

English Newspapers As Sources of Malaysian History

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Abstrack: Makalah ini meninjau peranan akhbar-akhbar berbahasa Inggeris dalam merakamkan peristiwa-peristiwa sezaman buat sumber rujukan dan penyelidikan oleh sejarawan kemudian hari. Akhbar pertama diterbitkan pada 1805 di Pulau Pinang, diikuti dengan yang lain-lain di bandar-bandar yang menyaksikan perubahan pesat. Sumber ini tidak diterokai dengan sepenuhnya seperti rekod-rekod rasmi. Walaupun pada mulanya ia lebih cenderung kepada masyarakat Eropah dan memuatkan berita-berita berhaluan ekonomi dan perdagangan, coraknya diperluaskan hingga perkara-perkara sosio-budaya masyarakat Melayu, Cina dan India juga tersentuh dalam bentuk rencana-rencana dan surat-surat kepada pengarang. Beberapa judul akhbar dibahas secara am dan dengan contoh-contoh untuk memperlihatkan kekayaan sumber ini bagi kajian sejarah Malaysia. Sebahagian besar daripada akhbar-akhbar ini boleh didapati dalam bentuk mikrofilem di Perpustakaan Universiti Malaya.

As G.L. Peet of the Straits Times so dramatically put it, at a luncheon meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Rotary Club on 13 March 1934, the first English newspaper in this country was published in the year of the Battle of Trafalgar (1805).¹ This was the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette*. Within the next several decades, more newspapers were published:²

Singapore Chronicle (1824)³

Malacca Observer (1826)

Pinang Register and Miscellany (1827)

The Government Gazette of Prince of Wales Island, Singapore, and Malacca (1828)

Prince of Wales Island Gazette (1833)⁴

Singapore Free Press (1835)

Pinang Gazette (1838)

Straits Chronicle (1838)

Straits Times and Singapore Journal of Commerce (1845)

Selangor Journal (1890)

Perak Pioneer (1894)

Malay Mail (1896)

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¹ See "When Mrs. Raffles Led Penang Society. Newspapers In Malaya." *The Malaya Tribune*, 15 March 1934. This is a report of G.L. Peet's address at a luncheon meeting of the Kuala Lumpur Rotary Club.

² All the newspapers mentioned here, except *The Government Gazette of Prince of Wales Island, Singapore, and Malacca* (1828), are available, in microfilm in the University of Malaya Library. For general comments on these newspapers see W. Makepeace, 'The Press' in Arnold Wright & H.A. Cartwright (eds.), *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources*, London, 1908; also W. Makepeace, Dr. Gilbert E. Brooke & Roland St. J. Braddell (eds.), *One Hundred Years of Singapore Being Some Account of the Capital of the Straits Settlements from Its Foundation by Sir Stamford Raffles on the 6th February 1819 to the 6th February 1919*, London, 1921, p. 278-286, 289-292.

³ For more detailed comments on this paper, see C.A. Gibson-Hill, 'The Singapore Chronicle (1824-37). *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, Malayan Branch*, vol. XXVI, Pt. 1, 1953.

⁴ This was a revival of the country's first newspaper which had ceased publication after 1827. Apparently, the public found the name too cumbersome and in 1838 it was shortened to *Pinang Gazette* which remained Malaysia's oldest newspaper until it faded away in 1962.

The above list is not exhaustive; it does not include a number of weekly and other periodical publications some of which have yet to be traced. Needless to say, English newspapers first made their appearance for the benefit of the European population. Even then, as W. Makepeace⁵ remarked (in about 1907):

Considering that the purely European population of the Straits Settlements and the Federated Malay States is certainly less than ten thousand, including the troops, the fact that they support eight daily papers in English may be taken as evidence that the "freedom of the Press" is thoroughly appreciated by the inhabitants. Of course, the number of English-speaking natives, particularly Chinese, is rapidly and constantly growing. The English schools of the colony turn out annually a considerable number of pupils from the upper standards more or less familiar with English, and, as years ago on, the knowledge of the language will become more common ...⁶

Although Makepeace's words were prophetic, the process took longer than he anticipated. In 1931, A.W. Still,⁷ another journalist well known in this country before World War II, commented that the Asian readers of English newspapers "are nearly all men of university education and probably as wide students of the higher grades of European literature as any in the world."⁸ But, within the next few years, the situation had changed so rapidly that Roland Braddell, the much respected lawyer, described the spread of English in Singapore as having attained the dimensions of a landslide;⁹ and Peet added:

There is coming into being in Malaya ... — indeed has already come into being — a newspaper public which is almost identical in tastes, education and outlook with that created by the elementary schools of Great Britain and catered for by the London popular dailies.¹⁰

This, to a large extent, explains the ability of English newspapers not only to survive but thrive in this country until the time of independence. The early crop of English newspapers, however, did not survive long even though they consisted of only four pages, published once a fortnight and received a Government subsidy.

The *Singapore Chronicle*, for example, lasted thirteen years when it was killed by the *Singapore Free Press*. The *Malacca Observer* gave glimpses of life in that Settlement between 1826-1829 and then perished owing to the withdrawal of the subsidy. The *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* faded away in 1827 because its editor was rash enough to challenge the Company's censorship by re-printing certain banned matter on a separate leaflet and circulating it through the town.

Among the newspapers which began publication in the first half of the 19th century, apart from the *Pinang Gazette*, the *Singapore Free Press* and the *Straits Times* also survived at the turn of the present century. But by then several other newspapers had made their appearance, among them, the *Straits Echo* (1903), *The Times of Malaya* (1904), the *Eastern Daily Mail* (1905), *The Malaya Tribune* (1915) and the *Malacca Guardian* (1928). Of these the *Eastern Daily Mail* and the *Malacca Guardian* lasted only briefly. By the 'thirties, three of the papers were able to commence printing Sunday editions, namely, the *Sunday Gazette*, the *Sunday Tribune* and the *Sunday Times*.¹¹

⁵ Walter Makepeace had an illustrious career as a journalist in Singapore. He had been in Malacca before he was engaged as a reporter and assistant by the *Singapore Free Press* which first appeared as a daily on 16 July 1887. In 1895 W.G. St. Clair and Makepeace became the proprietors of the *Singapore Free Press*. In 1916 when St. Clair retired, the paper was converted into a private limited liability company (of two). After 39 years service in Singapore, Makepeace retired (in 1926). He was then Editor of the *Singapore Free Press*.

⁶ Arnold Wright & H.A. Cartwright, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

⁷ Like Makepeace, A.W. Still also had a distinguished career as a journalist in Singapore. He too retired in 1926 after having been in Singapore for 18 years. He retired as Editor of the *Straits Times*.

⁸ Cited by G.L. Peet; see "When Mrs. Raffles Led Penang Society, &c.", *op. cit.*

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Except the *Eastern Daily Mail*, and the *Sunday Times*, all the other papers mentioned here are available, in microfilm, in the University of Malaya Library. In the case of the *Sunday Tribune*, however, which had three editions — Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Ipoh — only the Ipoh edition is found in the University Library.

It is interesting to note that from the time the *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* appeared in 1805 until the outbreak of World War II, there was not a single year when no English newspaper was published. Admittedly, the focus of each newspaper was inclined to be somewhat parochial but by the early part of the 20th century, each major town on the west coast of the Peninsula had its own newspaper — Penang, Taiping, Ipoh and Kuala Lumpur.¹² As a result, the historian of Malaysia today finds himself in the fortunate position of being able to gain access to information on developments which occurred in places where change was taking place rapidly.

Although no English newspapers has ever been published in the east coast, the Malay states there were never completely neglected. The commercial network which emerged in the course of the 19th century ensured that news of the east coast states could be found, albeit rather sporadically, in the Singapore newspapers for while Penang's direct commercial links were with Kedah, Perak and Selangor, and Melaka's with Selangor and Negeri Sembilan, Singapore handled the exports and imports of not only Johor but also the east coast states. The commercial community in Singapore, therefore, had to be, periodically at least, informed of conditions prevailing in the east coast states.

Despite the wealth of material available in the English newspapers for those interested in the history of the Straits Settlements as well as the Malay states, few historians have made extensive use of these newspapers.

The writing of Malaysian history began rather earnestly after the turn of the present century when British officials such as Frank Swettenham and R.J. Wilkinson began to publish their works which were based primarily on oral sources, official documents or personal knowledge. Their efforts were reinforced by academically even better qualified officials, in particular, R.O. Winstedt and W. Linehan. None of them used the English newspapers as their sources.

The writing of Malaysian history reached a more sophisticated and systematic phase after World War II with the establishment of the University of Malaya, in Singapore then, in 1949. The Department of History in the university attracted a number of scholars

(prominent among them were Professor C. N. Parkinson, C. D. Cowan, Brian Harrison, Emily Sadka, C. M. Turnbull and K. G. Tregonning) who worked enthusiastically on Malaysian history. They delved meticulously into official records and vastly improved on the writings of the officials. But, even they did not make extensive use of the English newspapers.

The reason is simple. Like the officials, the professional historians were also primarily interested in colonial policies. Needless to say, for a proper understanding of the formulation of colonial policies, the Straits Settlements Records and the Colonial Office Records are indispensable sources.¹³ Throughout the first ten years of the existence of the Department of History in Singapore, undergraduates in the Honours class were encouraged to work on similar documents (primarily, correspondence between the Colonial Secretariat in Singapore and the Colonial Office in London).

Although by the mid-1950s, there was considerable discussion on the need to re-write Asian (hence Malaysian too) history, it was not entirely clear to those concerned, how that was to be achieved. The perception of Malaysian history continued to focus on the activities of the British. Occasionally there were students who went beyond the customary boundary to deal with local personalities (such as Dr. Lim Boon Keng, Sultan Idris and Sultan Iskandar, both rulers of Perak, as well as Dato Onn bin Jaafar and Tan Cheng Lock) or Chinese education, the Japanese Occupation or the Emergency, but, in general, the writing of Malaysian history had not fully concentrated on Malaysians and the Malaysian society.

Clearly one of the major problems confronting students of Malaysian history was the comparative paucity of documents dealing with subjects not concerned with public administration. Family records were few, and, even if available, hardly accessible to students of history. Few Malaysians, until now, have faithfully preserved their personal papers. Za'aba is one exception. Nor have Malaysians formed the habit of keeping diaries.

In other words, even if students of Malaysian history had asked questions about Malaysians and the Malaysian society, the answers were not readily available. Comparatively, Singapore has been more for-

¹² The Penang papers were the *Pinang Gazette* and the *Straits Echo*; the *Perak Pioneer* was published in Taiping and the *Times of Malaya* in Ipoh. Before the appearance of the *Malay Mail* in Kuala Lumpur, there was the *Selangor Journal*.

¹³ Both the Straits Settlements Records and the Colonial Office Records are also available, in microfilm, in the University of Malaya Library.

tunate. Four publications have helped to provide the social historian with useful data for a study of the local society: C. B. Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore* (Fraser & Neave, Limited, Singapore, 1902); A Wright & H. A. Cartwright (eds.), *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya: Its History, People, Commerce, Industries and Resources*; W. Makepeace, G. E. Brooke, & Roland St. J. Braddell (eds.), *One Hundred Years Of Singapore*; and Song Ong Siang, *One Hundred Years' History of the Chinese In Singapore* (John Murray, London, 1923). Still, an examination of these works will reveal obvious shortcomings. Except for *Twentieth Century Impressions of British Malaya*, none of the others contain extensive information on the Indians, Ceylonese, Eurasians and Malays.

Twentieth Century Impressions Of British Malaya, incidentally, is also an invaluable source for those seeking information on Malaysian personalities. However, since it was published in 1908, and no further attempt was made to produce a similar work thereafter, 20th century Malaysian historiography has been that much poorer.

Yet, it ought to have been clear to students of Malaysian history that basically the kind of information found in *Twentieth Century Impressions Of British Malaya* is available in the local newspapers. In many respects, the most useful of the newspapers, as historical sources, are the English newspapers. Although, by the 20th century, there were Chinese, Malay and Tamil newspapers as well, only the English newspapers attempted to cover all sections of the Malaysian society. In that respect the early papers — up to about the 1930s — are more valuable to historians.

The English newspapers were published primarily for the enlightenment of the Europeans. Throughout the 19th century, although British influence was progressively established in the Malay Peninsula, the local Asian population remained very much a mystery to the Europeans. European interest in the Malay Peninsula was not entirely economic, there was also considerable interest in culture, flora and fauna and the unexplored areas of the country.

British interest in the Malay Peninsula can be divided roughly into three phases. In the first phase, it was more primarily commercial in nature. Penang and Singapore represented the two important foci of British commercial activities. A substantial amount of literature on the Straits Settlements and the neigh-

bouring Malay states was published beginning from the 1820s, the most useful of which were the series of journals produced by J. R. Logan.¹⁴

The next phase may be said to date roughly from the early 1870s. British intervention in the Malay states had begun. Another generation of Englishmen wrote for the enlightenment of those in England. The motive was still economic; mainly it was to encourage British capital to participate in the development of the Malay states. Frank Swettenham was the protagonist during this phase as both the writer and explorer.

The extension of British influence proceeded steadily after the Pangkor Engagement of 1874 but it is still possible to discern renewed interest in the Malay states beginning from the early years of the 20th century. The spark was provided by the phenomenal growth of the rubber industry.

Hitherto the European population was made up largely of administrators, merchants and business executives as well as professionals. In the early 20th century there emerged a sizeable planting community. The newspapers were conscious of the role they had to play in helping to educate the British population which was being induced to come over to the Peninsula where plantations were mushrooming.

Apart from reports on business activities the newspapers contained articles which discussed Asian culture; for example.

“Chinese Superstition: Funshui” (*Straits Times*, 1906)

“Indian Folk Medicine” (*Straits Times*, 1906), and

“The Ronggeng” (*Singapore Free Press*, 1911)

Most of the newspapers, however, were inclined to be rather parochial. The *Straits Times*, published in Singapore, is a conspicuous exception. Throughout the early years of the 20th century, it featured news on almost every state of the Peninsula such as “Kelantan Notes”, “Perak News”, “Pahang News”, “Penang Letter”, “Malacca News” and “F. M. S. News and Notes”. Also appearing regularly were “Labuan Notes”, “Borneo Notes” and “Sarawak News”. The *Singapore Free Press* was not very different.

Considerable attention, not surprisingly, was also given to history focusing in general on the era when the Malay states were first developed. Some of the more interesting articles include:

“Railway Progress In The Malay Peninsula” (*Singapore Free Press*, 1900)

¹⁴ A complete set of these journals is extant in the University of Malaya Library.

"Early Days In Kuala Lumpur" (*Straits Times*, 1906)

"In Old Johore. Reminiscences of Former Straits Resident" (*Straits Times*, 1909)

"The Church In Malaya" (*Singapore Free Press*, 1910), and

"F. M. S. Troops. A History Of The Troops Before The Malay States Guides" (*Singapore Free Press*, 1911)

Occasionally, there were also reports of progress or lack of it in the lesser known Malay states. The following is an example.

During the ninety years that followed [the beginning of the 19th century], the native population of Kedah have practically abandoned every useful trade that formerly existed with the exception of paddy planting. Cloth and silk are no longer woven, as sarongs and cotton piece goods can be far more cheaply obtained from Birmingham and India, carpentry and bricklaying are almost entirely in the hands of the Chinese. Malay blacksmiths and potters still exist but ironmongery is now usually imported, as are the earthenware pots and cooking utensils required for household use.¹⁵

The information is succinctly conveyed but it throws so much light, indirectly, on pre-modern Kedah society which, in the present state of Malaysian historiography, is not well known.

It is pertinent to point out that the information found in the newspapers is not necessarily always of a general nature. Often the reports which appeared in the press were precise. An illustration may be given by a reference to the formation of Indian associations in Malaysia. To date, this subject is only vaguely known. In one source, it is stated that:

The search for unity with their compatriots soon began, and gave rise to the first crop of movements in the community. These were the Indian Associations, which were formed in all towns and districts where educated Indians were concentrated. The first of these was the Indian Association of Taiping, formed in April 1906. A few years later, in 1909, a similar association, the Selangor Indian Association, was

formed at Kuala Lumpur with powerful backing from Indian businessmen, professionals, and clerical workers in Federal Government Offices. Soon other associations were formed, such as the Kinta Indian Association in Ipoh, the Lower Perak Indian Association in Teluk Anson ... and the Negri Sembilan Indian Association.¹⁶

Information culled from the local newspapers indicates that the above-mentioned study contains a number of inaccuracies. In the first place, the first Indian Association formed in Taiping was not known as the Indian Association of Taiping as the following will show:

A meeting of Indians in Ipoh was held on Monday evening under the auspices of the Indian Association of the F.M.S.¹⁷ It was fairly successful both in the matter of attendance and in the cause of the Institution and of its very desirable objects and scope. There was also another meeting for a similar purpose convened at the Kinta Chinese Club, and at both these meetings, Mr. W. Ragu Naidu, Vice-President of the Association and Pastor of the Taiping Methodist Episcopal Church, not only presided but also delivered interesting addresses. By way of encouragement he gave a brief *resume* of the rise and progress of Japan.¹⁸

In the second place, the Indian Association in Ipoh, which was meant to be an Ipoh Branch of the Indian Association of the F.M.S., was initiated in 1906 itself. In fact, the history of the Kinta Indian Association was given in another newspaper thirty years later. It was stated:

... in 1906, an Indian Association was formed following the impetus given by the Rev. Ragu Naidu, a well known Indian, who had been in England. This association had its premises on the first floor of 43, Belfield Street, Ipoh, with Mr. T. V. Pillai as its president and Mr. Ghulam Mohideen, as vice president. The late Mr. Sengalraya Naidu donated a substantial sum to set this going. After it had failed to function for a while, Mr. Sengalvaraya (sic) Naidu had to come to the rescue again and he revived it and lent the premises of the Hindu Devasthanam Paripalam Sabah for the use of the association.

¹⁵The *Straits Times*, 10 April 1909.

¹⁶S. Arasaratnam, *Indians in Malaysia and Singapore*, Kuala Lumpur, 1970, p. 83.

¹⁷That this refers to the association formed in Taiping will be shown subsequently.

¹⁸*Pinang Gazette*, 19 July 1906.

It was probably at this time that the Association had its legal recognition in as much as the date of its origin is recorded as 28-4-1911 in the Register of Societies.¹⁹

It was at this juncture too that it became known as the Kinta Indian Association.

The name 'Rev. Ragu Naidu' recurs when the early history of the Indian Associations is discussed. It is one of the shortcomings of existing Malaysian historiography that whenever the name of a non-European personality is mentioned, further information about him is usually unavailable. Rev. Ragu Naidu is interesting not merely because he played a leading role in the founding of the two earliest Indian associations (in Taiping and Ipoh) in this country but also because he was a Church leader who was yet so imbued with the need to achieve Indian unity. A look at another report will show that, apart from the admiration he had for the Japanese, he was also greatly impressed by the mass movement initiated by the Indian National Congress. This was a report on the founding of the Indian Association of the F.M.S. in Taiping:

An association for Indians is now being formed for the purposes of promoting the intellectual, moral and social welfare of the Indian community. A meeting was held during the week, in the M. E. Church, when Mr. W. Ragu Naidu was voted to the chair. After thanking the assembly (a very fair sized one) for the honour granted him, he said that, in spite of this being an age of progression, he felt that they were not keeping march with the times. By way of encouragement he referred to the Indian National Congress, started some 26 years ago, by a few zealots and now supported by thousands. He was more than glad that the need of an association had been aroused. Many others present expressed their opinion; in conclusion, it was decided that an association, styled the Indian Association, should be established; the officers and committee were then elected²⁰

There is more information in the papers on the Rev. Ragu Naidu as well as the various associations which emerged in this country. The associations themselves, in many instances, have few records of the past because locally there is little consciousness of the im-

portance of history; and the ravage of War is a further contributory factor. The newspapers are therefore an indispensable source not only for those interested in the history of Indian associations but also the cultural history of the Indians in Malaysia. Over the years, the newspapers continued to publish information on subjects such as:

"Taipusam" (*Singapore Free Press*, 1918)

"Changing Social Customs of the Chettiers" (*Malaya Tribune*, 1935), and

"Malayalees Preserve Traditions In Malaya" (*Straits Times*, 1940)

Periodically, letters to the press also prove to be extremely instructive. On the celebrated Taipusam festival in Malaya, a reader once explained:

... it is neither a religious festival nor a social festival to the Tamils. Taipusam is an unknown thing in South India, but it has an established character in Malaya because of the Chettiers in this country.

The Malayan Chettiers are also not uniform in celebrating this festival. They celebrate Taipusam only in Singapore and Penang. Visagam in Taiping and Ipoh, Uttaram in Kuala Lumpur, Paruvam [Citraparuvam] in Teluk Anson [Teluk Intan], Karthigai in Muar etc. are established by the Chettiers. These are the same celebration as Taipusam but occur at different places at different times.²¹

The contents of newspapers are however often less detailed than one would like them to be but even a brief reference to existing situations can help to correct certain misleading perceptions of the past. The view of C. G. Warnford Lock, for instance, on tin and gold mining in the Peninsula is of considerable significance. In an interview with the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, he said:

All the real mining, timbering, and ore-rising fall to him [a reference to the Chinese], supervision being generally effected by Malays. The Malay is essentially not a bad worker but is useful as a check on the Chinamen, because of the great racial animosity between them. The Malay also makes a very efficient engine-driver and is quite trustworthy with almost any machinery, which the Chinese coolie is not.²²

¹⁹ "How Kinta Indians Organised", *The Malaya Tribune*, 7 Jan. 1936.

²⁰ *The Straits Times*, 17 April 1906. See also note 17.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 20 Jan. 1940.

²² "The Chinamen in Malaya" *Pinang Gazette*, 3 July 1906. Warnford Lock was also author of a book entitled *Mining in Malaya for Gold and Tin* (London, 1907).

Warnford Lock was not a mere visitor to the Malay Peninsula. For some years previously he was employed as the General Manager of the Raub Gold Mining Co. in Pahang. It is as yet difficult to ascertain how widely applicable was his observation of the prevailing situation up to the beginning of the 20th century but it does throw some doubt on the generally accepted impression that the Malays played no part in the development of the mining industry.

His observation, moreover, is not entirely uncollaborated for in another column of the same newspaper, there was a lengthier discussion of the position of the Malays in the Peninsula within the context of the important technological development taking place. As this article contains information of considerable interest, it may be worthwhile reproducing it in full:

Without going into any far-reaching examination of the future Malay, whether he will die out from the supposed diseases of civilisation, will survive as a separate race, holding its own in the struggle for existence in the Peninsula, or will be merged into a mixed race, the product of Chinese, Malayan (sic) and some European blood, there is one aspect of the immediate future that is of interest. It is the industrial future of the Malays. The assertion is often made that the Malay will not work. The utmost that ought to be said is that he will not work any more than he is obliged to — a trait which he shares with the greater portion of the human race. The hereditary occupations of the Malays, jungle work, hunting, and paddy planting on a small scale, will inevitably disappear in the face of modern commercial conditions. As a policeman, a soldier, a sailor, or a peon, he does well, but the number able to be employed in such more or less genteel occupations is limited. There remain, therefore, but two ways in which the Malay can carry on the struggle for existence, either by entering the arena of industry as a workman in a factory or workshop, or by means of home industries. There are indications in towns of the Malay taking kindly to industrial occupations connected, for instance, with engineering and the lighter handicrafts such as electrical works. As our industries develop no doubt others will follow finding that regular work is not so unpleasant, if it keep (sic) the wolf from the door. Needless to say, the Malay is not so capable or

hard working as the Chinaman or the Mohamedan Kling, but advantages connected with his employment are that he is more amenable to discipline, and is not given to form combinations with his fellows to control the employer and dictate the rate of pay, etc. As to the point of home industries, there is not very much hope that they will attain any considerable magnitude. The tendency of the age is to displace the cottage or home industry by machine-made products, although there seems always to be a demand for home-made articles, which are of a better quality for wear than the machine-made articles. This tendency is notably being encouraged in Ireland at present, and we see in the annual education report some references to a similar encouragement in the Straits. Mr. Pringle, in his report on Malacca, notes that, at the Girls' School at Batu Tiga, sarong weaving is being taught, and the children, while not actually doing any weaving, assist in the spinning, dyeing, and preparing the raw cocoon work. The lace school at Peringgit has made excellent progress during the year, and quite a remunerative industry has sprung up, the women being able to dispose of their lace at good prices. These are women's occupations. For men we have in the States several institutions for encouraging Malay industries. The Malay Art School at Kuala Kangsar; the Malay Settlement near Kuala Lumpur; the "mangkuang" or straw hat making industry at Port Dickson. We have not before us full information as to the extent of these institutions, and I have a vague idea that they are not particularly flourishing. At the Agri-Horticultural Show to be held in August we shall no doubt see some of the results. On the whole, the prospects of establishing home or cottage industries for Malays do not seem very encouraging. But there is no doubt that the Malay, especially the Malay who likes to be near town with its allurements, will have to devise some means of earning a living, and to some form of industrial work he will have to turn his hands. He has the necessary intelligence, strength, eye-sight, and natural capabilities: the virtues of industry, accuracy, reliability, and steadiness will have to be acquired — or the Malay will cease to be a factor in the State.²³

²³ *Pinang Gazette*, 3 July 1906.

It is pertinent to reiterate that the discussion above on the Malays appeared in the press in 1906. Students of history need constantly to fall back on contemporary perception of a particular society to ensure that their own perception is not anachronistic. Assuming that the perception referred to above is generally accurate, one important question which must be raised by anyone dealing with the sociology of the Malays is why when the Malays had already commenced participating in the technological sector of the country's development at the beginning of the present century, so little progress is discernible over the several decades which ensued? But, within the context of the present discussion, it is more important to point out that newspapers are a far more significant historical source than has been realised at least where Malaysian historiography is concerned.

So far, attention here has been focused on the earlier years of the English papers published in the present century. It must be mentioned that articles of historical interest continued to appear in the English press over the years. A few examples are in order:

- "Bygone Perak by Rimba" Parts I–VIII (*Straits Times*, 1920)
- "Road Making In Malaysia. Ex-Official's Account" (*Malaya Tribune*, 1923)
- "Penang In The Eighties. Some Reminiscences of the Old Inhabitant" (*Straits Times*, 1921)
- "After 25 Years. Kuala Lumpur Revisited" (*Malay Mail*, 1928)
- "In Days That Are, Old Port Dickson" (*Malay Mail*, 1930)
- "Buku Merah Then And Now (Reminiscences of Old Malaya)" (*Malay Mail*, 1930)
- "Memories of Kelantan by W.E. Pepys" (*Malay Mail*, 1930)
- "Tales of British Malaya. Fishing from the Sea at Lukut, when Siamese mined at Raub, the First Rubber Boom and its Aftermath" (*Malay Mail*, 1931)
- "Johore's 'Valley of Peace'. The Rising Town of Yong Peng" (*Malaya Tribune*, 1933)
- "Chief Inspector Barrett Looks Back 27 Years in Malaya" (*Straits Times*, 1935)
- "Exploration In Malaya" (*Malaya Tribune*, 1935), and

"Malaya Through Twenty-Five Years by A.S. Small" (*Malaya Tribune*, 1936)

As indicated earlier, the Malayan newspapers did not confine their attention to the Peninsula and Singapore. Apart from news items, there were also articles of historical and cultural interest such as: "British North Borneo. Effects of Chinese Enterprise and Industry" (*The Straits Times*, 1909), "Sandakan Forty Years Ago" (*The Straits Times*, 1927), and "How Night Passes In A Dayak House" (*Malay Mail*, 1931).

It is, often, through the newspapers too that one is able to trace family ties especially those effected through marriages. For example, Wellington Koo, a well-known diplomat of China, married the daughter of Oei Tiong Ham, the 'Sugar King' of Indonesia who also had large business interests in Singapore. Allan Loke, the eldest son of Loke Yew, once the richest man in Malaya, married Lam Chooi Lan whose mother, Chung Siew Ying, was the grand-daughter of Kapitan Chung Keng Quee. Loke Yew was a contemporary of Chung Keng Quee in Larut at the time when that territory was continually ravaged by Chinese disturbances. Chua Boon San, son of Chua Cheng Bok, married Choo Lai Keun, the daughter of Choo Kia Peng, one of the longest serving Federal Councillors before World War II. Chua Cheng Bok, together with his brother Cheng Tuan, founded Cycle and Carriage (a company still flourishing) in 1899. Choo Kia Peng's other daughter, Choo Sim Keun, married Foo Meow Chin, the eldest son of Foo Choo Choon, the 'patriarch' of the Foo clan in Ipoh. Foo Choo Choon, of Penang origin, began his mining career in Taiping, subsequently settling down at Ipoh but his business interests extended to as far away as Sungei Besi in Selangor. Another interesting link between two influential families resulted from the marriage between Loke Yaik Foo, son of the well-known Kuala Lumpur personality, Loke Chow Kit, and Khong Sun Lun, daughter of Khong Cheong Tak of Ipoh. Khong Cheong Tak's brother, Dr. K.T. Khong, was an outstanding sportsman (a Cambridge Blue), a community leader and a State and Federal Councillor. Interestingly, Loke Chow Kit's fourth daughter, Loke Poh Gaik, married Kitson Khong a barrister and brother of Loke Sun Lun.²⁴

²⁴It is extremely difficult to obtain information on the links between elite families. This stems also from the paucity of biographical studies. In the case of Chua Cheng Bok, for example, although a history of the Cycle & Carriage Limjted has been published (see Eric Jennings, *Wheels Of Progress: 75 Years of Cycle & Carriage*, Singapore, 1975), the information given on the Chua family is very sketchy. Chua Cheng Bok's son, Chua Boon San, is not even mentioned in the books nor is there any reference to the fact that Chua Cheng Tuan spent a great deal of his time managing rubber estates owned by him and his brother in Selangor and Melaka.

All these names may not mean much to those not too familiar with the Chinese society in Malaysia but if it is borne in mind that Chinese business strategies depend very much on family and territorial-dialect or at least provincial ties, the need to identify personalities and their mutual relationships is of fundamental importance. Even if such marital ties did not help to enhance business interests, they were greatly valued as a means of preserving social status. Also, wealthy parents, in particular, felt duty bound to ensure that their daughters, used to a life of comfort and luxury, were married to men who could liberally provide for their wives.

Therefore, whether we are concerned with social, economic, cultural or political history, the newspapers are an indispensable source. Malaysian historiography has been rendered that much poorer because of the ravage of war (1942–1945) but fortunately the loss of important records has been compensated for by the reproduction of such records in the English newspapers. Of particular importance are reports of Sanitary Board Meetings, especially those of Taiping, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur and Seremban. Without these it would be difficult to undertake the study of the development of major Peninsular towns.

As indicated earlier, all the leading Peninsular English newspapers are available (in microfilm) in the Library of the University of Malaya but Malaysian historiography would be even further enriched if some of the lesser known newspapers could be traced and made available in the university to help students undertake a more intensive study of Malaysian history.

References to some of these newspapers have appeared in the leading newspapers such as the *Straits Times* and *The Malaya Tribune*. One of the earlier among them was the *Malayan Leader* which was frequently mentioned in the *Straits Times* between 1920–1921 but apart from that little else is known about the paper. A contemporary of the *Malayan Leader* and just as obscure was *The Malayan*

Saturday Post presumably published in Singapore too. Comparatively better known was *The Malayan Daily Express*, issued on 27 January 1927. It was published as a daily in Kuala Lumpur and was very similar in format to the *Malay Mail*. Its editor was a certain Reginald Fernando. Appearing a couple of months later (on 18 March 1927) was *The Eastern Messenger* which was also published in Kuala Lumpur. Its editor R.S.V. Muthuthamby was a retired educationist from Jaffna. On 2 January 1928, Melaka produced its own paper known as the *Malacca Guardian* under the managership of F.E. Smith who was previously at the helm of the *Observer* presumably in England. Like the other papers, the *Malacca Guardian* was short-lived. It was revived in 1932 but again ceased publication a few years later. Meanwhile, Taiping attempted to compensate for the disappearance of the *Perak Pioneer* by publishing *The Taiping Weekly Record*. One of its main aims was to campaign against the transfer of the state capital to Ipoh. On 1 March 1935, *The Malaya Tribune* began publishing a Kuala Lumpur edition and beginning from 5 October 1935, an Ipoh edition as well. In early 1936, some members of the Indian community brought forth a paper known as *The Indian* whose primary object was "to tell the Indians two things: 'That he is an Indian; and that he is not to forget that he is an Indian.'" This paper incidentally sponsored Nehru's visit to Malaya in 1937. He was accompanied by his daughter, Indira, and they visited all the major towns in the country from Penang to Singapore.

It is clear that the local newspapers served numerous interests. Their contents are therefore of immense value as historical sources. Much has been said about the re-writing of Malaysian history. One effective way of doing so is by using a new corpus of material although the traditional official records are by no means irrelevant even now.

LAMPIRAN

Suratkhbar-suratkhbar yang disebut dalam makalah ini didapati di Perpustakaan Universiti Malaya

LEMBAGA Melayu (Malay Tribune, Malay ed.)	(1 September 1914 – 31 Disember 1931)	Microfilm 739
MALACCA Guardian	(v.5, 5 January 1932 – v.10 no. 48, 1937)	Microfilm 1158
MALACCA Observer & Chinese Chronicle	(no. 50–56, 58, 62–63, 65, 27 January 1829 – 24 August 1829)	Microfilm 1191
The MALAY Mail	(14 December 1896 – 31 December 1940; 19 January 1912 – 30 December 1942; 5 September 1945 – 31 December 1945; 1 July 1946 – 30 September 1954; 1 February 1955 – June 1964; 4 December 1964 – 31 December 1965)	Microfilm 94
The MALAYA Tribune (Ipoh)	(1 October 1935 – 30 December 1950)	Microfilm 1240
The MALAYA Tribune (Kuala Lumpur)	(2 December 1945 – 30 December 1950)	Microfilm 1239
The MALAYA Tribune (Singapore)	(1 January 1914 – 10 January 1942; 19 November 1949 – 31 January 1951)	Microfilm 1238
The NEW Straits Times continues the Straits Times	(1883 –)	Microfilm 668
PERAK Pioneer and Native States Advertiser	(4 July 1894 – 4 July 1912)	Microfilm 1244
PINANG Gazette and Straits Chronicle	(7 April 1838 – 6 March 1958)	Microfilm 1093
PRINCE of Wales Island Gazette	(v.1–13, no.29, 1 March 1806 – 21 July 1827)	Microfilm 22 (Law Library)
SELANGOR Journal	(v.1–5, 1892/93 – 1896/97)	fDS598 S46S]/ Microfilm 521
SINGAPORE Chronicle	(4 January 1927 – 28 November 1835)	Microfilm 21
SINGAPORE Free Press	(8 October 1835 – 20 December 1866) 3 January 1900 – 24 December 1902; 22 May 1903 – 30 December 1903; 7 January 1904 – 31 January 1907)	Microfilm 577
SUNDAY Gazette	(3 April 1932 – December 1904; 11 November 1945 – 28 December 1947; 1955–1956; 1960; April–December 1962)	Microfilm 1119
SUNDAY Tribune (Ipoh)	(6 September 1936 – 31 December 1950)	Microfilm 1242
SUNDAY Tribune (Kuala Lumpur)	(6 January 1946 – 31 December 1950)	Microfilm 1241
TIMES of Malaya	(1915–1965)	Microfilm 1958