

**THE ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HADHRAMI
ARABS IN MALAYA, 1819 – 1969**

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**FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA
KUALA LUMPUR**

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**THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF
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ABSTRACT

This study examines the significant roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs and their contributions in the aspects of religion, education, publication, economics, politics, and administration of Malaya from 1819 until 1969. This study employs a qualitative research method. Library research is used in collecting data from published and unpublished documents, as well as records from the local archives and abroad, such as The National Archives of London, British Library, London, The National Archives of Singapore, National Library Board, Singapore, The National Archives Malaysia and its branches, The University of Malaya Library, and The National University Malaysia Library. All data are examined and analysed descriptively, analytically, and critically throughout the study. This study explores how the Hadhrami Arabs, a minority group of immigrants from Hadhramaut, Yemen, managed to prosper and hold important positions in the administration, politics, and economy of the Malay states. Furthermore, this research looks into the period of the founding of Singapore as a trading post by Stamford Raffles in 1819 whereby he managed to attract Arab traders to trade and to settle in Singapore. Moreover, the year 1969 marked the end of this study when South Yemen became independent with communist regime in power that practised the closed door policy regarding the migration of the Hadhrami Arabs and forbade those in the diaspora from returning home. Apart from their active involvement in the economy, administration, and politics of the Malay states, the Hadhrami Arabs also contributed immensely in the field of religious education, whereby several *madrasahs* or Arab schools were built to cater the needs of Muslim children. *Waqf* or endowment funds were also established from which income was collected to pay for the maintenance of *madrasah*, as well as for the teachers' salary. In addition, they also built mosques and financed orphanages through the *waqf* fund, as well as donating lands for graveyards. However, the involvement of Hadhrami

Arabs in the aspects of administration and politics of the Malay states had been looked upon with suspicion by the British. Thus, this study examines how the British responded towards the roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs and their involvement in the administration of religion, *madrrasah* education, publication, politics, administration, and economics in Malaya. It also chronicles the Hadhrami Arab-British relationship in the 19th and the 20th century in Malaya. Apart from that, this study analyses factors that led to the decline of the Hadhrami Arab descents in Malaya after the Second World War, particularly in politics and economy that eventually led to the shrinking of Hadhrami Arabs' dominance in the economy, as well as the identity crisis faced by the younger generation of the *Peranakan Arab*. Nevertheless, based on the information gathered, this study could be used to support and to strengthen the theory of the Arab factor in the social, economic, and political development in Malaya, by highlighting the contributions made by the Hadhrami Arabs; especially the Sayyids in the 19th and the 20th centuries, as they also contributed to the historical development of Malaysia.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini meneliti peranan penting yang dimainkan oleh orang Arab Hadhrami dan sumbangan mereka dalam aspek agama, pendidikan, penerbitan, ekonomi, politik dan pentadbiran di Tanah Melayu dari tahun 1819 sehingga 1969. Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah penyelidikan kualitatif. Kaedah penyelidikan perpustakaan digunakan untuk mengumpul maklumat daripada dokumen yang diterbitkan dan yang tidak diterbitkan, serta rekod dari koleksi arkib tempatan dan luar negara seperti Arkib Negara London, Perpustakaan British London, Arkib Negara Singapura dan juga Arkib Negara Malaysia serta cawangannya. Kesemua data diteliti dan dianalisa secara deskriptif, analitikal dan kritis sepanjang kajian dijalankan. Kajian ini juga turut menerokai bagaimana orang Arab Hadhrami yang terdiri daripada kumpulan minoriti Arab yang berhijrah dari Hadhramaut, Yemen berjaya dalam bidang perniagaan, serta memegang jawatan-jawatan penting dalam pentadbiran negeri-negeri Melayu dan politik. Kajian ini bermula dari pengasasan Singapura sebagai pusat perdagangan oleh Stamford Raffles pada tahun 1819 di mana beliau berjaya menarik minat para pedagang termasuklah orang Arab Hadhrami untuk mengurus niaga dan seterusnya menetap di Singapura. Tahun 1969 merupakan pengakhiran kepada kajian ini apabila Yaman Selatan merdeka dan ditadbir oleh sebuah kerajaan komunis yang mengamalkan dasar tertutup menghalang penghijrahan keluar dan masuk dari Yaman. Selain daripada penglibatan aktif mereka dalam ekonomi, pentadbiran dan politik negeri-negeri Melayu, orang-orang Arab Hadhrami juga banyak memberi sumbangan dalam bidang pendidikan agama di negara ini. Terdapat dalam kalangan mereka yang prihatin dengan keperluan anak-anak Muslim bagi mendapat pendidikan agama yang lebih baik dengan menubuhkan madrasah atau sekolah Arab. Dana atau badan wakaf ditubuhkan di mana pendapatan yang diperolehi digunakan untuk membayar kos penyelenggaraan madrasah dan membayar gaji guru. Selain itu, mereka juga turut membina masjid dan

menampung kos penyelenggaraannya melalui dana wakaf. Mereka juga turut membiayai rumah-rumah anak yatim serta mewakafkan dan menderma tanah bagi kawasan perkuburan. Namun, penglibatan orang Hadhrami Arab dalam aspek pentadbiran dan politik negeri-negeri Melayu dipandang serong oleh pihak Inggeris. Oleh itu, kajian ini cuba melihat respon British terhadap penglibatan dan peranan yang dimainkan oleh orang Arab Hadhrami dalam pentadbiran agama, pendidikan madrasah, penerbitan, ekonomi, politik dan pentadbiran di Tanah Melayu. Hubungan orang Arab Hadhrami dengan pihak Inggeris juga turut ditonjolkan dalam kajian ini. Selain itu, kajian ini juga cuba menganalisis faktor-faktor penyebab dan juga faktor lain yang turut menyumbang kepada kemerosotan penglibatan orang Arab Hadhrami di Tanah Melayu selepas Perang Dunia Kedua khususnya dalam bidang ekonomi dan politik sehingga membawa kepada kemerosotan penguasaan orang Arab Hadhrami dalam bidang ekonomi, serta krisis identiti yang melanda generasi muda Peranakan Arab. Walau bagaimanapun, berdasarkan kepada maklumat yang dikumpul, hasil kajian ini boleh digunakan untuk menyokong dan mengukuhkan teori faktor Arab dalam pembangunan sosial, ekonomi dan politik di Tanah Melayu, dengan mengetengahkan sumbangan orang Arab Hadhrami; khususnya keturunan Sayyid pada abad ke-19 dan abad ke-20 kerana mereka juga turut menyumbang kepada perkembangan sejarah Malaysia.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANM	Arkib Negara Malaysia
CLM	Commissioner of Land and Mines
CO	Colonial Office
DOK	District of Kuantan
ed/eds.	Editor/editors
FO	Foreign Office
GA	General Adviser
HCO	High Commissioner Office
IOR	India Office Record
L/P/S	Oriental and India Office Collection
JMBRAS	Journal of Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
KAR	Kedah Annual Report
MBRAS	Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
MSRI	Malaysian Sociological Research Institute
SP	Surat Persendirian
SS	Straits Settlements
SSR	Straits Settlements Record
SUK	Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri
SUMNO	Singapore, United Malays National Organization
SMD	Singapore and Malayan Directory
UMNO	United Malays National Organization
KMK	Kesatuan Melayu Kedah

GLOSSARY

- 'alim* : One who knows. A scholar (in any field of knowledge), such as a theologian (who knows religion). *'ulama* is a plural of *'alim*.
- Baju kurung : A traditional Malay costume which loosely translated as enclosed dress.
- Batik sarong : Sarong means 'sheath'. It is a large tube or length of fabric often wrapped around the waist and worn by men and women throughout much of South Asia, South East Asia, and the Arabian Peninsula. The fabric most often has woven plaid or checkered patterns, or may be brightly coloured by means of batik or ikat dyeing.
- Da'ie : Muslim missionary involved in *dakwah*. It can also have a general meaning referring to someone who calls others to a certain belief.
- Dakwah : Inviting others to Islam, missionary work.
- Fardhu 'Ain : Obligatory on every individual Muslim to aid in any way he can.
- Feqah or Fiqh : Jurisprudence built around the shari'ah by custom (al-'urf). Literally means understanding the Islamic laws.
- Hadith : Literally means speech; recorded saying or tradition of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.
- Hajj* : Pilgrimage to Makkah during the month of Zul Hijjah. It is the fifth pillar of Islam.
- Haji / hajah : Refers to a man and woman who have performed the *hajj*.
- Jubah : A traditional garments for the Arabs. It is a loose fitting outfit.
- Kafaah : Equivalence. It refers to a tradition requiring husband and wife (or wife's family) to be of equal rank in religion, lineage, social status, and means.
- Madrasah* : *Madrasah* is an Arabic word for School. In the Malay society, *madrasah* refers to Arabic school.
- Mentri or menteri : Minister.
- Mufti* : An Islamic scholar who is an interpreter or expounder of Islamic law (Shari'a), capable of issuing *fatawa* (plural of *fatwa*).

<i>Mutawwif</i>	: <i>Mutawwif</i> is a person who is also known as <i>haji</i> guide. The role of a <i>mutawwif</i> is to arrange transport, accommodation, food and water for pilgrims during the <i>haji</i> season.
Nahu	: Arabic grammar
<i>Nasab</i>	: Descent, lineage or genealogy.
<i>Nazam</i>	: In Arabic, <i>Nazam</i> is generally meant poetry, but in the Malay society, it refers to a song or <i>nasyid</i> that contains a variety of advice and guidance normally associated with the knowledge of Tawhid, Fardhu 'Ain, the Attributes of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. and the attributes of Allah.
<i>Peranakan Arab</i>	: born Arab of Arab father and non Arab mother.
Pondok / Pondok school	: A traditional Islamic education school in Malaysia.
Qādī	: Judge of Islamic Law.
<i>Rakyat</i>	: folk or the public.
Sayyid	: (In everyday usage, equivalent to Mr.), Sayyid is a title given to the descent of Prophet Muhammad SAW through his grandson Husayn.
Sharif	: Sharif is a title given to the descent of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. through his grandson Hassan.
<i>Syaikh al-Islam</i>	: A title of superior authority in the issues of Islam.
Surau	: Prayer house where Muslims perform <i>solat</i> . <i>Surau</i> is not as big as <i>masjid</i> or mosque where the Friday prayer is held.
Tauhid/Tawhid	: Monotheism; affirmation of the Oneness of Allah.
Tafsir	: Exegesis, particularly such commentary on the Qur'an.
Tareqat/ Tareqah	: A Muslim religious order, particularly a Sufi order.
<i>Tasawwuf</i>	: <i>Tasawwuf</i> is a branch of Islamic knowledge which focuses on the spiritual development of Muslim.
Turban	: A traditional Muslim headdress consisting of a long scarf wrapped around the head. Malays call it <i>serban</i> .
<i>Ummah</i>	: Literally means nation. It refers to the global community of all Muslim believers.

Umrah : A pilgrimage to Makkah performed by Muslims that can be under taken at any time of the year.

Waqf : *Waqf* in the Arabic language means to stop, contain or preserve. Plural of *waqf* is *awqaf*. In Islamic terms, *waqf* refers to a religious endowment i.e. voluntary and irrevocable dedication of one's wealth or a portion of it in cash or kind (such as house, building or a plot of land), and its disbursement for shariah compliance project (such as mosque, religious school or orphanage).

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Definition of Hadhrami Arab

The Malays close ties with the Arab community dates back as far as the early periods of trade-based contact. This relationship flourished and grew with the existence of the Arab community in the Malay world, both in Indonesia and Malaya. Gradually, the Malays converted into Islam, the religion of the Arabs. This strengthened the bond between the Malays and the Arabs, which then was revolving on religion and education. The 16th century, marked the beginning of the intervention of colonial powers in Malaya, which threatened the relationship between the Arabs and Malays in later years. Most of the Arabs who migrated and settled in the Malay World, especially in Malaya in the 19th century originated from Hadhramaut, Yemen. They consisted of the Sayyid and non-Sayyid.

The term Hadhrami refers to the people of Hadhramaut, Yemen. In this study, it refers to the Hadhrami Arabs from Hadhramaut, Yemen who claimed the descendant of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. through his grandson Husain, the son of Saidatina Fatimah r.a. The Sayyid or the *Sadah*, plural of Sayyid, is a title of respect used by the descendant of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. According to The New Encyclopaedia of Islam,¹ Sayyid is a title of respect used for the descendants of the Prophet through his daughter Fatimah and ‘Ali bin Abi Talib. However, it is also used as a general title of address like sir, monsieur and mister. Sayyid is an Arabic word means lord and master. It is a title of respect used to indicate descendants of the Prophet, Muhammad.² Nowadays, many people used it as a proper name. Sayyid means a prince, lord, chief or owner; one who is eminently by virtue of his personal qualities, his possession or his birth.³ Plural of sayyid is *sadah*. It derives from root word *sa wa da* which means leader, or chief from the Prophet Muhamad SAW’s descent. The term has been used

¹ Cyril Glasse & Huston Smith, *The New Encyclopedia of Islam*, Singapore: Tien Wah Press, reprinted 2002, p. 407.

² Gordon Newby, *A Concise Encyclopedia of Islam*, England: OneWorld Publication, 2000, reprinted 2004. p. 192.

³ H. A. R. Gibbs & J. H. Kramers, *Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam*, New Delhi, India: Pentagon Press, 2008, p. 694.

throughout the Muslim World as a title of respect to indicate in particular the descendants of Prophet Muhammad SAW.⁴ However, this title is also used for Muslim saints.⁵ The term *Sayyid*, *Sadah*, and Hadhramis shall be used in this research interchangeably to refer to the Hadhrami Arabs.

Many of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya involved in trade. They managed to secure important positions in the Malay States and became successful entrepreneurs. Names like the Al-Kaff, Al-Saqqaf, Al-Junied and Al-Attas were among the most influential and wealthiest Hadhrami Arab families in Malaya. They were also actively involved in charity work such as endowing lands for burial grounds, establishing religious schools, building mosques and founding orphanage houses. This research examines the roles and contributions of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya from 1819 until 1969. It discusses the significant roles played by the Hadhramis in religion, education, economy, publication, politics and administration of the Malay states in Malaya. This study will also look into the British response on the role of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. Subsequently, the research will explore and analyze factors that led to the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs' role and influence in Malaya, especially in the middle of the 20th century, owing to the Second World War as well as the changes that took place in local politics that did not only affect the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the economy, but also their social status in Malaya.

Research Questions

In the Malay society, Arabs, especially the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent were highly regarded with respect and deference by the Malays for their piety and scholarship in Islam. The Islamization of the Malays was also a direct result of the significant role played by the Arabs. Trade is one of the factors that encouraged the Hadhrami Arabs

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ A Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam, p 192. They are also called descendant of *al-Sadah*.

to travel overseas. In the due course, many of them settled down in foreign lands and build their own settlements. The Hadhrami Arabs' mass migration to the Malay World took place around the 18th and 19th centuries, particularly when Malaya in need of religious orientation and a role model to follow in order to strengthen their faith and understanding about Islam. Many of them succeeded in lives and attached to religious institution and administration held important positions, while others ventured into business becoming successful entrepreneurs. Apart from their commitments in businesses, they were also involved in philanthropic works such as building mosques, *madrasah*, and donating land for funeral grounds.

Therefore, this research attempts to study when the Hadhrami Arabs mass migration occurred in the Malay World and in particular to Malaya in the 19th and 20th centuries. Who are the Hadhramis or the Hadhrami Arabs that had played significant roles in Malaya and contributed to the country's history. What are the factors that encouraged the Hadhrami Arabs' migration to Malaya and the significant roles played by them in the aspects of religion, education, economic, publication, and politics of the country. This study shall also highlight what they have contributed to the society in the aspects of religion and religious institution, education, publication, economics, politics and administration in Malaya.

The Hadhrami Arabs' survival in Malaya also deserves an explanation, on how they as a group of minority managed to prosper in Malaya and what are the factors that contributed to their success in the country especially in the economy. How the Hadhrami Arabs succeeded in holding important positions in the Malay states' administration and politics, until certain extend, they have become rulers of several Malay states in Malaya such as in Perlis, Johor, Pahang and Terengganu. Most importantly, how the Hadhrami Arabs immersed into the Malay society, and later on be accepted as part of the community and considered as Malays. Why the British were

suspicious of the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the administration and politics of the Malay states in particular their good terms with the Malay rulers. Therefore, this research tries to answer the reason why the British were suspicious of the Hadhrami Arabs and also to examine how the British responded towards the roles played the Arabs in particular the Hadhramis in the aspects of religion, education, economy, politics, publication, and journalism in the 19th and 20th century Malaya. Last but not least, what are the factors that contributed to the decline of the Hadhrami Arab descent in Malaya after the Second World War, particularly in the economy. All these questions shall answer why the Hadhrami Arabs have become the focal point of this study.

Research Objectives

Based on the title of the research "The Roles and Contributions of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, 1819-1969", this research aims to explore the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in Malaya based on available sources. Therefore, this research is conducted to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) to study the historical background of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya and how the Hadhrami Arabs as a group of minority from Arabian Peninsula managed to integrate themselves in the Malay society; and be accepted as part of the community; and be considered as Malays;
- 2) to explore the roles and contributions made by the Hadhrami Arabs in religion, education, economics, publication, politics and administration of Malaya from 1819 until 1969;
- 3) to discuss the British response towards the role played by the Arabs in economy, politics, publication, religion and education in Malaya; and

4) to analyze factors and other contributing factors led to the decline of the Hadhrami Arab descents in Malaya on the aspects of administration, economy, and politics as well as the crisis of identity facing by the *Peranakan* Arab after the Second World War.

Research Scope

This research will tackle the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, their roles and contributions in religion, education, economy, publication, politics and administration of the Malay States from 1819 until 1969. The study begins with the period of the founding of Singapore as a trading post by Stamford Raffles in 1819 until 1969, when the Yemen Government implements the policy of prohibiting Hadhrami Arab immigrants from returning home. Apart from that, the year 1819 was also a period when Raffles implemented the policy of making Singapore a free trading port which encouraged foreign merchants to trade in Singapore including the Chinese, Indian and Arabs. Singapore became a transit port; a hub for commodities exchange before proceeding to the East or the West to their intended destinations. This policy had not only attracted merchants and traders to operate their businesses on the island, but also at the same time, encouraged the influx of immigrants from China, India, Arab, and also European countries to populate Singapore and the Malay States. The Hadhrami Arabs in particular were among the Arab traders who came to trade in Singapore. The majority of them were Hadhramis from Hadhramaut, who came directly and indirectly from Hadhramaut, Yemen. Many of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, particularly in, Singapore came directly from the Dutch East Indies or Indonesia today. The involvement of the Arab traders, particularly the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malayan waters was vital to the spice trade activity in the region. This inspired Raffles to include the Arabs in his plan in making Singapore a trading hub in the region. Raffles envisioned making Singapore a metropolitan city through the participation of merchants from all

over the world. Raffles had also added in his plan a particular area for the Arab settlement in the Singapore town plan known as *Arab Kampong*. "...The Arab population will require every consideration..."⁶ Therefore, with this recognition, the story of the Hadhrami Arab traders in Malaya began.

The involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya was something not thoroughly studied or researched on. Available literatures on them are quite limited and scarce. This research concentrates on the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay States: in religion, education, economy, publication, politics and administration of the Malays during the period. This research discusses their background and how they acquired such a position in the Malay States administration as well as their relationship with the ruling class and aristocrats. Further discussion highlights the role played by them in the Malay States administration and politics.

This study also covers the period of the British colonial rule in Malaya. A lot of changes occurred during the British colonial rule in Malaya. The policy introduced by the British affected the administration, economy, socio-cultural as well as the administration and political structure of the Malays. Some perceived and received these changes positively while there were those who revolted against the British due to certain issues that touched on Malay sentiment and honour. In this respect, this research also highlights significant roles played by the Hadhramis in dealing with British policies in Malaya. The period between 1941 and 1945 was a crucial time in Malaya. The breakout of the Second World War and the Japanese Occupation had crippled the administration and economy of Malaya. The Hadhrami Arabs' economic activities were also badly affected due to the war. The policies introduced by the government in Singapore particularly contributed to the Hadhrami Arabs decline in later years. To some

⁶ J. A. E. Morley, "The Arabs and the Eastern Trade", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 22, Pt. 1, 1949, p. 164.

Hadhramis', these policies caused them to lose their social status and identity in Malaya particularly in Singapore.

The climax of this study is in 1969 when the South Yemen achieved its independence in 1969. The communist regime that was in power in Yemen at this time, had pursued a policy that prohibited the return of the Hadhrami Arabs from abroad, including Malaya. This policy in a way affected the Hadhrami Arabs' population in Malaya and their immigration. To limit the scope of study, this research only focuses on the Malay states in the Malay Peninsula, including Singapore, Penang and Malacca except Sabah and Sarawak.

Research Methodology

This study employs qualitative research methods. It uses library research method in collecting data related to the topic. The research also refers to primary sources that are accessible searched as from *The National Archive*, London, *The National Archive*, Malaysia and its branches as well as *The National Archive*, Singapore. These sources include records from the British Colonial Office (*Colonial Office CO*), Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), the Government Gazettes, Censuses, and General Adviser (GA). Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri (SUK) files are also consulted to get information regarding the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay states' administration. Newspapers and magazines are also referred to obtain information regarding the Hadhrami Arabs involvement in the publishing industry in Malaya whereas; they also provide details about their stand and approach in dealing with social issues in the society as well as economy and politics.

This research also refers to secondary sources from published and unpublished documents such as theses, books, articles, working papers, microfiches and microfilms, newspapers and journals from overseas and local libraries such as British Library,

London, National Library Board, Singapore, National Archive Library, Malaysia, University of Malaya Library, and Tun Sri Lanang Library. All the data are analyzed descriptively, analytically and critically using a thematic approach to observe the development of the Hadhrami Arabs involvement in Malaya.

Significance of the Study

This study could have a remarkable impact on the study of Malaysian history. All this while, the history of the Arab people in Malaya has not received appropriate attention from the respective bodies as such their roles and contributions to the history-making of the country is also overlooked. Thus, it is hoped that their efforts and contributions will be given proper recognition as they are part of the country's history.

1. This study attempts to highlight the history of the Hadhrami Arab community in Malaya in terms of their roles, contributions and their survival in the Malay community.
2. It is hoped that the study will provide new and valuable information about the roles and contributions of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya in order to fill the gap in the academic studies.
3. The information gathered from the study could be used to support and strengthen the theory of the Arab factor in the social, economic and political development in Malaysia by highlighting the contributions of the Hadhrami Arabs; especially the Sayyids in the 19th and 20th century Malaya. This will also help create a new understanding and perspective of the people towards the Hadhrami Arabs in the history making of Malaysia.

Literature Review

There is a vast but scattered literature on the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay World. However, literature reviews on the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, particularly in the Malay states are quite limited and scarce. Available writings are focused on the involvement of several prominent Hadhrami Arab figures in the economy and selected religious scholars and figures such as Sayyid Mohammad Al-Saqqaf, Sayyid Hassan bin Ahmad Al-Attas, Sayyid Abdul Rahman Al-Idrus@Aidarus popularly known as Tok Ku Paloh and Sayyid Shaykh Ahmad Al-Hadi, a popular reformist and journalist. Other writings discuss about the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya in brief and in general terms. Therefore, this research is conducted to fill this gap, and to explore the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya that was overlooked by researchers in the past.

In general, Arabs were associated with the activities of spreading Islam in Malaya and the Malay World. Writings on the origins, background and history of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya have been studied by local and foreign scholars alike. Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya in his works traces the origin and history of the Hadhrami Arabs and their settlements in Malaya. His works provide a valuable insight to the study of Hadhrami Arabs with general ideas on their origins, background of the Sayyid families in Malaya, genealogy and factors which lead to their migration to the Malay World particularly in Malaya.⁷ However, in his works, Mahayuddin does not emphasize the roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs in the development of religion, their involvement in politics, administration and economy in Malaya. On the other hand, Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad studies about the Arab community in Penang. He touches on the issue of origin, history, pattern of Arab migration, their involvement in the

⁷ See Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya, "Latarbelakang Sejarah Keturunan Sayid di Malaysia", in *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, p. 1980; Mahayudin haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984, Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya, "Sejarah Penempatan Orang Arab di Johor", *Seminar Sejarah dan Budaya Johor Tahun 2000*, May 3-6, 2000.

economy, education, *dakwah* activity, and social lives but discusses rather briefly, about their participation in politics in Penang.⁸

There are academic writings focus on Arab society in Malaya in specific districts or states such as the Arabs in the state of Kedah, Muar, Johor and in Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan. Nazirah Lee in her PhD thesis studies the Arabs in British Malaya in the Interwar Years from 1918 until 1941. In this study, she covers all Arabs who reside in Malaya regardless of their clan and descent and this include the *sadah* and shaykh as well as Arabs in general. She also touches on the background of the Arabs in Malaya that include their education and social life. This thesis also highlights the Arabs involvement in economics and administration that witnessed direct contact between the Arabs and the British in Malaya. While at the same time she also touches on the dynamic relationship between the Arabs and the Malays during the period of study.⁹

The genealogical study of the Hadhrami Arabs is also done to trace the background of the ancestors and descendants of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, such as Raja Haji Yahaya who studied the genealogy of Perak Royals who are connected with the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, and R.O. Winstedt in *Hadramaut Saiyids of Perak and Siak*.¹⁰ Tun Suzana and Muzaffar discuss in detail the genealogies of the Sayyid descents in Malaysia. They relate the relationship between the *Ahlul Bait*, the families of Prophet Muhammad SAW with the genealogies of the Malay Sultanates in Malaya, the present day Malaysia, the Sultanates of Brunei, the Sultanates of Sulu, the rulers of Aceh, the rulers of Champa (Cambodia), Patani and Maguindanao, Philipines today. This book highlights the roles and contributions of the Sayyid descendants originated from Hadhramaut, Yemen who claimed the descents of the Prophet Muhammad as *da'ie* and rulers in the Malay World. From this book, it is learned that Tun Habib Abdul

⁸ Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, "The Arabs in Penang", *Malaysia in History*. Vol. 21, No.2, December 1978.

⁹ Nadzirah bt Lee, *The Arabs in British Malaya in the Interwar Years, 1918-1941: A Historical Study*, PhD. Thesis, Hiroshima City University, Japan, 2010.

¹⁰ R. O. Winstedt, "Hadramaut Saiyids of Perak and Siak", *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Kraus Reprint, Vaduz, 1965, Sept. 1918. pp. 49-54. See also Raja Haji Yahya in JRASSB, p. 305. He studies genealogy of Perak Royals that have connection with the Sayyids from Hadhramaut, Yemen.

Majid, the Bendahara of Johor was one of the *Ahlul Bait* members and from him comes the genealogies of the Johor Sultanates (1699 – 1877), Pahang and Terengganu who ruled the states until today.¹¹

Faridah Romly in her thesis *Orang Arab di Kedah* studies about the Arab people in Kedah, discussing their genealogy, origin, and their involvement in the history-making of Kedah that include their participation in religion, society, economy and politics of Kedah.¹² A. Rahman Tang Abdullah in his academic exercise focuses on the history of the Arab society in Muar. He highlights the Arabs' involvement in the aspects of religion, education, economy and social life of the Arab community in Muar. Meanwhile, Syed Zakaria bin Syed Hassan also focuses his study on the Arab society, specifically in the District of Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan. He touches on the historical background of the Sayyid, the Arabs who originated from Hadhramaut, Yemen who claimed the descendant of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. who reside in Jelebu, Negeri Sembilan.¹³

Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas also discusses the genealogy of the Sayyid descents and their link with Hadhramaut, Yemen the country where their ancestors were originated and trace their roots to Qahtan from Hazarmaveth (Hadhramaut). Despite various claims, disagreements and uncertainties among genealogists about the Qahtan's ancestry, they however, come to an agreement that Qahtan was one of the Children of Ismail. The Arabs were also concerned with the authenticity of their genealogical origins and keep records of it. This tradition is still strictly observed by the Bani 'Alawi or the 'Alawis of Hahdramaut and they keep it recorded in seven volumes known as *Shajarah al-Sadah Bani 'Alawi* compiled by the *Rabitah al-'Alawiyyah* in Jakarta, Indonesia. The *Rabitah al-'Alawiyyah* has branches in the two Holy Cities, in Cairo and

¹¹ Tun Suzana and Muzaffar Mohamad, *Ahlul Bait, Keluarga Rasulullah SAW & Kesultanan Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Crescent News, 2009.

¹² Faridah Romly, *Orang Arab di Kedah*, Academic Exercise, History Department, National University of Malaysia, 1983/84.

¹³ A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, 'Sejarah Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Muar', Academic Exercise, B.A. History Department, University of Malaya, 1991/92, Syed Zakaria bin Syed Hassan, 'Sejarah Tentang Syed di Negeri Sembilan, Satu Kajian di Daerah Jebebu', Academic Exercise, B.A., Faculty of Usuluddin, University of Malaya, 1989/1999.

in the Malay Archipelago.¹⁴ Al-Attas further discusses about the activity of spreading Islam in the Malay Archipelago by the Arabs that were mainly done by the Bani 'Alawi of Hadhramaut, the descendant of al-Husain in the 12th and 16th centuries.¹⁵

The works of Mahayuddin Haji, Yahaya Omar Farouk, Nazirah Lee, Syed Zakaria bin Syed Hassan and Faridah Romly are important and significant to the study of Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. They provide a valuable insight and basic introduction to the study of Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, which covered the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in several social aspects in Malaya. However, their works only discuss about the Arabs in certain states only. Omar Farouk and Faridah Romly study about the Arabs in general which include the Sayyid and non-Sayyid descent in Penang and Kedah. Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya specifically writes about the Hadhrami Arab descents of Sayyid descents in Pahang and Johor in general. Therefore a thorough study needs to be done to highlight and discover the presence of Hadhrami Arabs in other states in Malaya, their roles and contributions in the Malay States. While, Nazirah Lee tries to cover almost every aspect of the Arabs in Malaya that makes the study lacks of detail in certain issues such as the Arabs' involvement in *madrasah* education and the conduct of *hajj* activities by the Arabs in Malaya. Overall, this thesis provides a useful information regarding the Arab society in Malaysia. Further research needs to be carried out to study related aspects in detail.¹⁶

W.H. Ingrams provides a valuable insight to the study of Hadhrami Arabs on their social, economic and political situation in Hadhramaut, Yemen. In his report, Ingrams touches on the social structure of the people of Hadhramaut which is basically centred on the social strata with the *Sadah* (plural of Sayyid) as the highest and

¹⁴ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Historical Fact and Fiction*, 2011, pp. 76, 79.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

¹⁶ Nazirah bt Lee, *The Arabs in British Malaya in the Interwar Years, 1918-1941: A Historical Study*, Ph.D Thesis, Hiroshima City University, Japan, 2010, Faridah Romly, *Orang Arab di Kedah*, Academic Exercise, History Department, National University of Malaysia, 1983/84, A.Rahman Tang Abdullah, 'Sejarah Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Muar', Academic Exercise, B.A. History Department, University of Malaya, 1991/92, Syed Zakaria bin Syed Hassan, 'Sejarah Tentang Syed di Negeri Sembilan, Satu Kajian di Daerah Jelebu', Academic Exercise, B.A., Faculty of Usuluddin, University of Malaya, 1989/1999.

respected group in the society followed by the *Syaikh* or *Masyaikh*. The *Sadah* or the *Sayyids* consisted of the religious scholars and learned men. They were consulted by the people in matters related to religion. They were also the mediator in settling disputes or fights between clans in the society. He also mentions about the Hadhrami Arab emigrants outside Yemen such as in East Africa, East Indies (Indonesia today) and Malaya. Ingrams further writes that the Hadhrami Arabs who live in Singapore mainly originated from the towns of Tarim, Seiyun, and Shibam and many of them were the *Nahd* tribesmen.¹⁷

Meanwhile, L.W.C. Van Den Berg studies about the Hadhrami Arabs in the Netherland East Indies or Indonesia today. He provides detailed information on the Hadhrami Arabs in Indonesia who mostly originated from Hadhramaut, Yemen. In his writing, Van den Berg also briefly mentions about the Hadhrami Arab colony in Malacca, Penang, and Singapore. He says that the Hadhrami Arabs in Malacca were mostly born Arab with a mixed blood of an Arab father and local mother and many of them are poor. Meanwhile, those who have capital moved to Singapore to earn a better living, engaging in trade and the likes. The Hadhrami Arab colony continued to grow, as well as the number of Hadhrami Arab immigrants every year. Penang was one of the British colonies in Malaya that also witnessed the presence of the growth of the Hadhrami Arab colony on the island. However, their number was relatively small and they even did not have their own leader from their nationality.¹⁸

‘Hadthramut and the Arab Colonies in the Indian Archipelago’ by L.W.C. Van Den Berg discusses issues concerning Hadhramaut of its population, geography, social, economy and political life. This book is divided into two parts where the third part is omitted (a dissertation). The first part is about the Arabs in Hadhramaut. L.W.C Van Den Berg mentions about significant roles played the Sayyids of hadhramaut who have

¹⁷ W.H. Ingrams, *Aden Protectorate: A Report on the Social, Economic and Political Condition of the Hadhramaut*, London: Printed and Published by His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1936, p. 143.

¹⁸ L. W. C. Van Den Berg, *Orang Arab di Nusantara*, (trans.) Rahayu Hidayat, Jakarta: Komunitas Bambu, 2010, p. 110.

great moral influence over the people. He lists down names of Sayyid families in Hadhramaut as well as other names of family tribes including the Bedouins. The Sayyids are respected by the rest of the population because of their religious influence and noble status being the descent of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. However, the Sayyids in Hadhramaut are conservative and they oppose innovations be it material or intellectual in particular from Europe. The second part is about the diaspora Arabs in the Indian Archipelago, their migration abroad, survival in foreign lands, the remittances sending back home and censuses of the Arabs in diaspora particularly in Singapore, Malacca, Penang and Wellesley in 1874 and 1884.¹⁹

This book is a translation from Dutch to English. It provides a useful information regarding Hadhramaut of its political and social life particularly the political roles played by the Sayyids in the region. However, in preparing this book Van Den Berg himself did not visit Hadhramaut. Most of the information gathered are collected from his interviews with Arabs in Batavia who on frequent visits to Hadhramaut. He also refers to M. Mahommed bin Hassan Babahir, the chief of Arab colony in Batavia. Statistics are collected from local authorities as well as archives from Government reports in relation to the Arabs' political roles in Hadhramaut, Yemen. Although this book provides quite a considerable amount of information regarding the Arabs in Hadhramaut and in the Indian Archipelago, but not much is mentioned about the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent in the Malay states.²⁰

The involvement of the Hadhramaut Arabs in the administration of religion and educational aspects of Malaya prevails in almost every state in the country. Researchers like Heather Sutherland,²¹ Shahril Talib Robert,²² Muhammad Yusuf Hashim,

¹⁹ IOR. MFI – 1492 +1493, V/23/273 no. 212, Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government. No. CCXII – New Series. L. W. C. Van Den Berg, *Hadhramut and the Arab Colonies in the Indian Archipelago*, (trans) Major C. W. H. Sealy, Second Assistant Political Resident, Aden. Published by Order of Government with the Permission of the Governor General of Netherlands-India, 1887.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Heather Sutherland, "The Taming of the Trengganu Elite", in Ruth T. McVey (ed.), *Southeast Asian Transitions Approaches Through Social History*, London: Yale University Press, 1978, pp. 32-85.

Mohamad Abu Bakar,²³ and Shafie Abu Bakar²⁴ are among those who studied and penned their works discussing issues related to the involvement of the elite group, religious scholars and figures, administrators and political figures in Malaya before and after the country achieved independence. Among them there were Hadhrami Arab religious scholars and figures that were in the service of the Malay States.

Heather Sutherland focuses his study on the status of the elite group in Terengganu in *The Taming of the Trengganu Elite*. He categorizes the ruling and social structure of the state into three stages; the first stage is the elite or *golongan atasan* or dignitaries that comprises of the sultan, administrators (officials) and the religious group (scholars). In the second stage, the group of the middle class comprising of the lawyers (who did not receive formal training) was also known as the representative (*wakil*) lawyers. The last and the lowest stage is the commoners or ordinary people, the *rakyat*.²⁵ In this work he further discusses the role played by the religious elite group such as the Al-Idrus family who held important positions in the state as *mufti* and *Shaykh al-'Ulama'*. The Al-Idrus family originated from Hadhramaut, Yemen.²⁶

In the administration and political aspects, the Hadhrami Arabs were among those who were actively involved in the affairs of the Malay states in Malaya. Hussain Baba bin Mohamad discusses how Perlis, also known as Kayang, some time ago as a small district under the governorship of Kedah had come to be an independent state ruled by descendants of Hadhrami Sayyid in the middle of the 19th century. It also discusses how Sayyid Hussain helped the Sultan of Kedah to protect Perlis and Kedah

²² Shahril Talib Robert, "The Trengganu Ruling Class in the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBARS)*, Vol. 50, Pt. 2, 1977.

²³ Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Ulama dan Umara: Tok Ku Paluh dan Pemerintahan Islam"; Mohamad bin Abu Bakar, "Sayid Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Idrus (Tok Ku Paloh)", 1979; Mohamad Abu Bakar, *Ulama Terengganu Suatu Sorotoan*.

²⁴ Shafie Abu Bakar, Peranan Ulama dan Kesannya Terhadap Sikap Anti-Penjajahan Dengan Merujuk Pada Pengajaran Tasawwuf Sayid Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad (Tok Ku Paloh) Berasaskan Karangannya Ma'arif al-Lahfan, in *Colloquium Masyarakat Melayu Abad ke19*, 26 October 1985, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi.

²⁵ Heather Sutherland, "The Taming of the Trengganu Elite", pp. 32-85.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

against the Siamese attack. It was through him that the descendant of Jamalullail rules Perlis from then until today.²⁷

While Julie Tang Su Chin exclusively discusses about the establishment of the state of Perlis that is ruled by Hadhrami Sayyid descent in the middle of the 19th century until today, as well as the roles played by Sayyid Hussain in bringing peace to the state.²⁸ Julie also illuminates the factors that contributed to the appointment of Sayyid Husain Jamalullail as the ruler of Perlis. Several other researchers and historians have presented various hypotheses on this issue. Ahmad Ismail and Yazid Mat,²⁹ Mohd Isa Othman,³⁰ Haji Buyong Adil,³¹ and Hussain Baba bin Mohamad³² are among those who studied the history of Perlis, which indirectly involved the Hadhrami Arabs' presence in Kedah and Perlis. Besides, the close relations between Sayyid Hussain and the royal family of Kedah could have contributed to his appointment as the ruler of Perlis.³³ Whereby, Arau had been given by the Sultan Dhiauddin to Sayyid Harun, his son in law (the father of Sayyid Hussain) as a marriage gift and the area is to be inherited by his offspring forever.³⁴

Haji Buyong Adil also briefly touches on the political and administrative positions held by several Hadhrami leaders in Negeri Sembilan such as Sayyid Abdul Rahman (1872-1879) who was appointed Datuk Kelana of Sungai Ujung.³⁵ In Tampin, the Al-Qadri families controlled the district of Tampin when Sayyid Sha'aban was made its first ruler, the *Tengku Besar Tampin*. In Jelebu, Sayyid Ali bin Zin al-Jafri held the position of Datuk Penghulu Jelebu. Khoo Kay Kim also discusses about the involvement of Sayyid Abdul Rahman bin Sayyid Ahmad al-Qadri in *The Dato' Bandar*

²⁷ Hussain Baba bin Mohamad, "Sejarah Raja-Raja Perlis", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 42, pt. 2, 1969, pp. 173-197.

²⁸ Julie Tang Su Chin, *Sejarah Kerajaan Perlis 1841-1957*, MBRAS, Monograph No. 32, 2002.

²⁹ Ahmad Ismail and Yazid Mat, *Perlis Indera Kayangan. Sejarah Pembentukan Sebuah Negeri Berdaulat*, Kangar: Perbadanan Perpustakaan Awam Negeri Perlis, 1992, pp. 1-2, 9-20, 27-28, 35, 32; See also Yazid Mat, *Perlis (1839-1909), Period Penentuan Ujudnya Negeri Perlis sebagai sebuah negeri yang mempunyai keperibadiannya sendiri*, Latihan Ilmiah, Universiti Malaya, 1974.

³⁰ Mohd Isa Othman, *Politik Tradisional Kedah 1681-1942*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1990, pp. 29-30, 60.

³¹ Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Perlis, Siri Sejarah Nusantara*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981, pp. 20, 23-24.

³² Hussain Baba bin Mohamad, "Sejarah Negeri dan Raja2 Perlis", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 42, Pt. 2, 1969, pp. 173-196.

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 176-77; Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Perlis*, pp. 23-24.

³⁴ Julie Tang Su Chin, *Sejarah Kerajaan Perlis 1841-1957*, pp. 14-15. See also Ahmad Ismail and Yazid Mat, *Perlis Indera Kayangan. Sejarah Pembentukan Sebuah Negeri Berdaulat*, pp. 27-28, 35, 40-44.

³⁵ Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Negeri Sembilan*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981.

of *Sungai Ujong* in the politics of Sungai Ujung when he was appointed as Datuk Kelana.³⁶ These works provide useful information regarding the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the state administration and politics in Negeri Sembilan. However, these writings do not focus specifically on the Hadhrami Arabs.

Mohammad Redzuan discusses the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the administration and politics in the Malay states. This work is important because it provides preliminary studies on the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the state administration in Malaya, with many of them holding important positions in the Malay States. His study covers the states of Kedah, Perlis, Perak, Terengganu, Kelantan, Pahang, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Johor. However, his writings only focus on the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the Malay states for a limited period of time. A thorough and comprehensive study needs to be carried out to find further information on their involvement in Malaya until at least in the mid 20th century.³⁷

Mohammad Redzuan also discusses the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the Malay politics in Malaya up to the 1940s. This time he focuses on the roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs in the politics in Malaya before the Second World War. There were Hadhrami Arabs who were pro British and some were discreetly against them. Despite of the loyalty shown by the Hadhrami Arabs towards the British administration in Malaya, still the latter were suspicious of the Hadhrami Arabs, particularly during the tensed period of the First World War.³⁸ This study provides important perspective of the British towards the Hadhrami Arabs' attitude and standpoint concerning the politics of Malaya during the period of study. However, his study only covers the period before the Second World War meanwhile; this research studies the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement

³⁶ Khoo Kay Kim, "The Dato' Bandar of Sungai Ujong", *Peninjau Sejarah*, Vol. III, September 1968, pp. 41-54.1

³⁷ Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Hadhramis in the Politics and Administration of the Malay States in the Late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean 1750s-1960s*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 82-93.

³⁸ Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Conflicting Political Loyalties of the Arabs in Malaya Before World War II", in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (eds.), *Transcending Borders. Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, pp. 37-52.

in the Malay politics until the year 1969. Further discussion needs to be carried out to see the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay politics after the Second World War.

Nurfadzilah Yahaya in her Master's thesis studies the British colonial views of the Arab elite in Singapore from 1819-1942, tries to discover how the Arab elites managed to keep their identity of *Arabness* despite being born of mixed descent; of Malay and Arab parent. Even though there were rumours about the Arab elites in Singapore who at times were suspected as anti-British, yet there were wealthy Arab elites who tried to keep a good rapport with the British, especially in politics, for the sake of their business ventures in Malaya.³⁹

There are also other writings that touch on the issue of the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in politics and administration in Malaya, albeit with very brief and very general discussion. The information on them can be found in *Sejarah Negeri Sembilan, Sejarah Terengganu, Sejarah Kedah* and *Sejarah Johor* by Buyong Adil,⁴⁰ *History of Kelantan 1890-1940* by Shahril Talib Robert,⁴¹ *Sejarah Tentang Syed di Negeri Sembilan: Satu Kajian di Daerah Jelebu* by Syed Zakaria bin Syed Hassan⁴² and *Temenggung of Muar* by R.O. Winstedt.⁴³ These works provide information on the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the Malay States administration and politics from which we can glean the Hadhrami Arabs' relationship with the Malay rulers as well as the British.

After all, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, by William R. Roff helps a lot in understanding the Malay political background in Malaya for the period covered in

³⁹ Nurfadzilah Yahaya, *Good Friends and Dangerous Enemy: British Images of the Arab Elite in Colonial Singapore (1819-1942)*, Master Thesis, Department of History, National University of Singapore, 2006.

⁴⁰ Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Perlis*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981; Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Negeri Sembilan*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981; Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Selangor*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981.

⁴¹ Shahril Talib Robert, "The Trengganu Ruling Class in the Nineteenth Century".

⁴² Syed Zakaria bin Syed Hassan, *Sejarah Tentang Syed di Negeri Sembilan: Satu Kajian di Daerah Jelebu*, Academic Exercise, Faculty of Usuluddin, University of Malaya, 1998/99.

⁴³ R.O. Winstedt, "The Bendaharas and Temenggongs", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*, Vol. 10, No. 1, January 1932, pp. 55-66.

study.⁴⁴ Readings on the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya in later periods are not tackled by many, especially after the Second World War and post-independence in Malaya. Sayyid Muhammad Khairudin Al-Junied touches on the role played by Hadhramis in Singapore in the 20th century by highlighting the involvement of the Al-Saqqafs or Al-Saggofs in *dakwah* or the propagation of Islam in Singapore, publication and politics. Names like Sayyid Ibrahim bin Omar Al-Saqqaf, Sayyid Ahmad bin Mohamed Sayyid Esa Al-Menoar, Sayyid Ali Redha Al-Saqqaf, Sayyid Shahbuddin and Sayyid Ja'afar Albar were among the Hadhramis who were actively involved in politics in Malaya and Singapore.⁴⁵

Syed Shaykh Al-Hadi was one of the Hadhrami Arab figures whose interest prevailed in the work of reform or *islah* through publication and education. Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi was not only a reformist, but also a teacher and journalist. He contributed to the establishment of several *madrasahs* as well as founding reformist journals in Malaya such as *Al-Imam*, *Al-Ikhwan* and *Saudara*.⁴⁶ Alijah Gordon in *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hady* highlights the works of *islah* or Islamic reform by Syed Shaykh Al-Hadi in his effort to bring progress in the Malay society that was portrayed in the publication of journals such as *Al-Imam*, *Saudara* and *Al-Ikhwan*. Ian Proudfoot,⁴⁷ William R. Roff,⁴⁸ Nik Ahmad Nik Hassan⁴⁹ and A.M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad⁵⁰ were among those who compiled and wrote on the publishing industry in Malaya. From these works, one can gather information on Hadhrami Arabs who became funders, editors and journalists as well as owners of publishing companies.

⁴⁴ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore: University of Malaya Press and New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967.

⁴⁵ Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore – A Reinterpretation", *Immigrants & Minorities*, Vol. 25, No. 2, July 2007, pp. 163-177.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02619280802018165>.

⁴⁶ Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hady*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute (MSRI), 1999.

⁴⁷ Proudfoot, Ian, *Pre-War Malay Periodicals Notes to Roff's Bibliography Drawn from Government Gazettes*, Kekal Abadi, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 1985.

⁴⁸ William R. Roff, *Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals Published in the Straits Settlements and Peninsular Malay States 1876-1941*, London: Oxford University Press, 1972.

⁴⁹ Nik Ahmad bin Bik Hassan, "The Malay Press", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 36, Pt. 1, No. 201, 1963.

⁵⁰ Drs. A.M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1973.

Talib Samat and Abu Bakar Hamzah explore the life of Sayyid Shyakh Al-Hadi a prominent literati and *'ulama'* who played significant role in promoting the idea of reforms or *Islah* and *Tajdid* movement in the early period of the 20th century through education and publication. More study needs to be done to find further information regarding the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the publishing industry in Malaya and their contributions towards the nation building and independence in the 20th century Malaya.⁵¹

Apart from their involvement in the politics and administration in Malaya, the Hadhrami Arabs were also actively engaged in business and trade, and business ventures in Malaya and the Malay Archipelago as well, as trans-ocean businesses between Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Among the works which deal with the early trade contact between the Arabs and the Malays is an article by Rita Rose Di Meglio.⁵² In the study of Arab community's involvement in trade and economy in Malaya, more light has been shed on their business and trade activities in the Malay Archipelago such as in Indonesia (Dutch East Indies) and Singapore.

William G. Clarence-Smith in his article 'Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940,' describes the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in trade and business ventures in the Malay World particularly in Singapore and Indonesia. He studies how and why the Hadhrami entrepreneurs came to play such a significant role in the economy of the Malay World when many of them were reported multimillionaires in Indonesia and Singapore. Many of the Hadhrami Arabs involved in business ventures traded spices, cotton textiles, engaged in inter island shipping, as well as the pilgrim industry. They were also reported to be involved in money lending business. William also touches on the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in agriculture in Malay

⁵¹ Talib Samat, *Syed Syeikh Al-Hadi Sasterawan Progresif Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1992; Abu Bakar Hamzah, *Al-Imam: Its Role in Malay Society 1906-1908*. Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1981.

⁵² Rita Rosa Di Meglio, "Arab Trade with Indonesia and the Malay Peninsula from the 8th to the 16th Century", in D. S. Richard (ed.), *Islam and the Trade of Asia. A Colloquium*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 105-135.

Peninsula, which, according to him was almost non-existent except for the Al-Saqqaf family's involvement in Johor and Singapore.⁵³

In his other work 'The Rise and Fall of Shipping in the Indian Ocean, c.1750 – c.1940', William G. Clarence-Smith touches on the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the shipping industry trading commodities in the Malayan waters in mid 18th century until 20th century employing mostly Javanese crews members with Arab captains. Shipping was a profitable business to the Arabs before they faced stiff competition with European shippers in the 1880s when steamships were introduced and dominated mostly by the European big companies. In general, this article provides a useful information regarding the Hadhrami Arabs involvement in the shipping business in the Malay world. Yet, not much is mentioned about the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, particularly in the Malay Peninsula.⁵⁴

Meanwhile, in Malaya, there are writings on the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in trade and business activities in Malaya focusing on certain leading figures who were prominently known in the society. Among them were the Al-Saqqaff, Al-Kaff and Al-Junied families. Mohd. Sohaimi Esa discusses about the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the economy of Johor in the 19th until early 20th century Malaya.⁵⁵ In his other work *Ekonomi Orang Arab di Johor (1862-1942)*, Mohd. Sohaimi Esa specifically discusses the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the economy of Johor. This book contains four chapters discussing about the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the economy of Johor. The first chapter touches on the historical background of the Hadhrami Arabs, their voyages, trade and migration in the Malay World. Chapter two discusses about the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the economy of Johor before the British interfered in the state administration (1862-1914). In chapter three he touches on

⁵³ William G. Clarence-Smith, "Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World", in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders Scholars and the Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s-1960s*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 297-314.

⁵⁴ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "The Rise and Fall of Shipping in the Indian Ocean, c.1750 – c.1940", in *Ships and the Development of Maritime Technology in the Indian Ocean*, (eds.) David Parkin and Ruth Barnes, London: Routledge Curzon, 2002, p. 230.

⁵⁵ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, "Ekonomi Orang Arab Pada Abad Ke-9 Masihi Hingga Tahun 1914", *Jebat*, No. 26, 1999, pp. 41-71.

the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the economy of Johor during the British era that he considers as the first stage from 1914 until 1926. In the last chapter, Mohd Sohaimi discusses the Arabs' involvement in the economy of Johor from 1926 until 1942. Several issues are discussed by Mohd Sohaimi regarding the Kukup Concession, conflicts between the state of Johor and Kukup Concession and its trustees.⁵⁶

Mohd Sohaimi Esa discusses the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the economy of Johor in his Master thesis 'Penglkatan Individu-individu Arab dalam Ekonomi negeri Johor (1862-1942) in which many of them concentrated in Johor Bahru Town.⁵⁷ This study provides important background of the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the economic sector in Malaya particularly in Johor. The book and the thesis provide an interesting and detail information regarding the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the state of Johor. However, it only covers a limited period of time from 1862 until 1942 and focuses on the state of Johor only. Therefore, this research tries to fill the gap to study the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in economy in other Malay states and also to cover the period after the Second World War until 1969.

Saadiah Said focuses her writing on the involvement of the Al-Saqqaf family in the economic activities on Johor in particular Sayyid Mohamad Al-Saqqaf. She also explores the close relationship between Sayyid Mohamad Al-Saqqaf and the Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor. Sayyid Mohamad was awarded *Pingat Darjah Kerabat Johor* (DK), a special award that was only given to Johor royalties. Through this relationship, Sayyid Mohamad Al-Saqqaf was granted with a concession land in Kukup, Pontian for agricultural purpose. Apart from that, the Al-Saqqaf family was also actively involved in pilgrimage activity and matters related to it such as being a *hajj* agent or *hajj* broker

⁵⁶ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, *Ekonomi Orang Arab di Johor (1862-1942)*, Sabah: Universiti Malaysia Sabah, 1999.

⁵⁷ Mohd Sohaimi Esa, *Penglkatan Individu Arab dalam Ekonomi Negeri Johor (1862-1942)*, M.A. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1997.

or *shaykh haji* by providing transportation to potential *haji* to Hijaz.⁵⁸ These works provide useful information on the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the economic sector in Malaya. However, these works focus on certain states only. Therefore, a thorough study is needed to explore the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in other Malay states in Malaya.

Apart from their involvement in the economy, the Hadhrami Arabs also contributed to the establishment of several religious schools in Malaya that were popularly known as *madrasah*. *Madrasah* is also called *Sekolah Arab* or Arabic school. Sayyid 'Ali bin Mohamed Al-Attas highlights the significant role played by Sayyid Hassan in promoting Islamic education in Malaya. Sayyid Hassan was a successful and wealthy Hadhrami Arab entrepreneur in Malaya who used his own wealth (accumulated from his business enterprises) to build several *madrasah* in Johor and Pahang.⁵⁹ Rahim bin Osman⁶⁰ in *Madrasah Masyhur al-Islamiyyah* discusses the involvement of the Arab community in Penang. Among whom were the Hadhrami Sayyids who took initiative to set up a religious school named *Madrasah al-Qur'an* in 1916 to teach basic knowledge about Islam, Qur'an recitation and Fardhu 'Ain. This *Madrasah Al-Qur'an* served as a basic foundation for the establishment of *Madrasah Al-Masyhur* in 1919.⁶¹

Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi was the person who was responsible in bringing big changes to the *madrasah* administration and its management. He introduced a new system of education that was totally different from the old one where students were taught with secular subjects aside from the religious ones. This writing highlights the significant role played by Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi in the modern religious education in Malaya. However, this writing only focuses on Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi's contribution

⁵⁸Saadiah Said, "Kegiatan Keluarga al-Sagoff dalam Ekonomi Negeri Johor 1878-1906", *Jebat*, No. 7/8, 1977/78-1978/79, pp. 52-67. See also Saadiah Said, *Kegiatan Keluarga al-Sagoff Dalam Ekonomi Johor 1878-1926*, B.A Thesis, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1979.

⁵⁹ Sayyid 'Ali bin Mohamed al-Attas, *Allahyarham Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas Seorang Mujahid dan Pembangunan Ummah*, Johor: Madrasah al-Attas al-Arabiah Johor, 1998.

⁶⁰ Rahim bin Osman, "Madrasah al-Masyhur al-Islamiyyah", in Khoo Kay Kim, et al., *Islam di Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980, SPP/P/1. *Madrasah Mashoor al-Islamiah (Lelaki Perempuan)*, Prepared by: Shaikh Ahmad Osman Bajunid, Pulau Pinang, 1980.

⁶¹ Rahim bin Osman, "Madrasah al-Masyhur al-Islamiyyah".

in the establishment of *Madrasah Al-Masyhur* in Penang with only brief information about his involvement in the establishment of *Madrasah Al-Iqbal* in Singapore and *Madrasah Al-Hadi* in Malacca. Further study needs to be done to study his involvement in other *madrasah* in Singapore and Malacca as well as other Hadhrami Arabs contributions in the religious education in Malaya.⁶²

On the subject of the British response towards the roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, this research tries to look into several aspects such as religion, politics and administration, publication and economics that witnessed the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the country. This research will also touch on the British policy and response towards the Middle East influence on the Malays through the political ideology, religious reform and pan-Islamic ideas. Apart from that, a discussion on the Turkish influence and its impact on the Malays are also worth mentioning. Mohammad Redzuan discusses about the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the politics of Malaya, with some of them as pro British, while there were others who were anti-British particularly during the inter war years of the First World War and the Second World War in Singapore. There were Hadhrami Arab leaders who showed their support and loyalty to the British rule in Malaya.⁶³ A selection of Malay newspapers and journals shall be referred to in order get a clear idea of the Malays' perception of the political developments in Malaya.⁶⁴

Meanwhile, regarding the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs role and influence in Malaya, the research will look into several factors that contributed to the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs particularly after the Second World War. This decline also refers to the shrinking of political, economic and social domination of the Hadhrami Arabs in

⁶² Rahim bin Osman, "Madrasah al-Masyhur al-Islamiyyah". Linda Tan, 'Syed Shaykh : His Life & Times', in Alijah Gordon, *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh al-Hady*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1999, pp. 147-149. Talib Samat, *Syed Shaykh Al-Hadi Sasterawan Progresif Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka dan Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1992, pp. 44-45.

⁶³ Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Conflicting Political Loyalties of the Arabs in Malaya", p. 38.

⁶⁴ This newspapers and journals would include the Malays view and thoughts on the political development that taking place in Malaya during the said period such as *Neracha*, *Pengasoh*, *Saudara* and *Al-Ikhwani*.

Malaya. The aftermath of the Second World War resulted in the changes of government policies such as the introduction of the ‘Control of Rent Act 1947’ that caused the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs income in Singapore. The shortage of income also affected on the remittances contributed by the Hadhrami Arabs to their homeland, Hadhramaut.⁶⁵ The Act froze all the rent of pre-war properties and it was put under the control by the government of Singapore. The ‘Control of Rent Act of 1947’ introduced by the authority was aimed to prevent landlords from raising rents in a way to take advantage of the shortage of housing in the island. This Act gave a big impact to the Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore as many of them were dependent on the income accumulated from the rental properties.⁶⁶

Division of Chapters

The Introduction part of the research discusses about the problem statements, scope of the study, objectives of the study, the significance of the study and literature review. Chapter one discusses about the background and the origin of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya as the majority of them originated from Hadhramaut, Yemen, and claimed themselves as descendants of Prophet Muhammad SAW tracing their genealogy back to Husain, the son of Fatimah. This chapter discovers the early trade contact between the Arabs in the Middle East and the Malays in the Malay World. This research will also refer to the census of the Arab Population in Malaya that were mostly carried out in Malaya from 1871 until 1931. This shows the increased number of the Arabs every year either from the external influx of the Arabs from the Middle East or through the intermarriage between the Hadhrami Arabs with the local women in Malaya that gave birth to a new generation of *Peranakan Arab*. This chapter will also touch on the

⁶⁵ Syed Farid Alatas, “Hadhramaut and the Hadhrami Diaspora”, in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence –Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s – 1960s*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, p. 25.

⁶⁶ Amen Ali Talib, “Hadramis in Singapore”, *The British-Yemeni Society*; Jim Baker, *Crossroads: a Popular History of Malaysia & Singapore*, Singapore: Times Books International, 2000, pp. 269-270.

Hadhrami Arabs' social life where the majority of the Hadhrami Arab community in Malaya experienced a mix-culture of Arab and Malay. The majority of the Arabs in Malaya were from a mixed-marriage between Hadhrami Arab men and local women.

The second chapter discusses about the role and contribution of the Hadhrami Arabs in religion and religious administration, and religious education or *madrasah* in Malaya. This chapter explores the roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs in religion and religious administration, with many of them appointed to the position of *mufti*, *shaykh al-Islam*, *qādī* and religious teachers. There were Hadhrami Arabs who were involved in the establishment of *madrasah* in Malaya, such as *Madrasah Al-Masyhur*, *Madrasah Al-Attas*, *Madrasah Al-Saqqaf* (Al-Saggof), and *Madrasah Al-Junied*. These *madrasahs* were built through the efforts of the wealthy Hadhrami Arabs, in fulfilment or response to the social need of the *ummah*. They use the wealth accumulated from their business activities to build *madrasah* as well as to maintain the *madrasah's* administration.

Chapter three discusses about the roles and contributions of the Hadhrami Arabs in the economy and publication, highlighting the Hadhrami Arabs' dominance in the economic sector in Malaya. The Hadhrami Arab families such as Al-Saqqaf, Al-Kaff and Al-Attas were among the big names in the economy of Malaya and reported among the richest individuals in Malaya. In terms of publication, the Hadhrami Arabs were also involved in the publishing industry in Malaya producing journals and newspapers such as *Al-Imam*, *Al-Ikhwān*, *Saudara*, *Warta Malaya* and *Genuine Islam*. These publications also served as a medium for the religious reformist group known as *Kaum Muda* in disseminating the idea of reform and *pan-Islam* in Malaya.

Meanwhile, the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in administration and politics of Malaya is discussed in chapter four. The authority and respect secured by the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya were due to their participation in the politics and administration of the Malay states. Their involvement in the politics and administration

was noticeable in almost all of Malay states, but it was mostly apparent in Perlis, Kedah, and Negeri Sembilan where the Hadhrami Arab religious scholars who married into the royal families and ruling class received privilege and special status in the society. These afforded them greater chances in being appointed to high positions in the Malay states administration and politics.

In chapter five, this research explores the British response on the role played by the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya where the Hadhrami Arabs' prominence in the politics and administration of the Malay states resulted in their role being perceived with suspicion by the British. This was due to the British apprehension towards the Hadhrami Arabs, for fear that they would use their religious and political influence among the Malays to go up against the British administration in Malaya. This chapter will also look into the British reaction towards the Hadhrami Arabs' participation in the Malay politics and administration, as well as religion, particularly the pilgrims industry which also benefitted the British.

Lastly, in chapter six the research discusses the factors that lead to the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs' role and influence in Malaya. This decline also refers to the shrinking of the Hadhrami Arabs' influence in politics, economic and social domination. The Hadhrami Arabs' economic activities were also badly affected due to the war. The aftermath of the Second World War and the Japanese Occupation in Malaya had crippled the administration and economy of Malaya. The government policies introduced in Singapore also resulted in the Hadhrami Arabs' decline in later years. Some Hadhrami Arabs felt that these policies were the reasons which caused them to lose their social status and identity in Malaya particularly in Singapore.

In the concluding part, the research summarises the important roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya as well as their contributions in the religion, religious administration, Arab school or *madrasah*, administration and politics of the Malay

states, economy and publication. The involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay states could be considered as an important part in the history making of Malaya particularly in the religious historiography that witnessed the lasting impact of the Hadhrami Arab scholars' contributions to the Malay-Islamic civilization as well as the Muslims thoughts in Malaya and Malaysia today.

Conclusion

In general, the Hadhrami Arabs played prominent role in Malaya and contributed significantly to the development of the country in the 19th and early 20th century. The most beneficial and lasting contributions of the Arabs were reflected in religious and intellectual development of the Malays by establishing *madrrasah*, mosques, engaging in the administration of religion and politics. The early Hadhrami Arab immigrants in Malaya were respected religious scholars and successful entrepreneurs. Their scholarship in Islam earned them a reputable status in society and they also had been appointed to high positions such as *shaykh al-Islam*, *mufti*, *qādī*, and religious teachers. The prominent roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs in politics and administration of the Malay states also earned them authority and respect by the Malays.

However, in certain parts, the Hadhrami Arabs were seen dominating the economy of Malaya, which had caused dissatisfaction among the Malays. The Malays started questioning the role of the Arabs and criticized their sincerity in bringing up the changes in the society. Regardless of these sentiments, the Malays should recognize and appreciate the efforts made by the early Hadhrami Arab generations in bringing changes in the society such as establishing religious institutions from which the Malays benefitted in deepening their knowledge about Islam.

This study examines the significant roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs and their contributions in the aspects of religion, education, publication, economics, politics

and administration of Malaya from 1819 until 1969. This study employs a qualitative research method. Library research is used in collecting data from published and unpublished documents as well as records from the local archives and abroad such as The National Archives of London, British Library, London, The National Archives of Singapore, National Library Board, Singapore, The National Archives Malaysia and its branches, The University of Malaya Library, The National University Malaysia Library. All data are examined and analyzed descriptively, analytically and critically throughout the study. It explores how the Hadhrami Arabs, a minority group of immigrants from Hadhramaut, Yemen managed to prosper and held important positions in the Malay states' administration, politics and the economy. This research spans from the period of the founding of Singapore as a trading post by Stamford Raffles in 1819 where he managed to attract Arab traders to trade and settle in Singapore. The year 1969 marks the end of this study when South Yemen became independent with a communist regime in power that practised a closed door policy regarding the Hadhrami Arabs migration and forbade those in the diaspora from returning home. Apart from their active involvement in the economy, administration and politics of the Malay states, the Hadhrami Arabs also contributed immensely in the field of religious education where several *madrasah* or Arab schools were built to cater the needs of Muslim children. *Waqf* or endowment funds were established from which income was collected to pay for the maintenance of *madrasah*, as well as for the teachers' salary. In addition, they also build mosques and financing orphanage houses through the *waqf* fund as well as donating lands for the graveyards. However, the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the aspects of administration and politics of the Malay states had been looked upon with suspicion by the British. Thus, this study tries to examine how the British responded towards the roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs and their involvement in the administration of religion, *madrasah* education, publication, politics, administration,

and economics in Malaya. It also chronicles the Hadhrami Arab-British relations in the 19th and 20th century Malaya. Apart from that, the study also analyzed factors that led to the decline of the Hadhrami Arab descents in Malaya after the Second World War, particularly in politics and economy that eventually lead to the shrinking of Hadhrami Arabs' dominance in the economy, as well as the crisis of identity faced by the younger generation of the *Peranakan* Arab. Nevertheless, based on the information gathered, the study could be used to support and strengthen the theory of the Arab factor in the social, economic, and political development in Malaya, by highlighting the contributions of the Hadhrami Arabs; especially the Sayyids in the 19th and 20th centuries, as they also contributed to the history of in the making of Malaysia.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 2:BACKGROUND OF THE HADHRAMI ARABS IN MALAYA

Introduction

The nomadic lifestyle is synonymous with the Arabs. They live in the desert, move in groups and engage in business ventures in the whole Arabian Peninsula. This tradition continued even after the coming of Islam. They migrated from one area to another area in the Arab Peninsula looking for business opportunities while performing their duties as *da'i* spreading Islam. Through trade contact, the Hadhrami Arabs intermingled with the Malays and some stayed and built colonies in several countries in the Malay World such as in the East Indies, Philippines, Borneo, Sulu, and Malaya. The hardships in the desert and struggles at sea made the Hadhrami Arabs appreciative of life.

They tried to build good contact with the Malays, particularly the ruling class. This resulted in mixed marriages between the Hadhrami Arabs with Malay royal families that saw some gaining prestige and status in the society. The Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descents were known as respected and esteemed '*ulama*' or religious men. Many of them served in the administration of religion in the Malay states. The Hadhrami Arabs in general would also try to gain control and expand influence wherever they went. In Malaya, some of them held important positions in the Malay states' administration. They managed to place themselves among the elites and the ruling class. Through marital bonds, they became part of the ruling family and some inherited the throne. Some of them succeeded in life, becoming entrepreneurs conducting business ventures in Malaya such as brokering property, inter island trades, plantation and estates, and shipping.

The Hadhrami Arabs have a long history of trade contact with countries in the East. Trade brings them to areas further out of their homeland, sometimes crossing the ocean, passing the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean to Africa, India, and even further eastward to China. On the eastward voyage to China, they would drop in at the Malay

Archipelagos while waiting for the monsoon to change to also look for supplies of food and fresh water.¹

Through this contact they intermingled with the Malays and some would stay and build colonies scattered in several countries in the Malay World such as in the East Indies, Philippines, Malaya, Borneo and Sulu.² The Arabs as suggested by Morley would use their diplomatic skills, ability to exploit the weak sides of the native character and their dignity as respected and esteemed 'ulama' or religious men as well as successful traders to gain certain degrees of social status in the Malay World. The Arabs, either through marital bonds or influence managed to establish themselves as rulers or having connections with the ruling classes in several places, for example Perlis in Malaya, Siak, Kampar and Jambi in Sumatra and Pontianak and Kubu in Borneo.³

The indirect contact between the Arabs and Malaya had long been established since immemorial time. The long distance maritime trade between China and the Arab countries that established and flourished even before the advent of Islam gave impact to the development of trade in Southeast Asia, especially in Malaya. "The Arabs, controlling the ports of Aden and Sacutra and gifted with an enterprising nature, had been sailing to South-East Asia and China since the immemorial time".⁴ This long distance maritime trade had witnessed the involvement of Arabs as middle men transporting and supplying commodities from India and China crossing the Indian

¹ According to J. A. E. Morley, the long distance maritime trade had long been established between seaports of Arabia, East Africa, India, Ceylon, East Indies and China. These seaports were connected to each other by the sea trade link following the changes of monsoon. This shows that the Arabs were familiar with the sea route of the Indian Ocean to China including the Malay Archipelago's. J. A. E., Morley, "The Arabs and the Eastern Trade", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*, Vol. 22, pt. 1, 1949, p. 143. The Arabs settlements were to be found in Canton, China around the 2nd century A.D. See S.M., Imamuddin, "Arab Mariners and Islam in China", S. Moinul Haq, (ed.) *Journal of the Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 32, pt. 3, July, 1984, pp. 168-170.

² The 14th century Sulu witnessed an 'alim named Makhдум Karim who also called Tuan Syarif Awliya' converted the king of Sulu and his people to the religion of Islam. Then, came another sayyid from Makkah known as Sayyid Abu Bakar who was appointed by the Sultan of Sulu with the title Sultan Syarif Hashim from 1450 till 1480. He was said to arrive in Sulu from Johor. Two Hadhrami Sayyid who were responsible for the conversion of the people in Mindanao to Islam were Syarif Hassan and Syarif Maraja. They were said to have come from Johor. Muhammad Ali Zainal Abidin or famously known as 'Sharif Kebungsuwan' also came from Johore to Mindanao. He was responsible for spreading Islam in Mindanao in the 16th century. Please refer to Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion*, Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1976, pp. 16-17, 24-25, 29. During this period, Malacca was an Islamic kingdom.

³ J. A. E. Morley, "The Arabs and the Eastern Trade", pp. 165-166.

⁴ Affan Seljuq, "Some Muslim Geographers on South-East Asia", *Journal of The Pakistan Historical Society*, Vol. 37, pt. 2, April, 1989, p. 129.

Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. They plied from Arabia⁵ to China and vice versa, and became familiar with the Malay Archipelago. Commodities were loaded at Aden, a centre for distributing merchandise before they sailed up to Egypt and traded in the European markets.

The Arabs by nature were valiant seafarers and experienced navigators. Being surrounded by the Gulf Sea in the east, Red Sea in the west and the Indian Ocean in the south made them familiar with life at sea. The hardships faced in the Arabian Desert affected the physical, character and mental building of the Arabs. They learned to sail and seek better living outside the region. They explored the world of navigation and became experts at sea in their trade ventures to the Far East. They were familiar with the monsoon seasons in the region that assisted them in their sea navigation to India and other eastward countries until up to China.⁶ For a business venture to India, they usually began their voyage by sailing in July heading to the continent with the assistance of the south-western monsoon that blew to the north and after about three months, they reached the western coast of India. After loading their ships with merchandise from India and China they sailed back to their homeland following the same course in November with the help of the north-eastern monsoon. They sailed repeatedly throughout the year.⁷

⁵ Arabia is also known as Arab Peninsula or *Jazirat al-Arab* (Island of the Arabs). It is located in the extreme southwestern corner of Asia. The peninsular is bounded by the Red Sea on the west and southwest, the Gulf of Aden on the South, the Arabian Sea on the south and southeast, and the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf (also called the Arabian Gulf) on the northeast. The northern boundaries of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait are generally taken as marking the limit of Arabia. See Encyclopaedia Britannica, <http://www.britannica.com>. Generally, Malays will refer to Arabs as those who come from Arabia; Arab Peninsular as a whole regardless of their origin whether they are from Yemen, Bahrain, Oman or Saudi Arabia.

⁶ Abdul Ali, "The Arabs as Seafarers", *Islamic Culture*, Vol. LIV, no. 4, Oct. 1980, p. 211.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 217.



Figure 2.1 Map of Hadhramaut, Yemen.

The Arabs were masters at sea, controlling maritime trade with the east and dominating the eastern merchandise and spices until at least the end of the 15th century when Europeans began to discover other routes to the east.⁸ Merchandise like pepper, cinnamon and ginger were traded from Aden to Egypt before marketed in Europe. Besides the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf also played an important role in the sea trade route between east and west Asia. In Hadhramaut itself, the people produced frankincense as a source of income. However, due to imperialism in the East, Arab-Chinese relations were halted for several centuries. The Arab-Malaya trade relations had also slowed and started to decline until the 19th and 20th century.⁹

Hadhramaut is a province situated in the southern part of Yemen with a coastal area that contains a transit port which also acts as the centre of maritime trade even

⁸ S. M. Yusuf, "The Route of Arab Mariners Through al-Zabaj (Further India) in the Third and Fourth Centuries H", in *Studies in Islamic History and Culture*, Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 1989, p. 132. During this period of time (9th – 10th centuries), Arabs' navigation was at its peak. They had travelled pass the Indian Ocean and went up to China passing the al-Zabaj (further India). In due course they sailed passing the Malay Archipelago.

⁹ J. A. E. Morley, "The Arabs and the Eastern Trade", p. 153.

before the emergence of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula. Aden became a well-known port that engaged in trade and a hub for merchandise exchange between Egypt and India. The Arabs took the chance to sail across the Indian Ocean, passing the Malay Archipelago on its way to the Pacific Ocean to arrive in China. They built settlements on the Western coast of India, in Ceylon, in the Malay Archipelago and in China.¹⁰

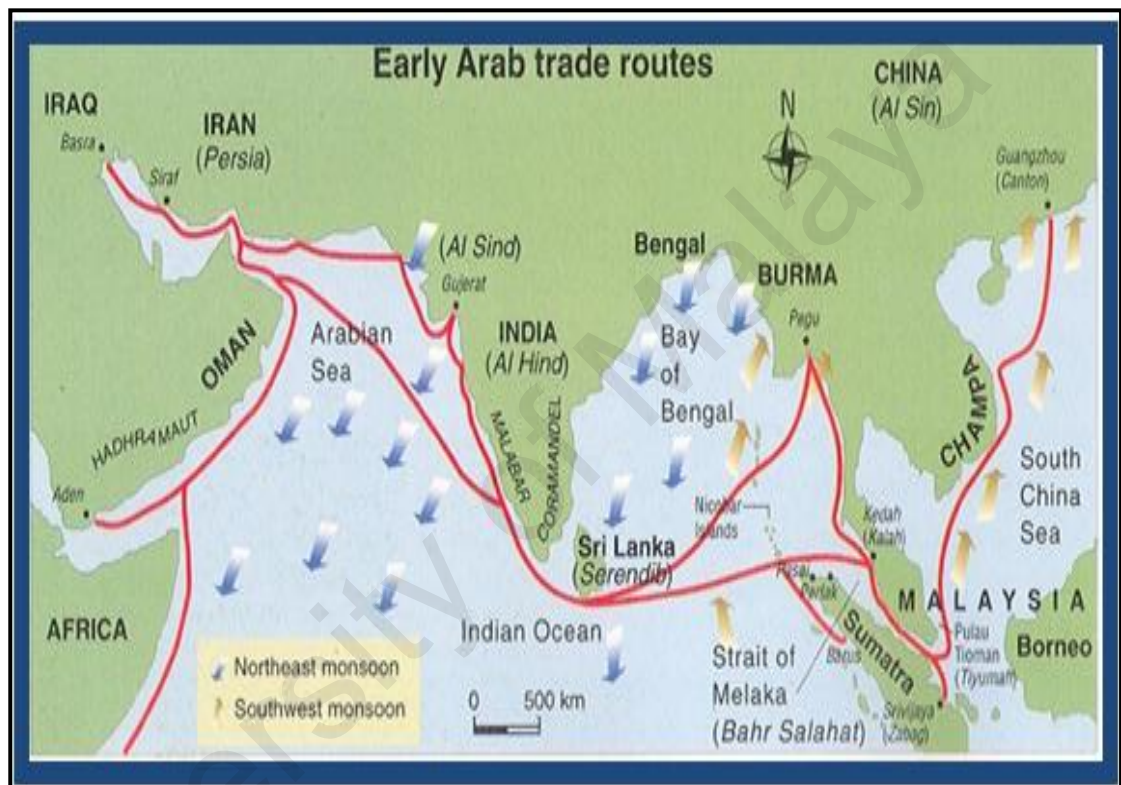


Figure 2.2: The Early Arab Trade Routes

With the emergence of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula in year 610 A.D, the teaching was then widely spread throughout the whole Arabia and went beyond the region, crossing the oceans to reach till Far East in China and west of Africa in Western Sahara. The Arab Muslim traders were now occupied with the new task as carriers of the new faith, Islam. Islam encourages Muslims to pursue navigation. The Al-Qur'an also acknowledges maritime activities of the past Arabs and it also urged them to

¹⁰ Abdul Ali, "The Arabs As Seafarers", p. 211.

observe navigation and benefit from the abundance of resources at sea bestowed by Allah upon mankind.¹¹ The earlier contact with India that was merely based on trade had changed. Since then, their travels to India were not merely for business purposes but were also occupied with missionary activities.¹²

According to R. B. Serjeant, around the 12th – 15th century, there were colonies of Arabs who lived in several port cities in India such as Gujarat, Malabar, Bijapur and Surat. This would be in line with the proposed theory by Mahayudin Haji Yahaya and other scholars¹³ that the coming of ‘Alawi Sayyids to Southeast Asia occurred in several stages; the first one took place around the 16th century, followed by the second and third phase in the 17th or the 18th century and in the 19th or 20th century. This migration occurred directly and indirectly from Hadhramaut, Yemen but most of them followed an indirect course to Southeast Asia, where some of them came from India and Indo-China before reaching the Malay Archipelago. In Malaya, the majority of Hadhrami Arabs of the Sayyid descent from Hadhramaut, Yemen who settled down in the Straits Settlement such as in Singapore, Penang and other Malay States came from East Indies such as Java, Palembang and Aceh where they lived in the 18th and 19th century. They consisted of religious men, politicians and traders.¹⁴

The Origins of Hadhrami Arabs

The 19th century had witnessed the expansion of British colonial rule in Malaya. The opening of Singapore in 1819 as it's based in Southeast Asia to oversee the long-distance trade operations in the region opened lots of opportunity to foreign traders to

¹¹ Please refer to al-Qur'an, Surah Bani Israel, verse 66. See also S.M. Imamuddin, "Arab Mariners and Islam in China", pp. 158-159.

¹² R. B. Serjeant, "The Saiyids of Hadhramaut", in *Studies in Arabian History and Civilisation*, London: Variorum Reprints, 1981, p. 24. See also Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984, p. 27.

¹³ Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, "The Arabs in Penang", *Malaysia in History*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Historical Society, 1978, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 2.

¹⁴ CO 273/551/16. Enclosure No. 2 to "Penzance's" Report of Proceeding for Month of March, 1933. Narrative of a Visit to the Wadi Hadramaut, p. 4. See also Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, p. 27, Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, "The Arabs in Penang", p. 2.

trade there. Singapore then was opened as a free port. The policy introduced by the British attracted merchants and traders from all over the world, including Hadhrami Arabs from the Middle East countries.¹⁵ Arabs from Hadhramaut, Yemen were among those traders who travelled to the Malay World seeking fortune in Singapore by engaging in business ventures on the island.

Hadhramaut is one of the fertile valleys in Yemen. It is also called *Wadi Hadhramaut*. Before 1968, Hadhramaut referred to the Kathiri and Quaiti Sultanates in the Southern part of the Arabian Peninsula. It consisted of the towns of Shibam, Seiyun and Tarim. The valley was the most populated in all Yemen. From 1968 onwards until 1990, the term Hadhramaut referred to the governorates of Shabwa and Hadhramaut of the Republic of South Yemen. From 1882 till 1967, Aden and Hadhramaut were under the British protectorate and were ruled by the Quaiti Sultanate. Hadhramaut was then annexed by South Yemen and became an independent Communist State. In 1990, both South Yemen and North Yemen unified to form the Republic of Yemen.

The Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent in Malaya claimed that are the descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. through his grandson Husain, one of the sons of Fatimah and ‘Ali R. A. They were also called the descendants of *Sadah* (plural of Sayyid). They called themselves *al-‘Alawiyyin*, by connecting their lineage to Sayyid ‘Alawi, grandson of Ahmad bin Isa *al-Muhajir*¹⁶ in order to distinguish themselves from other Sayyids of Hadhramaut. They traced their genealogy back to ‘Ali, the great-grandson of Hussain, the sixth generation of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.’s progeny. ‘Ali lived in Basrah and was called ‘Ali *al-Qaim Bi-‘l Basrah*. From ‘Ali’s progeny

¹⁵ The same approach was taken by Francis Light when he took Penang that was later on called Province of Wellesley in 1786. Light introduced a policy that attracted many foreign traders to trade in Penang. Duty free was exempted upon traders and merchants as well as freedom of acquiring land in Penang that had attracted many foreign merchants and traders including those from Hadhramaut, Yemen, India, as well as people of Malaya to settle there. Police force was also established to look after the safety and security of the island. See National Archive Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur branch, MISC. 19/1 ANM.

¹⁶ Mahyuddin Haji Yahaya, “Latarbelakang Sejarah Keturunan Sayid di Malaysia”, in *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980, pp. 64-66. Ingrams, W.H., *A Report on the Social, Economic and Political Condition of the Hadramaut*, London: Printed and Published by His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1936, pp. 36-39. Colonial No. 123.

came his great-grandson named Ahmad who was also known as *al-Muhajir*¹⁷ (the traveller). He was the son of Isa bin Muhammad bin ‘Ali (al-Qaim Bi-‘l Basrah). Ahmad bin Isa then migrated from Basrah to Hadhramaut, Yemen. The Hadhrami Saiyids of *al-‘Alawiyyin* adopted their clan name from the grandson of Ahmad b. Isa *al-Muhajir*, ‘Alawi, calling themselves *al-‘Alawiyyin*. The descendants of ‘Alawiyyin Sayyid emerged in Hadhramaut around 512 A.H./1127 A.D. In Hadhramaut, their clan extended and they also gained reputable status in the society as carriers and inheritors of the faith of Islam.¹⁸

According to Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, European scholars and historians used the term ‘Alid to refer to the children of ‘Ali bin Abi Talib by his wife Fatimah, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W., and also his children by other wives and their descendants. This term has been used since the early period of Islam. Among his sons that had issues were al-Hassan and al-Husain; Muhammad al-Hanafiyyah; Umar the Younger; and ‘Abbas the Younger. The sons of Ja‘far bin Abi Talib were also called the ‘Alids. In Arabic they were called ‘Alawi and this term is used by Muslims to specifically refer to the offspring of al-Hassan and al-Husayn. During the Umayyads and ‘Abbasids periods, the term ‘Alid means the partisans of ‘Ali (Shi‘at ‘Ali), a political group who supported him during the election to the Caliphate after the death of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. From this *Shi‘at*, the Shi‘ite group got their name.¹⁹

¹⁷ CO, 273/551/16. Report of Proceeding for April, 1933, Narrative of A Visit to the Wadi Hadhramaut. Ahmad bin Isa, the *al-Muhajir* (the traveller) was the great grandson of ‘Ali *al-Qaim bil Basrah*. ‘Ali al-Qaim bil Basrah was the great-grandson of Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Ahmad bin Isa migrated from Basra to Hadhramaut around 512 A.H./1127 A.D. As claimed, they were the descent of Prophet Muhammad SAW. “The original ancestor of the Hadhramaut Seyyid came from Basra many centuries ago, and his tomb can be seen not very far east of Seyim on the South side of the Wadi Hadhramaut. Every Sayyid comes to pray here once a year, and on his return from a journey will visit this tomb before he goes to his home.”

¹⁸R. O. Winstedt, “The Hadhramaut Saiyids of Perak and Siak”, *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JSBRAS), Sept. 1918, no. 79. According to Ibn Hazm, a famous historian in the 5th A.H/11 A.D, he recorded in *Jamharah Ansab al-Arab* genealogy of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W’s progeny through his grandsons Hassan and Husain. However, the record of the family ends at the sixth generation of the family. It is said that there had been confusion on the genealogy of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W since there were fake claims made by irresponsible person. However, the historiography of the genealogy of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W based on the Hadhrami Sayyids’s sources resumed after 10th century A.H/ 16th century A.D. See *Jamharah Ansab Al-Arab* Li Abi Muhammad ‘Ali bin Ahmad bin Said bin Hazm Al-Andalus 384-456, Abd Al-Salam Muhammad Harun (Tahqiq wa Ta’liq), Cairo: Dar Al-Ma’arif, 1962M/1382H, pp. 39-59.

¹⁹ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, *Historical Fact and Fiction*, Penerbit UTM Press, 2011, pp. 13-4.

The social structure of the Arab society is based on clans. The Sayyids of Hadhramaut trace their pedigree back to Ahmad bin Isa *al-Muhajir*. Every tribe in Hadhramaut carries its own family name. It is common for the Hadhrami Arab family to be called Ba, Ibn and Bin that denotes 'son of' or 'descendant of'. Every Sayyid descendant carries its own family name such as al-Attas, al-Aidarus, as-Saqqaf and al-Haddad. The family name is normally attached to the end of their names, such as Sayyid Mohamed Al-Sagoff and Sayyid Hassan Al-Attas. Unlike Malays, their names only consist of their first name and father's name such as 'Umar Bin 'Ali. The Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent are protective of their family tree. They try to maintain the genealogy of the Sayyid family intact for generations. In Malaya, the Arab society known as *Rabitah al-'Arabiyyah* which is based in Singapore is responsible for keeping records of Hadhrami descendants in the country. They have representatives who record every birth, marriage and death in the Sayyid families.²⁰

In Hadhramaut, the *Sadah* held religious positions and were reputable '*ulama*' or religious men in society who were very influential in preserving *Shariah* Law and the teachings of Islam. Tarim was one of the most important centres of Islamic learning in their homeland. Many religious scholars were produced in Tarim. They became *mufti* and *qadi* as well as religious men. A majority of the Hadhrami Sayyids who are the descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. lived here.²¹

Of many tribes and races in Malaya, the Arabs originating from Hadhramaut, Yemen who are known as Hadhrami Sayyid or *Sadah* descendants were one time ago respected people in the Malay society. They were known for their religious endeavors in promoting Islam to the people of Malaya. Many of them were esteemed '*ulama*' or religious scholars. They contributed a lot to the development of civilization in the Malay

²⁰ In Indonesia, there is a board of Hadhrami Sayyid society known as *Rabitah al-'Alawiyyah* that is based in Jakarta keeping records of the Hadhrami descendants. It also has a branch in Singapore. The society was formed in 1927 and it was also known as The Alawi Union. See Natalie Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami Awakening: Community and Identity in the Netherlands East Indies, 1900-1942*, New York: Southeast Asia Program Publications, 1999, p. 99.

²¹ W. H. Ingrams, *A Report on the Social*, pp. 36-38.

World, especially in Malaya. Even though their numbers were small, their influences were much felt by the society at large. They were also famous as successful entrepreneurs and merchants as well as religious scholars from which they gained good reputation in the Malay society. Besides, they also held significant posts in the administration of the Malay sultanates in Malaya.²²

²² See Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Conflicting Political Loyalties of the Arabs in Malaya", in *Transcending Borders, Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, (eds.) Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, p. 38.

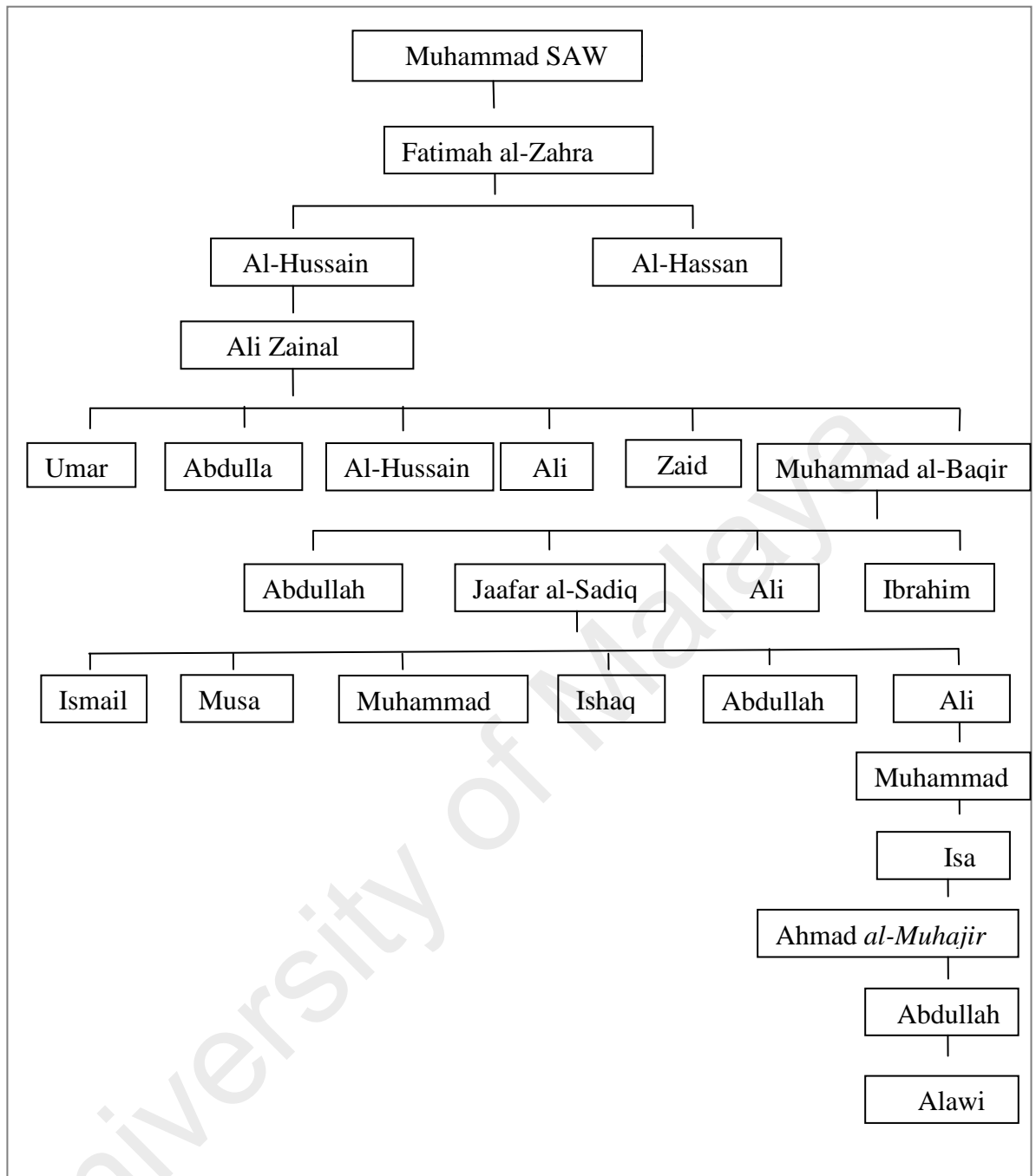


Figure 2.3 The Lineage of Al-'Alawiyyin clan through the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W's grandson, al-Husain.²³

Being descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. secured them a special place in the Malay society. Malays looked up to them with respect and deference, not only for their sacred connection with Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. but also for their profound knowledge in Islam as well as their piety. This factor in a way helped them to be easily

²³ Referred to and modified from various sources. Please refer to R.O. Winstedt, "The Hadhramaut Saiyids of Perak and Siak", *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JSBRAS)*, Sept. 1918, no. 79. See also Mahyuddin Haji Yahaya, "Latarbelakang Sejarah Keturunan Sayid di Malaysia".

accepted by the people as the successors bringing the teachings of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. They became the source of reference for fellow Muslims to consult matters related to religion. In terms of relationship, there is a little gap between the Sayyids and Malays. According to Linehan, Sayyids were more welcomed and free in their contacts with the royalties and aristocrats compared to the Malays. Malays respected the Sayyids as much as they respected their sultans and rulers.²⁴

In the Malay society, there are certain titles used to address respected people. The Sayyid group also received a special title by the Malays. In Pahang, especially in Kuala Tekal, Malays would call them 'engku' and in Pekan and other districts they are called 'habib' 'tuan' or 'tuan sayyid'. In fact, the lineage of the Sultans and Bendaharas of Pahang descended from Tun Habib Abdul Majid, the *Bendahara Seri Maharaja* of Johor, who was also believed a member of the *ahlu al-bait* and having connections with the descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. from Hadhramaut, Yemen.²⁵ They were addressed using Wan or Tun which was also attached to their names such as Tun or Wan Ali and Wan Mutahir.²⁶ The title Wan was also used to refer to the descendants of *ahlul bait* in Aceh and Jakarta.²⁷ In Terengganu, they are called *Tukku* or *Tokku*. While among themselves, they would use word *ana* and *anta* which means 'I' and 'you'.²⁸ Besides the title sayyid, they are also called *syarif* and *habib*. There is another honorific title used in Hadhramaut to refer to people of high dignitaries of religion in the society. It is normally given to teachers, scholars and men of religion who form a group of noble men in Hadhramaut, Yemen and they are known as *syaikh* or *masyaikh* (plural).²⁹

In Malaya this group of people did not only come to trade, but were also actively involved in missionary work propagating and spreading Islam. They, together with the

²⁴ W. Linehan, "A History of Pahang", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JMBRAS), Vol. 14, pt. 2, May, 1936, p. 81.

²⁵ See W. Linehan, "History of Pahang", p. 55; Tun Suzana Tun Othman and Muzaffar Mohamad, *Ahlul-Bait (keluarga) Rasulullah S.A.W. & Kesultanan Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Crescent News Sdn. Bhd., 2009, pp. 197, 201, 211, 215, 219-226.

²⁶ Tun Suzana Tun Othman and Muzaffar Mohamad, *Ahlul-Bait (keluarga) Rasulullah S.A.W. & Kesultanan Melayu*, pp. 201, 219.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

²⁸ Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, p. 88.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 694, See also W.H. Ingrams, *A Report on the Social*, pp. 40-41.

Hadhrami Sayyids became religious teachers and advisors to sultans on matters related to Islam. The term *Syaikh* or *masyaikh* is also used to refer to scholars and holy men who claimed themselves as descendants of local saints or well known and reputable Hadhrami scholars in Hadhramaut in order to differentiate them from the descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. of Sharif and Sayyid. In Malaysia, the term Sayyid has been used by the Arabs who are descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W.'s through his grandson's progeny Husain bin Abi Talib.³⁰

The social stratum of the Hadhramaut society has divided its community into seven groups or social classes. The people are known and grouped according to their tribes and clans as well as their importance and position in society. The *Sadah* or Sayyid group in Hadhramaut descended from Ahmad bin Isa *al-Muhajir*. They form the most influential religious group in Hadhramaut and are the respected '*ulama*' in the society. Many of the Sayyid families inherited the title *mansab* and were also known as spiritual leaders by surrounding tribes. Take for example Ba 'Alawi, al-Aidarus, al-Saqqaf and al-Haddad.³¹

The descendants of Sayyid or Habib are scattered in Hadhramaut. They have a special place in the society. Van Den Berg affirms their importance in Hadhramaut by saying that "...they form an ecclesiastical nobility greatly respected, and have in consequence a great moral influence on the rest of the population". He further adds that "On the death of the chief of a tribe or family, the notables of the tribe or family and the most influential Sayyid of the locality meet to elect his successor".³²

The *masyaikh* or *syaikh* group is considered the second class in the society after the *sadah* group. Before the coming of the Ahmad bin Isa *al-Muhajir* in the 9th century, the religious affairs of the people were in the hands of the *masyaikh*. They are the

³⁰ Syed Ali bin Mohamed al-Attas, *Allahyarham Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas Seorang Mujahid dan Pembangunan Ummah*, Johor: Madrasah al-Attas al-Arabiah Johor, 1998, p. 6.

³¹ W. H. Ingrams, *A Report on the Social*, pp. 36-40.

³² IOR MFI -1492-1493. V/23/273 No. 212, m/f version. Selections from the Records of the Bombay Government. L. W. C. Van Den Berg, *Hadthramut and the Arab Colonies in the Indian Archipelago*, (trans.) Major C. W. H. Sealy, Published by Order of Government with the Permission of the Governor General of Netherlands-India, 1887.

educated and respected people in the society. Among the main family groups are like al-‘Amudi, al-Ishaq and al-Ba Wazir who mostly live in Du’an and Gheil.³³

The *Yafa’is* or *Yafa* group is the soldiers or *‘asakir*. They represent the ruling class in the society and the rulers of the Qu’aiti territory. For example, Al-Mosilli, Al-Kasadi Ash-Shanathira and Al-Jahawisha from the Adh-Dhubi tribe and many other groups from the Al-Busi and Al-Mausata tribes.³⁴ The *Qabilah* or *qabā’īl* is the tribesmen. Under the *Qabilah*, there comes the *Bait* and *Fara’* or tribe and clan. The Hadhrami tribes are traditionalists and conservatives. They are attached to tribal customs. They were mainly involved in trade and have a considerable position in the society.³⁵

According to W.H. Ingrams,³⁶ the city people or the townsmen are those who came along with Ahmed bin Isa *al-Muhajir* from Iraq in the ninth century. They could be divided into four classes; the merchants involved in trade, the artificers, the labourers and the servants. Many of them are wealthy and played a significant role in Hadhramaut’s economy. The last two classes in the Hadhramaut society are the slaves and Subians. Slaves can mostly be found in the governments of Qu’aiti and Kathiri. Most of them are of African origin. They received good treatment from their masters. Ingrams reports that the Mukalla Government treated young slaves well by giving them special training and care to become cadets and join the armed forces. While the Subians are people from the lowest class in the Hadhramaut society. They form groups of labourers working in the agricultural sector. Most of them lived outside the coastal towns of Mukalla and Shihr. They also do menial jobs like cutting woods and sanitary works. According to Ingrams, the word *subian* is derived from the Arabic word *sabi*,

³³ Ibid., pp. 40-41.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 41.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 41-42.

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 42-43.

which means boy.³⁷ They are said to originate from Abyssinian descendents who invaded Yemen from the 3rd to 6th centuries A.D.

Census of the Arab Population

The Hadhrami Arab society was scattered in almost every state in Malaya during the 19th and 20th centuries. However, the number of Arabs in Malaya in the 18th and early 19th century is not certain. A census on the Arabs in Malaya was first carried out during the British colonial rule. From these censuses it is found that the census officer has generalised all Arab speaking individuals born in Arab countries as well as in Malaya or British colonies under one category which is Arab. This would include the Sayyid and non-Sayyid of Syaikh groups. The earliest census in Malaya was carried out in 1871³⁸ on the Straits Settlement population of Singapore, Malacca and Penang. From this record it shows that the total number of Arabs was 1122. Many of them were in Singapore at 465 people followed by Penang at 354 and Malacca at 303. Of the 1122, 605 were males and the remaining 517 were females. *The Singapore Chronicle* record shows that in 1830, the Arab population was at 28 out of the total population of the island of 20,243.³⁹ Based on Earl's record, the number of Arabs in Singapore in 1833 was 96 out of a total population of 20,978. No female Arab immigrants were recorded.⁴⁰ Another census conducted in 1881 in the Straits Settlement saw the increase of Arab population in the three states. In ten years' time their number had increased to 1637, an addition of 515 people. However, the 1891 census showed a decrease to 1468 people. Their numbers slightly decreased in comparison with the 1881 census (refer Table 2.1).

Meanwhile in the Federated Malay States, the 1891 census showed that their numbers were at 427 with Pahang being the mostly populated with 329 Arabs followed

³⁷ Ibid., p. 44.

³⁸ Straits Settlement Population 1871, Microfilm no. 242.

³⁹ See *Singapore Chronicle*, No. 165, Thursday 15 July 1830.

⁴⁰ G. W. Earl, *The Eastern Seas*, with an introduction by C.M. Turnbull, reprint, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1971.

by Selangor with 27, Negeri Sembilan 20 and Perak 51. The 1901 census carried out in the Federated Malay States showed growth of the Arab population compared to the previous ten years' census at 574 people. In the states of Negeri Sembilan, Selangor and Perak, the increments were quite small compared to Pahang which saw a significant rise from 329 in 1891 to 447 in 1901.⁴¹ During the last quarter of 19th century Malaya, many Hadhrami entrepreneurs from Johor applied to the government of the State of Pahang to open land for agricultural, mining as well as timber activities. This could have possibly attracted fellow Hadhrami Sayyids to move to Pahang to work there. Based on the censuses above, it is found that since the first census carried out in 1871, Arabs particularly the Hadhrami Sayyids were scattered in almost every state in Malaya.

Table 2.1: Censuses of Arab Population in the Straits Settlement (Singapore, Malacca and Penang)⁴²

Year	States/ Number of Arabs			
	Singapore	Malacca	Penang	Total
1871	465	303	354	1122
1881	836	220	574	1630
1891	806	95	567	1468
1901	919	45	542	1506
1911	1237	135	702	2074
1921	1282	56	520	1858
1931	1939	88	605	2632

⁴¹ Federated Malay States, Census of the Population, 1901, Compiled by George Thompson Hare, Published by Command, Colonial Office Library, 1902. See also CO 575/3, Federated Malay States Statistics 1906, Census Taken on 1st March, 1901, Colonial Office Library, pp. 84-85.

⁴² Straits Settlements: Report on the Census of the Straits Settlements, taken on the 5th April 1891, by E.M. Merewether, Eso, Singapore: Printed at the Government Printing Office, 1892.

Table 2.2: Censuses of the Arab Population in the Federated Malay States⁴³

Year	States				
	Pahang	Selangor	Negeri Sembilan	Perak	Total
1891	329	27	20	51	427
1901	447	31	27	69	574
1911	152	73	62	50	337
1921	395	82	78	101	656
1931	189	70	88	55	402

Based on the 1911 census done in the State of Kedah and Perlis, it shows that the number of Arabs was 119 in Kedah and 10 in Perlis. Based on tables III and IV on races and languages, the report classifies Arabs as Malays.⁴⁴ “The large majority of the Arabs were practically Malays of remote Arab descent. The Syeds had usually described themselves as Arabs”.⁴⁵ This could be probably due to the spoken language which made them part of the Malay society. It is found that intermarriage between different races was common in Kedah and Perlis and their descendants learned to speak foreign languages besides their mother tongue. A majority of Arabs born in Malaya of Malay mothers speak Malay. Many of them cannot speak fluent Arabic, but some can understand it. Due to the assimilation with the local people, they easily adapted to the Malay way of life and culture including language, food, customs and fashion that eventually, they could be called Malays.⁴⁶

⁴³ Federated Malay States, Census of the Population, 1901, Straits Settlement Population 1871, J. A. E. Morley, “The Arabs of the Eastern Trade”, p. 175; CO 575/3, Federated Malay States Statistics 1906, Census Taken on 1st March, 1901, Colonial Office Library, pp. 84-85.

⁴⁴ Report on the Census of Kedah and Perlis A.H 1329 (A.D 1911), Penang: Printed at the Criterion Press Ltd. 1911. Colonial Office, 10th March, 1911, Straits Settlements: Report on the Census of the Straits Settlements, taken on the 5th April 1891.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p.7.

⁴⁶ Onn Jaafar in his letter to Medical Director Office of Johor on 31 January 1931 raised up the issue of free medical treatment to the Arab people as enjoyed by Malay people. This is regarding a complaint made by Sayyid Omar and Syarifah Esah Hussein from Muar to the government asking for free medical treatment at the General Hospital Muar. In this matter, Onn Jaafar considers Arabs at equal level to the Malays and they were to be treated and considered as Malays. See A letter sent by Onn Jaafar to Medical Director Office of Johor Bahru, Johor on 31 January 1940, GA 27/1940.

Since Kedah and Perlis were under the suzerainty of Siam until 1909 when The Bangkok Treaty was signed between Great Britain and Siam on 10th March 1909, no such census was conducted before this date. Since then, the suzerainty of Siam was transferred to Great Britain.⁴⁷

Table 2.3: Censuses of Arab Population in un-Federated Malay States⁴⁸

Year	States					
	Johor	Terengganu	Kelantan	Kedah	Perlis	Total
1911	699	186	17	119	10	1031
1921	736	567	118	226	154	1801
1931	1345	89	213	113	143	1903
1947	1897	199	256	62	27	2441

Hadhrami Sayyids were very concerned about their family genealogy. In order to ensure the family ties were safely guarded, they would record marriages, births and deaths of family members. This was important so that they can trace the family tree back to Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. and it could be a source of reference for young generations to come. The science of genealogy or *nasab* or also known as *Ilmu Salasilah*⁴⁹ was much stressed by the older generations of the Hadhrami Sayyids.

Migration and Distribution

The Hadhrami Arabs travelled to many foreign countries looking for a better living. Their colonies were to be found in many places, including in East Africa, India and in the Malay world. There were several factors that contributed to their emigration overseas, particularly to Malaya and the Archipelago. The 19th century geo-political and economic situation in Hadhramaut had forced the majority of its population, especially

⁴⁷Report on the Census of Kedah and Perlis A.H 1329 (A.D 1911).

⁴⁸ Nathan, J. E., *The Census of British Malaya 1921*, London, Dunstable and Watford: Printed by Waterlow & Sons Limited, 1922, p. 92; see also Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, "Sejarah Penempatan Orang Arab di Johor", in *Seminar Sejarah Budaya Johor Tahun 2000*, Vol. 2, Johor Bahru, p. 4.

⁴⁹Sy. Aliedin, "Pengantar Singkat Ilmu Nasab", *Seminar Diaspora Arab Nusantara: Peranan dan Sumbangan*, Lembaga Muzium Negeri Kedah dan Perbadanan Perpustakaan Awam Kedah, 5 – 7 Mac 2011, Wisma Darul Aman Alor Setar, Kedah.

young people to consider migration to foreign countries. The internal skirmishes and uprisings against the Turkish army had worsened the situation in Hadhramaut.⁵⁰

Hadhramaut was also suffering from drought, terrible famine and constant tribal wars that made life risky, miserable and less prolific. This encouraged many of them to travel overseas to seek a better source of income and living in foreign lands.⁵¹ Hadhrami Arabs of the Sayyid group were among those Arabs who migrated to the East. Many of them were to be found in the Dutch East Indies, Singapore and Malaya. When Penang and Singapore were taken by British in the 18th and 19th centuries and opened as free ports, Hadhrami Arabs were among the earliest immigrants to settle in the islands. They came as traders and religious teachers. Thus, the ties between Arab countries and Malaya resumed.⁵²

After the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, travels by steam ships became popular compared to traditional ships. This made the movement of ships as well as immigrants easier, faster and their number also increased from time to time. The Arab diaspora also spread faster to the foreign lands of India, Africa and also the Southeast Asia region including Malaya. In Malaya there were many Hadhrami Arab families of Sayyid descent, such as al-Attas, al-Saqqaf also called al-Saggof, al-Junied and al-Kaff. Many of these Sayyid families were big names in the society. They were actively involved in business and became successful entrepreneurs and businessmen. When Singapore was opened by Stamford Raffles in 1819, Hadhrami Arabs of the Sayyid

⁵⁰ W. H. Ingrams, *A Report on Social*, pp. 29- 36.

⁵¹ Besides earning more income and had better life in Malaya, where many of them married and settled there but they never forget to send home remittances every year. With this money they supported lives of the relatives, building houses, mosques, schools etc. This continued until the World War II broke in 1942 when Malaya was attacked by Japanese army. Many of those were one time migrants with nothing were now successful traders in Malaya.

⁵²In fact the relationship between Malaya and the Arab countries had existed since in the early decades of the Islamic Era and even earlier than that before the advent of Islam. The Trans ocean business venture between the East and the West had long established. Arab merchants crossed the Indian Ocean to the Far East passing the Malay Archipelago on the South China Sea to China Ocean to get to China. While plying forth and back to the East, Arab merchants became acquainted with the Malay World and aware of its development. Some of them stopped at these islands and build settlements. Their existence were to be found in several areas in the region such as in East Indies, Malaya, Singapore, Borneo and in Philippines. In the early times they were focused in trade ports such as in Aceh, Malacca and Singapore. The Arabs lost supremacy over the trade venture in the East when European powers started dominating the maritime trade in the East in the 16th century. This incident had indirectly slackened the relationship between the Arabs and the Malay World, especially Malaya. When Penang was taken by Francis Light in 1786, and declared it as British colony, this had attracted foreign traders to trade in Penang. Arabs were among the earliest settlers in Penang. The opening of Singapore by British in the 19th century was also seen as a link to the Arab-Malaya connection. Hence, the ties between Arab countries and Malaya resumed.

group were among the earliest merchants who came to trade there. Mohammed bin Harun al-Junied and his nephew Sayyid Omar bin Ali al-Junied came to Singapore in 1819. It was said that they were wealthy merchants from Palembang, Sumatra.⁵³

A majority of the Arabs in Malaya were those who came from Hadhramaut, Yemen. They were from the Sayyid clan, the descendants of Sayyid ‘Alawi. According to Mahayudin Haji Yahaya,⁵⁴ the Arabs migration to Malaya from the Arabian Peninsula occurred in several direct and indirect stages. He further noted that direct migration from the Arabian Peninsula rarely happened compared to indirect migration that involved a majority of the Arab migrants from Hadhramaut to the Malay Archipelago. Most of them were those who came from the Arabian Peninsula through the East Indies (Indonesia).⁵⁵ Omar Farouk⁵⁶ discussed about Arabs’ migration to Penang, where he mentioned that it began immediately after Francis Light took Penang from the Sultan of Kedah in 1786.⁵⁷ This movement also involved Arab migration from neighbouring countries such as Aceh and Sumatera to Penang. It shows that the Arabs were familiar with the area through trade contacts between Arab merchants and the Malay Archipelago, keeping the Arabs informed and aware of any progress occurring in the area.⁵⁸ The Arab’s influence in the Peninsula began to be felt in the society and had started to increase in the nineteenth century due to better sea communication with the Middle East and more stable and economically advantageous conditions offered. When Singapore was opened as a free port in 1819, it also became a gateway to Penang to

⁵³ Ameen Ali Talib, “Hadramis in Singapore”, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1997, p. 89.

⁵⁴ Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, “Sejarah Penempatan Orang Arab di Johor”, p. 1; See also Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*.

⁵⁵ According to Serjeant, R.B, the Hadramaut Sayyids were said to arrive in East Indies just some time before the coming of the Dutch to the island in the 18th century. However, this statement could still be argued. They could have come to the East Indies earlier than the 18th century. Records from the travel’s accounts of Ibnu Battuta and Marco Polo had shown that Islam came to the region since the very beginning of the 13th century. Even during the glory period of Malacca in the 15th century, there were Arab merchants from the Arab countries trading in Malacca. And these traders would stop at East Indies islands such as Perlak and Pasai for the monsoon change before sailing back to their countries. R.B. Serjeant, “The Saiyids of Hadramawt,” pp. 24-25.

⁵⁶ Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad discussed about the Arab people in Penang. He mentions about the pattern of Arab migration to Penang, their population, their involvement in commerce and education. He also listed down names of Arab clans in Penang. See Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, “The Arabs in Penang”, pp. 2-10.

⁵⁷ It is believed that what attracted Arab people to come to Penang during that time was the trade policy introduced by Francis Light that charge no import duties to merchants and also the freedom of right to new settlers of acquiring land in Penang. Please see R.O Winstedt, *A History of Malaya*, Singapore: Marican, 1962, p. 210.

⁵⁸ Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, “The Arabs in Penang”, p. 1.

those Arabs from the Middle East countries and also Arabs from East Indies to Penang.⁵⁹

Malacca was once at its height as an entreport in the Malay Archipelago. Its popularity had attracted many foreign merchants to trade in Malacca, including Arabs from Hadhramaut, Yemen and other Middle East countries. Many of them came directly from Palembang. Malacca did not only play an important role as an emporium for maritime trade between the East and the West, but also as a centre of learning and spreading Islam in the Malay world. Thus, the relationship between the Arabs and the Malays became closer and more meaningful with Islam as its catalyst. However, according to Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, the coming of Hadhrami Sayyids to this region was a bit late, probably in the 16th century compared to those Arab merchants who came earlier and traded in Malacca in the 15th and 16th century.⁶⁰

The Arabs' migration to the state of Pahang was also indirect. They came from other places such as Palembang, Singapore, Johor and Penang before moving to Pahang. Many of them migrated for business purposes as well as missionary work, propagating Islam.⁶¹ They had close contact with the ruling class, especially the royalties. The indirect migration also saw the coming of Arabs from Gujerat, India to Penang and other states in Malaya. With the advent of the 19th and 20th century, Malaya witnessed the influx of Arabs from Hadhramaut, Yemen, Hijaz, Egypt and Iraq to Malaya. They consisted of traders and religious scholars.⁶²

In Southeast Asia, especially Malaya the al-Attas family was among the earliest immigrants to settle in the country. Based on existing literature, it is found that the al-Attas emigrants to the Malay World, especially Malaya can be traced back to early 19th century, when Sayyid Zayn al-Attas, a trader from Hadhramaut came to Malaya from Makasar. He travelled to Makasar at the end of late 18th century and married a Bugis

⁵⁹ William, R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967, p. 40.

⁶⁰ Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, p. 36.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁶² Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, "The Arabs in Penang", p. 2.

princess.⁶³ Sayyid Zayn al-Attas together with his nephew Sayyid Ahmad bin Hassan al-Attas were involved in business ventures in Pahang. They had a good relationship with the royal family of Pahang. The al-Attas family was one of the famous and successful Hadhrami entrepreneurs in Malaya in the 19th and 20th centuries, especially Habib Hassan al-Attas. He was not only an entrepreneur, but also a philanthropist.⁶⁴

In Pahang, the earliest evidence of the Arabs' existence can be traced back to 1000 A.D. The finding of a tombstone that belongs to an Arab Syaikh in Kampung Permatang Pasir, Pekan dated 419 A.H/ 999A.D was a proof of their existence in Malaya. It is believed that this Arab figure came to Pahang from China. As discussed earlier, trade relations between Arabs and China was the reason for the Arabs to get to know the Malay Peninsula, especially the East Coast areas. The riot that occurred in 878 A.D in Canton, China that claimed thousands of lives of Muslim merchants and many other foreigners had caused many of them to flee from Southern China. Muslim merchants then shifted their business enterprises from China to the Malay world.⁶⁵

Due to this incident, business ventures with China were halted for about a century. Cesar Adib Majul further discusses the involvement of Arabs in trade ventures in the Malay World and their familiarity with the *Nanhai* Trade.

“It is generally agreed that by the beginning of the ninth century, Arabs merchants and sailors had begun to dominate the *Nanhai* Trade. By this time the generality of the Arabs had already been Moslems for more than a century. Their ships from Oman were said to have sailed to and from the Sri-Vijaya port of Kedah in the Malay Peninsula. Around 850, this was one of the most important ports of call for Arab ships, and its prosperity

⁶³Kazuhiro Arai, *The Arabs Who Traversed the Indian Ocean: The History of The al-Attas Family in Hadhramawt and Southeast Asia, c. 1600 – c. 1960*, PhD. Thesis, University of Michigan, Near Eastern Studies, 2004, p. 132; See also Syed Ali bin Mohamed al-Attas, *Allahyarham Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas: Seorang Mujahid dan Pembangun Ummah*, Johor Bahru: Wakaf Almarhum Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas, 1984.

⁶⁴ According to Munsyi Abdullah's book *Pelayaran*, he mentions about the settlement of several Arab families in Kampung Maulana on the river bank of Pahang River in year 1838. They involved in trade and were respected people in the society. They had close relationship with the royalties. They were consisted of al-Attas, al-Habsyi, al-Yahya, al-Hinduan, al-Saggaf, al-Jifri, al-Junid, al-Khirid and al-Aidid. Munsyi Abdullah Abdul Kadir, *Hikayat Abdullah*, (annotated translation by A.H. Hill, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1970, p. 290; See also Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, p. 37. Sayyid Hassan was one of the successful Hadhrami Arab entrepreneurs in Malaya who played significant role in the establishment of several *madrasah* in the country. He had endowed (*waqf*) his properties of about 10 acres land that houses Madrasah al-Attas al-ArabiyyahJohor Bahru and another acre that houses Masjid al-Attas and a building in Cairo for a period of 100 year. See SS 2289/1941. A letter of property agreement between Syed Hassan and his three children; Sayyid Ahmad, Sayyid Abdullah and Sayyid Muhamed on 24th May 1931.

⁶⁵ See Mohd. Mokhtar bin Shafii, “Batu Nisan Kurun ke-5H/10M di Pekan, Pahang”, in *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan United Selangor Sdn. Bhd., 1980.

increased as it became indispensable to the Arabs especially by the tenth century...”⁶⁶

This migration was also the main factor in the distribution of Arabs in the Malay Archipelago, especially Malaya. This period also witnessed the spread of Islam to the region which is supported with the findings of historical remains such as tombstones and stone inscriptions. Their settlement could also be found in several countries in the region such as in the East Indies, Sulu, Brunei, Champa and Malaya.⁶⁷

The existence of Hadhrami Sayyids in Pahang can be traced back to early 19th century when groups of Hadhrami Sayyids from al-Habsyi, al-Yahya, al-Khirid, al-Saggaf, al-Hinduan, al-Attas and al-Aidid clans were among the Arab immigrants from Hadhramaut, Yemen who migrated to Pahang and settled there. It is said that the Al-Habsyi family was among the earliest Hadhramis who arrived in Pahang around 1803-1806 during the reign of Tun Koris. Sayyid ‘Abdul Rahman b. Sayyid Abdullah was an Arab Hadhrami who came to Pahang from Batavia, Jakarta. In Pahang he married Tun Koris’s sister and from this marriage came the generation of al-Habsyis in Pahang. Besides the al-Habsyi’s family, there were many other Hadhrami families in Pahang such as al-Yahya which were also known as Bin ‘Aqil, al-Hinduan, al-Junied, al-Aidid, and al-Attas.⁶⁸

The al-Yahya descendants are scattered in Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan. It is said that before they migrated to Malaya, they had stayed in Palembang at the end of the 18th century when Sayyid ‘Aqil b. Sayyid Ahmad married a local lady and begotten a son named Sayyid Yasin. After some time, they returned to Hadhramaut and migrated once again to Malaya. This time, they headed to Terengganu.⁶⁹ The al-Yahya’s

⁶⁶ Cesar Adib Majul, *Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia*, Philippines: Siliman University, 1964, p. 340.

⁶⁷ Imamuddin, S.M, “Arab Mariners and Islam in China”, p. 171; Cesar Adib Majul, *Theories on the Introduction*, p. 339.

⁶⁸ Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Arab di Pahang*, p. 39.

⁶⁹ According to Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, the chaotic situation in Hadhramaut could be the reason for Saiyid ‘Aqil’s second migration to Malaya; the Wahhabis crisis as well as the British intervention in Hadhramaut. Moreover, the Arabs were to be found almost everywhere in and many of them especially the al-Idrus family was among the important figures in the state administration of Terengganu. See Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Arab di Pahang*, pp. 41, 42 and 45.

descendants from the Sayyid Yasin family are scattered in several states in Malaya. Sayyid Hussain, Sayyid Yahya and Sayyid Salim moved to Kelantan. Sayyid Abd al-Rahman went to Pekan, Pahang during the reign of Bendahara Tun Ali in 1834, while the rest stayed in Terengganu.⁷⁰

The al-Khirid descendants in Pahang were led by Sayyid Ali b. Sayyid Sulaiman. He came from Hadhramaut to Palembang where he married a princess of Banjar and had a son. From Palembang he moved to Pahang in 1835. Sayyid Ali then moved to Kampung Jenderak, Temerloh where he married a local woman and lived there. From this marriage, the lineage of al-Khirid's family in Pahang and their offspring were to be found dominating the area of Teluk Tekal and Sega, Raub, Pahang.⁷¹ These Hadhrami Sayyids claimed to be the descendants of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Based on the 1911 and 1921 census, the number of Arabs in Pahang increased from 152 to 395. "There is a fairly large Arab settlement at Kampong Bruas in the Pekan district of Pahang..."⁷²

In the State of Terengganu, the presence of Hadhrami Arabs was noticed by foreign visitors in the early 19th century such as G.W. Earl, who was on his journey from Bangkok to Singapore in 1833. He recorded that there was an Arab community in Terengganu who had a considerable influence in the society and are involved in the administration of religion in the state.⁷³ The Sultanate of Terengganu which was first led by Sultan Zainal Abidin I (1702-1726) also had a link with the holy descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. through his father Tun Habib Abdul Majid, the Bendahara of Johor (d. 1697). Tun Suzana and Muzaffar believe that Tun Habib Abdul Majid was descended from the offspring of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W, an *ahlul bait* based on the title *habib* attached to his name that is only specially used by the Sayyid descendants. The Hadhrami Arabs' presence in Terengganu was obvious in the 18th century, when

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 46.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 49-51.

⁷² Nathan, J.E., *The Census of British Malaya 1921*, p. 91.

⁷³ G. W. Earl, *The Eastern Seas*, pp. 185-186.

the state's religious institution was led by a group of scholars which include Hadhrami Arab scholars of the al-Idrus family.⁷⁴

In Terengganu, the al-Aidarus or the al-Idrus families were among the well-known Hadhrami Sayyid families in the state. The al-Aidarus family was known for their religious endeavours, spreading and teaching Islam. Sayyid Muhammad bin Zainal Abidin al-Aidarus (1839-1876), better known as Tok Ku Tuan Besar was an *'alim* who contributed a lot to Islamic development in Terengganu. The origins of Sayyid Muhammad al-Aidarus is closely associated with the arrival and the presence of an Arab of Sayyid descent to Terengganu, Sayyid Zainal Abidin who was Tok Ku Tuan Besar's father. Sayyid Zainal Abidin was a rice trader who often commuted between the Java Islands and the Malay Peninsula. It was believed that he met with the al-Aidarus family who settled in Terengganu where he married the daughter of Sayyid Muhammad Mustafa bin Ahmad. Sayyid Muhammad Mustafa bin Ahmad was famously known as *Tok Ku Makam Lama*, the descendant of al-Aidarus from Hadhramaut, Yemen who first came to Terengganu.⁷⁵ Sayyid Muhammad bin Zainal Abidin (Tok Ku Tuan Besar) was born on the night of his grandfather's death (Tok Ku Makam Lama) on Thursday, February 18, 1795 in Kampung Chabang Tiga, Kuala Terengganu. Sayyid Muhammad (Tok Ku Tuan Besar) was raised at Chabang Tiga, Kuala Terengganu and furthered his study of religion in Makkah. Upon returning home, Tok Ku Tuan Besar started his religious class in Chabang Tiga. The society regarded him with respect as an *'alim*, of Sayyid descent from the descendants of Prophet Muhammad SAW. Through Sayyid Muhammad (Tok Ku Tuan Besar) came the descendants of Al-Aidarus who also played

⁷⁴ Tun Suzana Tun Othman & Muzaffar Mohamad, *Ahlul-Bait Keluarga Rasulullah*, p. 201

⁷⁵ Wan Husin Wan Embong, "Peranan dan Pengaruh Tok Ku Tuan Besar," in Muhammad Abu Bakar (ed.), *Ulama Terengganu Suatu Sorotan*, Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn. Bhd., 1st Edition, 1991, see footnote 3, p. 143. The genealogy of the Sayyid Muhammad bin Zainal Abidin family is kept by Engku Embong bin Abdul Kadir, the great-grandchild of Sayyid Muhammad al-Aidarus and it is also kept by the former (nazir) chairman of the primary schools in Terengganu (religious section).

important roles in the administration of religion and politics in Terengganu in 19th and 20th century Malaya.⁷⁶

In Penang, Sayyid Sheriff Tengku Sayyid Hussain Al-Aidid was among the earliest Arabs to settle in the island in the late 18th century. He arrived on the island from Aceh in 1792. He was a successful merchant and owned a warehouse for keeping goods in Acheen Street. He was a reputable person and one of the richest men on the island and became the leader of the Arab and Malay community.⁷⁷ It is said that Sayyid Hussain Aidid had requested from Francis Light to be the leader of the Arab community in the island to cater to matters related to their religious and social customs, yet no reply to his request was recorded in official records. Sayyid Hussain Aidid managed to strengthen his position among the Arab and Malay community in the island due to his claim that he is a direct descendant of the Prophet.⁷⁸ He built a mosque on Acheen Street known as “Masjid Melayu”. From his name one can assume that he might come from a royal family. If not by birth, he might acquire the title ‘Tengku’ by marriage. Since he came from Aceh and was the agent of the Sultan, there was a possibility that he was part of Aceh’s royal family.⁷⁹ As discussed earlier, the Arabs would at any chance, try to have a close connection with the ruling class, which helped much in their trade ventures in Malaya.

In Negeri Sembilan, the Hadhrami Arab community lived in groups like in Pahang and Johor. Many of them are to be found in three main districts; Seremban, Tampin and Jelebu. Kampong Peradung is among the earliest villages to receive Hadhrami Arab immigrants in the District of Jelebu.⁸⁰ It is not certain who was the first Hadhrami Sayyid to arrive in Negeri Sembilan, but Sayyid Hassan was among the earliest Hadhrami Arabs to arrive in Negeri Sembilan who came from Hadhramaut,

⁷⁶ Ibid., pp. 135-43.

⁷⁷ Nordin Hussin, *Trade and Society in the Straits of Malacca: Dutch Melaka and English Penang, 1780-1830*, Singapore: National University of Singapore Press, 2007, p. 94.

⁷⁸ H. P. Clodd, *Malaya's First British Pioneer, The Life of Francis Light*, London: Luzac & Company Ltd., 1948, p. 119.

⁷⁹ Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, “The Arabs in Penang”, p.4.

⁸⁰ Syed Zakaria bin Syed Hassan, *Sejarah Tentang Syed di Negeri Sembilan, Satu Kajian di Daerah Jelebu*, Academic Exercise, B.A., Faculty of Usuluddin, University of Malaya, 1989/1999, p. 76.

Yemen. It was said that in Jelebu, he married the daughter of the head chieftain of Bakul Undang Jelebu III, Tok Chu who converted to Islam. Starting from this marital bond, the descendants of Sayyid from Hadhramaut, Yemen began to spread in Negeri Sembilan. This event took place around the 18th century. Through this marriage; the Hadhrami Arabs started to settle in Negeri Sembilan and gained reputation and status in the Malay society. Their association with Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. as the inheritor of the faith of Islam benefited them in gaining recognition in the Malay society in religious, social as well as economic aspects.⁸¹

However, the Hadhrami Arabs in Negeri Sembilan do not descend from Husayn Ibn ‘Ali R.A., but through Hassan Ibn ‘Ali R.A. The involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the politics of Negeri Sembilan especially in Tampin started when Sayyid Shaaban bin Sayyid Ibrahim al-Qadri, the son in-law of Raja ‘Ali the Yamtuan Muda of Rembau (1815-1832) was appointed the Tengku Besar of Tampin (1856 – 1872).⁸²

In the Naning War (1831-1832), Raja Ali, the Yamtuan Muda of Rembau and his son in-law, Sayyid Shaaban helped British defeat the Naning chief, Datuk Dol Said around 1831 till 1832. Once the war ended, Raja Ali with the support of British proclaimed himself as the Yamtuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan (1832 – 1834) and appointed his son in-law as the *Yamtuan Muda of Rembau*. However, this appointment was not approved by other *Datuk Undangs* in Negeri Sembilan. A series of skirmishes and quarrels caused Raja ‘Ali and Sayyid Shaaban to be dismissed from Rembau. Datuk Nganit, Undang of Rembau and Datuk Kelana Kawal, Undang of Sungai Ujung ousted Raja Ali and his son in law from Rembau. In 1834, Raja Ali moved to Lukut and his son-in-law Sayyid Shaaban went to Tampin. Datuk Nganit of Undang Rembau (1819-1838) made an agreement with the British in Malacca to hand over Tampin to Sayyid

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 79. See also Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Negeri Sembilan*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981, p. 18.

⁸² Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Negeri Sembilan*, p. 31; Tun Suzana Tun Othman & Muzaffar Mohamad, *Ahlul Bait Rasulullah SAW dan Kesultanan Melayu*, p. 174.

Shaaban. With the support of the British, Sayyid Shaaban was made Tengku Besar of Tampin. Since then, Tampin was ruled by the family of Sayyid from Hadramaut.⁸³

The Rulers of Tampin (Tengku Besar of Tampin)⁸⁴

1. Sayyid Shaaban bin Sayyid Ibrahim al-Qadri (1834 - 1850 (d. 1873)
2. Sayyid Abu Bakar bin Sayyid Shaaban al-Qadri (1873-1883)
3. Sayyid Abdul Hamid bin Sayyid Shaaban al-Qadri (1883-1893)
4. Sayyid Dewa bin Sayyid Abdul Hamid al-Qadri (1893-19??)
5. Tengku Sharifah Leng binti Sayyid Abdul Hamid (acting Tengku Besar of Tampin).
6. Sayyid Akil bin Sayyid Dewa al-Qadri (19??-19??)
7. Sayyid Muhammad bin Sayyid Dewa al-Qadri (19?? – 1929)
8. Tengku Sharifah Leng binti Sayyid Abdul Hamid (acting Tengku Besar of Tampin, 1929-1944).
9. Sayyid Idrus al-Qadri bin Sayyid Muhammad (1945- 2005)⁸⁵

The involvement of Sayyid descendants in Negeri Sembilan politics had indirectly brought in British intervention in Negeri Sembilan's political affairs that resulted in a series of uprisings and revolt against British's policy in the state. The al-Qadri Sayyids were seen on the British side. One district after another signed treaties with the British, placing their territories under British protection.⁸⁶

In Perlis, the Sayyid family of Jamalullail has ruled the state since mid-19th century to the present day, when Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail was appointed the state's first ruler in May 1834.⁸⁷ The Jamalullail family originated from Hadhramaut, Yemen.

The Arab blood in the inheritors of the rulers of Perlis started when Sayyid Ahmad Ibn

⁸³ Ibid., p. 174. Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Negeri Sembilan*, pp. 32-33.

⁸⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

⁸⁵ Tun Suzana Tun Othman & Muzaffar Mohamad, *Ahlul Bait Rasulullah SAW*, pp. 174-5; Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Negeri Sembilan*, p. 33, <http://www.royalark.net/Malaysia/tampin3.htm>. (last accessed on 18 May 2013).

⁸⁶ Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Hadhramis in the Malay States", in Ulrike Freitag & William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen In the Indian Ocean, 1750s – 1960s*, Brill: Leiden, New York: Koln, 1997, pp. 90-92.

⁸⁷ Mohd Roselan Ab. Malek, *Silsilah Nama Tempat Pulau Pinang dan Perlis Indera Kayangan*, 1st Edition, Selangor: Penerbit Prisma Sdn. Bhd, 1993, p. 35.

Sayyid Hussin Jamalullail, an Arab from Hadhramaut migrated to Limbong, Alor Setar, Kedah in 1735. He was the tenth generation of Jamalullail in Perlis. The Jamalullails also trace their genealogy back to Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. through his grandson Husain, the son of Fatimah Binti Muhammad S.A.W. and Ali R.A. Sayyid Ahmad then married the daughter of Sayyid Muhammad Taha al-Qadri, Sharifah Aminah and they had a son named Sayyid Harun Jamalullail in 1737. In 1752 Sayyid Ahmad passed away and his son Sayyid Harun Jamalullail moved to Chenak. In Chenak he stayed with his uncle Sayyid Ibrahim al-Qadri who was also known as Tokku Chenak. In Chenak, Sayyid Harun traded and taught religion and al-Qur'an to the people.⁸⁸

In 1797, when Sultan Abdullah al-Mukarram Shah of Kedah died, his brother Tuanku Ziya'uddin@Dhiauddin, the Raja Muda of Kayang and Setul was appointed Pemangku Sultan. He married his princess Tuanku Safiah to Sayyid Harun Jamalullail. Tuanku Ziya'uddin then awarded Mukim Arau to Tuanku Safiah and Sayyid Harun as property. Sayyid Harun was then appointed as *penghulu* or chieftain of Arau. He did not have children with Tuanku Safiah. Sayyid Harun then married Wan Fatimah, daughter of Sayyid Ibrahim al-Qadri (Tokku Chenak) and they had four children. The eldest one was Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail. Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail lived with Tuanku Safiah. When Sayyid Harun passed away in 1825, Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail was appointed the new chieftain of Arau to replace his late father.⁸⁹

The Kedah-Siam War lasted for 29 years (1821-1842). The war-stricken situation left Kedah in chaos, which was added with civil wars among the royalties for power. A series of campaigns against the Siam led by Sayyid Zayn al-Abidin (Zainal Abidin) popularly known as Tunku Kudin, Sultan Ahmad's half Arab nephew had managed to recapture Kuala Kedah. However, the Siamese army retaliated and took

⁸⁸ Universiti Malaysia Perlis, *Perlis Mahkota Negara*, Perlis: Unit Kajian Strategik, Universiti Malaysia Perlis, 2010, p. 31.

⁸⁹ Mohd Roselan Ab. Malek, *Silsilah Nama Tempat*, p. 39.

back Kuala Kedah. The skirmish also caused Tunku Kudin's death.⁹⁰ The Kingdom of Siam appointed the Ruler of Ligor as its governor to run the administration of Kedah. This situation left Perlis with no rulers. When the Ruler of Ligor died in 1839, the Kingdom of Siam divided Kedah and its territory into four separate states; Kedah was ruled by Dang Anum, Kubang Pasu was ruled by Tengku Hassan, Setul governed by Tengku Bisnu and Perlis was ruled by Raja Long Krok who was also known as Paduka Seri Maharaja Lela. Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail was appointed deputy governor to Paduka Seri Maharaja Lela by Raja Rama III to assist him in administering Perlis. When Raja Long Krok died in 1841, Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail was then appointed as the first ruler of Perlis with title *Phya Songkram Ramu Wichit Willis Asmara Phya Pelit*. His ascension was done in Bangkok and the coronation ceremony was held in Istana Arau, Perlis. Perlis is the only state in Malaya ruled by the Sayyid family ever since. Through marital bonds, they managed to acquire a special place and secured reputable positions in the society. The family has ruled the state since the 19th century until today.⁹¹ (See attachment A, the Genealogy of Perlis Rulers)

In Johor, the majority of Hadhrami Arabs lived in three main districts; Batu Pahat, Johor Bahru and Muar. Most of them gather in towns like Johor Bahru, Penggaram (Batu Pahat) and Maharani Town (Muar) while the rest of them are distributed in other districts such as Mersing, Kota Tinggi, Pontian, Kluang and Segamat.⁹² The Johor sultanate was once ruled by a Hadhrami Sayyids descendant when Tun Habib Abdul Majid's son Bendahara Paduka Raja Tun Habib Abdul Jalil was appointed the new ruler of old Johor in 1699 with the title Sultan Abdul Jalil Ri'ayat Shah IV (1699-1718). Since then, the descendants of Bendahara Tun Habib Abdul Majid have become the Sultans of Johor until in the late 19th century when the

⁹⁰ Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Hadhramis in the Malay States", p. 86.

⁹¹ Universiti Malaysia Perlis, *Perlis Mahkota Negara*, p. 32; See also Ahmad Ismail & Yazid Mat, *Perlis Indera Kayangan, Sejarah Pembentukan Sebuah Negeri Berdaulat*, Perlis: n.p.1974, p. 27.

⁹² Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya, "Sejarah Penempatan Orang Arab di Johor", *Seminar Sejarah Budaya Johor*, Vol. 2, Johor Bahru, 2000, pp. 4-5.

Temenggung family came to throne in 1885. However, the genealogy of Tun Habib Abdul Majid did not end with the fall of the Bendahara family's reign in Johor. His pedigree is scattered in Terengganu and Pahang as rulers and aristocrats of the states. The Selangor Sultanate also originated from Sultan of Abdul Jalil Ri'ayat Shah IV's lineage through his daughter, *Puteri Mandak*.⁹³

If we refer to the history of Islamisation of Mindanao, Islam has already spread to Mindanao in early 16th century. Two Hadhrami Sayyids who were responsible for the conversion of the people in Mindanao to Islam were Syarif Hassan and Syarif Maraja. They were said to have come from Johor.⁹⁴ Muhammad Ali Zainal Abidin was one of the prominent '*ulama*' in the history of Mindanao in the 16th century. He was also called '*Sharif Kebungsuwan*', means the youngest. *Sharif Kebungsuwan* was said to be responsible for the formation of the Islamic kingdom in Mindanao in the 16th century.⁹⁵ He was said to depart from Johor and arrive in Magindanao around late 15th century or early 16th century. His father Syarif 'Ali Zainal Abidin married into the royal family of the Sultan of Johor, Jusul-Asiqin or Jawzul 'Ashiqin.⁹⁶ *Sharif Kebungsuwan* travelled to Magindanao from Johor together with his people known as Samals or the Bajau; the sea nomads or orang laut.⁹⁷ He married a princess from Malacca.⁹⁸ Most of the descendants of Bendahara Tun Habib Abdul Majid use the titles of Wan or Tun attached to their names. This title denotes the nobles and dignitaries from the Bendahara's descent from Johor and Malacca.⁹⁹

Singapore was the focal point and place of attraction for the Hadhrami Arabs to invest their money and skills in trade and business ventures in Malaya. Since its opening as a free trade port by Raffles in 1819, the island managed to attract traders and

⁹³ Tun Suzana Tun Othman & Muzaffar Mohamad, *Ahlul-Bait Keluarga Rasulullah*, p. 197.

⁹⁴ Najeed M. Saleeby, *The History of Sulu*, p. 47; Peter G. Gowing, "Kris and Crescent: Dar Islam in the Philippines", *Studies in Islam*, Vol.3, 1966, p.4.

⁹⁵ Syarif Ali Zainal Abidin was one of the descendants of Syed Alawiyah, Hadramaut. See also R.B. Serjeant, *The Saiyids of Hadramaut*, London: University of London, 1957, p. 25; Najib M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion*, Manila: The Filipina Book Guild, 1976, pp. 52-53, pp. 34-35 and 37-38; Caser A. Majul, *Muslims in Philippines*, p. 25.

⁹⁶ Najeed M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History*, pp. 52-53.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 54-55.

⁹⁸ Najeed M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History*, pp. 24, 26-27, 37.

⁹⁹ Suzana & Muzaffar Mohamad, *Ahlul-Bait Keluarga Rasulullah*, p. 201.

merchants from all over the world. The Al-Junieds were believed to be among the earliest Arabs to settle in the island when it was opened in 1819. Sayyid Muhammad bin Harun al-Junied arrived in Singapore in 1819 from Palembang, Sumatra. He was a Yemeni Arab who traded in Palembang. Sayyid Omar bin Ali al-Junied (1792-1852), the nephew of Sayyid Muhammad also come and joined him in Singapore in the same year. Arab Street became the focal area to the Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore in the 19th century. They were actively involved in trading with India and the East Indies, dominating the spices and cloth trade. They were not only traders, but were also involved in realty business. The al-Junieds were also known for their philanthropic work. They owned lots of lands which they donate to build the Melaka Mosque of Kampung Omar in 1820, the first mosque ever built in Singapore.¹⁰⁰

Besides the Al-Junieds, the Al-Saqqafs were also among the earliest Arabs to trade in Singapore in 1824. The al-Saqqafs were from Saudi Arabia, where they also have close family links in Hadhramaut, Yemen. Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf and his son Sayyid Ahmad al-Saqqaf came to trade spices in Singapore and travelled between Java, Sumatra and Celebes. They also established their spice trade in Malacca. The al-Saqqafs managed to establish their own company, the al-Sagoff & Co. in 1848. Sayyid Ahmad married Raja Siti, the daughter of Hajjah Fatimah, a successful and wealthy woman who also owned business ventures in Singapore. When Hajjah Fatimah passed away, all her wealth was inherited by her daughter and son-in-law Sayyid Ahmed who used it to expand the family business. The al-Kaff is also another Hadhrami Arab family who made a name in the metropolitan city of Singapore. They were among the prominent Arab traders and leaders on the island.¹⁰¹

Singapore, once declared as a free port had managed to attract foreign traders to stop by and run businesses there. In 1820, it was reported that Singapore had been

¹⁰⁰ National Heritage Board, *Singapore, The Encyclopedia*, Singapore: Editions Didier Millet, 2006, p. 28.

¹⁰¹ Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824) to A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962)* with biographical and contemporary sketches of some members of the Alsagoff family, compiled and published by Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, Singapore: S.M. Alsagoff, 1963.

visited by many people from all over the world of all nations such as Chinese, Europeans and Arabs. Sayyid Omar Bin Ali Al-Junied was among the earliest Arabs who came to trade in Singapore. He became partner with his uncle Sayyid Mohammad bin Harun Al-Junied, running businesses in Singapore. They both came from Palembang, Sumatera. Before they came to Singapore, they traded in Penang.¹⁰² Singapore has ever since become a centre of attraction not only to Arab traders but also to other nationalities. The al-Junieds were also known for their philanthropic values. They owned lots of lands which they donated to build the Melaka Mosque of Kampung Omar in 1820, the first mosque ever built in Singapore. The al-Junieds were also among the religious and social figures in the early Arab community in Singapore. Sayyid Omar was one of the Muslim leaders' communities during his time.¹⁰³

As Arabs by nature emphasize on tribalism, they would prefer to live in their own groups of community. In Singapore, the Arabs have their own separate settlement. They mostly populated the northeast area surrounding the palace. Arab Street, Baghdad Street, Bussorah Street, Jedda Street and Muscat were all inhabited and attributed to them. In the early 20th century, the majority of them could be found in Middle Road, Seligi Road, Rochore Canal Road and Sumbawa Road. They were also known to possess lots of lands and property in Singapore.¹⁰⁴

The Social Life of Hadhrami Arabs

In general, the Hadhrami Arab society in Malaya experienced a mix-culture of Arab and Malay. Mix marriages between Hadhrami Arabs and local Malay women were common in the society. Since the Arab migration was a male-business phenomenon, it was very rare to hear of Arab females' migration. Many of them did not bring along their families

¹⁰² Charles Burton Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 62. See also C.M. Turnbull, *A History of Singapore 1919-1988*, 2nd Edition, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989, p. 14.

¹⁰³ Oral History Centre, National Archive of Singapore, Acc. No. 320/03, Reel 3, Mr. Syed Hussain b. Abdul Qadir AlJunied, http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/oral_history_interviews. (Accessed on December 13, 2014).

¹⁰⁴ J. A. E. Morley, "The Arabs and the Eastern Trade", pp. 167, 169.

and they would leave their wives and children in their homeland in order to seek fortune and better living overseas.¹⁰⁵ They easily adapted to local customs and cultures and became part of the Malay community. Since the Arab community is so concerned about marriage and their lineage, parents would prefer to marry their daughters to Arab men rather than to non-Arabs. According to Omar Farouk, parents would prefer their daughters to become spinsters rather than marrying them to non-Arab men. This is important for them to ensure the family lineage is protected.¹⁰⁶ This contrasts with Arab men who are so concerned with patriarchal lineage. Hence, mix marriages between Arab men and local women were common in the society.

In the early period of their migration to the Malay world particularly to Malaya, many Arabs from Hadhramaut, Yemen married into the ruling class and royal families. They were easily accepted by the Malays and were regarded as equals to their rulers and nobility. The early Hadhrami Arabs were among the respected people in the society. Most of them who were learned men earned religious prestige in the society for their knowledge and authority in Islam. Their social status is strengthened through marital bonds with the royal family. For example, Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Idrus (Tok Ku Paluh) married the sister of Sultan Zainal Abidin III (1881-1918) of Terengganu, Tengku Mandak.¹⁰⁷

The issue of *kafā'ah* became an intensely debated topic among the Hadhrami Arab community, not only in Malaya, but also in Indonesia as well as in their fatherland, Hadhramaut, Yemen. Fatwas (rulings) were issued on the matters and were frequently discussed in *al-Manar*¹⁰⁸, especially in the early period of the 20th century. There was an event involving a marriage of a woman from the *Sadah* group to an Indian Muslim. The marriage was with the consent of both families. However, someone from

¹⁰⁵ However, they would constantly sending money back home and once they accumulated enough, they would return home for good. see FO 371/16852.

¹⁰⁶ Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, "The Arabs in Penang", p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Ulama dan Umara: Tok Ku Paluh dan Pemerintahan Islam", in Mohamad Abu Bakar (ed.), *Ulama Terengganu Suatu Sorotan*, Terengganu: Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn. Bhd, 1991, p.183.

¹⁰⁸ *Al-Manar*, Vol. 7, 1904, pp. 381-384.

the *Sadah* group wrote to *al-Manar*, asking about the status of the marriage. The reply was published in the journal, saying that the marriage was legal and *halal* (within Shariah Law).¹⁰⁹ However, the *Sadah* group led by a Hadhrami scholar, Sayyid ‘Umar al-Attas, the reputable ‘*alim* of Padang, Sumatera was annoyed with the *fatwa* issued in *al-Manar*. Therefore, he had issued his own *fatwa* on this marriage by saying that the marriage was null and *haram*. Sayyid ‘Umar al-Attas’s argument was that the couple breached the rule of *kafā’ah* in which, according to him, the basic criterion is *nasab* (descent). One of this criterion is that an Arab woman cannot marry a non-Arab.¹¹⁰

The *Sadah* consider themselves as ‘masters’ and the rest of the Muslims are the slaves of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib and his descents. Therefore, an Arab woman, particularly a *Sadah* woman or a Sharifah cannot marry non *Sadah* men. This idea of *kafā’ah* is still preserved and followed by Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent in the 20th century in Malaysia and Singapore. In an interview with Sayyid Esa al-Menoar (Tan Sri), a Hadhrami Arab of Sayyid descent in Singapore, he also touched on this issue in which he talks about the Arab strata in Singapore that places the Sayyids in a higher rank than the Syaikhs and other ordinary Arabs. He further says that the Sayyids are close to royalty. Hence, Sharifahs are allowed to marry the royalty and Sayyids to marry the *Tengkus*. The *Sadah* are regarded to be at the same rank with royalties in Malaysia.¹¹¹

At the beginning of their presence in the Malay World, there was a trend of Arabs marrying into ruling families and this practice continued to the end of the 18th century. Through marriage bonds, they managed to acquire secured positions in the society. Their attachment to the royalties helped them a lot in getting support from the ruling class as well as in their business enterprises. An example of this is in Aceh, where

¹⁰⁹ *Al-Manar*, Vol. 8, 1905, pp. 215-217.

¹¹⁰ A. S. Bujra, “Political Conflict and Stratification in Hadhramaut -1”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 4, 1967.p. 357. See also Zanariah Noor, “Gender Justice and Islamic Family Law Reform in Malaysia”, *Kajian Malaysia*, Vol. 25, No. 2, December 2007, pp. 139-140.

¹¹¹ Alijah Gordon, “Riau: The Milieu of Syed Shaykh’s Formative Years”, in Alijah Gordon, *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hady*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute (MSRI), 1999, p. 39. AlMenoar, Syed Esa (Tan Sri), Oral History Interview @ Archive Online, Accession Number 000321. See also Deliar Noer, *The Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942*, Singapore/Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 62. See also Zanariah Noor and Nazirah Lee, “The Conflict among Hadrami Arab Community in Malaysia Regarding the Issue of Kafa’ah in Muslim Marriage”, *Middle East & Islamic Studies*, Vol. 11, Issues 2-3, 2013. <http://booksandjournals.brillonline.com/content/journals/10.1163/15692086-12341249>.

there are Sayyids who inherited the throne and become sultans¹¹² and in the state of Perlis where the Sayyid Jamalullail's family managed to run the state since the early 19th century until today.¹¹³ Through close contact with the ruling class, some of them were granted concession lands, for example Sayyid Hassan al-Attas who was granted with a concession land in Ketapang, Pahang and Sayyid Mohamad who was granted with a concession land in Kukob, Johor.¹¹⁴

Nowadays, the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaysia are losing their identity of 'Arabness' due to intermarriage. Their marriage to local women and intermingling with local people resulted in gradually losing their cultural identity which is commonly characterised by language and culture. This phenomenon is felt even by the second and third generations of Arabs born in Malaya. These new generations were not capable of speaking fluent Arabic or have no knowledge of Arabic at all. This is probably due to the language spoken at home where Malay women do not speak Arabic. Their Arab fathers also speak Malay mixed with Arabic. They care not about language and little stress was given on the children to learn Arabic. "In the real test, that of language, they fail in their claim to be Arabs. None of the older people speak Arabic habitually in their homes, though many can, and in the case of the younger generations any knowledge of Arabic is non-existent."¹¹⁵

According to A. Rahman Tang Abdullah who studied the Arab society in Muar, Johor, he noted that the Arab society used to communicate with local people, especially the Malays using a Malay-Arabic language, a mix of Malay and informal Arabic which is also called *bahasa Arab pasar*.¹¹⁶ In conversation, they used to refer to themselves as *ana* meaning 'I' and called others *anta*. Most Arab men who married Malay women did not speak formal Arabic or did not speak Arabic at all. The Arab fathers rarely taught

¹¹² Cesar Adib Majul, *Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia*, p. 349.

¹¹³ Julie Tang Su Chin, "Sejarah Kerajaan Perlis 1841-1957", *The Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (MBRAS)*, Monograph No. 32. Academe Art & Printing Services Sdn. Bhd., 2002.

¹¹⁴ Johor Bahru Branch, 'Alsagoff Concession Kukup', 15 March, J/Pelb., National Archive, Malaysia.

¹¹⁵ Nathan, J. E., *The Census of British Malaya 1921*, p. 91.

¹¹⁶ A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, *Sejarah Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Muar*, Latihan Ilmiah, Jabatan Sejarah, Fakulti Sastera dan Sains Sosial, Universiti Malaya, 1991/92. p. 53.

their children to speak and write in Arabic. The spoken language at home was a Malay-Arabic language, a mix of Malay and informal Arabic language *bahasa Arab pasar*. They only taught their children to recite Qur'an at home. This was one of the reasons why the young generations of Arabs born in Malaya could not speak Arabic. However, according to Omar Farouk,¹¹⁷ in Penang, most Arabs are familiar with the Arabic language, it is just the matter of they can speak it or not. The majority of Arab parents in Penang send their children to English schools, hence English became a common language to the younger generations of Arab compared to Arabic.

Most of the children only received formal education at school learning Malay and English. Arabic was also taught at *madrasah* and it became medium of instruction in almost all *madrasahs* in Malaya. In the early days, early generations of Hadhrami Arabs and those who could afford would send their children, especially boys to be educated in their homeland, Hadhramaut. They were taught the Arabic language as well as religious knowledge.¹¹⁸ Malay was also a common language in Hadhramaut. It was also widely spoken and became a mother tongue for the children who were born Arab from a mixed parentage of Arabs with Malay or Javanese women.¹¹⁹

Although A. Rahman Tang Abdullah's work was carried out in 1991/92, this issue has long been noticed in a survey of census done in the state of Kedah and Perlis in 1911. Since the report was based on languages and races, it indirectly categorised Arabs as Malays. This census¹²⁰ shows that the majority of Arabs in Kedah and Perlis had become a part of the Malay community. They spoke Malay and married local women. Their children were born in Malaya of Malay mothers or *Arab Peranakan* who also spoke Malay. Moreover, they adapted to the Malay way of life socially and culturally. No doubt, they were considered as Malays.

¹¹⁷ Omar Farouk Shaikh Ahmad, "The Arabs in Penang", pp. 12-13.

¹¹⁸ J. A. E. Morley, "The Arabs and the Eastern Trade", pp. 145, 168 .

¹¹⁹ W. H. Ingrams, *A Report on Social*, p. 12.

¹²⁰ Report on the Census of Kedah and Perlis A.H 1329 (A.D 1911), p. 7.

Most Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid and Syaikh descendants who travelled overseas were educated in their homeland before migrating. They consisted of traders and religious men who later on hold important positions in Malaya such as mufti, qādī, religious teacher and even the highest religious position in Malaya, *Syaikh al-Islam*. Because of their authority in religion and social status in society, they were given priority and trust by Muslims to lead the Muslim community in matters related to religion. In Terengganu, the al-Idrus family held a considerable influence over the Islamic affairs of the state and they were entrusted with the post of 'ulama', such as Sayyid Muhamad bin Sayyid Zainal Abidin al-Idrus who was also known as *Tokku Tuan Besar* and Sayyid Abdul Rahman bin Sayyid Muhammad al-Idrus, famously known as *Tokku Paloh* who were appointed as *Syaikh al-'Ulama'* (head of all scholars).¹²¹ In the state of Kedah, Syed Abdullah Dahlan served as the *Syaikh al-Islam* from 1903 till 1904.¹²²

Even though many Hadhrami Sayyid descendants lived in Malaya and the majority of them have their own families in the peninsula, they never forget their homeland as they sent money back home annually to support their family members and relatives. With this money they built houses and mosques. They would pay a visit to Hadhramaut whenever they went for Hajj in Makkah. Some would return home for good to spend their old age after migrating for years in foreign lands, even though their country was politically unstable. "The wealth that enabled these houses to be built and maintained was not earned in the Hadhramaut, or even in Arabia, but derived from the remittances, amounting to more than half a million pounds annually, from East Africa,

¹²¹ Mohamed Abu Bakar, "Sayid Abdul Rahman bin Muhammad al-Idrus (Tok Ku Paloh)", in *Islam di Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1979, pp. 34-35. See also Shahril Talib Robert, "The Trengganu Ruling Class in the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*, Vol. 50, Pt. 2, 1977, pp. 39-40.

¹²² Othman Ishak, "Some Aspects of the Administration of Islam in Kedah", in Asmah Haji Omar (ed.), *Darulaman Essays on Linguistic, Cultural and Socio-Economic Aspects of the Malaysian State of Kedah*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia Cawangan Kedah, 1979, p. 186.

India, Malaya and the East Indies.”¹²³ The love for their homeland never fades away even though they were far away in foreign lands.

A majority of the Hadhrami Arab community in Malaya followed the Sunni and Shafi‘e sect. However, there are some of them who still practiced certain religious rites inherited from their ancestors in Hadhramaut such as glorifying and adoring religious figures in their prayer which is called *ratib*. They believed that people like Muhammad ‘Ali Ba ‘Alawi and al-Qutb Umar b. Abd. Al-Rahman al-‘Attas are sacred and deserve recognition. They also believed that those who constantly recite the *ratib* will be saved from disasters. In Muar, Johor reciting *ratib* has become a practice among the Hadhrami Sayyids. They name it *Ratib al-Haddad* or *Ratib al-Attas*.¹²⁴

In recognition of their contribution to the society, certain roads are named after Arab figures such as *Jalan al-Saggof* in Pontian and *Jalan Hassan al-Attas* in Johor Bahru. They even have their own village or community areas such as *Wadi Hana* and *Kampung Wadi Hassan* in Johor Bahru. *Kampung Wadi Hassan* was opened and once owned by Habib Hassan al-Attas. Nowadays the area still exists and many Hadhrami Arabs live there. While in Singapore, there are *Arab Street* and *Jeddah Street*.¹²⁵

Living overseas far away from the homeland never erases their identity as a Hadhrami Arab. Moreover, the bond between them became closer. In almost every state in Malaya, there is an Arab community from Hadhramaut. For example, in 1923, the Arab people of Johor had established an organization known as *Jam ‘iyyah al-Arabiyyah* with the purpose to look after its members’ welfare and education. Its committee members were Arabs of Sayyid descent led by Sayyid Hussain Salim al-Attas.¹²⁶ Although their number is small, they managed to secure outstanding status and held important positions in the society. They by nature managed to adapt to the Malay

¹²³ J. A. E. Morley, “The Arabs and the Eastern Trade”, p. 144.

¹²⁴ The *ratib* was composed in Arabic. It was then revised and translated into Malay by Syed Idrus b. Abdullah al-Habsyi and named *Risalah al-Solah* and *Risalah al-Fawaidu al-Abadiyah*. See A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, *Sejarah Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Muar, Latihan Ilmiah, Jabatan Sejarah, Fakulti Sastera dan Sains Sosial, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, 1991/92*, pp. 56-57.

¹²⁵ J. A. E. Morley, “The Arabs and the Eastern Trade”, pp. 167 and 169.

¹²⁶ See Attachment E about the *Jam ‘iyyah al-Arabiyyah* group members and its rules, SS 2843/1923.

culture and way of life. In Singapore the Arab community established their own club that was known as *Nadi al-Arab al-Arabiyyin* founded before the Second World War. The club then changed its name to *Al-Wehdah Al-Arabiyyah Bi Singapurah* or the *AlWehdah*, the Arab Association Singapore that was officially registered on 11th November 1946.¹²⁷

The Hadhrami Arabs were also actively involved in welfare and charitable works. The wealth accumulated from their hard work in trade and business ventures were returned to the society through their contributions to religious, education and social welfare such as building mosques, establishing *madrasahs* or Arab schools and setting up shelters for orphans. Among the famous *madrasahs* are *Madrasah al-Masyhor* in Penang, *Madrasah al-Sagoff*, *Madrasah al-Attas al-Arabiyyah* in Johor and *Madrasah al-Junied* in Singapore. They did not only establish *madrasahs*, but were also responsible for its maintenance as well as the *madrasahs'* administration and management. They provide good teachers that are mostly imported from Middle East countries such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Hadhramaut, Yemen. Besides primary and secondary schools, they also opened training colleges for teachers and qadi in Johor Bahru. The Kuliyyah al-Attas Johor Bahru received positive response from the society. Many students from all over Malaya furthered their studies at this college.¹²⁸

In the beginning, Arab girls did not receive much opportunity as Arab boys. It became a tradition in Arab society that formal education was only intended for men. Girls and women were educated at home. They learn how to cook, sew and manage the household. However, as time changes women also started to get such opportunities and society are now aware of the importance of education for both girls and boys. In the 1930s the *madrasahs* started to open admission for girls. The *Madrasah al-Huda al-*

¹²⁷ Oral History Centre, National Archives of Singapore, Acc. No. 320/03 (reel 3), Mr. Syed Hussain b. Abdul Qadir AlJunied, http://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/oral_history_interviews, (Accessed December 13, 2014). See also <http://www.islamicevents.sg/organisation/32> for information on AlWehdah organization.

¹²⁸ "Kuliyyah al-Attas Johor Bahru", in *Saudara*, 30 May, 1931, p. 5.

Diniyah which was under the supervision of Sayyid Abdullah al-Maghribi had advertised special admission to the school that was established especially for girls.¹²⁹

The mixed marriages helped the Arab society to slowly adapt to the Malay culture, customs and way of life. For example the use of *jubah* and *turban* were common among the Arab people in the 19th century. However, this practice started to decline and the younger generations are no longer interested to wear *jubah* and *turban*. They choose to wear pants and sarong instead. The female Arabs wear *baju kurung* and *batik sarong* for their daily attire at home.¹³⁰ However, there was a drastic change in their lifestyle in the 20th century when western style and fashion became popular in the society. It is undeniable that westernization has more or less affected people's way of life as well as their perception towards modernity. The changes brought by Europeans have caused many Arabs and Malays to have culture shock. People are now adopting and adjusting their life to the new culture brought by the West in terms of dress code. The Arabs started to wear western fashions such as coat, tie and dress instead of long *jubah*, *sarong* and *baju kurung*. The newspaper *Jasa*¹³¹ also criticised on the issue of Muslims' dress code that are not in compliance with the Islamic dress code.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent in Malaya managed to adapt to the Malay culture and way of life. Many of them married local women and built their own families in Malaya as well as secured good positions and status in the Malay society. However, there are some who were still bound to the customs and rules of the old practices of their ancestors, especially in issues related to marriage. However, the young generations of *Peranakan* Arab are more flexible and open minded in this matter.

¹²⁹ "Madrasah al-Huda al-Diniyah", *Bumi-putra*, 2 December, 1933, no page number.

¹³⁰ "Awad bin Dhiab", January 14, 1984, *Oral History Collections*, National Archives of Singapore.

¹³¹ "Kemajuan Arab Timur Kupang", *Jasa*, Vol. 9, Year 2, July 13, 1929, p. 177, quoted in Nadzirah bt Lee, *The Arabs in British Malaya in the Interwar Years, 1918-1941: A Historical Study*, PhD. Thesis, Hiroshima City University, Japan, 2010, p. 133.

The young generations of the Hadhrami Arabs managed to adapt to the Malay culture and way of life. Being a minority group of Arab immigrants does not forbid them to prosper in Malaya. They easily adapted to the Malay culture and way of life that enabled them to mingle in the society and eventually become part of the Malay community. Mixed marriage occurred between the Arabs and local women, giving birth to new generations of *Peranakan* Arab. Many of them managed to secure good positions and status in the Malay society. Some of them have become successful traders as well as entrepreneurs. Despite their small number, the Hadhrami Arab community in Malaya had played a considerable role in bringing about change in the society through their contribution in religion and economy. The 20th century also witnessed lots of changes in the social, political and economic aspects of Malaya. The *Peranakan* Arabs managed to adapt themselves well within the multiracial society. Some of them succeeded in their lives as entrepreneurs as well as religious scholars. Several of them have attained the highest level of social life and become part of the ruling class in the country. The land that was once foreign to them as a sojourn destination is now becoming the motherland to the new generations of *Peranakan* Arabs in Malaya.

CHAPTER 3: EXPERIMENTAL

3.1 Materials

All chemicals (**Table 3.1**) used in this research were analytical grade and used as received.

Table 3.1 List of main chemicals used in this research

Name	Chemical formula	Formula weight (g mol ⁻¹)
1-Bromodecane	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₉ Br	221.18
1-Bromododecane	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₁₁ Br	249.23
1-Bromohexadecane	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₁₅ Br	305.34
1-Bromooctane	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₇ Br	193.12
1-Bromotetradecane	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₁₃ Br	277.28
2,2'-Bipyridine	C ₁₀ H ₈ N ₂	156.18
Copper(II) chloride dihydrate	CuCl ₂ ·2H ₂ O	170.48
Copper(II) sulphate pentahydrate	CuSO ₄ ·5H ₂ O	249.68
Decanoic acid	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₈ COOH	172.27
Dodecanoic acid	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₁₀ COOH	200.32
Hexadecanoic acid	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₁₄ COOH	256.42
Iron(II) sulphate heptahydrate	FeSO ₄ ·7H ₂ O	318.01
Magnesium sulphate anhydrous	MgSO ₄	120.37
Methyl 4-hydroxybenzoate	4-HOC ₆ H ₄ COOCH ₃	152.15
Octanoic acid	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₆ COOH	144.22
Potassium carbonate	K ₂ CO ₃	138.21
Potassium iodide	KI	166.00
Sodium carbonate	Na ₂ CO ₃	105.99
Tetradecanoic acid	CH ₃ (CH ₂) ₁₂ COOH	228.37

A total of five CH₃(CH₂)₆₋₁₄COONa and four *p*-CH₃(CH₂)₉₋₁₅OC₆H₄COOK, 17 metal carboxylates, 17 metal complexes with 2,2'-bipyridine were prepared. These complexes

were analysed by CHN elemental analyses, FTIR spectroscopy, UV-vis spectroscopy, ^1H -nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, thermogravimetric analysis (TGA), differential scanning calorimetry (DSC), polarizing optical microscopy (POM) and room-temperature magnetic susceptibility. Crystalline complexes were analysed by single-crystal X-ray crystallography.

All geometry optimization and frequencies calculations were done using Gaussian09W package with DFT B3LYP method with 6-31G basis set. In the calculation, ultrafine integral was used. The frequency calculation calculated from the resultant of the above calculation was done to obtain its IR intensities. The predicted IR intensities from the calculation were compared to the experimental IR. The frequencies were scaled by 0.98 because the overestimates calculation by B3LYP method [66].

3.2 Syntheses

3.2.1 $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{RCOO})_4(\text{bpy})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$

a) $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$

A solution of $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COOH}$ (14.47 g; 100.3 mmol) in ethanol (100 ml) was added portionwise to a solution of Na_2CO_3 (5.30 g; 50.0 mmol) in water (100 ml). The mixture was magnetically stirred and heated for 30 minutes. The white solid ($\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COONa} \cdot 1/2\text{H}_2\text{O}$) obtained was filtered and washed with water before dried overnight. The yield was 14.23 g (85.6%).

A solution of $\text{CuCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (1.72 g; 10.1 mmol) in distilled water (20 ml) was added to a solution of $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COONa} \cdot 1/2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (3.34 g; 20.1 mmol) in aqueous ethanol (100 ml). The mixture was magnetically stirred and heated for 30 minutes. The reaction mixture was left to cool to room temperature, washed with water, and filtered. The product

was a green powder ($[\text{Cu}_6\text{Cl}_{10}(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COO})_2]\cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}\cdot 2\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$), and its yield was 1.21 g (61.6%).

2,2'-Bipyridine (0.24 g; 1.5 mmol) was added to a hot solution of $[\text{Cu}_6\text{Cl}_{10}(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COO})_2]\cdot 3\text{H}_2\text{O}\cdot 2\text{CH}_3\text{CH}_2\text{OH}$ (0.53 g; 0.5 mmol) in methanol-ethanol (1:2 ratio; 100 ml). The reaction mixture was stirred for about 30 minutes, allowed to cool to room temperature, and filtered. The product was a blue powder, and its yield was 0.06 g (11.9%). On recrystallisation from ethanol, two types of blue crystals were obtained.

b) $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_8\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$

The method was the same as for $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (Section 3.2.1 (a)), using Na_2CO_3 (5.34 g; 50.3 mmol), $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_8\text{COOH}$ (17.76 g; 103.1 mmol), $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_8\text{COONa}\cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (3.30 g; 18.0 mmol), $\text{CuCl}_2\cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (1.56 g; 9.0 mmol), $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_8\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ (1.15 g; 1.4 mmol), and 2,2'-bipyridine (0.44 g; 2.8 mmol).

The yields of $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_8\text{COONa}\cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was 14.80 g (74.0%), $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_8\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ was 2.99 g (39.2%), and $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_8\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (blue semisolid) was 1.54 g (97.9%). On recrystallisation from chloroform-ethanol (1:1 v/v), blue crystals were obtained.

c) $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$

The method was the same as for $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (Section 3.2.1 (a)), using Na_2CO_3 (5.23 g; 49.3 mmol), $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COOH}$ (20.04 g; 100.0 mmol), $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COONa}\cdot 1/2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (4.49 g; 20.2 mmol), $\text{CuCl}_2\cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (1.75 g; 10.3 mmol), $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]\cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (0.17 g; 0.2 mmol), and 2,2'-bipyridine (0.68 g; 0.4 mmol).

The yields of $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COONa}\cdot 1/2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was 15.79 g (69.2%), $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]\cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was 1.01 g (10.2%), and

$[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (blue solid) was 0.22 g (95.2%). On recrystallisation from ethanol, blue crystals were obtained.

d) $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{12}\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$

The method was the same as for $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (**Section 3.2.1 (a)**), using Na_2CO_3 (5.31 g; 50.1 mmol), $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{12}\text{COOH}$ (22.86 g; 100.1 mmol), $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{12}\text{COONa}$; 5.01 g; 20.0 mmol), $\text{CuCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (1.71 g; 10.1 mmol), $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{12}\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2] \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (0.74 g; 0.70 mmol), and 2,2'-bipyridine (0.24 g; 1.5 mmol).

The yields of $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{12}\text{COONa}$ was 20.73 g (82.8%), $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{12}\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2] \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was 2.97 g (23.1%), and $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{12}\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (blue solid) was 0.38 g (43.7%).

e) $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{14}\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$

The method was the same as for $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_6\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (**Section 3.2.1 (a)**), using Na_2CO_3 (5.30 g; 50.0 mmol), $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{14}\text{COOH}$ (25.68 g; 100.1 mmol), $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{14}\text{COONa}$ (5.55 g; 0.02 mol), $\text{CuCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (1.82 g; 0.01 mol), $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{14}\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ (2.67 g; 2.3 mmol), and 2,2'-bipyridine (0.80 g; 5.1 mmol).

The yields of $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{14}\text{COONa}$ was 24.24 g (87.1%), $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{14}\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ was 4.76 g (37.6%), and $[\text{Cu}_2(\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{14}\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (blue crystals) was 2.67 g (81.1%).

3.2.2 $[Fe_2(RCOO)_4(bpy)(H_2O)_2]$

a) $[Fe_2(CH_3(CH_2)_8COO)_4(bpy)(H_2O)_2]$

The method was the same as for $[Cu_2(CH_3(CH_2)_6COO)_4(bpy)_2]$ (Section 3.2.1 (a)), using $CH_3(CH_2)_8COONa \cdot 2H_2O$; 4.48 g; 19.5 mmol), $FeSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$ (3.58 g; 12.9 mmol), $[Fe_2(\mu-H_2O)_2(CH_3(CH_2)_8COO)_4] \cdot H_2O$ (1.29 g; 1.5 mmol), 2,2'-bipyridine (0.50 g; 3.2 mmol).

The yields of $[Fe_2(\mu-H_2O)_2(CH_3(CH_2)_8COO)_4] \cdot H_2O$ was 5.98 g (36.1%), and $[Fe_2(CH_3(CH_2)_8COO)_4(bpy)(H_2O)_2]$ was 0.77 g (49.7%).

b) $[Fe_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{10}COO)_4(bpy)(H_2O)_2]$

The method was the same as for $[Cu_2(CH_3(CH_2)_6COO)_4(bpy)_2]$ (Section 3.2.1 (a)), using $CH_3(CH_2)_{10}COONa$ (2.60 g; 11.2 mmol), $FeSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$ (2.13 g; 5.6 mmol), $[Fe_2(\mu-H_2O)_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{10}COO)_4] \cdot 2H_2O$ (1.05 g; 1.1 mmol), 2,2'-bipyridine (0.34 g; 2.2 mmol).

The yield of $[Fe_2(\mu-H_2O)_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{10}COO)_4] \cdot 2H_2O$ was 1.84 g (33.3%), and $[Fe_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{10}COO)_4(bpy)_2(H_2O)_2] \cdot 2H_2O$ was 0.85 g (67.9%).

c) $[Fe_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{12}COO)_4(bpy)(H_2O)_2]$

The method was the same as for $[Cu_2(CH_3(CH_2)_6COO)_4(bpy)_2]$ (Section 3.2.1 (a)), using $CH_3(CH_2)_{12}COONa$; 5.71 g; 22.8 mmol), $FeSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$ (4.39 g; 11.6 mmol), $[Fe_2(\mu-H_2O)_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{12}COO)_4] \cdot 2H_2O$ (0.84 g; 0.8 mmol), 2,2'-bipyridine (0.24 g; 1.5 mmol).

The yield of $[Fe_2(\mu-H_2O)_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{12}COO)_4] \cdot 2H_2O$ was 1.72 g (13.8%), and $[Fe_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{12}COO)_4(bpy)(H_2O)_2]$ was 0.86 g (90.9%).

d) $[Fe_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{14}COO)_4(bpy)(H_2O)_2]$

The method was the same as for $[Cu_2(CH_3(CH_2)_6COO)_4(bpy)_2]$ (Section 3.2.1 (a)), using $CH_3(CH_2)_{14}COONa$; 3.83 g; 13.7 mmol), $FeSO_4 \cdot 7H_2O$ (2.62 g; 6.9 mmol), $[Fe_2(\mu-H_2O)_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{14}COO)_4]$ (1.23 g; 1.1 mmol), 2,2'-bipyridine (0.34 g; 2.2 mmol).

The yield of $[Fe_2(\mu-H_2O)_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{14}COO)_4]$ was 3.78 g (47.2%), and $[Fe_2(CH_3(CH_2)_{14}COO)_4(bpy)(H_2O)_2]$ was 0.74 g (50.8%).

3.2.3 $[Cu_2(p-ROC_6H_4COO)_4(bpy)_2]$

a) $[Cu_2(p-CH_3(CH_2)_9OC_6H_4COO)_4(bpy)_2]$

$p-HOC_6H_4COOCH_3$ (4.57 g; 30.0 mmol), K_2CO_3 (4.98 g; 36.0 mmol) and KI (0.22 g; 1.3 mmol) were added in 200 ml DMF. The mixture was stirred and heated at 50°C until dissolved. $BrCH_2(CH_2)_8CH_3$ (6.61 g; 29.9 mmol) was added dropwise to the hot solution. The reaction was refluxed for 24 hours. The cool white powder was washed with water (3x100 ml) and ethanol (2x100 ml) until the washing is colourless. The white powder was dissolved in $CHCl_3$ (100 ml) and $MgSO_4$ anhydrous was added to the solution. The $MgSO_4$ anhydrous was filtered. The $CHCl_3$ was evaporated at room temperature and filtered. The product ($p-CH_3(CH_2)_9OC_6H_4COOCH_3$) was white solids and its yield was 63.4% (5.54 g).

$p-CH_3(CH_2)_9OC_6H_4COOCH_3$ (3.87 g; 13.2 mmol) was dissolved in 100 ml of hot EtOH. KOH (0.74 g; 13.2 mmol) in 10 ml EtOH was added dropwise to the hot solution. The reaction was reflux for 4 hours. The reaction was cool to room temperature and the white solid (1.46 g) was filtered and its yield was 35.0%.

$p-CH_3(CH_2)_9OC_6H_4COOK$ (0.99 g; 3.1 mmol) was dissolved in ethanol:water (100 ml; 1:1 v/v). The reaction was heated to 50 °C. $CuSO_4 \cdot 5H_2O$ (0.40 g; 1.6 mmol) was dissolved in 20 ml water and was added dropwise to the hot solution. The reaction was heated for 30 minutes and blue powder was filtered hot (0.87 g) with 44.2% yield.

$[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_9\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ (0.26 g; 0.2 mmol) was immersed in 100 ml ethanol. 2,2'-bipyridine (0.07 g; 0.4 mmol) was dissolved in 10 ml of ethanol was added dropwise to the hot solution above. The reaction was magnetically stirred and heated (50 °C) for an hour. The clear solution was left to cool to room temperature overnight. The blue solid, $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_9\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2] \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was filtered (0.21 g) with 65.4% yield.

b) $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{11}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$

The method was the same as for $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_9\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (Section 3.2.3 (a)), using *p*-HO-C₆H₄COOCH₂CH₃ (5.01 g; 30.1 mmol), K₂CO₃ (4.9922 g; 36.1 mmol), KI (0.21 g; 1.2 mmol), CH₃(CH₂)₁₁Br (7.47 g; 29.9 mmol), *p*-CH₃(CH₂)₁₁OC₆H₄COOCH₂CH₃ (2.53 g; 7.1 mmol), KOH (0.55 g; 9.7 mmol), *p*-CH₃(CH₂)₁₁OC₆H₄COOK (1.02 g; 2.9 mmol), CuSO₄·5H₂O (1.49 g; 6.0 mmol), $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{11}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2] \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (0.32 g; 0.2 mmol), and 2,2'-bipyridine (0.06 g; 0.4 mmol).

The yields of *p*-CH₃(CH₂)₁₁OC₆H₄COOCH₂CH₃ was 5.55 g (52.1%), *p*-CH₃(CH₂)₁₁OC₆H₄COOK was 1.20 g (49.1%), $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{11}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2] \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was 1.03 g (25.1%) and $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{11}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (blue solids) was 0.27 g (80.3%).

c) $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{13}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$

The method was the same as for $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_9\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (Section 3.2.3 (a)), using *p*-HOC₆H₄COOCH₂CH₃ (5.01 g; 30.2 mmol), K₂CO₃ (5.03 g; 36.4 mmol), KI (0.21 g; 1.3 mmol), CH₃(CH₂)₁₃Br (7.61 g; 27.4 mmol), *p*-CH₃(CH₂)₁₃OC₆H₄COOCH₂CH₃ (2.79 g; 7.7 mmol), KOH (0.54 g; 9.6 mmol), *p*-CH₃(CH₂)₁₃OC₆H₄COOK (0.89 g; 2.4 mmol), CuSO₄·5H₂O (0.31 g; 1.2 mmol),

$[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{13}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2] \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (0.24 g; 0.2 mmol), and 2,2'-bipyridine (0.04 g; 0.3 mmol).

The yields of $p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{13}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOCH}_2\text{CH}_3$ was 8.02 g (80.6%), $p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{13}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOK}$ was 1.49 g (51.8%), $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{13}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2] \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was 0.76 g (39.9%) and $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{13}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (blue solids) was 0.04 g (13.4%).

d) $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$

The method was the same as for $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_9\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (Section 3.2.3 (a)), using $p\text{-HOC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOCH}_3$ (5.51 g; 36.2 mmol), K_2CO_3 (7.07 g; 51.1 mmol), KI (0.21 g; 1.3 mmol), $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{Br}$ (10.99 g; 36.0 mmol), $p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOCH}_3$ (10.57 g; 28.1 mmol), KOH (1.58 g; 28.1 mmol), $p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOK} \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (3.93 g; 9.0 mmol), $\text{CuCl}_2 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (0.84 g; 4.9 mmol), $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{13}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ (0.47 g; 0.3 mmol), and 2,2'-bipyridine (0.03 g; 0.2 mmol).

The yields of $p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOCH}_3$ was 11.91 g (87.8%), $p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOK} \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ was 10.5 g (85.4%), $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ was 3.95 g (54.6%) and $[\text{Cu}_2(p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COO})_4(\text{bpy})_2]$ (blue solids) was 0.28 g (82.7%).

3.2.4 $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$

a) $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ ($R = p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_9\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4$)

A solution of $\text{FeSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (0.44 g; 1.2 mmol) in distilled water (10 ml) was added portionwise to a solution of $p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_9\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOK}$, (Section 3.2.3 (a)) (0.73 g; 2.3 mmol) in ethanol:water (100 ml; 1:1 v/v). The reaction mixture was magnetically stirred

and heated for 30 minutes. The brown powder $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-H}_2\text{O})(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ formed was filtered hot. The yield was 0.72 g (47.1%).

2,2'-Bipyridine (0.09 g; 0.6 mmol) was added to a hot solution of $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-H}_2\text{O})(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ (0.36 g; 0.3 mmol) in chloroform (100 ml). The reaction mixture was stirred for about 30 minutes, allowed to cool to room temperature, and filtered. The yield of $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ was 0.29 g (76.6%).

b) $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ ($R = p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{11}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4$)

The method was the same as for $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ (Section 3.2.4 (a)) using $p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{11}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOK}$; 2.00 g; 5.8 mmol, $\text{FeSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (1.10 g; 2.9 mmol), $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-H}_2\text{O})(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2] \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ (0.89 g; 0.6 mmol), 2,2'-bipyridine (0.20 g; 1.3 mmol).

The yield of $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-H}_2\text{O})(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2] \cdot \text{H}_2\text{O}$ was 1.99 g (48.9%) and $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ was 0.65 g (73.3%).

c) $[\text{Fe}(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ ($R = p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{13}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4$)

The method was the same as for $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ (Section 3.2.4 (a)) using $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{13}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOK}$; 2.17 g; 5.8 mmol, $\text{FeSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (1.1037 g; 2.9 mmol), $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-H}_2\text{O})(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ (0.78 g; 0.5 mmol), 2,2'-bipyridine (0.16 g; 1.0 mmol).

The yield of $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-H}_2\text{O})(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2]$ was 2.40 g (55.2%) and $[\text{Fe}(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ was 0.42 g (97.4%).

d) $[\text{Fe}(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ ($R = p\text{-CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4$)

The method was the same as for $[\text{Fe}_2(\mu\text{-RCOO})_2(\text{RCOO})_2(\text{bpy})]$ (Section 3.2.4 (a)) using $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{15}\text{OC}_6\text{H}_4\text{COOK}$; 1.68 g; 3.9 mmol, $\text{FeSO}_4 \cdot 7\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (0.81 g; 2.1 mmol),

[Fe₂(μ-H₂O)(μ-RCOO)₂(RCOO)₂(H₂O)₂] (0.66 g; 0.4 mmol), 2,2'-bipyridine (0.13 g; 0.8 mmol).

The yield of [Fe₂(μ-H₂O)(μ-RCOO)₂(RCOO)₂(H₂O)₂] was 1.32 g (41.9%) and [Fe(RCOO)₂(bpy)] was 0.47 g (79.7%).

3.3 Instrumental Analyses

3.3.1 *Single crystal X-ray crystallography*

Single crystal X-ray diffraction was performed on a Bruker SMART APEX diffractometer operating with graphite-monochromator Mo Kα radiation ($\lambda = 0.71073\text{\AA}$) at 100 K. The intensities were collected using the $\omega - 2\theta$ scan mode, in the range $2.0^\circ < \theta < 27.5^\circ$. The data sets were corrected for absorption based on multiple scans [67] and reduced using standard methods [68]. All structures were solved by direct method using SHELXS-97 [69], and refined by full matrix least-square methods on F^2 with the use of the SHELXL-97 program package [6]. The crystals molecular structures were drawn with 50% displacement ellipsoids using Mercury [70].

3.3.2 *Elemental analyses*

The elemental analyses were recorded on a Perkin Elmer CHNS/O analyser 2400 Series II. The sample was accurately weighed (1 – 2 mg) in a tin capsule (5 x 8 mm). The capsule containing the sample was folded into a tiny piece and placed inside the analyzer to be heated to a maximum temperature of 1000 °C.

3.3.3 *Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy*

The Fourier Transform Infrared spectra (FTIR) were recorded from 4000 – 450 cm⁻¹ on a Perkin Elmer 400 FT-IR/FT-FIR spectrometer with attenuated total reflection (ATR) technique.

3.3.4 Ultraviolet-visible spectroscopy

The ultraviolet-visible spectra (UV-vis), for both solid and solution samples, were recorded from 1000 – 300 nm on a SHIMADZU UV-vis-NIR 3600 spectrophotometer. An exactly known mass of the solid was dissolved in a suitable solvent in a 10-mL volumetric flask. The solution was introduced into a 1-cm quartz cuvette. Then the cuvette was inserted into the sample holder. The spectrum obtained was recorded against the solvent as the background.

3.3.5 ¹H-NMR spectroscopy

The proton NMR was recorded on JEOL FT-NMR Lambda 400 MHz spectrometer. The samples were dissolved in CDCl₃. The chemical shifts were reported in ppm using the residual protonated solvent as reference.

3.3.6 Room-temperature magnetic susceptibility

Room-temperature magnetic susceptibility was recorded on a Sherwood Auto Magnetic Susceptibility Balance. An empty tube was tared on the analytical balance and then placed in the instrument. The exponent of the reading was changed to 10⁻⁵ and tared. The finely ground sample was packed into the tube to the calibrated mark (length 5 cm) and the mass was recorded. The tube containing the sample was then placed in the instrument and the χ_g was recorded.

3.3.7 Thermogravimetric analysis

The thermogravimetric analysis (TGA) was recorded from 50–900 °C on a Pyris Diamond TG/DTA Perkin Elmer instrument with the scan rate of 20 °C min⁻¹. The sample was analysed under nitrogen at a flow rate of 10 cm³ min⁻¹. An empty alumina pan was placed

in the holder and tared. Then the sample (4 - 5 mg) was loaded onto the pan and the weight recorded.

3.3.8 Polarizing optical microscope

The mesophases pictomicrographs were captured using Nikon-H600L Eclipse Microscope equipped with Metler Toledo FP90 central processor and Linkam THMS 600 hot stage. The magnification was 50x.

3.3.9 Differential scanning calorimetry

Differential scanning calorimetry (DSC) was recorded from 35–300 °C on a Perkin Elmer DSC 6 calorimeter. The weight of the sample (3 – 4 mg) was initially recorded on a microbalance. The sample was transferred into an aluminium crucible and placed inside the instrument. The analysis was performed under nitrogen gas at a flow rate of 10 cm³ min⁻¹ and scan rate of 10 °C min⁻¹.

3.3.10 Molecular modelling

Computational calculation analysis was conducted using density functional theory (DFT), B3LYP method. The calculation was performed on Gaussian 09 program package. In preliminary calculation to determine the lowest energy conformers, the geometry optimization was done using 6-31G basis sets on all atoms. The lowest energy conformers were then individually recalculated their moieties using 6-311G basis sets. The frequency calculation calculated from the resultant of the above calculation was done to obtain its IR intensities. The predicted IR intensities from the calculation were compared to the experimental IR. The frequencies were scaled by 0.98 because the overestimates calculation by B3LYP method [66].

CHAPTER 4: ROLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE HADHRAMI ARABS TO THE ECONOMY

Introduction

Trade relations between Malacca and the Middle East in the 15th and early 16th centuries occurred through Arab, Persian, Turkish and Abyssinian intermediary traders who were based in the port of Bengal. Malay merchants also traded with the Indians. Gujarati merchants played an important role in trade between the Middle East and the Malay World. Ports such as Diu, Randir, Surat, Daman and Cambay in India acted as intermediary ports for ships bringing commodities from the Middle East that would be traded in the Malay World and elsewhere. Important ports in the Middle East like as Alexandria, Makkah, Ormuz, Aden and Jeddah were hubs for the collection of merchandise before being exported to the East and West. The ports in the Malay World, India and the Middle East were dependant and interrelated to each other for inter-ocean long distance trade.

The 16th century was also marked as the beginning of the intervention of colonial powers in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaya which threatened the trade relationship between the Arabs and Malays in later years. The Arabs' presence in Southeast Asian maritime trade had also started to diminish. It was only around the middle of the 18th century that the Arabs started to make their presence felt in Southeast Asian maritime trade. The long distance trade between India and China had secured the Malay Peninsula, particularly Singapore as transit ports which later on turned out to be one of the British colonies. The Arabs, especially those migrated from Hadhramaut, Yemen came to settle in Malaya and played a prominent role in Malayan trade. The Hadhrami Arabs managed to secure political and economic status in the society. Their capabilities adapted well with local customs and way of life, helping them to be accepted by the Malay society. The Hadhrami Arabs' diligence and expertise in dealing

with trade and entrepreneurship made them competitive merchants parallel to the Chinese and Europeans. The British treated the Arabs as partners in economic ventures because of the Arabs' diligence and expertise in trading. The presence of Arab traders of Sayyid descent from the Middle East in Malayan waters is traceable in Riau, the state capital of Johor since around the end of the 18th century. Under the leadership of Raja Haji, Riau became a trade centre, monopolizing in the tin business. As recorded in *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, "Large Numbers of Sayyids came from the Arab lands together with *lebai* from Java, who filled the religious hostels as well as mosques and prayer houses belonging to the dignitaries and the wealthy".¹

19th and 20th century Malaya witnessed the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the country who played a primary role in the economic activities of the Malay states such as in services, trade, mining and agriculture. In the service sector, many of them work as civil servants, receiving monthly salary and allowances. Some of them became professional appraisers and auctioneers. Many of them were not only engaged in trade, but also in timber, agriculture and mining and became successful entrepreneurs and traders. Famous names like al-Attas, al-Junied, al-Kaff and al-Saqqaf ventured into more than one sector and were pioneers in their respective fields. The close relationship built with royalties earned them valuable capital when some of them were awarded with land and mining concessions by sultans. Such an award could be considered a golden opportunity and is important for them to expand their business ventures and flourish in Malaya.

The Malay Peninsula started to gain fame and popularity as an economic hub in the region in the 18th century with the opening of Penang as a free trade port by Francis Light in 1786, and about two decades later in the 19th century when Stamford Raffles opened Singapore as a trading post in 1819. Being situated on the trade route between

¹ Raja Ali Haji ibn Ahmad, *The Precious Gift (Tuhfat al-Nafis)*, Virginia Matheson & Barbara Watson Andaya (trans.), Kuala Lumpur: 1982, pp. 160-161.

China and West Asian countries including India, the Malay Peninsula served as a stopover between India and China for European merchants. Trade between England and India was monopolized by the East Indian Company which dominated the tea trade, one of the important commodities from the East. Besides, the Arab connection with the Malay World had already begun and can be traced back to at least the 9th century. The earliest Arab settlement found at Siak in Sumatra and Pontianak in Borneo dated from late 17th century where wandering Arab traders, adventurers, and religious scholars had been a feature of the Malay life for hundreds of years.²

Meanwhile, trade between India and China was under the control of independent merchant groups. They plied from India to China, passing by the Malay Archipelago. In the 19th century, the Arabs played quite a considerable role in the economic development of Singapore when Singapore was still under the Malay Archipelago. When Singapore opened as a free trade centre, Raffles managed to attract traders and merchants from all over the world, including Hadhrami Arab merchants to trade in Singapore. Raffles had also stressed on the vital role played by the Arabs along with the Chinese and Bugis in Eastern trade as without them, trade activity would have declined. “Let the Chinese and Arabs still trade to the eastward. Without them, the trade would be reduced to less than one third of even what it is at present”³

Plantation

Agriculture is one of the economic sectors that the Hadhrami Arabs were involved in commercially. Some of them were reported to be major landowners in Kedah, especially in the districts of Yan and Kubang Pasu. The Arab families who owned most of these agricultural lands were the al-Idrus, al-Baraqabah and al-Jamalullail.⁴ Yan was one of

² Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, “The Arabs in Penang”, *Malaysia in History*, 1978, Vol. 21, No. 2, p. 40.

³Quoted in J. A. E. Morley, “The Arabs and the Eastern Trade”, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* (JMBRAS), Vol. 22, Pt. 1, 1949, p. 163. (The sentence is quoted as it is from the article).

⁴ Paridah Romli, ‘Orang Syed di Kedah’, B.A, Academic Exercise, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1983/84, p. 74.

the districts in Kedah where the Hadhrami Arabs ventured into paddy plantation. The government of Kedah had encouraged people in that area to open paddy fields. Swamps and wasted lands had been turned to vast areas of agriculture planted with paddy. This development was welcomed by the residents of Kedah as well as migrants from Siam and Indonesian islets.⁵ The royals and dignitaries of Kedah were among those who took the opportunity to acquire fertile land in Yan, including Hadhrami Arabs such as Sayyid Othman, a magistrate in Alor Setar. Meanwhile, Tunku Abidin, Tunku Aminah, and Mohd Jonah were among the Kedah Royals and dignitaries who also acquired lands in Yan.⁶ Sayyid Akil was granted 160,000.00 acres of lands in the area of Mukim Gunong by Tuanku Raja Muda of Kedah. He had to pay taxes for 11 years which had amounted to \$412.50. A sum of \$37.50 was collected for the year 1910.⁷

Frank Swettenham in his visit to Kedah in 1889 was impressed with the development of paddy plantation in Yan. *“The padi fields are of greater extent than any other state that I have seen elsewhere in the peninsula. The whole country up to Perlis for some distance from the coast is one vast padi plain”*.⁸ In order to facilitate the plantation of paddy, Sayyid Osman who was the District Officer of Yan took the initiative by digging Sungai Yan Kecil to connect it with Wan Mat Saman Canal in Guar Cempedak for irrigation purposes to water the agricultural areas. It was completed in 1914.⁹ Mohammad Redzuan Othman discusses the involvement of the Hadhrami Sayyid families in the economic sector in Kedah, particularly in agriculture.¹⁰ Among the Hadhrami Arab families who were involved in the plantation and agricultural sectors were the families of Al-Idrus, Al-Barakbah and Al-Jamalullail, while Sayyid Alwi bin

⁵ Teh Koon Hoo, ‘Sejarah Sosio-Ekonomi Daerah Yan Dari 1909 hingga 1957’, M.A. Dissertation, Pusat Pengajian Ilmu Kemanusiaan, Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), 2003, p. 96.

⁶ National Archive Malaysia, Kedah/Perlis Branch. SUK 06/1332.

⁷ Surat Duli Tuanku Raja Muda beri kepada Syed Mansor al-Jafri fasal tanah Syed Akil, Surat Menyurat Sultan Abdul Hamid T.H. 1318 -1820 - T.M. 1900-1902, No. 16, Jil. 1, p. 173.

⁸ Swettenham visited Kedah on 23 November 1889, Cited from CO 273/16.

⁹ Resumption of land for the extension of canal from Guar Cempedak –Yan Road to Wan Mat’s Canal, SUK 1270/1333.

¹⁰ Mohamad Redzuan Othman. “Sumbangan Usahawan keturunan Arab dalam Perkembangan Ekonomi Tanah Melayu sebelum Perang Dunia Kedua”. Paper presented in Seminar Sejarah Keusahawanan: Pelajaran untuk Masa Depan, Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya, 9 January 2009.

Sayyid Ahmad al-Habshee worked on rubber estates in the district of Yan.¹¹ Sayyid Abdullah bin Mohsin Al-Attas engaged in the sugar business in between Penang and Kedah.¹² Meanwhile, Sayyid Abdul Rahman Al-Junied showed his interest to venture into the petroleum business in Kedah. He was reported to submit an application to the British government to set a shop up in Kulim in 1914.¹³

Moreover, the Hadhrami Arabs not only participated in agriculture, but also in the economic and town development activities in Johor, particularly Johor Bahru. There were also Arabs from Singapore who were doing business in the state in various sectors. Most of them focused in town areas such as Johor Bahru, Penggaram, Batu Pahat and Maharani, Muar. The Hadhrami Arabs played significant roles in Johor's economic sector which can be seen in the development of towns and opening of agricultural estates commercially by several Arab individuals. Their status as permanent residents had helped them a lot in gaining trust from the local authorities to be involved in commerce ventures in Johor.¹⁴

In short, there were many successful Hadhrami Arabs at that time. Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf was one of the successful Hadhrami Arabs in Johor. He took over the family business from his father, Sayyid Ahmad al-Saqqaf. He was a successful entrepreneur who was involved in many business ventures in Singapore and had managed to accumulate a huge fortune through his business connections, not only in the Malay Peninsula but also in Europe and the Middle East. His company, Al-Sagoff & Co. exported commodities such as timber, rubber, sago, coconuts, coffee, cocoa and pineapples, while its imports comprised of general merchandise for local consumption.¹⁵

¹¹ Claims his share in the rubber Estate of Syed Alwi bin Syed Ahmad Alhabshi. - Tuntutan Bahagiannya di Atas Kebun Getah Syed Alwi bin Syed Ahmad Alhabshi. 1918. Kedah 584/1338.

¹² Prays that his brother Syed Abdullah bin Mohsin al-Attas be pardoned for evading payment of duty on sugar. Pohon diampun saudaranya Syed Abdullah bin Mohsin a-Atas fasal pelari daripada membayar hasil di atas gula. Kedah 3362- 1352.

¹³ S. A. Al Junied applies for permission to erect on behalf of the Asiatic Petroleum Co. Ld; Penang a Kerosine and Petrol store on Lot no 291, Kulim. Kedah 660/1333.

¹⁴ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, 'Penglabatan Individu-Individu Arab dalam Ekonomi Negeri Johor (1862-1942)', M.A. Dissertation, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1997, p. 165.

¹⁵ For the life and business activities of Sayyid Mohamed al-Sagoff, see Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia* A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824) to A.H. 1382 (A.D. 1962) with biographical and contemporary sketches of some members of the al-Sagoff family, compiled and published by Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, Singapore: S. M. Alsagoff, 1963, p. 11. See also letter from R.W. Maxwell (Acting Inspector-General of Police) to the Colonial Office, 12 March 1884, CO 273/126.

Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf was among the Arabs who pioneered commercial plantations. Through his close relationship with the ruler of Johor, Sultan Abu Bakar, Sayyid Mohamed was awarded a large estate in Kukup, Johor in 1878. The land concession of 60,000 acres stretching between Sungai Permas and Sungai Pontian Besar was to be used for cultivation (except opium).¹⁶ The concessions, which was called “The Al-Sagoff Cucob Concession” by the British, was later on renamed the “Constantinople Estate” by Sayyid Mohamed.¹⁷

The Constantinople Estate was a prospering economic zone. Many Javanese workers were employed on the estate to overcome the shortage of local labour. The Javanese workers signed contracts to work on the estate for a certain period of time. Being contract labourers, they were promised to be able to perform *hajj* with all expenses provided by the Estate.¹⁸ The Estate also provided a scheme that was also known as contract-tickets that attracted many Javanese workers to work on the estate. The Al-Saqqaf or Al-Sagoff and Company also made a deal with stranded *hajjis* in Hijaz to bring them back home with a condition that they have to sign a contract to work as labourers in the estates belonging to the company for a certain period of time until their debts are paid. This practice was admitted to by Sayyid Mohammed al-Saqqaf himself where he had lent an amount of \$100,000.00 for the period of three years.¹⁹ Around 200 potential pilgrims signed the contract to work on the estate in 1889.²⁰ About 400 labourers were employed by the Estate in the 1880s and another 200 in the 1900s.²¹ The al-Saqqaf Company ferried potential *hajj* pilgrims and contract workers to Makkah using their own ships.²² This contract-ticket became popular among potential *hajj* pilgrims towards the end of the 19th

¹⁶ See “Alsagoff Concession Kukup,” 15 March 1906 J/Pelb., National Archive, Malaysia (Johor Bahru Branch). See also “A Brief History of the Alsagoff Concession, Kukup, Johore,” n.d., GA 253/24, National Archive, Malaysia (Johor Bahru Branch).

¹⁷ Saadiyah Said, ‘Kegiatan Keluarga al-Sagoff dalam Ekonomi Johor 1878-1926’, B.A. Academic Exercise, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1979, p. 53.

¹⁸ Arnold Wright, *A Twentieth Century Impression of British Malaya*, London: Lloyd's Great Britain Publishing Co., Ltd., 1908, p. 707.

¹⁹ J. M. Gullick, *Malay Society in the Nineteenth Century: The Beginnings of Change*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 314-315.

²⁰ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, “Ekonomi Orang Arab Pada Abad Ke-9 Masihi Hingga Tahun 1914”, *Jebat*, Vol. No. 26, 1999, p. 56.

²¹ See William Gervase Clarence-Smith, “Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940”, in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen In the Indian Ocean, 1750s – 1960s*, Leiden; New York; Koln: Brill, 1997, pp. 311-312.

²² A. Wright & Cart Wright, *A Twentieth Century Impression of British Malaya*, p. 707.

century as it functions as a loan to pilgrims to replace cash money for the sake of safety. The workers were provided with all necessities needed on the estate. The workers' settlement was also provided with a marketplace where they use their own currency known as Constantinople Currency to buy goods and other stuffs in the estate. After two months being awarded with the concession land, Sayyid Mohammed issued the Estate's first currency on 1st May 1878.²³ The currency was printed by Sa'aidi Press in Singapore and had consisted of 25 cents, 50 cents, \$1.00 and \$2.00.²⁴

When Sayyid Mohammed al-Saqqaf passed away on 3rd July 1906 in Singapore, his properties were inherited by his two sons, Sayyid Abdul Kadir and Sayyid Umar. On 19th April 1907 Sayyid Abdul Kadir passed away, thus Sayyid Umar became the sole beneficiary of the al-Saqqaf wealth.²⁵ Under Sayyid Umar, aggressive efforts were made to attract investors to the "Cucob Concessions". Apart from developing the concessions himself, Sayyid Umar also leased part of the land in the concession to European companies to plant rubber. In 1907 he leased 10,000 acres of "Cucob Concessions" for 200 years to Hevea Rubber Planting Co. Ltd. This was followed by the lease of another 5,000 acres of land for 90 years to Peneiro Planting Syndicate. Both estates were required to pay a tax of 2.5% of their products to Sayyid Umar.²⁶

Another Hadhrami Arab who was also involved in agricultural estate was Sayyid Hassan al-Attas. He was also awarded a land concession by the Sultan of Johor of about 2000 acres near Johor Bahru. This concession was known as the Estate of Habib Hassan. The Estate was planted with rubber, coconut and pineapple. Today, this estate covers the areas of Century Garden, Wadi Hassan, Kampung Ngee Heng, Hulu

²³ Saadiyah Said, 'Kegiatan Keluarga al-Sagoff Dalam Ekonomi Johor 1878-1926', p. 99.

²⁴ The Sultan of Johor gave permission to the Constantinople Estate to use own currency. See Khazin Mohd. Tamrin & Sukiman Bohari, "Orang Jawa Pontian: Kedatangan dan Kegiatan Dalam Aspek Sosio-Ekonomi dan Politik Tempatan", *Jebat*, No. 10, April, 1980/81, p. 40.

²⁵ For interesting discussions on the death of Sayyid Abdul Kadir in what was perceived as an elaborate murder plot, see William R. Roff, "Murder as an Aid to Social History. The Arabs in Singapore in the Early Twentieth Century", in Huub de Junge and Nico Kaptain (eds.), *Transcending Borders. Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, pp. 91-108.

²⁶ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, "Ekonomi Orang Arab Pada Abad Ke-9 Masihi Hingga Tahun 1914", p. 57.

Air Molek, Saujana, Kampung Tarum, and part of Kampung Kubur.²⁷ He was also working on a rubber plantation area of 79 acres between Ghi Heng Road and Yahaya Awal Road.²⁸ His son, Sayyid Mohamad was also involved in the agriculture sector by opening *gambier* and coffee plantations in Muar, Johor.²⁹ Several Hadhrami Arabs applied for land grants for lots in Arab Street in Bandar Maharani, Muar for agriculture and business purposes. People such as Sayyid Hussein Mohamed al-Mahthar, Sayyid Mohamed Uthman al-Yahya and Sayyid Salleh Abdul Rahman were among the land applicants in Muar.³⁰

Apart from Johor, Sayyid Hassan invested in plantations by running the *Ketapang Rubber Estate* in Pahang commercially.³¹ Sayyid Hassan gained a reputable status in Pahang and was a highly respected Arab for his piety and wealth.³² Fortunately, he maintained a good relationship with Sultan Ahmad, the Sultan of Pahang who awarded 14,000 acres of land stretching from Kuala Pahang to Air Hitam for agricultural purposes for 99 years.³³ The land was handed to him on 1 Muharram 1306 (7 September 1888). A saw mill was erected at Kuala Pahang to extract timber before it was developed for agriculture. Sayyid Hassan employed Chinese workers for this purpose.³⁴ Of the concession land, about 2,000 acres were planted with rubber and it was known as the *Ketapang Rubber Estate*.³⁵ The *Ketapang Rubber Estate* was said to be the largest estate owned by a Muslim before the Second World War. The workers employed were

²⁷ Aminuddin bin Abd. Rashid, 'Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas: Satu Kajian Biografi', B.A. Academic Exercise, University of Malaya, 1995/96), p. 59.

²⁸ See Memorandum CLM to GA on 4 September 1919, GA 857/1924.

²⁹ A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, 'Sejarah Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Muar', B.A. Academic Exercise, History Department, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya, 1991/92, p. 18.

³⁰ Letter from Muar Land Office for Sayyid Hussain Mohamed al-Mahthar to CLM on 29 December 1919 with renting amount \$5 per acre, CLM 7/1920; see Letter from Muar Land Office for Sayyid Mohamed Uthman al-Yahya to CLM on 28 February 1920, CLM 7/1920; 596/1920; and Letter from Muar Land Office for Sayyid Salleh Abdul Rahman to CLM on 6 December 1924, CLM 1437/1924.

³¹ Sayyid Ali Mohammad al-Attas, *Almarhum Sayyid Hassan Ahmad al-Attas*, pp. 11-32; Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, pp. 90-91. See also Marriot (Governor's Deputy) to Amery, 1 April 1925; enclosure *The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence*, No. 28, April 1925, CO 537/931.

³² Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Pahang*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984, p. 336.

³³ See National Archive, Malaysia (Kuala Trengganu Branch), 1306AH/1888AD, Sultan Pahang 33/1916.

³⁴ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, "Ekonomi Orang Arab", p. 54.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

among local villagers who planted rubber seedlings and supervised the estate's management.³⁶

The Hadhrami Arabs were also actively involved in business enterprises in Selangor, when a Sayyid who was associated with Tunku Kudin engaged in a commercial undertaking since 1883. They engaged in business ventures related to a mangrove concession and had managed paddy and sago planting companies where Tunku Kudin had a half interest in.³⁷ In Singapore, the al-Saqqaf family worked on perseverance estate and rural properties which produced lemon grass for a citronella oil factory.³⁸

Apart from that, the Hadhrami Arabs were also awarded certain areas to monitor economic activities as well as toll collection. In Kedah, two Hadhrami Arabs, Sayyid Osman and Sayyid Mansur al-Jafri were among the recipients of grants of revenues enforced at the end of 1911 (1329). Sayyid Osman shared the grant of revenues of brick export duty received from Kuala Kedah with Wan Ahmad. He also received the grant of revenues of pepper export duty and the fruit market in Yan. Meanwhile, Sayyid Mansur al-Jafri was awarded with a grant of revenues of markets in Sala, Kangkong and Simpang Ampat.³⁹

Mining

After emerging in the government services sector, the Hadhrami Arabs had tried to engage in the mining sector. Mining is another sector that saw the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay Peninsula. Unfortunately, late 19th century witnessed the Chinese dominance in Malaya's tin mining sector. "All the shopkeepers and financiers

³⁶ See Aminudin bin Abd. Rashid, Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas: Satu Kajian Biografi, p. 55.

³⁷ J.M. Gullick, "Tunku Kudin of Kedah", *Journal of Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*, Vol. 60, No. 2, 1987, pp. 83-84; Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Selangor*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981, p. 144.

³⁸ William G. Clarence-Smith, "Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940", p. 311.

³⁹ *The Annual Report of the Adviser to the Kedah Government for the Year 1329 A.H.* (2nd January – 21st December, 1911), by Meadows Frost, Acting Adviser to the Kedah Government, Kuala Lumpur: Printed at the F.M.S. Government Printing Office, 1912, p. 29. In the report the names of Hadhrami Arabs' recipient were spelt Said instead of Sayyid.

involved Chinese. The trades going into Malay states were controlled by the Chinese, and often were Chinese”.⁴⁰

However, in Johor, the mining sector had recorded to have quite a number of Hadhrami Arab entrepreneurs’ involvement. In 1863, Sultan Abu Bakar awarded a land concession for mining tin in Air Putih to Sayyid Abdullah al-Junied, Sayyid Junied Umar al-Junied, Sayyid Abu Bakar Umar al-Junied and Sayyid Salim Mohsin al-Attas.⁴¹ In 1889, Sultan Abu Bakar also awarded a land concession of three square miles for mining to Sayyid Mohammed al-Saqqaf. Even though it was not clear the kind of minerals mined, Sayyid Mohammed through his lawyer Messrs. Donalson and Burkinshaw was given the responsibility to venture in the activity for 99 years.⁴² Sayyid Mohammed al-Saqqaf was also given permission by the Sultan of Pahang to do mining work in Raub, Pahang. Raub was then famous for gold mines.⁴³

With the introduction of the Mining Enactment of 1911, all miners in Johor are bound to the law. The grant of concession lands which the rulers of Johor used to award to whosoever they wished to, especially the Arabs who had close relationships with the royals is no longer in practice. Now, all miners have to apply to the government of Johor directly or either through agents or lawyers to mine tin in the state. Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas was reported to be one of the actively involved Hadhrami Arabs in tin mining in Johor. He owned two areas of tin mining in Mersing and Kota Tinggi. The Mersing tin mine was acquired on 13 June 1915. The 500 acres area was situated and bordered between the Mayang and Jemari rivers.⁴⁴ Meanwhile, the Kota Tinggi tin mine was also acquired through an agent, lawyer M. Ismail on 10 February 1916. The area

⁴⁰ K. G. Tregonning, “The Origin of the Straits Steamship Company in 1890”, *JMBRAS*, Vol. 38, Pt. 2, 1965, p. 287. The number of Chinese emigrants which entered Singapore had increased every year and in the 1898 their number was 190,000. Many of them went to Java, but a large number of them travelled to tin states on the Malay Peninsula. See also K. G. Tregonning, “The Origin of the Straits Steamship Company in 1890”, p. 287, footnote no. 14.

⁴¹ See Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, “Ekonomi Orang Arab Pada Abad Ke-9 Masihi Hingga Tahun 1914”, pp. 42-43.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 45.

⁴³ J. A. Richardson, *The Geology and Minerals Resources of the Neighbourhood of Raub*, Pahang, Kuala Lumpur, 1939, p. 85.

⁴⁴ Application letter of M. Ismail for Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas to CLM on 24 March 1915 and reply letter from CLM to Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas on June 12, 1915. CLMS 361/1915.

consisted of 300 acres near the Redan River.⁴⁵ Based on the reply letters from CLM to Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas, the fees for a mining license in Kota Tinggi was RM50.00 and RM25.00 for Mersing. The premium charge for selected 50 acres of land in both mining areas was RM10.00 per acre. Apart from that, Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas also had a joint venture with Chinese miners Ah Seah Im and Ang Tang. From the records, it shows that a new agreement was rearranged when Ah Seah Im was replaced by J.A. Hamilton.⁴⁶

The mining sector in Johor had also attracted outside investors from Singapore. Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf, an Arab entrepreneur from Singapore was also actively involved in tin mining in Johor. He owned 500 acres of mining area at the Seluyot River in Kota Tinggi which was acquired on 22 October 1916 with a mining license fee of RM50.00 and a premium of RM10.00 per acre for selected 50 acres of land.⁴⁷ Apart from that, Sayyid Mohamed together with another miner from Singapore, Shaykh Amir Badar managed to acquire an area of 500 acres near Bukit Lawang in Polesing on January 1917. The fee for a mining license was also RM50.00 and a premium of RM10.00 per acre for selected 50 acres of land.⁴⁸ Furthermore, Sayyid Ibrahim Ali had also applied for a mining license to excavate minerals in the area of Endau where he had acquired about 500 acres of land around the Lendong River.⁴⁹ These examples were proof that the Hadhrami Arabs were actively involved in the mining sector.

About 12 mining licenses was issued to the Arabs in Johor and Arabs from Singapore during the British administration in the state from 1914-1942. After the Second World War, the Arabs still continued their operations in producing tin mining. New

⁴⁵ Application letter from M. Ismail for Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas to CLM on 17 October 1915 and reply letter from CLM to Sayyid Abdul Rahman Umar al-Attas on 10 Februari 1916. CLM 1920/1915.

⁴⁶ Letter from Allen and Gledhill for Sayyid Abdul Rahman, Ang Seah Im and Ang Tang to CLM on 3 February 1915. CLMS 129/1915.

⁴⁷ Application letter from M. Ismail for Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf to CLM on 30 November 1915. Reply letter from CLM to Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf on 22 October 1916. CLM 2322/1915.

⁴⁸ See Application letter from M. Ismail for Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf to CLM on 8 December 1915. Reply letter from CLM to Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf on 13 January 1917, CLM 240/1915; Application letter from M. Ismail for Shaykh Amir Badar to CLM on 8 December 1915 and reply letter from CLM to Shaykh Amir Badar on 21 January 1917, CLM 2399/1915.

⁴⁹ Application letter from *Pesuruhjaya Kerajaan Endau* for Sayyid Ibrahim Ali to CLM on September 4, 1915. CLM 1567/1915.

mining areas were opened for bauxite. One of the bauxite mining areas was operated by Sayyid Muhamed Mohsain at Bukit Melintang, Pengerang in 1950.⁵⁰

Records showed that quite numbers of Hadhrami Arabs were involved in the mining sector in Pahang. Apart from land concessions for agricultural and plantation purposes, Sayyid Hassan in 1890 was also awarded with lands for gold mining by the Sultan of Pahang. For that purpose, local villagers were employed to mine gold in small scales. To further develop the concession, Sayyid Hassan leased the mining lands to foreign investors such as Mr. Burkinshaw from Messrs. Donalson and Burkinshaw, Mr. Murray from the Merchantile Bank, and Mr. Cuthbertson from Bousted and Co. The lease was based on Sayyid Hassan receiving seventeen thousand shares each valued at \$3.00.⁵¹ In 1921, Sayyid Mohamed Alwi al-Haddad together with his partner Ungku Abdul Rahman Ungku Abdul Majid from Johor applied for a mining license to extract gold in an area of about 2,000 acres in the District of Batu Talam, Raub, Pahang.⁵² Al-Sagoff and Co. was also involved in paper production in Pahang.⁵³

In the Batu Pahat area, many Hadhrami Arabs had settled down in Penggaram Town. Sayyid Abdullah Alwi, Sayyid Hassan Mohamed al-Idrus and Sayyid Idrus Mohamed al-Habsyi were among the applicants for land grants in the Penggaram town. Among the Hadhrami Arabs who ran business activities in Johor Bahru were Sayyid Husain Salim al-Attas, Sayyid Sahil Ahmad, and Sayyid Ahmad Abdul Rahman al-Habsyi. In Bandar Maharani, Muar there were Sayyid Idrus Mohamed al-Habsyi and Sayyid Mohamed Osman. While in Penggaram, there was Sayyid Hassan Abdullah al-Jufri.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Letter from CLR Kota Tinggi to CLM Johor Bahru on 15 March 1950. CLM 212/1950.

⁵¹ Aminuddin bin Abd. Rashid, 'Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas: Satu Kajian Biografi', p. 48.

⁵² Letter from District Officer of Raub, Pahang on 14th March 1921 to the District Officer, Johor Bahru regarding the application from Ungku Abdul Rahman Ungku Abdul Majid of Bukit Taram, Johore, and Sayyid Mohamed bin Alwi al-Haddad for a prospecting license over 2000 acres of Land in the Mukim of Batu Talam, Raub, Pahang. CLM 363/1921.

⁵³ See Letter from Al-Sagoff and Co., to District Office of Kuantan on 31 October 1923, District of Kuantan (DOK). DOK, 509/1923.

⁵⁴ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, "Penglibatan Individu-Individu Arab dalam Kegiatan Ekonomi Negeri Johor", p. 174. See SS 2843/1923; CLM 1785/1917; 265/1918; 142/1922 and 209/1926.

Services Sector

Apart from agriculture and mining, many of the Hadhrami Arabs in Johor were involved in other economic sectors such as services, trading, and mining. In the services sector, many of them had worked as civil servants who received monthly salaries and allowances. Some of them became professional appraisers and auctioneers. Furthermore, the Hadhrami Arabs have also served in Johor's government service sector since before the interference of the British in Johor's state administration in 1914. Many of them continued to serve in the state administration of Johor such as in the offices of Chief Minister, Treasury Department, Police Department, Religious Affairs Department, Education Department and Works Department. Applications for government posts were not only received from the Hadhrami Arabs living in Johor but also from outside Johor such as Kedah, Negeri Sembilan, Singapore and also from Pontianak.⁵⁵ Based on The Singapore and Malayan Directory (SMD), it showed that the number of Hadhrami Arabs employed in the government service sector had increased from 19 persons in 1910 to 35 persons in 1922.⁵⁶

According to Sohaimi Esa, the Hadhrami Arabs who worked in the government service sector were generally from low income background unless they received side income by being involved in trade and cultivation activities. Some of them worked in several private companies as labourers or clerks, or as teachers at private schools owned by Arab people such as Madrasah al-Attas al-Arabiyyah in Johor Bahru. For example, Sayyid Abu Bakar Abdullah al-Attas was employed as a teacher at Madrasah al-Arabiyyah al-Attas Johor and Sayyid Salem Ahmad worked as a clerk at Syed Noah Al-Habshee and Co.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ For example Surat Syed Ismail, Johor Bahru kepada GA pada 13 Januari 1920, GA 30/1920; Surat Syed Abdul Azizi Abdul Hamid, Johor Bahru to GA pada 22 Januari 1924, GA 123/1924; and Surat Pesuruhjaya Kerajaan Muar untuk Syed Abdul Kadir Muhamed kepada SS pada 29 Disember 1917, SS 1401/1917. Applications received from outside Johore such as GA 793/15 surat Syed Abdullah Syed Uthman Abdul Kadir, Kedah kepada GA pada 24 Muharram 1334; 812/1922, surat Syed Abdullah, Negeri Sembilan kepada GA pada 29 November 1922 and SS 551/1922, Surat Pesuruhjaya Polis untuk Syed Hassan Muhamed al-Kadri, Pontianak kepada SS pada 25 Februari 1922.

⁵⁶ *The Singapore and Malayan Directory*, 1910, pp. 423-439; *The Singapore and Malayan Directory*, 1922, pp. 618-638.

⁵⁷ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, 'Penglibatan Individu-Individu Arab dalam Kegiatan Ekonomi Negeri Johor', p. 155 (footnote).

The Hadhrami Arabs were also involved in the service sector by being appraisers. Sayyid Noah Mohamed al-Habsyi was an active appraiser and was involved in the business since 1905. His business was centred in Johor Bahru. Having good business contacts with prominent and successful traders in Johor helped him to hold a first class appraiser status from which he got recommendation and support.⁵⁸ He managed to establish his own company named Syed Noah Al-Habshee and Co.⁵⁹ Sayyid Noah also owned licenses in architecture, surveying, realty and is an agent of the commissioner. Besides that, he also opened a petrol pump station in Pontian Kecil, Kukup in 1928.⁶⁰ Other appraisers among the Hadhrami Arabs during this period of time were Sayyid Hussain Ali in Segamat, Sayyid Abdullah Hassan al-Attas in Johor Bahru, and Sayyid Mohamed Umar al-Attas in Mersing.⁶¹

The Hadhrami Arabs in Johor managed to run their businesses well and many of them became successful traders and merchants. Most of the big companies owned by the Hadhrami Arabs were situated in Johor Bahru, a town of commerce. Companies like Al-Attas and Co, Johore Star and Co., Al-Kaff and Co. and Sahil and Co. were owned by the Hadhrami Arab families in Johor. Al-Attas and Co. was owned by Sayyid Hassan al-Attas who was a successful Arab trader in Johor who ventured into real estate, agriculture, services and commerce. His business was centred in the Johor Bahru town on Ibrahim Road, Segget Road, Dhobi Road, Trus Road and Tan Heok Nee Road. In these areas, shop-houses, offices and houses were built for rental.⁶² Since most of his properties were situated at strategic locations, many of his lands were later on sold to the government of Johor for public use such as for road construction between Tan Yeok

⁵⁸ Letter from traders/merchants to SS on 30 July 1917, SUK 728/1917; Applications for first class appraiser by Sayyid Noah Al-Habshee, SUK 1216, SUK 325/1917 and SUK 729/1917.

⁵⁹ *The Singapore and Malayan Directory*, 1925, p. 640.

⁶⁰ Letter from Sayyid Noah al-Habsyi to SS on 7 February 1928, SS 3783/1930, attached with company logo, SS 427/1928.

⁶¹ Letter from Sayyid Hussain Ali to SS on 26 June 1926, SS 1948/1926; Letter from Sayyid Abdullah Hassan to SS on 1 December 1919, SS 2159/1919 and Letter from Commissioner Government of Endau to SS on 3 January 1923, SS 59/1923.

⁶² Letter from Sayyid Hassan Ahmad al-Attas to CLM on 10 November 1926, CLM 753/1926.

Nee Road and Dhobi Road, and on Bentara Road for building barracks that cost about \$2600.00.⁶³

The Johore Star and Co. located on Jalan Ibrahim, Johor Bahru was owned by Sayyid Hussain Ali. He was an agent of the commerce commissioner and also ran wholesale hardware, clothing and many more businesses.⁶⁴ Sahil and Co. was owned by Sayyid Sahil Ahmad. The company supplied food and clothing for prisons and hospitals in Johor Bahru.⁶⁵ Al-Kaff and Co. was owned by the Al-Kaff family and was registered under a commerce and broker license.⁶⁶ The Al-Sagoff and Co. was owned by Sayyid Mohamed al-Saqqaf from Singapore. The company was not only involved in agriculture ventures in Kukup, Johor but also owned lots of rental houses in Muar.⁶⁷

There are several Hadhrami Arab businessmen who were noted for their business achievement in the services sector in Batu Pahat. They were Sayyid Mustafa bin Agil, Sayyid Ahmad Alwi and Sayyid Hamid Hassan al-Jufri. Sayyid Mustafa bin Agil bin Shahab owned a company registered under his name, Syed Mustapha bin Agil bin Shahab and was involved in the architecture and construction industry since 1929. He was assisted by Sayyid Mohamed, the Assistant Director; Sayyid Safi'i and V.M. Husain as clerks, and Sayyid Ali as the architect. He was also an experienced architect and contractor (building) in Pontian, Johor; Malacca, and Singapore.⁶⁸ He was appointed by the government as a Grade II Appraiser, and later on in January 1937 promoted to Grade I Appraiser.⁶⁹ Sayyid Ahmad Alwi is another Hadhrami Arab entrepreneur in Batu Pahat who was also involved in business as an architect, realty agent and commissioner agent. He was assisted by Sayyid Mustafa Akil as supervisor

⁶³ Letters regarding the process of land acquisition of the Bentara Road area by the Government of Johor from Sayyid Hassan, GA 608/1916, CLM 2630/1916, SS 1707/1908 and SS 1221/1919. See Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, *Penglibatan Individu-Individu Arab dalam Ekonomi Negeri Johor (1862-1942)*, p. 183.

⁶⁴ See these files contain information on his business details, GA 396/1922, GA 149/1923, GA 664/1923 and GA 773/1923.

⁶⁵ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, *Penglibatan Individu-Individu Arab dalam Kegiatan Ekonomi Johor (1862-1942)*, pp. 180-181.

⁶⁶ Letter from Al-Kaff and Co., to G.A. in year 1918, GA 345/1918.

⁶⁷ See Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, *Penglibatan Individu-Individu Arab dalam Kegiatan Ekonomi Johor (1862-1942)*, pp. 183.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 258-259; *The Singapore and Malayan Directory (SMD)*, 1932, p. 661; *SMD*, 1933, p. 637; *SMD*, 1934, p. 590 and *SMD*, 1941, p. 61.

⁶⁹ Letter from Sayyid Mustapha Agil to AABP on 4 December 1939 and 25 February 1940, GA 1123/1939; Letter from Sayyid Mustapha to AA Kukup on 11 December 1938, AAK (P) 534/1938; Letter from Sayyid Mustapha Agil to SS on 4 January 1937 and 6 January 1937, SS 4917/1936; and A letter from Sayyid Mustapha Agil for extending Appraiser's and Auctioneer's license, AABP 207/1932.

and building surveyor and Hassan Ahmad as draftsman and clerk.⁷⁰ His brother Sayyid Muhamed had a joint venture with a bank director of Batu Pahat, a Chinese merchant Kua Kim Pah and Kepol Shaaban to open an area of 10 acres to build 35 shop lots that included a cafeteria and lounge at Jalan Sultanah in Penggaram Town.⁷¹

In 1940, Sayyid Hamid Hassan was involved in transportation services where he operated in the areas of Batu Pahat and Muar. He invested in the transportation services by running eight buses everyday between Batu Pahat and Muar.⁷² In Segamat, Sayyid Umar Othman al-Saqqaf was appointed as an appraiser and Grade II auctioneer in 1927.⁷³

In the state of Pahang, the early generations of Hadhrami Arab migrants were also noted for their economic involvement in the early 19th century. Abdullah b. Abdul Kadir Munshi recorded about the existence of an Arab community in Pahang during his visit to the East Coast Malay States in 1837-38 (1253 H.) According to him, the people who even though were few in number, were highly respected, rich and mostly earned their living as traders.⁷⁴ Based on his account, it is clear that the Hadhrami Arabs were actively involved in business activities in Malaya decades before the introduction of a capitalist economy by the British. Sayyid Hassan, the father of Sayyid Ahmad Al-Attas was among the traders who arrived in Pahang in the late 19th century.⁷⁵ In 1827, as recorded by Gray, an Englishman who traded opium in Pahang, between January to February there were two Arab merchants from Singapore named Sayyid (Sahid) Alwee and Sayyid (Sahid) Abdullah who were doing business in Pahang.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ *The Singapore and Malayan Directory*, 1930, pp. 341 and *The Singapore and Malayan Directory*, 1931, p. 299.

⁷¹ List of lands and agricultural areas owned by Sayyid Ahmad and his children, CLM 937/1928.

⁷² Letter from Sayyid Hamid Hassan al-Jufri to GA on 22 January 1940, GA 61/1940. Letter from Sayyid Hamid Hassan al-Jufri to SS on 21 April 1941, SS 351/1940. See also Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, 'Pelibatan Individu-Individu Arab dalam Ekonomi Negeri Johor (1862-1942)', p. 261.

⁷³ Letter from Sayyid Umar Othman al-Saqqaf to SS on 20 January 1927, SS 300/1927; Letter from Government Commissioner of Batu Pahat for Sayyid Umar Othman al-Sagoff to SS on 18 October 1927, SS 2682/1927.

⁷⁴ Kassim Ahmad, *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah Ke Kelantan dan Ke Judah*, annotated with an introduction, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn., Bhd., 1981, pp. 11-12.

⁷⁵ Sayyid Ali Mohammad al-Attas, *Almarhum Sayyid Hassan Ahmad al-Attas. Seorang Mujahid dan Pembangun Ummah*, Johor Bahru: Wakaf Almarhum Syed Hassan bin Ahmad Alattas, 1984, pp. 11-32; Mahayuddin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1980, pp. 90-91.

⁷⁶ W. Linehan, "History of Pahang", *JMBRAS*, Vol. XIV, Pt. II, 1936, p. 58.

In Kelantan, there are not much record found and written about the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the state's economic sector except through several notes by foreign visitors such as F. F. Laidlaw who was impressed with trade activities in Kelantan markets. He observed that the traders consisted of multiple races such as Malays, Chinese, Indians and also Arabs.⁷⁷

Sayyid Hassan al-Attas also ventured into new forms of business by going into the entertainment sector when he established the first cinema in Johor in 1926. The cinema was named *Public Cinema* and was situated at the junction of Dhobi Road and Terus Road. The Shaw Brothers was given the responsibility to supervise and maintain the cinema from 1931 until 1938. The name of the cinema was then changed to "Empayar Theater". The cinema was a joint venture investment between the Shaw Brothers, Sayyid Hassan and Charity Estate.⁷⁸ Sayyid Hassan had also expanded the Al-Attas business by venturing into real property overseas when he bought a three storey building in Cairo City, Egypt in 1926. The building was bought from a local Arab Egyptian for 10,000.00 pounds. The building was then rented to Malay students from Malaya at around RM15.00 to RM60.00 per month.⁷⁹

In the absence of a dominant Malay trading class, the Arabs emerged as the most prominent entrepreneurs, apart from the Indian Muslims representing Muslims in business activities in Singapore. The active involvement of Arabs in business activities was most notable when Stamford Raffles established Singapore in 1819. After Singapore was made a free port, Raffles ordered that an area suitable for up to two thousand Arabs be set aside and they were encouraged to settle in the new city-port.⁸⁰ Raffles hoped that Singapore would attract a large community of Arabs who had a long history of involvement in trade to participate in the development of the island. The

⁷⁷ F. F. Laidlaw, "Travels in Kelantan, Trengganu and Upper Perak, A Personal Narrative", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 26, Pt. 4, 1953, p. 156.

⁷⁸ Syed Hussein al-Attas, 'Suara Al-Attas,' p. 50.

⁷⁹ See Syed Hussein Alwi al-Attas, "Suara al-Attas", p. 22 and GA506/1929, Letters between G.A. and High Commissioner Singapore on 27 August until 5 September 1929. See Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, 'Penglabatan Individu-Individu Arab dalam Ekonomi Negeri Johor (1862-1942)', p. 261.

⁸⁰ Charles Burton Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, Singapore: Frazer and Neave Ltd., 1902, p. 85.

incentives offered and their entrepreneurial skills enabled the Arabs to prosper like the Chinese and European traders.⁸¹

By late 19th century, the Arabs had firmly established their business interests in Singapore and it was described by the Dutch scholar L.W.C. Van Den Berg as “the most flourishing, though not the largest Arab colony in all the Indian Archipelago” and their numbers were said to be increasing year by year, as it was “the point by which all Arabs pass who go to seek their fortunes in the Far East”.⁸²

Although the period between the late 1920s and early 1930s were the times of a worldwide economic recession, the period was considered as the golden days to the Arabs in Singapore as the wealthiest community in the island owing to their vast holdings in house, land, and estate properties and the steep rise in land values in the interwar years.⁸³ Together with the Jews, Arabs in 1931 were described as “the largest owners of house properties” in the island.⁸⁴

The first Arabs to arrive in Singapore after it was put under the British administration were Sayyid Mohamad Harun al-Junied and his nephew Sayyid Umar al-Junied. Both of them settled in Kampung Gelam, where Sayyid Mohamad Harun al-Junied died as a very rich man in 1824. Sayyid Umar lived on until 1852 and served as leader of the Arab community in Singapore.⁸⁵ Generally, most of the Arabs who settled in Singapore in early 19th century were petty shopkeepers, small traders and owners of real estate. Another Arab who also came to Singapore in its early days and made his fortune in trading ventures was Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf.⁸⁶ Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf and his son, Sayyid Ahmad traded spices in Java and the neighbouring islands. In 1848,

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 85.

⁸² L. W. C. Van den Berg, *Le Hadhramout et les Colonies Arabes dans l'Archipel Indien*, Batavia: Government Printers, 1888, p. 122; cited from William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967 p. 40.

⁸³ See Ulrike Freitag, “Arab Merchants in Singapore. Attempt of a Collective Biography”, in Huub de Junge and Nico Kaptain (eds), *Transcending Borders. Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, p. 113.

⁸⁴ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, “Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940”, p. 303. See also, C. M. Turnbull, *A History of Singapore, 1919-1988*, Second Edition, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1989, pp. 98-99.

⁸⁵ C. M. Turnbull, *A History of Singapore*, p. 14. See also, Charles Burton Buckley, *An Anecdotal History*, p. 563.

⁸⁶ Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 9.

Sayyid Abdul Rahman established a company known as Al-Sagoff and Co. Sayyid Ahmad, the son of Sayyid Abdul Rahman married Raja Siti, daughter of Hadjee Fatimah, the Sultana of Gowa in the Celebes. Sayyid Ahmad expanded the family business by venturing into many other sectors in Malaya such as realty, plantation and shipping.⁸⁷

Singapore became a focal point of business interests to the Arabs in the late 19th century when about a number of 80 Arab commercial firms were established by 1885. This number is equal to 29 percent of all Arab firms in the Malay World with capital over 10,000 guilders. Arabs became influential real estate owners in Singapore. The expected value of real estate owned by the Arabs on the island was 4 million guilders or about a quarter of the estimated total value of real estate owned by the Arabs in the Malay Peninsula and the Dutch East Indies.⁸⁸

The Arabs owned around 75 percent of private land or about 50 percent of Singapore's total land area by the 19th century. In spite of their small number, the Arabs together with Jews owned more real estates in the 1930s. The Arabs owned almost the proportions of urban property that is valued at \$2.5 million in which almost 80 percent of the large estates including Raffles Hotel (owned by the AlSagoff) and the Europe Hotel (owned by the AlKaffs).⁸⁹

Hajj Business

Since a majority of Hadhrami Arabs were familiar with Arabia and they were also respected for their profound knowledge about Islam, many of them were involved in *hajj* activities and were appointed as pilgrim brokers or *syaikh haji*.⁹⁰ Being a pilgrim broker is not an easy task. A *syaikh haji* must be responsible to ensure that every

⁸⁷ Hadjee Fatimah was a rich Malay lady with business connections in the Malay States and Celebes. She was reported to own many vessels. When she died her fortune was inherited by her son-in-law Sayyid Ahmad. See Charles Burton Buckley, *An Anecdotal History*, p. 564.

⁸⁸ Stephanie Po-yin Chung, 'Land Dedicated to Allah – Arab Community and Waqf land in Singapore, 1860s –2010, http://www.hkihss.hku.hk/ecologies2014/paper/Chung_Waqf%20Land%20in%20Singapore%20draft.pdf. See also Wright, Arnold & H.W. Cartwright (eds.), *A Twentieth Century Impression of British Malaya*, London: Lloyd's Great Britain Publishing Co., Ltd., 1908, pp. 705-7, 710-2; Charles B. Buckley, *An Anecdotal History of Old Times in Singapore*, Singapore: Frazer and Neave Ltd., 1902, p. 85.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

⁹⁰ They were also known as *broker haji* amongst Malays.

pilgrim receives his ship ticket and to inform the pilgrim the exact date of the ships' arrival and departure as the ships will depart to Hijaz from Penang and Singapore. The potential *hajj* pilgrim is also reminded to take cholera and smallpox injections as well as provide a medical statement that proves that he has taken the injections. Sayyid Salleh al-Sagoff was one of the pilgrim brokers appointed by the State of Kedah to supervise *hajj* activities of pilgrims from Kedah.⁹¹

In 19th century Malaya, *hajj* activities were exclusively managed by the Arab community. It was run by private individuals who had connections and contacts with shaykh *haji* or *mutawwif* in Makkah. The al-Saqqaf or al-Sagoff family was among the Hadhrami Arabs who were directly involved in this industry. Sayyid Ahmad, the son of Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf began the business, transporting pilgrims to Hijaz using sailing vessels or sailing ships around the 1850s. He then moved to steamships and had carried 3,476 pilgrims in 1874 to Jeddah using his four steamships. The al-Saqqaf family owned a shipping company named the Singapore Steamship Company.⁹² They owned a firm in Singapore that conducted business in real estates and had also acted as a pilgrim agency. Most pilgrim brokers or *syaikh haji* were Arabs.⁹³ There were many *syaikh haji* representatives or *syaikh* agents in the Malay states and Singapore. In order to get potential *hajj* pilgrims, the *hajj* brokers and agents would advertise about their services to would-be pilgrims in local newspapers.⁹⁴

Mohd Zulfadli had listed the names of agents that acted as *syaikh haji* in the Malay states and Singapore between 1940 until 1970. From 109 pilgrim agents or

⁹¹ "Sayyid Salleh al-Sagoff asks to relinquish his appointment as Kedah Pilgrim agent", Clerk of Council, Alor Star, 193, ANM, 1957/0412860. From this report, Sayyid Salleh al-Sagoff asks to resign from the post of pilgrim broker for the State of Kedah. His position was then replaced by Sayyid Ahmad al-Masyhor. For detail information on Shaykh haji see thesis written by Mohd Zulfadli Maafor, 'Sheikh Haji Tanah Melayu: Aktiviti dan Operasi 1900-1950', M.A. Dissertation, Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan, Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2011.

⁹² Edwin Lee, *The British as Rulers Governing Multiracial Singapore 1867-1914*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1991, p. 165.

⁹³ Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia, A.H. 1240 (A.D.1824) to A.H. 1382 (A.D.1962)*, Compiled and Published by Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, Singapore, 1963, p. 29

⁹⁴ Mohd Zulfadli Maafor, 'Sheikh Haji Tanah Melayu: Aktiviti dan Operasi 1900-1950', M.A. Dissertation, Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan, Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 2011, p. 140. The shaykh *hajj* representatives would also persuade the potential pilgrims to use their service. '...menggunakan retorik merayu bakal haji supaya menggunakan perkhidmatan mereka'. See also M. Dien Majid, "Aktivitas Travel Haji Firma Al-Segaff & Co. 1855-1899 Berkedudukan di Semenanjung Melayu dalam Arsip Belanda", in *Malaysian History from Dutch Sources*, Kuala Lumpur: National Archive of Malaysia, 2004, p. 199.

syaikh *haji* representatives listed in the Malay states and Singapore, only three of them were Arabs of Sayyid descent. Two of them were in Penang, namely Sheikh Sayyid b. Ahmad Shaikh Zayed (Burmah Road) and Sayyid Ali b. Sayyid Abdullah al-Mufathal (Lumut Lane). The other one was Sayyid Ali b. Mohammed al-Junied from Gurun, Kedah.⁹⁵

Hajj brokers or syaikh *haji* used printed media such as newspapers as a way to promote their services to the public, particularly the Malay Muslims in Malaya. However, newspapers were not the only means for the syaikh *haji* to get potential pilgrims from Malaya. The *hajj* brokers would also have personal meetings with potential pilgrims as well as ‘pesanan dari orang perseorangan’.⁹⁶ Personal meetings between the representative of syaikh *haji* and potential *hajj* pilgrims was among the most effective ways to attract Muslims in Malaya to join respective *hajj* brokers to perform *hajj* in Makkah. Through personal meetings with the representative of a syaikh *hajj*, the potential pilgrims were explained details about *hajj* activities. The advertisements on *hajj* activities portrayed the best facilities; transportation as well as accommodation provided for potential *hajj* pilgrims during their stay in Hijaz.⁹⁷

Mohd Zulfadli had listed the names of newspapers published from 1900 till 1950 that advertised information on *hajj* activities conducted by respective syaikh *haji* or *hajj* brokers in Malaya. These newspapers are published and operated in Penang and Singapore. Among the newspapers operated in Singapore were *Berita Malai*, 1943; *Dunia Akhirat*, 1936-1937; *Dunia Sekarang*, 1934-1944; *Fajar Asia*, 1934-1944; and *Kehidupan Dunia Akhirat*, 1935-1936. Meanwhile, the newspapers operating in Penang that advertised information of *hajj* activities by *hajj* syaikh were *Al-Ikhwan*, 1926-1931; *Bahtra*, 1932-1933; *Bintang Timur*, 1900; *Bumiputera*, 1933-1934; *Cahaya Pulau*

⁹⁵Mohd Zulfadli Maafor, *Sheikh Haji Tanah Melayu: Aktiviti dan Operasi 1900-1950*, p. 85.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁹⁷*Ibid.*, pp. 138-39.

Pinang, 1904-1906; *Cahaya Timur*, 1942; *Dewasa*, 1931; *Dunia Baharu*, 1948; *Dunia Melayu*, 1928-1929; and *Idaran Zaman*, 1925-1930.⁹⁸

The Al-Saqqaf firm based in Singapore acted as a pilgrim agent who controlled *hajj* activities from Malaya through their *syaikh* pilgrim agents and brokers. Apart from advertising their services in newspapers, *hajj* *syaikh* or brokers would also offer money lending facility to potential pilgrims for pilgrimage.⁹⁹ This loan was given to would-be pilgrims who did not have sufficient money to cover their expenses in Makkah but were ambitious to perform *hajj* in Makkah. After completing their pilgrimage, the borrowers will be given the opportunity to pay their debts in cash or they can pay back by working as farm labourers. The majority of them chose to pay the debt by working as farm labourers in the Cucob Concession owned by the Al-Saqqaf company.¹⁰⁰

Malaya, in particular Singapore was the main transit for pilgrims before departing to Hijaz. However, Singapore did not only dealt with pilgrims from Malaya, but also pilgrims from Indonesia. "In the mid 19th century, some two thousand Indonesians made the journey; by the end of the century, the number had risen to over 7000, and a high percentage took passage from, and returned to, Singapore, not only because of the facilities available there, but also to avoid Dutch restrictions on travel to Mecca".¹⁰¹ Here it shows that Singapore became the chosen port for pilgrims outside Malaya, especially those from the East Indies due to the strict rules and regulations imposed on them by the Dutch authorities in their country. This is because the Dutch were afraid that these pilgrims would be influenced by pan-Islamic ideas that had widely spread in Hijaz amongst *hajj* pilgrims or the *hajjis*. They believed that the returned *hajjis* would cause social and political disturbances in Indonesia.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

⁹⁹ M. Dien Majid, "Aktivitas Travel Haji Firma Al-Segaff & Co. 1855-1899 Berkedudukan di Semenanjung Melayu dalam Arsip Belanda", in *Malaysian History from Dutch Sources*, Kuala Lumpur: National Archive of Malaysia, 2004, p. 199.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 199; State Secretary, 1451/1921, Surat Perjanjian Tanah Konsesi Kukup - AlSagoff Concession Kukup, J/PELB.

¹⁰¹ Moshe Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1979, p. 223.

¹⁰² For further detail on the issue of Indonesian pilgrims and the Dutch policy imposed on them please refer to Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia", *The Journal of Asian Studies (JAS)*, Vol. 24, No. 2, February, 1967, pp. 267-270. See also William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 38-39.

Since the cost of travelling to Hijaz is expensive, not many people were able to go there. Generally, Malays go to Makkah in their old age, after they have saved enough money to cover the cost of travelling and expenses in Makkah. By that time, their children had already grown up and become independent. It is a dream of every Muslim to perform *hajj* and if possible they would prefer to die in the Holy City of Makkah. Upon returning from Makkah, Malay pilgrims are addressed as *Tuan Haji* for men and *Hajjah* for women.¹⁰³

The al-Saqqaf family was among the significant Arab families in Singapore who were involved in this profitable business.¹⁰⁴ They did not only engage in the *hajj* industry as pilgrim brokers, but also had another business related to it whereby they employed potential pilgrims to work in their estates for a certain period of time. The Constantinople Estate owned by the al-Saqqaf family employed many Javanese workers. Being contract labourers, they were promised to be able to perform *hajj* with all expenses provided by the Estate.¹⁰⁵ A scheme known as contract-tickets introduced by the Constantinople Estate had attracted many Javanese workers to work there. Around 200 potential pilgrims signed contracts to work on the estate in 1889.¹⁰⁶ Some 400 labourers were employed by the estate in the 1880s and another 200 in the 1900s.¹⁰⁷

In order to facilitate the travel of pilgrims, Sayyid Ahmad b. Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf acquired steamers to serve his flourishing pilgrimage business. His Singapore Steamship Company ferried pilgrims to Jeddah as early as 1874.¹⁰⁸ After the death of Sayyid Ahmad in 1875, his business was continued by his son Sayyid Mohammad, including the business of pilgrim brokering and pilgrims' transportation to Makkah. Sayyid Mohammad was known as "a shipowner and considerable proprietor in Singapore

¹⁰³ Moshe Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya*, p. 222.

¹⁰⁴ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 38-39.

¹⁰⁵ Arnold Wright, *A Twentieth Century Impression of British Malaya*, London: Lloyd's Great Britain Publishing Co., Ltd., 1908, p. 707.

¹⁰⁶ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, "Ekonomi Orang Arab Pada Abad Ke-9 Masihi Hingga Tahun 1914", *Jebat*, No., 26, 1999, p. 56.

¹⁰⁷ See William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940", pp. 311-312.

¹⁰⁸ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, "Ekonomi Orang Arab Pada Abad Ke-9 Masihi Hingga Tahun 1914", p. 56. See also Edwin Lee, *The British As Rulers governing Multiracial Singapore 1867-1914*, p. 165.

and Johor”.¹⁰⁹ In order to assist him in dealing with the family business, Sayyid Mohammad sent his nephew Sayyid Omar to Jeddah to manage the business there.¹¹⁰ Sayyid Massim bin Salleh al-Jufri was another Arab entrepreneur who built his fortune in shipping, and at one time owned several large trading vessels, and later towards the end of his life acquired some steamers that were used for shipping pilgrims to Makkah.¹¹¹ Sayyid Ibrahim Omar al-Saqqaf, the grandson of Sayyid Mohamad al-Saqqaf was also one of the Arab entrepreneurs who were responsible for providing services and assistance for pilgrims from Singapore to Makkah.¹¹²

In the early stages, the Al-Saqqaf firm sent pilgrims to Makkah using their own sailing ships.¹¹³ However, with the advent of steamships, the firm had no choice but to cooperate with British shipping companies to bring pilgrims to Hijaz. The increased number of pilgrims from Malaya caused the Al-Saqqaf firm to charter steamships from other shipping companies.¹¹⁴ The Blue Funnel Shipping Company was among the shipping companies that was involved in transporting pilgrims from Malaya in the period of 1900 to 1950. The Blue Funnel Shipping Company was responsible for transporting pilgrims from Malaya to Hijaz since 1936.¹¹⁵

The widespread of intellectual trends that took place in Hijaz such as ideas of pan-Islamism, modernist trends, and Wahabi teachings had indirectly influenced pilgrims from Malaya.¹¹⁶ The British were aware that such intellectual exposure could affect their position in Malaya and it was considered as a big threat to the British

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 165. See also CO 273/126. 24 March 1884, Weld to Derby enclosing R.E. Maxwell, acting Inspector of Police, Straits Settlements, to the Colonial Secretary, 12 March 1884.

¹¹⁰ Edwin Lee, *The British As Rulers governing Multiracial Singapore 1867-1914*, p. 166. See also CO 271/216 344, 30 July 1896. Mitchell to Chamberlain.

¹¹¹ Charles Burton Buckley, *An Anecdotal History*, p. 365.

¹¹² *Genuine Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 6 & 7, June/July 1936.

¹¹³ S.P. 1935, 63/3, Sejarah Ringkas Kapal Haji Seri Mekah dan Seri Juddah oleh Haji Fadhil Basheer bin Zakaria Basheer J.P.

¹¹⁴ SUK Kedah, 1957, 0404748 1425/1347, Dates of the Pilgrims Sailing, S.P. S.P. 1935, 63/3, Sejarah Ringkas Kapal Haji Seri Mekah dan Seri Juddah oleh Haji Fadhil Basheer bin Zakaria Basheer J.P. See also Aiza binti Maslan@Baharudin, 'Dari Tabung Buluh ke Tabung Haji: Sejarah Pengerjaan Haji Orang Melayu, 1850-1984', PhD. Thesis, University of Malaya, 2008, pp. 458-9.

¹¹⁵ Mohd Saleh Awang (MISBAHA), *Haji di Semenanjung Malaysia dan Sejarah Perkembangan Sejak tahun 1300-1405 H (1886-1985 M)*, Kuala Terengganu: Yayasan Islam Terengganu Sdn. Bhd., 1986, p. 420.

¹¹⁶ Mary Byrne McDonnell, "Patterns of Muslim Pilgrimage from Malaysia, 1885-1985", in Dale F. Eickelman and James Piscatori (eds.), *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, migration, and the religious imagination*, New York: Social Science Research Council, 1990, pp. 116-7.

administration in the country. It was quite common among the *hajj* pilgrims from Malaya to stay in Makkah for a fairly long period of time, usually from six months to several years, but there were some who spent their old days in Makkah after retirement. However, the length of the *hajj* trip to Makkah had shortened since the Second World War ended. After the war ended, pilgrimage trips to Makkah were then controlled and became a four-week travel package. Therefore, pilgrims from Malaya had ample time to perform *hajj* rather than busying themselves in other social networks.¹¹⁷

Shipping

Apart from being involved in business ventures and trades, another profitable business in which the Arabs were actively involved from the beginning of the 20th century until the Second World War was inter-island shipping trade in the waters of the Malay World.¹¹⁸ In the Malay World, shipping business was also related to the pilgrimage industry which was exclusively in the hands of the Arabs. Arab shippers benefited and prospered in this business as a result of a growing flow of Muslim pilgrims to Hijaz from Singapore and Penang since the late 19th century.¹¹⁹

The Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in shipping industry had started much earlier around mid 18th century when they conducted business shipping and trading commodities in the Malayan waters between Java and the Straits of Malacca particularly Palembang and Malacca until mid of 20th century. At this period of time shipping venture was a profitable business trading commodities across the oceans. The Hadhrami Arabs owned large vessels of many kinds that are mostly built in locally. However, the Hadhrami Arabs sail shipping cannot survive and gradually started to decline when steamships were introduced in the 1880s. Clarence-Smith further says that;

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ They trade *batik* and other cloth products and also a wide range of goods such as spices, tobacco, coconuts and timber.

¹¹⁹ William R. Roff, "The Malayo-Muslim World of Singapore at the Close of the Nineteenth Century", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. XXIV, No. 1, November 1964, p. 80.

“A specifically Hadhrami involvement on this route (sailing between Java and the Straits of Malacca) dated back at least to the mid-1750s. The average size of all ships owned by Arabs was just over 50 tons, but some of their vessels were much larger. Arab captains resident in Java were mostly to be found in the central and eastern ports of the north coast, notably Semarang, Pekalongan, Gresik and Surabaya. Crew members were mainly Javanese and were probably free rather than slave”.¹²⁰

The Arabs were well suited to the industry since they had well-established business connections in Singapore and Penang as well as contacts in Hijaz which facilitated the conduct of *hajj*.¹²¹ The al-Saqqaf family was particularly significant among the Arabs in Singapore who were involved in this profitable business.¹²² In order to facilitate the travel of pilgrims, Sayyid Ahmad b. Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf procured steamers for this purpose. His steamship company started operating the business of ferrying potential pilgrims to Jeddah since 1871. By 1874, four steamers were used to transport 3,476 pilgrims to perform *hajj* in Makkah. Of this number, about 2,250 pilgrims were from the Dutch East Indies colony.¹²³ However, in 1880, the company faced a severe misfortune when a ship carrying pilgrims was hit by a storm off the coast of southern Arabia.¹²⁴

Another prominent Arab entrepreneur in Singapore who also built his fortune in shipping was Sayyid Muhsin (Masim) bin Salih al-Jufri. He was reported to own several large trading vessels and some steamships later on towards the end of his life.¹²⁵ With the introduction of steamships in the late 19th century after the opening of the Suez Canal, Sayyid Muhsin was rumored as not being able to cope with the change in the

¹²⁰ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, “The Rise and Fall of Shipping in the Indian Ocean, c.1750 – c.1940”, in *Ships and the Development of Maritime Technology in the Indian Ocean*, (eds.) David Parkin and Ruth Barnes, London: Routledge Curzon, 2002, p. 230.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

¹²² William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 38-39.

¹²³ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, “Ekonomi Orang Arab...”, p. 56.

¹²⁴ See William G. Clarence-Smith, ‘Hadhrami Entrepreneurs,’ p. 300.

¹²⁵ Charles Burton Buckley, *An Anecdotal History*, p. 365.

industry. The problem was added with stiff competition from European shipping companies, causing his business to fail.¹²⁶

By 1919 the Arabs appeared to have ceased operating steamships due to stiff competition from British and Dutch steamship companies.¹²⁷ The inability of the Hadhrami Arabs' shipping companies to compete with the European companies had caused many of their businesses to close down. The rivalry among European shipping companies such as the British, Dutch and Germans during the inter-war years of the 20th century affected trade and economy of countries in South East Asia.¹²⁸ Although their ventures in the shipping business started to decline by the end of second decade of the early 20th century, some of the Hadhrami Arabs still managed to maintain their monopoly in the pilgrimage industry. For example, it was reported that in 1922, Sayyid Ibrahim bin Omar al-Saqqaf still ran his father's pilgrim office at Jeddah.¹²⁹ Sayyid Ibrahim Omar al-Saqqaf, the grandson of Sayyid Mohamad al-Saqqaf was also one of the Arabs who was responsible for providing services and assistance needed for pilgrims from Singapore in Makkah.¹³⁰

Publishing Industry

The publishing industry in Malaya has started since the early 19th century, pioneered by a group of Christian missionaries from Europe. The locals' involvement in the industry began in the late 19th century in Singapore when a group of Jawi Peranakan published a weekly newspaper known as *Jawi Peranakan* in 1876. Since then, about 157 journals have been published in Malaya comprising of various types of genres and themes. Singapore became the centre of publication and Malay literature. During the Second

¹²⁶ Ulrike Freitag, "The Arab merchants in Singapore", p. 119.

¹²⁷ William Gervase Clarence-Smith, "Hadhrami Entrepreneurs", p. 300.

¹²⁸ Francis E. Hyde, "British Shipping Companies and East and South East Asia, 1860-1939", in *The Economic Development of South East Asia: Studies in Economic History and Political Economy*, (ed.) Cowan, C.D., London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964, p. 28.

¹²⁹ CO 273/518. Straits Settlements 1922, Vol. 4, Despatches Nov. – Dec., p.255.

¹³⁰ *Genuine Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 6 & 7, June/July 1936.

World War, almost all publishing activities were halted and some were ceased. After the war, it was reported that around 321 types of journals were published. The publication centered in several main cities such as Singapore, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Kota Bharu, Kelantan and Johor Bahru. It is noticed that most of the journals did not last long. Nevertheless, this is a good sign, showing that the reading culture had spread in the society.¹³¹

The involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the publishing and printing industry in Malaya started in early 20th century. The involvement of the Hadhrami Arab community in the publishing industry in Malaya was closely related to political developments in the Arab World. The involvement of the Hadhrami Arab community in the publishing industry in Malaya intensified with the publication of the *al-Imam* magazine in Singapore in 1906. *Al-Imam* had similarities with the *al-Manar* magazine in Egypt. Most of the articles and its contents were taken from *al-Manar*, the reformist magazine in Egypt.¹³²

The publishing industry was a business venture that Hadhrami Arabs were also actively involved in in Malaya. The history of printing in Malaya started in Penang when A. B. Bone introduced *The Government Gazette*,¹³³ a weekly newspaper on 1st March 1806. The newspaper then changed its name to *Prince of Wales Island Government Gazette* on 7th June 1806. The printing company then omitted the word ‘government’ from the newspaper’s title of the 17th October 1807 issue. *Prince of Wales Island Gazette* continued to publish until it ceased publications in August 1827.¹³⁴

The publishing industry in Malacca started in 1815 by a Christian missionary group from London. In Singapore, the printing activity started soon after Stamford Raffles opened Singapore in 1819. The Missionary Society of London was responsible to run the

¹³¹ E. W. Birch, “The Vernacular Press in the Straits”, *JMBRAS*, Dec. 1879, No. 4, (Reprinted: Kraus Reprint Ltd. Vaduz, 1965).

¹³² Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2009, p. 37.

¹³³ Cecil Byrd, *Percetakan awal di Jajahan Selat 1806-1858*, Mansor Ahmad Saman (trans.), Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1991, p. 4.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

Mission Press, the first foreign publishing company in Singapore. In the beginning, the printing companies in the Straits Settlements were owned by the Christian Missionary Society. These newspapers serve as the government's gazette as well as for commerce.¹³⁵ The *Singapore Chronicle*, *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, and the *Straits Times* were among the earliest newspapers published in Singapore in the second decade of the 19th century.¹³⁶

Muhammad bin Datuk Muda Linggi,¹³⁷ A.M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad,¹³⁸ Ian Proudfoot,¹³⁹ and William R. Roff¹⁴⁰ were among the writers who studied the development of journals in Malaya. They provided valuable information and insight to the history of journals published in Malaya and its growth since the 19th century up to the 20th century. This chapter aims to study specifically the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs, a minority group of Arab ethnic in the publishing industry in the Malay Peninsula during the 19th and 20th century.

The involvement of Muslims in the printing industry started in Singapore around late 19th century when a group of *Jawi Peranakan* worked on lithograph printing articles about Islam and worldly affairs in Malaya. In 1876, they published *Jawi Peranakan*, a weekly newspaper which is the oldest Malay newspaper in Singapore.¹⁴¹ Only in late 1880s the Arabs started to show their interest in the printing industry in Malaya when Sayyid Mahmud b. Sayyid Abdul Kadir (1865-1913) established *Alwi Ikhwan Press*. He was also among the earliest Arabs to produce books for school.¹⁴²

¹³⁵ Ibid., p. 3.

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp. 20 and 26.

¹³⁷ Muhammad bin Dato' Muda, *Kitab Tarikh Surat Khabar*, Bukit Mertajam: Matba'ah al-Zainiah, 1940.

¹³⁸ Drs. A.M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu, 1876-1968*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1973.

¹³⁹ Ian Proudfoot, Ian, "Pre-War Malay Periodicals: notes to Roff's Bibliography Drawn from Government Gazettes", *Kekal Abadi*, Vol. 4, No. 4, December 1985.

¹⁴⁰ William, R. Roff, *Guide to Malay Periodicals, 1876-1941, with details of known holdings in Malaya*, Kuala Lumpur: Published for the Dept. of History in the University of Malaya by Eastern Universities Press, 1961 and William R. Roff, *Sejarah Surat-surat Khabar Melayu*, Monograf no. 1, Pulau Pinang: Saudara Sinaran Berhad, 1967.

¹⁴¹ E. W. Birch, "The Vernacular Press in the Straits", *JMBRAS*, Dec. 1879, No. 4, (Reprinted), Kraus:Reprint Ltd. Vaduz, 1965), pp. 51-53. The *Jawi Peranakan* could be considered as the earliest Malay newspaper printed in Jawi ever published in Malaya by a group of Jawi Peranakan, the Indian Muslim of Singapore.

¹⁴² A. Wahab Hamzah & Hadijah Mohd. Sani, "Pameran Percetakan Awal", Seminar Serantau Pendokumentasian Bahasa dan Kesusasteraan Melayu, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka; British Library, London; Muzium Negara Malaysia dan Sistem Penerbangan Malaysia, 1990, p. 14.

Lembaga (1933-1941) was a popular Malay daily newspaper published in Singapore by Alwi bin Abbas al-Attas. The newspaper was widely circulated throughout Malaya with 20 pages and it was sold at 5 cents per copy.¹⁴³ It was like a ‘brother’ (saudara) to *Lembaga Malaya*. Both *Lembaga* (1933-1941) and *Lembaga Malaya* (1934-1941) shared the same editor, Onn Jaafar. There are similarities between them in terms of contents, covering both local and international issues of politics, society and economics.¹⁴⁴ It is worth to note that the newspapers and journals published during the 1930s, especially those under the Hadhrami Arabs’ conveyed as well as reported to the public current issues happening in the country concerning the Muslim society and Malaya as a whole.¹⁴⁵

The development of the publishing and printing industry in Malaya had contributed to political awareness among the people in Malaya. Ramlah Adam related that the political development of the Malays and their awareness towards the idea of nationalism was also rooted from Indonesia in which she believes that it was brought from there through political movements as well as the press. The involvement of Malay youths and their participation in Indonesian political parties had more or less exposed them to ideas of independence. The politics in Malaya received direct influence from the development of mass media, literature, publications, magazines and newspapers in the country as well as in Indonesia. These developments played an important role in the dissemination of information and ideas of independence as well as raised the public's awareness and national spirit among the Malays.¹⁴⁶

The publishing industry in the early 20th century Malaya had witnessed the influence of reformist ideas from Middle Eastern countries. Newspapers and magazines did not only feature local and international issues around the world, but also become the

¹⁴³ *The Genuine Islam*, Vol. 5, No. 10, November/December 1940, p. 214.

¹⁴⁴ Ramlah Adam, “Lembaga Malaya 1934-1941”, *Malaysia dari Segi Sejarah*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, No. 8, April 1979, p. 60.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

media for educated Malay students from the Middle East countries such as Makkah and Egypt to promote ideas of reformism and pan-Islamism. *Al-Imam* (1906), a reformist journal was one of Malaya's earliest periodicals that served this purpose. And then came along *Saudara*, *Jasa*, *Warta Malaya* and many more. Although the newspaper was inclined to depict political issues of Malaya as well as anti-imperialism, it also played an important role in promoting equal opportunity in education to everyone in Malaya regardless of social status.¹⁴⁷

Political developments in the Middle East had greatly influenced the development of the printing industry in Malaya. Compelled to deliver the idea of reform, Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi together with Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin and some friends published a magazine called *Al-Imam* in Malaya in 1906. This newspaper is a continuation of the *Al-Manar* newspaper in Egypt. The newspaper acted as a platform to educate the public on issues related to religion and the ideology of reform. In the printing industry, the Hadhrami Arabs either became part of the editorial board as editors and writers or owned the publishing company which provided financial support. The general themes of issues being raised up and discussed by the journals and periodicals during the twentieth century were related to Malaya's socioeconomic situation and politics. The reformist journals and newspapers also promoted the idea of 'pan-Islamism' and anti-colonial issues in main newspapers before they were banned from publication.¹⁴⁸

Al-Imam held a resemblance to *al-Manar*, an Arabic periodical from Egypt published in Malaya in the Malay language. Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi, Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin, Haji Abbas Muhammad Taha, and Syaikh Mohd. Salim al-Khalili were among the important and influential personalities who were responsible for the publication of *Al-Imam* in 1906. The magazine was first published on 22 July 1906

¹⁴⁷ Abdul Aziz Mat Ton, *Politik al-Imam*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2000, pp. 230-232.

¹⁴⁸ William, R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1967, p. 168.

printed by the Matba'ah Melayu Tanjung Pagar. The editors of *Al-Imam* were Syaikh Mohd Tahir Jalaluddin al-Azhari, Sayyid Syaikh bin Ahmad al-Hadi, and Haji Abas bin Mohd. Taha. *Al-Imam* was printed in *Jawi* and contained about 32 pages with 31 editions published since July 1906 till it ceased publication in December 25, 1908. The *Al-Imam*'s publication was then taken over by Al-Imam Printing Co., Ltd.¹⁴⁹ *Al-Imam* was a religious reformation magazine in line with Muhammad Abduh and *Al-Manar*'s ideas of reform. *Al-Imam* reminded Malays about their backwardness in many aspects of life compared to other races in Malaya.¹⁵⁰

In the 1930s, the Arabs were particularly active in the publication of their own Arabic journals. For example between 1931 to 1941, there were at least fifteen of them published in Singapore, ranging from those which lasted for just a few issues to those which survived for several years.¹⁵¹ The first Arabic journal published in Singapore was the weekly *Al-Huda* under the editorship of Sayyid A. W. Jilani. Sayyid A.W. Jilani was also the editor of two other journals, *Al-Akhbar* and *Al-Akhbar Al-Musawwarah*. Both journals were published in 1939 and had ceased circulation prior to the Japanese invasion. The Arabic journals published found their readership not only in Singapore, but all over the Malay World and Hadhramaut.¹⁵²

There are several other Arabic journals that are not mentioned by William R. Roff in his writing. The *Al-Watan* that was published in 1910 could be considered among the earliest newspapers published by the Hadhrami Arabs. Sayyid Mohd. bin Abdul Rahman al-Mashor was its editor and publisher. The first issue was published on 28 February 1910, but there is no record about its origin. It could have probably been published in Singapore. This newspaper contained four pages.¹⁵³ From Proudfoot's¹⁵⁴ records, *Al-Islah*

¹⁴⁹ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ For details of the Arabic newspapers published in Singapore, their editors, holdings and the number of issues published, see William R. Roff, *Bibliography of Malay and Arabic Periodicals Published in the Straits Settlements and Peninsular Malay States 1876-1941*, London: Oxford University Press, 1972, pp. 59-61.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 59 & 60.

¹⁵³ Proudfoot, Ian, "Pre-War Malay Periodicals: notes to Roff's Bibliography Drawn from Government Gazettes", pp. 20- 21.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

could possibly be the earliest Arabic newspaper as it was published in 1908. The first issue was published on 29 November 1908 in Singapore and was priced at ten cents per copy. It covered general news. The editorial board was led by Shaykh Karamah Baladrom@Baladran.¹⁵⁵

Shaykh Karamah Baladrom@Baladran reported that up to 1931, there were four Arabic newspapers published in Singapore; *al-Islah*, *al-Hisam*, *al-Muntasyir* and *al-Huda*.¹⁵⁶ The publication of Arabic newspapers showed that there were Arabic speaking readers in Singapore and in Malaya in general. The editors of *al-Huda* for example encourage readers to send letters written in Arabic. It was a kind of encouragement for the people to participate and improve their Arabic language. Many of the young generations of Arab were not able to speak fluent Arabic as their mother tongue was Malay.¹⁵⁷ *Sawt Hadramaut* is another Arabic newspaper published by the Al-Saqqaf in Singapore. The newspaper was edited and published by Sayyid Taha Al-Saqqaf Al-'Alawi. *Sawt Hadramaut* was published weekly and printed by the Ahmad Press located at Jalan Sultan, Singapore. It was sold at 15 cents per copy. The newspaper also provided a special column for the "Alawi Affairs" or the 'Syu'un Al-'Alawiyah' which discussed about the Hadhrami Arabs or the 'Alawis in Malaya and Indonesia. There was also a column for the "Hadhramaut Affairs" or *fi Syu'un Hadhramaut*. Among the issues discussed in the newspaper were about the Hadhrami Arab affairs in Surabaya, Pekalongan and the establishment of orphanage houses in Betawi.¹⁵⁸

The Arabs' involvement in the publishing industry, however, started much earlier and they had been active in sponsoring the publication of several Malay journals. When the first Malay reformist journal, *Al-Imam*, was published in 1906, the people responsible in bringing it into existence were the Arabs, who not only contributed the editorials but

¹⁵⁵ However, according to William R. Roff, the editorial board was led by Sayyid Mohammad Agil b. Yahya. He was assisted by Shaykh Karamah Badaran, and perhaps Sayyid Hassan b. Shahab.

¹⁵⁶ Shaykh Karamah Baladrom@Baladran, "Sahifah Jadidah", *Al-Huda*, June 1, 1931, p. 7.

¹⁵⁷ "Editorial Notes", *Al-Huda*, May 25, 1931, p. 1.

¹⁵⁸ *Sawt Hadramaut*, Year 1, no. 5, 24 Mei 1935.

also supported it through financial backing. The initial financial backer of *al-Imam* was Syaikh Mohd. Salim al-Khalali, an Achehese of Hadhrami Arab origin. Another early financial backer of the journal was Sayyid Muhammad bin Aqil bin Yahya.¹⁵⁹ Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi was also among its editors.¹⁶⁰ He was also involved in the publication of the *Al-Ikhwān* journal (Sept. 1926- 1931). Many of the *Al-Imam*'s articles were republished in *Al-Ikhwān*.¹⁶¹

Al-Ikhwān is a monthly magazine published by Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi in Penang on 16 Sept. 1926. Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi was its editor and publisher from 16 September 1926 until the last edition in December 1931. The magazine was written in *Jawi*. At the beginning, *Al-Ikhwān* was printed by the British Malaya Co., and then the printing process was taken over by The Jelutong Press, Penang. The Jelutong Press was owned by Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi. The newspaper was in line with *Al-Imam*. However, it was not a reform magazine.¹⁶² *Al-Ikhwān* had also highlighted on the issue of women. 'Women's World', an excerpt from the book *Tahrir al-Mar'ah* or *kebebasan perempuan* that was authored by the late Qassim bek Amin was published in the newspaper. Besides, the Hadhrami Arabs also financed and controlled several other publishing journals such as *Saudara*, *Warta*, *Lembaga* and *Majlis*.¹⁶³

Lembaga Malaya is another journal published by the Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore from Dec 1934 till 1938. It was then republished in Johor Bahru from 1938 till 1941. The journal was put under the leadership of Onn bin Jaafar (10.12.1934 – 1936), Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Syaikh Ahmad al-Hadi (1936-1941) and Sayyid Jaafar Albar (1936-1941). The journal was printed in *Jawi* with 40 pages and was published weekly on every Monday. It was then published on every Friday. The journal ceased publication at

¹⁵⁹ See Abu Bakar Hamzah, *Al-Imam. Its Role in Malay Society 1906-1908*, Kuala Lumpur: Media Cendekiawan Sdn. Bhd., 1981, pp. 120-124.

¹⁶⁰ A. Wahab Hamzah & Hadijah Mohd. Sani, *Pameran Percetakan Awal*, p. 24.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁶² A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkabupaten Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 18.

¹⁶³ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 174.

the end of 1941. Onn bin Jaafar and Sayyid Alwi were the editors and publishers of this journal.¹⁶⁴

Lembaga is another journal published by Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore in October 1935 till 1938. It was then republished in Johor Bahru from 1938 till 1941. Among the editorial board were Malay and Hadhrami Arabs such as Onn bin Jaafar (8.10.1935 – 1936), Sayyid Alwi bin Omar Albar (1936 - mid of 1939) and Sayyid Alwi bin Shaykh Ahmad al-Hadi (mid 1936 -1941). It was also printed in *Jawi*, had contained 24 pages and was published daily including on Sundays. The newspaper ceased publication at the end of 1941. Copies of this newspaper are available at The National Archives of Malaysia.¹⁶⁵ A weekly newspaper, *Lembaga* was published from 1933-1941 with Onn bin Jaafar as its editor. It was financed by Sayyid Alwi bin Abbas al-Attas.¹⁶⁶

*Saudara*¹⁶⁷ was a weekly newspaper published on 29 September 1928 by The Jelutong Press, Penang. It was published by Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Syaikh Ahmad al-Hadi. Among the editors were Malays and Hadhrami Arabs such as Mohd Yunos bin Abdul Hamid (29.9.1928 - ?, 1931), Abdul Rahim Kajai (29.9.1928 -?, 1931), Sayyid Alwi himself (1932, Sept. 1934 - ?) and Sayyid Syaikh Ahmad al-Hadi (early 1933 – Feb. 1934). The newspaper which was written in *Jawi*, started at 8 pages and then 20 pages in 1935. It was published every Saturdays from 29.9.1928 till January 1932. It was then published twice a week starting from February 1932. The journal ceased publication in 1941. Copies of this newspaper are available at the University of Malaya.¹⁶⁸

Hadhrami Arabs together with the Malays were actively involved in the printing sector, publishing newspapers and journals. Their involvement in the publishing industry was said to have started much earlier. However, in Malaya, Muslims' printing

¹⁶⁴ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 32.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

¹⁶⁶ Ramlah Adam, "Lembaga Malaya 1934-1941", pp. 59-60. See also William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 176-177.

¹⁶⁷ In the beginning, *Saudara* was published by Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi in 1928. It was then taken over by his son Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi as the publisher and also editor of the newspaper.

¹⁶⁸ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 20.

and publishing of religious books or 'kitab agama' started to flourish in the early 20th century due to the development of Islamic education in *madrasah*. Sayyid Hassan Al-Attas was a successful trader in Johor who was also involved in the publishing industry in Malaya when he established his own publishing company in 1927 named *Al-Attas Press* (Matba'ah al-Attas). The company was situated at Kampung Wadi Hassan, Johor Bahru.¹⁶⁹ Al-Attas Press published its first monthly journal, *Majalah Jasa* on 29 November 1927. Sayyid Zain Hassan al-Attas was the journal's chief editor and this magazine could be considered as the first journal published by the Hadhrami Arabs in Johor. The journal contained 42 pages and was published in Malay using *Jawi* script. It was sold at 25 cents per copy. *Majalah Jasa* discussed issues such as lessons learned from history, contemporary developments and others.¹⁷⁰

The Al-Attas Press also published general and religious books as well as printed books and religious books in Malay, English and Arabic. *Tarikh al-Qur'an, Islam dan Tamadun* and *Asas Ahl al-Sunnah wal Jama'ah* were among the religious books published by the al-Attas Press.¹⁷¹ Besides that, the company also took orders from customers such as printing bills, invitation cards and letter heads. *Jasa* ceased to publish in May 1932 after publishing 37 issues due to the high cost of maintenance and stiff competition from other publishing companies.¹⁷² Another reason for the journal to cease its publication was due to lack of moral support and material after the death of Sayyid Hassan al-Attas in 1932 who was the backbone of the company.¹⁷³ Towards the end of his life, Sayyid Hassan published another journal, *Bulan Melayu* on 1 June 1930.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁹ Syed Ali Mohamed al-Attas, *Allahyarham Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas*, p. 17; Syed Hussein Alwee al-Attas, "Suara al-Attas", p. 23.

¹⁷⁰ Aminuddin bin Abd. Rashid, 'Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas: Satu Kajian Biografi', p. 60.

¹⁷¹ Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, "Madrasah al-Attas al-Arabiyyah Johor 1913-1991", p. 57.

¹⁷² G. Savumtharaj, *Katalog Suratkhobar dan Majalah Bahasa Malaysia*, 2nd Ed. Kuala Lumpur: Arkib Negara Malaysia, 1995, pp. 19-20. See also *Jasa*, 11 May 1932, p. 508.

¹⁷³ Syed Ali Mohamed al-Attas, *Allahyarham Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas*, p. 22.

¹⁷⁴ See Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, 'Penglibatan Individu-Individu Arab...', pp. 247-248.

In 1930, one of the Al-Saqqafs, Sayyid Hussein bin Ali Al-Saqqaf founded the first Malay daily newspaper, *Warta Malaya* with Onn Jaafar on 1st January 1930.¹⁷⁵ Apart from *Warta Malaya*, Sayyid Hussein was also a well-known publisher who published weekly Malay pictorials, *Warta Ahad* and *Warta Jenaka*.¹⁷⁶ *Warta Malaya* was one of the influential presses in Malaya. At the beginning, *Warta Malaya* was printed by Anglo-Asiatic Press. Then, it was taken over by Warta Malaya Press Ltd. When Anglo-Asiatic Press changed its name to Malaya Press Limited, Sayyid Hussein joined venture with his brother Sayyid Abdullah and their cousin Shaikhah to fund the publication of *Warta Malaya*. Apart from publishing their own daily newspaper, they also offered services for book binding of religious books and also received translation works from English to Malay and vice versa. They also provided special columns for rent to companies, privates or individuals for advertising purposes in *Warta Malaya*.¹⁷⁷

The other two journals were also printed by Warta Malaya Press Ltd. *Warta Malaya* was printed in *Jawi* with around 24 pages per issue. Sayyid Alwi Ahmad al-Hadi (Dec. 1933 – February 1934) and Sayyid Abdullah b. Hamid al-Idrus (1934-1941) were among the editors who wrote for *Warta Malaya*. Things changed when the Japanese occupation took place in Malaya. Many of the newspapers discontinued publication during the occupation period. Nevertheless, *Warta Malaya* was still in operation, publishing its daily newspaper printed in *Jawi* and Roman (Rumi). The daily newspaper shrank from 24 pages to 6 pages and sometimes 2 pages only per issue. Its publication ceased in August 1942 and then it was taken over by Japanese and used for their propaganda purposes.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Sayyid Hussein bin Ali al-Sagoff was from a family of Hadhrami Arab, al-Sagoff one of the richest Hadhrami Arabs' families in Singapore. They used their wealth investing in business and commerce as well as commercial establishing publishing company.

¹⁷⁶ See Syed Mohsen al-Sagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 39.

¹⁷⁷ Nik Ahmad bin Bik Hassan, "The Malay Press", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 36, Pt. 1, No. 201, 1963, p. 23; "Rencana Pengarang", *Warta Malaya*, 1 Jan 1934; See also Zulkipli Mahmud, *Warta Malaya Penyambung Lidah Bangsa Melayu 1930-1941*, Jabatan Sejarah, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Bangi: 1979, p. 4.

¹⁷⁸ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 23, copies of this newspaper are available at University Malaya, National Archive Malaysia and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka; Syed Muhd Khairudin al-Junied, "The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore – A Reinterpretation", *Immigrants & Minorities*, July 1, 2007, p. 180, quoted from notes.

Apart from covering news from overseas such as from China, Turkey, India, England and other European countries, *Warta Malaya* had also focused on local news and issues of politics, economy and social aspects of the Malays. Besides, *Warta Malaya* also had exchanges with other newspapers' news such as *al-Kamaliah* and *Putera* in Kelantan and *Lidah Benar* in Kelang, Selangor.¹⁷⁹ It can be said that *Warta Malaya* had distributor agents in almost every state in Malaya. The late 1920s and early 1930s were the times when the country was influenced by the global economic recession. Some publishing companies were affected by this recession. *Warta Malaya* for example had decreased the price of its newspaper from 10 cents to 6 cents per copy in line with the economic recession.¹⁸⁰

Warta Ahad, a weekly magazine published in Singapore on 5 May 1935 was also published by Sayyid Hussein Ali al-Saqqaf. It was printed in *Jawi* by Warta Malaya Press Ltd. This weekly magazine was published on every Sunday and had contained around 36 pages. Among the editors of *Warta Ahad* were Onn bin Jaafar (5 May 1935 - Dec. 1935), Sayyid Alwi Ahmad al-Hadi (Dec. 1935 - February 1936), Sayyid Hussein bin Ali al-Saqqaf or Sagoff (1936 - ?) and Abdul Rahim Kajai. *Warta Ahad* was a famous magazine during its time. The magazine ceased its publication at the end of 1941.¹⁸¹ *Warta Jenaka* was also published by Warta Malaya Press, a publishing company owned by Sayyid Hussein Ali al-Saqqaf or Saggof. The weekly newspaper was first published on 7 September 1936. It contained 30 pages printed in *Jawi* and published every Monday. The newspaper ceased publications in Dec 1941. The editorial board of *Warta Jenaka* were all Malays such as Abdul Rahim Kajai (7 Sept. 1936 – Dec. 1941), Hashim Yunos

¹⁷⁹ *Warta Malaya*, Year 1, No. 17, 20 January 1930.

¹⁸⁰ Nevertheless the number of newspaper production had increased in 1937. The price of *Warta Malaya* also has returned to its original price 10 cents per copy. The selling of *Warta* has increased with Johor as the main centre. In Johor itself, there were five agents in the district of Johor Bahru, Pontian, Muar, Penggaram and Batu Pahat. See *Warta Malaya*, Year 1, Nol. 3, 3 January 1930, p. 3. Besides, *Warta Malaya* was also distributed to other states in Malaya with agents in Seremban, Pulau Pinang, Malacca, Alor Setar, Sungai Petani and Kuala Lumpur. *Warta Malaya*, Year 1, No. 30, 4 February 1930, p. 14.

¹⁸¹ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 34.

and Ishak Haji Mahmud. Copies of this journal are available at the National Archive of Malaysia, University of Malaya and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.¹⁸²

Sayyid Hussein was also involved in funding several types of journals such as *al-Qalam*, one of the widely read periodicals that highlighted the issues of Muslims ranging from religious affairs to issues of economy, social and politics. This periodical had tried to raise Malays' awareness towards the British government's mismanagement in Malaya as well as their inconsideration and bias towards Islam and Muslims.¹⁸³ The journal was published in Singapore in July 1950. The company was then moved to Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur. Among the editors of *al-Qalam* were Sayyid Abdullah b. Hamid al-Edrus (July 1950 – end of 1968, still in service), Abdullah Basmeh (1950-1965) and Sayyid Jaafar Albar (1955-?). The monthly journal was printed in *Jawi* with an inconsistent number of pages. In July 1956, the number of pages was 59. The company published the journal until the end of 1968.¹⁸⁴ The *Genuine Islam* (1936-1939) was another periodical published monthly which emphasized on issues of Muslim minority dilemmas in the 1930s. During the 1930s, most periodicals published in Malaya addressed the issue of Muslim-related affairs locally and internationally.¹⁸⁵

There were several other Hadhrami Arabs who took the initiative of publishing journals in Malaya. They either published the journals on behalf of an association, the private sector, the government sector or for commercial use. For instance, in the state of Kedah, Sayyid Ahmad Shahabudin, an Hadhrami Arab who held the position of Chief Minister of Kedah published *Waktu*, a bi-monthly newspaper on 11 November 1956. The journal was printed in *Jawi* by Wah Chong Press, Alur Setar. It contained 16 pages.

¹⁸² Ibid., p. 39.

¹⁸³ Syed Muhd Khairudin al-Junied, "The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore – A Reinterpretation", *Immigrants & Minorities*, p. 172, See also CO 1022/434. Muslim Affairs in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore, p. 8.

¹⁸⁴ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 65.

¹⁸⁵ Syed Muhd Khairudin al-Junied, "The Role of Hadramis...", p. 172.

The journal ceased publications in April 1957. Sayyid Ahmad Shahabudin was the editor and publisher of the newspaper.¹⁸⁶

Meanwhile in Perak, Sayyid Abdullah al-Attas published a monthly journal called *Khizanah al-Ilmu* at Kuala Kangsar in August 1904. The chief editor was Sayyid Abdullah al-Attas himself with several other editors such as Haji Mohd. Noor bin Haji Mohd and Ismail al-Khalidi. The journal was printed in *Jawi* by *Matba'ah al-Attas* Kuala Kangsar. It is not clear when the journal ceased publications. Another newspaper published by Hadhrami Arabs in Ipoh, Perak was *Panduan Teruna* in February 1930. This weekly newspaper was under the editorship of Sayyid Othman bin Shaykh (21.2.1930 - ?). The newspaper was printed in *Jawi* and published every Friday by *Matba'ah al-Rahman*, Ipoh. It is not clear when the journal ceased publications.¹⁸⁷

In Penang, apart from the publication of *al-Ikhwan* (1926) and *Saudara* (1928) by the al-Hadi family printed by the Jelutong Press, there were two other journals published by Hadhrami Arabs in Penang; *al-Rajaa'* (1925) and *Sahabat* (1939). *Al-Rajaa'* was published by Madrasah al-Masyhur in March 1925. This monthly magazine was printed in *Jawi* with 28 pages. It was the school's magazine and had become the 'voice' of the school. However, it is not clear when the magazine ceased publications.¹⁸⁸ *Sahabat*, a newspaper published in Penang three times a week was also operated by a Hadhrami Arab, Sayyid Ahmad b. Shaykh (15 February 1939). The *Jawi* newspaper was published on every Monday, Wednesday and Thursday with 44 pages and it was printed by Al-Huda Press Pulau Pinang. Sayyid Ahmad bin Shaykh was one of the editors of *Sahabat*, while the rest are Malays. The *Sahabat* newspaper ceased to publish

¹⁸⁶ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 87.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁸⁸ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, pp. 15-16.

in April 1941. The copy of this newspaper is available at University of Malaya, the National Archive of Malaysia and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.¹⁸⁹

In the state of Negeri Sembilan, *Bintang Sembilan*, a weekly newspaper that was published in 1925 was reported to employ an Hadhrami Arab; Sayyid Ali al-Zahari (April 1925 - 1926) as its editor. The *Jawi* newspaper was published by Abdul Hamid bin Mohd. It was first published in April 1925 printed by the Negeri Sembilan Press on every Friday. It was however halted in 1925 and again republished in January 1926 till the end of 1926.¹⁹⁰

The publishing and printing industry in Johor received a great blow from Singapore, a flourishing cosmopolitan city. This was an unavoidable phenomenon as the state was close by the island. There were several newspapers published in the state with the participation of several Hadhrami Arabs as members of the editorial board. *Taja Penghiburan* was published in September 1934 in Muar, Johor by Sayyid Abdul Qadir bin Mohd bin Yahaya. Sayyid Abdul Qadir was also the editor of a magazine that was published every three months. The magazine represented the 'voice' of members of the Muar Club Association, Bandar Maharani, Johor. It is however not known when the magazine ceased its publications.¹⁹¹

Majalah Peredaran is another magazine published by Persatuan Guru-Guru Ugama Johor (The Association of Religious Teachers of Johor) in August 1946. Ahmad bin Yaacob was the publisher appointed on behalf of the association. Most of the editorial members were Malays except for Sayyid Mohd. bin Idrus al-Attas, a Hadhrami Arab (1946 - ?). The monthly *Jawi* magazine contained 36 pages. The magazine became the 'voice' of the association. In the beginning, it was named '*Peredar*' and

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 43.

¹⁹⁰ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 16.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 31.

then had changed to *Majalah Peredaran*. Copies of this magazine are available at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and University of Malaya.¹⁹²

Warta Jabatan Ugama Johor is a magazine published by Jabatan Agama Johor (The Religious Department of Johor) in 1949. This monthly magazine contained 20 pages and was printed in *Jawi*. Among the editors of this magazine were Haji Ismail b. Omar (1949-1950), Hj. Mohd. Nasir b. Hj. Mohd. Ali (1950-1956), Sayyid Othman b. Ali (1956-1961) and Hj. Hasbullah b. Hj. Abdul Razak (1961-1968, still in service). The magazine ceased to publish at the end of 1968. Copies of this magazine are available at the National Archives, Malaysia.¹⁹³

Apart from the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in popular reformist magazines and newspapers mentioned above, they had also worked as editors in other Malay magazines and periodicals. Sayyid Sa'dullah Khan was also one of the editors of *Utusan Melayu* from 1918 – 1921. The newspaper was first published on 7 November 1907, printed in *Jawi* and Roman by Singapore Free Press. This newspaper contained four pages and was published three times a week; Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. The newspaper was then published daily from September 1915 till 1921 when it ceased publications. Copies of this newspaper are available at the University of Malaya and Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (microfilm).¹⁹⁴ The Hadhrami Arabs were also involved in the publication of international magazines such as *Majalah Al-Islam* that was published in Singapore in 1912. *Majalah Al-Islam* is a translated work from an Islamic Review magazine published in London. Sayyid Mohammad al-Junied and K. Anang were the translators of this monthly magazine. The magazine was printed by Al-Ikhwan Press with 32 pages in *Jawi*. The magazine was also circulated to West Jawa, Indonesia distributed by Radin Gunawan.¹⁹⁵

Lidah Ibu, a Malay magazine printed in *Jawi* was published in Singapore on 1 September 1935. The editor of this magazine was Sayyid Mohd. bin Zain al-Sagoff. It is

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁹³ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., p. 9.

not clear when the weekly magazine ceased to publish. *Medan Lelaki* is another magazine published in Singapore on 27 September 1927. Sayyid Ahmad Hussein Dahlan al-Indonesi was the editor cum publisher of this magazine who produced it on behalf of the Medan Company. Being printed in *Jawi*, the weekly magazine contained 36 pages and was printed by the Royal Press, Singapore. Copies of this magazine are available at the University of Malaya. This magazine is aimed to promote the teachings of Islam. Apart from that, Sayyid Ahmad Hussein was also the editor and publisher for *Medan al-Islam* that was also published in Singapore. The monthly magazine was first published on 14 August 1936 in *Jawi* and printed by Royal Press Singapore. It is not clear when the magazine ceased to publish.¹⁹⁶

Members of the al-Saqqaf and al-Idrus family were also involved in the publishing and printing industry in Malaya. For example, *Kesatuan Islam* was a Malay magazine printed in *Jawi*, published in Singapore by Sayyid Ibrahim bin Sayyid Omar al-Saqqaf in January 1946. This weekly magazine contained 36 pages. Its publication only lasted for four months and had ceased publications in April 1946. The magazine was printed by Al-Ahmadiyah Press. The editor of this magazine was Sayyid Abdullah bin Sayyid Hamid al-Idrus who served as the editorial staff from the first issue till the last one in April 1946. This magazine is a religious based journal. Copies of this magazine are also available at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.¹⁹⁷

Asmara was another journal published in Singapore in August 1954 that saw the involvement of al-Saqqaf family members; Sayyid Omar Ali al-Saqqaf as the publisher on behalf of the Geliga Publication Bureau Singapore. Most of the editorial boards were Malays. The monthly magazine contained 40 pages and was printed in *Jawi*. It is not known when the journal ceased to publish. This magazine contained short stories, especially for adults. Copies of this magazine are available at the Dewan Bahasa dan

¹⁹⁶ A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, p. 35.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

Pustaka.¹⁹⁸ Sayyid Omar Ali al-Saqqaf was also responsible for the publication of *Wartawan*, a monthly magazine published in Singapore on behalf of the *Persatuan Wartawan Melayu Singapura* in 1956. The magazine contained 44 pages and was printed in *Jawi*. It is not clear when the magazine ceased to publish. This magazine became the ‘voice’ to *Persatuan Wartawan Malaya Singapura*. Copies of this magazine are also available at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.¹⁹⁹

Album Asmara was another version of magazine *Asmara*. This magazine was also published by Sayyid Omar bin Ali al-Saqqaf on behalf of Geliga Publications Bureau Singapore in 1957. *Album Asmara* contained 76 pages and was printed in *Jawi* by Weng Printers Co., Singapore. The magazine was published annually before it ceased to publish in 1959.²⁰⁰ Sayyid Mohd Ali al-Saqqaf was also involved in the publishing industry when he became editor for *Warta Ahad Semenanjung* newspaper that was published in Singapore in February 1958. The weekly newspaper issued on every Sunday contained eight pages and was printed in *Jawi*. *Warta Ahad Semenanjung* was a Sunday version of *Warta Semenanjung*, a daily newspaper that was also published by Sayyid Mohd Ali al-Saqqaf on 8 March 1958. Both *Warta Ahad Semenanjung* and *Warta Semenanjung* were published by Semenanjung Press Ltd. *Warta Semenanjung* contained eight pages and it is unknown when the newspaper ceased to publish. Copies of this magazine are available at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.²⁰¹

It is noticed that from 1959 onwards, most of the journals published in Malaya started to use Roman rather than the *Jawi* script. *Penulis* is another magazine published by the Persatuan Penulis Nasional (PENNA) in Singapore in January 1964. Among the editors of *Penulis* was Sayyid Hussin Ali. The magazine was printed in Roman with 52 pages. The magazine stopped its publication in December 1964 but again resumed publication in August 1968. The magazine was published quarterly in Kuala Lumpur. Copies of this

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., pp. 77-78.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 88-89.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 92.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 93.

magazine are available at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.²⁰² *Majalah Lembaga Alam Islam* is published in Singapore in May 1968 under the leadership of Sayyid Ibrahim b. Omar al-Saqqaf. The magazine was printed in Roman with 72 pages by Malaysia Press Ltd., Singapore. This monthly journal served as a source of knowledge for readers concerning issues related to religion, cultures, knowledge and history. Sayyid Ibrahim b. Omar al-Saqqaf was the editor and also publisher of this magazine.²⁰³ *Hang Tuah* is a magazine published in London in 1958. This magazine was published by *Badan Siasah Kesatuan Melayu UK (United Kingdom)* and was printed in Roman at 30 pages. Among the editors of this magazine was Sayyid Ahmad Ali (March 1962 - ?). It is not known when the newspaper ceased to publish. Copies of this magazine are also available at Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka.²⁰⁴

It is observable that in the 1920s until 1930s the publishing industry in Malaya was dominated by non-Malays; Peranakan Arab, and *Jawi Peranakan*. Most of the newspapers published in Malaya before the Second World War were owned or published by rich and influential ‘orang-orang peranakan’, either born Arab of Malay mothers or born Malay of Indian Muslim fathers. They were to be found in Singapore and Penang.²⁰⁵ This situation had caused uneasiness and worry among the Malays who see the need for a publication by Malays and representing the Malays. This issue had been raised up by Roff who said that;

“...namun semua surat khabar kota yang utama (surat2 khabar Saudara, Warta dan Lembaga dan Majlis) diongkosi dan kuasai oleh orang2 bukan Melayu-Arab, Arab-Melayu, dan Jawi Peranakan. Tiadanya surat khabar yang benar2 asli sebagai gelanggang melahirkan pendapat orang2 Melayu sudah menimbulkan kekhuatiran di kalangan orang2 Melayu beberapa tahun lamanya terutama di Singapura...”²⁰⁶

²⁰² Ibid., pp. 112-113.

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 134.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 150.

²⁰⁵ William R. Roff, *Sejarah Surat-surat Khabar Melayu*, p. 12.

²⁰⁶ William R. Roff, *Nasionalism Melayu*, (trans.) Ahmad Boestamam, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1975, p. 221.

Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi was one of the famous Hadhrami Arab journalists in the early 20th century Malaya. The early education received by Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi helped him master Arabic. Although he was an Arab, his early education and upbringing helped him much in mastering Arabic as well as the Malay language. He was also personally a critical and creative person. His involvement in journalism started as early as 1906. Being inspired with the idea of reform and Islamic movements from West Asia in particular Egypt, Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi together with his comrade Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin al-Azhari took the initiative to publish *Al-Imam* in 1906 in Singapore. His meeting with Muslim reformist leaders in Egypt such as Syaikh Muhammad Abduh during his visit to Egypt while escorting the princes of Riau who furthered their studies there had inspired him to stand up against the heretical or *bid'ah* and superstitious practices in the Malay society. He also read books and writings of Syaikh Muhammad Abduh.²⁰⁷

Apart from being a journalist, Sayyid Shaykh was also an author of religious books. Through writings, he tried to reform the society. His writings portrayed his thoughts and progressive attitude in promoting the *Islah* movement and reform in the Malay society. He also stressed the importance of education, freedom and opportunities enjoyed by men to also be given to Muslim women. His thoughts were also reflected in the novel *Kitab Alam Perempuan* and *Hikayat Faridah Hanum*. He also produced love novels and books of fiction such as *Cerita Ashik kepada Makhsyuknya* and *Ceritera-ceritera Rokambul*. His works were published in *al-Imam*, *al-Ikhwān* and *Saudara*.²⁰⁸

Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi's talent and interest in journalism was inherited by his son Sayyid Alwi who was also involved in this field. His involvement in journalism started in 1930 when he was asked by his father to handle *Saudara* to fill the vacant post of Abdul Rahim Kajai as an editor who quitted and joined *Majlis* in Kuala Lumpur. In

²⁰⁷ Siti Rodziah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu*, pp. 50-53.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-61.

November 1933, Sayyid Alwi moved to Singapore and joined *Warta Malaya* as editor. However, his tenure with *Warta Malaya* did not last long when he had to move back to Penang to take over *Saudara* after his father passed away in 1934.²⁰⁹

Sayyid Alwi was the eldest son of Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi. He was born in Malacca in 1893 and received his early education at the Malay School in Riau. He furthered his studies at Victoria Bridge in Singapore and passed Standard 7 in 1913. In 1914 he was sent to Beirut to study Arabic education at an Arab College known as *Kuliyah Othmaniah*. However, he did not complete his studies at *Kuliyah Othmaniah* but had joined the *Protestant College* in Syria. Once he returned home, he joined the Anglo Chinese School in Penang and then *Madrasah al-Masyhur*. He then joined Syarikat Bekerjasama Negeri-Negeri Melayu in 1924 until his father asked him to join *Saudara*, managing and supervising the newspaper publication in 1928.²¹⁰

Unlike his father, Sayyid Alwi paid less emphasis on the issue of Islamic reform (Islah) in Malaya. However, his father's idea of reform had indirectly made *Saudara* as an agent of reform and a strong supporter of *Kaum Muda*'s thoughts. The 1930s was a critical time in Malaya where issues of social, economic and politics were the main concern of the Malays in Malaya. *Saudara* also discussed and suggested solutions that could help improve the social status of the Malays. *Saudara* also asked the Malays to eliminate negative attitudes so that they could compete economically and socially with other races in Malaya.²¹¹ Sayyid Alwi also wrote articles touching on the issue of Malays' education. He who had experience teaching at the Anglo Chinese School and *Madrasah al-Masyhur* criticized and advised the Malays on the importance of education so they could improve their lives for a better living. Malays at the time were seen as backwards in many aspects of life.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Ibid., pp. 76, 84.

²¹⁰ Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu*, p. 83. Before he starts his career as a teacher at Anglo Chinese School and *Madrasah al-Masyhur* in Penang, Sayyid Alwi had joined the military service in the medical team in Turkey for about a year and then joined the British army until 1919 during his stay overseas.

²¹¹ *Saudara*, 9 March 1929, p. 3; See also Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu*, p. 85.

²¹² Ibid.

Under the editorship of Sayyid Alwi, *Saudara* managed to last for about thirteen years in the world of journalism in Malaya. *Saudara* tried to play its role as social media not only in circulating news to the readers, but also to remind the Malays that they were in a critical situation. Immigrants from outside are now demanding for equal rights in many aspects of life in Malaya such as chances to hold positions in government offices and to have control over the economy in Malaya. Most of the foreign immigrants were concentrated in the cities, doing business and being involved in trade compared to the Malays who lived in the suburbs and rural areas. Foreign immigrants, particularly the Chinese dominated the economic activities in Malaya, while at the same time petitioned constantly to have the same rights and privileges as the Malays. Articles on the issues of Malays' backwardness and poverty had more or less managed to alert the Malays of their situation.²¹³

Sayyid Hussain bin Ali al-Saqqaf²¹⁴ was another big name in journalism in 20th century Malaya. Sayyid Hussain established Anglo-Asiatic Press in 1929. Sayyid Hussain collaborated with Onn Jaafar to produce several Malay newspapers like *Warta Malaya* (1930), *Warta Ahad* (1935) and *Warta Jenaka* (1936).²¹⁵ *Warta Malaya* was published in Singapore in January 1930. In the beginning, *Warta Malaya* was printed by the Anglo-Asiatic Press which then changed its name to Warta Malaya Press Limited with Sayyid Hussain as its owner.²¹⁶ *Warta Malaya* was a daily newspaper but no publication was produced on Sunday. Most of its workers and editors were Malays. When Onn bin Jaafar resigned from his post as editor of *Warta Malaya*, his place was taken by Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi. However, his tenure only lasted for about eight months. His place was then replaced by Abdul Rahim Kajai, Muhammad

²¹³ Wan Suhana Wan Sulong, "Saudara (1928-1941): Continuity and Change in the Malay Society", *Intellectual Discourse*, 2006, Vol. 14, No. 2, pp. 179-202.

²¹⁴ His name is also spelled Sayyid Hussein. Throughout this study his name will be spelled Sayyid Hussain.

²¹⁵ Syed Mohsen al-Sagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 39. The Al-Saqqaf or al-Saggof family was among the wealthy Arab families in Singapore. They involved in business as well as real estate in Singapore. They also invested in publishing industry in Malaya.

²¹⁶ Zulkipli Mahmud, *Warta Malaya: Penyambung Lidah Bangsa Melayu, 1930-1941*, Selangor: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1979.

Ismail bin Abdul Kadir, Muhammad Hashim bin Yunus and Muhammad Yusof bin Ishak.²¹⁷

Apart from publishing its own newspapers, the Warta Malaya Press Ltd also provided religious book binding services and translation from English to Malay and vice versa. They also provided special columns for rental to private companies for the purposes of advertisement in *Warta Malaya*.²¹⁸ However, *Warta Malaya* also faced huge competition from other newspapers like *Utusan Malaya* that was published in 1939 in Singapore. The emergence of *Utusan Malaya* was a severe blow to the production of *Warta Malaya*. The newspaper *Utusan Malaya* was the most anticipated newspaper by the Malays as it could be said to represent the opinions of the Malays and was eventually owned, operated and published by the Malays. The birth of *Utusan Malaya* was in response to the need of Malays who looked for a newspaper that could represent the Malays' voice instead of being dependent to newspapers published by non-Malays.

The Hadhrami Arabs did not only highlighted issues related to religious reform in the society by revitalizing the teachings of Islam and to free the society from heretical practices (bid'ah) and khurafat in their newspapers and magazines, but also touched on the social, economic and political issues in the country. These journals function as informants to the readers of the social and political issues in the country as well as overseas. These journals also shared information and news among them as well as collaborate with other newspapers and magazines from other states in Malaya. These journals had more or less influenced the people's perspective and thoughts over the Malay scenario and political atmosphere of Malaya during that period of time. Journals, in particular the reformist newspapers and magazines had played important roles in

²¹⁷ Ibid.,

²¹⁸ Nik Ahmad Nik Hassan, "The Malay Press", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 36, Pt. 1, No. 201, 1963, p. 23; Rencana Pengarang, *Warta Malaya*, 1st January 1934.

bringing social change and political awareness to the Malay society in the early period of 20th century Malaya.

Roff specifically refers to the role of *Warta Malaya* as the agent of change, conveying information and discussing issues related to the Malays and their rights in Malaya. *Warta Malaya* also published religious articles for the purpose of religious knowledge among readers. However, it was not a reformist newspaper like *Saudara*.

“ ...Warta Malaya discussed editorially a wide range of issues affecting the Malays, from the vexing question of the restoration of powers to the State Councils in the Federations Malay States (FMS) and the dangers inherent in locally domiciled non-Malay demands for increased right, to higher education for the Malays and the development of the Malay economy”.²¹⁹

Based on the issues published in these journals, it is clear that *Kaum Muda* were the strong supporters of the reform ideas in the Malay society. The newspaper *Saudara* is more likely to be seen parallel and tend to follow the religious struggle of *al-Imam* that was published in the early 20th century while *al-Imam* was a resemblance of the reformist magazine *al-Manar* from Egypt. The editorship factor contributes to the styles of writing in the journals. Those with English and Arabic education backgrounds more or less would affect the writings in the journals. For example, Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi, the editor of *Warta Malaya* received comments from readers to reduce the number of Arabic news and articles quoted in *Warta Malaya* from Arabic newspapers.²²⁰

Saudara was a reformist newspaper based in Penang published by Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi on September 1928. *Saudara* reached its readers in every nook and cranny in the Malay Archipelago as well as in Western Asia. This is proven by the number of letters received by the editorial team from readers and it was also distributed to many areas such as Sarawak, Sabah, Siam, Kalimantan, Southern Thailand, Sumatera,

²¹⁹ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 168.

²²⁰ Zulkipli Mahmud, *Warta Malaya Penyambung Lidah Bangsa Melayu 1930-1941*, pp. 21-22.

Sulawesi, Egypt, Hijaz and London.²²¹ *Saudara* also touched on issues of religion until to some extent, it was said that *Saudara* was a reformist magazine for its support towards the ideas of *Kaum Muda*. When Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi became the editor of *Saudara*, most of the articles and writings in the newspapers touched on the issue of religion that became the main cause of conflict between *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua*.²²²

Apart from publishing issues relevant to the struggle of *Kaum Muda*, *Saudara* also promoted ideas of Islamic Reform in the society through its articles and writing. *Saudara* also stressed on the issue of Malays. Malays at that time were seen as the least productive ethnic in Malaya socially, economically and politically compared to other races. *Saudara* was also concerned about the Malays' progress in education, economy, politics and social aspects.²²³ *Warta Malaya* also criticized the British administration in Malaya that was seen as being biased to the non-Malay people.²²⁴ Nevertheless, the approach taken by *Warta Malaya* was less anti colonial. Instead of struggling to oust British from Malaya, editorial boards of *Warta Malaya* urged the British to provide more chances and opportunities to the Malays to hold important positions in the administration of Malaya.²²⁵

Kaum Muda or the young faction had used *Saudara* as a medium for religious reform struggles and dissents with *Kaum Tua* or the old faction who were also known as the traditionalists. The years between the 1928 and 1930s were the period that had seen a polemic of religious struggle between *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* in Malaya with the participation of *Saudara* representing *Kaum Muda*'s ideas and reforms in the society. The newspaper *Lidah Benar* representing *Kaum Tua* who were also called by *Kaum Muda* 'Lebai-lebai Pondok' was obsessed with the concept of *taqlid*.²²⁶ Debates between the two parties were published in both newspapers. The 1930s were considered as the peak

²²¹ *Saudara*, 7 June 1930, No. 4; See also Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu*, p. 37.

²²² Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara*, pp. 35-40. Starting from the issue of 17 October 1931, the post of publisher and editor of *Saudara* was taken over by Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi when Sayyid Alwi resigned from his post to join *Warta Malaya* in Singapore. See also Zulkipli Mahmud, *Warta Malaya*, p. 21.

²²³ Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu*, p. 45.

²²⁴ A. Wahab Hamzah & Hadijah Mohd.Sani, *Pameran Percetakan Awal*, p. 22.

²²⁵ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, 1967, p. 168.

²²⁶ *Saudara*, 27 April 1929, See also Siti Rodziyah Nyan, *Akhbar Saudara Pencetus Kesedaran Masyarakat Melayu*, p. 43.

time of nationalistic consciousness among the Malays.²²⁷ *Saudara* was also bold in giving scathing criticism to *Kaum Tua*, the British government in Malaya and also to the Malays in general regarding issues of Malay backwardness in education, economic, politics and social compared to other races in Malaya. *Saudara* also criticised the Malays' attitude who dared not to compete with the non-Malays as the reason for their backwardness and lagging behind. *Saudara* also condemned the attitude of some Malays who were spendthrift and wasteful that had caused them to live in poverty and were left behind in various economic sectors. The issue of foreign immigrants from India and China was widely discussed by *Warta Malaya*. These immigrants dominated the economic sector in Malaya, for example in the mining industry.²²⁸

Conclusion

Although the number of Hadhrami Sayyids was quite small, they managed to flourish economically in Malaya and became successful traders and entrepreneurs. Even though they complained about being secondary compared to other entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia especially the Chinese, they performed well in business ventures in Malaya as well as in the East Indies, Indonesia. They were reported to be actively involved in economic activities and were successful traders as the Chinese. The stories of success of early Hadhrami Sayyid emigrants in making their lives in Malaya had attracted and encouraged more of their fellow-countrymen to migrate to Malaya. With the establishment of companies such as Al-Attas and Co., Al-Sagoff and Co., and Al-Kaff and Co., it shows that many of them had become successful traders and entrepreneurs. Their involvement in the economic sector of Johor contributed a lot in developing the state as a centre of commerce in the southern region of Malaya. Although their number

²²⁷ Refer to "Mengapakah apa2 pekerjaan Am bagi Kaum Melayu tidak mahu maju?", *Saudara*, No. 434.

²²⁸ Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi had experienced handling the first reformist magazine al-Imam in Singapore that was lasted for about two years only. Its ambitious aspirations to do reform in the society received negative reaction from the Malay society. His open and bold criticism towards the British administration in Malaya that are seen and put the blame to the Malay rulers over the Malay backwardness added with the widespread of corruption among the Malay aristocrats and nobles that might have been one of the reasons behind its closure in 1909. *Al-Imam*, No. 25, November 1908, p. 234 *Al-Imam*, No. 14, April 1907, p. 316.

is quite small, they managed to flourish in Malaya and became successful traders and entrepreneurs.

However, the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the shipping industry in the region did not last long as they have to face stiff competition from European shipping companies. The Hadhrami Arabs' shipping companies were not able to compete with European shipping companies such as the British, Dutch and German shipping companies. In fact, there was bitter rivalry between the European shipping companies themselves in the trade in South East Asia. The rivalry among the European shipping companies during the inter-war years of the 20th century affected the trade and economy of the countries in South East Asia.

The 1920s to 1930s were the years that had seen as rapid development in publication and Malay journalism in Malaya as a result of awareness that arose among the Malay intelligentsias and the Malay Arab descendants who received their education in West Asia. This period also witnessed the seeds of the Malay spirit of nationalism in the country that was driven by the Islamic reform movement from West Asia, especially from Egypt. *Kaum Muda* or the young reformist group used media as a tool to propagate the ideas of reform and *Islah* to the society. The swift progress of the printing industry in Malaya contributed to the emergence of local newspapers featuring domestic and foreign issues.

The Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya in the 20th century were not only involved in the publication of newspapers and magazines but had also promoted ideas of religious reform to the society through these journals. Newspapers like *al-Imam*, *al-Ikhwan*, *Saudara* and *Warta Malaya* were mediums of reform used by *Kaum Muda* or the young reformists who mostly had religious education backgrounds from the Middle East, in particular Egypt. In Egypt, they were exposed and influenced by the idea of reform and *Islah* in the country. Religious figures and reformists like Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi and Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin al-Azhari were among those who were actively involved in

religious reform or *Islah* movement in Malaya through journalism. They joined the editorial board of reformist journals such as *al-Imam*, *al-Ikhwān*, *Saudara* and *Warta Malaya*. Although these newspapers were published by Arabs, the issues concerned were still related to the social, political and economic development of Malaya, especially for the Malays.

Most reformist newspapers and magazines published in Malaya that saw the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs had actively struggled to demand that the Malays must be given more chances to be involved in the administration of Malaya. Nevertheless, they took a moderate approach in criticizing the British colonial administration. That could have been the reason why *Saudara* managed to survive until 1941 and had kept steady in the publishing world in Malaya compared to other reformist journals such as *al-Imam* (1906-1909) and *al-Ikhwān* (1926-1931) that only survived for about two to six years. Past experiences had taught Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi to be less vocal in criticizing and to not touch on the issues of Malay rulers and aristocrats and the British administration in Malaya to save *Saudara*. The newspapers *Saudara* (1928-1941) and *Warta Malaya* (1930-1942) lasted more than 10 years and these newspapers were less anti-colonial compared to the former two.

The struggles shown by Malay reformists of Hadhrami Arab descent through pen had created political awareness among the Malays. Internal issues that become polemic among the Malays such as *talkin* recitation and *taqlid* practices were hotly debated between the *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* and were widely published in newspapers in Malaya, particularly *Saudara*. Through the articles and writings in these newspapers and magazines, the Malays were reminded and alerted to their real situation when they were all this while in the comfort zone of modesty. The Malays, particularly the uneducated ones were not exposed to the city modern life of competition. Newspapers had managed to raise awareness among the Malays of their political, economic and social conditions that in due course united the Malays through

various social activities and organizations such as PASPAM, *Syarikat Bekerjasama* in the villages, and Malay states' based organizations such as *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* and *Kesatuan Melayu Selangor* intended to safeguard the welfare of the Malays. Eventually, these organizations managed to produce politicians and reformists who struggled for the country's independence in the later years.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 5: INVOLVEMENT OF THE HADHRAMI ARABS IN ADMINISTRATION AND POLITICS

Introduction

19th and 20th century Malaya witnessed the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the administration and politics of the Malay states. Their involvement was noticeable in the late 19th century with the rise of prominent Hadhrami Arabs who held important responsibilities as state rulers and government officials. Before the British intervention in Malaya in the 19th century, the Malay states were ruled by respective *sultans* or *rajas*. The states' administration, economy, religion and political affairs were governed by the sultans with the help of Malay chiefs and officials. These aspects of life were interrelated with each other with Islam acting as a catalyst that guides mankind to a better living. However, since the British invasion to Malaya, many changes had been done by the British in the name of development and modernity, transforming the nature of the Malay states' administration and affairs to be under a centralized government. The British placed their advisers and residents in almost every state to oversee and control the economy, politics and administrative aspects of the Malays. The Sultans and Malay rulers no longer had absolute authority. As such, every order and decision's final say came from the British advisers.

The Hadhrami Arabs who migrated earlier and married into the ruling class and Malay noble families were considered by Malays as equal to their rulers. The local Muslims gave due respect to the Hadhrami Arabs who claimed themselves as descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. Being accepted by the Malay community and aristocracy helped the Hadhrami Arabs to consolidate their social and political networking in Malaya. Through marital bonds, the Hadhramis enjoyed prestige and special privilege in the Malay society. Some of them were involved in the Malay States'

administration and were appointed head of state, government officials, bureaucrats or chieftains.

The Arabs, according to J.A.E Morley, made use of their diplomatic skills. They possessed the ability to exploit the weak sides of the natives' character. The dignity and respect they received as esteemed '*ulama*' or religious men as well as successful traders enabled them to gain certain degrees of social status in the Malay World. The Arabs, either through marital bonds or influence managed to establish themselves as rulers or having connection with the ruling classes in several places, for example Perlis in Malaya, Siak, Kampar and Jambi in Sumatra, and Pontianak and Kubu in Borneo. However, the involvement of Hadhrami Arab figures in the Malay states' politics and administration was seen as a threat by the British who were afraid that they would inspire anti-British sentiments among the Malays. In the Malay society, it was common that Hadhrami Arab religious scholars or the '*ulama*' and those who have close relations with the royal family would be given priority in holding religious positions in states' administration and politics.

Being descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W earned the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent respect and privilege in the Malay society. In addition, the early Hadhrami Arab immigrants to Malaya were known for their religious knowledge. Some of them were not only involved in states' religious administration, but also held important positions in the states' administration, ranging from the lowest ranks to the highest positions. This chapter explores the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in politics and administration of the Malay states in Malaya. It will observe how the Hadhrami Arabs managed to secure such important positions, played their role and contributed to Malay politics and administration.

Kedah

Among the earliest Hadhrami Arab families who settled down in Kedah were the Jamalullails, Shahabudins, al-Qadris and al-Aidids. The Jamalullail family had significant influence on the politics of the state. Sayyid Ahmad bin Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail was among the earliest family members of the Jamalullail family who came to Kedah from Hadhramaut in 1148AH/1735AD. Sayyid Ahmad married Sharifah Aminah al-Qadri who gave birth to Sayyid Harun Jamalullail. Sayyid Harun Jamalullail grew up to be an important figure in Kedah. Sayyid Harun's close contact with Kedah royals was strengthened through his marriage to Tengku Safiah, the daughter of Tunku Dhia'uddin. Through this marriage, Sayyid Harun was awarded the district of Arau in 1797 (1212 H). He was also appointed as a *penghulu* or the chieftain of Arau.¹ Through this appointment Sayyid Harun managed to wield his influence in the politics of Kedah.

The Jamalullail's family involvement in the state administration of Kedah prevailed since the 19th century, when Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail was appointed the new ruler of Perlis in 1843.² The Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the politics of Kedah was significant, particularly during the critical period when Kedah was invaded by Siam (1821-1842). When Siam occupied Kedah in 1821, they divided the state into four territories; Setul, Perlis, Kubang Pasu and Kedah which were placed under different rulers. The Sultan of Kedah, however, sought protection by escaping to the Province of Wellesley in 1821 and then took refuge in Melaka.³ The Hadhrami Arabs together with the Malay chiefs and Sultan fought against the Siamese invasion. In the effort of gaining support and commitment from the society to free Kedah from Siam, the Arabs were said to have used their political and religious influence to call for *jihad*.⁴ They considered the Siamese as an infidel enemy that must be opposed. The strategy of the religious militancy resurgence succeeded in drawing support from the Malays as well as Arab

1 Hussain Baba bin Mohamad, "Sejarah Negeri dan Raja-Raja Perlis", *JMBRAS*, Vol. XLII, Pt. 3, 1969, p. 174.

2 After a long war of dispute and struggle between Kedah and Siam, finally Kedah regain independence. This was duly to the effort of several people among others were Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail. See Hussain Baba, "Sejarah Negeri dan Raja-Raja Perlis", p. 176.

3 British Adviser Office Files (Perlis), Arkib Negara Malaysia, (KL), M78/95.

4 Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, London: Macmillan, 1982, pp. 119-20.

merchants of the Straits Settlement. At the same time, underground support was also received from some Europeans.⁵

The two decades of continuous wars indeed witnessed a top down effort from the inhabitants of Kedah as well as the Hadhrami Arabs in their efforts to get rid of the Siamese invasion. Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin II, together with the Malay chiefs, the people of Kedah and the Hadhrami Arabs worked hand in hand in this struggle. The role of the Hadhrami Arabs thus was significant. Sayyid Zainal Abidin, better known as Tunku Kudin led the military campaign against Siam and succeeded to re-conquer Kuala Kedah from the enemy. However, he did not manage to defend Kuala Kedah from Siamese attack that eventually saw the fall of Kuala Kedah into the hands of Siam which had also claimed his life. Another attack was also planned in 1828, but it was also a failure for the Malays. The Hadhrami Arabs had proven that they were willing to fight for Malays even when it costed them their own lives. Another prominent Arab, Shaykh Abdul Samad participated in the decisive battle of 1828 and lost his life in the battlefield.⁶

Finally, after two decades of war and political distress, Kedah bargained a peace deal with Siam. Both powers agreed to cease fire and put the military conflict to an end. Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail⁷ was among those responsible for the peace pact between Siam and Kedah. He played a significant role in bringing peace and order to Kedah through negotiations with Siam. Thus, it is evident that the Hadhrami Arabs also contributed to the peace-making process by restoring political order and assisting Kedah's road to independence. In order to sustain peace and political order in the state, Kedah had to maintain its good terms with Siam through political alliances.⁸ Sayyid

5 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Arabs Migration and Its Importance in the Historical Development of the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Malaya*, paper presented at the *15th Annual World History Association Conference* held on 22-25 June 2006 in California, USA, p. 15.

6 Muhammd Hassan b. Dato' Kerani Muhammad Arshad, *Al-Tarikh Salasilah Negeri Kedah*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1968, pp. 149-50.

7 Sayyid Hussain was the first son of Sayyid Harun Jamalullail. He was born on 10 January 1805.

8 This political alliance enabled Kedah to maintain its sovereignty and sustainability. 'System of political alliance ... These alliances enabled smaller states to pay tribute to the largest in exchange for their relative independence and a degree of protection when attacked by other states'. Meaning that Kedah and Perlis are now independence but subject to Siam's sovereignty and

Hussain Jamalullail's effort was worthwhile when he was appointed the new ruler of Perlis in 1843. With this appointment, the Jamalullail family's political interest was strengthened. Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail became the legal ruler of the newly established state of Perlis.⁹

Starting from 1909, Kedah was put under the British protectorate. The Bangkok Treaty, also known as the Anglo-Siam Treaty or *Perjanjian Inggeris-Siam* was signed between the British and Siam. In this treaty, the states of Kedah, Perlis, Kelantan and Terengganu were put under the British protectorate. Kedah was to accept a British adviser along with the other states.¹⁰ The involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the state administration of Kedah was obvious with the appointment of several Hadhramis in the state's administration. There was a notion of *anak emas* that refers to Hadhrami Arabs in Kedah. This notion is referred to the sultans' tendency and preference in giving the Hadhrami Arabs positions in Kedah's state administration. It was a common practice in the state of Kedah for the Sultan to take Arabs as their son-in-laws. It gave the Hadhrami Arabs opportunities to become part of Kedah's royal family. They also received the same respect as the royals and the elites of Kedah. Many of them assumed high positions in the state's administration.¹¹

In the *Salasilah* or the *Tarikh Kerajaan Kedah* for instance, it is recorded that the Sultan of Kedah granted the District of Yan to Sayyid Osman al-Qadri in 1906/07 (1324 AH). With this award, Sayyid Osman al-Qadri was responsible to supervise the District of Yan as well as collect revenue.¹² Based on the Letter 'Salinan Surat Kepada

protection. In this case they have to pay tribute to Siam in the form of 'bunga emas' or *ufti* annually. See Hodgson, G.A, "An Introduction to Kedah History", Buku Kenangan Hari Keputeraan Yang Keempat Puluh Tiga Tahun Duli yang Maha Mulia Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Badlishah, Kuala Lumpur: Berjaya Printing Press, 1971, no. page number.

⁹ Hussain Baba, "Sejarah Negeri dan Raja-Raja Perlis", pp. 176-77.

¹⁰ Rupert Emerson, *Malaysia: Satu Pengkajian dalam pemerintahan Secara Langsung dan Tidak Langsung*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1974, p. 296.

¹¹ Faridah Romly, *Orang Arab di Kedah*, B.A. Academic Exercise, History Department, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 1983/84, p. 223.

¹² Salinan Surat Kepada Raja-Raja, TH 1312-TM 1895, No. 2, p. 42. The letter was addressed to Tuan Sayyid Osman, Head in the District of Yan; Salinan Surat Kepada Raja-Raja, TH 1312-TM 1895, No. 2, p. 407. (original page no. 241), Another letter entitled "Rencana Surat Duli yang Maha Mulia Kepada Tuan Syed Osman Ketua Mukim Yan pasal Tiada Boleh kerah Orang-orang Yan yang pindah pergi duduk ke Sg. Korok dan Yunus di Sg. Limau itu", SMSAH, 1 Rabiulawal 1323, (4 June 1905). See also Faridah Bte Mahaidin, 'Sejarah Pekan Yan dari Segi Ekonomi dan Pelajaran', in Khoo Kay Kim (ed.), *Beberapa Aspek Sejarah Kedah*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1st Edition, 1983, pp. 45-46.

Raja-Raja, TH 1312-TM 1895, No. 2', that was written on 24 Jamadil Akhir 1313, it is learnt that Sayyid Osman was the head of the district or *Ketua Mukim* of Yan, Kedah, one of the districts in Kedah that produces rice until today. Besides that, Sayyid Mohamed and Sayyid Zainal Abidin were also appointed heads of district of Sala Besar.¹³ The appointment as *ketua mukim* or head of the district is a special recognition of the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the politics and administration of Kedah. This position is a special reward by the Sultan of Kedah. It gives the recipient rights over the revenues of the districts.¹⁴ In addition, the *Ketua Mukim* also had the authority to appoint the *penghulu* or chieftain in his districts.¹⁵

The Hadhrami Arabs also became members of the State Council Meeting. Several other high ranking and important positions were held by Hadhrami Arabs too, such as Sayyid Barakbah who was appointed the Chief Judge and Sayyid Hassan Shahabudin as the State General Auditor. Sayyid Abu Bakar Kidit or Aidit was given the post as acting District Officer in Sungai Petani and Tuan Sayyid Mohd Aidit was appointed as Chief Magistrate.¹⁶ There were also a number of Hadhrami Arabs who were employed in the state's civil service as clerks and office boys. In 1918, record shows that nine Hadhrami Arabs worked as clerks in various offices in the districts of Kedah. For example, Sayyid Mohamed A. Bakar in the Land Office in Jitra, Sayyid Mashur Alwi in the Land Office in Langkawi, Sayyid Abdullah Yahya in Mahkamah Besar, Alor Setar, Sayyid Omar Shabudin in Mahkamah Kecil, Alor Setar, Sayyid Mashar Mohd. Shahabudin in the Adviser's office, Sayyid Omar Sayyid Mohammad Shahbudin in Mahkamah Kecil, Alor Setar, Sayyid Abdullah bin Yahya in Mahkamah

13 SMSAH, 6 Rabiulawal 1324, 29 April 1906.

14 KAR 1909-1910, Kedah Annual Report, p. 11.

15 T.B. William, *The Economics of Padi Production in North Malaya*, (pt. 1), Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Pertanian, Buletin No. 103, 1958, p. 9. See also Mohd. Isa Othman, *Pengalaman Kedah & Perlis Zaman Penjajahan British*, Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn. Bhd., 2001, pp. 297-8.

16 Minutes of State Council Meeting, Kedah, 30 September 1919/ 5 Muharram 1338, Minutes of State Council Meeting Kedah, 9 August 1920 / 24 Zulkaedah 1338.

Besar, Alor Setar and Sayyid Idros in the education sector.¹⁷ Sayyid Alwi bin Sayyid Abdullah Barakbah was a grade III English Clerk in the Survey Office, Kulim which was then transferred to the Audit Office in Alor Setar.¹⁸ Sayyid Ismail bin Sayyid Alwi was a Superintendent of Survey from the Survey Department in Kulim.¹⁹ Sayyid Mohamed bin Sayyid Zin was a financial assistant in the Monopolies and Customs Department, Alor Setar.²⁰ And finally, Sayyid Ahmad bin Sayyid Mahmud was a grade III English Clerk, and Tuan Sayyid Abdullah al-Mahdali was in the treasury office (21 Safar 1323).²¹

According to Mohd Isa Othman who studies the administration of districts in Kedah during the Japanese Occupation, he found that several Hadhrami Arabs were appointed as district officers and assistant district officers. The post of district officer was known as *Guncho* while the assistant district officer known as *Fuku Guncho*. Sayyid A. Rahman Sayyid Abdullah was appointed as the district officer of Bandar Bharu, Sayyid Abu Bakar Sayyid Osman, district officer of Baling and Sayyid Hassan Sayyid Jan, the district officer of Sik. Meanwhile, Sayyid Idrus Sayyid Mansur was appointed assistant district officer of Kuala Muda and Sayyid Osman Idid as the assistant district officer of Yan.²²

Information about the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the state administration of Kedah can also be traced from the collection of letters belonging to Sultan Abdul Hamid. Several Hadhrami Arab names were mentioned in these letters. They had specific roles in the state administration of Kedah. Among the names were Sayyid Abdullah, Syed Abdullah Tuan Teh, Sayyid Abdullah Shihabuddin, Sayyid Mansor Al-

17 Surat Menyurat Sultan Abdul Hamid (SMSAH) TH 1337/TM 1918, No.12, Circular No. 25/37, Pekerjaan Government Negeri Kedah. This is regarding a test sat by clerks in the government of Kedah for the year 1337/1918. Nine of them were Hadhrami Arabs who held the post of clerks in various offices in the state of Kedah.

18 SUK, A (N) Kedah, 3543-1351, Syed Alwi b. Syed Abdullah Barakbah, ANM(KL). Sayyid Alwi applied for transfer. He was transferred to Alor Star under Audit Department while his former position was replaced by Ramli Mohamad Said.

19 SUK, A (N), Kedah, 440-1351, ANM (KL) Retirement of Syed Ismail b. Syed Alwi superintendent of Survey (daily paid employee), from Survey Department, Kulim resigned from his post due to health problem. He suffered from Pulmonary Tuberculosis. He received compensation amounted to \$180.00.

20 SUK, A (N), Kedah, 650-1351, Syed Mohamed bin Syed Zin, ANM(KL).

21 SUK Kedah 72/1948, Kedah Government Servants.

22 Mohd Isa Othman, *Pengalaman Kedah & Perlis Zaman Penjajahan British*, pp. 237, 288-289.

Jefri, Sayyid Hassan and Sayyid Osman, a Guard Captain. In these letters they were addressed as *Tuan Sayyid*. The following are several samples of letters from Sultan Abdul Halim's correspondence.²³

*A letter addressed to Tuan Syed Muhammad Shahbudin in the state of Singgora regarding his Mother Tunku Rasyidah who passed away on 11 Rejab 1313.*²⁴

*"Kepada Tuan Syed Muhammad al-Jefri Pasa yang tapak jerap Duli Yang Maha mulai hendak berangkat pergi main di Jenderai itu belum tentu lagi mana mana hari."*²⁵

*"Tuan Syed Husin, Kuala Muda... Paduka Ayahanda Tuan Syed Husin. Surat daripada Raja Muda kepada Tuan Syed Husin, Kuala Muda. 9 Shaaban 1314."*²⁶

*"Syed Mansur, Surat daripada Duli Tuanku Raja Muda beri kepada Syed Mansur Pasa suruh bubuh atap Rumah Guru School di Penang itu dan buat bangsal kuda adanya. 23 Shaaban 1314"*²⁷

*"Syed Mansur, Surat Duli Tuanku Raja Muda beri kepada Syed Mansur Pasa Syed Mohd Haddad minta jangan pedulikan Syed Mohd Haddad kerana kurang baik tabiatnya. Datang ke Penang dari Singapore tapi tidak bayar tambang. 28 Zulkaedah 1314."*²⁸

The Hadhrami Arabs who served in the local authorities enjoyed pensions just like the locals. From the record of SUK A on the issue of pension, it is found that seven pension receivers were Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent. They were in the civil service as office boys, Malay clerks, English clerks and Secret Police. What is interesting is that the record stated their races as Malay instead of Arab as shown in the following table.²⁹

23 SUK Kedah, 72/1948. p. 228.

24 Ibid., p. 46.

25 Ibid., p. 59.

26 Ibid., p. 256.

27 Ibid., p. 273.

28 Ibid., p. 333.

29 SUK A. File on pension, Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri Kedah. This information is copied as it is from the file record.

Table 5.1 SUK (A) File on Pension, Kedah.

No.	Name	Date of Birth	Race	Occupation
1.	Syed Yaacob B. Syed Mansor	-	-	Office boy – State Secretariat.
2.	Syed Omar b. Syed Mohamed	31 October 1923	Malay	Malay Clerk-employment- 3.2.1948 – 23.3.67
3.	Syed Mohamed b. Syed Abdul Rahman Al-Idrus (passed away)	1330	Malay	English Clerk- Grade II, 10-1087 - 14-1-1963
4.	Syed Mohamed b. Syed Alwi	14-8-1324	Malay	O.D.O II, Rice Monopoly. 1-11-49 – 27- Dec – 2602
5.	Syed Hussein b. Syed Mohammad Yahya	14-1-1317	Malay	Sup. Malay Clerk Grade I, (Cashier) – 12-2-39 – 19-7-2602
6.	Syed Mansor b. Syed Endut	1322-	Malay	Mata-Mata Kastam (customs sleuth) Grade II, 11-7-02 - 26-6-61.
7.	Syed. Hassan b. Syed Jan al-Jefferi	28 Apr. 1920	Malay	2 nd Asst. Land Office, Kuala Muda, 214-7-2602 – 29-6-1361

In the administration of Kedah, the post of chief minister or *menteri besar* was also being held by a Hadhrami Arab when Sayyid Ahmad Shahabuddin was appointed as the chief minister of Kedah from 1967 till 1978. He also held the positions of Deputy Minister and Ministry of Home Affairs (1978-1982). Sayyid Ahmad Shahabuddin also held various positions in the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) branch in Kedah.³⁰ Other than participation in administration, the 20th century also witnessed the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the politics of Kedah. Among the administration officials in Kedah who were also involved in the politics of the state after the Second World War were Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tunku Kassim, Sayyid Ahmad Shahabuddin and Sayyid Omar Shahabuddin.³¹

Political awareness among the Malays in particular the administrative officers in Kedah started to surge due to the impact of the Second World War. The British

³⁰ [http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx/ Archives. Ex-Malacca Governor laid to rest. Tuesday July 8, 2008, \(Accessed on May 15, 2014.\)](http://www.thestar.com.my/story.aspx/ Archives. Ex-Malacca Governor laid to rest. Tuesday July 8, 2008, (Accessed on May 15, 2014.))

³¹ Mohd. Isa Othman, *Kedah & Perlis Zaman Penjajahan British*, p. 237.

administration did not encourage Malay participation in politics. They had monitored and curbed any outside influence that were geared towards supporting Malay participation. Meanwhile, the reverse was true for the Japanese administration policy in Malaya, where they spurred anti-Western colonialism sentiments among the Malays to rally support from the people against the British. Nevertheless, there were also government officers who were anti-Japanese. However, the Malays realised that it is important for them to participate in politics to fight for their rights. Left-wing political parties emerged, spearheaded by the *Kesatuan Melayu Muda* that had a branch in Kedah. By the end of 1945, a committee consisted of several 'ulama and youths of Kedah formed a party known as *Kesatuan Melayu Kedah* (KMK). Among the committee members of KMK were Mahathir Mohamad (former Malaysian Prime Minister) and Sayyid Ahmad Shahabuddin (former Governor of Malacca). KMK was against the British's proposal of Malayan Union.³²

Perlis

Perlis is a state that is purely ruled and governed by the descendants of Jamalullail, the Hadhrami Arabs originating from Hadhramaut, Yemen. The Jamalullail's family has ruled the state since it was a small district and part of the Kedah Sultanate until today. Perlis separated from Kedah when Siam invaded Kedah in 1821, thus splitting Perlis and Setul from Kedah's territory. Sayyid Harun was appointed the local chief of Arau, Perlis. His son Sayyid Hussain became the sole ruler of Perlis in 1841.³³ Ever since, Perlis has become an independent state. However, Perlis was subjected to Siam suzerainty until the Bangkok Treaty was signed in 1909. Siam had some control over Perlis' internal affairs until 1905 when the state had a financial crisis. The problem

32 http://www.mykedah2.com/10heritage/109_2_p2.htm . (Accessed on 15 May 2014). For further details about the development of politics in Kedah, please refer to Azmi b. Saad, "Penubuhan dan Pergerakan Politik Melayu Negeri Kedah 1945-1955," in journalarticle.ukm.my/525/1/1/pdf. (Accessed on 15 May 2014). This article is part of the author's academic exercise. Azmi b. Saad, 'Negeri Kedah, 1945-1957: Suatu Kajian Pergerakan Politik Orang-Orang Melayu,' B.A. Academic Exercise, History Department, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 1978/79. See also Mohd. Noor Jusoh, 'Saberkas: Satu Tinjauan Terhadap Perjuangan Politik dari tahun 1944-1947,' B.A. Academic Exercise, University of Malaya, 1985/87.
33 Mohd. Isa Othman, *Pengalaman Kedah & Perlis Zaman Penjajahan British*, p. 6.

persisted, thus urging the ruler of Perlis to seek assistance from Siam through a loan which resulted in the appointment of a British adviser in the state.³⁴

Sayyid Hussain was said to be the person responsible of separating Perlis from Kedah's sovereignty in order to build a new government. Before Perlis became a separate political entity from Kedah, it was just a small district under the governorship of the Kedah Sultanate. According to Julie Tang, Sayyid Hussain revolted against the government of Kedah to form a new state of Perlis. Julie considers this revolution as a subtle rebellion or *pemberontakan halus* since it did not involve war or bloodshed. Sayyid Hussain waited for a suitable time before taking action to realize his mission, which was when the Kedah-Siam War was at its peak.³⁵ Sayyid Hussain's tendency to have a coalition pact with Siam was therefore seen as his effort to bring peace and to free Kedah from Siam's dominion.³⁶

However, there were various ideas proposed by researchers and scholars related to the factors that contributed to the appointment of Sayyid Hussain Jamalullail as the ruler of Perlis. Hussain Baba and Haji Buyong Adil believe that Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin awarded Perlis to Sayyid Hussain as a sign of appreciation for his efforts to free Kedah from Siam's sovereignty.³⁷ The close relations between Sayyid Hussain and the royal family of Kedah also contributed to his appointment as the ruler of Perlis. Even during the reign of Sultan Dhiauddin, Arau was awarded by the sultan to Sayyid Harun, his son in law (the father of Sayyid Hussain) as a marriage gift and the area was to be inherited by his offspring forever.³⁸

The appointment of Sayyid Hussain as the governor of Perlis in 1939 was a golden opportunity for him to consolidate his influence in Perlis. Julie discusses other

34 Mr. Duke was appointed from Bangkok as adviser to the Ruler of Perlis assisting him in the financial affairs of the state until 15 July 1909. When a treaty was signed between Siam and the Great Britain in 1909 that transferred the suzerainty of Siam over the Malay States to the Great Britain and this include Perlis. See Annual Report of the Adviser to the Perlis Government for the Year A.H. 1327 (23rd January, 1909 – 12th January, 1910), The National Archive of Malaysia, Kedah and Perlis Branch.

35 Julie Tang Su Chin, "Sejarah Kerajaan Negeri Perlis 1841-1957", *JMBRAS* Monograph No. 32, 2002, pp. 5-7, 66-76.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 15.

37 *Ibid.*, pp. 176-77; Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Perlis*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981, pp. 23-24.

38 Julie Tang Su Chin, "Sejarah Kerajaan Negeri Perlis 1841-1957", pp. 14-15. See also Ahmad Ismail and Yazid Mat, *Perlis Indera Kayangan. Sejarah Pembentukan Sebuah Negeri Berdaulat*, Perlis, 1974, pp. 27-28, 35, 40-44.

possibilities that have contributed to the appointment of Sayyid Hussain as a ruler of Perlis in 1843 by the *Maharaja Siam* as well as the reason behind Perlis' split from Kedah. British's intervention in the Siam-Kedah War also contributed to the ceasefire between the two countries. Due to the truce, Siam (Rama III) split the state of Kedah into three provinces which are Kedah, Kubang Pasu and Perlis. Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin returned to rule Kedah, while Perlis was put under the governorship of Sayyid Hussain. It is said that Sayyid Hussain was quick to take action to fill the vacuum in the politics of Kedah when there was no ruler in power during the war.³⁹

Sayyid Hussain used the opportunity to gain support from the local Malay dignitaries or *pembesar-pembesar Melayu* such as Muhammad Arshad bin Muhammad Yunus, the father in law of Sayyid Hussain, one of the Malay dignitaries who played an important role in the establishment of Perlis. Muhammad Arshad and Sayyid Hussain allied with Tunku Anum and Tunku Bisnu, members of the Kedah royalty in their struggle for power to overthrow Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin's rule in Kedah. Julie considers this action as a rebel from within the royal family itself and Sayyid Hussain who was an opportunist benefited from the skirmishes and power struggle between the royal dignitaries and the ruling sultan (Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin). At the same time, he showed his loyalty to Siam as well. When the truce was achieved and Siam was about to consider restructuring its rule over the colonies on the northern part of Peninsular, Sayyid Hussain offered himself to rule Perlis under Siam's patronage.⁴⁰

"In 1839 he ordered the state of Kedah to be divided into three states – Kedah, Kabangpasu, dan Polit... (A) trusted Malay, Tonku Setusen, (was) appointed Sultan of Polit".⁴¹

Therefore, the appointment of Sayyid Hussein as the new ruler of Perlis received strong support from Malay dignitaries that led to his appointment as the ruler of the

39 Julie Tang Su Chin, "Sejarah Kerajaan Negeri Perlis 1841-1957", pp. 20-22.

40 Ibid., pp. 67-76.

41 Ibid., p. 9. For details please refer to Walter F. Vella, *Siam Under Rama III 1824-67*, New York: J.J. Augustin Incorporated Publisher, Published for Asian Studies, 1957, p. 75.

state. The Hadhrami Arabs' struggle for power was not easy as it involved careful planning and cunning action from many parties. Records from the Government Gazette of Perlis show that the Hadhrami Arabs were also employed in the state administration of Perlis. Tuan Syed Omar b. Syed Hussain and Tuan Syed Hassan b. Syed Mohammad were appointed members of the Council of Religion and Malay Custom of Perlis in the 1960s together with other Malays.⁴² While in 1961, Tuan Syed Bahaldin b. Syed Noh, the Justice of Peace was appointed president for the Council of Religion and Malay Customs of Perlis.⁴³ Tuan Syed Hussain b. Syed Zain, the Justice of Peace of Perlis and Tuan Syed Ali b. Syed Hassan were appointed as members of Perlis' State Pardons Board in 1960. This appointment was for a period of three years.⁴⁴ Sayyid Alwi b. Syed Hassan and Tuan Syed Bakar b. Syed Hussain Al-Jafri were appointed as Justice of Peace within and for the State of Perlis.⁴⁵

The Hadhrami Arabs were also appointed as members of the Council of Succession in Perlis. Those appointed were Tuan Syed Hussain b. Syed Zain Jamalullail, J.P., Tuan Syed Mahmood b. Syed Alwee b. Syed Idrus Jamalullail, Tuan Syed Bakar b. Syed Hussain Al-Jafri, J.P., Tuan Syed Alwee b. Syed Idrus Jamalullail, and Tuan Syed Alwi b. Syed Hassan Jamalullail. Other candidates appointed to be the members of the Council of Succession in Perlis were such as the Mufti of Perlis, Tuan Shaykh Mahmud b. Haji Mat Saman, Dato' Wan Ahmad b. Wan Daud, D.P.M.P., J.M.N., P.J.K, J.P., Che Mat b. Haji Kassim, J.P., and Tuan Haji Abdullah b. Ahmad (J.P.).⁴⁶

The Hadhrami Arabs were also in the service of other sectors such as in Public Health, Juvenile Courts, Town Board Councils, the State Development Board of Perlis,

42 Government of Perlis Gazette, Vol. 5, August 1963, Vol. 7, June 1964, Vol. 8, March 1965, Vol. 9, March 1966, and Vol. 10, August 1967.

43 Government Perlis of Gazette, Vol. 4, May 1961.

44 Government of Perlis Gazette, Vol. 3, 20th September 1960 and 3rd November 1960.

45 Government of Perlis Gazette, Vol. 6, 24th June 1963 and Vol. 7, 16th July 1964.

46 Government of Perlis Gazette, Vol. 8, 16th December 1965.

Land Revenue Office, and also the Legislative Assembly of the State of Perlis.⁴⁷ Apart from that, the SUK Perlis for year 1946 shows that the Hadhrami Arabs were also employed in the state administration of Perlis such as Sayyid Ahmed bin Sayyid Hussain, a class III clerk who served in the Land Office and Sayyid Mohamad bin Sayyid Hussain, a Class III clerk who was also in the same office.⁴⁸

Pulau Pinang @ Penang

Pulau Pinang or Penang also witnessed the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the administration of the island. The Hadhrami Arabs were among the state's citizens of whom the majority were Chinese. The Hadhrami Arabs were employed as the government servants and had also joined the Municipality of George Town, Penang as members of the Rent Assessment Board, Rural Board, and Muslim Advisory Board. Among the Hadhrami Arabs in the service was Sayyid or Syed Salleh Alsagoff b. Syed Hashim Alsagoff, M.B.E., J.P. Sayyid Salleh was appointed as one of the members of the Rent Assessment Board for the Municipality of George Town, Penang and the rural areas on Penang Island.⁴⁹

Apart from that, Sayyid Salleh was also an appointed *qadi* for the North-East district of the Island of Penang, including Pulau Jerejak @ Jerjak. He was also appointed as a member of the Mohammedan Advisory Board, Penang for the year 1948 together with Sayyid Ahmad Al-Mashoor. Sayyid Salleh was again reappointed to become a member of the Muslim Advisory Board for the Settlement of Penang for the year 1949. He was also addressed as Captain Sayyid Salleh.⁵⁰

Besides, Tuan Sayyid Murthada Aidid b. Sayyid Mohdar Aidid, J.P., was appointed as an unofficial member of the Penang Settlement Council. He was among

⁴⁷ Government of Perlis Gazette, 1960-1967.

⁴⁸ SUK Perlis, 120/1946.

⁴⁹ Government Gazette, Penang, Vol. 1, No. 2, Thursday, 24th June, 1948, Kuala Lumpur.

⁵⁰ Government Gazette, Penang, Vol. 1, No. 7, Thursday, 29th April, 1948, Kuala Lumpur, Government Gazette, Penang, Vol. 1, No. 31, Thursday, 4th March, 1948, Kuala Lumpur, Government Gazette, Federation of Malaya Government Gazette, Penang, March 21, 1949, p. 64.

other 14 members of whom majority of them were Chinese (seven), with three Indians and three Malays, while the official members were all English. At the same time, Sayyid Murthada Aidid became the Justice of the Peace for the Settlement of Penang in the year 1948.⁵¹ In 1949, Sayyid Murthada Aidid was appointed member of the Rural Board, Penang. However, he resigned in August 1949. Apart from that, Sayyid was also appointed as the member of the Board of Visiting Justice for the Settlement of Penang in the same year.⁵² Several Hadhrami Arabs were appointed to serve as jurors too in the year 1949 in the Settlement of Penang. They were Sayyid Abdul Rahman b. Sayyid Abdullah, a clerk from Municipal Engineer Office, Sayyid Ahmad Al-Junied, a clerk from District Office Butterworth and Sayyid Mohamed S., an Assistant Manager from R. E. Mohd Kassim & Co.⁵³

Kelantan

In Kelantan, the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the state administration was more prominent in the 19th century compared to the 20th century. They were in charge of matters related to judicial or Islamic Laws. Sayyid Muhammad bin Sayyid Alwi was appointed as a judge with the title Toh Hakim of Kelantan. Besides that, his kin Sayyid Jaafar was also in the service as judge to the former Sultan Muhammad II (1835-1886).⁵⁴ Saad bin Ngah, the Datuk Maha Menteri, Nik Yusuf bin Nik Abdul Majid, the Datuk Sri Paduka and Sayyid Muhammad bin Sayyid Alwi were among the most influential figures in Kelantan. They were also responsible for the appointment of Sultan Mansor to the throne after the death of Sultan Muhammad III. These three chiefs and their followers strongly backed the chosen candidate to the throne in 1890 and

51 Government Gazette, Penang, Vol. 1, No. 1, Thursday, 5th February 1948, Kuala Lumpur Government Gazette, Penang, Vol. 1, No. 10, Thursday, 10th February 1948, Kuala Lumpur.

52 Government Gazette, March 21, 1949, Federation of Malaya Government Gazette, Penang, Government Gazette, Penang, Sept. 1, 1949, Federation of Malaya Government Gazette, Penang. Federation of Malaya Government Gazette, Penang, January 20, 1949.

53 Federation of Malaya Government Gazette, Penang, Vol. 1, No. 21, Thursday, 11th November, 1948.

54 Shahril Talib, "History of Kelantan 1890-1940", Monograph No. 21, Kuala Lumpur: The Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, 1995, p. 44. See also Nik Mohamed b. Nik Mohd. Salleh, "Kelantan in Transition: 1891-1910", in William R. Roff (ed.) *Kelantan, Society and Politics in a Malay State*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974, p. 7, footnote 35; H. Clifford, *British and Siamese Malaya*, London: Royal Colonial Institute proceedings, Vol. 34, 1902-3, p. 65

1891.⁵⁵ Sayyid Jaafar was a follower of Sultan Muhammad II. He was also the loyal commander of the Sultan in the Kelantan Civil War⁵⁶ along with Long Jinal, the ruler of Kelantan and the uncle of Sultan Muhammad II in 1839.⁵⁷

Perak

In Perak, the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the administration and politics of the state was significant ever since the 18th century. The Hadhrami Arabs had close contact with the ruling class of Perak, earning themselves good social reputation. They were addressed as *Tengku* and became part of Perak's royal family. The post of *Orang Kaya Besar* in the state of Perak was also held consecutively by the Arabs. The last official who held this post was Sayyid Jaafar. Meanwhile, the post of *Orang Kaya Menteri Sri Paduka Tuan Besar* was also held by the Arabs.⁵⁸

During the reign of Sultan Muzaffar Shah (1728-1754) in the previous century, two Hadhrami Arabs appointed to the post of *Orang Kaya Menteri Sri Paduka Tuan* were Sharif Hussain and Sharif Abu Bakar. Sayyid Abu Bakar was given the post of *Bendahara*, one of the main posts in the state of Perak during the reign of Sultan Iskandar (1752-1765). Among other duties of *Bendahara* was to oversee the state's home affairs. He acted as the chief minister and commander in chief of the state. Most of his income was collected from the tax charged on the imports and exports of the Kinta River.⁵⁹

Apart from that, the Hadhrami Arabs were also responsible for enacting the Ninety-Nine laws of Perak pertaining to local rules and regulations according to Islamic Laws. The Laws was composed by Sayyid Ja'afar bin Sayyid Unus. He was an influential leader in the Malay society and was appointed to a leading position as the

55 Shahril Talib, "History of Kelantan 1890-1940", p. 44.

56 See C. Skinner, "The Civil War in Kelantan in 1839", Monograph of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, No. 2, Singapore, 1965, p. 66, fn. 184.

57 Ibid.

58 R.O Winstedt, "The History of Perak", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 12, Part I, January 1934, p. 143.

59 Ibid., pp. 140-143.

chieftain or *penghulu* of Kuala Teja in the District of Kinta. Based on this record, the Laws of Perak was brought into the state by Sayyid Hassan during the reign of Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, *Marhum Tanah Abang*. Tuan Sayyid Abdul Majid was the chief officer or *menteri*. The Laws was composed based on *Shara'*; the Islamic legal system discussing issues related to Muslim practices in life such as marriages, criminal offences, divorces, slaves and loans.⁶⁰ The Ninety-nine Laws of Perak is proof showing that the Hadhrami Arabs had played a significant role in Perak and were entrusted with important tasks and positions in the state.

Johor

In Johor, the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the state's affairs and politics can be traced back to the 17th century during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1685-1699) when Tun Habib Abdul Majid (d. 1697)⁶¹ was appointed as the *Bendahara* of Johor with the title *Sri Maharaja*. *Bendahara* Tun Habib Abdul Majid was an Arab from Hadhramaut, Yemen descended through the Hashimite lineage of Sayyid Aidarus who migrated to Aceh. During his service as *Bendahara* of Johor, the state managed to maintain its political influence in the Malay Archipelago as well as its economic stability. When Tun Habib Abdul Majid retired, he was replaced by his son *Bendahara* Tun Abdul Jalil with the title *Bendahara Paduka Raja*.⁶²

Bendahara Tun Abdul Jalil was then appointed as the Sultan of Johor on 3rd September 1699 when Sultan Mahmud II passed away, leaving no heir to the throne. The *Bendahara* family managed to rule Johor for about 178 years (1699 – 1877). *Bendahara* Habib Tun Abdul Majid's father Habib Ali Zainal Abidin al-Aidarus was a

60 The Ninety-Nine Laws of Perak, in Undang-undang Melayu Lama, ANM 2006/01664, n.d.

61 *Bendahara* Tun Habib Abdul Majid was also called *Bendahara Padang Saujana*. The post *Bendahara* is equivalent to the post of prime minister today

62 R.O. Winstedt, "A History of Johore (1365-1895)", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 10, pt. 3, pp. 59,159. See attachment B the genealogy of Tun Habib Abdul Majid.

trader in Hijaz. He had another son named Sharif Muhammad Kebungsuwan.⁶³ According to Najeeb M. Saleeby, Sharif Muhammad Kebungsuwan was responsible for the formation of the Islamic Sultanate in Mindanao in the 16th century. He left Johor and arrived in Magindanao around late 15th or early 16th century. His father, Sharif ‘Ali Zainal Abidin married Jusul-Ashikin or Jawzul ‘Ashikin from the Sultan of Johor’s royal family. It is recorded that Jusul-Asiqin or Jawzul ‘Ashiqin was the granddaughter of Tun Sri Lanang by his son, Tun Jinal.⁶⁴

When the last ruler of Malacca, Sultan Mahmud II, the *al-Marhum Mangkat di Julang* died in 1699 and left no heir to the throne, the rule of Malacca-Johor Sultanate did not come to an end. It was indeed continued by a noble family from the descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. The *Bendahara* of Johor, *Seri Maharaja Tun Habib Abdul Majid*’s descendants took this big responsibility governing the state of Johor and its territories. In 1699, *Bendahara Paduka Raja Tun Habib Abdul Jalil*, the son of *Bendahara Tun Habib Abdul Majid* was appointed the new ruler of Old Johor with the title Sultan Abdul Jalil Ri’ayat Shah IV (1699-1718). His brother Tun Zainal Abidin was then made the first Sultan of Terengganu with the title Sultan Zainal Abidin I (1702-1726).⁶⁵

Bendahara Maharaja Tun Habib Abdul Majid descended from the offspring of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W, the *ahlu al-bayt*. Tun Suzana and Muzaffar believe that Tun Habib Abdul Majid was an *ahlu al-bayt* based on the title *habib* attached to his name that is used only by Sayyid descendents.⁶⁶ According to Daniel Perret and

63 According to Najeeb M. Saleeby Syarif Muhammad Kebongsuan was responsible to establish the Sultanate of Mindanao in the 16th century. For details please refer to Chapter 2. Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History, Law and Religion*, Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1976, p. 8.

64 R.O. Winstedt, “A History of Johore (1365-1895)”, pp. 59, 60, 189,194,195, Tun Suzana Tun Hj. Othman, *Institusi Bendahara Permata Melayu Yang Hilang Dinasti Bendahara Johor-Pahang*, Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka BSM Enterprise, 2002, p. 181; R.B. Serjeant, *The Saiyids of Hadramaut*, London: University of London, 1957, p. 25; Najeeb M. Saleeby, *Studies in Moro History*, pp. 52-53; Awang Haji Mohd. Jamil Awang Haji Omar, Sultan Sharif Ali, Seminar Sejarah Brunei, Anjuran Jabatan Pusat Sejarah, Kementerian Kebudayaan, Belia dan Sukan, Brunei Darussalam, 28-31 August 1989, pp. 34-35 and 37-38; Cesar Adib Majul, “The Muslims in Philippines: A Historical Perspective”, in Peter G. Gowing and Robert D. Mc Amis, *The Muslim Filipinos*, Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House, 1974, p. 25.

65 See Mohamed Anwar Omar Din, *Dirgahayu Tuanku: Sejarah Kesultanan Terengganu 1708-2008*, Yayasan DiRaja Sultan Mizan, 2009. See also Shahril Talib Robert, “The Trengganu Ruling Class in the Nineteenth Century”, *JMBRAS*, Vol. 50, pt 2, 1977, pp. 29-30.

66 Tun Suzana Tun Othman & Muzaffar Mohamad, *Ahlul Bait Rasulullah SAW dan Kesultanan Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Crescent News, 2006, pp. 199-201.

Kamaruddin Abdul Razak who conducted a research on the royalty's funeral area in Kota Tinggi, Johor, it is believed that there was a Hadhrami Arab community in the area around the 17th century and *Bendahara* Tun Habib Abdul Majid was Sayyid Aidarus' great grandchild.⁶⁷ This mausoleum does not only contain the graves of Malacca royal family members and dignitaries but also a grave of Sayyid Salim al-Aidarus, the religious teacher of Sultan Mahmud. The mausoleum itself is known as *Makam Sayyid* or *Makam Tauhid*. This could possibly refer to the family members of the Sayyids who were buried there.

The rule of *Bendahara* family ended in the 19th century, when the *Temenggung* family overthrew the *Bendahara* family and succeeded the throne. Sultan Abu Bakar was one of the *Temenggung* family members who came to throne in 1885. In the 19th and 20th century, a number of Hadhrami Arabs served in the state administration of Johor such as in the religious administration. Besides that, the Hadhrami Arab elites in Johor and Singapore were in close contact with the Sultan of Johor. Sayyid Mohammad al-Saqqaf was one of the leading Hadhrami Arab entrepreneurs in Johor and Singapore. He was a close friend to Sultan Abu Bakar. He accompanied the Sultan on his overseas trips on several occasions. Sayyid Mohammad al-Saqqaf was honoured with a medal *Pingat Darjah Kerabat*. He was the first non-royal individual rewarded with such a title that signifies his close contact with the royal family of Johor. With this title he was regarded as a part of the royal family of Johor. Through good contact maintained with the ruling family of Johor, Sayyid Mohammad Al-Saqqaf was awarded 60,000 acres of concession land at Kukob, Johor. The concession land was later on named The *Constantinople Estate* which was meant to be used for cultivation purposes except opium.⁶⁸

67 Daniel Perret & Kamaruddin Abdul Razak, *Batu Aceh: Warisan Sejarah Johor*, Johor Bahru: Yayasan Warisan Johor, 1999, pp. 197-198.

68 Saadiah Said, "Kegiatan Keluarga al-Sagoff dalam Ekonomi Negeri Johor 1878-1906", *Jebat*, No. 6/7, 1977/78, p. 53.

Sayyid Hassan al-Attas was another Hadhrami Arab who had connections with the royal family of Johor. He was also awarded with *Pingat Darjah Kerabat* in 1926 by Sultan Ibrahim.⁶⁹ Sayyid Hassan Al-Attas became the sultan's representative when dealing with matters related to diplomatic and political relations of Johor. For example, Sayyid Hassan attended the Caliphate Conference in Cairo in May 1926 representing the Sultan of Johor. The conference discussed issues of future leadership of the Muslim *Ummah*.⁷⁰ Sayyid Hassan Sayyid Hassan was also awarded land concession of 2000 acres near Johor Bahru by the Sultan of Johor. This concession came to be known as the Estate of Habib Hassan. The concession was planted with rubber, coconut and pineapple. Today, the former Sayyid Hassan Estate covers the thriving Century Garden, Wadi Hassan, Kampung Ngee Heng, Hulu Air Molek, Saujana, Kampung Tarum and part of Kampung Kubur.⁷¹

When the British started to interfere in state administration of Johor in 1914, an agreement was signed between the government of Johor and the British on 12 May 1914. The agreement among others touched on the rights of the people of Johor or Malays of Johor to work in the government service. In this respect, the Hadhrami Arabs were also given privileges like the Malays. Many of the Hadhrami Arabs in Johor born of Malay mothers and Arab fathers enjoyed the same benefits with the Malays of Johor.⁷²

It is recorded that the arrival of Arabs to the state had increased every year since 1911.⁷³ Many of them came to settle down and trade in Johor as well as in other states in Malaya. They also received good treatment from the royal family of Johor. Many of

69 Sayyid Ali Mohammad al-Attas, *Almarhum Sayyid Hassan Ahmad al-Attas. Seorang Mujahid dan Pembangun Ummah*, Johor Bahru: Wakaf Almarhum Syed Hassan bin Ahmad Alattas, 1984, p. 22

70 Pejabat Agama 180/241, The National Archive, Malaysia, (Johor branch). A letter from Sultan Ibrahim to the president of the Universal Caliphate Congress of Cairo, Egypt, 17 April 1926; and letter from the sultan private secretary to the president of the congress, 21 March 1926.

71 Aminuddin bin Abd. Rashid, 'Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas: Satu Kajian Biografi', B.A. Academic Exercise, University of Malaya, 1995/96, p. 59.

72 R.O. Winstedt, "A History of Johore (1365-1895)", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 10, pt. 3, p. 146. This treaty officially signifies that the Government of Johor agreed to accept the British General Adviser, D.G. Campbell.

73 Nathan, J.E., *The Census of British Malaya 1921*, London, Dunstable and Watford: Printed by Waterlow & Sons Limited, 1922, p. 92. Please also refer to chapter 1 the census of Arab people in un-federated Malay states from 1911- 1947.

them were employed in the administration of the state. They were employed in the police department, high court, the land office and mines and the registrar of marriages and divorces. Sayyid Muhammad and Ungku Ahmad Sayyid Abdullah were appointed as members of the Johor State Council Meeting for the year 1873. Ungku Ahmad Sayyid Abdullah was also appointed as the resident of Pengerang.⁷⁴

Several Hadhrami Arabs were employed in the religious administration in Johor. In 1873, Sayyid Ahmad al-Attas was appointed as *mufti* of Johor whilst Sayyid Salim al-Attas was appointed as a member of the State Assembly or *Ahli Dewan Negeri*.⁷⁵ Sayyid Salim then was promoted to the position of *mufti* of Johor in 1893 while the post of *Shaykh al-Islam* was held by Sayyid Salim Ahmad Al-Attas.⁷⁶ Sayyid Alwi Tahir al-Haddad was the famous and longest *mufti* in service since the retirement of Sayyid Abdul Kadir Mohsin Al-Attas in 1934.⁷⁷ Sayyid Alwi bin Tahir Al-Haddad became the leading 'ulama' and was renowned for his intellectuality. He was well versed in Islamic Jurisprudence and Islamic education. He also played a critical role in promoting Islamic literacy and history in Johor. His Islamic reformist ideas were channelled through his involvements in religious works, education and journalistic writings.⁷⁸

Pahang

The political situation in Pahang was also interesting with the presence of Hadhrami Arabs' influence in the state. The rulers of Pahang himself were from *Bendahara Tun Habib Abdul Majid* of Johor's lineage. The Hadhrami Arabs' influence in the state affairs of Pahang started when Tun Abbas, the *Bendahara* of Johor was appointed as

74 Mohd. Sohaimi Esa, 'Pelibatan Individu-Individu Arab dalam Ekonomi Negeri Johor (1862-1942)', M.A. Dissertation, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 1997, pp. 51-52; The Straits Calendar and Directory, 1873. (Microfilm, National Library 1174-88, National Library of Singapore). See also Ahmad Fauzi Basri, Johor 1855-1917, pp. 38 and 55.

75 Straits Calendar and Directory, 1873, p. 12.

76 See M.A. Fawzi Mohd. Basri, "Perkembangan dan Peranan Jabatan Agama Johor 1895-1940", *Malaysia in History*, Vol. 18, No. 1, June 1975, pp. 10 & 15.

77 Pejabat Agama Johor, 68/34. National Archive, Malaysia (Johor Bahru Branch), 8 Mac 1934. Sayyid Alwi Tahir al-Haddad took over the position of *mufti* of Johore on 8 March 1934.

78 Nurulwahidah Fauzi, Abdullah Yusuf and Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor, "Hadhrami 'Ulama' Within the Malay-Johor Activism: The Role of Sayyid 'Alwi bin Tahir Al-Haddad (1934-1961)", *Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research* 13 (3): 354-362, 2013, DOI:10.5829/idosi.mesjr.2013.13.3.1918

the *Bendahara* of Pahang. Tun Abbas was the offspring of the late *Bendahara* of Johor. Sultan Mahmud Shah III of Johor awarded the state of Pahang to *Bendahara* Tun Abdul Majid as a family hereditary. *Bendahara* Tun Abdul Majid was also known as *Bendahara* Pahang. Since then, Pahang has been ruled by the *Bendahara* family until today. Among the successors of Tun Abbas who ruled Pahang were Tun Abdul Majid, Tun Muhammad, Tun Koris, Tun Ali, Tun Mutahir, and Tun Ahmad who was also known as Wan Ahmad.⁷⁹

The Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the state affairs of Pahang was significant during the reign of *Bendahara* Tun Ali (1806-1857) when he appointed his son-in-law Sayyid Umar as the chief minister. Sayyid Umar was styled *Engku Sayyid*. Engku Sayyid Umar has two sons Tuan Embong and Tuan Ngah.⁸⁰ When *Bendahara* Tun Ali passed away in 1857, the position of *Bendahara* was taken over by Tun Mutahir. Tun Mutahir's appointment as the *Bendahara* of Pahang received strong support from Arab leaders such as Sayyid Umar al-Attas and Sayyid Deraman Abdul Rahman.⁸¹

Tun Ahmad or Wan Ahmad, the brother of *Bendahara* Tun Mutahir contested and claimed the throne of Pahang for the post *Bendahara*. Eventually Tun Ahmad succeeded in defeating his brother *Bendahara* Tun Mutahir in a long disputed civil war or *perang saudara* that lasted for almost six years from 1857 till 1863. Tun Ahmad also received support from the Hadhrami Arab chief Sayyid Al-Idrus.⁸² Besides, there were also other Hadhrami Arab families who supported Tun Ahmad's claim to the throne such as Al-Khirid, Al-Habsyi and Al-Yahya.⁸³ After succeeding in the civil war, Tun Ahmad was appointed as the *Bendahara* of Pahang in 1863 with the title *Bendahara Sewa Raja* (Seri Wa Raja). Tun Ahmad then was declared the Sultan of Pahang on 5 December 1884 with the title Sultan Ahmad Al-Mu'azam Shah. He was recognised as

79 W. Linehan, "History of Pahang", *JMBRAS*, Vol. XIV, pt. II, 1936, p. 60.

80 Ibid.

81 Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984, pp. 96-97.

82 Linehan, W. "A History of Pahang", *JMBRAS*, Vol. XIV, pt.2, May 1936, p. 71.

83 Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, *Sejarah orang Syed di Pahang*, pp. 96-97.

the Sultan of Pahang by the British in 1887. Sultan Ahmad al-Mu‘azam Shah ruled Pahang until 1914 when he passed away at the age of 78.⁸⁴

Apart from that, the Hadhrami Arabs from Sayyid descent were also employed in the state administration of Pahang. For example, Sayyid Sohor Sayyid Ahmad was appointed as chieftain or *penghulu* of Semantan, Temerloh; Sayyid Abdul Rahman who was also known as Tuan Chik was made *penghulu* of Jenderak, Temerloh; Sayyid Hamzah bin Tuan Sayyid Dabal, the headman or *penghulu* of Sungai Karang, Kuantan; and Sayyid Muhammad Sidek bin Hamzah, the chieftain or *penghulu* of Pahang Tua.⁸⁵

Negeri Sembilan

Negeri Sembilan is another state in Malaya that witnessed significant roles played by Hadhrami Arabs in administration and politics of the state in the 19th and 20th century Malaya. These Hadhrami Arabs were said to be responsible for bringing in the British to meddle in the state’s internal affairs which eventually led to British’s intervention in 1874. Sayyid Sha‘aban bin Sayyid Ibrahim al-Qadri (d.1873) was one of the prominent Arab leaders in Negeri Sembilan in the 19th century. Born into a religious family of an Arab religious teacher in Rembau earned him respect and social status in the society. His mother however, was a local woman from Melaka. Sayyid Sha‘aban married the daughter of Raja Ali, one of the ruling families of Negeri Sembilan. Raja Ali was the great grandchild of Raja Adil, the second Raja from Sumatra who became the *Yam Tuan Besar* of Negeri Sembilan.⁸⁶

When Raja Ali became *Yam Tuan Besar* of Negeri Sembilan in 1832, he appointed Sayyid Sha‘aban, his son-in-law to become the *Yam Tuan Muda*. Sayyid

84 Regarding the civil war between Sultan Ahmad and his brother Tun Mutahir, kindly refer W. Linehan, ‘A History of Pahang,’ pp. 53, 71; Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, “Perang dan Damai: Politik Melayu Abad ke-19 dengan rujukan kepada Perang Muar 1879-1880”, in *Masyarakat Melayu Abad ke-19*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1991, pp. 92-94; (Tun) Suzana (Tun) Hj. Othman, *Institusi Bendahara Permata Melayu Yang Hilang*, pp. 93-124.

85 Mahayudin Yahaya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang*, p. 99.

86 Khoo Kay Kim, “Syed Shaaban bin Syed Ibrahim al-Kadri”, *Peninjau Sejarah*, Vol. II, No. 1, April 1967, p. 40.

Sha‘aban became prominent and acted as the adviser to the *Yam Tuan Besar*, Raja Ali.⁸⁷ Unfortunately, his appointment to the position of *Yam Tuan Muda* was not agreed by other Negeri Sembilan Malay chiefs. A “dispute over a building of a stockade to collect tolls at Simpang” between the joint of Sungai Rembau and Sungai Linggi caused a war. In this incident, Sayyid Sha‘aban was forced to withdraw his military forces to Melaka. Despite his failure to regain his position even after several attempts, he was crowned as the ruler of Tampin with the title *Tengku Besar Tampin*. Sayyid Sha‘aban held the post until he passed away in 1873.⁸⁸ One of his sons, Sayyid Hamid was appointed as the *Yam Tuan Muda* of Negeri Sembilan in the 1870s.⁸⁹ Although Sayyid Sha‘aban was a commoner with no royal blood, his children from his marriage to the daughter of Raja Ali, the *Yam Tuan Besar* of Negeri Sembilan had the rights to inherit the throne. His appointment as *Tengku Besar Tampin* was based on his relationship with Raja Ali, the *Yam Tuan Besar* of Negeri Sembilan. Since then, the post of *Tengku Besar Tampin* was taken over by his descendant hereditarily until today.

Sayyid Abdul Rahman bin Sayyid Ahmad al-Qadri, the *Dato’ Klana* of Sungai Ujong was another prominent Arab leader in the history of Negeri Sembilan (1873-1880). He was the nephew of Sayyid Sha‘aban. Sayyid Abdul Rahman held the post of *Laksamana* of Sungei Ujong in 1850 while Sending assumes the post of *Datuk Klana* of Sungei Ujong replacing *Datuk Klana Kawal*. When *Datuk Klana* Sending passed away in 1873, Sayyid Abdul Rahman replaced him as new *Datuk Klana* of Sungei Ujong.⁹⁰ He played a significant role in the politics and administration of Negeri Sembilan. Sayyid Abdul Rahman together with Dato’ Muda of Linggi made a deal with Andrew Clarke, the Governor of the Straits Settlement over a friendship pact that indirectly ceded their territories under the British protection. Sayyid Abdul Rahman could have

87 R.O. Winstedt, “The History of Negeri Sembilan”, *JMBRAS*, Vol. XII, Part II, October 1934, p. 63, Khoo Kay Kim, ‘Syed Shaaban bin Syed Ibrahim al-Kadri’, p. 41.

88 See Norhalim Hj. Ibrahim, *Sejarah Linggi: Pintu Gerbang Sejarah Pembangunan Negeri Sembilan*, Shah Alam: Penerbit Fajar Bakti Sdn Bhd., 1998, pp. 164-165; 169; 171-173; 175-176.

89 Mohammad Redzuan Ohman, *The Arab Migration and Its Importance*, p. 17, Khoo Kay Kim, “Syed Shaaban bin Syed Ibrahim al-Kadri”, p. 46.

90 John Gullick, ‘The Tampin Successor,’ *JMBRAS*, Vol. 4, Part II, 1976, pp. 32-33

done that as a precaution step taken to protect himself and his territory from the attack of other districts in Negeri Sembilan. His action was not likened and envied by other Malay chiefs of Negeri Sembilan. The chiefs were afraid that they would lose their power and authority in Negeri Sembilan. So, they planned an attack over Sungai Ujong.⁹¹

The British assisted *Dato' Klana* Sungai Ujong by providing him with armed forces in the later struggle against *Yam Tuan Antah*. The British also openly backed *Dato' Klana* over the claim of Terachi. The war broke out in December 1875. During this war, *Yam Tuan Antah* and his army were not able to fight against the allied forces of *Dato' Klana*. Eventually, *Yam Tuan Antah* was forced to withdraw from the battle and retreat to Johor. After some time, he returned to Negeri Sembilan but became less powerful. *Yam Tuan Antah* was appointed as the *Yam Tuan* of Sri Menanti.⁹² Gradually, the British managed to increase their political dominance and influence in Negeri Sembilan. Sayyid Ali bin Zain al-Jufri was another Hadhrami Arab leader in Negeri Sembilan who also had a direct contact with the British. He also signed a political deal with the British in September 1886 that made his territory, Jelebu under British protection. Sayyid Ali was the chieftain or *penghulu* of Jelebu.⁹³ Since then, leaders of the districts in Negeri Sembilan took a drastic step by signing political deals with the British in order to seek protection in 1895. The districts include Sri Menanti, Sungai Ujong, Jelebu, Rembau, and Tampin.⁹⁴

Selangor

In Selangor, the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent also actively involved themselves in the politics and administration of the state, particularly in the Klang Civil War in the

91 R.O. Winstedt, 'History of Negeri Sembilan,' pp. 69-71, Khoo Kay Kim, 'Syed Shaaban bin Syed Ibrahim al-Kadri', p. 46.

92 J. M. Gullick, 'The War with Yam Tuan Antah,' *JMBRAS*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 1954, pp. 5-10; Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, 'Kebangkitan-Kebangkitan Anti-British di Semenanjung Tanah Melayu' in Khoo Kay Kim, (ed.) *Sejarah Masyarakat Melayu Modern*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Muzium Malaysia, 1984, p. 5.

93 R.O. Winstedt, 'History of Negeri Sembilan,' p. 74.

94 *Ibid.*, p. 74.

1870s. Sayyid Mashhor or Masahor bin Muhammad al-Shahab was among those who participated in this civil war. He was a Malay warrior with Arab blood who came from Pontianak. In the beginning, he was on the side of Tunku Kudin. Tunku Kudin sent him to the fortress at Kuala Selangor. Not long after his departure, his brother Sayyid Abdullah was killed in Langat.⁹⁵ Sayyid Mashhor was very angry with the incident and he believed that the murder was planned by Raja Yaakub. Since then, Sayyid Mashhor was not in good terms with Tunku Kudin. He became allies with Raja Mahadi, Tunku Kudin's opponent.⁹⁶ On the side of Tunku Kudin was also a Hadhrami Sayyid named Sayyid Zain or Zin.⁹⁷ Sayyid Zain or Zin was a Malay of Arab blood from Penang.⁹⁸ When the war ended, Sayyid Mashhor was appointed as a chieftain or *penghulu* at Kerling. Sayyid Zin was appointed chief subordinate to Tengku Kudin, the ruler of Klang and Kuala Selangor from 1870-1874.⁹⁹

Terengganu

In Terengganu, the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the state's administration was significant in the 19th and 20th century, especially during the reign of Baginda Omar (1839-1876) and Sultan Zainal Abidin III (1881-1918). In fact, the genealogy of the Terengganu Sultanate was also from Tun Habib Abdul Majid, the *Bendahara* of Johor. Tun Zainal Abidin, the son of *Bendahara* Tun Habib Abdul Majid was appointed as the first Sultan of Terengganu with the title Sultan Zainal Abidin I (1702-1726). His appointment to the throne of Terengganu was supported by religious leaders of Terengganu, such as Syarif Abdul Malik b. Abdullah who was popularly known as Tok Ku Pulau Manis.¹⁰⁰ The present Sultan of Terengganu, Tunku Mizan also has Arab

95 Haji Buyong Adil, *Perjuangan Orang Melayu Menentang Penjajahan Abad 15-19*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan bahasa dan Pustaka dan Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 1985, p. 182.

96 Haji Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Selangor*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1981, pp. 69-70.

97 J.M. Gullick, "Tunku Kudin of Kedah", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 60, Part 2, 1987, p. 82.

98 Haji Buyong Adil, *Perjuangan Orang Melayu Menentang Penjajahan Abad 15 – 19*, p. 187.

99 Wan Mohd. Amin bin Wan Mohd. Said, *Pesaka Selangor*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1966.

75 Emily Sadka, *The Protected Malay States 1874-1895*, Kuala Lumpur: University Press, 1968, p. 27.

100 See Mohamed Anwar Omar Din, *Dirgahayu Tuanku: Sejarah Kesultanan Terengganu 1708-2008*, Yayasan DiRaja Sultan Mizan, 2009. See also Shahril Talib Robert, "The Trengganu Ruling Class in the Nineteenth Century", pp. 29-30.

blood from Sayyid descent. The Sultan is a descent of Sayyid Omar Al-Junied, one of the Arab pioneers of modern Singapore.¹⁰¹

The administration of the state of Terengganu was divided into several districts. Each district was governed by immediate royal family and dignitaries. They also had the rights to collect tax revenues in each of their controlled areas. Each district was constantly in touch with the administrative centre in Kuala Terengganu. The decision made by the Sultan in governing Terengganu by placing each district under the supervision of royal families and dignitaries could be considered as a wise action because the responsibility to protect Terengganu was fairly distributed among them and became everyone's concern. The respective chiefs were responsible to look after their districts. This practice could also help to avoid a power struggle between the royal families. In 1882, Terengganu was divided into eight districts.¹⁰²

During the rule of Sultan Zainal Abidin III, the state administration of Terengganu was divided into 12 districts. Norizan Mustafa touches on the 'patrimonial' pattern of rule practiced in the state in which the royal families and chiefs were appointed as representatives of the sultan for a region or district.¹⁰³ But in certain conditions, these representatives were not selected based on blood relations or were among the dignitaries, but rather from religious scholars or leading figures in the society. This practice is known as 'extra-patrimonial'.¹⁰⁴

In order to govern the various districts in Terengganu, Sultan Zainal Abidin III had appointed his close family members and the state's officials to run the administration of every district. Among those officials were the Hadhrami Arabs. For example, Sayyid Muhammad bin Zainal Abidin al-Idrus or Tokku Tuan Besar was

101 *Al-Mahjar*, "Terengganu's Sultan's mother is an Alsagoff," in Points to Ponder Column, Vol. 4, No. 1, April 1999.

102 See Abdullah Zakaria bin Ghazali, "Perubahan dalam Pentadbiran Terengganu 1893-1942", Malaysia dari Segi Sejarah, No. 11, 1982, p. 66. See also Norizan Binti Mustafa, *Sejarah Kuala Terengganu 1900-1957*, M.A. Dissertation, Jabatan Sejarah, Fakulti Sains Kemasyarakatan dan Kemanusiaan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 1989/90, p.2.

103 Patrimonial means the provision by the government of a province or district to someone based on blood tie among the kin or relatives. See Norizan Binti Mustafa, *Sejarah Kuala Terengganu 1900-1957*, p. 41.

104 Extra-patrimonial means the award of a province or territory to those who do not have any family relationship with the government. Grants may occur on the basis of a close personal relationship between the government and the person. See Norizan Binti Mustafa, *Sejarah Kuala Terengganu History 1900-1957*, p. 41.

awarded Chabang Tiga and Sayyid Abu Bakar or Tuan Bong was awarded Ulu Trengganu.¹⁰⁵ Sayyid Muhammad bin Zainal Abidin al-Idrus, popularly known as Tokku Tuan Besar was given some sort of autonomy in managing the District of Chabang Tiga. He was assisted by his sons; Sayyid Mustaffa who was also known as Tuan Dalam, Sayyid Abdul Rahman popularly known as Engku Chik, Sayyid Abu Bakar also known as Tuan Embong and Sayyid Ahmad or Tuan Ngah. Each of them was helped by a *budak raja*. Tokku Tuan Besar made a mosque as his office and built up kind of lock-up house to detain the guilty.¹⁰⁶

A pole was also erected to tie those who were charged of *takzir* for not fasting in *Ramadhan* and did not perform Friday congregational prayers. During the reign of Sultan Omar, Terengganu was popularly known as *Darus Salam* or the abode of peace where Islamic laws were strictly practised by the people.¹⁰⁷ Sayyid Abu Bakar or Tuan Bong was awarded Ulu Trengganu.¹⁰⁸ He also had marital bonds with the Sultan when he married the Sultan's niece. Syed Abdullah was appointed as the minister of Terengganu.¹⁰⁹ Sayyid Abdul Rahman, popularly known as Tok Ku Paloh or Engku Sayyid Paloh was awarded Sungai Nerus and the area was placed under his supervision.¹¹⁰

The Al-Idrus family was among the Hadhrami Arab families who played a significant role in the state of Terengganu. The family of Al-Idrus was also known as a family of scholars. They played an important role in the administration of religion and also in other state affairs, administratively and politically. The close relations built with the ruling class of Terengganu enabled them to play an important role in the state, thus

105 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Arab Migration and Its Importance in the Historical Development of the Late Nineteen and Early Twentieth Century Malaya*, pp. 18-19; Yusri b. A. Ghani, *Sistem Pentadbiran British di Terengganu dan Reaksi Masyarakat Setempat 1909-1928*, B.A. Academic Exercise, History Department, Fakulti Sains Kemasyarakatan dan Kemanusiaan, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Bangi, 2001, pp. 15-17.

106 Ibid.

107 Wan Husin Wan Embong, "Peranan dan Pengaruh Tok Ku Tuan Besar", in Mohamad Abu Bakar (ed.), *Ulama Terengganu Suatu sorotan*, Terengganu: Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn. Bhd., 1991, pp. 140-143. See also Muhamad Salleh Haji Awang, *Mengkaji Sejarah Terengganu*, Singapura: Al-Ahmadiyah Press, 1957, p. 23.

108 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Arab Migration and Its Importance in the Historical Development of the Late Nineteen and Early Twentieth Century Malaya*, pp. 18-19.

109 Buyong Adil, *Sejarah Terengganu*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1974, p. 152.

110 Yusri b. A. Ghani, *Sistem Pentadbiran British di Terengganu dan Reaksi Masyarakat Setempat 1909-1928*, p. 15.

succeeding in making Islamic Laws as the state's legislature. This can be seen in the appointment of Sayyid Muhammad bin Zainal Abidin Al-Idrus (Tokku Tuan Besar), a prominent scholar in Terengganu during the reign of *Baginda Omar* as *Shaykh al-'Ulama'*. Besides that, Tokku Tuan Besar was also appointed as the head to lead the *Dewan 'Ulama'* or Scholars' Hall that functions as the highest government office that monitors and consults all matters related to state affairs.¹¹¹

The Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent were also given priority to hold important positions in the state administration of Terengganu. Apart from their close connection with the aristocrats through marital bonds, their credibility and authority in the field had earned them a social prestige in the society. When Tengku Ismail, the chief minister or *Menteri Besar* of Terengganu passed away, his position was taken over by Sayyid Muhammad Zain, one of the Tokku Tuan Besar's sons with title *Engku Sayyid Seri Perdana*. The *'Ulama'* of Terengganu had managed to implement Islamic Laws as the state's constitution.¹¹² In Terengganu, the *'ulama'* had its own rank whereby they became part of ruling class in the society. In May 1941, Sayyid Muhammad bin Idrus was appointed Magistrate I for criminal law in the province or district of Kuala Terengganu, Ulu Terengganu, Marang, and Bukit Rakit during the emergency period (*darurat*). He was given the authority to hear and sentence criminal cases in the provinces.¹¹³

Another family member of Al-Idrus who was also a prominent scholar in Terengganu during the reign of Sultan Zainal Abidin III (1881-1918) was Sayyid Abdul Rahman Al-Idrus, the son of Tok Ku Tuan Besar. Sayyid Abdul Rahman was popularly known as Tok Ku Paloh. Politically, Tok Ku Paloh played an important role in Terengganu when he was appointed *shaykh al-'ulama'* of Terengganu. He also became

111 Wan Husin Wan Embong, 'Peranan dan Pengaruh Tok Ku Tuan Besar', p. 140.

112 Ibid.

113 Surat tauliah daripada Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah kepada Sayyid Muhammad bin Idrus sebagai Magistret I Jenayah Negeri Terengganu. Surat Tauliah bertarikh 5 Jamadil Awal tahun 1361/ 21 Mei 1942 semasa pendudukan Jepun. Refer to Norizan Binti Mustafa, *Sejarah Kuala Terengganu 1900-1957*.

a member of the State Council Meeting. The authority and integrity of Tok Ku Paloh as a religious scholar earned him respect and trust from the Sultan Zainal Abidin III who made him his teacher. Sultan Zainal Abidin III always referred to Tok Ku Paloh who acted as his adviser to consult in matters related to the state's political and administrative affairs. According to Mohamad Abu Bakar, Sultan Zainal Abidin III consulted Tok Ku Paloh to seek his opinion regarding the 1895 incident that involved the Pahang warriors.¹¹⁴ He further says that the close relation between the two gave them the opportunity to consult each other in the state's as well as personal affairs.¹¹⁵ Apart from the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent, the non-Sayyid Hadhrami Arab who was also in the service of the state religious administration in Terengganu was Shaykh Hassan bin Said Yemeni. Shaykh Hassan was appointed to the post of the *mufti* of Terengganu during the reign of Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Shah (1920-1942).¹¹⁶

The Hadhrami Arabs played quite a considerable role in the administration of the state of Terengganu that involved both religious and political issues whereby they also acted as advisor to the Sultan. For example, Sayyid Abdul Rahman Al-Idrus, popularly known as Tok Ku Paloh with the consent of the Sultan was believed to have given protection and shelter to the Pahang warriors involved in the Pahang revolt in 1891. The British were suspicious and believed that Tok Ku Paloh was involved in the Pahang revolt. However, they could not prove his involvement in this plot. Tok Ku Paloh was a religious man who was also believed to possess *karamah*. Tok Ku Paloh was said to be responsible for instilling the spirit of *jihad* among the Pahang warriors while they were taking refuge in Terengganu.¹¹⁷

In Pahang, the revolt that was led by Datuk Bahaman, Tok Gajah and Mat Kilau was almost defeated. For that reason, they withdrew to Terengganu and sought help

114 Mohamad Abu Bakar, 'Ulama dan Umara: Tok Ku Paloh dan Pemerintahan Islam', in Mohamad Abu Bakar (ed.), *Ulama Terengganu Suatu Sorotan*, Terengganu: Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn. Bhd, 1991, p. 184.

115 Ibid., pp. 183-184.

116 Shaykh Hassan bin Said Yemeni's appointment letter as mufti of Terengganu. SUK Tr. 97/1361, Surat Tauliah kepada Sheikh Hasan bin Said Al-Yamani, Pejabat Sultan Terengganu, 22 Rajab 1361 (4 August 2602).

117 Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, "Agama dan Kebangkitan anti-British di Tanah Melayu", in *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980, p. 128.

from Tok Ku Paloh. Hence, they were given shelter in Paloh and taught with knowledge on how to fight their enemy (British) in Pahang.¹¹⁸ According to Mohamad Abu Bakar, Tok Ku Paloh had instilled in them the spirit of Islam, and urged them to launch *jihad* against the British. The refugees had a concrete reason to fight against British colonialism. They managed to recapture the fortress at Jeram Ampai. Clifford believed that the contact made between the Pahang people and Tok Ku Paloh had triggered the element of religion in the Pahang Revolt in 1894. 400 people from Pahang took shelter in Paloh where they were also allowed to explore and open new settlements there. However, the British officers were not able to trace down these people. Under the order of Tok Ku Paloh, the villagers of Paloh were asked to protect and cover the refugees from being found by the British agents.¹¹⁹

Clifford then led an expedition to arrest the rebels from Pahang in Terengganu. He even asked Sultan Zainal Abidin III to issue a warrant or *surat kuasa* for him to arrest anyone who helped the rebels from Terengganu. However, the authority given to him was limited to ordinary people only. The royals, the Sayyid families and the dignitaries of Terengganu were excluded from any investigations. The British nevertheless were always suspicious of Tok Ku Paloh. They had even met him to investigate the rebels from Pahang. To Clifford, Tok Ku Paloh was the main obstacle to his efforts in searching for the rebels in Terengganu.¹²⁰

To achieve their aim, the British had bribed the people in order to know the whereabouts of the Pahang rebels who were hiding in Terengganu, especially at Sungai Kemia. The British also offered free pardon to the rebels.¹²¹ Unfortunately, the

118 Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Ulama dan Umara: Tok Ku Paloh dan Pemerintahan Islam", p. 184. See also C.O. 273/351. Conlay's report from 11 July – 31 August, Anderson to Colonial Office, 22 September 1909.

119 Ibid., pp. 184-185.

120 Ibid., p. 185.

121 Aruna Gopinath, "Pahang 1880-1938 A Political History", *Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, (MBRAS)*, Monograph No. 18, 1991, p. 159. See also Duff to Clifford, 12 May 1895, enclosure in Mitchell to Ripon, Confidential, 27 May 1895, C.O. 273/104, f. 129; H. Clifford, 'Report on the Expedition Recently led into Kelantan and Trengganu on the East Coast of the Malay Peninsula,' *JMBRAS*, Vol. 34, Pt. 1, 1961, pp. 141-143. See also Clifford to Colonial Secretary, 5 September 1895, enclosure in Mitchell to Ripon, Confidential, 9 September 1895, C.O.273/206, f. 93; Clifford to Colonial secretary, 5 September 1895, enclosure no. 2 in R.H. Meade to Foreign Office., 10 October 1895, FOCP part 7, No. 76, p. 213. At the beginning many were refused to cooperate to disclose the information as they were afraid to be punished by mutilation of the nose.

continuous uprising and hardships experienced by the natives had forced them to surrender, betraying the dissidents. As a result of that, two Arab residents of Pahang, Sayyid Husain and Sayyid Seman (Uthman) finally informed Clifford of the refugees' location at Sungai Kemia.¹²²

According to Mohamad Abu Bakar, the British got an easy path to consolidate their influence in Terengganu, particularly when Tok Ku Paloh passed away in 1917 followed by Sultan Zainal Abidin in 1918. The death of these two influential figures who were strong opponents of the British rule in Terengganu, marked a beginning of colonial rule over Terengganu. Again, a new treaty was signed on 24 May 1919 with the British during the reign of Tengku Muhammad (1918-1920) that saw direct British interference in the state affairs of Terengganu. Through this treaty, the British had an excuse to assign its officer J.L. Humpreys as the first British adviser in Terengganu. Under the rule of Sultan Sulaiman Badrul Alam Syah (1920-1942), Terengganu was administratively, politically and economically under the direct control of the British adviser.¹²³

The British's intervention in the state affairs of Terengganu had caused a series of riots among the Malays that saw the involvement of the *Sadah* clan. The implementation of new policies over the state administration had caused dissatisfaction among the Malays. For example, the people were ordered to obtain passes for cultivating, cutting trees, opening new land and collecting forest revenues. This new rule also covered '*hasil tanah*' or land revenue and land registration where the people were forbidden from hunting wild animals unless they obtained licenses from the government for that purpose.¹²⁴

122 H. Clifford, *Bushwacking and Other Asiatic Tales and Memories*, London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1929, p. 122.

123 Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Ulama dan Umara: Tok Ku Paloh dan Pemerintahan Islam", p. 187. See also C.O. 273/474, 23.7.1918, from Young to Colonial Office.

124 Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, "Kebangkitan Terengganu 1928: Satu Perbicaraan Beberapa Tokoh dan Peranan Mereka", *Malaysia dari Segi Sejarah*, No. 9, 1980, p. 56; Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, 'Kekacauan dan Kebangkitan Terengganu 1921-1928', M.A. Dissertation, History Department, University of Malaya, 1976.

Many of the Malays ignored this new rule and did not take the passes as ordered because they thought that the new rules were absurd and it was different from what they had been practicing all those times. Moreover, they were in the opinion that the new rules were only applicable for those who wanted to work and open new government land (*tanah kerajaan*) only. The misunderstanding continued and the government did nothing to solve this issue.¹²⁵ Acting on behalf of the people, Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong thus wrote to the *Pesuruhjaya Tanah Terengganu* (Land Commissioner of Terengganu) asking for an investigation to be done regarding land ownership and to decide which land belonged to the government and which land were owned by the people or *rakyat*.¹²⁶ In 1922, several people were caught and brought to the court in Kuala Terengganu. At the hearing, Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong became the advocate, defending those who were sued, but this case was closed without any decision.¹²⁷

In the Terengganu Uprising of 1928, Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong was said to be the chief leader of the revolt. Malay chiefs from other areas or districts referred to Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong to consult matters related to the revolt as well as to seek his opinion on the new rules introduced by the British adviser in Terengganu. Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong advised the people to just ignore the rules and keep doing their routines as before. He further stressed that the land belonged to Allah and the government could not simply impose taxes on it.¹²⁸ Besides that, the '*Ulama Council of Terengganu* responded towards the new policy by saying that it was an infidel rule, and therefore, it must be opposed. Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong was also the prime mover

125 See also SUK. Tr. 1269/1342. From Haji Abdul Rahman bin Abdul Hamid to Pesuruhjaya Kuala Brang, 21 Mei 1924, SUK Tr. 1269/1342, Pesuruhjaya Kuala Brang to Setiausaha Kerajaan Negeri Terengganu, 11 Jun 1924.

126 SUK. Tr. 599/1342, Haji Abdul Rahman bin Abdul Hamid to Pesuruhjaya Tanah Terengganu, 13 October 1923.

127 Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, 'Kekacauan dan Kebangkitan Terengganu 1921-1928', pp. 120, 144; Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, 'Kekacauan dan Kebangkitan Anti-British di Semenanjung Tanah Melayu,' in *Malaysia: Sejarah dan Proses Pembangunan*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1979, p. 47; Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, 'Haji Abdul Rahman bin Abdul Hamid (Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong) Terengganu', in *Malaysia in History*, Vol. 19, No. 1, June 1976, pp. 15-18.

128 Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong real name was Haji Abdul Rahman bin Abdul Hamid. He was a respected '*alim* in Terengganu. He was also a trader and plied to Pahang, Kelantan, Patani, Siam, Kedah, Sambas, Sarawak, Brunei, and Riau. He was believed to possess supernatural power or *karamah*. See also Mohamed Endut, *1928: Penderhakaan di Terengganu*', B.A. Academic Exercise, History Department, University of Malaya, 1970, p. 32; Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, Haji Abdul Rahman bin Abdul Hamid (Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong), pp. 13-15; Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, 'Kekacauan dan Kebangkitan Terengganu 1921-1928', pp. 119-120.

behind the revolt in Terengganu, fighting for the rights against the ridiculous policy of Terengganu that was seen to suppress the people.¹²⁹

In this uprising, there was a Hadhrami Arab who joined the revolt; Sayyid Saggaf (Saqqaf) bin Sayyid Abdul Rahman Al-Idrus. He was from a prominent religious family of Hadhrami Sayyids in Terengganu, the Al-Idrus. His father, Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Idrus who was also known as Tokku Paloh was an influential *'ulama* in Terengganu who fought against the British intervention. After the uprising, Sayyid Saggaf was caught and brought to a hearing on 28 May 1928. He was accused of participating in the revolt. Based on available records, his name was listed in the *surat kerahan* to gather at Kuala Brang or Telemong. It was also stated that Sayyid Saqqaf was to attend and join the crowd where he would deliver a talk at Kampung Buluh, Kuala Brang.¹³⁰

Sayyid Saqqaf denied all the accusations charged on him. Moreover, the British Resident of Perak, H.W. Thomson failed to prove the allegations. H.W. Thomson, the British Resident of Perak who was responsible to investigate the revolt however believed and had confidence that there were religious factors that led to the 1928 uprising in Terengganu which included the involvement of *Sarekat Islam*.¹³¹ Despite Sayyid Saqqaf's denial, Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali too believed that Sayyid Saqqaf was involved in the uprising and was most probably part of the revolt.¹³²

Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali further looked at religion as the triggering factor that caused a series of chaotic uprisings against the British which occurred in Terengganu.¹³³

Usha Anyal also believes that the Islam and *'ulama* uprising was among the

129 SUK. Tr. 295/1346, From Wan Mahmud bin Wan Mohamed to Secretary of the State of Terengganu, 21 May 1928; See also Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, 'Kebangkitan Terengganu 1928: Satu Perbincangan Beberapa Tokoh dan Peranan Mereka,' pp. 58-59.

130 SUK. Tr. 1295/1346, From Kuala Brang District Officer to Secretary, Government of Terengganu, 30 April 1928.

131 C.O. 717/61, Report from the British Resident of Perak, H.W. Thomson, 30 June 1928; See also Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, 'Kebangkitan Terengganu 1928: Satu Perbincangan Beberapa Tokoh dan Peranan Mereka', p. 58.

132 C.O. 717/61, A Report from British Resident of Perak, 30 June 1928. See also Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, Kekacauan dan Kebangkitan Terengganu 1921-1928, p. 328; See also SUK. Tr. 1296/1346, A Statement from Sayyid Saqqaf bin Abdul Rahman al-Idrus at Istana Maziah, 28 May 1928.

133 Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, 'Kebangkitan Anti-British di Semenanjung Tanah Melayu', in Hamdan Sheikh Tahir (ed.), *Malaysia: Sejarah dan Proses Pembangunan*, Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1979, pp. 41-48.

contributing factors to *Kebangkitan Tani* (Peasants' Uprising) in Terengganu.¹³⁴ In this sense, it could be said that religion (Islam) played a significant role in rallying support from fellow Muslims against the British in Terengganu. This is what the British was worried about most where certain parties would manipulate religion for political interests against their rule and administration in Malaya.¹³⁵

The transition period from the 19th to the 20th century witnessed significant changes in Malaya. This was the period where the Malays started to get exposed to international politics and ideology of reforms from the Middle East. Political developments in the Middle East countries, particularly Egypt had influenced the growth of local politics and it was observed through the spread of Pan-Islamism and reform or *islah* movements propagated by the young reformists or Kaum Muda in Malaya. The idea of reform and pan-Islamism promoted by Jamaluddin Al-Afghani (d.1897) inspired Egyptian intellectuals such as Muhammad Abduh (d.1905) and Rashid Ridha (d.1935). They were among the Muslim reformists who fought against imperialism through ideas and thoughts. Their thoughts spread to the public through the publication of *al-Manar*. This magazine was widely circulated in West Asia and the Malay World.¹³⁶

Religious scholars from the Malay World such as Shaykh Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabau (d. 1916), Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin, and intellectuals like Sayyid Shaykh Ahmad al-Hadi, Haji Abbas Taha and Shaykh Muhammad Salim al-Kalali were also influenced by these thoughts. Ahmad Adam asserts that these figures had close connections with religious scholars from West Sumatera such as Haji Abdul Karim Amrullah, Shaykh Muhammad Jamil Jambek and Haji Abdullah Ahmad who had

134 Sanyal, Usha, *The Terengganu Uprising in 1928*, University of Kent, Canterbury, 1977, pp. 41-42.

135 Abdullah Zakaria Ghazali, "Kebangkitan Anti-British di Semenanjung Tanah Melayu", pp. 41- 48.

136 Ahmat Adam, *Melayu, Nasionalisme Radikal dan Pembinaan Bangsa*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2013, p. 35.

considerable influence in propagating the idea of reform or *Islah* in Malaya pioneered by the young faction or *kaum muda*.¹³⁷

The reform was also aimed to improve the education system as a tool of progress towards modernism that resulted in the establishment of several *madrasahs* in Indonesia and Malaya. Several wealthy Hadhramis took the responsibility to establish *madrasahs* in Malaya. Ahmat Adam further adds that the awareness towards religious education among the Malays had encouraged the students to further studies in West Sumatera, India and Western Asia whereas Muhammad Abduh also believed that education was one of the best ways to encourage reforms in the society.¹³⁸ Having experienced living under the British colonial rule ignited the feelings of anti-imperialism among the Hadhrami Arabs. Egypt was also colonised by the British since 1882. The reform movement pioneered by Shaykh Muhammad Jamaluddin Al-Afghani and his followers such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Ridha in Egypt had indirectly influenced the Malay students who studied there. Through these students, the ideas spread into Malaya and later on triggered the spirit of reformism, Pan-Islamism and nationalism in the country.

The emergence of *Kaum Muda* or the young faction in Malaya in the early 20th century was aimed to carry out religious reforms in the country. They consisted of Malay graduates who received their religious educations from the Middle East. Several local figures who participated in the reform became leading figures in this struggle later on. Sayyid Shaykh Ahmad Al-Hadi (b. 1867) and his contemporaries such as Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin (b.1869) and Haji Abbas Taha (b.1885) were among the *Islah* figures who worked hard for religious reform in the Malay society to bring back the people to the right path of Islam from superstition, *taqlid* or blind obedience and deviant teachings

137 Ibid, pp. 35-36.

138 Ibid, p. 36

that had overwhelmed the community. Sayyid Shaykh Ahmad Al-Hadi believed that this practise was the reason that hindered the people from progressing.¹³⁹

In order to spread the idea of reform in the society, they had started with the publication of the first reformed journal, *Al-Imam* in 1906. After *Al-Imam* ceased to publish in 1908, Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi took quite some time to start a new publication due to financial constraints. It was only in 1926 that he published *Al-Ikhwān*, followed by *Saudara* in 1928. He finally set up his own printing company, the Jelutong Press in 1927 that ran the publications of *Al-Ikhwān* and *Saudara*. The two journals were in nature anti-imperialist. Idea of nationalism, economy, social reforms and politics of the country were among the issues raised in these journals. In the interim (between 1908 till 1926), Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi got involved in administration work as a teacher and founder of *Madrasah Al-Iqbal* (1908) in Singapore in 1908, *Madrasah Al-Hadi* (1917) in Melaka and *Madrasah Al-Masyhur* (1919) in Penang. He also worked as a *Shariah* Lawyer or *Peguam Shariah* in Johor from 1911 until 1914. He quit practicing *Shariah* Law when the State of Johor started implementing English law in the state's administration.¹⁴⁰

The Malays' awareness towards nationalism was also due to the efforts made by Malay graduates from the Middle East countries, particularly Egypt. The reformist movement that took place in Egypt in the late 19th and early 20th century had influenced the Malays who studied there.¹⁴¹ However, the number of Malay students who graduated from Egypt was too small to have a significant impact on Malay politics. However, they managed to introduce a new system of education adapted from Egypt's education system known as *madrasah*.¹⁴² Names like Mohd Salleh al-Masri, Sayyid

139 Linda Tan, "Syed Shaykh: His Life and Time", in Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hady*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute (MSRI), 1999, p. 139.

140 Syed Alwi Al-Hady, "The Life of My Father", in Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hady*, p. 79 dan Syed Mohamed Alwi Al-Hady, "Syed Shaykh: Through The Prism of a Child's Eyes and the Al-Hady Clan", in Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hady*, p. 115.

141 Radin Soenarno, "Malay Nationalism 1900-1945", *Journal Southeast Asian History*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 406; See also Mazlan Abdullah, "Nasionalisma Tanah Melayu", *Dewan Masyarakat*, Vol. 9, 1973, pp. 15-16.

142 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Egypt Religious and Intellectual Influence on Malay Society", *Journal of the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue*, Vol. 1, 2005, p. 31.

Shaykh al-Hadi, Shaykh Junid Tola and Sayyid Hassan al-Attas were among those who were involved in the *madrasah* education during the early decades of 20th century Malaya. Through education, students were exposed to basic ideas of reformism, nationalism, religious and social reforms in the society. Modern religious education was seen as a tool to improve the Malays' social life and culture from religious dogma that were mixed with deviant teachings.¹⁴³

The emergence of Malay literati who were English educated and had received modern and secular education as well as those who received religious education from the Middle East gave new momentum to the political struggle in the country. They voiced out problems faced by the Malays in terms of their social and economic backwardness compared to the other races in the society. Among the reformist leaders in Malaya at that time were Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi (b.1867), Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin (b.1869) and Haji Abbas Taha (b.1885). They were influenced by the Islamic reformist movement in Egypt in the late 19th century. In Malaya, the struggle towards Islamic reform in the society was done through the founding of reformed journals and *madrasah* education.¹⁴⁴

Political development in Malaya in the early decades of the 20th century also owed much to the growth of the publishing industry in the country. The emergence of reformed journals such *Al-Imam*, *Al-Ikhwān*, *Saudara*, *Neracha*, *Pengasoh*, *Majlis*, *Lembaga* and *Lembaga Malaya* were anti-imperialist in nature. Among the objectives of these newspapers was to boost political consciousness among the Malays. Although the role played by newspapers was less significant, it had at least inspired the educated and conscious Malays and instil in them feelings of nationalism. The Malays as well as the Hadhrami Arabs were among those involved in the publishing industry in Malaya. At the meantime, there also emerged a new group of Malay elites who were English or

143 *Al-Imam* discusses this issue in which it calls the public to return to the true teachings of Islam. It also criticises the British administration in Malaya that was bias against the Malays and Muslims. See Abdul Aziz Mat Ton, "Al-Imam Sapintas Lalu", *Jurnal Sejarah*, Vol. XI, 1972/73, Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya, pp. 29-40.

144 Ibid.

Malay educated intellectuals during the early decades of the 20th century, particularly in the 1920s. They were among the vernacular-trained teachers who were involved in journalism in Malaya. They could not form a movement or organization since their number was relatively small, added with lack of confidence as well as organizational skills.¹⁴⁵

The spirit of nationalism grew slowly among the Malays. In fact, the struggle against colonialism in the 20th century was not as dramatic or as tough as in some other Asian countries that could have served as a bond or link to gather and unite the people against imperialism. Perhaps, there were unavoidable constraints that slow down their actions and restricted their movements from operating effectively. Since they knew their capacity in facing the British administration in the country, no such a radical movement led by the Malays were recorded. As Linda Tan suggests, most probably there was not one person who had enough courage, knowledge, and spirit of nationalism to guide and push the Malays for political change towards independence. Linda Tan describes the reform movement in Malaya as “The comparatively quiet and unorganised nature of the movement in Malaya may conceivably be attributed to the lack of a person combining Syed Shaykh’s personality and Shaykh Tahir’s knowledge”.¹⁴⁶

William R. Roff quoted what could have described the situation and mentality of the Malays towards Malay politics during such a period in 1928.

“The Malays are quite satisfied with present arrangements, as they know full well that if they get rid of the British, they will be worse off under some other power who would be sure to overrun the country and trample down the Malays the moment they are by themselves. It is dangerous for fatherless young chickens like ourselves, they would say, to move about alone where there are hawks and eagles hovering about ready to pounce upon them”.¹⁴⁷

145 William R. Roff, *The Origin of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore: University of Malaya Press, 1967, pp. 196-7.

146 Linda Tan, “Syed Shaykh: His Life and Times”, p. 161.

147 William R. Roff, *The Origin of Malay Nationalism*, pp. 197.

Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi (b.1867) was one of the Muslim reformists of Arab origin from Sayyid descent in Malaya who advocated for social and religious reform in Malaya. Through writings he voiced out the Muslim dilemma, the problem that was faced by Malays who lagged behind compared to other races in Malaya. *Al-Imam* was the first reformist magazine published by a group of young reformists aimed at to do reforms in the Malay society. The Malays' situation in the 1940s was not much different from the early decades of the 20th century. In the 1940s, particularly during the Japanese occupation as stressed by Abu Talib Ahmad from a speech by Lt. General S. Katayama, "...politeness and patience were two inherent traits of the Malay race, and he believed that it was possible that because of these intrinsic traits, the Malays were easily colonized by the Britain." He further says that "... Malays must be more aggressive and more dedicated in all their endeavours".¹⁴⁸

Singapore

The political atmosphere in Singapore was not much different from the Malay states in Malaya. The Muslim community was a minority in the island, living amongst Chinese folks and other races under the British administration. Malays who were once the majority population in the island had become the minority group. Under British rule, the influx of Chinese immigrants had increased every year, while the number of Malays decreased ever since the British took over the island in 1824. Today, the population of Singapore is dominated by Chinese who mostly originated from China. Although the number of Muslims was small, they had a considerable influence in Singapore. The leading families of Hadhrami Arabs were among the most influential Muslims in the island, such as the Al-Saqqafs, Al-Kaffs and Al-Junieds. They were owners of

148 Abu Talib Ahmad, "The Malay Community and Memory of the Japanese Occupation", in P. Lim Pui Huen & Diana Wong (eds.), *War and Memory in Malaysia and Singapore*, Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2000, p. 65.

successful businesses and trading ventures in metropolitan Singapore. Apart from that, they also represented the Muslim community on the island and also in Malaya.

As time goes by, more and more Malays became educated. They became aware and realised their social, economic and religious situation that lagged behind compared to other ethnic groups in Malaya. They were the destitute and underprivileged group of all. Being conscious of their condition, the Malays started to distance themselves from other races, the non-Malays, including the Arabs, Indians, or *Jawi Peranakan* (local born Muslims of mixed Malay and Indian descent) and also *Peranakan Arab*; those of mixed Malay and Arab parents of Sayyid descent.¹⁴⁹ The Malays realised that these people had had enough of Malaya's wealth, and had left the Malays behind in destitution and poverty. All this while, the Malays had high hopes that the Arabs would assist them socially and economically. The Malays came to their senses and accused the Arabs that they were taking advantage of the Malays' naivety. To some extent, the Malays regarded the Arabs as immigrants who tried to seize and take control of the wealth of the Malay states.¹⁵⁰

In his response towards the critics, Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi replied by advising the Malays against such emotions as the Malays still needed help from their Arab brothers. Linda Tan asserts that the response of the Malays in regards to their situation at that time could be considered as "an expression of nationalism in its formative stage" that was probably not realised by Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi.¹⁵¹ Mazlan Abdullah also opined that the Malays' participation in politics at the national level was also due to their dissatisfaction with the Arabs (most probably the Hadhrami Arabs) and Chinese dominion and control over Malaya's economy.¹⁵²

The 1940s until 1950s was a challenging period in Malaya. Many important events occurred and had significant impact on Malaya. The Japanese occupation which

149 Linda Tan, "Syed Shaykh: His Life and Times", pp. 159-60.

150 Mazlan Abdullah, "Nasionalisma Tanah Melayu Sebelum Perang", pp. 15-18.

151 Linda Tan, "Syed Shaykh: His Life and Times", p. 160.

152 Mazlan Abdullah, "Nationalism Tanah Melayu Sebelum Perang", pp. 15-18

lasted for about three years from 1942-1945 affected the social, economic and political affairs of the Malay States. The British administration in Malaya was also affected by this war. The aftermath effects of the war left a huge impact on the British administration in Malaya. In order to consolidate their influence in the Malay States, the British then introduced a scheme known as the Malayan Union in 1946. However, the idea of introducing the Malayan Union was not accepted by the Malays. The Malays regarded this scheme as a plot to remove the institution of Malay Sultanates in Malaya as well as to diminish and eventually eliminate the Malays' privileges and rights in Malaya.¹⁵³

In response to the scheme, the Malays established an organisation known as the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) that was registered in 1946. The Malayan Union scheme proposed by the British was specially designed for the Malay States in the Malay Peninsula with the exception of Singapore, which was to be ruled separately. UMNO then had its branch in Singapore around 1948 known as Singapore United Malays National Organization (SUMNO) aimed to protect the rights of the Malay community in the island. SUMNO acted as an organization representing the minority Malays, particularly the Muslims in Singapore. Many Malays and Arabs were actively involved and participated in the politics of Singapore, struggling for their rights since a large percentage of the population of the island was Chinese. Living in a multiracial society demands a close social bond between the Muslim communities in the island to ensure that their rights were protected. Besides SUMNO, there were the Labour Front and the People's Action Party (PAP). The latter party (PAP) was more organised and many SUMNO members had joined in later on.¹⁵⁴

However, there was political fighting going on between SUMNO and PAP. The PAP's success in getting votes from the people of Singapore had raised feelings of

153 PRO, CO 537/1528, Dominions Office to High Commissioners, 21 January 1946; See also Albert Lau, *The Malayan Union Controversy 1942-1945*, Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1991.

154 Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore – A Reinterpretation", *Immigrants & Minorities*. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02619280802018165>.

dissatisfaction among the UMNO members. SUMNO tried to get back the support of the Malays in Singapore. *Utusan Melayu* served as an ideological tool to discredit the opposition party in Singapore. The racial based politics between UMNO and PAP finally reached its peak in July 1964 when riots broke out on the island involving the Malays and Chinese.¹⁵⁵

Sayyid Alwi Al-Hadi, the son of Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi was also involved in the politics of Malaya. Apart from his interest in journalism and succeeding his father running the Jelutong Press which published *Saudara* that ran until 1941, he was also involved in Malay politics. He followed Onn b. Jaafar who started a Malay organization known as United Malays National Organization (UMNO). He became Onn b. Jaafar's assistant since he knew many contacts among the Malays through his experience organizing *Persaudaraan Sahabat Pena* (Brotherhood of Pen Friends). Sayyid Alwi was made the UMNO Publicity Officer by Onn b. Jaafar from 1946-1951. He was responsible to promote and set up new branches of UMNO. Sayyid Alwi also had experience organizing *Sahabat Pena* (1934-1937) as its Secretary-General and also as the Secretary-General of *Pergerakan Melayu Semenanjung* from 1945-1946. However, Sayyid Alwi quitted UMNO in 1951 when Onn b. Jaafar withdrew from UMNO.¹⁵⁶

Sayyid Alwi Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi was also actively involved in the political movement in Johor. The *Pergerakan Melayu Semenanjung Johor* based in Batu Pahat was one of the active political movements in Malaya. This movement was led by Dato' Onn Jaafar with the objective to show protest towards the establishment of the Malayan Union. Members of *Pergerakan Melayu Semenanjung Johor* contributed a lot to *Derma Kebangsaan Melayu*. Among the famous leading figures of this political movement were Onn Jaafar, Hussein Onn and Sayyid Alwi Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi.¹⁵⁷

155 Dr. Syed Mohamed Alwi al-Hady, "Syed Shaykh: Through the Prism of a Child's Eyes and the al-Hady Clan", in Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The Real Cry of Shaykh Al-Hady*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian sociological Research Institute, 1999, pp. 98, 103-4.

156 Ibid., p. 104.

157 Ramlah Adam, *UMNO Organisasi Politik dan Kegiatan Politik*, First Edition, Kelantan: Mohd. Navi Book Store, 1978, p. 5.

Besides that, Sayyid Jaafar Albar was one of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) officials who was involved in the Malay political arena in the 1950s. He was then a Publicity Officer and was frequently on the move, giving lectures to the public as the party's representative.¹⁵⁸ He was then promoted as UMNO's secretary-general and turned into a mass rally orator.¹⁵⁹ In politics, religion has become one of the means to rally campaigns that proved to benefit the party in order to obtain public support. One of the approaches taken was by inviting religious leaders to give speeches in their efforts to attract crowds.¹⁶⁰ In the Malayan political arena, the role of religion was significant to rally the people's support towards a party. Religion also functioned as one of the means to approach the public as promoted by the pan-Islamic movement in rallying support from fellow Muslims, which was later on followed by UMNO in their political agenda in Malaya.¹⁶¹

Sayyid Jaafar bin Hassan Albar was a Malay born Hadhrami Arab. He was also the UMNO's Secretary General who supported the cause of the Malay community in Singapore. He opposed the separation of Singapore from Malaya. He suggested that Singapore should declare emergency and Lee Kuan Yew must be removed from being the Prime Minister of Singapore. The infighting and bickering that occurred between UMNO and PAP eventually caused the Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman to decide that Singapore should withdraw from Malaysia. Sayyid Jaafar Albar's service with UMNO did not last long when he resigned from the post of UMNO's General Secretary after Singapore was announced to split from Malaysia in 1965.¹⁶²

Syed Jaafar Albar together with Tunku Abdul Rahman, the former Prime Minister of Malaysia were involved in the issue of Malaysia–Singapore relations in the

158 See FCO 141/7343, Egyptian Influence in Colonies, Chief Secretary – Secret.

159 Lee Kuan Yew, *The Singapore Story*, p.477.

160 FCO 141/7343, Egyptian Influence in Colonies, Chief Secretary- Secret.

161 FCO 141/7343, Egyptian Influence in Colonies, Chief Secretary – Secret.

162 Turnbull, C.M, *A History of Singapore 1819-1075*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1977, pp. 290-291. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syed_Jaafar_Albar. Accessed on 22 December 2013.

1960s.¹⁶³ Sayyid Ja'afar Albar was known as a vocal politician, particularly when it involved the issue of Singapore. He even called Lee Kuan Yew and other Chinese as *kaum pendatang* or immigrants. Sayyid Jaafar considered Lee as an ungrateful citizen through his campaign 'Malayan Malaysia' from which the Malays saw it as a threat to the Malay sovereignty and *Ketuanan Melayu*. This issue could arouse racial instabilities and sentiments in the society, particularly among the Malays.¹⁶⁴

The Hadhrami Arab community in Singapore was also affected by the political changes in Malaya. Since the separation of Singapore from Malaya in 1965, the issues of identity, religion, culture, politics and language were highlighted and had become a polemic among the people of Malaya. The Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore were also affected by these issues. There were Hadhrami Arabs who were involved in the political parties in Malaya. Living under the British colony, Singapore forced the people to adhere to the new rules of the colony. The political changes that took place in Singapore also affected the Malays and Hadhrami Arab community on the island. In order to regain public support due to the Malayan Union issue, the British started to introduce policies to win the people's hearts as well as to calm down the tensions, among which free education was provided to Malay children. They were also given free food. In order to enjoy such benefits, the Hadhrami Arabs had no choice but to change their nationality and race from Arab to Malay due to certain policies that were introduced by the Singaporean government.¹⁶⁵ The PAP government had proposed free education at secondary and tertiary levels to all Malays who were Singaporean citizens only. A special funding was established to assist Malay students. The government of Singapore opened a Malay secondary school only in 1960.¹⁶⁶

163 Lee Kuan Yew, *The Singapore Story*, Singapore: Times Editions Pte Ltd. 1998, pp. 514-515.

164 Abdul Majid Mat, 'Syed Jaafar Albar: Penglibatan dalam UMNO', B.A. Academic Exercise, Jabatan Sejarah, Fakulti Sastera dan Sains Sosial, Universiti Malaya, 1994/95. Bushra Yusoff, 'Tan Sri Datuk Syed Jaafar Albar: Peranan dan Kegiatannya dalam Politik di Malaysia', B.A. Academic Exercise, Fakulti Syariah, Akademi Islam, University Malaya, 1995. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syed_Jaafar_Albar. (Accessed January 2014).

165 Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore – A Reinterpretation", p. 166.

166 Ismail Kassim, *Problems of the Elite Cohesion: A Perspective from a Minority Community*, M.A. Thesis, University of Singapore, 1972, pp. 107-108.

In Singapore, Sayyid Ahmad bin Mohammed Al-Saqqaf (b. 1896) was a Hadhrami Arab who was also involved in the politics of Malaya, particularly in Singapore representing the Muslims through Singapore United Malay National Organization (SUMNO). He was born in Singapore on 5 July 1896 into a well-known Hadhrami Arab family, the Al-Saqqafs. He received his early education in Makkah and then in Syria by joining the Syrian Protestant College which later on was known as the American University of Beirut. Sayyid Ahmad showed more interest in community service and joined the Boy Scouts and Red Crescent movements. He was made a Justice of Peace in 1930 by H.E. Sir Hugh Clifford, the Governor of Singapore. He also held the post of Deputy Commissioner of St. John's Ambulance Brigade for Singapore.¹⁶⁷ In December 1951, he was elected as SUMNO's first president. He was popular among the Malay people in Singapore, particularly in the eastern region of the island. SUMNO aimed to bring about social and economic changes to the Malays in Singapore. The Malays in Singapore were living in poverty. They deserved better education and economy uplift.¹⁶⁸

SUMNO also insisted for independence from the British colonial rule. SUMNO succeeded in getting support from the Malays, including those from the *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* (KMS). SUMNO managed to gather around 7,000 members by the early 1950s through 80 branches on the island.¹⁶⁹ Besides him, there was another Hadhrami Arab, Sayyid Esa Al-Menoar who also joined SUMNO and became the party's Secretary General in 1961. SUMNO had direct contact with UMNO's headquarters in Kuala Lumpur. In order to ensure the Malays involvement in the politics of Singapore, particularly their participation in the Legislative Council, SUMNO allied

167 Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 23.

168 *Ibid.*, p. 23.

169 Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "The Role of Hadramis, p. 173.

with the Singapore Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) to contend for seats in the Legislative Assembly elections. SUMNO won all three seats contested.¹⁷⁰

SUMNO also saw the participation of another young Hadhrami Arab from the Al-Saqqaf family that is Sayyid Ali Redha (1928). Sayyid Ali Redha was from a scholarly family whose father was a religious scholar, Sayyid Abu Bakar bin Taha Al-Saqqaf. Sayyid Abu Bakar ran an Islamic school, *An-Nahda* in Seiyun, Hadhramaut. Sayyid Ali Redha joined SUMNO when he was 24 years old. He received his education at the *Madrasah Al-Junied Al-Islamiyyah*. He was in charge of the Telok Belangah branch in the early 1950s. Towards the end of 1950s, there was crisis between SUMNO members and UMNO's headquarters which caused quite a number of SUMNO members leaving the party. Some of them joined the People's Action Party (PAP) that contested against SUMNO in the following elections.¹⁷¹

Sayyid Omar b. Abdul Rahman b. Taha Al-Saqqaf was another Al-Saqqaf who also joined politics of Singapore. He was elected the Vice-President of the Singapore Liberal Socialist Party in 1957 and 1958.¹⁷² Sayyid Mohsen Alsagoff (b.1914), the author of *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia* who by profession was a professor displayed interests in physical fitness, sports and body building. Sayyid Mohsen was also involved in politics in Singapore. He was elected Vice-President of the Labour Front Political Party in the Telok Ayer (Town) Division on 29th July 1956. He was then appointed president of the Labour Front Political Party in September 1956.¹⁷³

In Singapore, Sayyid Ibrahim Omar Al-Saqqaf (1899-1975) was one of the Hadhrami Arab leaders who represented the Muslim community in the island. He was also known as Datuk S.I.O, a Hadhrami Arab. He played an important role in bringing

170 Ibid., pp. 173-74, Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 7. (foreword).

171 Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "The Role of Hadramis, p. 174.

172 Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 40.

173 Ibid., p. 37.

mutual understanding between the people and the British administration. He was appointed by the British in Singapore as a government leader representing the Muslim community. Sayyid Ibrahim was the Chairman of the Singapore Muslim Advisory Board since 1947. He was also the president of the All-Malaya Muslim Missionary Society since 1932. He also held office as a Municipal Commissioner from 1940 until he resigned from the post in 1954. He was nominated as a member of the Advisory Council for Civil Affairs during the British Military Administration of Singapore in 1946. In recognition of his public service, Sayyid Ibrahim was awarded the Singapore Certificate of Honour by the Singaporean Government in the name of Her Majesty the Queen. He was also awarded Darjah Kerabat (DK) by Sultan Ibrahim of Johor.¹⁷⁴

Due to his service as a member of the Legislative Assembly in Makkah during the reign of King Hussein I, Sayyid Ibrahim was awarded the High Order of “The Rising of the Arab” Class II. He was also made a member of the Legislative Assembly in Makkah in 1926 during the reign of King Abdul Aziz b. Saud of Saudi Arabia.¹⁷⁵ Based on the *Political Intelligent Journal* published by the British in 1948, Sayyid Ibrahim Omar Al-Saqqaf was also reported to be involved in the efforts of establishing an Islamic party in Malaya. It is said that a meeting was held at his house in Singapore on 29 February 1948. As a result, an Islamic political party known as *Hizbu al-Muslimin* was formed with the ultimate objective towards the effort of freeing Malaya from colonial rule and achieving independence. This meeting was also attended by leaders of *the Masjumi party* from Indonesia.¹⁷⁶

Apart from that, the Hadhrami Arabs were also engaged in diplomatic relations with foreign countries. For example, Sayyid Mohammad b. Ahmed Al-Saqqaf had a good and strong relationship with the Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the leader of the Ottoman

174 Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 29.

175 *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

176 CO 537/3751, *Political Intelligent Journal*.

Empire in Constantinople. He was awarded the *Osmaniah Order* degree of honour from Sultan Abdul Hamid II due to his excellent service. His contribution and influence had also prevailed in the Malay World. He also received honours and appreciation from the royalties as well as rulers such as Sultan of Siak, Sultan Langkat, Sultan Pontianak, Governor of the Straits Settlement and the High Ambassador of the Malay states.¹⁷⁷

Conclusion

The Hadhrami Arabs played significant roles in the politics and administration of the Malay states. Although their number was small, their credibility earned them important positions and social prestige in the society. They were not only looked upon for religious advice and instructions but were also politically and administratively capable of assisting the Sultans and Malay chiefs in matters related to state affairs. Some of them become rulers of the Malay states such as in Perlis, Johor, Pahang and Terengganu. Together with the Malay rulers and chiefs, they tried to preserve the stability and peace in the country against negative and bad elements, in particular the British's influence in the country.

In certain circumstances, the close link built between the Hadhrami Arabs and the Malay ruling class and chiefs through good contacts and marital bonds helped them in gaining trust and support from the royals and dignitaries. This connection strengthens the claim that the genealogies of the Malay rulers have direct contact with Arab blood through marital bonds, such as in the state of Johor (1699 – 1877), the rulers of Perlis, Pahang and Terengganu. The Hadhrami Arabs tried their best to be in good terms with the Malay courts which enabled them to strengthen their political and economic influence. Perlis is one of the states in Malaya that was led by the descendants of Sayyid Jamalullail who originated from Hadhramaut, Yemen. They managed to

177 Syed Mohsen AlSagoff, *The Al-Sagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 11.

maintain the reign until today. However, the close relationship developed between the Hadhramis and the Malay royalty was not liked by the British.

Towards the end of the 19th and early 20th century, the role of the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay States' administration started to decline as the British colonials started to consolidate their control in Malaya. The residential system introduced in Malaya had indirectly and slowly reduced the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay States' administration. The concept of a centralised government introduced by the British with the appointment of residents to assist Malay Sultans was not only to block the Hadhramis' participation in the Malay States' administration and politics but also to indirectly control the Malay rulers' authority. Gradually, the role and contribution of the Hadhrami Arabs started to decline. This situation refers to the British policy practiced in Malaya in order to impede the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the Malay States' administration as they were afraid that the Arabs would use political and religious propaganda to gain support from the Malays against the British administration in the country.

The early decades of 20th century Malaya were the crucial periods for the British when they were at war and the political issues became the main concern. However, this period (between 1930s towards the 1960s) had also witnessed an increase in the number of Hadhrami Arabs' participation in Malay politics, especially towards the later stages of independence. Their participation was quite obvious in Singapore as they were among the biggest minority group of Muslims in the island. Singapore at that time was dominated by a Chinese population that was under the British administration. Later on, Singapore was administered by the Chinese. The Hadhrami Arab elites became representative of the Malay Muslim population. They held a big responsibility by representing Muslims to safeguard Muslims' rights in order to ensure survival in the country.

The role played by the Hadhrami Arabs in the politics and administration in Malaya varied from one state to another. However, their roles started to gradually diminish as the British's dominance in Malaya became increasingly powerful. The British implemented a residential system that indirectly enabled them to have control over the Malay States' affairs. Before the British came to Malaya, the states' political situation was totally different where there was no such division of political parties among the Malays. In general, the Malays also had their own groups and followers who belonged to certain chiefs of the ruling class. It was only in the late 19th century and early 20th century when people started to get exposed to the idea of nationalism and religious reform through the work of young reformists who studied in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt. This period also witnessed significant changes in the patterns of politics and administration of Malaya. However, the spirit of nationalism among the Malays grew slowly. It was only in the early decades of the 20th century that the growth of both Malay religious and non-religious political parties started to manifest. The focus of Malay politics then was to free Malaya from colonialism and to struggle for self-authority.

The struggle faced by the Malays and Muslim reformists became more challenging as they did not only have to face the British administration but to also remind and alert the Malays especially those in the rural areas of their social, political and economic conditions. Practically, the British succeeded in implementing their policy by dividing the population of Malaya according to their occupations and race. This policy was unfavourable to the Malays as many of them were lagging behind socially and economically compared to other ethnic groups such as the Chinese and Indians. At this point of time, the majority of Malays were in their comfort zone and were satisfied with their lives. They lived in the villages and worked as fishermen and farmers on small scale farms. They did not care and were not aware of the political issues that were taking place in the country. Undeniably, the struggle faced by the

reformists had involved intellectual strategies and negotiations. After the Second World War, several Hadhrami Arabs figures participated in the Malay political arena to struggle for Malaya's independence, a country that finally became their homeland.

University of Malaya

CHAPTER 6: BRITISH'S RESPONSE TO THE ROLES OF THE HADHRAMI ARABS

Introduction

This chapter discusses the British's response towards the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in Malaya, particularly on the roles played by Hadhrami Arabs in religion, publication, politics and administration, and economics. Since the coming of the British to Malaya in the 18th century, many things have changed; the British did not only control the economic resources of Malaya, but also the administration. These changes indirectly threatened the authority of sultans over the control of politics, economy and administration of the Malay states. The last quarter of the 19th century had witnessed drastic changes in the Malay states administration, such as the expansion of British influence in Malaya. The Pangkor Treaty signed in 1874 was the beginning of British direct rule in the country. This treaty left a big impact on the administrative, political and social structure of Malaya and indirectly separated the functions and role of religion from politics, economics and administration in Malaya. In fact, the British unobtrusively tried to marginalize and paralyse the role of Islam as a way of life for the Malays in Malaya.

The involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay states' politics and administration was also discreetly monitored by the British agents. The British were in the opinion that the Hadhrami Arabs have a considerable influence in Malaya as many of them held important positions in the country such as mufti, *qādī*, chieftain or *penghulu* as well as state officials. Furthermore, the Hadhrami Arabs also had close connections with the Malay rulers, as well as being well-regarded by the people in the society. The British always observe the Malays' political movements and activities that could politically and administratively threaten their interest in Malaya. Through their residents and advisers, the British also kept an eye on the Hadhrami Arabs' activities in

Malaya to control foreign influences such as pan-Islam and reform movements that had emerged in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt since the late 19th century. This situation further added to the British's apprehension towards the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. In this respect, this chapter tries to examine the British's response towards the roles played by the Hadhrami Arabs and their involvement in the administration of religion, *madrasah* education, publication, politics and administration, and economics in the Malay states. This chapter will also chronicle some observations on the Hadhrami Arab-British relations in the 19th and 20th century Malaya.

Religious Influence

The British colonial records contain abundant information about the country that contributed to modern Malaysia historiography. However, when it comes to the subject of religion, nothing much was said about Islam. The British through the Pangkor Treaty¹ agreed not to interfere in the matters related to religion and Malay customs. This treaty also led to the decline of the roles of the Malay Sultans into solely becoming the head of Islam and its religious affairs in their respective states. However, it seemed that the agreement was not followed by the British as they will not let matters related to religion stay as it is. Instead, they monitored the religious activities of the Malays through the Malay Sultans by introducing enactments and regulations issued to restrict the involvement of the Malays in religious activities that had the potential to threaten the British administration in Malaya.²

In general, the Arabs had a considerable influence in Malaya, particularly in religion where the Malays respectably looked upon them. This is especially for the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent. In addition to that, they were also perceived by Malays as noble ancestry from the lineage of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. The Malays

1 The treaty was signed and executed by the sultan and chiefs of Perak before the Governor of the Straits Settlements in January 1874 which had resulted in the intervention of British Colonial rule in Malaya.

2 1957/0432092, MISC 5530-1904, ANM (KL). 50 copies of translation of Mohamedan Laws Enactment into Arabic Malay. Aturan Undang-undang akan Menetapkan Hukuman atas Kesalahan Orang-orang Islam, under section 9 (B).

gave the Arabs, particularly the Hadhrami Arab religious scholars substantial respect derived from their feelings of gratitude towards the latter's contribution in the Islamisation of the Malays in Malaya. Apart from that, the Hadhrami Arabs also enjoyed respect due to their commitment and sincerity in bringing about social change in the Malay community as well as well adapting to the Malay customs and way of life.³

The early Hadhrami Arabs to Malaya were mostly learned men. The Hadhrami Arabs played prominent religious, social, political, and economic roles in the life of the Malays. They also held religious positions such as *mufti*, *qādī*, and religious teachers or *ustaz*. They had high interest in Islam and had engaged in religious activities. Therefore, they emerged as the religious authorities in the Malay states. Famous Hadhrami Arab religious scholars like Sayyid Muhammad Zainal Abidin Al-Idrus, Sayyid Abdul Rahman bin Sayyid Muhamad Al-Idrus, and Sayyid Alwi Tahir Al-Haddad were among the Hadhrami Arabs who contributed to the religious institution in Malaya during their time. However, the high positions secured by the Hadhrami Arab religious scholars and Arabs in general in the Malay states were perceived with suspicion by the British.⁴

Among the earliest perception of the British towards the Arabs in Malaya was expressed by Stamford Raffles in his report that was full of prejudice towards the Arabs, which is most probably due to his hatred and envy towards the former's achievement and influence in Malaya religiously, economically, administratively, and politically. Raffles had indirectly identified these Arabs as descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W and he refers to the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent on their inter-island trade activities in the Malay Archipelago. This inter-island trade were conducted by the Arabs who held religious titles of Syaikh (sheikh) and Sayyid (seyyad). Raffles also said that the Hadhrami Arabs took advantage of the Malays in Malaya and alleged that the

3 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Hadhramis in the Politics and Administration of the Malay States in the late Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith, (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s – 1960s*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 83-84.

4Ibid.

Hadhramis exploited religion as an excuse to reach out to the community from which they gain religious and political prestige and status in the society.

“...the Arabs who frequent to the Malay countries, and under the specious mask of religion, prey on the simple unsuspecting native. The Chinese must, at all events, be admitted to be industrious; but the Arabs are mere drones, useless and idle consumers of the produce of the ground, affecting to be descendants of the Prophet, and the most eminent of his followers, when in reality they are nothing more than manumitted slaves; they worm themselves into the favour of the Malay chiefs, and often procure the highest offices in the Malay states. They hold like robbers the offices they obtain as sycophants, and cover all with the sanctimonious veil of religious hypocrisy. Under the pretext of instructing the Malays in the principle of the Mohammedan religion, they inculcate the most intolerant bigotry, and render them incapable of receiving any species of useful knowledge. It is seldom that the East is visited by Arabian merchants of large capital, but there are numerous adventurers who carry on a coasting trade from port to port, and by asserting the religious titles of Sheikhs and Seyyad claim, and generally obtain, an exemption from all port duties in the Malay states”.⁵

Despite their small number and claim as descendants of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W., the Hadhrami Arabs have a considerable influence in Malaya where some of them engage in the administration as well as politics of the Malay states. In fact, the feeling of prejudice towards the Arabs had already rooted among the British since the late 18th century when Francis Light took possession of the Penang Island in 1786. In his dealings with the Arabs, Francis Light regarded them as “good friends and dangerous enemies”.⁶ The British befriend with Arabs for business purposes while at the same time take precaution with the Arabs who were considered as their enemy. Meanwhile, in 1822, Raffles had included a special area for the Arab settlement in his Singapore town plan in which he said that, “...The Arab population will require every consideration.”⁷

The close relations built between the Malay rulers and the Hadhrami Arabs saw many of them being employed and appointed into high positions. The Hadhrami Arabs

5 J. A. E. Morley, “The Arabs and the Eastern Trade”, *Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 22, Pt. 1, 1949, p. 162.

6 H. P. Clodd, *Malaya's First British Pioneer, The Life of Francis Light*, London: Luzac & Company Ltd., 1948, pp. 55-56.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 164.

in Malaya, in particular the *Sadah* were respected people in Malaya. Their credibility in Islam earned them social prestige in the Malay society. The early Hadhrami Arab migrants in the 19th century had good relationships with the ruling class and aristocrats in the Malay states. The British administration in Malaya took a subtle approach when dealing with the Hadhrami Arabs as many of them were respected scholars and figures in the society. They also had substantial influence in the Malay states' administration and politics. The British worried that the Arabs would use their religious and political influence in arousing the Malays against the British administration in Malaya. Viewing the possibility of such a threat, the British took precautionary steps in dealing with the Arabs, in particular the Hadhrami Arabs.

It is undeniable that the British intervention in Malaya brought big changes to the Malay states' administration. The British, with their own agenda planned to establish a centralized control over the Malay states through a new government under the Residential scheme system in order to monitor and have direct rule over Malaya. Although it is stated in the Pangkor Treaty in article VI that the British officer or resident will not interfere or touch on issues related to Malay religion and customs, the reality was different as the residents still had some control over other affairs of the Malays.

“... whose advice must be asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom”.⁸

Based on the above statement, it is clearly stated that the British took control over the Malay states' affairs through the so called adviser or Resident post in the Malay states. The British in one way or another tried to separate between the role and function of religion from other aspects of life including social, economy, politics and

8 Emily Sadka, “The State Councils in Perak and Selangor, 1877-1895” in K. G. Tregonning (ed.), *Papers on Malayan History*, paper presented at the International Conference of South East Asian Historians, Singapore : Journal South East Asian History, 1962, p. 90.

administration. However, the roles played by the residents had gone beyond expectations when they gradually managed to influence the sultans and Malay rulers. The British managed to play their roles in controlling the Malay rulers' decision-making in matters related to the administration, economy and politics of the Malay states. They even interfered in matters related to religion. The British took a cautious approach when dealing with sultans in matters related to religion in order not to arouse the latter's wrath and dissatisfaction.

However, towards the end of the 19th century and early 20th century, there were active religious and reform movements in the Middle East, particularly in Egypt pioneered by Jamaluddin Al-Afghami and his followers such as Muhammad Aduh and Rashid Ridha. This movement was also closely monitored by the British Malaya as they expected that the Malays would also be influenced by the movement, especially through Malay students who studied in Egypt. As a result, an enactment was introduced by the British in 1904 under section 9 (b) of the Mohammedan Laws Enactment which aimed to limit and control the influx of reform and pan-Islam ideas prevalent among the Malays. This pan-Islamic movement was a threat to the British administration in Malaya. The British also managed to get consent from the Malay Rulers to prevent activities of spreading or printing materials related to religion and politics in Malaya that do not have the consent or written permission from the Sultans. The person who engaged in such illegal activity would be fined \$25.⁹

Influenced by the reforms and religious movements in Egypt, Malay students then spread the ideas to Malaya, which later on triggered the spirit of reform, pan-Islam, and nationalism in the country. Early 20th century Malaya also witnessed the emergence of *Kaum Muda* or the young reformists group mostly consisted of those who received religious education from the Middle East. This period also saw strife and contention

⁹ 1957/0432092, MISC 5530-1904, ANM (KL).50 copies of translation of Mohamedan Laws Enactment into Arabic Malay. Aturan Undang-undang akan Menetapkan Hukuman atas Kesalahan Orang-orang Islam, under section 9 (B).

between traditional '*ulama*' and *Kaum Muda* in matters related to religion and *adat* practices. The members of *Kaum Muda* were such as Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin (b.1869), Haji Abbas Taha (b.1885) and Sayyid Shaykh Ahmad Al-Hadi (b. 1867). Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi and his contemporaries were among the *Islah* figures who worked hard to do reform, including religious reform in the Malay society through publication of newspapers and magazines such as *Al-Imam*, *Al-Ikhwān* and *Saudara*.¹⁰

Looking at the development of religious and reform movements in Malaya in the early 20th century was enough to give the impression to the British about the potential of this movement to grow further in the country. The differences between *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* or traditional '*ulama*' in issues related to religious doctrine and rituals was harnessed by the British as an opportunity to gain the support of the Malay rulers as well as traditional religious scholars in their effort to curb and bring down *Kaum Muda* activities. The *Kaum Muda* had caused a major stir in the country which encouraged the British to take action by amending the Muhammedan Laws Enactment of 1904 in 1925. This time the fine was increased from \$25 to \$200 or imprisonment and was applied to anyone who prints or publishes materials related to Islam without prior permission from the Sultan in the Council.¹¹

The amendment of the Muhammedan Enactment Laws of 1925 shows that the British were concerned and worried about the religious movement pioneered by the young reformists, among them was Sayyid Syaikh Al-Hadi and his comrades who vocally criticized the government as well as the traditional elites regarding religious matters. The *Kaum Muda* also openly attacked the traditional '*ulama*' through articles and writings published in reformist newspapers and magazines. Those traditional '*ulama*' who stuck to absurd *adat* practices and resisted were seen as obstacles to Malay progress. The young reformists also criticized traditional Malay elites such as the Malay

10 See Linda Tan, "Shaykh: His Life and Time", in Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hadi*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute (MSRI), p. 139.

11 William R. Roff, "Kaum-Muda – Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction amongst the Malays, 1900-1941", Paper submitted to the *First International Conference of South-East Asian Historians*, Singapore, January 1961, p. 178.

rulers and the dignitaries who were more concerned about their interests rather than the people or *rakyat*, as well as their failure to handle issues related to the Malays and Islam.¹²

Moreover, the British got the upper hand in monitoring Malay affairs concerning religion as well as politics since they have control over the Malay sultans and rulers through Residents and advisers. This situation made it difficult for the *Kaum Muda* to disseminate religious thoughts of pan-Islam and to do reform in the Malay states. Nevertheless, the obstacles faced by the *Kaum Muda* did not stop them from continuing with the reform agenda as they moved their activities to the Straits Settlement of Singapore and Penang.¹³

Publication Activities

The growth of the publishing industry in Malaya in the early decades of the 20th century is also credited to the development of reform and religious movements in the Middle East. The emergence of the *Kaum Muda* in Malaya was pioneered by religious scholars and those who were influenced by the reform movements in Egypt. These young reformists took up the challenge to do reform in Malaya. The British had anticipated that this movement will spread in Malaya, and therefore had taken preliminary steps by introducing the Enactment of Mohammedan Laws in 1904 in order to control the printing and spreading of materials related to Islam in Malaya that do not have permission from the Sultans. Even so, this enactment was not so effective in the Straits Settlement, particularly in Singapore and Penang compared to the Malay states where the Religious Council is under the authority of the Malay rulers. This restriction did not hinder the young reformists who were persistent in continuing with the agenda of religious and reform movement in Malaya. As a result, publishing activities initiated by

¹² Ibid., pp. 176-7.

¹³ Ibid.

the young reformists or *Kaum Muda* as well as publications by the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya were published in Singapore and Penang.¹⁴

The emergence of *Al-Manar* as a response to government policies in Egypt had triggered the spirit of reform and nationalism among the Malay students who studied in the Straits Settlement. Inspired by the reform movement pioneered by Sayyid Jamaluddin Al-Afghani and his followers such as Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Ridha in Egypt, several young reformists such as Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin, Haji Muhammad Abbas Taha, Syaikh Muhammad Salim Al-Kalali, Sayyid Muhammad Aqil, and Syaikh Sayyid Al-Hadi published *Al-Imam*, the first reformist journal in Malaya in 1906. *Al-Imam* provided information about the outside world as well as relevant information on issues and events in the Muslim world. It was also aimed to awaken the Malays and to remind them of their condition and backwardness in the society compared to other races in Malaya.¹⁵

The involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the publication of newspapers and magazines in Malaya was closely monitored by the British authorities in the country to check on the journals' contents as well as their involvement in the politics of Malaya. Apart from *Al-Imam*, there were several reformist newspapers and magazines published by the Hadhrami Arabs in British Malaya, such as *Al-Ikhwan*, *Saudara*, and *Warta Malaya*. These newspapers and magazines were either owned, sponsored or managed by the Hadhrami Arabs who were among the most influential figures in Malaya. Sayyid Syaikh al-Hadi, Sayyid Hassan al-Attas, Sayyid Alwi b. Sayyid Syaikh Al-Hadi, and Sayyid Hussein Ali al-Saqqaf were among the Hadhrami Arab individuals who were involved in the publication of newspapers and magazines in Malaya.¹⁶

14 William R. Roff, "Kaum-Muda – Kaum Tua...", p. 178. See also Ahmat Adam, *Sejarah dan Bibliografi Akhbar dan Majalah Melayu Abad kesembilan Belas*, Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992, pp. 32-5. See footnote no. 32. The author mentions about the printing laws in Malaya particularly in the Straits Settlements and in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia) that introduced by the colonials aimed at curbing seditious publications.

15 A. M. Iskandar Haji Ahmad, *Persuratkhabaran Melayu (1876-1968)*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1973, p. 6.

16 Please refer to chapter three on the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in publishing industry in Malaya, and the newspapers published by them.

In 1925, an amendment was made to the old enactment of Mohammedan Laws of 1904 regarding the printing and circulation of materials related to Islam with a stricter fine up to \$200 or imprisonment to those who did not abide to the regulation. The enactment that was once introduced by the British to monitor the progress of religion and Islamic movement of the Malays in Malaya was also one of the ways to keep an eye on the local publications in Malaya and to check on the nature of these publications (if they are on the government side (British) or anti-government). There are cases where articles or writings were rejected from being published due to their content that were reformist in nature. For example, three works by Ahmad bin Muhammad Ali were refused permission for publication by the religious authorities of Perak due to their reformist contents. Even Za'aba (Zainal Abidin bin Ahmad) was approached by a British resident asking him to withdraw the circulation of a book titled *Umbi Kemajuan* (The Roots of Progress) that is a collection of articles translated from the *Islamic Review* in Penang in 1932. He was also asked to apologise to the Sultan.¹⁷

The British authorities in Malaya even proposed a legislation to ban all 'new styles' of import newspapers and journals perceived by the British as a threat to the peace and political stability of the Malay states. There was a meeting held to discuss issues related to the "questions of prohibiting the importation into the Federated Malay States of 'papers debating the Muhammedan religion' ...". However, the proposed legislation was rejected by the Conference of Residents. Illegal publications or publications that did not get the consent of the sultan and his advisers were addressed under the Seditious Publications (Prohibition) Enactment of 1919.

“...no amendment to the Muhammedan Laws Enactment [which, inter alia, provided penalties for the publication within the states of Islamic writings not formally approved by the Sultan and his advisers] is required, but that in any particular case action may be taken under the Seditious Publications (Prohibition) Enactment, 1919”.¹⁸

17 William R. Roff, “Kaum-Muda – Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction amongst the Malays, 1900-1941”, p. 178. At that time, Za'aba was a government staff at the Malay Translation Bureau at the Malay Teachers Training College, Tanjung Malim, Perak. Refer to footnote 51.

18 William R. Roff, “Kaum-Muda – Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction amongst the Malays, 1900-1941”, p. 178.

In some cases, the publications of journals by *Kaum Muda* or the young reformists were also rejected and prohibited from being circulated in certain states such as in Kelantan.¹⁹ *Pengasoh* (1918 – 1937), a periodical published in Kelantan by the Council of Religious and Malay Customs of Kelantan also attacked *Kaum Muda*'s views and regarded them as nonreligious. It was hard for *Kaum Muda* to spread reformist ideas in Malaya through the administration of religion in the Malay states because the religious councils are under the control of the Malay Rulers and traditional 'ulama'. Therefore, the *Kaum Muda* took the initiative by establishing religious schools known as *madrasah*.²⁰

The *madrasah* also has elements of the Egyptian system of education. Yet, the *Kaum Tua* or the traditional 'ulama' never agreed with *Kaum Muda*. The *Kaum Tua* had a strong influence in Malaya as they were backed up by the Malay aristocracy and most of the time received administrative support from the British who were also concerned about the *Kaum Muda* activities in Malaya. Constant surveillance is conducted to monitor the *Kaum Muda* activities coupled with the introduction of an enactment to regulate their reformist ideas from spreading in the country.²¹ In fact, apart from being labelled as *Kaum Muda* by the traditional 'ulama' or *Kaum Tua*, the term *Kaum Muda* refers not only to this reformist group, but was also associated with the Young Turks in Turkey whose policies and approaches were viewed as deviating from the real teachings of Islam. This labelling was also intended to undermine the struggle of the *Kaum Muda* as well as to damage their reputation in Malaya.²²

The development of the publishing industry in Malaya, particularly reformist newspapers and magazines as well as the secular and religious schools (*madrasah*)

19 This issue is also highlighted in *Al-Ikhwān*, 3, No. 7, 16 March 1929, pp. 215-220.

20 William R. Roff, 'Kaum-Muda – Kaum Tua...', p. 177. See also Kelantan Administration Reports for the Year 1918 Government Printer, Kuala Lumpur, 1919, p. 13.

21 Cheah Boon Kheng, "The Japanese Occupation of Malaya, 1941-45; Ibrahim Yaacob and the Struggle for Indonesia Raya", *Indonesia*, No. 28, October 1979, p. 86.

22 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence on the Development of Religious and Political Thought in Malay Society, 1880-1940*, PhD. Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1994, p. 266.

driven by the *Islah* or religious reform and the rise of nationalism in Malaya sparked a political consciousness among the Malays. According to Ahmat Adam, this awareness was also triggered by the economic and socio-political situation of the Malays who were left behind compared to other ethnic groups at that time.²³

The British continued to dominate printed media in Malaya, particularly when the First World War broke out in 1914. Following the declaration of war, a *fatwa* was issued by Syaikh al-Islam, Khayri Affendi in November 1914 to launch *Jihad* against Great Britain, France, Russia and its allies.²⁴ The proclamation of *jihad* alarmed and concerned the British because the Malays in general respect and look up to the Turkish Government as a patron of the Muslims and Islam.²⁵ Therefore, in order to control the dissemination of information of the *fatwa* as well as news regarding the war, particularly on the issue of Turkey and its efforts to rally support from Muslims from around the world, the British took immediate action by issuing an enactment through the Federated Malay States Government Gazette on 21st November 1914. This enactment forbids the spread of news related to the war that is not in the British's favour. Through the enactment, the British were given the authority to censor news reports of the war.²⁶

Economic Involvement

It is undeniable that the Hadhrami Arabs and Arabs in general were among the influential figures in the economy of Malaya in the 19th and early 20th century. They had trade contacts in the Malay World as well as in the Middle East. The Hadhrami Arabs were reported to be among the richest Arab individuals in Malaya. They owned vast properties in Singapore such as houses, shop outlets and lands. The Hadhrami Arab

23 Ahmad Adam, Melayu, *Nasionalisme Radikal dan Pembinaan Bangsa*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2013, p. 37.
24 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence*, p. 309. See also Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence, 1900-1941*, pp. 309-310.

25 "Memorandum on Indian Moslems," Mark Sykes to A.H. Grant, Secretary to the Government of India in Foreign and Political Department, Simla, 1912, p. 2, L/PS/10/524 (Oriental and India Office Collection),

26 Federated Malay States Enactment 1914, in *Government Gazette*, 21 November 1914. See also Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence, 1900-1941*, pp. 309-310.

elites benefited from the world economic slump in the 1920s to 1930s that hit the country by buying assets such as lands, houses and shop houses at low prices. According to Lee Warner who was quoted in Ingrams, he mentioned that the “...whole streets in Singapore and Penang are owned by wealthy Hadhramis, mainly of the Kathiri tribes”.²⁷

J. A. E Morley explains how the Hadhrami Arabs managed to acquire a lot of property in Singapore, apart from the profits gathered from trade activities and also through their money-lending business. Normally, a borrower who wanted to take a loan had to deposit valuables such as a house, land or jewellery as collateral. However, sometimes, the borrower is not able to pay on time or did not have money to pay back the borrowed amount, resulting in the loss of the deposited articles, or collateral. In fact, the Hadhrami Arabs contributed tremendously in the economic development of Malaya, particularly in Singapore and competed with other races such as the Chinese, Indians and other foreign businessmen.²⁸

Despite Raffles’ first impression about the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya which sounded negative, he however came to realise that the Hadhrami Arabs’ presence in trade activities was crucially vital. Raffles then changed his approach towards the Hadhrami Arabs upon realizing the positive side of the Arabs which can benefit the British in the long run. Raffles realized that the Arabs did not only have the ability and skills in conducting trade, but also played important roles in inter-island trades in the Malayan waters as well as having good relations with the Malay rulers. This perception led Raffles to consider the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in his plan to develop Singapore as a trading post in the region.

27 W. H. Ingrams, *Aden Protectorate, A Report on the Social, Economic and Political Condition of the Hadhramaut*, London: Printed and Published by His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1936, p. 150. Lee Warner, ‘Notes on the Hadhramaut,’ *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. LXXVII, No. 3, March 1931.

28 J. A. E. Morley, “The Arabs and the Eastern Trade”, *JMBRAS*, Vol. 22, Pt. 1, 1949, pp. 169-170.

“Let the Chinese and Arabs still trade to the eastward. Without them, the trade would be reduced to less than one third of even what it is at present; but let their trade be regulated...”²⁹

Apart from trading spices, textiles, commodities and services, the Hadhrami Arabs also indulged in the pilgrimage business by providing services as *syaikh haji* or *haji* broker as well as providing facilities in terms of accommodation and also transportation from Malaya to Hijaz to *haji* pilgrims. Some of them were involved directly in the conduct of *haji* as *mutawwif* and *syaikh* broker or *haji* broker. Sayyid Mohammad Al-Saqqaf was among the Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore who was involved in the profitable *haji* business in Malaya.³⁰ Sayyid Ahmad b. ‘Abd Rahman al-Saqqaf acquired more steamships to meet the demand of the pilgrimage business through his Singapore Steamship Company that was established since 1871. The company ferried around 3,476 potential *haji* pilgrims to Jeddah in four steamships in 1874. It was reported that the Al-Saqqaf firm had ceased operating steamships before 1914, but they still operate as a pilgrim agency in 1940 with a branch in Jeddah.³¹ According to Aiza Maslan, around the 1950s, the Al-Saqqaf family still had a monopoly of the *haji* activity from Malaya as *syaikh haji* or *haji* broker. Sayyid Ibrahim al-Saqqaf reported running this business based in Singapore, while Syaikh Ahmad Masyhor ran the business in Penang.³²

William R. Roff further adds that the task as *syaikh haji* or *syaikh* broker certainly fitted the Arabs or Hadhrami Arabs who were familiar with the Malay culture and ways of life as well as understanding their spoken languages. This is important to handle the potential *haji* pilgrims from Malaya. What was important is that the *syaikh*

29 Ibid., p. 163.

30 William G. Clarence-Smith, Clarence-Smith, William Gervase, “Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940,” in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (ed.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen In the Indian Ocean, 1750s – 1960s*, Leiden; New York; Koln: Brill, 1997, pp. 299-300. See also Mohd Zulfadli Maafor, ‘Sheikh Haji Tanah Melayu: Aktiviti dan Operasi 1900-1950’, M.A. Dissertation, Fakulti Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan, Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2011.

31 Ibid., pp. 300-1.

32 Aiza binti Maslan@Baharudin, *Dari Tabung Buluh ke Tabung Haji: Sejarah Pengerjaan Haji Orang Melayu, 1850-1984*, PhD. Thesis, University of Malaya, 2008, p. 162. See footnote.

hajj and brokers have experience and contact in Hejaz. Most of these broker *hajj* were based in Singapore and Penang, but they move all over Malaya as well as in the neighbouring countries looking for potential pilgrims.³³

The British maintained good contact with the Hadhrami Arab elites in Malaya. In the beginning, the British seem to not have direct interference in matters related to *hajj*. The British however handled this matter positively as it was seen as a means of generating economic resources. In fact, it was a lucrative business not only to Hadhrami Arabs, but also to the British themselves. The British also had shares in the pilgrim industry which involved the transportation of potential pilgrims to Hijaz using their shipping company. The Blue Funnel Line belonging to the Ocean Steam Navigation Company was among the steamers which transported the Malay and Indonesian Muslims to and from Jeddah during the *hajj* season.³⁴

Although the travel period from Malaya to Jeddah by steamship was shortened to between thirteen to seventeen days compared to sailing on a regular ship that took about three to six months (depending on the weather), the conditions on board the steamship was not pilgrim-friendly. The ship was overcrowded with pilgrims and the ships themselves were filthy. The ship did not only carry pilgrims but also merchandise as well as the pilgrims' belongings. It was evident that the shipping company also hoped to gain some profit from the journey by carrying tradeable merchandise. These were among the reasons which attracted British's concern for the Malay pilgrims, eventually leading to their involvement in the Malay pilgrimage to Makkah.³⁵

The British administration in Malaya could not just ignore the problems faced by the Malay pilgrims in performing their religious duties, as the conduct of *hajj* is a

33 William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore: University of Malaya Press & New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 38-9. See also William R. Roff, *Nasionalisme Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2003, p. 43.

34 GA 602/27, National Archive Malaysia, Johor Bahru Branch, No. 2 in HCO 1069/27, Secretary to High Commissioner to General Adviser Johore; enclosure Report of 1926/27 Pilgrimage by Haji Abdul Majid Zainuddin, the Malay Pilgrimage Officer, September 1927, p. 1.

35 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence*, pp. 120-1; Eldon Rutter, "The Muslim Pilgrimage", *Geographical Journal*, Vol. LXXIV, No. 3, September 1929, p. 271, Some correspondences related to the issue. CO 273/73, (9 June 1869), CO 173/73 (9April 1873), CO 273/89, 4 January 1876.

profitable business for the British as well. In order to guarantee continuous income from this business, the British began to introduce legislation and regulations in the Straits Settlement and the Malay states on matters related to shipping conditions and the welfare of pilgrims at the beginning of the 1890s.³⁶ These regulations were important in order to improve and facilitate the *hajj* activity and to ensure that the pilgrims' welfare were taken care of to avoid epidemics and death. An arrangement was made between the British authorities and the Government of India regarding a hospital in Jeddah to cater to pilgrims from the British colonies during the *hajj* season.³⁷

In relation to the influence of returning *hajjis* from Hijaz who were believed to be exposed to the political development in the Muslim World through their contact with Muslims from other countries in Makkah, some of them were thought to be involved in several conflicts and uprisings in Kelantan (1915), Terengganu (1928), and Pahang (1892). However, there is no strong evidence that could prove that these *hajjis* were exposed to 'external' influence while they were in Hijaz. Furthermore, by looking at the frequency of the disturbances and uprisings that occurred in the country, it is impossible to say that these *hajjis* were the main reason for the outbreak of these incidents.³⁸ It is also said that the Hadhrami Arabs also played a role in the Terengganu Uprising in 1928 when Sayyid Saqqaf or Saggap was reported among the suspects in this incident.³⁹

However, Roff believes that there is a possibility for the Malay pilgrims to get information about the growing anti-colonial and pan-Islamic movement in other Muslim countries during their stay in Hijaz. Roff further says that through contact with Indonesian pilgrims, their Malay speaking-*mutawwif*, mosque teachers or *syaikh*, the Malay pilgrims had definitely heard of or were exposed to Islamic modernist and reform ideas as well as feelings of dissatisfaction of their fellow Muslims whose countries were

36 William R. Roff, "The Conduct of the Hajj from Malaya, and the First Malay Pilgrimage Officer", *SARI*, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, occasional paper, No. 1, 1975, p. 84.

37 CO 273/505. Inter Departmental Pilgrimage Quarantine Committee, Minutes of Meeting held at the Foreign Office, Wednesday, June 30, 1920.

38 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence*, p. 291, William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 71.

39 Thomas F. Willer, "Malayan Islamic Response to British Colonial Policy", *Jurnal Sejarah*, Vol. 12, 1973/74, p. 79.

colonized by the west. They might have also been introduced to the western ideas of democracy and self-government.⁴⁰

In fact, there was no major problem caused by potential or returning *hajjis* that could arouse British suspicion upon them. This could be the reason why the British adopted a tolerant policy on the *hajj* activity involving the Malays, unlike the Muslims from Indonesia that were restricted from performing *hajj* by the Dutch East Indies government.⁴¹ Although there were policies introduced by British Malaya regarding the *hajj* activity, yet these policies did not burden the Malay pilgrims. It seems like the British tried to avoid conflict and also facilitated the Malays for their *hajj* activities. This impression was important to the British, particularly during the critical period when the British and its allies were at war with the Turks in order to show that the British in Malaya are not anti-Islam. In fact, there is a hidden agenda behind the delicate and tolerant approach applied by the British towards the Malays' conduct of *hajj* in Malaya.

“Such a delicate policy on the Malay Conduct of Hajj was pursued by the British because they viewed it as important for governing the population, and it was always their priority to protect, as far as the protection lay within their power, the interests, religious and material, of those of their subjects who wanted to perform the religious obligation”.⁴²

The concern shown by the British towards the Malay affairs, especially on pilgrimage and other matters related to it was merely to protect the British's interest in this industry as well as to monitor and control any political activities involving the Malays that could connect them with the outside world of Malaya. Such assistance would also boost their credibility and image in order to gain the trust and support of the Malays. They tried their best not to create awkward situations and prejudice that would

40 William R. Roff, *Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 1974, p. 32-90. See also Mary Byrne McDonnell, "Patterns of Muslim Pilgrimage from Malaysia, 1885-1985, in Dale F. Eickelmen and James Piscatori (ed.), *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, migration, and the Religious Imagination*, London: Routledge, 1990, p. 117.

41 For further discussion on the restrictions imposed by the Netherlands East Indies on the Indonesian pilgrims, see Deliar Noer, *Modernist Muslim Movement in Indonesia 1900-1942*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 25-26.

42 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence*, p. 292.

affect their administration in the Malay states. However, on the British part, this issue did not stop there. The British also instructed the District Officers to keep an eye on the activities of the *hajis*. Through British observation, in particular in the 1920s, the *hajis* were also regarded as a potential threat to the British colonial rule in Malaya.⁴³ As a result, the position of pilgrimage officer was established with Abdul Majid Zainuddin appointed as the first Malay Pilgrimage Officer. He was responsible to look after the Malay pilgrims' welfare during their stay in Hijaz for the *hajj* season. Apart from that, Abdul Majid was also required to report to the British authorities any suspicious political activities that could harm the British interests in Hijaz and Malaya during the *hajj* season.⁴⁴

An extract from a political section of the Abdul Majid's report on the Malay pilgrims' activities was published in the Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence in the November issue of 1923. However, the report was credited to an anonymous Malay intelligence agent. It could be observed that from his report, not a single Malay pilgrim talked about politics or discussed issues related to current political affairs as they were rather busy memorising rituals and were very much engaged and focused on the pilgrimage. Abdul Majid also stressed that not a single attempt was made in the city of Makkah to spread any political propaganda among the pilgrims, either from the outside or through local influence. Also, no literature of political nature was available in the city because the security of Makkah by the order of Sharif Husayn had imposed censorship on written materials entering the country.⁴⁵ This is because the city of Makkah has high potential to become a breeding ground as Muslims from all over the world meet every year to perform *hajj* and *umrah* there. In addition, Abdul Majid also recorded the

43 Laurence Nunns Guillemard to Duke of Devonshire, 25 November 1922; enclosure The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence, No. 9, November 1922, CO 273/518.

44 William R. Roff, "The Conduct of The Hajj from Malaya", p. 94, *Pengasoh* also highlights the appointment of Abdul Majid Zainuddin as the first Malay pilgrim officer in Makkah. See *Pengasoh*, No. 188, Vol. 8, 28 January 1926. See also Moshe Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institution in British Malaya, Policies and Implementation*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1979, pp. 230-231.

45 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence*, pp. 295-6, William R. Roff, "The Conduct of the Hajj from Malaya", p. 95, please also refer to Laurence Nunns Guillemard to Duke of Devonshire, 9 November 1923; enclosure *The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence*, No. 18, November 1923, CO 537/919.

activities of Netherlands East Indies pilgrims such as their proposal to organize a congress of *Jam'iyat Ansar al-Haramayn* with the objective of overthrowing the Dutch rule in Indonesia.⁴⁶

Political Interests

The Arabs in the Malay World, in particular the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent built close relationships with the ruling class through marriage ties with the Malay royalty and dignitaries. These opened more business opportunities and afforded them important political status, helping them gain respect and acceptance among the native Muslims. The Hadhrami Arabs played quite a considerable role in the political and administrative aspects of the Malay states where some of them were appointed to important positions such as ruler of a state, government officers, or *penghulu*.⁴⁷ Meanwhile, in the Netherlands East Indies, the Hadhrami Arabs there were regarded as special individuals with the capability to lead others. They were even regarded as “natural leaders” by Sumit K. Mandal who said that the leadership potential in the Hadhrami Arabs were reflected in their political undertakings in the country.⁴⁸

The Hadhrami Arabs’ reputation in politics and administration of the Malay states caused them to be perceived with suspicion by the British. All their activities were discreetly observed by the British who were cautious about the Hadhramis’ participation in radical movements and anti-British sentiments in Malaya. However, it was undeniable that there are Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, particularly those in the elite group who had good contacts with British officials and had even become allies. The Hadhrami Arabs of Singapore in particular were in a good terms with British officials. It

46 F. H. W. Stonehewer-Bird (under secretary of State for India) to Foreign Office, 9 April 1928, 1 June 1928), L/PS/10/632 (Oriental and India Office Collection).

47 Omar Farouk Bajunid, “The Arabs and the Nation-State in Southeast Asia”, *Al-Mahjar*, Vol.2, No.1, June 1997, p. 4.

48 Mandal, Sumit K, “Natural Leaders of Native Muslims: Arab Ethnicity and Politics in Java under Dutch Rule”, in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian ocean, 1750s-1960s*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, pp. 189-98.

was also through this contact that the British interfered into the affairs of the Malay states, such as in Negeri Sembilan.

Back in the early period of the 19th century, the Hadhrami Arabs-British relations was based on political and economic motives. In Negeri Sembilan, the Hadhrami Arab-British relations started around the 1830s when Sayyid Sha‘aban allied with the British in the Naning War against Dol Said in 1832. This contact was a start to the British intervention in Negeri Sembilan. In the beginning, Dol Said received support and assistance from Rembau when Yam Tuan Ali sent his son in-law Sayyid Sha‘aban who allied with Dol Said to fight against the British. Dol Said also received help from Yamtuan Ali of Remai and Recat, Datuk Kelana Putera Sungai Ujong, the chieftain of Gemencheh, the chieftain of Linggi and Malay dignitaries of Seri Menanti. Dol Said managed to gather 4,000 people and defeated the British army. They attacked and seized British headquarters at Sungai Petai on 24 August 1831, resulting in a loss on the British side.⁴⁹

Due to this loss, the British rearranged strategies to defeat Dol Said. Sayyid Sha‘aban who was a strong supporter of Dol Said withdrew from becoming allies with Naning due to the rumours spread by Dol Said. According to the rumour, he said that the British would attack Rembau once they defeated Naning. It was proven later on that this was not the case. Sayyid Sha‘aban was offered by the British a sum of money asking for his withdrawal from giving support to Dol Said. Yamtuan Ali, Sayyid Sha‘aban and his fellow chief men of Rembau signed an treaty of friendship in 1832 and Sayyid Sha‘aban was offered \$500.00 by the British to withdraw from the war.⁵⁰ The treaty of friendship entailed the acknowledgement of the self-authority of Rembau, making Sayyid Sha‘aban and the British allies.⁵¹ The agreement signed between

49 SSR.R.1 Ibbetson to George Sivinton, Chief Secretary Lord Ford William, 27th August 1831. See also Peter James, Begbie, *The Malayan Peninsula*, Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1967, p. 186.

50 Ibid., p. 186.

51 Haji Buyong Adil, *Perjuangan Orang Melayu Menentang Penjajahan Abad 15-16*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka dan Kementerian Pelejaran Malaysia, 1985, p. 146.

Rembau and the British was a golden opportunity for the latter to interfere in Negeri Sembilan's affairs. In April 1874, a treaty of friendship was again signed between Andrew Clarke, the governor of the Straits Settlement with Sayyid Abdul Rahman bin Ahmad al-Qadri, the Dato' Kelana of Sungai Ujong which indirectly placed the district of Sungai Ujong under the British protectorate. This alliance benefitted both sides as the two tried to preserve their political interest in the state. This collaboration resulted in the introduction of the Residential System in Negeri Sembilan. Dato' Kelana's action was later on followed by other Malay chiefs of Negeri Sembilan.⁵²

The British did not only interfere in the political affairs of Negeri Sembilan, but also monitored its external relations that could threaten their political interests in Malaya. In the 1890s for example, it was reported that Sayyid Hamid was involved in pan-Islamic affairs by persuading Dato' Inas to write an appeal to a Turkish admiral who was then visiting Singapore to get rid of the infidels. As a result of this incident, Dato' Inas was removed from his position while Sayyid Hamid was luckily unaffected from any action because of his close relationship with the Yam Tuan. However, it is believed that Sayyid Hamid was reminded of the consequences of his action. He then seceded from attending meetings and affairs of the state council. His son Tengku Dewa represented him in meetings and occasions in Negeri Sembilan until finally he succeeded his father in 1894.⁵³ The British did not take direct action towards Sayyid Hamid, but instead psychologically and discreetly made the latter felt guilty. The British was always alert with such an issue that could potentially arouse anti-British sentiment in the Malay states.

Since the coming of British to Malaya, the Malay rulers started to lose their powers and rights as legal authorities in the Malay states. In other words, the Sultans had no final say and were powerless as they were controlled by the British residents and

52 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Conflicting Political Loyalties of the Arabs in Malaya", in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (eds.), *Transcending Borders, Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, p. 38.

53 J.M. Gullick, "A History of Negeri Sembilan", Monograph No. 33, *MBRAS*, 2003, pp. 67-68

advisers. In Terengganu, British's intervention in the state caused dissatisfaction among the Malays, particularly the religious scholars or '*ulama*'. Sayyid Abdul Rahman, better known as Tok Ku Paloh was a prominent '*alim*' in Terengganu who was believed to have managed to delay British intervention in Terengganu in the early 20th century. The British always tried to find an excuse to meddle in Terengganu's state affairs. The Bangkok Treaty signed on 10 March 1909 between Siam and Great Britain was a start to their intervention in Terengganu with the appointment of W. L. Conley as the British agent assigned to assist Sultan Zainal Abidin III in state affairs and administration as well as in monitoring matters related to foreign merchants' affairs in Terengganu. However, Terengganu never recognized the treaty. Instead, this issue had caused dissatisfaction and anger among the royals and dignitaries because the agreement was done without the knowledge of Terengganu.⁵⁴

Therefore, Tok Ku Paloh advised Sultan Zainal Abidin III to be very cautious in dealing with this matter. If the treaty were to be accepted by Terengganu, it will affect the whole state's affairs, including religion, administration, economy and politics of Terengganu.⁵⁵ With the initiative of the dignitaries and royals of Terengganu, a constitution named *Iqanul Muluk bi Tadilis Suluk* was drafted for the State of Terengganu on 2nd November 1911 in order to protect the state from foreign invasion. From this law, it was clear that the people of Terengganu did not want foreign powers, particularly the British to interfere with Terengganu's state affairs. Unfortunately, this constitution was not recognised by the British. In return, a commissioner was set up by the British and sent to Terengganu to check on the so-called 'scandal' in the state's administration. This was merely a tactic to interfere in Terengganu's state affairs by placing a British adviser in the state.⁵⁶

54 Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Ulama dan Umara: Tok Ku Paloh dan Pemerintahan Islam", in Muhammad Abu Bakar (ed.), *Ulama Terengganu Suatu Sorotan*, Terengganu: Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn. Bhd, 1991, pp. 185-186.

55 Ibid., pp. 185-186.

56 Diary W. L. Conley from 11 July until 31 August 1909. From Anderson to Colonial Office, 22 September 1909, CO. 273/351(1). W. L. Conley was the British agent in Terengganu.

Through the appointment of British Residents and advisers in the Malay states, the British closely monitored the Malays' movements that were deemed anti-British. The British were particularly suspicious towards the Hadhrami Arabs, and this became apparent particularly in the early 20th century when the people of Malaya started to get exposed to political developments in the Muslim World. The idea of pan-Islam, religious movements and nationalism started to hover in the Malay society through news reports and articles from local newspapers and magazines. However, these ideas received less response from the Malays since not everyone, particularly the masses from the rural areas had access to this information. Furthermore, the British were quick to take action in controlling and curbing the spread of such ideas from spreading to the Malay community.⁵⁷

One example of this is the involvement of Sayyid Saqqaf, the son of Tok Ku Paloh who was reported to be involved in the 1928 uprising in Terengganu. It is said that he was one of the suspects who rallied support from the people of Terengganu in launching the uprising in 1928. However, the British authorities failed to formally charge him with the incident. The Terengganu Uprising in 1928 definitely reflected British's involvement in local riots which showed the British authorities' seriousness in addressing the issue by issuing a warrant to inquire, capture and shoot anyone who joined the rebellion against the Sultan and the government of Terengganu. All government officers, including *penghulus* and the masses were required to provide assistance to the Commissioner of Police whenever necessary. The letter issued on 22nd May 1928 was endorsed by the Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Suleiman Badrul Alam Shah, who gave Mr. Mills, the Commissioner of Police of Terengganu full power to

⁵⁷ Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence*, p. 309; *Federated Malay States Enactment 1914 in Government Gazette*, 21 November 1914.

conduct the investigation. The letter further stated that the Commissioner of Police was also given authority to use every means at his discretion to eradicate the said affairs.⁵⁸

Based on the warrant, the rioters had caused chaos at Kuala Brang, followed by an attack on government offices. In fact, the word 'government' here refers to the British administration in Terengganu. As the investigation took place, a letter that was believed to be written by Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong urging Muslims to join *Syarikat Islam* and gather at Kuala Brang to raise the flag of *Stambul* or Istanbul was found. In addition, the letter also referred to Sayyid Saqqaf or Saggaf b. Sayyid Abdul Rahman as the *Khalif* or (God's regent) or *Khalifah* of Allah in Terengganu. This showed that Sayyid Saqqaf was someone important in Terengganu and he was a respected and influential individual among the members of *Syarikat Islam*. The title of the announcement letter, "Warta Sayyid Saqqaf b. Sayyid Abdul Rahman kepada Pengikut-Pengikutnya supaya berkumpul di Kuala Berang untuk memulakan kebangkitan"⁵⁹ clearly explained the objective of the gathering which was to start an uprising or *kebangkitan*. According to Mohammad Redzuan, the word *khalifah* and Istanbul used by Haji Abdul Rahman Limbong had attracted the British's attention towards the uprisings which was apparently a gathering to show the people of Terengganu's concern and sympathy for the Caliphate in Turkey.⁶⁰

Although Sayyid Saqqaf was free from the allegation, nevertheless his movement and activities were closely monitored by the British. Sayyid Saqqaf was also reported to be involved in the politics of Terengganu when he joined the *Kuala Terengganu Malay Association*, a secret and confidential organization as its president, and also as the President of the *Kuala Terengganu Malay Union* that strongly protested

58 Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, *Terengganu Darul Iman. Tradisi Persejarahan Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka & Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 1991, p. 887.

59 Ibid., p. 886.

60 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence*, p. 321.

against the Malayan Union proposal.⁶¹ Besides that, there was also a report on Sayyid Abdul Kadir or Tuan Dagang, another son of Tok Ku Paloh who also had a substantial influence in Telemong in the 1930s. He was reported as anti-British and regarded the latter as non-believers. He even did not shake hands with them.⁶² However, there was not much record on them from the British report as to what action was taken by the British in response to the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the politics of Terengganu. This matter could be considered as isolated cases by the British or perhaps they had little influence over the masses to spark riots or disturbances in Terengganu.

The British interference in the state administration of Terengganu regarding the introduction of land enactments and regulations caused a feeling of discontent among the people of Terengganu, particularly those in Telemong in which there were various taxes imposed on land as well as on livestock and crops. The Hadhrami Arabs also responded to the ridiculous policies introduced by the British administration in Terengganu by their involvement in a series of uprisings in the state.⁶³

Meanwhile, in cosmopolitan Singapore, Hadhrami Arab elites were in good terms with the British officials, though the latter was always cautious of the former's affairs, particularly those concerned with international relations and issues related to the British's interests in Malaya. The Hadhrami Arab-British relations in Singapore had already started as early as in the 19th century, when the island was opened as a free port by Raffles in 1819. At that time, the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent received every consideration by the British that they were allocated specific areas for settlement. The 20th century was the period of global contact where commercial interests and political influence became the main concern. The population of Singapore benefitted from the rapid growth of the cosmopolitan city with the latest technology facilitating commercial

61 Shahril Talib Robert, "The Trengganu Ruling Class in the Late Nineteenth Century", *JMBRAS*, Vol. 50, Pt. 2, p. 43. See also SUK. (SCAO) 57/1946: encl. 1 and 3.

62 Shahril Talib Robert, "The Trengganu Ruling Class in the Late Nineteenth Century", p. 43; CLM. 229/1352: Commissioner of Police to CLM, 30 April 1934.

63 Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, *Terengganu Darul Iman. Tradisi Persejarahan Malaysia*, p. 191.

and trade activities. Even though the Arabs were small in number compared to other ethnic groups in Singapore and Malaya, they however managed to attain a certain degree of social status in the society. The Hadhrami Arab elites benefitted much from their good relations with the British administration in Malaya.⁶⁴

Regardless, the British administration in Malaya was still suspicious of the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the reformist and political movements in the country, especially when a number of influential Hadhrami Arab leaders had political connections with the Muslim World or in the Middle East as well as personal contacts with Muslim leaders. Sayyid Mohammad b. Ahmed Al-Saqqaf was one example. He had a close relationship with Sultan Abdul Hamid II (ruled from 1876 -1908), leader of the Ottoman Empire in Constantinople.⁶⁵ Sayyid Mohammad Al-Saqqaf also had close relations with Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor. Seeing the close contact between the two, as well as the close contact between the Sultan of Johor and Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the British were anxious that Sultan Abdul Hamid II would make use of Sayyid Mohammed Al-Saqqaf in promoting pan-Islamism in Malaya. Despite the pan-Islamic appeal touted by the Malay dailies, as well as Malay sentiments towards the Turks as their patron and Sultan Abdul Hamid as the leader of Muslims, the movement did not interrupt the British administration in the country.⁶⁶ As Mohammad Redzuan said, although Sultan Abu Bakar was in close contact with Sultan Abdul Hamid II, he did not show much zeal and interest in spreading pan-Islamic ideas championed by Sultan Abdul Hamid II in Malaya.⁶⁷

In order to control political movements in Malaya, particularly in Singapore, the British appointed Hadhrami Arab leaders as Muslim representatives. For instance, Sayyid Ibrahim Sayyid Omar al-Saqqaf (1899-1975) was one of the influential

64 Nurfadzilah Yahaya, 'Good Friends and Dangerous Enemies: British Images of the Arab Elite in Colonial Singapore (1819-1942),' M.A. Dissertation, National University of Singapore, 2006.

65 Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia, A.H. 1240 (A.D. 1824) to A.H. 1382 (A.D.1962)*, Compiled and Published by Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, Singapore, 1963, p. 11.

66 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Pan-Islamic Appeal and Political Patronage: The Malay Perspective and the Ottoman Response", *Sejarah*, No. 4, 1996, pp. 97-104.

67 *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Hadhrami Arab leaders in Singapore. He was appointed as government leader representing the island's Muslim community. He was also known as Datuk S.I.O, and he had had good relations with Muslim leaders in the Middle East such as in Arabia as he used to be a member of the Legislative Assembly in Makkah during the reign of King Hussein I. He also became a member of the Legislative Assembly in Makkah in 1926 during the reign of King Abdul Aziz b. Saud of Saudi Arabia.⁶⁸

Sayyid Ibrahim also played an important role in bringing mutual understanding between the people and the British administration. Even so, the British still viewed some Hadhrami Arabs with suspicion. For instance, Sayyid Ibrahim was accused by the British of encouraging and reviving the pan-Islam movement in Malaya. This probably referred to the Sayyid Ibrahim's role as the prime mover of *Genuine Islam* and its pro-Arab stand reflected in the publication of articles and issues related to the Arab World, particularly on the concerns over the Palestinian conflict in the Middle East.⁶⁹

However, based on the *Political Intelligence* journal published by the British in 1948, Sayyid Ibrahim Omar Al-Saqqaf was also reported to be involved in the efforts of establishing an Islamic party in Malaya. It was believed that a meeting was held at his house in Singapore on 29 February 1948. As a result, an Islamic political party known as *Hizbu al-Muslimin* was formed with the ultimate objective of freeing Malaya from colonial rule and to gain independence. This meeting was also attended by leaders of the *Masjumi party* from Indonesia.⁷⁰

The first two decades of the 20th century witnessed significant political changes in the country with the outbreak of the First World War and the Second World War which affected the stability as well political structure in Malaya. Although Malaya did not participate in the First World War, the British were afraid that the Malays' political

68 Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, pp. 29-30.

69 Shenton Thomas to Ormsby-Gore, 21 October 1937; enclosure S.S. Police Special Branch Political Intelligence Journal, 9 February 1937, CO 273/630; Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence*, p. 334. See also *Genuine Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 8, August 1936, p. 41, *Genuine Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 10, October 1936, Augur, "What Palestine Means to British," *Genuine Islam*, Vol. 1, No. 10, October 1936, p. 27.

70 CO 537/3751, Political Intelligence Journal.

awareness will be aroused and interest in pan-Islamism is generated as an indirect result of the war. Generally, although the Malays were seen as untouched and unaffected by the global political events that occurred during the First World War, the British still took precautionary action in order to curb and restrict the Malays' participation in political movements as well as the entry of information and news from abroad, especially from the Muslim countries in the Middle East to Malaya.⁷¹

As a result, a Criminal Intelligence Department was created to serve the purpose. In 1918 G.G. Seth was appointed as the director of the Criminal Intelligent Department. The initial reason behind the establishment of this department was to monitor political activities among the immigrants, in particular the Indians. However, the British saw the need for the department to extend its scope to cover other races in Malaya, particularly the Malays when some of the latter were found to be involved in local political activities in the 1920s (those who had political contact with the Middle East).⁷²

Worried about the political developments that occurred in Malaya, in the 1920s Laurence Guillemard sought the approval from the Colonial Office to create an office that would be responsible for matters related to the Malay affairs and their relationship with the British colonial rule in Malaya. Guillemard stressed on the need for this special secretariat in order to monitor the issue of the Malays which in his opinion, were much more educated and had progressed greatly from before. He was worried that these Malays may sometimes express their dissatisfaction toward the British administration in Malaya through local journals. He furthermore reminded the British to not be too contented with the support given by the Malay rulers during the war as things have considerably changed. The Malays were also concerned with the social, political, and

71 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Middle Eastern Influence*, p. 313.

72 *Ibid.*

economic disorder of the Muslim World. These issues could have affected and influenced the Malays.⁷³

The Political Intelligence Bureau was created in 1922 to replace the Criminal Intelligence Department. This time the bureau covered a bigger scope to embrace many aspects of Malaya, especially the political activities of the Malays. The British also produced a journal related to their political security policies in Malaya. The contents of *The Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence* journal reflected the British's perceptions of the political arena in the country.⁷⁴ The British kept an eye on political activities in Malaya through various channels such as the restriction of press freedom and power of Malay rulers. They also suppressed potential political groups and activities that were bold and vocal in criticizing the British administration of Malaya.⁷⁵

The *Kaum Muda* was one of the target groups that was closely monitored by the British. Their reformist newspapers which voiced anti-British sentiments were also closely monitored. However, there was not much that could be done politically as the people were quite limited by different laws. Za'aba, quoted by William R. Roff in *The Origin of Malay Nationalism* once talked about the Malay politics, saying that “Everyone was afraid of talking politics. You couldn't go against the sultans, and the sultans all had British advisers”.⁷⁶ Za'aba's point of view of the Malay politics at that time showed that the Malay rulers were also under the control and influence of the British.⁷⁷

With the establishment of the Political Intelligence Bureau, it showed that the British were concerned and had monitored the political changes that took place among the Malays in Malaya as well the political developments that occurred in the Muslim World that had the potential to influence the economic, political and social structure of

73 CO717/5, Laurence Nunns Guillemard to Viscount Milner, 8 November 1920.

74 CO 272/515, Laurence Nunns Guillemard to Winston Churchill, 24 February 1922. The bureau was again changed its name in 1933 to Special Branch.

75 Ibid.

76 William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 176.

77 Ibid.

Malaya. The reformist thoughts and pan-Islamism movement in the Muslim World, particularly in Egypt would have influenced the Malay students who studied there. This would include the role played by vernacular and local presses as well as foreign presses that advocated pan-Islamism. The British were anxious that the Malays would rise against the British administration in Malaya and ask for self-determination.⁷⁸

The first two decades of the 20th century were a crucial period for the British who were involved in the First World War. The British were suspicious and aware of the activities of several Hadhrami Arabs who were anti-British. There were several Hadhrami Arab leaders in Singapore who had close ties with the Turks. Although there was no critical opposition and insurgency by Malays and Arabs in Malaya against the British administration, the British were always cautious and kept on monitoring their activities. For instance, Sayyid Mohammad al-Saqqaf, a well-known Arab leader in Singapore was reported to have close contact with the Turks.⁷⁹

Sayyid Mohammad was a successful entrepreneur with businesses and political contacts in Malaya, Indonesia, Makkah, China, Turkey and also in Europe. He was also in good terms with Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the Ottoman Sultan in Constantinople. He was conferred by the sultan a reward known as Osmaniah Order due to his excellent service. Sayyid Mohammad also had vast influence and contacts in the Malay World, especially in the Indonesian islands such as Siak, Langkat, and Pontianak where he also received honours from the sultans and rulers from these places including the Governor of the Straits Settlement and the High Commissioner of the Malay states.⁸⁰

The British looked into the historical contact between the Hadhrami Arabs with the Turks, particularly the close contact the al-Saqqaf family had with Sultan Abdul Hamid II of Constantinople. The al-Saqqafs were pro-Turkey and strong supporters of the Ottoman Caliphate. Such a relation caused worry on the British side as this would

78 William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*; CO 272/515, Laurence Nunns Guillemard to Winston Churchill, 24 February 1922.

79 Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p. 11.

80 Ibid.

lead to unwanted political interest. The British looked into this matter as a threat and considered Sayyid Mohammad to have the capability of influencing and spreading Turkish influence in Malaya.⁸¹

The British were a bit relieved when Sayyid Mohammad al-Saqqaf passed away in July 1906. His nephew, Sayyid Umar al-Saqqaf took over the roles and responsibilities of by his uncle as a Muslim and Arab leader in Singapore. He also inherited the business empire of the al-Saqqafs. Sayyid Umar Al-Saqqaf was one of the most successful and influential Hadhrami Arab leader in Singapore. He had good links with British officials and befriended influential officials from the Straits Settlement e.g. in Singapore such as the Governor of the Straits Settlement, the High Commissioner of the Federated Malay States and Major General Henry Ridout, the General Officer of Commanding Troops in Malaya. Sayyid Umar was also in close contact with the royal family of Johor and was in very good terms with Sultan Abu Bakar and his son Ibrahim.⁸²

In his dealings with the British, Sayyid Umar al-Saqqaf was pro-British. Initially, he was in favour of the Turks and was a strong supporter of the Ottoman Caliphate, in particular during the outbreak of the First World War. However, his stand towards the Turkish and Ottoman Caliphate started to change when he was informed and convinced by Dudley Ridout, the General Officer Commanding the Troops of the Straits Settlement of the Turks' misrule and domination of Turkey by Germany.⁸³

The British tried to get support from the Malays as well as the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 had caused the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim Caliphate. The Turks that were perceived by Malays as the leader of the Muslims were in a crucial situation. Their failure in the war was a great

81 See Anthony Reid, "Nineteenth Century Pan-Islam in Indonesia and Malaysia", *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 2, February 1967, p. 271.

82 Syed Mohsen Alsagoff, *The Alsagoff Family in Malaysia*, p.11; Nurfadzilah Yahaya, *Good Friends and Dangerous Enemies*, p. 83.

83 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, 'Conflicting Political Loyalties of the Arabs in Malaya,' p. 39.

blow to the Muslims. However, the British worried that the Turks will use pan-Islamism as a tool to gain support and sympathy from Muslims. Sayyid Umar Al-Saqqaf was among the Arabs who sympathized with the Turks. The British were concerned that Sayyid Umar Al-Saqqaf would do something to rally support from the Malays and Arabs in Malaya for the Turks' cause. Because of this, the British took a decisive action by creating false information regarding the Ottoman rule and the domination of Germany over Turkey for fear that the Turks would make use of pan-Islamism to gain support from other like-minded Muslims.⁸⁴

Sharif Husayn took bold action by launching an uprising against the Ottoman rule in Hejaz. It was an awaited moment by the British who were at that time at war with Turkey. In this Arab revolt, Sharif Husayn managed to oust the Turks from Makkah and the whole Hejaz. He then proclaimed himself the king of the Arabs.⁸⁵ The British through its foreign office ordered Henry Mac Mahon, the High Commissioner in Egypt to supply and facilitate Sharif with all assistance needed in order to weaken the Ottoman rule in Hijaz. To facilitate his revolt against the Turks, Sharif Husayn had taken the initiative to publish a special edition of the newspaper *Al-Qiblah* in Makkah which was circulated to all Arabs in Hejaz, as well as those in Southeast Asia such as the Malay states, Singapore and Indonesia. This newspaper served as an important source of information regarding the Turks and the Ottoman Caliphate in order to undermine the cause of the Turks. This was seen as a way to raise sympathy from the public to support Sharif Husayn, so the public had received and perceived the wrong information that the British and Sharif Husayn wanted them to believe.⁸⁶

Brigadier-General Dudley Ridout, the General Commanding Officer of the Troops of the Straits Settlement was the person responsible to carry out the plot. To facilitate this task, the newspaper *Al-Qiblah* was published and distributed to the

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid., p. 40. See footnote.

86 Ibid., p. 41.

Muslims in the Malay world including Malaya and the Dutch East Indies. The audience included the Hadhrami Arabs.

“I have also recommend, a recommendation which I am glad to say is being put into effect, that copies of “al-Kiblah” emanating directly as it does from the Shereef of King Of Mecca and therefore of more active influence than papers issued in Egypt, be circulated to the Arabs in this country. I have recommended privately to Mr. Gaselee that an attempt be made to circulate through the vernacular Malay Press, articles in Malay prepared in London giving instruction on a scale modulated to the capabilities of the native mind, regarding the false aims and objects of Germany and Turkey in relation to Islam and the Arabs and the true relations of Germany and Turkey towards Islam and the Arabs as compared with the position and attitude of Great Britain and her allies.⁸⁷

Upon receiving this news, Sayyid Umar al-Saqqaf renounced his support for the Turks and turned to the cause of King Husayn, the Sharif of Makkah after being convinced by Ridout.⁸⁸ Sharif Husayn himself was pro-British. In order to show his support for the British, Sayyid Umar offered his property in Jeddah to be used by British officials.⁸⁹ Sayyid Umar al-Saqqaf also refused to receive a cable from India sent by Akhbar c/o Khilafat to his son Sayyid Ibrahim informing of Kemal Pasha’s victory. The note had also included the request to inform all Muslims of prayers of thanksgiving that should be recited in all mosques. At that time, Sayyid Ibrahim was in Hejaz managing Sayyid Umar’s pilgrim office in Jeddah.⁹⁰

The Hadhrami Arab elites’ support for the British administration in Malaya was shown in a declaration given to the British authorities proclaiming their loyalty and full support. In the Singapore Mutiny event that broke out in February 1915, the Hadhrami Arab leaders played significant roles in assisting the British authorities in bringing down riots in the island. Sayyid Umar al-Saqqaf together with Sayyid Muhammad Aqil were

87 Report prepared by W. R. D. Beckett, British Consulate General, Batavia, 6th Sep. 1917 to The Under Secretary of State, Foreign Office, London. In L/PS/10/629.

88 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, “Conflicting Political loyalties of the Arabs in Malaya”, pp. 39-40.

89 L/PS/10/599 (Oriental and India Office Collection) Arthur Young to Bonar Law, 28 August 1916.

90 CO 273/518, Straits Settlements 1922, Vol. 4, Despatches Nov. – Dec., Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence, p. 255.

among the Hadhrami elites who were involved in bringing peace to the island. Several meetings were held in order to explain to the public the situation and actions taken by the British to expel rumours and battle the riot.⁹¹

A meeting was held at the Victoria Hall on 6th March 1915 and was attended by some three thousand people from different ethnic groups and communities in Singapore showing their loyalty to the British. This included the Arabs who represented the Muslims of the island. In their speeches to rally support and convince their fellow brethren to give their undivided loyalty towards the British, an Egyptian teacher delivered a speech, comparing the rules of the Mamluk with the British's. He further described that the sultans of the Mamluk dynasty were harsh oppressors while giving credit to the British colonial rule in Egypt that had raised a great number of Muslims to a better life, as well as brought the country to a better level of human civilization.⁹² In this gathering, a secret agent from the General Office Commanding the Troops who came from India reported that the Muslim leaders of Singapore were loyal to the British. However, he further said that feelings of dissatisfaction still existed among the Indian Muslims and subordinate groups of Arab immigrants. "Generally, disaffection existed among the Indians and "lower class of immigrant Arabs".⁹³

Although the Turks lost in the First World War, this incident did not affect the political situation in Malaya, most particularly in Singapore. During the war, the situation in the country was under control. Although there were Arabs on the island who sympathized with the Turks, there was no distressing situation reported. Nevertheless, the British were always cautious when dealing with the Arabs in Singapore. Through their undercover agents, the British collected information regarding the Arabs,

91 Ibid., p. 39. See also CO 273/421. Arthur Young to Lewis Harcourt, 11 March 1915, Singapore Disturbance, Attitude of Moslems, Straits Settlements, Government House, Singapore, pp. 8-10. CO 273/425, Sayyid 'Umar al-Saqqaf to Arthur Young, March 1915. There is also an extract of news regarding the event published in the *Malaya Tribune*, Monday, 8 March 1915, "Moslem Mass Meeting, Address of Loyalty to the King".

92 Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Conflicting Political Loyalties of the Arabs in Malaya", p. 39; see also CO 273/421, enclosure extract from *Malaya Tribune*, Monday, 8 March 1915.

93 Khoo Kay Kim, "Islam in Malayasia: The Pre-1941 Scenario", paper presented in Seminar on *Islam in Malaysia*, Marina Mandarin Hotel, Singapore, Feb. March, 1989, p. 17.

particularly those who were suspected of working against British interests in Singapore. In this respect, there were several Arabs who were in close contact with the British, working as undercover agents in Malaya such as Sayyid Muhammad Aqil and Syaikh Awad Zaydan. Sayyid Muhammad Aqil delivered information through R. J. Wilkinson, the colonial secretary and officer who administered the government of the Straits Settlement.⁹⁴ The Criminal Intelligence Department that was established earlier on was responsible for monitoring the Muslims' activities and their political movements in Malaya especially Singapore, which was populated by many Arabs.⁹⁵

The involvement of Hadhrami Arabs with the British against Muslims by spying on their activities had caused anger and dissatisfaction among the Muslims. These feelings were further aggravated when some of them really indulged in conspiracies to bring down the Ottoman rule in Turkey. Although their part in this was small, the impact was still considerably immense. The later impact of this led to the fall of an Islamic Caliphate in the Muslim World. This was seen as unforgivable by fellow Muslims when they betrayed their fellow brethren for the sake of material lust and promises by the colonials. Sayyid Muhammad Aqil and Syaikh Awad Zaydan were among those who allied with the British. Blinded with rewards offered by the British, Syaikh Awad Zaydan was responsible for the controversial issue of the caliphate by claiming that this post should only be held by Arabs. He also made a false statement and alleged that it was taken from the words of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. This fake statement was translated into Malay and circulated to the public. Copies of these papers have also been posted on the walls of the Grand Mosque of Singapore. His actions were said to receive great criticism from the Muslims and eventually led to the fall of the Ottoman Empire and at the same time, destroyed Muslim unity.⁹⁶

94 Ibid., p. 48. See FO 371/5236, Lee Warner to the Undersecretary of State, Foreign Office, Downing Street, 15 July 1920.

95 Ibid.

96 FO 371/5236, Dunn, Consul of British Consulate General, Batavia to Ear Curzon of Kedleston, 18 May 1920, p. 2.

There were efforts made by *Syarikat Islam* lead by Tjokroaminoto. Tjokroaminoto held a feast at a house of his *mutawwif*, Syaikh Ahmad Kudus in Makkah which was attended by 150 guests of natives of the Netherlands East Indies. At this meeting, Tjokroaminoto talked about the need to combine all Malayan countries and the Hijaz under Muslim rule directed by a real *khalifa* with his seat in the Hijaz, free from all foreign influence and interference. Tjokroaminoto proposed to take over the responsibility as the leader of *Syarikat Islam* and envoy from Java, and that he will explain to all Malays the necessity of expelling the White races from the East. In the meeting, the name Ibn Saud was mentioned as the possible *khalifa*.⁹⁷

Another meeting was held on 15 April 1926 at Jaid in Makkah attended by some 1,000 Syrians, Egyptians, Indians and Malays. Basically, the essence of all the speeches was the absolute necessity of driving out the White races from the Malayan countries as they monopolised the authority and power and swallowed the wealth of the natives. Due to Tjokroaminoto's plan, a number of Sumatra Malays visited Malaya after the *hajj* to stir up anti-British feelings amongst the Malays.⁹⁸

The situation in Singapore was quite tensed compared to the Malay Peninsula when almost every Arab were discussing and talking about the caliphate issue. Generally, in the early 1920s, the Arab community in Singapore could be divided into two groups; those who supported the British and Sharif Husayn and another group who were anti-British. The Arabs who were pro-British were criticized and accused as allies to the British by the anti-British. Sharif Husayn was also criticised by the anti-British and anti-Sharif Husayn for breaking up the Muslims' solidarity. Whilst in Indonesia, the situation was almost the same where Muslims were also in a dilemma. A group of Hadhrami Arabs in the Netherland East Indies (Indonesia) was also reported to have connections with the Hadhrami Arabs who were residing in Singapore. "The Bin Abdat

97 CO 273/543/16, Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence, Tjokroaminoto, p. 8.

98 CO 273/543/16, Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence, p. 8.

family and the al-Djofri (al-Jafri) families were identified as Hadhrami families who were anti-British and connected with Singapore (the latter family was also connected to Java). They were known to be leading anti-British Kathiri allies and opponents of the pro-British Qu'aiti regime and to the British as well".⁹⁹

The British also recorded a request by the family of the former Sultan of Turkey asking for assistance which was received by a ruling house in the Federated Malay States. The exiled members of the Sultan of Turkey were residing in France. They asked for assistance in view of the past services of their predecessors to the cause of Islam. However, the British believed that such an appeal should be treated as of no account and should be left unanswered.¹⁰⁰

The defeat of the Turks in the First World War was a blow to the Muslim World. According to Nurfadzilah, in order to eliminate the feelings of hatred and dissatisfaction of the Malays, especially among the Hadhrami Arabs, the British took initiative by introducing English education. Education was seen as a way to eliminate anti-British sentiments among the Arabs in Malaya.¹⁰¹ Henri Onraet reported that an Arab named Sayyid Zainal Abidin al-Sagoff was put under the care of an English tutor and soon lost any anti-British feelings he might have had before.¹⁰²

It is observed that in the early decades of the 20th century, particularly during the 1920s to 1930s, the involvement of Malays in politics was minimal. In fact, it was the British policy not to encourage the Malays' participation in politics. The British would use any means to control the influx of outside influence that could arouse the masses' consciousness about the critical political scenario in Malaya. Meanwhile, the Hadhrami Arabs were also not too passionate in their reactions or interactions with the political development in Malaya in the early decades of the 20th century as compared to the late

99 List of leading Kathiri's who are pro-British in Singapore. Unsigned and undated, IOR. R/20/A/1409. See also Nurfadzilah Yahaya, *Good Friends and Dangerous Enemies*, p. 66.

100 *Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence*, Request for Assistance from ex-Sultan of Turkey's family, p. 7, CO273/534.

101 Nurfadzilah Yahaya, *Good Friends and Dangerous Enemies*, p. 66.

102 CO273/534. *Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence*, Request for Assistance from ex-Sultan of Turkey's family, p. 7. *Ibid.*, p. 88

1940s. Their passion was roused then, especially when the spirit of nationalism was at its height, as well as the period of deciding Singapore's participation into Malaysia and its subsequent separation from Malaya in 1965.¹⁰³

It was only after Malaya was occupied by the Japanese army during the Second World War that the Malays started to realize and at the same time inspired by the Japanese policy resounding anti-Western colonialism in Malaya. The Malays then started to get involved in politics, by rallying protests opposing the British's proposal of the Malayan Union Scheme in 1946. The period after the Second World War also observed the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in Malay politics with prominent figures taking up the cause, such as Sayyid Alwi b. Sayyid Syaikh Al-Hadi and Sayyid Jaafar Albar. Many other new faces of Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore had gotten involved in the politics of Malaya as they started to become aware of their social and political status in British Singapore. Their involvement was to fight for their and the rest of the Muslims' rights through the establishment of SUMNO.¹⁰⁴

Due to the emergence of political consciousness among the Malays involving government officials and administrators, the British began to take security measures by setting up a special branch of police in Singapore. This special branch was tasked to control and monitor the political activities of Malaya. A special branch of the police was founded in Singapore from 1948 to 1953 to monitor illegal political movements, parties or organizations that were suspected of having connections with communists in the island. Anyone suspected of having a connection or sympathized with the communist movement was arrested or silenced. This period, however, created a political vacuum in

103 Mohd. Isa Othman, *Pengalaman Kedah & Perlis Zaman Penjajahan British*, p. 236.

104 For example, in Kedah the Malays awareness in politics has long been embedded since before the Second World War. It was however, has been banned and prevented by the Malay royalty and dignitaries who considered politics as 'haram' or illegal. These elite groups also look down and hate those who involve in politics and even regarded the political party as a communist party or "parti komunis". This notion became widespread and even influenced the masses which had caused them refrain from getting involved in politics and even to hate it. According to *SUARA SEBERKAS*, "Politik dipandang oleh kebanyakan orang-orang Melayu sebagai perkataan haram atau menyalahi kerajaan semata-mata". So, it is clear that the government (British) was the mastermind who controlling the politics of the Malays for the sake of their political and economic interests in Malaya. See *SUARA SEBERKAS*, Year 1, No. 4, April 1946, p. 3. See Azmi b. Saad, 'Penubuhan dan Pergerakan Politik Melayu Negeri kedah 1945-1955,' journalarticle.ukm.my/525/1/1.pdf. accessed on 15 May 2014, and *SUARA SEBERKAS*, Year 1, No. 4, April 1946, p. 3; See also Mohd. Isa Othman, *Pengalaman Kedah & Perlis Zaman Penjajahan British*, Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications & Distributors Sdn. Bhd. 2001, p. 236.

the island that was later on filled by Singapore's United Malays National Organization (SUMNO) who represented the Malay community in Singapore. This was how the British authorities managed to monitor the political developments in Singapore in order to maintain peace and stability among the multiracial community in the island.¹⁰⁵

In 1926, the Political Intelligence Bureau of Singapore reported that a group of Indonesians had planned to establish a club in the Kalang district, Singapore. The group was intended to have ties to the communist movement in the Netherlands East Indies. There was also a report received by the Political Intelligence Bureau of Singapore saying that a Malay communist newspaper will be published in Singapore and funded by the N.E.I communists. On 29th May, it was reported that Haji Jaafar held a private meeting at the house of Sayyid Mahdar discussing the issue of the formation of a club consisting of 500 members. Earlier in that month, a club was founded in the Province of Wellesley by Sultan Perpatih, wherein members were mainly Javanese from Sumatra.¹⁰⁶

The 1950s was a period that observed a series of political upheaval in the country. Sensitive issues involving Islam and the Malays received quick responses from the Malays and Muslims in the country. However, the British perceived these incidents as a form of protest by the people against the Government's policy. For example, the British was of the opinion that the Muslim religio-political minority agitation was endeavoured to exploit every incident such as the Hertogh case, those convicted in subsequent riots, and the showing of the film "David and Bathsheba" to put pressure upon government policy. The Muslim affairs in the country were disturbed during the month when there was opposition by the All Malaya Muslim Missionary society and the Singapore Muslim League. It built up until the showing of a controversial film called

105 Jim Baker, *Crossroads: A Popular History of Malaya & Singapore*, Singapore: Times Book International, 2000, p. 267.

106 CO 273/534, Malayan Bulletin of Political Intelligence, Communist Centre in Singapore, p. 9.

“David and the Bathsheba”.¹⁰⁷ The evidence pointed out that the opposition was mainly from a small minority of South Indians of strong Muslim religious views and political inspirations. The release of the film by the Appeal Board with augmented Malay representation in the Federation of Malaya did not weaken vocal opposition in Malaya. Apart from that, the British also mentioned about the role played by the Arab magazine *Al-Qalam* wherein its Arab publisher, Sayyid Hussein Ali al-Saqqaf attacked Dato Onn, the IMP, the Secretary of the State’s proposals for Chinese citizenship and the Singapore Government policy in respect to the film “David and the Bathsheba”. He also reported to be endeavouring to form an Islamic party and also championed a unified religious administration throughout Malaya independent of the Government and supported by a body called the Muslim Brotherhood.¹⁰⁸

The British also expressed their worry over the political and religious connections between the Muslims in Malaya with those in Indonesia and India. They were also concerned about the Muslim People's Organization movement who on their tour to Indonesia passed Singapore and then on their return stopped by at Singapore for a few days. This group of Muslims sympathized strongly with Egypt, Tunisia and Iran. The report further stated that the Muslim People's Organization sought to mobilise religious feelings for political purposes. One of their objectives was to assist in the liberation of Muslim people from foreign domination. The group was also reported to be in touch with Mohamed Karim Ghani, the riot leader in Singapore and had arranged for his visit to Karachi to attend a Muslim People's Organization conference on May 10, 1952. The Muslim People's Organization also established relations with the MASJUMI Party during their tour to Indonesia.¹⁰⁹

The British also reported about a visit by Syaikh Said Mohamed Ramadan to Indonesia, who also paid a visit to Malaya. On the evening of 11 March 1952, Syaikh

107 CO 1022/434, Muslim Affairs in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore, January 1952. Extract from Political Report for January 1952, p. 16. CO 1022/434.

108 Ibid., p. 16.

109 CO 1022/434, “Muslim Affairs in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore”, p. 8.

Said Mohamed visited Johor Bahru from Singapore accompanied by Dato' Sayyid Ibrahim Al-Saqqaf, the president of All Malaya Muslim Missionary and several other prominent members of the All Malaya Muslim Missionary Society. The party had dinner at the residence of the *Menteri Besar* of Johor which was attended by several UMNO officials, including the President of Religious Affairs and the Acting *Mufti* of Johor. Syaikh Said Mohamed also gave a lecture to about 200 people on the issue of Islamic religion yet had touched nothing on politics.¹¹⁰ The British authorities in Malaya always kept an eye on the political movements of Muslim organizations and parties in Malaya. For instance, they checked on the All Malaya Muslim Missionary Society's annual general meeting on 19th April 1952.¹¹¹

The close political connections between Muslim organization outside Malaya such as the World Muslim Conference in Karachi, India with the Malaya Muslim League of Singapore was also monitored by the British authorities. For instance, there was an attempt made by the organization to stir up feelings over issues afflicting the Muslims in Tunisia. The Secretary of the World Muslim Conference wrote to the Secretary of the Malay Muslim League proposing a demonstration on 1st February 1952 to show their sympathy towards the Muslims of Tunisia. However, the situation in Malaya did not allow for such a demonstration although the local Muslims had sympathised with the Tunisians.¹¹²

There was another Muslim organization known as the Singapore Muslim League. The organization had its annual general meeting on 3rd February 1952 which was attended by about 100 members who were mostly Indians and Pakistanis. There were about 10 Malays, but not a single Arab attended the meeting. M. J. Namazie was re-elected president and Che Sidek, J.P., the president of the Singapore Malay Union was elected as one of the vice presidents. However, there was a misunderstanding about

110 Ibid., p.8.

111 Ibid., p.8, CO 537/3751, "Malaya Political Developments", Political Intelligence Report, p. 257.

112 CO 1022/434, "Muslim Affairs in the Federation of Malaya and Singapore", p. 18.

his appointment as he was absent from the meeting, and later announced that he was not a member of the league and rejected the appointment.¹¹³

On the issue of the showing of the film "David and the Bathsheba", the *al-Qalam* magazine had criticized the government's insensitivity towards the feelings of Muslims at a time "when the Government need the services of the Muslims to fight communism".¹¹⁴

Conclusion

As evidenced, the Hadhrami Arabs played quite a considerable role in Malaya. Despite their small number, some of them had huge influence on the economic, political as well as administrative aspects of Malaya. The Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the administration of the Malay states was seen by the British as a threat to its interests in Malaya. Considering such an influence possessed by the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, the British took a subtle approach in dealing with the Hadhrami Arabs while at the same time maintaining the benefits they derived from their overall control in the Malay states. The British it seemed was afraid that the Hadhrami Arabs would use their political and religious influence to encourage the Sultans and the rest of the Malays to fight against the British administration in the country. Meanwhile, on the Hadhrami Arabs' side, particularly the elites, links and good ties with the British officials were perceived as beneficial too. They even pledged their loyalties to the British, particularly after the mutiny in Singapore.

The Hadhrami Arab elites also maintained good relations with the British administration in order to preserve their business interests and influence in Malaya. Despite this, the British was still suspicious of the Hadhrami Arabs' loyalty towards the British administration in Malaya as among them, there were also several figures who

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 13.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 18.

were anti-British. The British however succeeded in winning the Hadhrami Arab elites' support, contributing to their relative success in the administration in Malaya. For instance, through the assistance of several Hadhrami Arabs, the British Malaya managed to influence the people's perception of Turks' domination and their role in the First World War. The British officials took advantage of their close relationship with the Hadhrami Arab leaders in order to keep an eye on their fellow Muslims, for example on their religious and political activities in Malaya.

Although there were concerns on the part of the British regarding the spread of pan-Islamic ideas in Malaya (by the Malay students who studied in Egypt) and also the role played by reformist newspapers published by the Young Faction or *Kaum Muda* in Malaya (pioneered by *Islah* or reformist figures such as Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin, Haji Abbas Taha, and Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi), the response shown by the Malays was not so overwhelming. It was the reformist thoughts of Al-Afghani that managed to mobilize the Malays and stirred up political consciousness among the masses. The internal conflicts between *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* was tapped by the British to create tension among the Malays on issues related to religious practices and *adat*. In fact, it was the British who masterminded this conflict as they fuelled the tension and conflict by supporting and backing up the Malay rulers and traditional '*ulama*'.

In terms of the Muslims' religious affairs, in particular the *hajj* conduct, after several incidents related to pilgrims in terms of health and welfare, the realisation of the economic gains associated with the industry, and in the interest of controlling the Malay pilgrims' participation in radical political movements while they were in Hijaz, the British decided to interfere in this issue. This resulted in the improvement of the pilgrims' welfare and health during their stay in Makkah. A Malay pilgrimage officer was appointed to monitor the smooth running of the *hajj* conduct. These actions were seen as manifestations that the British were not anti-Islam.

CHAPTER 7: THE DECLINE OF THE ROLES AND INFLUENCES OF THE HADHRAMIS IN MALAYA AND SINGAPORE

Introduction

20th century Malaya witnessed significant changes in the politics, economics, and social aspects of the country. The world economic slump in the 1920s and 1930s left a big impact to the economic activities in the country. Many entrepreneurs and traders were affected by the economic depression, yet the well-to-do Hadhrami Arab elites benefited from the economic downturn that hit the country as they took the opportunity to accumulate wealth by buying assets. The Hadhrami Arabs were known as among the wealthiest individuals in Singapore in the 1920s and 1930s who possessed a lot of properties in the form of houses, shop lots, and lands.

The Japanese occupation of Malaya (1941-1945) and its aftermath in the 1940s had also affected the economic activities of the country. This period also witnessed changes in local politics as well as the emergence of political unrest due to the process of independence of Malaya in 1957. The British tried to consolidate their power in Malaya through the establishment of the Malayan Union, but received negative responses from the people, particularly the Malays. The period between after the Second World War until the late 1960s was a crucial time for the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. This period was marked as the starting point of the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs in the country economically, whilst on the other hand, it also saw the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the politics of modern Singapore. This political struggle was unavoidable and it was a must to participate to ensure their survival in Singapore. Being a minority group in a densely populated Singapore with a majority of Chinese population made the Arabs' presence on the island felt by many. Although their number was small, they managed to do well in their lives socially, economically, and politically. Meanwhile in the Malay

states, the situation was different since the majority of Hadhrami Arabs had become part of the Malay community and were even known as Malays. Despite the Hadhrami Arabs' survival in a multi-racial society in Malaya, the Malays saw the Hadhrami Arabs as a dominating ethnic in the economic sector.

The ups and downs of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya were also related to the political and economic changes that took place in the country as well as in the Middle East. The political affairs in Malaya as well as in Hadhramaut, their homeland had more or less affected the Hadhrami Arabs in their diaspora. Most of the Hadhrami Arabs in the diaspora maintained a close link with Hadhramaut. Therefore, this chapter attempts to discover and highlight the plausible factors that contributed to the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, particularly in Singapore in the 20th century when it was once a focal point for the Hadhramis to make a living and accumulate wealth and fame in the region. This chapter also discovers how the Hadhrami Arabs coped with the ever changing world surrounding them.

The term 'decline' used in this chapter refers to the shrinking of the Hadhrami Arabs' dominance in politics and administration, economics, and social status in Malaya. This decline was noticeable in Singapore compared to the Malay states as the Hadhrami Arabs were distinctively known as a Muslim minority group in the republic. In the Malay states, such a decline was not apparent as the Hadhrami Arabs had mostly become part of the Malay society and were well accepted by the Malays as their brothers in Islam. The separation of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 contributed to this decline as well, as many of the Hadhrami Arabs were separated from their families and fellow brothers in Malaya. This decline was also related to the policies introduced by the Government of Singapore, particularly after the Second World War which had

affected the socioeconomy of the Hadhrami Arabs who were once known as wealthy Arabs on the island.

Political Changes

Political issues played a major role in the lives of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya as well as those in Hadhramaut, Yemen. The decline of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya reached its climax when the people lost contact with their homeland in Hadhramaut. The independence of South Yemen in 1967 left a big impact to the Hadhramis in Yemen as well as those in the diaspora. The new communist regime in power implemented policies that forbade the Hadhrami immigrants from returning to their homeland, including those in Malaya and Singapore. This policy was continued at least until the 1990s, when South Yemen and North Yemen had finally reunited.¹

The new government in power imposed policies that forced the Hadhrami emigrants to disconnect their family ties with their kin in Hadhramaut. The practice of sending back children to Hadhramaut for religious education as well as visits was also halted. This definitely affected the remittances received by the people in Hadhramaut from their relatives overseas, as well as the funds received from *waqf*. Ameen stresses on the effects of this political change to the education of the young generation, such as their level of Arabic language proficiency and the identity as the children of the Hadhrami Arabs. The children had started to lose contact with their ancestors in Hadhramaut, and many of them hardly ever spoke Arabic.²

The political situation in Malaya and Hadhramaut also contributed to the shrinking number of Hadhrami Arabs in the country. The communist government in

¹Ameen Ali Talib, "Hadramis in Singapore", The British-Yemeni society, Nov. 1995, See also <http://www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/talib95.htm>. See also Ben Simpfendorfer, *Singapore's Hadhrami Community in Today's Economy*, Singapore: Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore, 2010, p.5. <http://www.mei.nus.edu.sg>. Accessed 4/1/2015.

² Ameen Ali Talib, "Hadramis in Singapore", See <http://www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/talib95.htm>.

Yemen implemented policies in 1969 that affected the flow of Hadhrami Arabs' migration to Malaya. The Hadhrami Arabs' mass migration to the Malay World, in particular Malaya, occurred in the early 19th century. The majority of them were among the *sadah* group of the various clans of the Sayyid descent, as well as non *sadah* from Hadhramaut, Yemen. Their numbers increased every year. The influx of Hadhrami Arabs who migrated from Hadhramaut to Malaya increased every year since the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. The use of steamships facilitated the flow of Hadhrami Arabs' travel and diaspora to the east. However, the flow of Hadhrami migration to Malaya was affected by the immigration policy enacted in the early decades of the 20th century, particularly in Singapore.³

Immigration control was first enforced in 1919 when an ordinance was introduced on 11th April 1919 to control the influx of newcomers to Malaya. However, this ordinance did not affect those who were born in Malaya and Singapore. In order to administer the influx of immigrants, an alien ordinance was introduced in 1933 whereby the Immigration Department was established in January 1933 in Singapore with its first office situated in the Chinese Protectorate Building at Havelock Road. It was then moved to the Palmer Road Government officers in January 1953. The department also introduced a fixed quota for alien immigration to control the number of immigrants to Malaya through Singapore. The Alien Ordinance of 1936 restricted the number of immigrants entering the country with a limited quota. It said that only 25 Arabs were allowed to be ferried out to the island in one ship.⁴ Originally, the ordinance was purposely implemented to control the influx of the Chinese immigrants to Malaya which saw an excess of thousands of Chinese into the country with the setting of a quota of 4,000 immigrants every month. The policy was also applied to non-shipping companies,

³ Ibid., See also John Duke Anthony, "The Communist Party of the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen: An Analysis of Its strengths and Weaknesses", in B.R. Pridham (ed.), *Contemporary Yemen: Politics and Historical Background*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984, p. 232.

⁴ Leif Manger, *The Hadrami Diaspora: Community Building on the Indian Ocean Rim*, United States: Berghahn Books, 2010, p. 35.

whereby they were permitted a number of aliens not exceeding 25 people from any nationality per month. This policy and restricted quota of permitted aliens also applied to the Hadhrami Arab immigrants from Hadhramaut, Yemen. This situation indirectly affected the number of Hadhrami Arab immigrants to Malaya, as well as the return of Hadhramis to their native country.⁵

Despite the political change and distress suffered by the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya and Singapore due to the loss of contact and political link with their homeland in Hadhramaut, this period had witnessed an increased number of Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the politics of Malaysia and Singapore, particularly after the Second World War. The Hadhrami Arabs had started to realise the need for their participation in politics, particularly in Singapore, to secure their rights and interests in the republic. Being a minority Muslim community in Singapore, it was crucial for them to get involved in the political affairs in order to ensure their survival in the country. When Singapore joined the Federation of Malaysia on 16th September 1963, the citizens of the state of Singapore became Malaysians and they were issued Malaysian passports. However, Singapore did not stay long under the Federation of Malaysia, as the country separated from Malaysia on 9th August 1965 to become a sovereign state of its own entity. This separation gave a big impact to the people in Singapore, in particular the Malays and Hadhrami Arabs as part of the minority group of Muslims in the republic.⁶

The Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in religious administration in the Malay states saw some of them holding important positions such as *mufti* and *syaikh al-Islam*. However, the number of appointments decreased in the 20th century due to the increased number of qualified local Malays who pursued religious studies in the Middle East by deepening their religious knowledge and mastering the Arabic language in institutions

⁵ *The Straits Times*, 'The Migratory Flow in Malaya,' 20 June 1936, p. 12. Accessed on 30 May 2014, from [http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article._See also Ulrike Freitag, "Arab Merchants in Singapore", in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein \(eds.\), *Transcending Borders, Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, p.113.](http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article._See%20also%20Ulrike%20Freitag,%20%22Arab%20Merchants%20in%20Singapore%22,%20in%20Huub%20de%20Jonge%20and%20Nico%20Kaptein%20(eds.),%20Transcending%20Borders,%20Arabs,%20Politics,%20Trade%20and%20Islam%20in%20Southeast%20Asia,%20Leiden:%20KITLV%20Press,%202002,%20p.113.)

⁶ <http://www.ica.gov.sg/page.aspx>.

such as the Al-Azhar University in Egypt and also in Hijaz in Makkah and Medinah. However, there were several Hadhrami Arab religious scholars who served as *mufti* in the state of Johor and Terengganu in the 20th century, such as Sayyid Alwi bin Tahir al-Haddad (1934-1961), Sayyid Abdul Qadir b. Mohsin Al-Attas (1907-1933), and Sayyid Yusof b. Ali Al-Zawawi (1952-1975). Sayyid Alwi bin Tahir al-Haddad (1934-1961) was the longest serving *mufti* in the Religion Department of Johor before and after the Second World War.⁷

Economic Depression

20th century Malaya also witnessed the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs' influence in the economic sector in Malaya, particularly in Singapore. The world economic slump in the 1920s to 1930s affected the economic flow of the country. This situation influenced the market prices of rubber, the trade sector, as well as properties and real estates in Malaya and Singapore. However, this situation benefitted the rich as well as the wealthy Hadhrami Arab merchants as they accumulated more real estate and properties, particularly in Singapore. The land price in Singapore has increased ever since it was opened as a trading port. The economic slump that hit Malaya had slowed down the economic activities of the country. However, the Hadhrami Arab elites looked at this situation as a chance to benefit from the economic slump by acquiring more land and properties. For instance, Sayyid Ahmad al-Saqqaf or al-Saggof bought a piece of 999 leasehold land and a house at No. 74, Arab Street for \$8,600 from a local property auction in 1922.⁸

⁷ Daeng Sanusi Daeng Mariok & Abdul Fatah Ibrahim, "Dato' Sayid Alwi Tahir al-Haddad 1884-1962: Mufti yang Tegas", in *Ulama Silam dalam Kenangan*, (ed.) Ismail Mat, Bangi: Penerbit Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1992, Nurulwahidah Fauzi, Ulama Arab Hadhrami dalam Pentadbiran dan Pendidikan Islam di Johor : Analisis terhadap Sumbangan Syed 'Abd Qadir bin Muhsin al-'Attas dan Syed 'Alwi b. Tahir al-Haddad, PhD. Thesis, Jabatan Sejarah dan Tamadun Islam, Akademi Pengajian Islam, University of Malaya, 2012, Muhammad Abu Bakar, "Syed Yusof Ali al-Zawawi Mufti Terengganu, 1952-1975", in *Ulama Terengganu: Suatu Sorotan*, Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Publications, 1991, pp. 247-256.

⁸ *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser* (1884-1942), Local Property Auction, 27 October 1922, p. 12.

The Hadhrami Arabs were reported to be among the wealthiest individuals in Singapore and Penang owing to their large possessions of land, houses, and estate properties. According to Lee Warner who was quoted in Ingrams, he mentions that “...whole streets in Singapore and Penang are owned by wealthy Hadhramis, mainly of the Kathiri tribes”.⁹ Ingrams asserts that due to Islam’s restriction on interest, the Hadhrami Arabs could have probably spent the profits from their business ventures in buying land and houses.¹⁰ J. A. E Morley reveals how the Hadhrami Arabs ran their businesses in which some of them managed to amass lots of properties through money lending activities.¹¹

Sayyid Ahmad b. Abdul Rahman al-Saqqaf was one of the wealthy men in Singapore. He engaged in very large trades, owning steamers and sailing vessels. When he passed away, his wealth and business ventures were inherited by his son, Sayyid Mohammad b. Ahmad al-Saqqaf, who was known as the leader of the Muslim community in Singapore. Sayyid Mohammad Al-Saqqaf had vast business interests in Singapore in the form of land and property shares. He was reported to own a great part of property in Kampung Glam, Singapore. In Johor, he also owned a large estate known as Cucob Concession.¹²

The Hadhrami Arabs’ business ventures had shown signs of inability to compete with foreign traders and merchants, such as the Chinese and the Europeans as early as late 19th century as these entrepreneurs were better connected compared to the Arab merchants and traders. Their commercial and business activities were disrupted due to the outbreak of the Second World War. Once the war ended, business and trade activities continued as usual. However, the Hadhrami Arabs were not as dominant as the first several generations

⁹ W. H. Ingrams, *Aden Protectorate, A Report on the Social, Economic and Political Condition of the Hadhramaut*, London: Printed and Published by His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1936, p. 150, Lee Warner, ‘Notes on the Hadhramaut,’ *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. LXXVII, No. 3, March 1931.

¹⁰ W. H. Ingrams, *Aden Protectorate, A Report*, p. 150.

¹¹ For further information on the Hadhrami Arabs’ involvement in money lending, please refer to chapter five. See also J. A. E. Morley, ‘The Arabs and the Eastern Trade’, *JMBRAS*, Vol. 22, Pt. 1, 1949, pp. 169-170.

¹² *The Singapore Free Press and Mercantile Advertiser*, ‘Death of Syed Mohamed AlSagoff,’ 3 July 1906, p. 2.

of Hadhrami Arabs who traded in Malaya in the 19th century. The Hadhrami Arabs, especially the elites, had business contacts in Malaya and the neighbouring countries as well as in the Middle East. Shipping enterprise was another source of income from which the Hadhrami Arabs prospered in.¹³

This business earned them much revenue in which they made profit by conducting inter-island trades and shipping in the Malay Archipelagos. This included providing services for potential *hajj* pilgrims to Jeddah. The al-Saqqaf family was one of the Hadhrami Arabs who were involved in the shipping industry.¹⁴ They once were actively involved in trade, conducting inter-island trades in the Malayan waters. However, with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, the use of steamships became famous and made its way to the Southeast Asia. This was a great blow to the Hadhrami Arabs who were involved in the industry as they had to compete with the European shipping companies. The Hadhrami Arab entrepreneurs did not lag behind in this regard as they also acquired steamships. Sayyid Mohammad al-Saqqaf was reported to own three steamers.¹⁵ The al-Saqqafs acquired steam ships to meet the demands of the flourishing pilgrimage enterprise of conveying pilgrims to Jeddah. In 1874, the company ferried 3,476 pilgrims to Jeddah using their four steamers.¹⁶ The Singapore Steamship Company belonging to the Al-Saqqaf company had carried potential *hajj* pilgrims to Jeddah as early as 1871.¹⁷ Sayyid Muhsin or Massim, also spelt Massein, was also engaged in the pilgrim industry as a pilgrim agent, ferrying potential *hajj* pilgrims to Jeddah using a British ship named *Fathool Carrim* or *Fathul Karim*. Sayyid

¹³ See Ulrike Freitag, "Arab Merchants in Singapore", in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (eds.), *Transcending Borders, Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, p.135.

¹⁴ PRO C.O. 273/206. The information is obtained from a special edition of Straits Governments Gazette, August 1895.

¹⁵ PRO C.O. 273/206.

¹⁶ Edwin Lee, "The Easily Governed Races", in *The British As Rulers Governing Multiracial Singapore 1867-1914*, Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1991, p. 165.

¹⁷ William G. Clarence-Smith, "Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940", in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen In the Indian Ocean, 1750s – 1960s*, Leiden; New York; Koln: Brill, 1997, p. 300.

Ahmad was also engaged in this industry. He rented a British ship named *Fathool Illah* or *Fathullah*, using it to ferry potential *hajj* pilgrims to Jeddah.¹⁸

However, the involvement of Hadhrami Arabs in the region's shipping industry did not last long as they had to face stiff competition from European shipping companies. The Hadhrami Arabs' shipping companies were not able to compete with the European shipping companies, such as the British shipping company, the Dutch, and the Germans. In fact, there was bitter rivalry between the European shipping companies themselves in the trade in Southeast Asia. The rivalry among the European shipping companies during the inter war years of the 20th century affected the trade and economy of the countries in Southeast Asia.¹⁹ For instance, Sayyid Muhsin (Masim) b. Salih al-Jifri was one of the Hadhrami Arab traders who prospered in the shipping industry. However, his business was closed down in 1894 due to its inability to compete with the European companies.²⁰ The Al-Saqqaf company was also reported to cease its shipping operations before 1914 due to stiff competition with the Dutch and British shipping companies. However, it was reported that the family was still operating their business in Jeddah, conducting a pilgrim agency in 1940.²¹

The British dominated the shipping industry in Malaya because they owned many steam ships. The British shipping company, the Blue Funnel, did not only transport commodities, but it also provided services for ferrying pilgrims from Malaya to Jeddah. The steam ship was widely used in the Malay World as it shortened the journey from three to six months depending on the weather to only about 16 days of

¹⁸ *Straits Times Overland Journal*, "Shipping Intelligence," 14 July 1871, p. 10. See also Microfilm NL 5197, Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, Singapore. <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article>.

¹⁹ Francis E. Hyde, "British Shipping Companies and East and South East Asia, 1860-1939", in C.D., Cowan (ed.), *The Economic Development of South East Asia: Studies in Economic History and Political Economy*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1964, p. 28.

²⁰ Clarence-Smith, William Gervase, "Hadhrami Entrepreneurs in the Malay World, c. 1750 to c. 1940," in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (ed.), *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars, and Statesmen In the Indian Ocean, 1750s – 1960s*, Leiden; New York; Koln: Brill, 1997, p. 300.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

travel from Singapore to Jeddah. The inability to compete with the European companies caused the Hadhrami Arabs' shipping companies to close down their operations.²²

Government Policies

The aftermath of the Second World War left a big impact on the economic development of Singapore. There were several factors that affected the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs, as well as their social status in Malaya and particularly, in Singapore. Among these were government policies such as the Rent Control Act, Land Acquisition Act, and the enactment introduced by the government concerning the Administration of Muslim Law Act 1968 that monitored the administration of charitable *waqfs* in Singapore. The Rent Control Act launched by Singapore in 1946/7 affected the Hadhrami Arabs' properties on the island.²³

The Act froze all the rents of pre-war properties and put those properties under the control of the Singapore government. The Rent Control Act introduced by the authorities was aimed to prevent landlords from raising rents by taking advantage of the shortage of housing in the island. The Hadhrami Arab families in Singapore were major landowners. The Rent Control Act introduced by the government of Singapore in 1947 had a considerable impact on the Hadhrami Arabs' income as many of them were major landlords. Most of them depended on the income collected from the rental properties. Due to the Rent Control Act, the rents of pre-war properties were controlled. Furthermore, the implementation of Rent Control Act had gravely affected the income of the *awqaf*.²⁴ Meanwhile, properties built or completed on or after that date were free from the control. The rent was fixed by the Rent Conciliation Board and such rent was turned into a standard rent. This act had caused the standard rents to be frozen to the

²² Ibid. See Mohd Zulfadli Maafor, *Sheikh Haji Tanah Melayu: Aktiviti dan Operasi 1900-1950*, PhD Thesis, Bangi: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2011, pp. 95-100. Apart from Blue Funnel, there were also other shipping companies that ferried pilgrims from Malaya to Jeddah such as the Nemazie and Straits-Hejaz Steamship. Mohd Zulfadli Maafor, *Sheikh Haji Tanah Melayu*, p. 97.

²³ Philip Motha, (compiled), *Singapore Real Property Guide*, Singapore: Quins Pte. Ltd., pp. 25,152.

²⁴ Ulrike Freitag, *Arab Merchants in Singapore*, p. 135.

maximum rent listed (or legal rents) unless the Rent Conciliation Board permits for the rent to be raised in order to cover repairs or modifications. However, the properties built on or after the date were free from the control.²⁵

This Rent Control Act had indirectly affected the Hadhrami Arabs' income as the *waqfs* or trusts were mostly pre-war properties which resulted in the decrease of their income. The Hadhrami Arabs owned considerable assets in the form of rental properties and *waqf* or trusts. They had private family trusts as well as public charitable trusts. Through these trusts, they maintained the family businesses in Malaya and Singapore, as well as in their home country, Hadhramaut as they lost their source of income. Since most of their properties were in the form of *waqfs*, this situation affected much on their income which resulted in the loss of their economic influence in Singapore.²⁶

The government of Singapore developed the island aggressively as they acquired land for urban development. The Land Acquisition Act gave authority to the government over control of land use in Singapore. Thus, the act enabled the government to acquire land wherever and whenever necessary, in particular the pre-war properties for urbanisation. Many of the Hadhrami Arabs' properties were in the form of lands and buildings. Ameen further says that most of the land in today's central business district was at one time owned by the Hadhrami Arabs' *waqf*. The *waqf* bearing the Hadhrami Arabs' family names were either for private use or charity. These *waqfs* were also meaningful to the Hadhrami Arabs, giving them a considerable status amongst their fellow Muslims in Singapore. These properties were taken by the government and the compensation paid was relatively lower than the market value. Under the name of modernization, more properties were acquired in the 1970s and 1980s for urban

²⁵ Philip Motha, (compiled), *Singapore Real Property Guide*, pp. 25, 152.

²⁶ Ameen Ali Talib, "Hadramis in Singapore", *The British-Yemeni society*, Nov. 1995, See also <http://www.albab.com/bys/articles/talib95.htm>. Jim Baker, *Crossroads: a Popular History of Malaysia & Singapore*, Singapore: Times Books International, 2000, pp. 269-270.

development. The Hadhrami Arab families suffered losses that affected many of their properties in Singapore. It also indirectly eroded the Arabs' identity as major landlords in Singapore, as well as their wealth and influence in Malaya and Singapore.²⁷

In 1962, the Al-Saqqaf Perseverance Estate was taken by the government for urban development. Shaykh Salem Talib was one of the Arab families who owned a considerable number of properties in Singapore. It was reported that the family owned more than three pages in the list of properties on the island. However, their properties were taken by the government and they were left with less than a one page list. The al-Junied family had 10 acres of land donated to the Muslim Trust Fund for the purpose of accumulating more income to be used for welfare projects. The Trust body had planned to build a mosque and a *madrasah* on the land, but they were not permitted to do so by the government. The land was later taken by the government in 1985.²⁸ In 1965, The Straits Times reported that the Central Government planned to buy the 1,000 acres of AlSagoff Estate in Geylang Serai to develop the area by building a housing scheme in the estate. About 50,000 Malays were living in the estate.²⁹

The introduction of the Muslim Law Act in 1968 had caused the Hadhrami Arabs to lose their authority over the *waqf* or trust funds' management. The Singapore Islamic Council was established to monitor the administration of charitable *waqfs* in Singapore. Before the Act was introduced, the *waqf* properties belonging to the Hadhrami Arab families were managed and controlled by the trustees. However, when the Council started to take over the management of *waqf*, the Hadhrami Arabs began to lose their rights and authority over the *waqf* properties. The Hadhrami Arabs' association with the *waqf*, as well as their reputation as generous and philanthropic

²⁷ Ameen Ali Talib, 'The Hadramis in Singapore', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, Vol. 17, No. 1, 1997, pp. 89-96. See also <http://www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/talib95.htm>.

²⁸ Ameen Ali Talib, "The Hadramis in Singapore", Nov. 1995.

²⁹ The Straits Times, 15 April 1965, 'Alsagoff Estate: Minister meets the trustees' p. 13. Article also available on microfilm reel NL12168 (Lee Kong Chian Reference Library) and online, <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article/straitstimes19650415.2.77.aspx>

Arabs in charitable work started to diminish as they no longer possessed such abundant resources for those purposes.³⁰

In the 20th century, Malaya witnessed significant changes in the politics and administration of the country. In Singapore, various policies were introduced by the government for the sake of modernisation. The Rent Control Act (1947), Land Acquisition Act, and Muslim Law Act (1968) that were introduced by the Government of Singapore left a big impact to the economic resources of the Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore. Since the majority of them were dependent on the *waqf* and rental properties as a source of income, these policies had decreased their revenues. Many of their properties were taken by the government, incredibly affecting their wealth. The collection of revenues lessen, indirectly affecting the amount of remittances sent to their homeland in Hadhramaut.³¹

Remittance plays an important role in the development of Hadhramaut. The remittance sent by Hadhrami Arabs in the diaspora to their homeland was used to rebuild and maintain Hadhramaut's social, political, and economic developments. These remittances were collected from personal incomes as well as incomes from *waqf* revenues. The revenues from the *waqf* was initially used to fund religious and social activities. For example, the revenue yielded from Sayyid Mohammad bin Ahmad's *Waqf* Fund was distributed to various channels among which are for maintaining the Hadjee Fatimah Mosque in Singapore, running the Al-Saggof Arab School in Singapore, maintaining poor relatives in and outside Singapore including Hadhramaut, and the poor in the city of Seiyun and other areas in Hadhramaut.³² Meanwhile, the Al-Kaffs used the collection accumulated from the *waqf* revenue for the purpose of

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ben, Simpfendor, *Singapore's Hadhrami Community in Today's Economy*, p. 5.

³² Leif Manger, "Building a Moral Economy: The Historical Success of Hadhrami Sada in Singapore", in Eldar Braten (ed.), *Embedded Entrepreneurship: Market, Culture and Micro-Business in Insular Southeast Asia*, Leiden: Brill, 2013, p. 241. See also Freitag Ulrike, "Arab Merchants in Singapore. Attempt of a Collective Biography", in Huub de Junge and Nico Kaptain (eds.), *Transcending Borders. Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia*, Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002, p. 122.

strengthening their social and political causes in Hadhramut. The money was also used to build schools and al-Kaff road from Tarim to the coast. They also supported the Sultan's military force. Gradually, they became part of the imperial elite in Hadhramut.³³

As asserted by Syed Farid Al-Attas, the remittances played a significant role in the development of Hadhramaut, from which they were used for daily life as the people of Hadhramaut depended much on these kinds of remittances received from overseas, particularly from Malaya and Indonesia. These remittances also provided financial support to the Kathiri and Qu'ayti Sultanates of Hadhramaut. The shortage of income from the revenue of *waqf* and rental properties had a remarkable impact to the development of Hadhramaut. The relatives and families in Hadhramaut depended on the incomes that were sent back home.³⁴ "Notes of the Day", written by an anonymous writer known as *Anak Singapura* in the Straits Times on 1st August 1939 highlighted the role played by the al-Kaffs in the economy of Singapore and their homeland, Hadhramaut. The al-Kaffs were synonymous with Al-Kaff and Co. which was ranked as the biggest single rate payer in Singapore. The writer also touches on the important role played by the al-Kaffs or the Kaf family as they were known in Hadhramaut for their contribution in developing Hadhramaut with the amenities of life, such as electricity, education, telephones, connecting important houses, and building houses and bungalows with swimming pools that were used to irrigate small gardens planted with a variety of fruit trees.³⁵

The writer further stressed that the money used by the al-Kaffs to develop Hadhramaut came from the income accumulated from the rentals of houses, shop lots,

³³ Ibid., p. 241.

³⁴ Syed Farid Alatas, "Hadhramaut and the Hadhrami Diaspora", in Ulrike Freitag and William G. Clarence-Smith (eds.) *Hadhrami Traders, Scholars and Statesmen in the Indian Ocean, 1750s – 1960s*, Leiden: Brill, 1997, p. 25.

³⁵ *The Straits Times*, 'Long Journey Through Unknown Arabia, Influence of Al-Kaff Family in the Hadhramaut,' 23rd July 1939, p. 11; *The Straits Times*, 'Notes of The Day,' 1st August 1939, p. 12. Accessed from <http://eresources.nlb.gov.sg/newspapers/Digitised/Article>.

and properties owned by the al-Kaffs in Singapore.³⁶ It shows that the Hadhrami Arabs' link with their homeland in Hadhramaut was never cut even though they had been away from their homeland and even had their own families in Malaya.

The *waqf* had been an important institution for the Hadhrami Arab community in Malaya. This institution was important to keep the maintenance of mosques and *madrasahs* that were run by the Hadhrami Arab individuals in Malaya, Singapore, and also in Hadhramaut. The Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya maintained close contact with their homeland in Hadhramaut by sending money back home. The rich Hadhrami Arabs sent their sons to Hadhramaut to be educated with religious knowledge, as well as to learn the Hadhrami culture. The outbreak of the Second World War halted these activities. It was resumed only after the war ended.³⁷

The Identity Crisis

The issues of identity and nationality were among the other matters that worried and annoyed the Hadhrami Arabs in the turn of the 1950s, particularly when Singapore was separated from Malaysia as two different political entities in 1965. In the Malay states, the issue of the Hadhrami Arabs' identity was not that apparent since the majority of the young generation were born Arabs or *Peranakan* Arabs from mixed marriages of Arab fathers and local mothers. The mixed marriages between Arab fathers and Malay mothers gave birth to a new generation of Arabs that is known as *Peranakan Arab*, which also indirectly entitled them to be called and considered as Malays. They culturally and socially became Malays and profess the religion of Islam.³⁸

The Hadhrami Arabs in general, can be categorised into two groups; the pure Arabs and the born Arabs. Such a marriage was not a big deal to the Hadhrami Arab

³⁶ *The Straits Times*, 'Notes of the Day,' 1st August 1939, p. 3.

³⁷ Ameen Ali Talib, Hadramis in Singapore, The British-Yemeni society, Nov. 1995. <http://www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/talib95.htm>.

³⁸ Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljunied, "The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore – A Reinterpretation, *Immigrants & Minorities*, July 1, 2007.

Sayyids since it is the tradition of the Arabs to preserve their genealogy through the patrilineal line. Children born from a marriage of an Arab father and mother are considered pure Arabs, whilst the children born from the wedlock of an Arab father to a non-Arab mother are considered as born Arabs or *Peranakan Arab*. As most of the Hadhrami Arab immigrants to Malaya were males, many of them were married to local women. This explains the increased number of Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya in the late 19th and 20th century.³⁹

Unlike the Sayyids, a Hadhrami Arab woman or Sharifah was only allowed to marry an Arab man of the Sayyid descent. The traditional Hadhrami Arab *Sadah* parents were strongly attached to the *kafa'ah* that sometimes caused them difficulties to find suitable spouses for their daughters. Due to the strictness of the *Sadah* tradition to preserve the patriarchal lineage, some of them would prefer their daughters to become "... lifelong spinsters rather than lose them in matrimony to non-Arabs". There were times when the Peranakan Arab daughters were more conservative and choosy in matters related to marriage compared to the other members of the larger Muslim community. Omar Farouk further adds that as for the girls, "... exogamy and interracial unions were out of question".⁴⁰

Owing to the process of assimilation with the locals through marital relations, the number of Hadhrami Arabs' population in Malaya of pure Arab blood had started to decline. This gave birth to a new generation of Malays of Arab blood known as *Peranakan Arab*. The social and cultural life of this generation was not much different from the Malays as their mothers were mostly local Malay ladies. They spoke Malay and learnt both Malay and English languages at school, but very seldom spoke Arabic although their fathers were Arabs. According to A. Rahman Tang who studies about the

³⁹ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore: University of Malaya Press and Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 40-41.

⁴⁰ Omar Farouk Shaeik Ahmad, "The Arabs in Penang", *Malaysia in History*, Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Historical Society, 1978, Vol. 21, no. 2, p. 3.

Arab society in Muar, Johor, he noted that the Arab society used to communicate with the local people especially the Malays using a Malay-Arabic language which is a mix of Malay Language and informal Arabic language that is also called *bahasa Arab pasar*. Most of the Arab men who married Malay women did not speak formal Arabic or did not speak Arabic at all. The spoken language at home was informal Malay-Arabic language. They also did not put much emphasis on learning Arabic. They only taught their children to recite the Qur'an at home. This was one of the reasons why the young generations of *Peranakan Arabs* in Malaya could not speak Arabic.⁴¹

Intermarriage could be one of the reasons for the Hadhrami Arabs to lose their Arab identity. Their intermarriage with local women and intermingling with local people had gradually diminished their cultural identity that was commonly characterised by language and culture. This phenomenon was felt even during the second and third generations of Arabs in Malaya from local mothers who did not speak Arabic. However, there were Hadhrami Arabs who managed to keep some of their Arab culture such as wedding ceremonies and religious rituals like *ratib* or prayers. An Arab wedding ceremony is different from the Malays. Apart from that, the Hadhrami Arabs of the Sayyid descent were still confined to the tradition of *kafa'ah* when it comes to marriage.⁴²

The issue of identity also contributed to the decline of the Hadhrami Arab Sayyids in number as towards the 20th century, particularly after the Second World War, many of them were recognised as Malays. The political change in Malaya had forced them to go with the national policy of the country regarding citizenship. Many of them were born Arabs from mixed marriages of Arab fathers and local mothers. By marrying the locals, the Hadhrami Arabs, as well as their children, adapted to the new culture of

⁴¹ A. Rahman Tang Abdullah, 'Sejarah Masyarakat Keturunan Arab di Muar', Academic Exercise, Department of History, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya, 1991/91, p. 53.

⁴² Ibid.

the land. Although they had become part of the Malay community, some of them managed to maintain some qualities of their Hadhramaut identity; the elitist lifestyle of the *Sadah*, while at the same time keeping their new identity as Malays. Regarding the term ‘race’, many of the Hadhrami Arabs opted to be identified as Malays, especially the young generation of *Peranakan* Arabs. In practical life, both Malays and Hadhrami Arabs socially and religiously shared the same customs and way of life.⁴³

According to Article 160 of the Federal Constitution, the term “Malay” means a person who professes the religion of Islam, habitually speaks the Malay language, practices Malay customs and (a) is borne, before Malaya was independent, in the Federation or in Singapore, or his father was born in the Federation or Singapore, or on the day of independence, he/she is domiciled in the Federation or in Singapore, or (b) he/she is a descendant of someone mentioned above. Based on this statement, it is clearly stated that being Islam, conversing in Malay Language, living in Malaya, and practicing the Malay customs and way of life are the criteria for a person to be considered as a Malay. The new generations of Hadhrami Arabs born in Malaya mostly had these criteria.⁴⁴

The Hadhrami Arabs benefitted from the advantage of being *Peranakan* Arabs. Many of them prospered and succeeded in their undertakings in Malaya. In this respect, gradually, many of them, particularly those residing in the Malay states (present day Malaysia), adopted the ‘Malay’ title rather than ‘Arab’. They were considered as *Bumiputera* and enjoyed the same privileges as other Malays under the Federal Constitution.⁴⁵ This could possibly one of the reasons that led to the decreased numbers of Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. The various policies introduced by the government of

⁴³ This situation happened could possibly due to the change of government policy. Such as in Singapore where the *Peranakan* Arabs have no choice but to adopt race Malay in their identity card instead of Arab that is considered as foreigners, in order to enjoy the benefits and privileges specially provided for the Malays. Al-Junied, Syed Muhd Khairudin, “The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore – A Reinterpretation”, *Immigrants & Minorities*, July 1, 2007.

⁴⁴ <http://www.slideshare.net/mb12020/constitution-of-malaysia/Full Text of the Constitution of Malaysia>, Accessed 3rd Jun 2014.

⁴⁵ Ahmed Ibrahim Abushouk & Hassan Ahmad Ibrahim (eds.), *The Hadhrami Diaspora in Southeast Asia, Identity Maintenance or Assimilation?*, Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2009, p. x. (foreword).

Singapore could have possibly made the *Peranakan Arabs* who were born and grew up in the Malay community to change their citizenship in order to enjoy the privileges provided by the government.⁴⁶

Matters related to the definition of Malay have also been highlighted by the press, such as *The Straits Times* in 1987. There was a need to include Islam in the definition of Malay as there is a loose definition of being Malay that defines Malay as “someone who is Malay, Javanese, Boyanese, Bugis, Arab or any other persons who are generally accepted as a member of the Malay community by that community”. The need to include Islam as one of the criteria of being Malay is important as Malays do not accept non-Muslim Malays as their representatives, particularly in Singapore, as Islam has become the identity of the Malays and their culture is also based on the religion of Islam.⁴⁷ So, the general term of ‘Malay’ is understood by many as a person who practices the Malay culture, speaks the Malay language, and professes the religion of Islam. In Singapore, the Malays have a special position in the Singapore Constitution. Malay children are entitled to free education up to the tertiary level. However, this privilege is not given to those of Arab and Indian Muslim descent.⁴⁸

Ameen relates the consequences of the policy implemented by the communist regime in power in Yemen that prohibited the out and in of the Hadhrami citizens in Yemen which resulted in a number of problems faced by the Hadhrami immigrants in the diaspora, including those in Malaya. He further says that the Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore faced an identity crisis where the younger generation did not speak Arabic. Living in cosmopolitan Singapore that emphasized on the use of English as a medium of communication, the Hadhrami Arab children were more inclined to speak English rather than their native language. The environment and residence areas also contributed to this

⁴⁶ Al-Junied, Syed Muhd Khairudin, ‘The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore – A Reinterpretation’, *Immigrants & Minorities*, July 1, 2007.

⁴⁷ *The Straits Times*, ‘Call to Include Islam in definition of Malay,’ 11th December 1987, p. 23.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

situation, where most of their family members and friends spoke either English or Malay. This had been true in cases where their mothers are Malays who did not converse in Arabic. Moreover, when the Hadhrami Arabs lost contact with their homeland in Hadhramaut, there was a cut in the relationship where they used to send their children back to Hadhramut to be educated in the homeland to learn religion and the Hadhrami culture, as well as for visits.⁴⁹

The Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore were aware of the problems faced by their community that if not addressed promptly and properly, would cause the younger generations to totally lose their identity as an Arab that has connections with Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. They also realised that the lack of Arabic knowledge was the key factor that contributed to the problem. Therefore, they established an Arabic language centre to improve the children's knowledge and proficiency of Arabic language as well as to teach them the knowledge about their identity, heritage, and culture. It was also a big challenge for them to maintain their identity as Hadhrami Arabs.⁵⁰ Syed Farid Alatas asserts that “the relatively less developed status of the Arab community in the Southeast Asia, and particularly in Singapore, has something to do with the problem of identity. While it is correct that the Arabs in Singapore are part of the Malay community to the extent that they have assimilated aspects of the Malay culture, they still identify themselves as Arabs.”⁵¹

Meanwhile in the Malay states, the government of Malaysia enacted a constitution to look after the people's rights, in particular to preserve the rights of Malays and the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak. In the Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Article 153 discusses the special status of Malays and the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak. It mentions about the privileges given to them such as scholarships, education, appointment in government service, business permits and

⁴⁹ Ameen Ali Talib, “Hadramis in Singapore”, November 1995.

⁵⁰ <http://www.al-bab.com/bys/articles/talib95.htm>. Accessed on 27 October 2013.

⁵¹ Syed Farid Alatas, Seminar organised by AlWehdah on *Singapore Arabs in the 21st Century*, 1995.

licenses and reserved land. The constitution that was enacted in 1948 has been revised and amended to meet the needs of the people from time to time.⁵²

From this article it is clear that the Malays and the indigenous people of Sabah and Sarawak are given privileges as citizens of Malaysia. Meanwhile, other races are also included in the constitution accordingly in terms of their rights as Malaysians. In the case of *Peranakan* Arabs, they have no other choice except to accept the reality that they are now Malaysians. Taking several factors into consideration, many of them had decided to be categorized as Malays to enjoy such privileges. Moreover, the *Peranakan* Arabs had long established relations with the Malays through marriage when many of them had married Malays.

The Hadhrami Arabs easily assimilated into the Malay culture in Singapore due to the common interest between them as they share the same faith and were a minority group of Muslims living in a multiracial secular country dominated by a Chinese population. “As a result, a majority of the Hadhramis in Singapore then classified themselves under the category “Malay” instead of “Arab” or “others”, when the identity card system was introduced in the early 1960s”.⁵³

Social Degradation

Religious and social recognition that was enjoyed by the Hadhrami Arabs as respected people in Malaya due to their sacred connection with Prophet Muhammad S.A.W. had started to be questioned by the Malays. All this while, the Malays looked upon them with respect and considered them as the inheritors of the ultimate preacher of Islam. In Singapore, there were Hadhrami Arab elites who preferred to maintain a different identity separated from the Malays, although most of them were of mixed descent that was also known as *Peranakan* Arab or born of Arab fathers and local mothers. The well

⁵² Nazri Muslim et al., ‘Analisis Peruntukan Orang Melayu dalam Perlembagaan Persekutuan Malaysia dalam Konteks Hubungan Etnik,’ *Jurnal Melayu*, Vol. II, December 2013, pp. 67-70.

⁵³ Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljuneid, “The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore - A Reinterpretation”, p. 178

to do Hadhrami Arabs who were concerned about the society contributed to the society's wellbeing through charitable works as they were also associated with the *waqf* institution in Singapore. However, the feelings of respect had started to wane due to the feelings of dissatisfaction among the Malays towards the Hadhrami Arabs who confined to their elitist and exclusive lifestyle and abandoned the needs of other fellow Muslims in the society. The Malays felt that they were neglected by their Muslim Arab brothers.⁵⁴

This scenario affected the activities of the Hadhrami Arabs and *Peranakan* Arabs in Malaya, such as their printing companies and newspapers. The PASPAM or Malayan Pen-Pal Brotherhood was an organization which promoted literature and culture and was organized by a newspaper called *Saudara*. This organization was joined by about several thousands of members from various Muslim communities in Malaya.⁵⁵ The issue of some Hadhrami Arabs or *Peranakan* Arabs who prioritized their community over the Malays had caused distrust among the Malays. The Malays began to question their sincerity in religious and social responsibilities towards their fellow brothers in Islam. As a result, the organization began to lose its membership from the Malays due to the growing distrust amongst the Malays towards the non-Malay members, in particular, the *Peranakan* Arabs.⁵⁶

This issue had a significant impact towards the organization as the Malay members did not support organizations with leadership dominated by Arabs or Indian Muslims. Therefore, the Malays worked hard to have their own newspaper rather than working with newspaper companies owned and financed by the Hadhrami Arabs. The Malays also started to criticize the sincerity of the Hadhrami Arabs in their efforts to improve the Malay society. As a result, *Utusan Melayu* was established in 1939 through the efforts of several Malays in Singapore who wanted to have their own newspaper.

⁵⁴ Ibid., <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02619280802018165>.

⁵⁵ *Warta Malaya*, 28th November 1940, p. 10.

⁵⁶ Zulkifli b. Mahmud, "Peranan Warta Malaya di Tahun-tahun 1930an" *Jebat*, No. 5/6, 1976/77, p. 154.

The national newspaper was founded independent of funds from the Hadhrami Arabs or other foreign sources. Abdul Rahim Kajai was made the editor of *Utusan Melayu*. The newspaper also provided an open column to discuss issues related to the definition of "Malay" or "Melayu".⁵⁷

Syed Muhd Khairudin Al-Junied stresses on the issues that worried the Malays regarding the roles that should be played by the Hadhrami Arabs, in which they hoped that it should be focused on improving the society (Malay Society), particularly its economy and not to take control over their lives. This could have been the reasons for their worry and discontentment towards the Hadhrami Arabs. At the same time, the Malays felt that they were left behind compared to their fellow brothers. As a result, the Malays expressed their dissatisfaction towards the Hadhrami Arabs by establishing an organization known as *Kesatuan Melayu Singapura* (KMS) or Singapore Malay Union in 1926.⁵⁸

KMS aimed "...to encourage its members to play a greater role in the public and governmental affairs; to sponsor Malay progress and interest in politics and education; to make representations to the government on behalf of the Malay community in all matters concerning the rights and freedoms of the of the Malays...". KMS believed that only the Malay Muslims should be representatives of the Malay Community and its membership should be restricted to native Malays only.⁵⁹ They also printed *Utusan Melayu* in 1939 as a tool to voice out their opinions. At the same time, they proclaimed that *Warta Malaya* which was published by the al-Saqqaf family did not represent the views and opinions of the Malays. This situation impinged the Hadhrami Arabs'

⁵⁷ Abdul Latiff Abu Bakar, *Abdul Rahim Kajai Wartawan dan Sasterawan Melayu*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984, p. 8.

⁵⁸ Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljuneid, "The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore – A Reinterpretation".

⁵⁹ William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore: University of Malay Press, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 190-191.

reputation in the publishing industry in Malaya as well as their influence and status in the Malay community that had started to decline in later years.⁶⁰

This situation affected the social relationship of both communities and it also led to social isolation and adverse effects to the Malays-*Peranakan* Arabs relationship. Then emerged a new categorisation of Muslims in Malaya based on ethnic and race such as *Darah Keturunan Arab* (DKA) and *Darah Keturunan Keling* (DKK) in order to differentiate the Malays from mixed marriages from pure Malays. Abdul Rahim Kajai was one of the influential journalists during his time (1940) who was known to have highlighted the term *bangsa*, in which he says that Islam is “not a *bangsa*” and further reminds “religious leaders that Malay unity must not be neglected in favour of the bonds of Islam”. Kajai further argues that if the “Malay movement was led or even merely joined by foreigners, then it could not be understood to be a Malay *bangsa* movement”. Kajai cynically referred to the Malays born of mixed ethnic origin with Arab blood as *Darah Keturunan Arab* (DKA), and those with Indian blood as *Darah Keturunan Keling* (DKK).⁶¹

The issue of land values that had been increasing in Singapore at that time had also become a concern among the Malays. For example, *Kampung Glam* that was once owned by the Malays was then populated by the Arabs. The Malays had to move out to the suburb areas due to high rental costs. This had been one of the reasons that caused the Malays’ discontent towards the Arabs in Singapore.⁶² Morley says that this situation happened because of the money lending business conducted by the Arabs that eventually led to the loss of valuable items deposited as collateral due to the failure of the borrowers to pay back the money.

⁶⁰ Syed Muhd Khairudin Aljuneid, “The Role of Hadramis in Post-Second World War Singapore”.

⁶¹ Anthony Milner, *The Invention of Politics in Colonial Malaya*, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2002, pp. 270-71.

⁶² William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, p. 192.

“...during the early days of the Colony’s history; with the result that the Kampong Glam district, for example which was originally predominantly Malay (the original “Sultan” leases having been given mostly to Malays) is now about 5% Malay as against 35% Arab. In other parts of the town the Arab acquisitions while they do not form nearly so large a proportion of the total, are nevertheless very considerable.”⁶³

Even though the Hadhrami Arabs played an important role in bringing about progress in the economy of Malaya as well as contributing to the society in matters related to religion and social life in the country, their growing exclusiveness and elitist lifestyle, particularly in Singapore created an atmosphere of distrust on the part of the Malay community. The Malays started to feel threatened by the economic status of the Arabs in Malaya. The strong bond between the Arabs and the Malay communities fostered by early generations of Arab migrants suffered from an uncomfortable period when the socially and economically conscious and educated Malays began to feel that they were being abandoned by the economically established Arabs, who as fellow Muslim brothers, they had hoped, would assist them in bringing about changes in the society.

Conclusion

The 20th century was a challenging period for the diaspora of Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. Many changes occurred during this period of time, particularly after the Second World War that involved the aspects of politics of the host country, as well as the homeland in Hadhramaut. This situation was not so badly felt by the Hadhrami Arabs who settled down in the Malay states compared to those Hadhrami Arabs who resided in Singapore. The government policies introduced in Singapore in the effort of making Singapore as a modern and metropolitan city left a long-term impact on the Hadhrami Arabs in the country, particularly in their economy. It also affected their income and

⁶³ J. A. E. Morley, “The Arabs and the Eastern Trade”, p. 170.

status as rich Arabs in Singapore. The enactments imposed by the government affected properties belonging to the Hadhrami Arabs as well as their incomes. The transfer of *waqf* management trust funds to the Islamic Council caused the Hadhrami Arabs to lose their authority over the *waqf* revenues, which also indirectly disrepute their association with the *waqf* and charity works in the society.

The decline of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya was most notable in the aspect of economy as they were no longer dominant entrepreneurs and traders in Malaya as compared to in the 19th and early 20th century. The ever changing world did not only affect them economically, but also socially and culturally, whereby the Hadhrami Arabs faced a crisis of identity. The younger generations were exposed to the Western culture and way of life and many of them were not able to converse in Arabic. These changes were quickly realized by the older Hadhrami Arabs, prompting them to establish an Arabic language centre in the efforts to revive the Hadhrami Arabs' identity and culture. They also re-established links with the homeland by encouraging travels to Hadhramaut so that the younger generations would not forget their origins and homeland.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

The Hadhrami Arabs were among the Arab nations who lived in the diaspora, migrated abroad, away from their homeland in Hadhramaut, looking for a better life and income overseas. Trade became one of the factors that brought the Arabs to travel overseas; to foreign lands that passed through the Indian Ocean and even further eastward to the Malay World, conquered the South China Sea to the east, and reached China. This trade contact had begun in the immemorial time before the Hijrah era, and once Islam started to take root in the Arabian Peninsula, the process of Islamization was quickly and widely spread to the east and to the west through the hard work of the Muslims *dā'ie*. This missionary work was also continued by the Muslim traders along with their trade activities. The Hadhrami Arabs were among the Arabs who traded in the east, and some of them sojourned in the Malay Archipelago. Through contacts with the locals, the Hadhrami Arabs built colonies that had been found in several countries in the Malay world or maritime Southeast Asia, such as in the Dutch East Indies (Indonesia), Philippines, Malaya, Borneo, and Sulu.

In Malaya, most of the Hadhrami Arabs originated from Hadhramaut, Yemen, who claimed to be the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. This claim enabled them to enjoy special status and privilege in the Malay community as the Malays also looked upon them with respect and deference, and even regarded them equally to their rulers and dignitaries. The mass migration of the Hadhrami Arabs to Malaya occurred in the 19th century. The economic development and the political stability in Malaya encouraged the influx of foreign traders and merchants from the east and the west to trade in the country. The introduction of the steamship in the 19th century facilitated the Hadhrami Arabs travel to the east. When Singapore was opened as a free trade port by Stamford Raffles in 1819, it managed to attract more traders to settle and trade in the island where the Hadhrami Arabs were among the merchants who were reported to

actively trade in the inter-island ventures in the Malay World. This period also witnessed the expansion of the British colonial rule in Malaya. Singapore was selected as the base for the East India Company to oversee the operation of its long-distance trade between China and India.

The Arab population in Malaya consisted of the Arabians who came from different countries in the Arab World, such as the Saudi Arabia (Hijaz), Egypt, and Yemen. The Hadhrami Arabs from Hadhramaut in Yemen were among the Arabs who had migrated to the Malay World and Malaya in particular. Initially, their mission to this part of the world was merely of trade motive, and later, was occupied with the missionary works when they embraced Islam. Since the Hadhrami Arab immigrants to Malaya were mostly male, many of them were married to the local women and had their own families in Malaya. The Hadhrami Arabs assimilated themselves well in the Malay community and society at large. They were the *Sayyid* or the *Sadah* group, who claimed to be the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad through his grandson, Hussein. Through this claim, they earned a reputable status in the society as the descendant of the holy Prophet Muhammad and were looked upon with respect and deference by fellow Malay Muslims. They also managed to secure good positions and social status in the Malay society.

The Hadhrami Arabs played a significant role in the establishment of Islam in the Malay community in Malaya, whereby the early migrated Hadhrami Arabs were reported to be among the religious scholars in Islam. Many of them were learned men and had credibility in Islam. The Hadhrami Arab religious scholars were common figures in the Malay society, and they played a significant role in deepening the religious understanding of the Malays. The Hadhrami scholars were also involved in the administration of religion and its affairs in the Malay states. Names like Sayyid Muhammad bin Zainal Abidin Al-Idrus (1795-1878), Sayyid Abdul Rahman bin Sayyid

Muhammad al-Idrus (1817 –1917), and Sayyid Alwi Tahir Al-Haddad (1884-1962) were among the Hadhrami Arab religious scholars who were involved in the administration of religion in the 19th and 20th century in Malaya. Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abdul Rahman al-Idrus were among other Hadhrami Arab religious scholars who were not only active in religion and its affairs, but also were appointed as *Syaikh al-'Ulama'* and chief minister to Sultan Baginda Omar, and a member of the State Council Meeting during the rule of Sultan Zainal Abidin III respectively.

Education was another aspect that received the attention of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. At the early stage, the process of learning started at mosques that also turned it into a learning centre. The '*ulama'*' or religious teachers were commonly known as *Tuan Sayyid* or *Tokku*, who gave lectures and talks at the mosques, *surau* or sometimes to the crowds at *majlis ilmu*, spreading knowledge and the teaching of Islam. The culture of knowledge was improved with the establishment of modern schools, known as *madrasah* or *sekolah arab* in the early 20th century through the effort of several Hadhrami Arab scholars, together with young reformists that is known as *Kaum Muda*. Sayyid Syaikh Al-Hadi, Sayyid Hassan al-Attas, and Sayyid Mohammad al-Saqqaf were among the Hadhrami Arabs who were concerned about the importance of education. They, together with the conscious Malays, started to build *madrasah* to meet the demands of the Muslim children to get proper education and knowledge about Islam. However, this effort was not as easy as it was planned when the first *madrasah* built in Singapore in 1908, known as *Madrasah Al-Iqbal*, did not receive a positive response from parents, as well as the people from Singapore. This was because the people did not appreciate the importance of knowledge as they were rigid and close-minded towards new knowledge that caused them to reject the ideas brought by Sayyid Syaikh Al-Hadi.

However, the establishment of *madrasah* in Malaya in the early decades of the 20th century was pioneered by the conscious Hadhrami Arabs towards the need of Muslim *ummah*. The wealthy Hadhrami Arabs used their money to establish *madrasah* whereby they were also responsible for the management and maintenance of the *madrasah*. Apart from that, they also established *waqf* or endowment funds, from which income was collected to pay for the maintenance of the *madrasah*, as well as to provide salary for the teachers. The establishment of education institution became part of their aspiration to continue with the legacy of knowledge spreading Islam to fellow Muslims, which became easier when the students were capable of understanding the Arabic texts well, thus made them better authorities in religion.

The Hadhrami Arabs also used their wealth to maintain the *madrasah* and its management. The *madrasah* managed to produce qualified religious scholars and political figures. The *madrasah* system of education contributed to the development of a systematic and structured system of education, in which it succeeded to produce future intellectuals, reformists, and nationalists. The young generation of Hadhrami Arab is also known as *Peranakan Arab*, together with the Malays, struggled petitioning for independence. The Muslim reformists or *Kaum Muda*, consisted of the Malays and the Hadhrami Arabs, played a significant role in *madrasah* education and it left a great impact on the religious understanding of the Muslim society in Malaya. Most importantly, *madrasah* managed to change the people's perception and awareness towards the importance of education.

Apart from that, the Hadhrami Arabs were also involved in politics in Malaya. They played a vital role in the Malay states' politics, such as being appointed to important positions as the ruler of a state, minister, *penghulu*, and district officer. The claim being the descendants of the Prophet Muhammad SAW made the Hadhrami Arabs of the sayyid group widely accepted by the Malays, as well as by the ruling class

and the Malay royal courts. In fact, it was an honour for the Malays, particularly the ruling class, to take the Hadhrami Arabs as sons in law, particularly to establish a connection with the descendants of the holy Prophet Muhammad. The Hadhrami Arabs also adapted well to the Malay customs, cultures, and way of life.

The Hadhrami Arabs' political influence prevailed in almost every state in Malaya, such as in Terengganu, Kedah, and Perlis. The Hadhrami Arabs also had a close connection with the Malay ruling class and chiefs, from which through good contact and marital bond, they gained trust and support from the royals and dignitaries. This connection verified the claim that the genealogies of the Malay rulers had direct contacts and Arab blood through mixed marriages, such as in the state of Johor (1699 – 1877), Perlis, Pahang, and Terengganu. For example, the Sayyid Jamalullail descendants ruled Perlis since in the 19th century until today. The period before and after the British intervention in Malaya witnessed the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay states' administration and politics. The Hadhrami Arabs also managed to establish themselves as rulers or had a connection with the ruling classes in several places, for instance, in Perlis, Malaya, Siak, Kampar, Jambi in Sumatra, and Pontianak and Kubu in Borneo.

The involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya was not only confined to religion, education, administration and politics, but they also played a significant role in the economic development of Malaya. Through trade contact, the Hadhrami Arabs travelled to foreign countries to meet the demands of social and economic needs. The hardship living in their own country made the Hadhrami Arabs work hard to earn a better living in the foreign countries. Many of them became successful entrepreneurs, merchants, and traders conducting trans-oceanic trade, as well as inter island trades in the Malay world, such as trades in spices, grains, textiles, and timber. Some of them were involved in agriculture and plantation commercially, for instance, the al-Saqqaf

family worked on the famous *Kukob Estate* in Johor and the al-Attas family worked on the *Teluk Ketapang Estate* in Pahang. They were also involved in the shipping industry conducting inter island trades, as well as providing shipping services to potential *hajj* to Hijaz. Sayyid al-Massim and the al-Saqqaf families were among the Hadhrami Arabs who were actively involved in the shipping industry as they were also reported to employ English captains to run their steamships.

Although the Hadhrami Arabs were minorities in Malaya, they managed to flourish in the economic sectors in the country and became successful businessmen like the Chinese. The stories of their success in Malaya attracted their fellow-countrymen to migrate to the country. The establishment of companies, such as Al-Attas and Co., Al-Sagoff and Co., and Al-Kaff and Co., showed that many of them were successful traders and entrepreneurs. It was through business and trade that made the Hadhrami Arabs prospered in Malaya. The wealth accumulated through their business activities were also used to rebuild their homeland in Hadhramaut. Remittances were sent to their homes annually to feed their families and relatives, as well as to fulfil their obligation as Muslims, whereas some were divided among the poor, as well as to build schools, mosques, and life necessities and amenities in Hadhramaut. The Hadhrami Arabs were known as among the wealthiest individuals in Singapore in the early decades of the 1920s to 1930s, where they were reported to own vast properties in the island, such as in the forms of houses, shop lots, and lands. The wealthy Hadhrami Arabs also contributed to the social works, and charity, for instance, by establishing religious schools or *madrasah* in Malaya, burial grounds, orphanage houses, and mosques for the use of the Muslim community in Malaya.

Publication had been another sector that saw the active involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the industry; publishing newspapers and magazines. In the beginning, the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in this industry was inspired by the

development of the publishing industry from Egypt, as well as the political development in the country that encouraged several Hadhrami Arab figures to produce their own newspapers, such as *Saudara*, *al-Ikhwān*, and *Jasa*. They even had their own publishing and printing companies such as al-Attas Press, The Jelutong Press and Warta Malaya Press Ltd. *Al-Imam* was the first reformist journal produced by the conscious Hadhrami Arabs together with the Malays, who were influenced and exposed to the political development in Egypt. The emergence of *al-Imam* was also a response to the religious, political, social, and economic situation of the Malays in Malaya.

The years from 1920s to 1930s were the periods that witnessed the growth of Malay journalism in Malaya. More newspapers and magazines were published in the country as a result of the political and social awareness among the people, in particular among the Malay intelligentsias and the *Peranakan* Arabs descents who received education in West Asia. Through the reformist newspapers and magazines published by the Hadhrami Arabs, the ideas of reform and pan Islamism spread among the Malays in Malaya. The reformist ideas spread by these newspapers played an important role in shaping the early development of Malay political consciousness in Malaya.

The political development that occurred in Egypt, highlighted by the local newspapers, provided the Malays to some extent with the political awareness and exposed them with the politics in the Muslim World. The Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in politics in Malaya, however, caused the British administration to be suspicious, and they established a special branch to monitor the former's movement and activities in the country. Although the Hadhrami Arab leaders had shown their unequivocal support and loyalty to the British, the latter took a careful approach in dealing with the Hadhrami Arabs. This period also witnessed the seeds of the spirit of Malay nationalism in the country that was driven by the Islamic reform movement from the West Asia, especially

in Egypt. *Kaum Muda* or the young reformist group used these newspapers and magazines as a medium to propagate the idea of reform in the society.

Most of the reformist newspapers and magazines published by the Hadhrami Arabs displayed news from overseas, as well as the local. These reformist newspapers also urged the British government to consider the involvement of the Malays in the administration of the country. However, they were less vocal in criticizing the government as it would affect their newspapers being banned by the government. The moderate approach taken by the Hadhrami Arabs' publishing house in criticizing the British administration in Malaya enabled their newspapers to last longer, for example the *Saudara* newspaper that continued to publish until 1941 compared to *al-Imam* (1906-1909) and *al-Ikhwān* (1926-1931). Sayyid Al-Hadi learnt from his past experiences, and thus, adopted a moderate approach, was less vocal in criticizing the government, and tried not to touch on the issues of the Malay rulers and aristocrats had saved the newspaper *Saudara*. Newspapers like *Saudara* (1928-1941) and *Warta Malaya* (1930-1942) lasted more than ten years, and had been less anti-colonial compared to *Al-Ikhwān* and *Al-Imam*.

The Hadhrami Arabs played a considerable role in Malaya. Despite being a minority, several of them had a considerable influence in religion, economic, political, as well as administrative aspects in Malaya. However, the Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the administration of the Malay states was perceived by the British as a threat to its economic and political interests in Malaya. Considering such an influence possessed by the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya, the British took a subtle approach in dealing with the Hadhrami Arabs, such as having good terms with the elite group of Hadhrami sayyids. The British, it seemed afraid that the Hadhrami Arabs would use their political and religious influence to encourage the sultans and the rest of the Malays against the British administration in the country. On the other hand, the Hadhrami Arabs

also maintained a good link and close ties with the British officials in Malaya in order to secure their business interests, as well as political benefits in Malaya.

Thus, in order to avoid such a suspicion on the British side, the Hadhrami Arabs showed their loyalty to the British administration in Malaya through the pledge of loyalty shown by the Muslims, particularly after the event of mutiny that took place in Singapore. Nevertheless, the British still doubted the Hadhrami Arabs' loyalty as there were anti-British among them. The close relationship built between the British and the Hadhrami Arab elites benefitted the British to monitor the Hadhrami Arabs. For instance, Sayyid Aqil who worked for the British as a spy was paid to check on his fellow Hadhrami Arabs' activities and movements in Malaya. It was also through the help of several Hadhrami Arabs, the British managed to influence and change the people's perception, particularly the Hadhrami Arab leaders who were once strong supporters of the Ottoman Caliphate of the Turks' domination and their involvement in the First World War.

However, instead of showing their sympathy towards the Turks who lost in the war, the Malay Sultans voiced their undivided loyalty and support towards the British. The British, through the consent of the Malay Sultans, introduced enactments prohibiting the spread of religious activities in Malaya, particularly related to the idea of reforms and Pan Islam. The British administration in Malaya also banned any news report from overseas regarding the Turkey's involvement in the confrontation. That was the reason why the Malays were less motivated and showed less support towards the Turks when they lost in the First World War.

Apart from that, the British administration in Malaya was always alerts on any political parties or movements that took place in Malaya. They had their eyes and ears everywhere to check on the Malay political activities. The effort of the Young reformist or *Kaum Muda* to spread the idea of reform and pan Islam in Malaya that was pioneered

by *Islah* figures, such as Syaikh Tahir Jalaluddin, Haji Abbas Taha, and Sayyid Syaikh Al-Hadi, did not receive responsive feedback from the Malays because there were enactments introduced by the British that prohibited such activities in the Malay states. Moreover, the British had closely monitored the *Kaum Muda* activities in Malaya, whereby they established a special branch to monitor their political movements. The British also took advantage of the conflicts between the *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* or traditional '*ulama*' to create tension in the Malay community on the issues related to religious practices and *adat*. In fact, it was the British who masterminded the conflict as they supported the Malay rulers and the traditional '*ulama*'.

Towards the end of the 19th and early 20th century, the role of the Hadhrami Arabs in the Malay states administration started to decline as the British colonial had started consolidating their control in Malaya. The concept of centralized government, introduced by the British, with the appointment of residents to assist Malay Sultans was not only to control the Malay rulers' authority, but also to minimize and block the Hadhrami Arabs' participation in the Malay states administration and politics because the British was worried that the Hadhrami Arabs, particularly the *sadah*, would manipulate their influence over the Malays to gain support against the British administration in the country. However, from 1930s to 1960s, there was an increased political awareness among the Malays and the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya.

The period during the Japanese occupation in Malaya was a vacuum phase of the British influence that witnessed the political alert and awareness of the Malays and *Peranakan* Arabs, who were conscious about their fate in the political affairs in their own country. Inspired by the Japanese policy resounding anti-Western colonialism in Malaya, the Malays then started to get involved in politics, among which, was rallying protests opposing the British proposal of Malayan Union Scheme in 1946. This period also witnessed an increased number of Hadhrami Arabs joining politics in Malaya.

Names like Sayyid Alwi b. Sayyid Shaykh Al-Hadi, Sayyid Jaafar Albar, and Sayyid Ibrahim Omar Al-Saqqaf were among the Hadhrami Arabs in Singapore who were involved in the politics of Malaya. The Hadhrami Arabs started to realize the need for their participation in the politics of Malaya to protect their rights, social, and political status in British Singapore through the establishment of Singapore United Malays National Organization (SUMNO).

The 20th century was a challenging period for the diaspora of Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. Many changes occurred during this time, particularly after the Second World War, that involved aspect of the politics of the host country, as well as in the homeland, Hadhramaut. This situation was not so badly felt by the Hadhrami Arabs who settled down in the Malay states compared to those who resided in Singapore. The period also witnessed the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya that was most notable in the aspect of economy as they were no longer the dominant entrepreneurs and traders in the country and also in the Malay world, like they used to be in the 19th and early 20th century.

The inability to compete with the European companies caused many of the Hadhrami Arabs to close down their businesses. In addition, the Government policies introduced in Singapore in the effort of making the republic a developing country left a long-term impact on the Hadhrami Arab community in the country. Many of the Hadhrami Arabs lost their source of income when the government introduced the Rent Control Act in 1947, as many of the Hadhrami Arabs were dependent on the income from the rental of their properties and the trust funds or *waqfs*. Besides, the transfer of *waqf* trust funds from being managed by the trustees to be under the supervision of the Singapore Islamic Council caused the Hadhrami Arabs to lose their authority over the *waqf* revenues, which also indirectly disassociated the Hadhrami Arabs' reputation as generous and philanthropic in charitable works. Apart from that, the *Peranakan* Arabs

also experienced crisis of identity; either to adopt Malay or Arab as their race. Moreover, the young generation of the *Peranakan* Arabs were exposed to the western culture and way of life, and many of them were unable to converse in Arabic. The conscious Hadhrami Arabs quickly found solutions to the problem by establishing an Arabic language centre to teach the young generation the Arabic language, as well as to revive, preserve, and instill in them the Hadhrami Arab identity, culture, and heritage.

Even though the Hadhrami Arabs played an important role in bringing about social changes in the Malay society, the attitude of several Hadhrami Arabs who kept to themselves and enjoyed the elitist lifestyles and exclusiveness of being the honoured descent of the Prophet Muhammad created a social gap between the Malays and the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya. The attitude of several Hadhrami Arabs who abandoned the cause of the Malays for their own interests, created a feeling of distrust among the Malays, who all those times, looked upon all the Arabs, particularly the *Sadah*, with respect and deference as they were the descent of the Prophet Muhammad. However, this respect started to wane as the people were more concerned about their personal interests compared to their fellow brethren.

Besides, there were complaints by the Malays that were published in the daily newspapers, such as *Majlis* and *Utusan Zaman*, that criticized the *Peranakan* Arab community who claimed to be 'Malay' and they were given priority and privileges in getting jobs in the government sector, religious department, and also priority for scholarships. After they had realized and were aware of their situation, the Malays were determined to improve their lives through hard work and not to rely on the Hadhrami arabs. They took the initiative by establishing their own organization that looked after the Malays' affairs in Singapore, known as Singapore Malays Association or *Kesatuan Melayu Singapore* (KMS) in 1926. Being influenced by the news and articles reported in the newspapers, the Malays started to distant themselves from the Hadhrami Arabs.

In 1939, the newspaper *Utusan Melayu* was finally published through the effort of conscious Malays who wanted to have their voices and interests heard. *Utusan Melayu* was purely owned, published, financed, and edited by the Malays, unlike the previous newspapers that were mostly owned, financed, and edited by the Arabs. The Malays wanted to have own newspapers that could represent them as a Malay nation, and not by foreigners like the Arabs. They felt that the actions of several Hadhrami Arabs had betrayed their trust as the Hadhrami Arabs were hoped to bring changes and helped the Malays to improve their lives.

Nevertheless, the Malays should not have generalized that all the Hadhrami Arabs were irresponsible. Due to the attitudes of several Hadhrami Arabs who prioritized their personal interests over their fellow Muslims, had caused the image and honour of the Hadhrami Arabs as the descents of the Prophet Muhammad tarnished. Despite the Malays' negative perception towards the Hadhrami Arabs that had created an unpleasant atmosphere and hatred among them, the Malays should not forget the sacrifice of the early Hadhrami Arabs who contributed to the Islamization of the Malays in Malaya. They also had played a considerable role in ensuring that Islam is preserved as the religion of the country. It was through the efforts and contributions of the early Hadhrami Arabs and religious scholars that enabled the Malays in deepening their religious knowledge and understanding Islam. It was also through the efforts and contributions of the early Hadhrami Arab religious scholars that the Islamization of the Malays occurred in peace. Their lasting contributions in Malaya were prevailed through the religious institutions and the establishment of *madrasah* that managed to produce Muslim scholars and intelligentsia who among others strived for the country's independence in the subsequent years.

It is hoped that through the research done, this qualitative study using library research method collecting data from primary and secondary sources from the archives,

consisted of files, documents, newspapers, government gazettes, published and unpublished manuscripts would benefited the public and researchers to study the historical background of the Hadhrami Arabs in Malaya and how the Hadhrami Arabs as a group of minority from Arabian Peninsula managed to integrate themselves in the Malay society. In the meantime, to explore the roles and contributions made by the Hadhrami Arabs in religion, education, economics, publication, politics and administration of Malaya from 1819 until 1969; to identify the British response towards the role played by the Arabs in economy, politics, publication, religion and education in Malaya; and to analyze factors that led to the decline of the Hadhrami Arab descents in Malaya after the Second World War.

Today, the term Hadhrami Arabs or *Peranakan Arab* is rarely heard. Most of the Hadhrami Arabs and their young generations are naturally adopt and adapt to the local cultures and way of life. Gradually, many of the *Peranakan Arab* have become Malays. Moreover, it was Islam that unites the people, whereby through the process of acculturation and integration added with a strong bond of mutual understanding enables the community living in peace and harmony. Although the Hadhrami Arabs or the *Peranakan Arab* are less prominent and no longer dominant in the religious, economic and political aspects of the Malays, however, they still contribute to the society through their engagement in the religious activities that are mostly associated with the Malays and not as a distinct ethnic group.

Further studies should be conducted to study how the Hadhrami Arabs or the *Peranakan Arab* today managed to adapt to the challenging world and integrate into the Malay community, live in a multiracial society in Malaysia while at the same time struggling to preserve and maintain their identity as Arabs. Today, many of the *Peranakan Arab* of *Sayyid* descents have become Malays through mixed marriages with the locals. A thorough study is needed to trace the descent of the Hadhrami Arabs in

Malaysia after 1969 until today. This would include identifying their number and distribution in the country. It is also helpful to study the period when Yemen was under the Communist regime to see the migration flow as well as contact between the Hadhrami Sayyids in the motherland and those in the diaspora.

The contributions of the Hadhrami Sayyids in religion and madrasah education are very meaningful whereby it benefits the Muslim *ummah* in the country. Therefore, it is important for future research to study the involvement of the Hadhrami Sayyids in madrasah education and religion as well as its *dakwah* in today's context in Malaysia. In addition, further studies should also be carried out to explore if the Hadhrami Sayyids are still involved and operating hajj activities in Malaysia where they once became the broker *haji* or the *hajj* brokers and agents in Malaysia.

In addition, further studies should also be conducted in the economic aspect of the country to see if the Hadhrami Sayyids are still active in the economic activities of the country after the Second World War. They were once among the richest and the most influential Arabs in Malaysia and were owners of land properties in Malaysia and Singapore. It is important to see if the Hadhrami Arabs of Sayyid descent or their young generation of *Peranakan* Arab still contributing to the economic growth of the country until today. Apart from that, further study should also be conducted to see the involvement of the Hadhrami Arabs in the publishing industry that once pioneered by the early generations of Hadhramis in Malaysia. Through publications the idea of reform and pan-Islam were disseminated to the public from which the society in particular the Malays were exposed to the idea of nationalism. Therefore, further research and discussion should be carried out to see if the Hadhrami Arabs still control the publishing industry in the country after the Second World War until today.

The Hadhrami Arabs' involvement in the aspect of the administration of the country must not be overlooked and it must be studied in greater depth since many of

them serve in the civil service today. In fact, they also hold important administrative positions and at the same time engaged directly in politics. The period after the Second World War had witnessed a number of Hadhrami Arabs who seriously involved in politics in order to maintain and preserve their rights as citizens of Malaysia and Singapore.

Further research could also be conducted to find out how the Hadhrami Arabs bring themselves during the Second World War and after the war ended. This is because due to the impact of the war, the economic activities of the country were declined that also resulted in the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs domination in the economy of Malaya. In addition to that, the policies introduced by Singapore in the effort of developing the country had also resulted in the decline of the Hadhrami Arabs in following years economically, politically, and socially.

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