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## The Involvement of English Educated Figures in Kinta District in National Politics

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### Abstract

This article is about the emergence of English educated figures in Kinta district and contributions in national politics. The development of English education in Kinta district, Perak from 1874 to 1957 became a major element in the emergence of English educated figures. The earnings of this article are to look at the political developments in Kinta region and the country. This article is developed as a result of the reference of primary and secondary sources of documents from the National Archives of Malaysia and Zaba Library, University of Malaya. All these documents are analyzed and evaluated and interpreted hermeneutically to avoid any elements of bias. The results found that the explosion and opening of tin mining areas in Kinta district opened opportunities for Christian missionaries and the British government to advance English education for the purpose of benefiting both parties. Overall, this article points out that the impact of English education in Kinta district led to the emergence of influential figures in the political landscape of the country and were directly involved in opposition to the Malayan Union and the establishment of popular political parties as well as participation in general elections.

**Keywords:** Figures, English Education, Kinta, Politic.

### Introduction

The development of English education in the Kinta district led to the emergence of caliber political figures in planning the best dough to voice dissatisfaction with the introduction of the Malayan Union and the establishment of political parties who eventually formed the Alliance Party. The leadership of the Kinta district community is expressed by their involvement in the country's political landscape. Political figures among Malays, Chinese and Indians were results of English education boom in Kinta help them pave the way for developing nations and laid the foundation stone in the joint efforts at the country level.

### Research Problems

The introduction of English education in Kinta district in 1895 was an opportunity for the local community to get higher education status compared to education at vernacular schools and religious school education. In addition, the development of education and English schools by the Christian missionaries and the British Colonial Government to the residents of Kinta Districts led to the birth of many English-educated political figures at the state level of Perak

and the country, especially in mobilizing Malayan Union's opposition, the establishment of United Malay National Organization (UMNO), Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) and Peoples Progressive Party (PPP). Involvement in local elections in Kinta is also a significant exposure to English-educated figures in national politics. The fact is the introduction of the English education system in Kinta District to shape the country's political route indirectly through the contribution of English-educated figures in the opposition to the British implicit intentions and the involvement of Kinta's figure in local elections.

### **Research Methods**

The main method used to make this study is a qualitative study method consisting of studies at library research. This method enables important data and information to be collected from government official records, journals, articles, thesis or dissertation, books and English and Tamil newspapers related to the study title. The steps taken are to review the records, documents and writings related to the history of English education development leading to the birth of a political figure of the country, especially from Perak. All materials and information related to the study title are used as a source of reference, either as the first source of reference or second reference source. In this way the researchers could collect a certain number of information related to the issue that caused the English educated leaders emerge and fight for the right of people in Malaya. Researchers also collect first sources such as Colonial Office Record, minutes of political party meetings to get a real picture. These information is filtered and analyzed before writing on the study title.

### **Malayan Union**

During the Second World War, the Malayan Planning Unit in London to design a plan that the administration of Malaya more systematically known as the Malayan Union (CO 537/1528) with the incorporation of NNS and NMB. Sir Harold MacMichael was sent to get the signature of the sultan as a bunch of consent against the Malayan Union. Sultan Abdul Aziz Billah Shah Almustamim signed on 22 November 1945. (Musa, 1959) By the end of January 1946, the British government published a White Paper Malayan Union which shows erosion of the power of the sovereign, autonomous Malay states lost power, and erode Malay rights Jus Soli nationality were given to non-Malays.

Sir Harold MacMichael intimidation to sign the proposed Malayan Union against the sultan of Perak heavily criticized by the Muslim Association of Malaya driven by Ibrahim Ma and K.Sultan Merican in Ipoh. The Islamic Voice of Malaya newspaper is the tool for defending the power of the Sultan as the head of state and Islamic religion as well as an important instrument against the Malayan Union. The newspaper was shaded by Sultan of Perak, Kedah, Selangor and Perlis king with K.Sultan Merican as his editorial chief. (Sultan-Ud-Din Merican, 1978)

Malay opposition to the Malayan Union was led by Dato Onn bin Ja'afar in Johor. In Perak, Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab with some Malay leaders formed the Malay Alliance Perak in January 1946. Since the Malay Alliance Perak is the first political organization at the state level in Malaya, in the short term this alliance opened a branch in the state of Perak and managed to receive 30 000 membership. The Malay Alliance magazine was published in headquarters located in Hale Street, Ipoh while the youth wing of the Alliance Perak Malay publishes Tenaga magazine (Nawang, 1988)

The reaction of the Malays against the British plan to set up the Malayan Union in Malaya was establishing UMNO or the United Malays National Organization (PEKEMBAR) in 1946. Violent opposition to the Malayan Union led to the organization of "Se Malaya Malay Congress" in Kuala Lumpur. UMNO was formed as a result of a combination of 41 delegates representing every state in Malaya include PKMM also supportive of this effort. Dato "Onn Jaafar was appointed as the first UMNO president and Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Abdul Wahab as the first UMNO secretary. the main aim of UMNO is to oppose and prevent the establishment of the Malayan Union (Lau, 1991). Some politicians of the Malay Alliance Perak involved in setting up the party. (Linehan) Among them were Zainal Abidin bin Haji Abas (Salahuddin, 2007) Deputy President of Malay Alliance Perak and chairman of the Perak Malay UMNO politics, Raja Kamaralzaman (M.Sheppard) and Yunus bin Megat Megat Mohamed Haji Isa from Ipoh (Salehuddin, 2007)

UMNO is basically established jointly by the nationalists of various levels and flow is formed due to a desire not only to defend the rights of the Malays but also the birth of the spirit of the anti-British struggle for independence. Examples Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Perempuan Kelsom led the women's movement against the Malayan Union in Kuala Kangsar. (W.Linehan) Women's Malay Alliance Perak has 10 branches of women wings, including one in Batu Gajah. Chairman of the Women's Malay Alliance Perak was Saadiyah binti Haji Adnan while his secretary was Puteh Mariah binti Ibrahim Rashid. Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Abdul Wahab welcomes the participation of women in Perak in politics especially in UMNO (Ibid)

The Malay Alliance Perak published *Hidop Melayu* that exposes the role of this alliance. The editor was W. Linehan, and J.Victor.Morais contributed to writing about Malay nationalist movement:

The Malays want a federation and not a Union; they want a High Commissioner and not a Governor; they want the nominal ownership of land to be vested in the Ruler and State Council and not on in the Crown, and above all, they all want the Ruler to retain his prerogative (Ibid)

The British government was urged to review the Malayan Union. Working Committee was established with representatives from the sultan, UMNO and the British in Malaya officials to draft the constitution of Malaya. With the formation of the Federation of Malaya in February 1948, Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab appointed as First Chief Minister of Perak. Several Perak state secretaries serve under the administration of the Perak Menteri Besar. Among them are Mustapha Albakri who helped organize the organization of the Kinta Administration during the British Military Administration and oversee the selection of additional police during the emergency. He was then appointed as State Secretary in 1949 (Morais, 1957). Osman bin Talib appointed as the Deputy Chief Minister of Perak in 1954. Then Hashim bin Mat Dris became Deputy Chief Minister of Perak who had become secretary of the Alliance of Perak Malay (Morais, 1956).

In the trial of the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) by John Thivy MIC said the main objective is to work with other races in the struggle for the independence of Malaya. In line with this philosophy MIC conference approved a motion to reject the Malayan Union (Jananayakam,

1946). One of the reasons MIC leader John Thivy opposition to the Malayan Union was the idea MU fails to ensure the independence of Malaya. The MIC is setting up the profits of the Indians who are accepted and put the country's interests as a key point. John Thivy urged the British to withdraw Malayan Union and replaced with a constitution that guarantees the self-government of Malaya. (Thivy, 1938-1948) This establishment proved John Thivy and MIC do not want to hurt the feelings of the Malays and he warned the Indians that did not submit demands that conflict with the interests of the Malays (Jananayakam, 1946)

Federation of Malaya 1948 enables centralized administration and the sovereign power is maintained. Tightened the granting of citizenship to non-Malays. It left an impression in the matter polarization caused some opposition parties of the non-Malays that led to the declaration of a state of emergency in 1948. In addition, the MIC conference he invited Umno to cooperate in the struggle for the independence of Malaya (Thivy, 1938-1948). However, UMNO decided to engage in confidential negotiations with the British (Jananayakam, 1946)

John Thivy decided to launch a campaign against the Federation of Malaya Agreement (PPTM) with other parties who agree with him when the British went ahead to perform PPTM. Since 1946, John Thivy strives to mobilize the support of all races to oppose the British in the Constitution. Stand against PPTM supported and welcomed by the leaders of the Parti Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM), the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) and Malayan Democratic Union (MDU). Through the cooperation of these parties, the inter-racial conference was organized on December 22, 1946. MIC urged the Indians to attend the conference by stating in the Tamil language newspaper:

bahasa Tamil:

The future of the country is in danger of Malaya. We need to choose between independence with the colonial rule. The British plan is not other than a ploy to keep the country in the grip of Malaya British forever. We should not allow this to happen. Come together to show your opposition to tough negotiations held by the British and French representatives (Jananayakam, 1946)

The future of the Malaya is in danger. We need to choose between independence of Malaya or stay with the colonial rule. The British plan is not other than a ploy to keep the country in the grip of British colonial forever. We should not allow this happen. Come together to show your opposition to otugh negotiations held by the British and Malay representatives (Jananayakam, 1946)

As a results, All-Malaya Council of Joint Action (AMCJA) was established in the inter-racial conference. The purpose of its establishment is urging the British to cancel the plans to implement PPTM. Tan Cheng Lock was appointed as Chairman of AMCJA. John Thivy visit the whole of Malaya and mobilize public support for the fight AMCJA. He asks everyone to reject PPTM for not guaranteeing the transfer of power to the people. (Jananayakam, 1947) The AMCJA struggle was not limited to against PPTM but managed to devise an alternative constitution known as the People's Constitution. (Boestamam, 1972) The People's Constitution is the result of a three day discussion between Dr. Burhanuddin, Isaac Hj.

Muhammad, Tan Cheng Lock, J. A. Thivy, Ahmad Boestamam, Chan Loo and Gerald de Cruz. The proposed constitution is accepted by all the races in Malaya. Ahmad Boestamam and Pusat Tenaga Rakyat (PUTERA) proposed four proposals and AMCJA urged six important things:

1. Singapore must be consolidated with Malaya.
2. One central government and selected state councils.
3. Rulers will have the real power, accountable to the people through the Legislative Council.
4. A new constitution for Malaya, provides certain privileges for the Malays progress politically and economically.
5. The customs of the Malays and Islam are fully controlled by the Malays through the Special Majlis.
6. Democracy around for all those who regard Malaya as a permanent residence and is willing to devote undivided loyalty.

According to Ahmad Boestamam, Pusat Tenaga Rakyat (PUTERA) urged four other things:

1. Malay language should be the national language and the sole official language of Malaya.
2. Defense and Foreign Affairs should be the shared responsibility of the Malayan government and the British government.
3. Citizen of Malaya should be named in Malay.
4. White and red colour should be included as the background of the National Flag of Malaya.

### **Election**

On April 13, 1949, the British government introduced Parliament's commitment as a step before independence (Short, 1975). British Government officials in Malaya was sent to London to understand the implementation of the general elections held in January 1950. The idea of the administration's own submission to the Malaya seen come true after the local elections created. Under administration of Gerald Templer's promises like Malaya's own government and citizenship came true:

In his first year as High Commissioner Templer introduced local elections, village councils, Chinese citizenship in which over half the Chinese population was enfranchised, a merger of the War Council with a more representative political organ, the Executive Council, and provided the first opening for the Chinese in the ranks of the Malayan Civil Service (Short, 1975)

By the time Templer left in July 1954 there were two hundred Village Councils in existence, most of them popularly elected, and all of them with power to impose limited local taxes and rates, to repair, maintain or build roads and other village amenities, and to undertake capital projects in their areas if the money was available. The Federal Government provided grants in aid in the ratio of one dollar for every two dollars they collected; and an annual budget and estimate were prepared. As a measure of introducing self-government about a million inhabitants had elected Councils by the end of 1955; and

government was reported to have been delighted at the success of the plan to develop a democratic spirit among the New Villages (Short, 1975)

Through the establishment of a new village council without permission given the opportunity to participate in local elections and lead its own administration from 1952. In Kinta the number of voters voted out was 5%. There are some cases of sale of votes in the local election of Pasir Pinji (Harper, 1999)

Most of the new village councils are created by the Chinese New Villages Organization. Malay villages do not agree with the establishment of the new village council because traditional Malay village administration does not want to lose the power of the administration. The effect of this Malay villages struggling to get provisions such as Chinese New Villages. Chief Minister of Perak, Datuk Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab claimed in Kinta new village council was created to give an advantage to the Chinese and the difficulty in obtaining a representative of the Malays and Indians. As a member of the Communities Liaison Committee (CLC), Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab vocal in championing the Malay economy. The establishment of the Special Committee involvement of Malays in Economics and Industry under his supervision provides an opportunity for strengthening the economy of the Malays.

In September 1951, Dato Onn Jaafar resigned as Umno president and established the Independence of Malaya Party (IMP) with the principle of non-communalism (Short, 1975). In 1952 UMNO and MCA combine to form a political alliance and contest in the Municipal Raya in Kuala Lumpur. IMP only won 2 seats out of 12 seats contested. During UMNO and MCA negotiation towards the establishment of the National Alliance Party, Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Abdul Wahab as Perak Umno chairman led the movement against Umno Center Executive Committee Policy. He held a secret meeting in February 1953 in the hope of attracting UMNO and MCA support to join his new party of the National Association of Perak (NAP). He also chaired the "National Conference" sponsored by seven chief ministers of other Malay states in an effort to thwart the cooperation between UMNO and MCA (Gordon, 1970)

Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Abdul Wahab's plan caused Tunku Abdul Rahman to sacked him and strong supporters of NAP from UMNO and Tunku Abdul Rahman subsequently held political tours throughout Perak and managed to restore support of Perak UMNO. Supporters of Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab putting their effort to revive the Malay Alliance Perak but failed.

After this defection UMNO was very weak in Perak and, at the time, the MCA had not yet been very effective in its campaign to organise the Chinese for contesting elections (Gordon, 1970)

In 1954 NAP worked with the National Party. Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang Abdul Wahab received strong support from his uncle Dato Panglima Kinta Mohd Eusoff and C.M. Yusuff and the support of the leader and one of the founder of MCA in Perak, Lau Pak Khuan (Harper, 1999). NAP is covered under the favour of Chief Minister of Perak by appointing village chieftains in Perak and renewed mining licenses for Chinese. In 1955 NAP suffered a great lost in the state election with the Alliance Party won all 30 state seats.

By the year 1956 NAP has become weak after the UMNO rised to champion for the Malays. Before Malaya gained independence Dato Panglima Kinta Mohd Eusoff died. He has held post as Assistant District Officer Kinta, Ipoh Magistrate and Assistant Commissioner of Cooperative Development. He was the first Malay to be president of the Rotary Club of Ipoh and the Governor of Rotary International International District 330 to 1952. Dato Panglima Kinta Mohd Eusoff also directly involved in public administration and in Kinta, Perak. He has served as a member of the Perak State Government Council and Ipoh municipalist. He also served as president of the Islamic Society of Malaya and was nominated as the representative of the Orang Asli in Malaya. Before he died, 56 appointments held by Dato Panglima Kinta Mohd Eusoff. (Ragayah, 1995) Then on 30 August 1957 Dato Dato Panglima Bukit Gantang resigned as Chief Minister of Perak and replaced by Ghazali bin Haji Jawi from Lenggong (Musa, 1959). Both leaders of the Kinta district were Malay elite and English educated. Malay in Perak were labelled as an influential government officer and "Anglophiles." They also urged Umno to ensure better economic position for the Malays.

The first general elections of Malaya in 1955 was won by the Alliance. Only three of the 52 parliamentary seats in Penang, Ipoh-Menglembu and Seremban Malay candidates did not contest. In Ipoh-Menglembu four candidates contested each of them from Alliance Party, NAP and Perak Progressive Party (PPP) and an independent candidate. Leong Yew Koh the candidate of the Alliance Party and Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) representative won the Ipoh-Menglembu seat with a large majority and other candidates lost deposits (Ratnam, 1965)

Ipoh became an autonomous power with the supervision of the local authorities on 1 January 1956 under the Alliance government. The Ipoh Municipal Council comprised of 12 elected councilors, a President who was nominated, a health officer and an engineer. (Tate & Chan, 1962) Among the Ipoh municipal councilors for Ipoh and Menglembu were Mohd Ali bin Pitchay pensioner of municipal inspector, lawyer D.R. Seenivasagam, Cheong Cheang Kang certified accountant, bank manager and right hand of C.H.Yin clerical Union, auctioneer M.Ramanand, Kah Yin, Yap Yin Fah and Hainan leader Too Joon Hing who later became a member of parliment of the South Kinta and also appointed as Deputy Minister of Education. ( Morais, 1956)With the Hainan people network in Malaya Too Joon Hing help the federal government to hold Rundingan Baling with Chin Peng in December 1955 (Morais, 1956)

Abdullah bin Kulop Uudi was the first President of the Ipoh Municipal Council appointed in 1957. Prior to that he served as a government official in Kampung Kepayang and received English education at Anderson's school (Tate & Chan, 1962). Ng Yin Fong was elected as a member of the Kampar Municipal Council and was President of Kampar Chinese Public Maternity Hospital (Morais, 1956)

In addition, in 1951 the Perak Labour Party in Ipoh was established by a group of 'Fabian Type Socialists'. Labor Party has a membership of many of the non-Malays and work with Indigenous People's Party, led by Malay and Sumatra. Ahmad Boestamam led both parties with the name of Socialist Front. Ahmad Noor Abdul Shukor contested in the State Legislative Assembly seat for the Gopeng area but lost despite getting full support from the Sumatra community in Kinta (Yaacob, 1985)



In early January 1953, some of the main leaders of the Perak Labour Party resigned and bringing their own direction by acting out of Socialist Front and establishing a Progressive Party Party (PPP) because the Labour Party has an ideological difference with the internal person. This is because the members in party itself not satisfied with the failure of party to fight for the use of jury system in Malaya. The PPP is the only Perak political party that demands the use of this system in court trial (Means, 1976). Official meetings were held on 10th January 1953 at the Clerical Union Headquarters, Ipoh (Straits Times, 1953). Dr. Kanapathipillai, Anglo Chinese School Ipoh Old Boy and general practitioner chaired a meeting with 30 members present and chose him as the first PPP president while Anderson School Old Boys D.R. Seenivasagam (Andersonian, 1959) was chosen as Vice President of PPP and his brother S.P. Seenivasagam was elected as a member of the PPP Committee. Members of PPP agreed to taken the Singapore Progressive Party (SPP) regulations with several amendments in this meeting. This party was the attraction of the English-educated professionals. The party dominated the election of the Singapore Legislative Council 1948 and 1951, but suffered a severe defeat in the 1955 election with the emergence of more aggressive political parties such as Labour Front and People's Action Party (PAP). This severe defeat caused SPP to join Democratic Party to form liberal Socialist Party in 1956. Therefore, it is not surprising when the establishment of PPP is heavily influenced by SPP. PPP main founder of D.R. Seenivasagam and his brother S.P. Seenivasagam were famous lawyers. The PPP is also a non racist political party and most members in the early stages of its establishment are English educated professionals. (Azmi & Rahman, 2016) Some leaders who give a speech at this meeting expressed regret as local government elections have not been held. According to S.P. Seenivasagam "Obviously, The Government Responsible For Organizing The Election ARE Incapable and Should Resign Their Task and Let Someone Else Undertake It" (Sunday Times, 1953) In the Local Election 1954, PPP for the first time competing for Umno-MCA-PPP tickets with Dr Seenivasagam as a candidate. He was voted as a member of the Local Council of Ipoh and Menglembu (PPM / PK-21/53)

Ideology and defense against poverty in Kinta such as their involvement in the case of Lee Meng, the Communist terrorists made the siblings of the well-known throughout Kinta (Ho, 2020). Ironically, this Ceylon siblings are the voice of the low income Chinese community at Kinta. (Comber, 2008) The success of the PPP leader was driven by the strong support of Chinese voters who saw the seriousness of the PPP leader to fight for Chinese, education and citizenship issues (Ampalavanar, 1981)

After exiting the Alliance Party, D.R. Seenivasagam lost in the 1955 general election but then won in the by-election in 1957. Perak Progressive Party turned the name into People's Progressive Party. The PPP began to champion racial issues, especially in the retention of the Chinese and Tamil vernacular education system as well as the use of Chinese and Tamil language as the official language of the country. The Chinese were dissatisfied with the MCA's stand fully supporting the Razak Education Report 1956 (Vasil, 1980). They argue that the Razak Statement abolished the gradually Chinese education system.

### **Conclusion**

The development of English education in Kinta is rapidly creating many credible students and leads to the emergence of political figures in Kinta. The contribution of political figures to the community especially in the Malayan Union highlighted the credibility of political figures on

English education in an effort to thwart British implicit intentions. In the aspect of the elections of political figures from the district of Kinta proves the effectiveness of being the voice of the people in social issue and education to the Kinta community.

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