

RESEARCH NOTE

THE FIRST HEAD OF STATE FOR SARAWAK: THE NATIVE OFFICERS' CONNECTION

Sharifah S. Ahmad^{1*}, Juna Liau² and Dexter Sigan John³

¹Institute of Borneo Studies, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Sarawak, Malaysia

²Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Sarawak, Malaysia

³Faculty of Education, Language and Communication, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, Sarawak, Malaysia

*Corresponding author: wassophia@unimas.my

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ABSTRACT

The key personalities at the forefront of the debate about the nomination for the first Head of State for Sarawak, which took place from January to September 1963, were Chief Minister Stephen Kalong Ningkan, Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman al-Haj, and the last British Governor of Sarawak, Sir Alexander Waddell. This was a controversy because of the lack of consensus within the parties that formed the Sarawak Alliance and became exacerbated by prolonged disagreements between Ningkan, Tunku and Waddell until its resolution was found three days before the official pronouncement of Malaysia on 16 September 1963. The perspectives of these leading players thus far constitute a standardised account about the debate, admittedly, with varying degrees of emphasis and competing claims. This study proposed another perspective on the debate by introducing the role of the Native Officers who worked behind the political gallery. They were the unsung heroes working for the cause of federation, subsequently clearing the ground for the eventual triumph of their class. By unravelling the Native Officers' role in the formation of Malaysia, we demonstrate the administrator's important as a continuing source of political stability and moderation. To appraise the administrator's dimension in the modern history of Malaysia serves as a lesson on political tolerance and compromise in the context of a multi-ethnic society.

Keywords: Head of State, Sarawak, Native Officer, formation of Malaysia, politics of federation

INTRODUCTION

The first three of Sarawak's head of state had served in the Native Officers' Service. Abang Openg bin Abang Sapi'ee, Tuanku Bujang bin Tuanku Osman and Abang Louis Barieng held various roles in the service and were sent to serve in various districts across Sarawak. The Native Officers' Service was a junior branch of the Sarawak Civil Service which was an administrative arm of the Brookes' government. Its creation dovetailed with the expressed intention of its first Rajah James Brooke in a type of administration that blends in the native traditional system with British conservative values. The Native Officers assisting their European officers in the district and local levels, resolving disputes, implementing policies and leading war expeditions. The emphasis on the right character and personality as a requirement for the selection of Native Officers was to present a benevolent impression of the Rajah's rule. The right disposition consisted of traits like loyalty, possessing language and problem-solving skills and showing kindness towards the native-subjects in a way that assisted their general well-being. Of the heads of state listed earlier, they exemplified the tradition the tradition of the Native Officers' Service. Abang Openg spoke fluent Iban, a skill that he picked up in the stations where he was posted. His father, Abang Sapi'ee was also a Native Officer. Tuanku Bujang, the second governor, had served in Iban districts such as Kanowit, Tatau and Simanggang. His grandfather, Tuanku Mohsen, played an important role in Brooke's pacification of Saribas from 1844 to 1849. In serving people from different ethnic compositions and in different localities, the Native Officers gained both grounded perspectives about local realities as well as a big-picture outlook about the central government mindset and the approach that subsequently shaped the lives of people. Given their unique position and experience, inevitably, the Native Officers sought to play a significant part in the formation of Malaysia, seeing themselves continuing the role as the state-builder serving under successive governments.

This article outlines the contribution of the Native Officers in the various stages of state-building. This provides a background to the approach and attitude taken on the issue of the first head of state of Sarawak. The authors argue that the preference for moderation and power-sharing was the linchpin in the moulding of nation-state in Sarawak, consequently, resulting in a situation where no single ethno-political representation dominates the discourse of national identity. This formula was gathered from the experience of state-building in which the Native Officers were the pivotal agents.

NATIVE OFFICERS AND STATE-BUILDING

There are three phases in Sarawak political history in which the Native Officers had played a critical role.

Phase 1: Incorporation, Expansion and Consolidation 1841–1941

The idea of integrating the native elites into the Brooke's administration was a continuation of the Brunei's indirect rule of Sarawak. The appointment of local elites from the Perabangan and the Sayyid's classes in the governing of the Brunei's outer territory manifested a power relation between the maritime sultanate with its outlying dominion, a relation which had been subjected to the ebb and flow of the political economy in the wider archipelago. When James Brooke acquired the governorship of the Sarawak River in 1841, he saw the logic in continuing the earlier formula. However, he attributed the idea to himself in a letter dated 10 December 1841: "the experiment of developing a country through the residence of a few Europeans and by the assistance of its native rulers has never been fairly tried; it appears to me in some respects more desirable than the actual possession by a foreign nation" (Templer 1853). Thus, the first outstation government's fort in Skrang was established after the war in 1849 was led by Sayyid Mohsen. When he was thought to be ill-suited to the role, the Rajah replaced him with a European officer William Brereton. From then on, every government station and district was administered by a European officer and assisted by the natives' elite. In 1870, the Council Negeri presided by Rajah Charles Brooke had formalised a native officer function and authority as stated in the following terms: "That I confirm the authority of the different Chiefs, to administer justice over all cases of engagement of marriage, divorce, or division of property arising from divorce or death. Such cases to be settled in accordance with established customs, or by rules laid down in the Mohamedan religion and duly recorded in the several Native Courts" (Council Negri 1969).

The aggressive annexation of territories beyond the border of Sarawak River continued between 1844 and 1905. Subsequently, administrative division was introduced in 1873 covering the First Division in Kuching, Serian, Bau and Lundu; the Second Division area stretching from Batang Sadong to Kidurong; the Third Division covering the Rejang river-basin; the Fourth Division of Bintulu and Miri was constituted in 1905 and the Fifth Division including the northern region was formed in 1912. Each of the division was administered by a Resident, and the districts under each residency were led by a District Officer. They were assisted by the Native Officers who were recruited from respectable families. The officers, whose background typically associated with social capitals like prestige and monopoly of resources, increased their stature under the foreign rule as junior administrators.

Phase 2: New Order, Collaboration and Adaptation (1941–1945)

When the Japanese bombers raided Kuching on 19 December 1941, Brooke's administration saw the writings on the wall. Rajah Vyner had left Sarawak for Australia few months before, leaving the Chief Secretary John Beville Archer in charge. W.J. Chater, an officer in the Kuching Secretariat, recalled Archer's instruction to European officers as the Japanese were approaching, "I asked the Chief Secretary what we were to do. He answered "Those of you who have essential work to do must stay. The rest of you must try to get away as best you can it is now a matter of every man for himself." I asked him who were essential people. He did not seem to know" (Public Record Office 1942). When the Japanese finally arrived in Kuching on 24 December, they found the Secretariat and the city deserted. All the maps and critical documents were burnt, the townspeople headed towards the rural part of Kuching and elsewhere, and the Kuching Datus Patinggi, Pahlawan, Menteri, Bentara and Hakim evacuated to Landeh. As the European officers made their moves from inland Kuching towards the Dutch border, the abrupt fall from grace was obvious, "The natives were now beginning to adopt an independent attitude towards us. News was spreading like wildfire that the *perintah* was finished."

Outside Kuching, similar panic and disorder reigned. A memoir from William Graham Morison, a technical employee in the Third Division, described the sense of chaos brought upon by the invading Japanese forces: "Rumours concerning the whereabouts of fugitive Europeans, rumours of Japanese victory and rumours of the price offered for any European head" (Rhodes House 1942). The European officers in Mukah, Sibul, Kapit and Kanowit tried to make their escape towards the Dutch border via the upriver of Rejang in Belaga. They were assisted in their escape by the Native Officers, the Catholic missions and the Dayak chiefs. As the Europeans were leaving their posts, the administration of the Third Division from its Sibul headquarters was taken over by an experienced Native Officer Tuanku Mohamad. Immediately he made it a priority to restore civil order and to ensure that there would be little resistance to the approaching Japanese troops. He instructed the Native Officers Abang Mustapha in Mukah and Abang Ahmad in Kapit to remain in their station. As a result, to he was able to avoid antagonising the Japanese and spared the district from bloodshed. On 31 January 1942, the Japanese reached Kapit on M.V. Rejang and took the district officer for Rejang Barcroft and Morison as prisoners. On board with the Japanese was Tuanku Bujang, who had served as a Native Officer in Kanowit before the invasion, and now a administrative officer for the Japanese in Kuching. Morison wrote, "I should like to add we were both well treated. It is possible and even probable that this treatment was due to the presence of Tuanku Bujang who came up with the Japanese party to collect us."

Most of the Native Officers were upgraded in their position during the Japanese rule. Like the Brookes administration before them, the Japanese realised they also needed the native leaders' cooperation to ensure minimal disruption in the running of the state. In the Third Division, Tuanku Mohamad was promoted to District Officer and Abang Adeng was put in charge of the police force. In the First Division, the Japanese created a council called Ken Sanji representing Malay, Dayak and Chinese communities. Two of the members of the council, Tuanku Bujang and Abang Openg were Native Officers, while traditional elites were represented by Datu Patinggi Ali, Datu Amar Abang Sulaiman, Datu Pahlawan Abang Mustapha and senior Kapitan Ong Tiang Swee. Since the activities of Japanese officials were concentrated in the town centres like Kuching, Sibuan, and Miri, the rest of Sarawak was administered as it was before the occupation. The fact that the administrative adjustment to the Japanese way presented little change from the previous era testified to the ability of the Native Officers in stabilising the transition. A case in point was a district in Bau in the First Division which covered four localities: Bau, Siniawan, Tondong and Buso. Native Officer Abang Othman was promoted to District Officer by the Japanese. According to the post-war British source, the peace and order of the district 'was well-maintained'. The people received rice supply from the military rule, the enforcement of rule and order were still using the Brookes penal code and law, the government wharves were in good condition, and the district officer was empowered to hear cases both civil and criminal. At the end of the occupation, the cash available in the district Treasury amounted to \$16,700 (Cabinet Office 1945).

Phase 3: Nationalism, Development and Modernisation (1945–1960)

The Japanese officially left their garrison in Sarawak on 11 September 1945 when the Commander of Royal Artillery 9, Australian Division accepted the surrender of Major General Yamamura. Even before the official surrender, the Japanese troops had gradually left their stations in Sarawak following their government's acceptance of the Postdam terms on 14 August 1945. Historian Ooi Keat Gin (1999) stated that the effect of the power vacuum on the public order until the coming of the Australian forces was devastating. Massacres of the Chinese at the hands of the Dayaks were reported in Kanowit, Baram and Upper Rejang. There was also retaliation against the Malays by the Chinese in Kuching and Sibuan for what the latter viewed as being Japanese collaborators. In addition to the lawlessness, there were also economic hardships brought upon by trade stoppage, inflation and black market. The British Military Administration (BMA) which took over the country during the seven months' interim period had faced enormous challenges in restoring civil order. Their reports on January and February 1946 revealed the ineffective food ration strategy as the problems were getting worse, "Black- marketing, cheating, thieving, hoarding

and unemployment are still there in their worst forms. After some months of liberation, the people of Kuching have some little case for being upset” (War Office 1946a).

The end of Japanese occupation had spelled another beginning for Sarawak in the awakening of the sense of collective cause among the different groups in society. The BMA reported in January 1946 that there was a new Chinese body called the Young Men Association, followed up by a proposal for a women association. As the cession of Sarawak to the British Government became imminent, the BMA was tasked with canvassing opinion among people in every division about the plan and their reports claimed that the people were quite apathetic about the cession. The people’s response is summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: The initial reaction towards cession based on the findings by the British Military Administration

Date	Location	Response
18 February 1946	Sibu	Malay – no interest; Chinese – pleased; Dayak – want to know who will be Rajah.
20 February 1946	Lower Rejang	People do not understand but accept Rajah’s action.
21 February 1946	Coastal division	Melanau – agreeable; Dayak – agreeable; Chinese – indifferent.
25 February 1946	Lawas	All favourable.
1 March 1946	Second Division	Malay – no strong reaction; Dayak – generally not unfavourable; Chinese – not unfavourable.
2 March 1946	First Division	Malay – increasingly favourable; Dayak – only mildly interested; Chinese – favourable.
2 March 1946	Fourth and Fifth Division	Malay – indifferent; Dayak – wanted member of Brooke family; Chinese – welcome change.

Source: War Office (1946b).

The first collective objection to the cession came from Persatuan Melayu Sarawak (PMS). They wrote a letter to the leader of the Senior Civil Affairs Officer to state their objection to the proposed cession. The proposal, wrote PMS, “had caused an excitement to the indigenous people as they have not been consulted. The indigenous people are still clinging to the treaty made

between the Sarawak and the British government in 1888 and the Constitution of 1941" (War Office 1946b). Subsequently, the Cession Bill was tabled at Council Negeri on 16 and 17 May 1946, a month after the transfer of administration to civilian rule on 15 April. Although the Bill was passed with 19 to 16 in favour of cession, the views of the council members from amongst the Native Officers were divided. Abang Abdul Rahim supported the cession in line with his brother Abang Mustapha. Native Officers Abang Zain of Batang Lupar and Tuanku Mohamad of Miri were aligned with the prominent Malay leader Datu Patinggi Abang Ali in opposing the cession. On 1 July 1946, Sarawak was officially ceded to Britain.

The restoration of the civil government, followed by the reactivation of the civil service had not stopped the anti-cession activities among some of the Native Officers (see Table 2). This had compelled the government to issue a Circular No. 9 of 1946 to prohibit government officers from getting involved in politics. This led to the resignation of 338 civil servants, five of whom were Dayaks.

Table 2: Native officer's involvement in political party from 1946–1947

Political party	Orientation	Native officer
Sarawak Dayak Association	Anti-cession	Eliab Bay
Barisan Pemuda Melayu	Anti-cession	Tuanku Bujang; Ahmad Zaidi
Persatuan Pemuda Melayu	Anti-cession	Tuanku Bujang
Persatuan Melayu Sarawak	Anti-cession	Abang Openg
Young Malay Association	Pro-cession	Datu Bandar Abang Mustapha

The resumption of civil government was hamstrung by the Native Officers whose political view stood on the opposite side of the government. From the government perspective, the need for Native Officers to return to duty was crucial in dealing with the social and economic disarray emerging from the delay in the return of government. As the mass mobilisation for anti-cession protests coordinated in Kuching and Sibu on its first anniversary on 1 July 1947, the Secretariat for Native Affairs in Kuching rolled out its Native Officers for outstation duties. Tuanku Bujang was posted to Tatau in July 1947 and Abang Openg to Bintulu. In July 1948, a prominent pro-cession Datu Bandar Abang Mustapha was appointed to the Secretariat, which oversaw the appointment, transfer, and addition of Native Officers. This gave him and the government in better control in curtailing the continuation of political activities of the anti-cessionists within the civil service.

The return of the Native Officers to the districts was timely as many outstanding issues had hampered the revival of economy. A report in the government publication *Sarawak Gazette* recorded a local dispute in Bintangor about the planting rights given to the Chinese by the Japanese official on a land claimed by the Dayaks. In Bintulu, trade was at a standstill owing to the unavailability of ships for transporting cargo (*Sarawak Gazette* 1946). Under the British, the self-improvement measures were initiated in fields such as education, health and cooperative schemes. In Limbang, Acting District Officer Abang Openg and Native Officer Tuanku Abdullah helped the Bisaya community to organise the first ever school in Batu Danau (*Sarawak Gazette* 1950). In the Second Division, Native Officers had guided the locals in creating their first ever local authority and cooperative society which combine resources for the villages' regeneration.

The economic rehabilitation occurred in parallel with the British attempt at modernising the native administration. This was achieved by opening up the recruitment for Dayak and Sarawak-born Chinese, "on terms and qualifications equal to those of the present Native Officer Service" (Resident First Division 1949). Another way was by introducing a legal-based administrative order. This rule-based system was a departure from the Brookes administration relic in leaving the craft of governing to the individual officer's wisdom, tact and judgement. As a result, since 1948, newly recruited officers were expected to take up legal training – something which in the past was considered abstract and impractical. The new regulation proved to be quite challenging as illustrated by a complaint made by the District Officer of Serian towards his junior officer, "Previously Awang Bunyok had third class powers but he showed himself incapable of exercising the normal duties of a third-class magistrate and I have hesitated to recommend that similar powers should be given to his successor Abang Ismawi" (Resident First Division 1950). Furthermore, this had changed the nature of the district offices' works which required more amount of time spent working in the office and less time for outstation travelling. Works in a district became more oriented towards paperwork: registration of births and deaths; trades licensing and other licenses; native probate; issuing of gun licenses; signing vouchers and paycheck; general correspondence; court works (Resident First Division 1950).

THE FIRST HEAD OF STATE FOR SARAWAK

The idea for a federation between Sarawak, Sabah, Brunei, Singapore and the Malayan states were proposed by Tunku Abdul Rahman to a former Commissioner General of Southeast Asia Sir Malcolm MacDonald in early 1959 as a strategy to reduce the political dominance of Chinese-based parties and electorates in Singapore and Malaya (Cabinet Office 1960). Within Borneo, the idea for a closer integration was mooted in 1958 between the governors

of Sarawak and North Borneo but the idea was not warmly received by the native elites in Sarawak who was suspicious of the Chinese enthusiasm for it. Nevertheless, the idea received a new lease of life when it was proposed by Tunku Abdul Rahman in 1960. Sir Anthony Abell, the governor of Sarawak, viewed the idea positively, as he believed that the joint-partnership would benefit the Borneo territories in trade, development, defence and internal security. In May 1960, the Commonwealth Relations and Foreign Office asserted that the federation involving the Borneo territories should be a matter decided by the people's consent. It was also stressed that the British rule of the colonies would not be a permanent state and so the future of the territories of the territories looked to be better, security wise, under a federation (Cabinet Office 1960). As of Brunei, the British were quite concerned of a possibility that its' joining the federation with Malayan states could enhance Malay nationalism in Sarawak. In addition, the internal opposition in Brunei led by Parti Rakyat was strongly opposed to the Malayan federation, preferring it to be just between the Borneo territories (Cabinet Office 1960).

A Malaysia Solidarity Consultative Committee was formed as an instrument to facilitate discussion about Malaysia and to turn the idea into reality. From 6 to 8 January 1962, the committee met in Kuala Lumpur for discussion, and they agreed on the principles of Federation, such as sovereignty, defence, external affairs, and internal security. The committee also decided for a fact-finding mission to be dispatched to Sarawak, North Borneo and Brunei to canvass local opinion.

The Debate

The nomination for the First Head of State in Sarawak was a contentious issue between the Sarawak Alliance-led government in Sarawak and Tunku Abdul Rahman and also within the Alliance component parties (refer to Table 3). The lack of consensus on this matter was especially baffling, given that the Sarawak Alliance and Tunku Abdul Rahman reached an agreement quite comfortably on the more cardinal aspects like sovereignty, security and development. Tunku himself showed sympathy for the Alliance's need for "safeguards" on matters like immigration, religious freedom for the non-Muslim populations, as well as the special rights for natives on terms equal to those of the Malays in the Malayan states. Also, Tunku gave his guarantee that Federal service would be opened up for Sarawak citizens and that the Borneanisation of civil service would be done in a progressive manner (Foreign Office 1962).

Three characters were openly partisan on the nomination of the first Head of State. Sarawak Governor Sir Alexander Waddell and the Chief Minister Stephen Kalong Ningkan advanced Temenggong Jugah a/k Barieng, who was a member of the Council Negeri, while, Tunku Abdul Rahman, the leader of the Alliance Party and the Prime Minister, pushed for a Malay candidate.

Ningkan who led the Sarawak Alliance, a coalition consisting of Sarawak National Party (SNAP), Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA), Barisan Rakyat Jati Sarawak (BARJASA) and Parti Pesaka Anak Sarawak (PESAKA) won the council election in 1963 and formed a government which was, on the pressure by Governor Waddell, a broad-based one which included its electoral rival Parti Negara Sarawak (PANAS) and independent representatives. It was during the caucus in Sibu on 20 July 1963, where the names for the first Sarawak cabinet were finalised and also the nominee for the first Head of State. As there was disagreement within the Alliance parties on Temenggong Jugah's nomination, the caucus explored another role for him as a senator, in addition to other nominees Tuanku Bujang (BARJASA) and Temenggong Lawai Jau (PESAKA) (Colonial Office, 1963). In Ningkan's view, Jugah's nomination was justified, given the support that the Ibans gave to the Greater Malaysia proposal. Jugah was also one of the representatives from Sarawak in the Inter-Governmental Committee and, in his capacity as the Chairman for Sarawak Alliance, one of the members of the Sarawak delegation to London, which signed the Malaysia Agreement on 9 July 1963. Earlier, prior to the visit of the Cobbold Commission, Jugah had organized a conference in Kapit on 15 February 1962 where 51 Pengarah and Penghulu from Iban communities in the Third Division declared their support for Malaysia proposal (Sutlive Jr. 1992, 180). When Tunku Rahman did not shift his position on having a Malay nominee Ningkan was reported to have threatened to take Sarawak out of Malaysia while Jugah was said to have almost resigned from all his positions (Colonial Office 1963).

Waddell was a British governor in Sarawak from 1960 to 16 September 1963. Like Ningkan, he viewed that the nominee for the First Head of State should be an Iban. He thought that the Iban support was crucial given the context of the Confrontation (Konfrontasi) and the fight against communism in the Southeast Asia region. On 8 December 1962, the northern region of Sarawak had briefly fallen into the hands of the anti-Malaysia's armed revolt. This had emboldened Waddell's fear of a militant side of Malays' pan-Borneo aspiration. Waddell became the main interlocutor for Ningkan what he called as a legitimate Sarawak position to the British Government. In an official communication, Waddell repeated Ningkan's point of view that Jugah was the only candidate acceptable to Alliance, and if their wish was not met, "within a week whole country would be anti-Malaysia" (Colonial Office 1963). Waddell also convinced the Colonial Office to support the Alliance nomination, "that Jugah's appointment is necessary to ensure a balance of power within the alliance and the contentment of the large Iban population. Neither a Malay nor a Chinese head of state would be acceptable at present" (Colonial Office 1963). Furthermore, Waddell also viewed Malay candidacy to be less an important factor for the stability of Sarawak in the new Malaysia. Instead, he claimed that a Malay head of state would antagonise the Iban especially from the Third Division and deepened the factionalism that already existed in the Malay politics between Tuanku Bujang and Datu Bandar Abang Mustapha. Waddell tried to broker an arrangement for Ningkan to get the

support of Datu Bandar for Jugah, “to come to some understanding on Malay participation in spoils of office” (Colonial Office 1963). This attempt turned out to be unsuccessful. Waddell had also appeared to be overplaying Ibans’ sentiment to the British Government. He reported that Jugah did not wish to disappoint his supporters in PESAKA, who had threatened “trouble ranging from non-cooperation to bloodshed” (Colonial Office 1963).

Tunku Abdul Rahman was reported to be surprised by Ningkan’s nomination of Jugah. As a leader of the Malayan Alliance and the future Prime Minister of Malaysia, he expected to be consulted on the choice of the Head of State. The Commonwealth Relations Office was informed that Tunku’s objection of Jugah’s nomination was based on two grounds: the concept of power sharing means the post of Head of State should go to a Malay since the Chief Minister was an Iban and; Jugah’s inability to read and write made him unsuitable for the post of a modern governor (Colonial Office 1963). Tunku found himself having to argue with both Ningkan and also Waddell whose pro-Jugah argument was repeated by the British Government. Waddell’s line of argument was picked up in the Far Eastern Department’s memo: “Malay was too divided at present to agree on a single candidate; would break the alliance; would turn the Iban against Malaysia; could give rise to internal and external security threat” (Colonial Office 1963). Waddell’s argument was also followed through by the Commonwealth Secretary, who wrote to Tunku about his misgiving if a Malay Head of State to be nominated “would revive all the earlier fears of Malayan domination” (Colonial Office 1963). Nevertheless, Tunku was unrelenting and his choice was Abang Openg. Tunku reminded the Alliance and the British Government that the Malay opinion matters, as he saw that “the Malays in Sarawak are the most politically conscious community there” (Colonial Office 1963). In response to Tunku’s remark, Waddell stated that Sarawak Malays “are the most politically tortuous and divided” and blamed Tunku for deepening the division by choosing to support BARJASA at the expense of PANAS (Colonial Office 1963). On the issue of violence arising from a prospect of losing Iban support, Tunku, via Abdul Razak, commented that “the start of the new nation should be seen right as between races”. The problem in Sarawak was arising from Ningkan’s “failure to consult in advance of appointment with a view of getting the whole picture right”. The threat of Iban’s uprising, though acknowledged, was considered minor to the possible exploitation of Malay towards Indonesian nationalism (Colonial Office 1963).

The Native Officers’ Connection

Abang Openg’s eventual appointment as the first Head of State was more than just a fortunate for being as “the last remaining standing member of the Council Negri” (Leigh 2018). He also fit the criteria demanded by Tunku that the person had administrative experience and a good education. Openg’s polite and gentle demeanour had also worked in his favour, a skillset he gathered from his career.

More importantly, Openg's appointment demonstrated the triumph of administrative elites in the early politics of the Federation. BARJASA support for Openg shows the common values held between Openg and the President of BARJASA Tuanku Bujang. It stemmed primarily from their common occupational class. They were both officers who served at the outstation and who had witnessed the situation of rural communities and carried out government orders under trying conditions. Both of the personalities had served in the Dayak villages outside Kuching; thus, they were not unsympathetic to their conditions. They belonged to the pre-war generation of officers who honed their skills in personal diplomacy when dealing with the natives, journeying into the interior villages, listening to their problems and solving issues. Although Governor Waddell attributed Openg's nomination to the scheming work of Abdul Rahman Ya'kub, a BARJASA politician, in pushing the agenda through, it would not have worked without the tacit knowledge among gentlemen officers who had perfected the art of personal diplomacy.

BARJASA's rejection of Jugah should not be read as an inter-racial rivalry for political ascendancy. Tuanku Bujang and Jugah were personal friends and enjoyed each other's company. Tuanku had served in Kapit as policeman and junior officer in the 1920s and 1930s so he was familiar with the context where Jugah came from. There were considerable similarities between BARJASA and the arguments advanced for Jugah. BARJASA was formed in December 1961 to support Greater Malaysia and had an anti-communism agenda in the party constitution. Furthermore, Tuanku Bujang and Jugah believed in the concept of power-sharing. Ghazali Shafie believed that Jugah carried no ambition for the role, but the Iban penghulus who were around him "were highly emotional on the subject" (Colonial Office 1963). The principle of power-sharing was understood by the Native Officers to be the way Sarawak was governed previously under the Brooke Rajahs. In the new Malaysia, the expectation was for the principle to remain. Hence, Ningkan and Waddell's demand for the Iban to hold positions of both chief minister and the head of state while dismissing Malays for either role was a clear divergence from the well-established tradition. It was about defending the principle that BARJASA took upon itself in the controversy.

Table 3: The timeline on the nomination of the First Head of State for Sarawak

Date	Event
11 July 1962	A correspondence from Anthony Brooke, the grandson of the last Rajah of Sarawak Vyner Brooke, proposed three candidates for Sarawak governor: his son, Simon Mackay and Sir Anthony Abell.
4 February 1963	The Inter-Governmental Committee recommended that the first Head of State for Sarawak and North Borneo should be a person nominated before Malaysia Day by her Majesty the Queen and the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

(Continued on next page)

Table 3 (Continued)

Date	Event
18 May 1963	Sabah Alliance Party agreed to nominate Datu Mustapha as its first Yang di-Pertuan Negeri and Donald Stephens as the chief minister.
4 July 1963	Tunku Abdul Rahman outlined his criteria for the first Head of State to the Sarawak Alliance: a well-educated person and at least able to read address for them in English.
6 July 1963	Tunku Abdul Rahman proposed a creation of Council of Chiefs where Temenggong Jugah could hold an important post.
12 July 1963	Ling Beng Siew, the President of the Sarawak Chinese Association (SCA), a component party within the Alliance, suggested Edward Jerah (a member of Supreme Council) as Head of State.
20 July 1963	The Sarawak Alliance component parties met in Sibü to discuss the first Sarawak cabinet and first Head of State.
21 July 1963	A first Sarawak cabinet was sworn in with Stephen Kalong Ningkan, the leader of Sarawak Alliance, was elected chief minister.
29 July 1963	Sarawak Alliance nominated Jugah as the first Head of State.
1 August 1963	BARJASA, a component party in Sarawak Alliance, nominated Abang Openg as the first Head of State.
8 August 1963	Tunku Abdul Rahman opposed to Jugah's nomination.
9 August 1963	Governor Waddell reinstated his support for Jugah and was against a Malay governor.
10 August 1963	Ghazali Shafie met with the Alliance in Kuching. He thought Datu Bandar Abang Mustapha would be an acceptable candidate for the Head of State.
30 August 1963	Chief Minister and leader of Sarawak Alliance defended Jugah's nomination, "or else" ...
6 September 1963	Tunku Abdul Rahman said would be submitting two names to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong – Abang Openg and Haji Mohamad Noah bin Omar.
11 September 1963	Crunch talk in Kuala Lumpur between Tunku Abdul Rahman, Governor Waddell and Sarawak Alliance. Jugah stepped aside and appointed as Federal Minister for Sarawak Affairs.
16 September 1963	Abang Openg bin Abang Sapiee sworn in as the first Head of State.

Source: Colonial Office (1962; 1963); Reece (1993); Sutlive Jr. (1992).

CONCLUSION

The saga of the first Head of State for Sarawak testified to the obduracy of the native administrative elites. Despite British attempts at suppressing their influence, arising notably from the hurt carried over by the officers' perceived collaboration with the Japanese, the Native Officers ploughed on. While some viewed the position of Head of State as a 'prize' for loyalty and achievement, those who were raised in the tradition of native service saw it as a symbol of continuity in power-sharing which they believed to be a formula tried and tested in Sarawak. The understanding and commitment for power-sharing with different ethnic groups in Sarawak has allowed political moderation to prevail and lasted until today.

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