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**Political Development of Indians During The
Japanese Occupation In Malaya (Malaysia),
1941-1945**

**Ganesan Shanmugavelu
and
Balakrishnan Parasuraman**



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Abstract

This paper looks at the political development of Indians during the Japanese occupation in Malaya. The Japanese Occupation in Malaya from 1941 to 1945 left many political effects in Malaya. The Japanese occupation has left some positive effects on the political development of Indians, particularly creating unity among Indians who had previously split up on caste, religion and ethnic differences. This unity is clearly seen through massive involvement of Indians in the activities of IIL and INA by supporting Japan. The leadership, reputation and credentials of Subash Chandra Bose also influenced the Indians in Malaya to join IIL and the INA. This political development of Indians is more focused on the development of India and India's struggle for independence. In addition, there are a handful of Indians who joined the anti-Japanese movements such as MPAJA and MPAJU.

Keywords: Political, Development, Indians, Japanese Occupation

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Statement: All the views expressed in the paper are of the author(s).

Political Development of Indians During The Japanese Occupation In Malaya (Malaysia), 1941-1945

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Introduction

The Japanese Occupation in Malaya (1941 - 1945) has brought many effects to the local community. The Japanese have been trying to mobilize local communities to play a more important role in the political arena in Malaya. In this regard, the Japanese have paid more attention to the Indian community in Malaya. The Japanese have used the issue of India's independence struggle, to stimulate anti-British sentiments among Indians in Malaya. The aim was to gain support from Indians against the British army and its allies in India and Burma. The Japanese saw the Indians in Malaya and Singapore as a potential fifth column for use against the British in India and Burma. (Bedlington, 1978: 64). For Japanese strategic purposes, the Indians were more directly politicized than any other group, by means of the Indian Independence League (IIL) and the Indian National Army (INA).

During this period, a significant proportion of the Indian community had been involved with the IIL and its military wing the INA. Japanese sponsorship of the IIL and the INA also gave the appearance of unprecedented communal solidarity. The dispute between IIL and INA officials and the actions by Japanese is considered the downfall of the pride of INA. For the revival of the independence movement and to gain the support of Indians in Malaya, the Japanese need to appoint a new leader. In this regard, Subash Chandra Bose is seen as the suitable leader. After Subash Chandra Bose became the leader of IIL and the INA, he made an immediate impact on Malayan Indians and under his inspired leadership, he re-invented the INA and popularized the IIL amongst Indians throughout the Peninsular Malaya. Towards the end of the war, the Indians in Malaya began to withdraw their support for IIL and the INA. Besides that, not all Indians in Malaya

support the Independence League and the Japanese. A small number of Malayan Indians joined the Malayan Peoples Anti Japanese Army (M.P.A.J.A) and showed their protest against the Japanese as they view Malaya as their permanent residence.

Involvement of Indians in the Indian Independence League (IIL) and the Indian National Army (INA)

In its quest for Indian support, the Japanese have used the influence of the Indian Independence League (IIL) and the Indian National Army (INA). The general impact of this movement has been noted often in broad terms, but requires closer analysis if we are to understand the effect of the Japanese occupation upon subsequent political developments. (Stenson, 1980: 91). In this regard, we must look deeper into the development of IIL and INA to see the impact of the Japanese occupation on the Indian political developments in Malaya. The Japanese government's efforts to gain the support of the Indian community can be divided into two stages. In the first stage, the Japanese have used Indian Nationalist influence, Rash Behari Bose and second phase through another Indian nationalist, Subash Chandra Bose. (Chiang Hai Weng, 1976: 121). The first attempt failed to achieve its original goal due to internal disagreement. However, the arrival of Subash Chandra Bose, managed to stimulate the spirit of nationalism among Indians in Malaya.

Since the beginning of its involvement in the Second World War, Japan had voiced its propaganda to create a zone known as the Greater East-Asia Prosperity Sphere. (Mahajani, 1973: 141). This idea refers to the Japanese effort to unite countries in Southeast Asia, Japan, China and Manchuria into an independent economic zone under the influence of Japanese politics. (Zainal Abidin Wahid, 1970: 98). The Japanese saw the

struggle for independence in India as a good opportunity for the success of its plans. The anti-British spirit that is so thickened among Indian nationalists, has been fully utilized by the Japanese to get the support of the Indian people.

In this effort, the Japanese have given political asylum to Indian nationalist leaders. Among the important leader is Rash Behari Bose, who was given asylum by the Japanese government since 1915, a sovereign, when he failed in an attempt to condense Viceroy of India, Lord Hardings in 1912. The Japanese have been using patriotic spirit for their own interests. Rash Behari Bose has been used as a tool by Japan to gain support from Indians in Southeast Asia, especially Malaya. This can be seen when Major Fujiwara was sent to Bangkok in October 1942 to contact the Sikh community with the help of Rash Behari Bose.

The purpose of Japan to get the assistance of the Sikh community has influenced the Indian soldiers under the British army as well as Indians in Malaya to support the Japanese. In this regard, several negotiations were held by Fujiwara with the Sikh community and some resolutions have been taken. Firstly, even though Indians in Malaya are under the British administration, they will not be regarded as Japanese enemies. Second, a military force known as the Indian National Army (INA) will be formed using former British-Indian troops. In addition, an organization known as the Indian Independence League (IIL) will also be set up to champion the Independence of India. An IIL branch was formed under the supervision of two Indian nationalists, Swami Puri and Pritam Singh. (Chiang Hai Wang, 1976 : 121)

When Japan invaded Malaya in December 1941, Major Fujiwara found that, only a handful of Indians supported it. In this regard, Fujiwara has sought to influence Indian leaders in Malaya to support the establishment of IIL. Thus, on December 25, 1941, an IIL branch was established in Penang and 10,000 Indians had attended the inauguration ceremony. The inauguration ceremony was held by Major Fujiwara and Pritam Singh. Among the Indian leaders who attended the ceremony was the President of the Central Indian Association of Malaya (CIAM), N.Raghavan. In his speech, N.Raghavan has expressed his support for IIL and his struggle to liberate India. Another IIL branch was formed in Taiping, Perak on 30th December, 1941. According to Akashi Yoji (1983), The IIL movement was now spreading like wildfire through out the northern part of Malaya.

In September 1942, Fujiwara was authorized by the Japanese government to form the INA in Malaya. The First Brigade of the INA army was formed in Kuala Lumpur using 20,000 former British-Indian troops who had surrendered to Japan. Former Captain in the British Punjab Regiment, Mohan Singh was appointed as the Military Commander of INA. As a consequence of the establishment of the IIL and the INA, the Indians, were suddenly elevated from being a labour community under British Malaya to a most favoured community status under the Japanese. In a sense this was true. The formation of the Indian Independence Leagues in the wake of the Japanese advance brought for Indians in the main towns a degree of immunity from the worst forms of Japanese brutality and the more oppressive exactions. (Stenson, 1980 : 92)

Although IIL grew rapidly in Malaya, the Indian leaders were still uncertain about the real intention of the Japanese. The IIL and the INA made slow progress, mainly because of the gnawing doubts in Indian minds about Japan's true intentions regarding India's future. While the Japanese exhorted the Indian leaders to use all their influence to rally support amongst their compatriots for the Japanese war effort and for their plans to invade and liberate India. (Muzafar Desmond Tate, 2008 : 65). In this regard, a conference involving Indians throughout Malaya was held on 9-10 March 1942 in Singapore. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the position of the Indians in the IIL and issues related to it. As a result of the conference, an agreement was reached to send an envoy to the Tokyo conference which took place on 28th March, 1942. (Usha, 1973 :146). Among the Indian leaders attended the conference were N.Raghavan, N.S.Gill, Akram Mohammad, S.C.Goho and K.P.K.Menon. (Lebra, 1971: 42)

In the Tokyo Conference, several resolutions have been taken. Among them was, officially recognized IIL as an organization representing Indians in Southeast Asia and Malaya for the purpose of achieving Independence of India. (Akashi Yoji, 1983: 110). The Japanese government also promised military aid to IIL in its efforts to liberate India. (Arasaratnam, 1970: 104). As a result, the conference successfully eliminated all the distrust of the Indians in Malaya against the Japanese. After the conference, the elites in CIAM have agreed to play a more important role in IIL.

After the Japanese conference, IIL has achieved rapid growth and by 10th May, 1942, it has a membership of more than 95,000. IIL branches

were formed in the state of Penang, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan, Johor and Malacca. The state-level CIAM President's namely, Dr. Lukshemeyah (Selangor), S.K. Das (Perak), Dr. Majumdar (Negeri Sembilan), S. Shanmugam (Melaka), N. Raghavan (Penang) and S.C. Goho (Singapore) were appointed as President of IIL in these states in 1942. (Rajeswari, 1981 : 14). The most important legacy of IIL was the politicizing of the Indian working classes in Malaya. With the establishment of IIL branches across the country, Japan hopes to mobilize all Indians, especially those who are actively involved in the struggle for independence of India. The movements of the Indians are carried out through massive gatherings, radio broadcasts, books, mass parades and general strikes. (Rajeswari, 1981: 8).

In June 1942, a conference was held in Bangkok to officially recognize the formation of IIL. Delegates from Southeast Asia including Malaya, Japan and Manchuria attended the conference. In the conference, several resolutions have been approved, among which was officially recognized IIL as Indian independence fighters. Meanwhile, INA was declared the official army of IIL and Mohan Singh was appointed as the Commander. In addition, a Council of Action was formed with Rash Behari Bose as its chairman. N. Raghavan and K.P.K. Menon were appointed as members in the council. The conference also proclaimed Behari Bose as the highest IIL leader for South East Asia and East Asia. (Lebra, 1971: 75-77). After the Bangkok conference, IIL grew more rapidly. By August 1942, there were approximately 40 branches throughout Malaya with membership of 120,000 people. (Stenson, 1980 : 92). To avoid disunity among Indians, other Indian associations are persuaded to cease their activities and join the IIL. Even the leaders of the Indian Muslim League were persuaded and coerced into co-operating with the IIL after August 1942.

These developments clearly showed that, from the very beginning, Malaya was seen as an ideal place to be the center of the IIL movement by the Japanese. This is due to several factors, among them geographically, the position of Malaya is close to India. The Indian leaders in Malaya have also been affected by the development of nationalism in India since the 1920s, and this can be used by the Japanese for their interests. However, the most important factor was, the British-Indian military units stationed in Malaya had surrendered and the Japanese intend to use the former military personnel to strengthen the troops. The former British-Indian troop is the one that Japan has used to form the INA. IIL's

top leaders, Rash Behari Bose, arrived in Singapore in late 1942 to restructure the IIL's political and military division. Rash Behari Bose was not much liked by other officials in IIL and INA. This is evident when a dispute arose between Rash Behari Bose and Mohan Singh which subsequently led to the split in INA.

Shortly thereafter, a dispute arose between IIL and INA officials with the Japanese who questioned the IIL's own integrity. The INA leaders began to be disappointed with the Japanese action which did not allow efforts to enlarge the INA military units. Furthermore, they were also dissatisfied with the Japanese action which forced every member of the INA, regardless of their rank, to pay tribute to the Japanese soldiers. This action is considered to be the downfall of the pride of INA. Another main problem was the leadership of Rash Behari Bose. Indians in Malaya considered Rash Behari Bose as a 'puppet' of Japan. Between January and July 1943, Rash Behari Bose struggled, with little success, to breathe more life into a movement that lacked enthusiastic local support. (Stenson, 1980 : 94). INA officials, especially Mohan Singh, were also dissatisfied with his position as a mediator or Indian representative in all dealings with the Japanese. The Japanese should also be blamed for sparking disappointment among IIL officials. Japanese officials often react freely and disrespectful to IIL officials. For example, they have used the Swaraj Institute under the supervision of N. Raghavan in Penang as well as the INA army without prior consultation with IIL officials.

In the protest against Japan's actions, N. Raghavan and K.P.K. Menon, had withdrawn from the Council of Action which administered the IIL headquarters in September 1942. However, N. Raghavan continued to serve as the IIL President in Malaya to defend the privilege enjoyed by the Indians. He resigned in 1943 when the Japanese formed another body known as Indian Youth League without the support of IIL. The Japanese-sponsored Indian Youth League grew very slowly. (Stenson, 1980: 94).

The attitude of these Japanese officials led Mohan Singh to lose confidence on Japan. He was aware that the Japanese had actually used INA and IIL for their own interests, and sent two of his representatives to India to communicate with the British. Unfortunately one of them was detained by the Japanese. In response, Mohan Singh made the decision to dissolve the INA, but before he acted, he was detained by the Japanese on the direction of Rash Behari Bose. On the other

hand, the members of the INA army declare themselves as prisoners of war in Japan. This action marked the official dissolution of the INA army in December 1942. This also marked the end of the first stage of Japanese efforts to gain the support of the Indians in Malaya. Meanwhile, Rash Behari Bose also lost the support and confidence of the Indians. In this pressing situation, he tried to defend his position by rebuilding the INA but failed.

The Japanese are worried with the dissolution of the INA because it needed the support and assistance of the Indians to make its war campaign against the British are successful. To carry out this task, the Japanese are aware that they need another Indian nationalist leader who can re-mobilize Indians in Malaya to support them. In this case, Subash Chandra Bose is seen as the most suitable candidate. He is one of the leading nationalists and has held the position of President of the Indian National Congress (INC). He arrived in Singapore in July 1943 and has sought to reorganize IIL and INA. (Rajeswari, 1981: 8)

The Influence Of Subash Chandra Bose On Indian Politics in Malaya

The arrival of Subash Chandra Bose on 2 July 1943 were widely admired in Malaya and the initial impact of Bose's personality on the Indian community of Malaya was terrific. Subash Chandra Bose was undisputedly a born leader of men and a dynamic personality, possessed of a moving power of oratory. He toured the country making rousing speeches to groups of Indians. Malayan Indians, unused to such political oratory, were swept off their feet and responded warmly. Volunteers flocked to the movement. Branches of the League were established in every major town and even in the plantations. Recruitment to the INA picked up. Differences among officers and civilians were forgotten when they were confronted with Bose's supreme confidence. (S.Arasaratnam, 1970 : 106). As a first step, Subash Chandra Bose has met with IIL leaders from across Asia. At this meeting, he has assured that the Japanese will not try to master or use IIL or INA for their own benefit. This shows that the Japanese side would realize their mistake and willing to cooperate and respect the IIL officials because Japan needs the support and help of the Indians. Subash Chandra Bose subsequently took over IIL's leadership from Rash Behari Bose and changed his slogan to 'Chalo Delhi' (Onwards to Delhi). (Zainal Abidin Wahid, 1970: 100). Subsequently, on 8 August 1943, he restructured the INA and now it was called as 'Azad Hind Fauj'

(Lebra,1970: 119). He also appointed himself as the head of the INA military unit.

Subsequently, Subash Chandra Bose has also agreed with Field Marshall, Count Terachi's proposal to allow an INA military regiment to engage in the movement against the British in Imphal (North East of Burma), along with the Japanese army. (Stenson,1980: 96). Subsequent to Subash Chandra Bose's decision, training camps were set up on a large scale throughout Malaya to train regular officers and soldiers. By the end of the Japanese occupation in Malaya, it was estimated that 500 to 1000 military officers had been trained in these camps. In addition, these camps have also produced more than 20,000 regular soldiers. (Stenson, 1980: 96)

Subash Chandra Bose has also declared the establishment of the 'Azad Hind' Government or Provisional Government of Free India in Singapore on 21st October,1943. He has declared himself as the Prime Minister. (Bedlington, 1978: 64). Azad Hind Government has been recognized by all countries under the auspices of Japan and its allies. Some local political leaders have been given several important posts in this government. (Arasaratnam,1970:105). For example N.Raghavan was appointed as the Minister of Finance.

Subsequently, Subash Chandra Bose has declared war on Britain and its allies. (Chiang Kai Wang, 1976: 123). He did so in the hopes of liberating IIL from the Japanese control and influence as a whole. At the same time, this action also demonstrates his authority as the leader of the Indians in Southeast Asia. As the IIL and INA operations cost huge expenditure, Subash Chandra Bose decided to seek financial assistance from Indians in Malaya. With this end, he launched a campaign for the utmost possible financial contribution from the wealthy sections of Malayan Indians. With the initial enthusiasm, well-to-do Indians of Singapore and the Peninsular donated cash, and ladies stripped themselves of their gold jewellery for the movement. (S.Arasaratnam, 1970 : 106) In addition to financial aid, he also needs their support to actively engage in IIL and INA. In that regard, he visited the whole of Malaya to get support and financial assistance from the Indians.

Subash Chandra Bose had successfully stimulates the spirit of nationalism among the Indians in Malaya with his ability to speak. As a result, IIL's branches have been established in the estates to secure the support of Indian labourers. This action caused many Indian workers to join the INA army voluntarily. By the end of 1943, it was estimated that some 30,000 labourers joined the

INA. (Usha, 1973: 148). The impact on Indian labour of the activities of the IIL and the events of the war was equally great. The Independence League took political activity into the plantations. Labourers volunteered for the INA and others formed local volunteer corps or Thondar Padai in the estates, devoted to nationalist activity. (S.Arasaratnam, 1970 : 108). Indians in Malaya and Singapore have also contributed a lot of money to finance the expenses of IIL and INA.

It is arguable that, the appointment of Subash Chandra Bose has saved IIL from extinction. Compared with Rash Behari Bose, Subash Chandra Bose has the ability to influence the Indians. His personality and commitment in liberating India successfully, had influenced Indians in Malaya to give full support to IIL. Rash Behari Bose is also more closely followed by Japanese instructions and does not seek to be independent and free from Japanese influence . However, when Subash Chandra Bose took over the leadership of IIL, he realized that IIL had to free itself from the influence and control of Japan if it wanted to achieve the cause of its struggle. In line with that, Subash Chandra Bose, has worked on his own to strengthen the INA army without the help of the Japanese. Both IIL and INA have achieved rapid development under his leadership. A well-known Indian leader said : “ When Subash Chandra Bose came, many Indians felt that not only would they fight for swaraj in India, but for swaraj of the people in Malaya....that they would be able to be rid of the people who stood upon them”. (S.Arasaratnam, 1970 : 108). It can be said that, this radical nationalism was also the starting point for the Indians to move into socialist, trade unionist and even communist activity, in which the Malayan Indian intelligentsia participated prominently in the post-war years.

In early 1944, the INA engaged in a campaign against the British at Imphal, from February to May 1944, together with the Japanese. (Rajeswari, 1981 : 146). However, this campaign failed to achieve its goal, as the INA army suffered a severe defeat and was forced to withdraw from Imphal. This defeat affects the relationship of Indian community in Malaya with IIL and INA. The Indians began to lose confidence in the INA and as a result, the number of volunteers participating in the INA decreased. For example, in May 1944, 10,000 volunteers joined the INA, but in November of the same year , only 560 participated. Besides that, many fled the INA army. According to a report, 200 INA soldiers fled every month by the end of 1944. (Toye, 1959 :131)

Although in its early stages, IIL has carried out various projects for the welfare of Indians, but over time, they began to oppress. Between 1944 - 1945, IIL was used as a tool or agency by the Japanese to get Indian labourers to work in its war projects such as the construction of the Siam-Burma railway. At the same time , IIL also faces financial problems. Beginning October 1943, IIL's administrative expenses increased to \$ 1 million a month. (Toye, 1959 : 91). Given the inadequacy of Indians, Subash Chandra Bose has decided to take more action to earn the necessary money.

Given that financial difficulties persisted, Subash Chandra Bose established a body named Boards of Management For Raising Funds in 1944 to raise the money needed to finance the IIL's expenses. Under this plan, Indians are required to declare their total assets to this body and pay a tax rate of 10 to 25% which applies to all fixed assets. The body was led by N.Raghavan since June 1944. Anyone who attempts to refuse to pay this tax will be detained by the Japanese military police, called Kempetai. (Stenson, 1980: 99). This situation shows the autocratic attitude of Subash Chandra Bose. The Indians were unhappy because Subash Chandra Bose relied heavily on the Kempetai. The most distressing groups under this law are merchants, Indian-Muslim traders, and Chettiars. Subash Chandra Bose's action was criticized by K.P.K.Menon and this led him to be held by Kempetai and subsequently he was sentenced to imprisonment for 6 years.

These developments have led the Indians to realize that the Japanese and Subash Chandra Bose have made them a tool for their own benefit. As a result, the Indians in Malaya began to withdraw their support for IIL. When Japan lost in the Second World War, the Azad Hind and INA were disbanded. Though in terms of what it set out to do the whole venture may be dismissed as a fiasco, its total impact on the Malayan Indian community has to be considered seriously. It gave a sense of mission and purpose to the Indians, as estimation in their own minds that they were making history on behalf of the people of the Indian sub-continent. (S.Arasaratnam,1970: 107). Although the IIL and the INA under Subash Chandra Bose failed to yield their promise and ended up in defeat and ignominy, they made a vital impact on Malayan Indian society. In general, they changed the face of Malayan Indian politics and the attitudes of Indians both towards one another and towards their colonial masters, the British. Subash Chandra Bose not only inspired them with nationalist ideas and giving them a sense of worth and self-respect, but also showed them how to organize and co-operate in order to achieve their

goals. (Muzafar Desmond Tate, 2008 : 70).

Involvement of Indians in the Malayan Peoples Anti Japanese Army (MPAJA)

It should be noted that not all Indians in Malaya support IIL or the Japanese. A small number of Indians have joined the anti-Japanese group as they view Malaya as their permanent residence, so they focus more on political developments in Malaya. Prior to the Japanese occupation of Malaya, a small number of Indians had engaged in the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) and pro-communist associations. When the Japanese dominated Malaya, the group immediately joined the M.P.A.J.A. led by MCP. An estimated 25 or more Indians had been linked with the Malayan Communist Party or related groups in trade unions or Anti-Imperialist League before the occupation and immediately they joined the M.P.A.J.A. Some Indians worked for the Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Union (M.P.A.J.U.) and very large numbers of Indian workers in estate areas have provided food, financial and information assistance to M.P.A.J.A. (Stenson, 1980 : 101).

By 1944, M.P.A.J.A. and M.P.A.J.U. have begun to influence the INA soldiers to support their cause. At that period, the morale of the INA army was very low, due to the failure of the Imphal campaign. This failure led them to view IIL's struggle in vain and had no hope of achieving its original goal. Thus, they decided to change the basis of their struggle, supporting the British and M.P.A.J.A. to free Malaya from Japanese control. To many of the INA volunteers cooped up in their camps with no hope of liberating India, the alternative of liberating Malaya began to seem far more attractive. Desertion rates were very high. Contacts between the M.P.A.J.A. and INA members grew, despite all the efforts of the Japanese and Bose's Provisional Government.

(Stenson, 1980 : 101). As a result , many of the members of the INA army turned away and joined the MPAJA. According to Stenson, for the labourers, involved as always in the struggle for survival, and for those intellectuals who had identified with the M.P.A.J.A and M.P.A.J.U. the transition was not nearly as bewildering. The radical nationalism and anti-nationalism of the occupation were realigned with relative ease behind a Chinese / Indian working-class coalition against the returning British imperialists. (Stenson, 1980 : 102).

Conclusion

Overall, it can be stated that, IIL failed to achieve its goal, however, it has left a deep impression on the Indians in Malaya. The involvement in IIL has allowed some Indians to be highly positioned in the Japanese administration. For example, some Indian representatives have been appointed as members of the State Council established in 1943. However, this privileged position is enjoyed by intermediaries such as merchants, traders and professionals based in big cities only. The Japanese also failed to protect the Indian labourers. These labourers were forced to work in Japanese war projects such as the construction of the Siam-Burmese fatal railway from 1942 to 1943. It was estimated that, more than 50,000 Indian workers had died in this project. (Usha, 1973: 193)

Efforts have also been made to mobilize more Indians to engage in political activities. Previously, Indian politics in Malaya was dominated by a small number of Malayalee middle-class, while the labourers in the estates are isolated from the current political development. However, during the Japanese occupation, political activities were brought into the estates by IIL officials. IIL officials have been working openly to raise political awareness among Indian labourers. Political awareness is what affects them involving voluntary involvement in IIL's activities. The development of political ideas in the estate has led to the emergence of a group of leaders from among the working class. This group played an important role in the development of Indian politics in Malaya after the war.

The involvement of Indians actively in IIL and INA, clearly shows that Indians in Malaya cannot separate themselves from the developments in India. This attitude led the Malay community to question the loyalty of the Indians towards Malaya, especially in the early years of the post-war. In addition, Indian Independence League and Indian National Army officials also faced pressure from the British after the war. For the Malayan Indian community, according to Muzafar; it presented a whole new series of choices to be made, opportunities to be grasped and decision to be taken. If nothing else, as a whole Malayan Indians were socially and politically awake and mobilized to a degree that they had never been before. (Muzafar Desmond Tate, 2008 : 70). The events of the Japanese occupation also served to unite the Indian community in Malaya, an achievement which had previously eluded the various groups and persons working towards this end. After the war, it was clearly observable that Indians of all classes and groups were emotionally drawn towards each other. Out of this growing pan-Indian identification it became possible to

bring Indians effectively together in one all-embracing political organization. (S.Arasaratnam, 1970 : 109).

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