

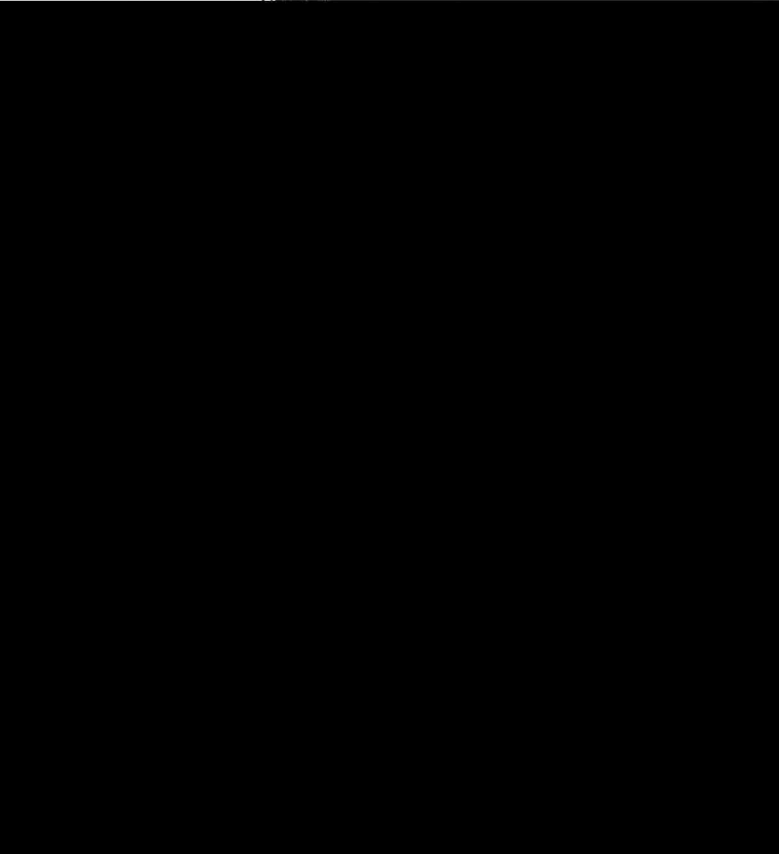
MALAYSIANS

29 FEB 1964

independent of Brunei, but would not accept it as a British protectorate. James Brooke continued to try to induce Britain to take over Sarawak and in 1868 in the last months of his life was also negotiating with Italy for protection.

Meanwhile the neglect by Calcutta in many ways favoured the development of the Straits Settlements, and particularly Singapore, which soon came to justify Raffles' dream as being the hub of trade in the Far East, a free port without duties or even port charges.<sup>6</sup> The revenue of Singapore, which had only amounted to \$M 620 a month in 1820, increased by 1843 to over \$M 15,000 a month, and the population, which in 1823 totalled less than 11,000, rose in twenty years to 57,000. Thousands of Chinese migrated to the Settlements each year, and gradually trade was built up with the interior. As early as the mid-1830s Chinese pepper and gambier planters began to move to the river valleys of Johore, and Chinese miners were already leading a precarious existence in the tin mines of Sungei Ujong in Negri Sembilan. From the middle of the century, with the opening of the tin fields of Larut and Selangor, Chinese miners flocked in thousands to the interior. More than half of them died of disease within a year, and the others were at the mercy of Malay chieftains and of their own rival clans, but the rewards for the fortunate few were substantial. The trade was dominated from the Straits Settlements by rich Chinese traders, often backed by capital from the European merchants,<sup>7</sup> and by 1863 the Singapore government estimated the trade between the Straits Settlements and the Malay states to be worth nearly one million pounds sterling a year.<sup>8</sup> This highly profitable but risky private trade sometimes involved the authorities in trouble. On occasion disputes between rival Chinese factions in the tin mines spread to the Straits ports and threatened the peace, particularly in Penang, where the secret society leaders could muster forces hundreds strong. Sometimes the miners clashed with Malay chiefs.

The settlements which had been made with the Dutch and the Siamese in the 1820s were intended as final arrangements to keep the Company out of trouble in the Malay peninsula. In fact they created a situation which was bound eventually to lead to intervention. The northern states, where Siamese influence was strong, remained fairly peaceful. For many years the ex-sultan of Kedah was a worry to the authorities in Penang, where he hatched several plots to regain his throne, some of them involving merchants in the settlement. The failure of armed insurrection induced the ex-sultan to change his tactics. In 1841 he sued for pardon, and in the following year Bangkok reinstated him as sultan of Kedah, but under strict control from Siam. The rulers of Kedah made no further attempts to throw off Siamese tutelage, and throughout the rest of the nineteenth century the country enjoyed peace and growing prosperity. The north-east states of Kelantan and Trengganu took many years to recover from the exactions made by the Siamese early in the nineteenth century. Their relationship with Siam continued to be



## FOREWORD

BY Y. T. M. TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN PUTRA AL-HAJ

PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

I am very pleased with the publication of this book about Malaysia, as I find it interesting, informative and useful.

Malaysia is a nation of wide and colourful variety, with people of many races, creeds and cultures. In effect this book is a mirror of Malaysia, showing in a striking way typical Malaysians at work and play, what they wear, how they look and what they do, all seen through the eyes of a Malayan artist.



I should like to express my appreciation of the Shell Group of Companies for their initiative and enterprise in producing this colourful book, which should prove very popular with friends of Malaysia all over the world.

*Kuala Lumpur,*

*11th September, 1963.*

Chinese immigration and the development of tin mining, in which subordinate chiefs often proved more competent than the sultans, finally undermined the tottering administration of the states. In all three states by the 1860s there was civil strife, in the midst of which the Chinese miners risked dispossession and slaughter, and their backers in the Straits Settlements faced financial ruin.

For many years the trade of the Straits Settlements flourished, but owing to the closely guarded policy of free trade, the government gained almost no share in this rising prosperity. In an attempt to prune expenses, administration was lax and inefficient. This was a positive advantage to the progress of the Settlements in the early decades, but by the middle of the century sections of the European mercantile community were growing restive under Indian rule. While fears of international war grew, the Company's parsimony had left the Settlements defenceless. There were fears of internal unrest, for the immigrant Chinese were organised by their secret societies, and the police force and judicial system were inadequate to control them. There were growing fear of convicts and resentment at being used as a penal settlement. Above all there was concern that the policy of uniformity which the government of India favoured from 1854 onwards would force the use of the rupee currency and introduce trade dues. The outcry among the European merchants in Calcutta following the Indian Mutiny for abolition of the Company was echoed in the Straits, and in 1858 a petition for transfer to the direct rule of the Crown was presented in the British Parliament.<sup>10</sup>

This apparently simple request was to lead to years of debate. The British government was not keen to take over a settlement that could not pay its own way, particularly at that time when the policy was to cut down commitments for military defence in overseas colonies. The issue was kept alive by an enthusiastic minority of the merchants, who thought that a colonial governor with a local legislative council would encourage and protect the expansion of trade in the neighbouring territories. Eventually the British government agreed grudgingly to the transfer, provided the Settlements paid their own expenses, but there was no intention of reversing official policy. The change did not bring immediately the advantages which the agitators for transfer had wanted. The Legislative Council was a disappointment because it was dominated by the official majority. The governor was rigidly controlled from the Colonial Office, which at first was as adamant as the Indian government in steering clear of commitments in the Malay peninsula.<sup>11</sup> By that time, however, the policy of non-intervention was dangerously out of date. Selangor was plunged into civil war in the 1860s, when the influx of Chinese tin miners added to the chaos which had already been caused by the breakdown of the sultan's authority and wars between rival chiefs over tin and trade dues. Merchants from the Straits Settlements took advantage of the strife to supply and arm the contestants, and the collapse of government and consequent increase of piracy threatened the trade of the Straits Settlements.