other than Malays, the loyalties of the first generation of Chinese and Indians who struggled for their communal interests in Malaysia, are re-oriented to Malaysia. Although they retain and embrace their ethnic identities, they struggle to dismantle the discriminatory applications that harm their interests.

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<sup>832</sup> Diane K. Mauvzy, ‘‘From Malay Nationalism to a Malaysian Nation?’’ 55.

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